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Hands That Grab and Tongues That Say: Understanding Animal Narrators and Protagonists

by
Sophie Ryan

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by
Dr. Kate Beutner
Department of English

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Abstract

Whether through owning a pet or merely seeing a squirrel outside the window, we cannot avoid encountering the non-human animal inhabitants of the world around us. This project considers how animals are represented as narrators and protagonists in predominantly 21st-century literature. Although extensive research in the fields of animal studies and human-animal studies has explored literary non-human animal characters, few have asked questions about the narratological construction of animal narrators and protagonists. This project uses the lenses of narratology and ecocriticism to discuss six texts: *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein, *White Fang* by Jack London, *The Bees* by Laline Paull, *The White Bone* by Barbara Gowdy, and "The Hillside" by Jane Smiley. I consider each text in terms of how it utilizes anthropomorphism to center or decenter human characters, contextualizes animal narrators or protagonists, and builds meaningful relationships between animals and between animals and humans. I argue that texts with animal narrators or protagonists fail to realistically portray animal consciousness, but often succeed in building empathy in humans; in addition, writers use different narrative strategies depending on whether the animal is domestic or wild. Given that we know we are not accessing animal consciousness, I question why humans keep writing and reading these stories.

Dedication

To Teddy, George, and Bonnie, who inspired this project.

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I want to thank everyone who supported me during my time at Wooster, particularly the English department faculty who encouraged my passions for reading and writing. I especially want to thank my advisor, Dr. Beutner, for encouraging and helping me complete this lengthy project. I would not have finished if not for your weekly reassurances that I was on the right track.

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Table of Contents

Abstract i

Dedication iii

Acknowledgements v

Table of Contents vii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

- Literature Chosen and Why 3
- Domestication in Texts with Animal Narrators and Protagonists 6
- Critical Conversations Within Animal Studies and Human-Animal Studies 8
- Anthropomorphism and Human Empathy 10

Chapter 2: Anthropocentrism and Anthropomorphism 15

- Working/Domesticated Animal Texts 16
- A Wild to Domesticated Animal Text 31
- Wild Animal Texts 35

Chapter 3: Animal Religion, Culture, and Naming Practices 47

- Religion 47
- Culture and Naming 62

Chapter 4: Interspecies, Intraspecies, and Human-Animal Relationships 73

- Working/Domesticated/Wild to Domesticated Animal Texts 74
- Wild Animal Texts 85

Chapter 5: Conclusion 97

Bibliography 101

Chapter 1: Introduction

Humans are extremely interested in portrayals of animal consciousness. This is illustrated by the sheer amount of texts that utilize animal narrators and claim that they are trying to depict animal minds. However, animal narrators are clearly not effective at giving the reader a window into true animal interiority. According to Gillian Beer, the central paradox for literature with animal narrators is language. Specifically, Beer questions, "How is it possible to be true to animal experience, even if that were the wish, if your medium of description is written human language? Will empathy be possible? Is it not more honest to *avoid* claiming understanding?" (3, emphasis in original). Although some authors hope to realistically depict non-human animal minds and experiences, many writers still use animals in literature for allegorical purposes or to represent human characteristics (Beer 3-4, 6). Therefore, due to an insurmountable language barrier, some level of anthropomorphism is inevitable when humans attempt to depict the interior lives of animals. However, this is not to say that treating animals as having complex emotions and relationships is innately anthropomorphizing. Later in this introduction, I will discuss the definition of anthropomorphism, the different types of anthropomorphism I have identified, including folk-tale and complex anthropomorphism, and the issues associated with this term.

Since I was a child, I have loved reading books with animal characters and animal narrators. My fascination with books that center animals began with *Winnie the Pooh* and matured into a love of *Watership Down*. Due to these early experiences, my biggest goal in life became owning a pet. I started out with a goldfish and was finally able to convince my parents to adopt a dog for me by age six. Ever since owning my first dog, I have felt more connected to and curious about what goes on in the minds of animals, specifically dogs,

prompting me to read more and more books about animals, including E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* and even Holly Webb's Animal Magic series. Thus, my personal love of animals and books about animals motivated me to want to explore this topic critically.

I have found that although texts with animal protagonists or narrators may seem to be trying to realistically depict animal consciousness, they often instead explore the role of humans in imagined animal worlds. From my research, I have found that there is a major distinction between domesticated and wild animal narrators in how narrative techniques are used to provoke empathy in addition to how much empathy the author hopes to elicit in the reader. I will discuss how the level and type of empathy built either allows texts with domesticated or working animal narrators or protagonists to avoid or raise ethical questions about human responsibility when it comes to domestication. By examining how texts engage with anthropomorphism, depict animal religions, cultures, and naming practices, and characterize animal-animal and animal-human relationships, I argue that, although texts with animal narrators or protagonists fail to portray "real" animal consciousness, they can succeed in satisfying curiosity, building empathy in humans, and calling humans to action. Given that we know we are not accessing animal minds, I will question why humans keep writing and reading these stories.

To begin my introduction, I will identify the texts I have chosen for studying animal narrators and protagonists, provide short synopses for each story, and discuss my rationale behind each choice. Next, I will introduce the current critical conversation surrounding this topic within animal studies and human-animal studies in addition to the theoretical lenses I have chosen to use in my analysis: narratology and ecocriticism. Further, I will discuss my

interpretation of anthropomorphism, in addition to a few other related topics, including domestication and human empathetic responses to animal narrators.

Literature Chosen and Why

The texts I chose for this project are *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein, *White Fang* by Jack London, *The Bees* by Laline Paull, *The White Bone* by Barbara Gowdy, and “The Hillside” by Jane Smiley. I wanted to consider mostly 21st-century animal narrator texts, but decided to include *Black Beauty*, which was published in 1877, due to its prominence in the field of animal studies. To organize my project, I separated these texts into two main categories: domesticated/working versus wild animal texts. This choice was not made on a purely taxonomic basis. Instead, I wanted to investigate whether there is a difference between how each group of texts approaches animal narrator construction. The domesticated animal texts I will discuss are *Black Beauty* and *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. The wild animal texts that are included are *The Bees*, *The White Bone*, and “The Hillside.” There is a spectrum of domestication and wildness depicted in these texts, with some not falling neatly into either category. This is especially true in the case of *White Fang*, as its main character begins the book wild but becomes domesticated later in the narrative. I will discuss *White Fang* as an intermediary text between these categories, with a wild-turned-domesticated animal protagonist.

For this project, I wanted to choose texts with a wide variety of animal narrators, rather than only domesticated pet animals. As I began researching, I found that my choices were more limited than I might have guessed. This may be due to a prevalent favoritism among conservationists who focus their efforts on “charismatic species” with characteristics such as big eyes, fur, striking colors, and direct connections to humans (Herman 9). This

favoritism permeates societal norms for which animals people would want to read about. Therefore, unsurprisingly, I found that most animal narrator texts focus on a narrow range of mostly charismatic animals. My project only represents four species of animals, horses, wolves/dogs, bees, and elephants, all of which fit at least one criterion for being charismatic animals. Thus, a taxonomic bias toward charismatic species was an unavoidable drawback for this project.

Next, the texts I chose for this project all needed to explore animal consciousness and interior lives, which would allow me to analyze the methods authors use to create non-human animal narrators and protagonists. Additionally, I searched for novels and short stories that represent animals as complex creatures with unique characteristics and the ability to form interspecies and intraspecies relationships. In the following few paragraphs, I will go into more detail about the value of each text for my project in addition to a short synopsis of each story.

The first book I read for my project was Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, a story about the adversity faced by a workhorse in Victorian Era England. Although this novel has now become a children's classic, it was originally written for adults. This text is an example of how literature has been able to influence public opinion and legislation in addition to being an example of how humans tend to class animal narrator stories as "for children" over time. *Black Beauty* allows me to highlight the usefulness of animal narrators in the past and lays a foundation for discussing Jane Smiley's "The Hillside." "The Hillside" is a short story set in a futuristic, post-human-dominated world. Like *Black Beauty*, "The Hillside" is written from the perspective of a horse. However, there is one major difference between the texts: the horse protagonist in "The Hillside" is wild while the horse narrator in *Black Beauty* is

domesticated. The idea that horses used to be domesticated by humans is addressed in "The Hillside." Thus, references to *Black Beauty* are extremely in the section of my project that focus on "The Hillside."

I had read *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein before choosing this topic, and it was one of my major inspirations for this project. This novel tells the story of a beloved pet dog named Enzo living with his family in Seattle, Washington. Enzo's unique narration gives the reader complete access to his complex consciousness. Next, like *Black Beauty* is for "The Hillside," Jack London's *White Fang* can be framed as an ancestor text for *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. *White Fang*, a text focusing on the sensory experiences of a wolf-dog named White Fang, details the process of domestication of dogs by humans, painting dogs as active agents in this process. This sets the stage for Enzo, for whom the process is already solidified by many previous generations.

Finally, I decided to include Laline Paull's *The Bees* and Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* in my analysis since these animal narrators are objectively wild. Bees and elephants can both be classified as charismatic species, which may encourage writers and readers to wonder about their consciousnesses. Bees play an important role in human culture, as symbols of industry, structure, social cooperation, and virtue (Worrel 7, 12, 13). Additionally, bees are unlike any other animal narrator I had come across since they are insects. Even though they fit the "striking colors" criterion of charismatic species, bees are much smaller, and thus less noticeable to humans, than the other animal narrators in my project. Further, this text is especially relevant due to the importance of bees in natural ecosystems. Thus, provoking human empathy toward bees is vital from an environmental standpoint. Next, elephants fall into the specific category "charismatic megafauna," which include "large animals with high

public appeal" (Thompson and Rog 10). Many humans find elephants, like dogs and horses, "cute," increasing their social relevance and probability for inducing human empathy. In his satirical article "How to Write about Africa," Binyavanga Wainaina instructs non-African writers:

> Animals, on the other hand, must be treated as well rounded, complex characters. They speak (or grunt while tossing their manes proudly) and have names, ambitions and desires. They also have family values: see how lions teach their children? Elephants are caring, and are good feminists or dignified patriarchs. So are gorillas. Never, ever say anything negative about an elephant or a gorilla. Elephants may attack people's property, destroy their crops, and even kill them. Always take the side of the elephant. Big cats have public-school accents. Hyenas are fair game and have vaguely Middle Eastern accents. Any short Africans who live in the jungle or desert may be portrayed with good humour (unless they are in conflict with an elephant or chimpanzee or gorilla, in which case they are pure evil). (n.p.)

His insistence that human authors must never say anything negative about elephants contributes to my idea that certain animal narrators are more likely to secure human sympathy, in addition to being more likely to be written about in the first place.

Domestication in Texts with Animal Narrators and Protagonists

Domestication is an important concept in this project, playing into which types of animals are most represented in texts with animal narrators. Domestication is the act of assimilating wild animals into human culture and society, training them to be docile and obedient, and persuading them to be dependent on humans for food, water, and shelter. In *White Fang*, Jack London illustrates the domestication process firsthand. In this text,

protagonist White Fang begins as an instinct-driven wolf pup, becomes a reluctant sled dog, and finally learns to trust, respect, and want to live with a human man. Once White Fang is integrated into the home of a human and begins to genuinely want to be around this human, he can no longer be seen as wild. The final products of domestication are depicted in *Black Beauty* and *The Art of Racing in the Rain*.

In addition to a bias toward charismatic species, I found that domestic or "tamer" animals have more stories written about them. Specifically, many prominent animal autobiographies, including Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography* and W. Bruce Cameron's *A Dog's Purpose*, are written from the perspective of domesticated pet dogs. Further, apart from wolves, none of the animal narrator texts I chose feature predatory animals. Thus, it appears that humans prefer to read narratives about animals that are calmer and less aggressive. The focus on prey animals could also be because these are the animals with the closest contact with humans due to their more easily domesticated temperament. Conversely, prey animals may be the ones most in need of human empathy due to their status as persecuted by predators.

There are differences in how writers portray animal narrators based on domestication status. Specifically, I found that domesticated animal texts actively avoid the question of what we might be doing to animals when we domesticate them. By bypassing this question, these texts reassure readers that domestication is "worth it" by showing positive and fulfilling human-animal relationships. I also found a difference between depictions of domesticated pets versus working animals. For example, Black Beauty is a working animal narrator, so he has minimal intimacy with his human owners. I believe this is because Anna Sewell did not want to elicit too much empathy for him since he is not a pet but an employee. If humans feel

"excessive" empathy for working animals, like horses, it may make them uncomfortable about the fact that humans rule over the behaviors and day-to-day activities of working animals. In contrast, Garth Stein, author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, does not have this issue and is able to elicit high levels of empathy for pet dog Enzo by depicting him with meaningful relationships with humans.

Critical Conversations Within Animal Studies and Human-Animal Studies

Many literary critics have discussed animals in literature, but I have not seen any specifically questioning how narrative techniques are used to create believable representations of animals. Animal studies, as a branch of cultural studies, questions how animal characters can be analyzed to better understand human culture (Wolfe 565). A key component of animal studies is the idea that "animals are sentient beings with interests, intentions, and desires… [and that] animals have agency and intentionality and are capable of reflexive thinking" (Kalof 6-7). However, many animal studies critics focus more on how animals are valued within human culture, rather than how literature can depict valuable animal cultures (Kalof 14). Animal studies considers how animals are represented as characters in human literature, but I would like to question how humans represent animals as *narrators* or *protagonists* in literature.

Next, the criticism in the cross-disciplinary field of human-animal studies is also largely focused on the connection and interaction between humans and non-human animals (Shapiro and DeMello 308). Human-animal studies emerged with texts such as *Animals and Why They Matter* by Mary Midgely and *Beasts of the Modern Imagination* by Margot Norris (Marvin and McHugh 4). Further, human-animal studies increased in importance due to the rise of texts that portray "animals as agents who are not humanlike subjects or thinglike

objects, but actors of a different order" (Marvin and McHugh 5). Posthumanist literature attempts to shift away from anthropocentrism, which can be defined as the "the valorization of everything human" (Shapiro and DeMello 313). Although these ideas are central to my project, I chose to focus on narrative studies and ecocriticism as my main theoretical lenses. Narratology is not necessarily at the center of the larger animal studies conversation. Therefore, my project stands out in comparison to other animal studies and human-animal studies critical articles due to the unique questions it considers concerning animal narrators and protagonists.

Narratology began in the mid-twentieth century, focusing on "the general theory and practice of narrative in all literary forms" (Abrams 181). Concerns within narratology include different types of narrators, a text's structural elements, and narrative devices used in a story (Abrams 181). Narratology, which was based on structuralism and linguistics, is now a cross-disciplinary field, considering storytelling across genres and contexts (Herman 2). Relevant texts on this subject include Bernaerts and colleagues' (2014) study of non-human narrators and Mitchell and colleagues' (1997) volume *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals* (cited in Herman 9). David Herman, author of *Narratology beyond the Human: Storytelling and Animal Life*, argues that narratology is useful for analyzing "narratives centering on animal worlds and human-animal relationships" (3). Herman uses narratology to consider how "narrative can at the same time be used to shore up, reproduce, and even amplify human-centric understandings of animals and cross-species relationships" (5). In contrast, I use narratology to question how narrative is used to represent domesticated and wild animals in literature.

In his introduction, Herman addresses anthropocentrism, an issue at the heart of ecocriticism. Timothy Clark, author of *The Value of Ecocriticism*, writes that the "challenge engaged by environmental literature and criticism [is] how to give voice to the non-human… in ways that do not seem merely fanciful or weakly anthropomorphic" (9). Therefore, ecocriticism fits into my project since it asks relevant questions, such as: how can humans move beyond simple anthropomorphism when writing about animals? Clark suggests:

> the most powerful and controversial forms of 'immersive' prose [are the ones] in which the attempted viewpoint is that of a non-human animal, as with Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography* (1933) (the name of the pet dog of Elizabeth Barrett Browning) or Barbara Gowdy's *The White Bone* (2000), which recreates from 'within' the social, intellectual and spiritual worlds of persecuted African elephants (81)

Despite the powerful nature of immersive prose written from a non-human point of view, Clark admits that this approach is controversial due to the problematic nature of anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism in literature.

Anthropomorphism and Human Empathy

Anthropomorphism is the "human tendency to ascribe notionally human traits to non-human animals and a rhetorical strategy in literary representation" (You 183). Anthropomorphism is prevalent in children's literature, including Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. In these texts, animals are only used as representations for human traits. However, this is only one kind of anthropomorphism. A sentence in Keith Barker's chapter "Animal Stories" inspired me to call this form "folk-tale anthropomorphism" (284). In his

essay "On Fairy Stories," J. R. R. Tolkien, an author known for creating non-human literary characters, once wrote, "the animal form is only a mask upon the human face" (n.p.). This is a perfect description of folk-tale anthropomorphism, since it emphasizes that the only important thing about the animals is their form. With folk-tale anthropomorphism, animal characteristics, including animal culture and relationships between different animal species, are overlooked, while human characteristics are emphasized. Novels from the perspective of animal narrators that favor folk-tale anthropomorphism, then, are less about animals and more about humans. Furthermore, animals are used in this type of storytelling as allegorical symbols, commentaries on societal, religious, or cultural norms, and stand-ins for human relationships.

Watership Down by Richard Addams, a text I did not go into detail with in this project, is an example of a preliminary attempt to move away from the use of folk-tale anthropomorphism in storytelling. Although this novel uses anthropomorphized rabbits to make arguments about human society, politics, and religion, *Watership Down* creates a unique rabbit language and mythology and implies that rabbits can form meaningful relationships. Addams even considers real rabbit behavior throughout the construction of his narrative.

Despite the prevalence of discussions of anthropomorphism in literature, this term itself is problematic. This is because it is highly human-centric, or "anthropocentric," since it assumes that traits such as complex emotions, societal and cultural norms, and the ability to form relationships are innately human. However, discussing anthropomorphism in some form is unavoidable when considering any text with an animal narrator, since humans are the ones writing the story (Plumwood 58). This is due to the barrier of language between animals and

humans, meaning that individuals who write from an animal perspective are not able to access animal experience. Despite the necessity of some anthropomorphism, many texts with animal narrators or protagonists attempt to move away from the animal-form-as-a-mask type of anthropomorphism into what I will call "complex anthropomorphism." Complex anthropomorphism involves attempting to be true to animal behavior and giving animals emotional intelligence. The texts I have chosen for this project use folk-tale anthropomorphism less overtly, instead relying on complex anthropomorphism, with the outcome of provoking more human empathy.

I define empathy as the ability to achieve emotional comprehension of another human or animal. The most overt example of empathy as a narrative goal is Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty*, since Sewell openly wrote about wanting to promote empathy for horses with this story (Bayly 272). Although empathetic responses are common outcomes of reading stories with animal narrators and protagonists, most of the texts I include in this analysis have more ambiguous goals. For example, although readers of *White Bone* may feel enhanced empathy for elephants after reading the story, this novel does not seem to have this goal in mind at its construction.

There is a large gulf between how domesticated versus wild animal texts seek to build empathy. Once animals are domesticated, humans no longer want to empathize with them based on their own natures. Instead, humans value domesticated animals based on their connections to other humans. *White Fang* is an example of this concept, since readers see the shift between empathy-based-on-wild-nature to empathy-based-on-connection-to-humans during the narrative. This raises ethical questions about what humans think our responsibilities are to domesticated and wild animals. Further, it reveals that humans might

not want to think deeply about what the process of domestication actually does to animal consciousness and relationships.

Writers who depict domesticated animals use narrative strategies differently than writers who depict wild animals. Domesticated animal texts are more likely to use folk-tale anthropomorphism in their depictions of animal consciousness than wild animal texts. Next, in terms of animal cultures, domesticated animal cultures are not usually distinguishable from human culture. Or, in the case of *White Fang*, a culture which revolves around humans is depicted. Additionally, domesticated animal texts center relationships with humans (as the main empathy-building technique) to the point of eradicating relationships between animals. In contrast, wild animal texts seem more willing to depict deeper and more complex animal consciousnesses than domestic animal texts. They also spend more time on worldbuilding and the construction of animal cultures. Finally, wild animal texts build empathy by demonstrating that wild animals should be valued for their own nature, using complex anthropomorphism to create more “realistic” depictions.

Chapter 2: Anthropocentrism and Anthropomorphism

In this chapter, I will discuss each text within the domesticated/working versus wild animal framework. I have found that each group of texts has conflicting aims when it comes to human characters. Specifically, the domesticated animal texts center human characters, while the wild animal texts decenter humans. Even though domesticated animal texts may claim to be about the animal experience, humans are found at the center of the narratives and are the driving forces for the action. The wild animal texts in this analysis do a better job of placing non-human animals at the heart of the story and pushing humans to the periphery. Further, I have found distinctions in narrative structure, perspective, and narratological choices depending on the species of the animal narrator or protagonist. This is important because these features elicit different types and levels of empathy in human readers.

All texts in my analysis rely on some level of anthropomorphism, in its multiple forms, to create believable animal narrators and protagonists. Further, the texts use different levels of intentionality depending on how much empathy they want to create. According to Julie Smith, there are three levels of intentionality: zero-order intentionality, first-order intentionality, and second-order intentionality (233-5). Zero-order intentionality is purely an organism's ability to function based on biological processes as responses to external stimuli (Smith 233). First-order intentionality, as seen near the beginning of the lives of several animal narrators, refers to an organism's ability to create mental representations of the outside world (Smith 234). Finally, second-order intentionality has been linked to anthropomorphism, meaning that an organism is thought to be aware of its own and others' consciousnesses (Smith 235). Although all books in my analysis have narrators or

protagonists who eventually gain some level of second-order intentionality, there are differences in each author's willingness to depict this level of complex non-human animal consciousness.

Working/Domesticated Animal Texts

The Art of Racing in the Rain

Enzo, the dog protagonist and narrator of *The Art of Racing in the Rain,* is anthropomorphized with second-order intentionality to give readers a vicarious account of what it might be like to experience life as a domesticated pet dog. The anthropomorphism of Enzo falls into both the folk-tale and complex categories. Although Enzo is given a unique consciousness that centers experiences a dog could feasibly have, Enzo's thoughts seem to be borrowed from human understandings of external phenomena. Thus, his intentionality is somewhat discounted by the fact that he appropriates his personal beliefs from human schemas. The fact that Enzo is more human-like than dog-like in his opinions and characteristics illustrates that some folk-tale anthropomorphism is at work here.

Although Garth Stein, the author of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, might claim that this novel's purpose is to tell Enzo's story, more emphasis is placed on the human characters. The lives of Enzo's human family, which consists of Denny, his wife Eve, and their daughter Zoë, drive the narrative flow of the novel. All the major events in the novel are Enzo's reactions to and descriptions of what is happening to his family. In other words, all the landmarks for Enzo are also landmarks for the human characters. When considering Eve's entrance into his and Denny's lives, Enzo admits, "We were both satellites orbiting Denny's sun" (Stein 16). This quotation explicitly supports my view that Enzo's storyline revolves around Denny. To give another example, when Enzo runs away from Denny and kills a

squirrel, it is because he found out Eve died. Enzo narrates, "I missed Eve so much I couldn't be a human anymore and feel the pain that humans feel. I had to be an animal again" (Stein 165). This revelation for Enzo's character–that being a human is too emotionally painful–comes about when there is a major loss in his human family. Further, as Enzo reverts to animalistic instincts, Denny also wants to lose himself. Enzo questions, "Depressed, stressed, hands shaking, and now he was going to get himself drunk?" (Stein 204). Although Denny soon puts the alcohol away and chooses to watch a home video of his family together, both he and Enzo have the same impulse to feel less after the loss of Eve. Thus, Enzo's narration is purely a lens through which the readers see what is happening to Denny and his family.

In the text, Enzo is characterized as "the perfect dog," who never intentionally misbehaves and completely adores his human master. The narrative attempts to show Enzo doing dog-like things, like going on walks or taking trips to the dog park, but mostly, Enzo participates in more human-like activities such as watching television and spending time with his family. This makes him feel less believably like a dog, since his existence solely revolves around his relationships with humans. Even though Enzo's character is "integral to the drama," as he puts it, it is still a human drama (Stein 223). For example, Enzo frequently visits Zoë as Denny battles her grandparents for custody, because Enzo "understood that [Denny] depended on me to take care of Zoë, and also to act as some kind of a witness on his behalf. Though I could not relate to him the details of our visits, my presence, I think, reassured him in some way" (Stein 225). Enzo's role as a stand-in for Denny is set up earlier in the novel when he witnesses Zoë's birth. In this scene, Eve asks, "'Will you promise to always protect her?,'" and Enzo thinks, "She wasn't asking me. She was asking Denny, and I was merely Denny's surrogate. Still, I felt the obligation" (Stein 26). And again when Denny

"delegated his love-giving to me. I became the provider of love and comfort [to Eve] by proxy" (Stein 66). Enzo is able to be there for Eve and Zoë when Denny is away, giving him a role, albeit a role he forfeits upon Denny's return, in the action of the novel.

In addition to his capacity as a Denny surrogate, Enzo has a clear, individual role in the lives of his human family. In his words, "I was an integral figure in Zoë's entertainment" (Stein 31). Enzo operates as a playmate for Zoë in her childhood and continues to be an important part of her life even when she lives with her grandparents. Enzo also plays an important role for Eve the night she returns from the hospital when she asks Enzo to protect her from her progressing illness. Eve pleads, "'Get me through it tonight… Protect me. Don't let it happen tonight. Enzo, please. You're the only one who can help'" (Stein 127). Enzo functions in this section of the text as a necessary protector of Eve, not only a stand-in for Denny, but "the only one who can help" Eve through her pain.

Despite this, Enzo often struggles with being notably not central in his family dynamics. When Denny and Eve return to work after the birth of Zoë, Enzo observes, "But then everyone moved on and left me behind" (Stein 32). Enzo feels lonely without the constant presence of his human family. Further, as Denny gets ready to leave for a race weekend, Enzo realizes, "Eve and Zoë seemed to know all about his leaving. He had told *them*. He hadn't told *me*" (Stein 74, emphasis in original). In this section, Enzo learns that, as a dog, he is not given as much information as the other humans in the text. Later, Enzo muses, "I was not privy to much, being a dog… No one confided in me. I was never consulted" (Stein 107). Enzo seems to resent his status as an overlooked dog, wanting more and more throughout the narrative to be like a human, "with [their] hands that grab things and [their] tongue[s] that [say] things" (Stein 5). Enzo understands that there is a difference

between non-human animals and humans, especially in terms of language. Language has been described as “the distinguisher between the human and other life forms” (Beer 313). Thus, Enzo believes that his lack of language, in addition to hand dexterity, means that humans are superior life forms to dogs.

This novel operates as a wish-fulfillment text for readers and possibly for the writer, constructing Enzo as an exemplar of how humans hope their dogs see them. Enzo’s consciousness, as depicted through the novel, reflects this. For example, Enzo once states, “He was right. I have the best master” (Stein 304). In his thoughts, Enzo openly shows his devotion to Denny. Next, when Enzo describes Denny, he narrates, “He is so brilliant. He shines. He’s beautiful…” (Stein 5). Enzo’s love for Denny is also reflected in his behavior since he prefers to always be in Denny’s company and is overjoyed when he is included in Denny’s day-to-day activities. Enzo’s characterization, as a being who lives to please a human, illustrates how many dog owners hope their dogs view them. Thus, this novel gives readers a place to live out that fantasy–where dogs love their human owners and strive to be like them. Further, Enzo’s characterization seems less dog-like and more human-like throughout the text, because Enzo’s thoughts revolve around the activities of his human owners. He does not prioritize acting dog-ish but forces himself to learn about human life and culture. Further, Enzo chooses to behave in ways that are helpful to Denny. Enzo narrates, “We sat on the berm for quite a long time, not speaking or anything. He seemed upset, and when he was upset, I knew the best thing I could do was be available for him. So I lay next to him and waited” (Stein 99-100). Enzo’s behavior is anthropomorphized in this section of the novel. However, anthropomorphizing non-human animal behavior can be beneficial since anthropomorphic descriptions are able to capture critical elements important for interactions

between humans and non-human animals as opposed to completely objective descriptions (Hebb 88). Thus, Enzo's anthropomorphism allows readers to understand his personality better than if only factual accounts of his behavior were given.

Enzo's main goal throughout the entire text is becoming a human in his next life. The following passage sets up this plot line of Enzo using his dog existence to prepare to be human:

> After the 1993 Grand Prix, the best thing I've ever seen on TV is a documentary that explained everything to me, made it clear, told the whole truth: when a dog is finished living his lifetime as a dog, his next incarnation will be as a man. I've always felt almost human. I've always known that there's something about me that's different than other dogs. Sure, I'm stuffed into a dog's body, but that's just the shell. It's what's inside that's important. The soul. And my soul is very human. (Stein 2-3)

The first thing to note about this quotation is the mention of Enzo's obsession with the 1993 Grand Prix, which illustrates the primacy of humans in the text, especially Denny, who is a professional race car driver. In the 1993 Grand Prix, Ayrton Senna won first place. This is notable, because Senna is Enzo's favorite race car driver and is compared to Denny throughout the text, since both are great at racing cars in the rain. The mention of the 1993 Grand Prix in the first chapter of the novel shows how Denny has influenced Enzo's interests and how much Enzo idolizes humans, including Senna. The documentary mentioned next was about Mongolia on the National Geographic Channel, which he believes to be a reputable source. This documentary teaches Enzo that dogs "who are ready" return to Earth as men after they have finished running "across the high desert plains for as long as [they] would like" (Stein 98). This is parallel to the idea of racing, Enzo's favorite activity in life.

The fact that Enzo's existence as a dog revolves around the belief that human life is the pinnacle of the reincarnation cycle inadvertently implies that a dog's existence does not have as much value as a human's existence. This implication itself places humans at the center of the narrative, despite its animal point of view. Further, the idea that humans are the highest level of creation is somewhat contradictory to Stein's use of a dog as a focal character. However, this idea increases reader empathy for Enzo since he is depicted as unconditionally loving of humans and human life. Implying that humans are superior creatures most likely validates the reader's beliefs and encourages them to feel sympathy and love for dogs who adore and love them in return. Ultimately, Enzo does not reveal anything new about the animal experience but shows readers how much their dogs love them. To add support to this argument, Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants*, said of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, "This old soul of a dog has much to teach us about being human" (n.p.). She notably did not say that this old soul of a dog has much to teach us about *the animal experience*. This is important, because, if the goal of this novel is to tell the story of a pet dog, it ultimately fails, since Enzo barely acts like an animal in the narrative. Instead, Enzo focuses on preparing his mind and soul to become human in his next incarnation. Enzo represses his animalistic impulses, favoring human morality.

Throughout the text, Enzo has many opinions on the relationship between humans and dogs. He has specific views about the domestication of dogs:

> I also believe that man's continued domestication (if you care to use that silly euphemism) of dogs is motivated by fear: fear that dogs, left to evolve on their own, would, in fact, develop thumbs and smaller tongues, and therefore would be superior to men, who are slow and cumbersome, standing erect as they do. This is why dogs

> must live under the constant supervision of people, and are immediately put to death when found living on their own. (Stein 19-20)

This quotation complicates Enzo's human ideation, illustrating that he recognizes the controlling and arrogant nature of humans as afraid of domination by another species. Although Enzo still wants to become human, he sees faults in the human form and in human history, especially the domestication process. Enzo does not discuss his opinions on domestication at any other points in the text, showing that he continues to see domestication as unnatural and harmful to the dog's evolution process. However, Enzo assumes that humans are superior to dogs due to the dexterity of their hands and small tongues, which allow human speech. His inability to communicate with Denny is another issue not only at the heart of this story but at the heart of all texts with animal narrators who interact with humans. Illustrating this, the first few sentences of the novel are:

> Gestures are all that I have; sometimes they must be grand in nature. And while I occasionally step over the line and into the world of the melodramatic, it is what I must do in order to communicate clearly and effectively. In order to make my point understood without question. I have no words I can rely on because, much to my dismay, my tongue was designed long and flat and loose… (Stein 1)

This passage shows how strongly Enzo wishes he could communicate with humans and implies that gestures are the only feasible method of communication between domesticated pets and their human owners. Enzo attempts to communicate with humans throughout the entire text, even expressing his anger at Zoë's grandparents, who Enzo terms the evil twins. Enzo narrates:

> My first thought was to take the pepperoncini and a couple of Maxwell's fingers with it. But that would have caused real problems, and I likely would have been euthanized before Mike could return to save me, so I didn't take his fingers. I did, however, take the pepper. I knew it was bad for me, that I would suffer immediate discomfort. But I knew my discomfort would pass, and I anticipated the unpleasant rebound effect, which is what I wanted. After all, I am just a stupid dog, unworthy of human scorn, without the brains to be responsible for my own bodily functions… And in my stomach, a foul concoction steeped. When it was time to take me out that night, Maxwell opened the French door to the back deck and began his idiotic chanting: 'Get busy, boy. Get busy.' I didn't go outside. I looked up at him and I thought about what he was doing, how he was rending our family, pulling apart the fabric of our lives for his own smug, self-congratulatory purposes; I thought about how he and Trish were grossly inferior guardians for my Zoë. I crouched in my stance right there, inside the house, and I shat a massive, soupy, pungent pile of diarrhea on his beautiful expensive, linen-colored Berber carpet… 'Get busy, motherfucker,' I said as I left. But, of course, he couldn't hear me. (Stein 230-232)

Enzo makes an informed, conscious, and manipulative decision in this passage, with full understanding of the outcomes of his actions. He uses his bodily functions to make a point, knowing he would not be blamed since humans assume Enzo is "just a stupid dog, unworthy of human scorn" (Stein 232). Later in the narrative, Enzo makes Denny understand his opinion, ultimately convincing Denny not to give up on his custody lawsuit for Zoë. Enzo recounts:

> I reached out with my teeth. And the next thing I knew, I was standing at the kitchen door with the papers in my mouth and both Mike and Denny staring at me, completely stunned… 'Give me the papers, Enzo,' Denny said. I shook them vigorously in my mouth… I dropped the papers before me and pawed at them. I dug at them. I tried to bury them… What else could I do? Had I not made myself clear? Had I not communicated my message? What else was there for me to do? One thing only. I lifted my hind leg and I urinated on the papers. Gestures are all that I have… Denny stood… he said, 'I'm with Enzo. I piss on their settlement too…' (Stein 265-7)

Even though he does have a limited ability to communicate, Enzo finds it frustrating that he cannot easily make his point known to humans. Thus, the fact that animals and humans cannot understand one another–due to an insurmountable barrier in language–makes it impossible for texts with animal narrators to ever be true to the animal experience.

Black Beauty

In contrast to *The Art of Racing in the Rain,* the author of *Black Beauty,* Anna Sewell, does not attempt to write a text about how horses experience the world. Sewell's goal was to "induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses" by humans who work with horses (qtd. in Bayly 272). *Black Beauty* is a first-person fictional autobiography of a horse named Black Beauty. Black Beauty's narration teaches readers about the importance of animal welfare in addition to kindness to other humans. This text is openly a protest piece, using a combination of folk-tale and complex anthropomorphism to depict horses as conscious creatures who deserve ethical treatment by humans. Unlike Stein, Sewell limits and deemphasizes Black Beauty's conscious capacities due to his status as a working

animal. Since humans force horses to work for them, reading about a horse with high levels of second-order intentionality could threaten these practices. Conversely, because Enzo is a domesticated pet animal, Stein was free to build unlimited empathy for him through complex anthropomorphism. However, Sewell did want to build *enough* empathy to increase moral treatment for horses. After the formation of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in 1824, the publication of *Black Beauty* in 1877 contributed to the movement to combat inhuman treatment of animals in Victorian England (Flynn 422). Free copies of *Black Beauty* were distributed to cabmen for educational purposes (Flynn 422). Further, the novel increased public support for organizations such as the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) (Beierl 214).

Black Beauty encourages reader identification with and empathy for horses through Black Beauty's anthropomorphized narration. When discussing *Black Beauty*, Keith Barker argues:

> Its major theme is kindness to horses… [and] it can still be read for its compassion (the author condemns war and fox hunting), for the power of the narrative voice and for the almost folktale-like plot. The narrative voice is, of course, human which may make it more easy for reader identification. (Barker 284)

This text gives Black Beauty a human-like consciousness that readers have access to throughout the novel. Complex anthropomorphism is used in this text to make it possible for readers to form an attachment to Black Beauty's character *as a work horse* and relate to his experiences. This window into Black Beauty's mind shows readers that he is a sentient being with the capacity for joy and memory. The novel begins with Black Beauty recounting his happy childhood:

> The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it… Whilst I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the day time I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot, we used to stand by a pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold, we had a nice warm shed near the plantation. (Sewell 11-12)

Words like "pleasant" and "warm" show that Black Beauty is attaching meaning to his memory of past sensations. As Julie Smith argues, "consciousness is the capacity to have meaningful sensory experiences, or a sense of 'like something to be the subject' that results from encountering the property of things in the world" (237). Anna Sewell uses the human language to construct a believable interpretation of how a Victorian work horse might experience the world, using an anthropomorphized depiction of Black Beauty's mind to encourage readers to empathize with the character.

Sewell uses human characters, in addition to horses, in this text as vehicles through which she could funnel her opinions. Black Beauty's master, Squire Gordon, once reprimands a builder, Mr. Sawyer, who brutally whips his horse. Squire Gordon says:

> You have often driven that pony up to my place… it only shows the creature's memory and intelligence; how did he know that you were not going there again? but that has little to do with it. I must say, Mr Sawyer, that more unmanly, brutal treatment of a little pony it was never my painful lot to witness; and by giving way to such passions you injure your own character as much, nay more, than you injure your horse, and remember, we shall all have to be judged according to our works, whether they be towards man or towards beast. (Sewell 67)

Black Beauty's master is disgusted by the animal cruelty shown by Mr. Sawyer, revealing that he believes God will judge men based on how they treat humans *and* non-human animals. The invocation of religion, specifically Christianity, frames the maltreatment of animals as immoral and sinful. Squire Gordon argues that horses deserve fair treatment based on moral and religious grounds, attempting to convince Mr. Sawyer that Christ will judge him on how he treats all living animals, not only humans. This passage gives an example of a character who believes horses are conscious creatures, with memory and intelligence. Later in this section Squire Gordon asserts that "horses were intended to have their heads free, as free as men's are" (Sewell 68). In this section, Black Beauty's master argues against the use of bearing reins, which restrict the movement of horses and often cause injuries since horses usually cannot recover from a misstep with them on. Since horses are sentient beings with intelligence, the use of bearing reins is not only dangerous to the physical health of the horse, but unethical due to horses' mental capacities.

Black Beauty recounts his knowledge of human cruelty to animals, narrating his experiences and opinions. For example, Black Beauty once met a young horse who says:

> I used to turn and look at it—you see, with our blinkers on one can't see or understand what a thing is unless one looks round; and then my master always gave me a whipping, which of course made me start on, and did not make me less afraid. I think if he would have let me just look at things quietly, and see that there was nothing to hurt me, it would have been all right, and I should have got used to them. (Sewell 167)

Restriction of sensory experiences, with blinkers or bearing reins, are depicted as dangerous forms of animal cruelty. This relates to Smith's argument that an animal "intensely

experiences the world that [their] sensory experience produces in [them], something that it is like for [them] to be in the world" (238). These devices restrict sensory experiences, which are vital for animals to have meaningful experiences of the world, so they are depicted as inhumane and cruel.

Further, this novel contains many scenes in which Black Beauty is personally abused, using the reader's attachment to his character for the purpose of evoking empathy for all horses. One such scene begins with Black Beauty narrating:

> What I suffered with that [bearing] rein for four long months in my lady's carriage, it would be hard to describe; but I am quite sure that, had it lasted much longer, either my health or my temper would have given way. Before that, I never knew what it was to foam at the mouth, but now the action of the sharp bit on my tongue and jaw, and the constrained position of my head and my throat always caused me to froth at the mouth more or less… But it is just as unnatural for horses as for men to foam at the mouth: it is a sure sign of some discomfort, and should be attended to. Besides this, there was a pressure on my windpipe, which often made my breathing very uncomfortable; when I returned from work, my neck and chest were strained and painful, my mouth and tongue tender, and I felt worn and depressed. (Sewell 130-1)

Again, the bearing rein is framed as an immoral restriction of sensory freedom. In a passage meant to invoke empathy, Black Beauty describes the mental and physical anguish he endures at the hands of humans. Black Beauty implies that he could have lost his health or temper from this abuse, emphasizing that horses have minds worth being protected. Later in the narrative, Black Beauty is sold to a corn dealer and baker, and his carter, Jakes, treats him cruelly. Black Beauty recounts:

> Jakes, like the other carters, always had the bearing rein up, which prevented me from drawing easily, and by the time I had been there three or four months, I found the work telling very much on my strength. One day, I was loaded more than usual, and part of the road was a steep uphill: I used all my strength, but I could not get on, and was obliged continually to stop. This did not please my driver, and he laid his whip on badly… Again I started the heavy load, and struggled on a few yards; again the whip came down, and again I struggled forward. The pain of the great cart whip was sharp, but my mind was hurt quite as much as my poor sides. To be punished and abused when I was doing my very best was so hard, it took the heart out of me. A third time he was flogging me cruelly… (Sewell 260)

This passage is one of the most explicit examples of the cruelty Black Beauty experiences himself. Most of his previous owners and grooms have shown him some level of kindness, but this carter is solely interested in finishing his job, with no thought for Black Beauty's comfort or wellbeing. This scene occurs later in the narrative, after the reader has been given ample time to get to know Black Beauty and begin to identify with him. Further, this scene not only emphasizes Black Beauty's physical pain, but accentuates his emotional pain, using his sentience as an empathy-inducing strategy.

Although horses are depicted as emotionally aware of their experiences, they are still derogated compared to humans in the narrative. For example, Black Beauty's master, Squire Gordon, once says:

> God had given men reason, by which they could find out things for themselves, but He had given animals knowledge which did not depend on reason, and which was

> much more prompt and perfect in its way, and by which they had often saved the lives of men. (Sewell 73)

Horses' intellect is depicted as different from the intellect of humans. Although the word "perfect" is used to describe it, animal knowledge is represented as thoughtless and sub-competent. It falls into what Smith describes as without "mental states in the sense of propositional attitudes, and behavior is fully determined not by thought but by an automatic response to outside sensations" (234). Although Black Beauty is granted a consciousness in his narration, human characters still view his mind as purely an instinctual collection of sensory knowledge. Black Beauty even derogates his own capacity to form opinions about humans who do not treat horses empathetically, when he states, "I thought York might have stood up for his horses, but perhaps I am no judge" (Sewell 129). This places humans at the center of the narrative, as reasonable creatures who deserve to rule over horses. Although this text argues for the sympathetic treatment of working horses, it does not denounce the right of humans to rule over them, despite depictions of Black Beauty's sentient mind.

Finally, *Black Beauty* centers human characters through its narrative structure. For example, the novel is divided into chapters and parts based on who currently owns Black Beauty. In part one, chapter one's title is "My Early Home" and the final chapter of this part is entitled "The Parting." Further, in part three, chapter one begins with a horse fair when Black Beauty is sold to Jeremiah Barker. This structure illustrates that Black Beauty's ownership determines how he breaks up the main epochs of his life. Rather than understanding the events of his life based on his age or the relationships he has with other horses, Black Beauty narrates his life based on which human he is working for.

A Wild to Domesticated Animal Text

White Fang

In *White Fang*, Jack London uses description-driven language to try to access the first-hand experiences of a wolf pup. The following passage introduces White Fang, the animal protagonist of this text:

> Always, in the beginning, before his conscious life dawned, he had crawled toward the mouth of the cave… The light drew them [the wolf pups] as if they were plants; the chemistry of the life that composed them demanded the light as a necessity of being; and their little puppet-bodies crawled blindly and chemically, like tendrils of a vine. Later on, when each developed individuality and became personally conscious of impulses and desires, the attraction of the light increased. (London 78)

In this unconscious, chemical state, the passage attempts to see the world through the eyes of a newborn wolf. For example, it describes the mouth of the cave as a wall of light, since a wolf pup may not yet comprehend the meaning of an opening to the outside world. Further, it implies that White Fang is not much more than a "bio-machine capable of fulfilling a function for its survival as it receives sensory stimulation" (Smith 233). Thus, at the beginning of his life, White Fang only has zero-order intentionality. The tone is practical and unemotional, trying to capture sensory experiences of White Fang and create a believable picture of an emerging animal consciousness. Jack London depicts White Fang as a chemical being before the dawn of his conscious life. White Fang's wild wolf pup consciousness is differentiated from Enzo's, a domesticated puppy's, consciousness, illustrating his status as farther from humans and closer to plants. Animals are directly compared to plants in this passage. This comparison could illustrate a belief that, before the conscious mind, or higher

orders of intentionality, develops, wild animals and plants are not very different–both driven by unconscious instincts. This passage attempts to convince readers that wolf pups, at the beginning of their lives, do not have conscious minds, only unconscious impulses, but that, at some point in the first few weeks of life, a wolf pup's consciousness appears. Further, the word "conscious" is repeated twice in the passage. This repetition is important for the narrative, since White Fang is given his own individuality later in the story. Additionally, the word "conscious" has somewhat of a double meaning–it could mean either awake or noticing events with controlled thoughts.

As a cub, White Fang's conscious mind is less anthropomorphized than the minds of Enzo or Black Beauty:

> In fact, the gray cub was not given to thinking–at least, to the kind of thinking customary of men. His brain worked in dim ways. Yet his conclusions were as sharp and distinct as those achieved by men. He had a method of accepting things, without questioning the why and wherefore. In reality, this was the act of classification. He was never disturbed over *why* a thing happened. *How* it happened was sufficient for him. (London 81)

In this passage, White Fang is granted first-order intentionality, "the capacity of an organism to represent external phenomena in the mind" (Smith 234). Unlike Enzo and Black Beauty, who attain second-order intentionality, the ability to know that "one has thoughts that govern behavior," White Fang is only given a limited anthropomorphized consciousness (Smith 235). The fact that White Fang is only able to create shallow depictions of sensory phenomena at this point in the novel illustrates his lesser cognitive capacities as compared to

Enzo and Black Beauty. Even though Enzo and Black Beauty's consciousnesses often borrow from human understandings, White Fang is not yet even given this ability.

White Fang gains second-order intentionality when he is given more complex human emotions. For example, when White Fang is burned on his nose and tongue, he is laughed at by a human named Gray Beaver:

> It was the worst hurt he had ever known. Both nose and tongue had been scorched by the live thing, sun-colored, that had grown up under Gray Beaver's hands. He cried and cried interminably, and every fresh wail was greeted by bursts of laughter on the part of the man-animals… And then shame came to him. He knew laughter and the meaning of it. It is not given us to know how some animals know laughter, and know when they are being laughed at; but it was this same way that White Fang knew it.
>
> And he felt shame that the man-animals should be laughing at him. (London 127)

The idea of an animal knowing shame feels innately human, since animals are not typically believed to have this capacity. Further, this passage both grants White Fang a complex understanding of a human reaction, laughter, while belittling his understanding of the event. It paints White Fang as a pitiful, ignorant creature who does not understand fire and deserves human laughter, rather than sympathy, when he is in pain. Although White Fang is described as exceptional and "intelligent beyond the average of his kind," the text still diminishes his consciousness to partially anthropomorphized, but mostly animalistic descriptions (London 154). London mostly avoids folk-tale anthropomorphism and, at the same time, is hesitant to use complex anthropomorphism. Thus, the objectivity of this novel limits the reader's capacity to empathize with White Fang.

Although this novel centers White Fang's experience with his mother in the wild at the beginning of his section of the narrative, as the text progresses, White Fang's existence begins to depend more strongly on the human characters. After White Fang escapes the village:

> A tree, contracting in the cool of the night, made a loud noise. It was directly above him. He yelped in his fright. A panic seized him, and he ran madly toward the village. He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man. (London 152)

After this, he wildly attempts to find the men "upon whom he was now dependent" and chooses to live the rest of his life in the companionship of men (London 157). This is the moment in the text when the reader notices the shift in White Fang from wild to domesticated. Like *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, *White Fang* functions as a wish-fulfillment text for readers. Since White Fang *chooses* domestication and wants to live with humans, it justifies the domestication process and reassures dog owners that their pets do enjoy living with them.

White Fang's domestication and love for humans increases throughout the narrative. His final master, Weedon Scott, fully cements White Fang's domestication:

> Because of White Fang's very great love, a cuff from the master hurt him far more than any beating Gray Beaver or Beauty Smith had ever given him. They had hurt only the flesh of him; beneath the flesh the spirit had still raged, splendid and invincible. But with the master the cuff was always too light to hurt the flesh. Yet it went deeper. It was an expression of the master's disapproval, and White Fang's spirit wilted under it. (London 295)

Due to White Fang's overpowering love for his master, physical punishment becomes more emotionally, than physically, hurtful. This passage, although granting White Fang a humanized emotional state, again uses terminology typically associated with plants. The word "wilted" is often used when describing flowers or other plants that have drooped due to negative external circumstances, like lack of water or sunlight. This implies that White Fang's master is the life-giver in his existence, around whom White Fang revolves. His spirit depends upon the regard of his master, giving humans a critical role in the narrative. Therefore, White Fang's love of and devotion to humans throughout the narrative place humans at the center of the text, like in the other domesticated animal texts, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* and *Black Beauty*.

Wild Animal Texts

The Bees

The Bees, by Laline Paull, is narrated in the third person by sanitation worker bee protagonist Flora 717, who is abnormal compared to the rest of her kin. Flora's most notable difference is that, unlike any of the other sanitation workers, she can speak. Instead of being killed due to her differences, Flora moves through the ranks of bee society, eventually breaking the most sacred law, that "*Only the Queen may breed*" (Paull 105, emphasis in original). This story tracks the entire life of Flora 717, as she struggles under the hive's dictatorial regime of the Sage priestesses and the fertility police.

The Bees attempts to create a realistic portrayal of bee consciousness by focusing on how a bee might understand sensory experiences. Flora is born with a purely instinctual understanding of life but is more complexly anthropomorphized as her level of intentional increases with age. Once, when Flora gets lost on a forage:

> Flora searched the air for the smallest scent of Holy Mother and scanned down at the foreign shapes and colors below her to try to reorient herself. Massive green and beige fields dulled the air with their vast, monotonous odor and she veered away to glean any clue to home. With a surge of relief she picked up the scent of the orchard and then of her sisters–never more beautiful… she saw foragers streaming back through the orchard, racing for the landing board. A new scent mixed with the homecoming marker, and as Flora began her descent her venom sac swelled hard in her belly and her dagger unsheathed. The code was alarm, and the hive was under attack. (Paull 58)

Flora uses scent almost exclusively to orient herself within her environment and glean meaning from her sensory experiences. For example, once she picks up the scent of her hive, she feels relief. This gives her second-order intentionality, since she has conscious internal states that give meaning to her sensory experiences. Although feeling relief could be categorized as anthropomorphism, it would be speciesist to assume that humans are the only creatures who are capable of this mental state. Thus, complex anthropomorphism is used in this story to construct a likeable bee protagonist who encourages human empathy.

In *The Bees*, humans appear only three times. The story opens with a prologue in which human characters discuss selling an old orchard, the owner deciding not to sell yet due to the presence of a beehive. In the middle of the text, an "old man in a red dressing gown and bare feet" disturbs the hive and steals a wall of "golden wealth" from the bee's Treasury (Paull 179). The last time humans are depicted is in the epilogue, when the owners of the orchard find out that the bees have abandoned their hive. The humans center themselves in this section of the narrative, believing the hive left because their beekeeper died. The son of

the beekeeper exclaims, "'Dad! They've gone; they went with him!'" (Paull 338). This illustrates the idea that humans believe that they are the center of the universe and are vital for the survival of other species. There is an external narrator for the prologue and epilogue, who portrays humans in a positive light, but when a human appears in the middle of the narrative, they are described in Flora's narration. However, despite their limited appearances in the story, *The Bees* only partially succeeds in decentering humans, because it uses humans as a framing mechanism for the narrative, relies on common young adult dystopian fiction tropes, and falls back into the tradition of using animals as metaphors for political issues. However, I will first discuss how *The Bees* succeeds in decentering humans–through the engines of the story and through language.

The true meat of the text mostly succeeds in decentering humans, depicting the consciousness of a single bee, Flora 717. The story is driven by events that bees may experience, including collecting pollen, getting attacked by enemies such as wasps or mice, and forming a cluster to stay warm during the winter. Language is also used to decenter humans in *The Bees*. This text creates terminology that is innately not-human. For example, terms such as "kin-sisters," "floor code," "kin-scents," and "Flow," among many others, are used as worldbuilding tools in this text (Paull 6, 8, 19). The unique language in this text allows the reader to become immersed in a world in which bees understand life in the hive with complex emotions.

However, the framing of this story complicates the decentering of humans. Using humans to frame Flora's story makes it more accessible to human readers. Instead of beginning in the hive, the framing orients the reader to the location of the hive and gives examples of humans who are sympathetic to bees. For example, when the owner of the

orchard decides not to sell his property yet due to the presence of the hive, this gives human readers an exemplar of an empathetic human. Further, when talking about the bees who live in this beehive, he reveals, "'my father… calls them his girls" (Paull 1). To call bees "girls" illustrates how the human characters contribute to the anthropomorphism in this story. This way of alluding to bees is both personal and informal, suggesting a connection between the speaker's father and the bees in his orchard.

The publisher's summary[1] for *The Bees* begins, "*The Handmaid's Tale* meets *The Hunger Games* in this brilliantly imagined debut" (n.p.). This is an apt description of this text, which relies on human dystopian fiction tropes. *The Bees* reads as a typical young adult dystopian fiction novel, with a protagonist who is exceptional compared to others and who overthrows an oppressive collective. The only difference is that this protagonist is a bee. Flora uses her individuality to create a new destiny for herself within the hive. This individualistic storyline goes against the idea of a collective beehive consciousness. This single bee protagonist is anthropomorphized in the sense that she is given individuality within the collective.

Further, the narrative structure is concerned with human political questions. I will argue against a quotation from NPR:

> Working in a tradition of anthropomorphized animal fables such as *Animal Farm* and *Watership Down,* Paull distinguishes herself: instead of using the rhythms and mores of animals as a central metaphor for political or social allegory, *The Bees* begins and ends with the hive, effectively dramatizing its lifecycle without the sound of any one axe grinding in the background. (El Mohtar n.p.)

First, as I have just discussed, this text notably does *not* begin and end with the hive, instead beginning and ending with human commentary about the hive. Next, *The Bees* contains a very human political agenda, although possibly not as obvious as that in Orwell's *Animal Farm*. This story mirrors the individualistic viewpoint that collectivist government structures are oppressive and corrupt. *The Bees* ultimately fails at decentering humans and telling a story purely about how bees experience the world, since Flora, although situated within the complexities of hive life, can be seen as merely a bee version of a human dystopian heroine.

The White Bone

The White Bone, by Barbara Gowdy, is more successful than *The Bees* in decentering humans. Humans, although appearing more throughout the narrative, are only referenced through the eyes of the elephant protagonists. The "current breed" of humans is definitively painted in a negative light: as murderous elephant poachers. For example, after seeing an airplane, elephant protagonist Tall Time, narrates:

> In the guts of both [types of planes] are humans. Slaughterers–a new and stunningly voracious generation. It's the tusks they want, sometimes the feet. Almost always they abandon the torso but once in a while they smoke the flesh at fire clearings and then carry it elsewhere, strewing the bones… At the fire clearings the humans leave behind the rough wooden skeletons upon which they draped the flesh and hide of the creature they had just torn from its own perfect skeleton. (Gowdy 56)

This descriptive summary of how humans murder and use elephants paints humans as the antagonists of this narrative. Even though being antagonists does not automatically decenter humans, it is interesting to note that the elephants who are "mind-talkers" can communicate with all living creatures except humans, insects, and snakes. "Mind-talkers" will be discussed

further as an element of elephant culture in chapter three, but this term means that elephants with this gift can communicate with other animals by listening to and responding in their minds. Excluding humans from animals with which elephants can communicate implies that human consciousness is less developed, less important, or less morally accessible than other animal consciousnesses.

As in *The Bees*, language is used in *The White Bone* to distance human readers from typical human descriptive vocabulary. This novel includes an extensive glossary of the unique terms the elephants use throughout the narrative. These terms include “Memory night” meaning a particularly starry night, “Domain” meaning planet Earth, and “Hindlegger” meaning human being (Gowdy xiii-xviii). Having a separate name for humans illustrates that their place in the narrative is not a place of primacy, since they are described only in elephant terminology.

Further, the storyline of *The White Bone* is not driven by humans *and* is not shaped by recognizable human story tropes. *The White Bone*, in a manner more similar to *Watership Down* than *The Bees*, tells a story of several families of elephants living on the African savanna. The elephants in this story are complexly anthropomorphized, with human-like personalities, and are depicted within a unique elephant culture, which includes a religion that I will discuss in depth later in this analysis. This complex anthropomorphism is used to invoke empathy for elephants among human readers. Based on a review by Judy Doenges from *The Seattle Times*, it seems to have succeeded in this aim. Doenges states, “Through the course of *The White Bone* we come to care about the elephants as much as we would humans” (n.p.). This assertion illustrates that, although human readers are most disposed to

empathize with human characters, this novel succeeds in creating elephant characters worthy of human empathy.

Protagonist Mud does not have a fully developed sense of self immediately after birth. The text narrates, “Mud bawled, thinking that *she* was that calf, its pink ears, its frenzy” (Gowdy 11, emphasis in original). Mud is trapped under her mother but believes another calf is herself. Thus, like White Fang, Mud is not born with a consciousness complex enough to understand everything about herself and her surroundings. However, adult elephants, including a more grown-up Mud, are granted second-order intentionality in the text, emphasizing the importance of elephants’ memory. This emphasis on memory is not necessarily anthropomorphizing, because humans are not the only creatures with a capacity for memory. Because elephants are sentient and intelligent life forms, it makes sense for a narrative to endow elephants with complex abilities, such as detailed memory processes. Further, humans are not the only creatures whose behavior is driven by intention and emotion (Morris et al. 162). Therefore, the use of memory in *The White Bone* realistically expands the reader's understanding of what an elephant’s consciousness might look like. Memory is brought up and emphasized early in the novel:

> Mud would remember her first hours of life second for second, both as the coherent sequence of events into which her older mind would gradually translate them and as the blare of images, sounds and smells they were at the time, when everything outside of herself seemed to be the incarnation of everything she sensed. (Gowdy 11)

Not only is memory highly relevant to the elephant protagonists in this novel, but “they [elephants] *are* memory” (Gowdy 1, emphasis in original). Sensory experiences guide their memories, illustrating, again, the importance of sensations as the guiding factor for animal

experiences, as I discussed earlier in my analysis of *White Fang*. The "images, sounds and smells" are emphasized as the most important components of Mud's recollection of this time and as the basis for the meaning Mud attaches to it. Not only do senses guide how memories are remembered and interpreted but influence how elephants understand the health of other elephants. For example, when Mud meets the She-D matriarch, She-Demands, the third-person narrator reveals, "Temporin leaks down her face, and respectfully Mud touches the exudate and then slips her trunk into the old cow's mouth but quickly withdraws at the stench of despair and decaying molars" (Gowdy 37). Mud's sense of smell characterizes how she determines the mental and physical state of She-Demands. Therefore, sensory experiences guide the perceptions of the elephant characters in *The White Bone* and give meaning to their knowledge of the world, in a less human-like and more distinctly elephant-like manner.

"The Hillside"

"The Hillside," by Jane Smiley, openly denigrates humans as compared to other animals. From the perspective of High Note, a young wild horse with second-order intentionality, humans are painted as destructive, selfish creatures who are unnecessary to the new world, which is run by an animal government called the Congress of Animals. However, readers are urged to sympathize with some of the humans in the story. For example, readers may sympathize with an old woman who serves as the human advocate during the trial in which humans are accused of stealing fire. This trial is part of a larger case; the Congress of Animals believes all humans should be executed due to their past crimes against the planet, which include "felling entire forests; terminating the existence of whole groups of animals…; [and] poisoning land, sea, and air" (Smiley 3). This woman, as translated by a raven, states:

> Humans have made many mistakes but there were always humans who disagreed with those mistakes and tried to prevent them. Our greatest error may have been bringing on the age of fire, but this, too, many humans tried to stop… We are heartily sorry for our misdeeds and share your horror of the destruction we have left in our wake. We ask for your mercy. (Smiley 6)

This human's acknowledgement of the past wrongdoings of her species encourages readers to sympathize with her plight, even if they are not encouraged to sympathize with all humans. For example, young human males are vilified in this text more than human females. The human advocate even states, "We acknowledge that our young men are often foolish and aggressive, but please do not let that tell against the rest of us" (Smiley 7).

Animals are centered as protagonists in this narrative, and this short story only shows humans as seen through the eyes of High Note. However, humans are not decentered. The narrative plot of "The Hillside" openly revolves around humans, unlike the plots of *The White Bone* or *The Bees*. However, for this story, decentering humans is not the aim, despite its focus on wild animals. "The Hillside," through centering both humans and animals as sentient beings, can comment on the real-life issues between humans and animals that might surface if animals were able to communicate with humans. Animals in this text are complexly anthropomorphized, given language and their own governmental structure, for the purpose of addressing important ethical questions about the health of the planet.

The role of humans in this text is further complicated by High Note's curiosity about and growing affection for a human female she names Plucky. High Note feels "a mysterious sense of protectiveness" toward Plucky and shows mercy for her throughout the text (Smiley 9). Further, High Note believes that "humans were far more complex than most animals gave

them credit for" (Smiley 1). This horse-human connection will be discussed further in a later chapter, implying that there is a deep bond between human females and horses that continues to exist even when horses are no longer domesticated. The fact that "everyone recoiled from the humans but the horses" suggests that horses have the strongest connection to humans of all non-human animals.

Like Enzo in *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, High Note directly addresses the process of domestication:

> What the older horses kept secret from the other animals was equine collaboration. To reveal that horses had been domesticated by humans back in mythic times was courting death. Wolves and cats were the accepted model—wolves insisted they had executed all the collaborators formerly known as dogs, and cats swore that they had pretended to be domesticated to protect themselves—any cat who lived with a human did so under duress, and all cats escaped whenever they could… Horses were five times the size of even old-style humans, and so why had they cooperated? (Smiley 7-8)

This passage is interesting to consider, because it shows a previously domesticated but now wild animal describing the history of domestication of animals by humans. The only other text that includes an explicit animal opinion about domestication practices is *The Art of Racing in the Rain* in which Enzo sees domestication as a fear-based practice used to ensure that dogs do not become superior to men. High Note's take on domestication diverges from this idea–she is confused about how horses were domesticated due to their larger size. This implies that High Note believes domestication must be a voluntary process, that animals are able to accept or reject. This relates to how domestication works for White Fang, who

chooses to be domesticated even after he escapes from the human camp. It is interesting to note that Enzo, in a domesticated animal text that glorifies humans, sees domestication in the most negative light of all: as a way for humans to control the evolutionary path of dogs.

"The Hillside" and *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, although both texts with animal narrators that center humans, have different motivations and center humans in very different ways. *The Art of Racing in the Rain* depicts Enzo as the perfect dog who idolizes humans and devotes his life to his human family. Enzo sees humanity as the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder due to their capacity for speech and language. High Note, however, is drawn to humans not out of admiration, but out of curiosity. High Note is confused by the past primacy of humans and does not have a desire to be human, possibly because she already has the capacity for language and interspecies communication in her current form. While Enzo is content to be the obedient pet of a human, High Note would be happier to have a human as a pet.

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Depending on whether the animal narrator or protagonist is categorized as domesticated or wild, texts make different choices regarding anthropomorphism and intentionality development. Most texts, excluding "The Hillside," include descriptions of the animal narrators and protagonists near the beginning of their lives. Some seem to be born with first- or second-order intentionality, while others need to develop their intentionality throughout the course of the text. The domesticated animal narrators are born with higher levels of intentionality than most wild animal narrators, including White Fang, Flora 717, and Mud, who are born with zero- or first-order intentionality. Further, complex anthropomorphism is more emphasized for wild animal narrators. Although the narrators of

Black Beauty and *The Art of Racing in the Rain* are complexly anthropomorphized, they are anthropomorphized in a very anthropocentric manner, in a way that either resembles humans or centers humans. The more an animal is presented as a human figure, the more there is to say about how that presentation works in terms of anthropomorphism. Therefore, in this chapter, the domesticated animal texts were given more analysis and explanation. However, in the next chapter, which will focus on animal culture and religion, the wild animal texts portray much more developed animal cultures, and therefore, will be given more space.

Chapter 3: Animal Religion, Culture, and Naming Practices

In texts with animal narrators or third-person omniscient/limited-omniscient narrators that focus on animal minds, worldbuilding is an important feature. In this chapter, I will consider how religion, culture, and naming work in texts with domesticated, wild to domesticated, and wild animal protagonists. When authors anthropomorphize animal narrators, they often develop animal culture and religion. I have found that wild animal narrator cultures do not always fit into human cultural models, since this might be less believable. Further, I will argue that as the level of human-centeredness decreases, animal religions and culture will focus less on laws. It can be seen as a form of anthropomorphism to believe that animal religions will inevitably rely on laws as many human religions do.

As I spent more time discussing the domesticated animal texts in chapter two, chapter three will devote more time to the wild animal texts. I will begin by discussing the role of religion in *The White Bone*, *The Bees*, "The Hillside," *White Fang*, *Black Beauty*, and *The Art of Racing in the Rain*. In the second section of this chapter, I will discuss how culture works in texts with animal narrators more broadly, focusing on naming practices as a vital element of culture.

Religion

The White Bone

In *The White Bone*, the elephant protagonists have a developed matriarchal religion, including beliefs about what happens to elephants, humans, and other animals after death:

> Sky cows are dead cows who have ascended to the sky to join the family of the She. A star is the shine of a sky cow's tusk. When stars fall it is because sky cows are

> dropping out of the family of the She and into The Eternal Shoreless Water, where they will bloat and drift insensible among the calves and dead bulls, all of whom fall into The Eternal Shoreless Water directly from this life, the hard truth being that not even newborn calves are granted a spell of bliss in the company of the She. (Gowdy 31)

This is one of the first passages in *The White Bone* that elaborates on the spiritual beliefs of the elephant protagonists. Female elephants, called cows, are the only elephants who ascend into space to become stars and join "the She." The She is a god-like figure– "the first elephant and the mother of all elephants" (Gowdy xvi). In contrast to this blissful union with the She, male elephants, called bulls, calves who have not yet gotten their cow name, and tuskless cows fall into "The Eternal Shoreless Water," described in the text as oblivion.

Elephant protagonist Mud is saddened by the fact that tuskless cows cannot join the She. After the slaughter of many elephants in the She-D family, including the family's matriarch, She-Demands, it is revealed: "For this is the real atrocity. Without at least one tusk attached to her skull, even the great She-Demands cannot ascend to the sky herd of the She" (Gowdy 88). This detail makes elephant poaching by humans even more atrocious, because it takes away the possibility of a blissful union with the She after death. In addition to taking the earthly lives of elephants, the real purpose of elephant poaching is the ivory trade, which involves stealing the most sacred part of the elephant: their tusks. This element of elephant religion rebukes the ivory trade by increasing empathy for elephants as spiritual creatures.

Later passages in the text feature male elephants, who cannot join the family of the She due to their gender, discussing religious beliefs. In one conversation between bulls Tall Time and Torrent about their afterlives, Torrent states, "'Who you are is the only thing you

can’t forget. It is all you have to take into the hereafter, and if you don’t have it, you eventually crumble and become the silt at the bottom of The Eternal Shoreless Water, that’s my belief’” (Gowdy 148-9). This belief illustrates that bulls attempt to see their afterlife positively. Even though they will not get to join the herd of the She, they will still have their earthly memories as they float in The Eternal Shoreless Water. This places memory back at the center of *The White Bone*, not only as a feature of cultural significance, but as a hope-giving component of the elephant’s religion. Further, it is important to note that gender is the only factor that bars bulls from joining the family of the She. Due to the matriarchal nature of elephant families, it makes sense that bulls are excluded from this family. As bulls leave their families and live alone or with a few other bulls, they are not included in the female-only afterlife.

In addition to beliefs about where elephants go after death, the elephant religion developed in *The White Bone* includes beliefs about the fate of deceased humans and other animals. The narrator notes, “The dust funnels off, and Mud takes this to be a manifestation of the spirit flying to that crowded mysterious place (The Other Domain) where all deceased creatures, aside from her own kind and humans, end up” (Gowdy 92). Humans and elephants are separated from all other animals according to the elephants’ religion since they are the only two creatures who do not end up in “The Other Domain.” Further, the elephants believe in a figure named Rogue, who is the “Son of the She; creator of all creatures except human beings and elephants” (Gowdy xvi). This frames human beings and elephants as exceptional as compared to all other creatures, as the only two species created by the She.

Humans, although viewed as distinct from most other animals, do not go to the same place as deceased elephants after death. They end up in a place called the Fissure, which is

described as “The place of perdition under the Earth where deceased human beings go” (Gowdy xiv). The elephant religion illustrates how humans are given a place of importance in the novel as dangerous antagonists without being centered. Humans are inevitably a part of elephant life, but they are positioned below elephants in the narrative.

Instead of only including an elephant religion, *The White Bone* incorporates the idea that many animals have religious beliefs. Further, this novel deliberately leaves out the fact that humans have religions. The detailed information about animal religious beliefs encourages readers to see each animal species as unique and important. Date Bed, the She-S’s mind-talker, learns about the spiritual beliefs of other animals throughout the course of her life. The first non-elephant animal religion discussed in the text is the religion of eagles:

> He then told her about guardians, or spirit twins. At the hatching of every martial eagle there is the hatching of a spirit twin whose fate determines the eagle’s fate. The twin lives underwater and feeds on fish and carcasses, but otherwise the events of his life are identical to the eagle’s… Frequent sightings of the spirit twin are essential. Without these contacts the twin loses faith in his own existence and begins to wane and act carelessly, and if he should deteriorate, so will the eagle. (Gowdy 167)

This passage illustrates that animals, like humans, use religion to explain the unexplainable– in this case, reflections. However, unlike many human religions, the animal religions discussed so far do not revolve around laws. They are unique, playing into ideas that seem like they would be important to animals. For example, since eagles often fly over bodies of water, they see their reflections and need to make sense of this “spirit twin.” Thus, sensory experiences are seen characterizing the development of animal religions in *The White Bone*.

This text also includes Date Bed learning about the beliefs of rhinos:

> Date Bed has heard about this, how rhinos believe that after an interval of anywhere from ten to thirty days the breath returns from wherever the spirit has gone. For an hour or so it lingers above the place where the death occurred, and if a female rhino happens to inhale the breath she will one day give birth to a calf in whom some portion of the spirit of the deceased is preserved. (Gowdy 176)

Like females in the elephant religion, female rhinos are also given special abilities and glorified within the rhino religion. It is interesting that several of the animal religions detailed in *The White Bone* have many matriarchal elements, since this further divides them from most human religions, which give power to men. The depiction of these animal religions is a tool used in *The White Bone* to reduce folk-tale anthropomorphism and give animal species individual, and collective, values and beliefs which provoke empathy in the human reader.

The Bees

Laline Paull creates a detailed bee culture in *The Bees*, including a religion, which revolves around worshiping the queen bee. Religion is intertwined throughout the entire text, with the bees having sacraments, holy laws, and prayers. Religious practices are relevant in the bees' everyday lives and appear in almost every chapter of the text. The main sacrament celebrated daily throughout the hive is called "Devotion." This is a tradition in which the bees in the hive are made to feel the love of the queen bee and become calm and often euphoric. Flora explains, "Sister Teasel's voice continued above her and she knew that when the comb shivered, the divine fragrance that rose up from it was the Queen's Love, and that this was the sacrament of Devotion" (Paull 19). Much of bee society in this text revolves around scent, so it makes sense that religious sacraments would do so also. Devotion, or the

scent of the “Queen’s Love,” is used in the text to reassure the bees and even give forgiveness. Flora narrates:

> The Queen let her mantle open so that the scent of Devotion flowed stronger, and the bees sank to their knees in gratitude. A soft vibration rose up through the comb, a smooth rhythmic wave traveling back and forth across the Dance Hall, lifting and rocking them as if Holy Mother carried them all in her arms. She walked among them with her wings spread wide, and each sister felt the blanket of forgiveness settle upon her as she breathed in her Mother’s Love. (Paull 212-3)

Capitalization is used in this passage to denote what is holy or divine, including “Holy Mother,” “Queen,” “Devotion,” and “Mother’s Love.” The capitalization of these words or phrases, which are not typically capitalized in the English language, signals to the reader that these things are important elements of bee religion and society. Further, capitalization is a common trope of early 21st century dystopian novels, again exemplifying how *The Bees* is modeled on novels with human protagonists.

Unlike in *The White Bone*, religion in *The Bees* is intertwined with politics. Laws, specifically, are vital within the bee religion and must be obeyed (or risk the wrath of the fertility police). For example, the most important law in bee society is: “*Only the Queen may breed*. That was the first law of life, so holy it needed no place in prayer for it was a rule literally incarnate in every sister’s body” (Paull 105, emphasis in original). Not only is this a societal or governmental law, but it is a “holy” law, associated with the bee religion of worshiping the queen. Additionally, the phrase “*Accept, Obey, and Serve*” is repeated by the bees throughout the text illustrating the cultural importance of lawful control (Paull 23, emphasis in original).

It is interesting to note that the ruling kin group of the beehive is determined by the kin of the queen bee, around whom the religion revolves. In this case, the queen bee came from the kin called Sage. Due to the Sage's genetic similarity to the queen, they are called "priestesses" and have power over the other bees in the hive, as in a governmental power structure. Flora questions the basis of their rule. She "tried to remember which scripture ordained the Sage the power of life and death. It was not in the Catechism, nor the prayer tiles, nor could she recall it from the Queen's Library–but it must surely exist, for their rule was law" (Paull 224). Since the Sage hold power in the hive, Flora assumes it must be religiously ordained.

Like the elephants in *The White Bone*, the bees' religion is notably matriarchal. The queen bee is to the bees as the She is to the elephants, a god and mother to them all. This focus on motherhood as holy and god-like relates to how bees are portrayed in popular culture, as a united army which revolves around a single female. Next, the bee religion includes beliefs about life after death for bees. For example, it is stated, "We fearlessly protect Holy Mother, for we know *From Death comes Life Eternal"* (Paull 99, emphasis in original). Bees are taught to defend the queen bee fearlessly without considering death, because they believe in an afterlife. However, unlike in *The White Bone*, who is admitted into this afterlife is not specified, implying that all bees, regardless of gender, are welcomed into eternal life after death if they serve the queen.

The religious and spiritual beliefs detailed in *The Bees* are more recognizably human than those included in *The White Bone*. Specifically, the religion of the bees is evidently modeled on the human religion of Catholicism. This is seen explicitly in the main prayer repeated throughout *The Bees*. This prayer is entitled the "Queen's Prayer," and begins, "*Our*

Mother, who art in labor… 'Hallowed be Thy Womb'" (Paull 155, emphasis in original). This prayer is very similar to the "Lord's Prayer" in Catholicism, which begins, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Browning, ed. n.p.). As the Lord's prayer glorifies the religious figure "God the Father," the Queen's prayer glorifies the mother of all bees in the hive. A main difference between the bee religion and Catholicism revolves around the issue of gender. Specifically, the bee religion is matriarchal, with female priestesses instead of male priests, as seen in Catholicism. Further, there is a female, corporal goddess as opposed to a male, cerebral God. The fact that the bees in *The Bees* are more anthropomorphized than the elephants in *The White Bone* is reflected by the religions of each. The bees' religion, although relating to the actual presence of a "queen bee" in beehives, draws from common human religious tropes and structures, following a strict, law-governed religious system.

"The Hillside"

The animals in "The Hillside" do not appear to adhere to any specific religion, but like *The Bees*, the animals are ruled by a system of laws. There is a strong, law-based governmental structure made up of many species of animals. The main plot of the text (whether or not humans should be eliminated) is decided by this authority, known as the Congress of Animals. High Note, the horse protagonist of the story, narrates:

> The inquiry was part of a larger case: the Congress of Animals (representing not only bears, cats, horses, and rats, which High Note had seen, but also gorillas, bison, antelopes, crocodiles, and other animals that High Note had never seen) had declared that humans, as a danger to the planet, must be exterminated once and for all, no exceptions. (Smiley 3-4)

In this text, the government is given a god-like role: the right to choose who has a right to live or die. Laws are very important in this text and apply to all species of animals, rather than just a single species, as seen in *The Bees*. Additionally, this government is established during an imagined time after the age of human dominance, or the Anthropocene. Timothy Clark argues, “The Anthropocene… underline[s] the status of humans as managers of nature. In others, however, it clearly questions any dogmatic assertion of the human/animal difference” (31). “The Hillside” overtly questions the right of humans not only to have dominance over nature, but to be allowed to survive at all due to their past devastation of the natural world. Smiley seems to be arguing that animals are not inferior to humans, but fully capable of working together to protect planet Earth.

Many animals on the hillside participate in the Congress of Animals, and there are many divisions, including the “behavior bureaucracy.” For example:

> She [High Note] looked around, as Plucky [a human female] had, and saw no horses or humans and also no rats, whose job was to observe animal behavior and report misdemeanors to the behavior bureaucracy, run by the foxes and overseen by the wolves. (Smiley 11)

The Congress of Animals is a powerful force which must be obeyed by the animals who live on the hillside. However, the Congress of Animals is supervised by a higher governmental structure known as the Central Congress, whose job it is to make the final decision about the fate of humans (Smiley 9). When the Central Congress’ judgment comes back in favor of eliminating humans, the Congress of Animals is able to implement the decision how they see fit. After humans become extinct without animal intervention, High Note narrates, “It was generally accepted in the valley that their chosen strategy had been a success, a good way of

following the orders of the Central Congress but at the same time maintaining the valley's independence and unique characteristics" (Smiley 18). The multiple levels of government mirror how the American government works, with a national level and state level.

Although this text condemns humans and gives voices and power to non-human animals, the law-governed regime of the animals mirrors a real human government. Adherence to laws is typical of human governments, illustrating how the government depicted in "The Hillside" is an anthropomorphic iteration of a human government. Unlike many texts featuring animals, "The Hillside" is an example of a text not "contaminated by a destructive anthropocentrism, that is, the assumption that it is only in relation to human beings that anything else acquires value" (Clark 14). However, unlike other wild animal texts, the goal of "The Hillside" is not to give animals a unique culture or religion. Instead, this text strives to show the complete inverse of the society we currently live in: animals with government and humans without. This text revolves around the question of whether animals and humans can coexist, ultimately deciding that humans do not have as much value as other animals.

White Fang

White Fang's religion revolves around men. Even though, like *The White Bone*, it does not resemble a human religion, it places humans at the center as gods. White Fang sees men as gods because of their control over inanimate objects. The third-person narrator observes:

> He could now see the man-animals driving back the dogs with clubs and stones, defending him, saving him from the savage teeth of his kind that somehow was not his kind. And though there was no reason in his brain for a clear conception of so

> abstract a thing as justice, nevertheless, in his own way, he felt the justice of the man-animals, and he knew them for what they were–makers of law and executors of law. Also, he appreciated the power with which they administered the law. Unlike any animals he had ever encountered, they did not bite nor claw. They enforced their live strength with the power of dead things… To his mind this was power unusual, power inconceivable and beyond the natural, power that was god-like. (London 121)

In this passage, the gods of White Fang are described as "makers and executors of law," illustrating the religion-laws connection as seen in *The Bees* (London 121). This implies that White Fang's religion, as founded on laws, is more anthropomorphized due to the linkage of laws and religion. White Fang's religion/devotion to humans grows throughout the text, with White Fang seeing humans more and more as gods:

> The more he came to know them, the more they vindicated their superiority, the more they displayed their mysterious powers, the greater loomed their god-likeness… the wolf and the wild dog that have come in to the fire find their gods in living flesh, solid to the touch, occupying earth-space and requiring time for the accomplishment of their ends and their existence. No effort of faith is necessary to believe in such a god; no effort of will can possibly induce disbelief in such a god. There it stands, on its two hind-legs, club in hand, immensely potential, passionate and wrathful and loving, god and mystery and power all wrapped up and around by flesh… (London 130-1)

Like the queen bee in *The Bees*, White Fang's gods exist in his same material world. This religion rejects the common human religious notion of gods being immaterial and supernatural. He sees human gods as vindictive and punishing due to his actual experiences.

Further, White Fang does not need to believe in something he cannot see but develops a religion to explain the miracles he does see. He does not understand how humans control "dead things," so he develops a religion to explain what, to him, is unexplainable and unnatural, as eagles do in *The White Bone* (London 121).

White Fang makes a distinction between human gods based on race–with the white-skinned gods being superior due to their perceived greater power over nature:

> Twenty-four hours had passed since he had slashed open the hand that was now bandaged and held up by a sling to keep the blood out of it… He had committed what was to him sacrilege, sunk his fangs into the holy flesh of a god, and of a white-skinned superior god at that. In the nature of things, and of intercourse with gods, something terrible awaited him. (London 249)

This passage illustrates the extent to which humans influence White Fang's worldview–he is even encoding human racism in his human-centered religion. He is so susceptible to the power of human gods, that he picks up on and reflects the effects of human racism.

Black Beauty

The horses in *Black Beauty* adhere to Christian beliefs and values prevalent in Victorian era England. Horses are depicted as pious creatures who believe in the Christian God. Horse character Sir Oliver, when arguing against animal cruelty, reveals that these acts are committed "'for fashion! if you know what that means; there was not a well-bred young horse in my time that had not his tail docked in that shameful way, just as if the good God that made us did not know what we wanted and what looked best'" (Sewell 59-60). Animal cruelty is framed as disrespecting God's creation in this quotation.

Religion is used to invoke empathy for animals by including them as God's creatures. Sir Oliver questions, "'Why don't they cut their own children's ears into points to make them look sharp? Why don't they cut the end off their noses to make them look plucky? One would be just as sensible as the other. What right have they to torment and disfigure God's creatures?'" (Sewell 61). This passage implies that there is no difference between docking a dog's tail or shearing its ears into points and doing the same acts to human children. This section is used to create empathy for non-human animals, while still centering human children as innately empathy-inducing creatures.

The humans in *Black Beauty* are vehicles through which Christianity, specifically the value of all of God's creatures, is taught. Black Beauty narrates:

> Then he talked to all the boys very seriously about cruelty, and said how hard-hearted and cowardly it was to hurt the weak and the helpless; but what stuck in my mind was this, he said that cruelty was the devil's own trade mark, and if we saw anyone who took pleasure in cruelty, we might know who he belonged to, for the devil was a murderer from the beginning, and a tormentor to the end. On the other hand, where we saw people who loved their neighbours, and were kind to man and beast, we might know that was God's mark, for "God is Love." (Sewell 78-9)

The devil is alluded to as an evil being who rules over cruel individuals. Further, the devil is used in this text as a fear-inducing tactic to encourage Christian readers to avoid cruelty to animals (or else they will end up in Hell). Therefore, *Black Beauty* not only uses anthropomorphism to encourage empathy for the horse characters but uses Christian religious beliefs to push for the creation of laws that promote kindness to all humans and non-human animals.

The Art of Racing in the Rain

In *The Art of Racing in the Rain,* dog protagonist Enzo has an eclectic belief system, drawing on a general "God" from an unnamed religion, Mongolian beliefs about a canine afterlife, and the Hindu concept of Karma. Enzo picks up different religious/spiritual beliefs as he goes through life, as other less anthropomorphic dogs may pick up sticks. When Enzo considers the creation of men and dogs, he narrates:

> I am a dog, and I know how to fast. It's a part of the genetic background for which I have such contempt. When God gave men big brains, he took away the pads on their feed and made them susceptible to salmonella. When he denied dogs the use of thumbs, he gave them the ability to survive without food for extended periods. (Stein 51)

This "God" is not associated with a particular religion in the text. However, since the text is set in Seattle, Washington, USA, it can be assumed that this "God" may be the Christian God, since Christianity is the most popular religion in America (Pew Research Center n.p.).

Next, Enzo, after watching a documentary, adopts Buddhist beliefs about reincarnation. From the National Geographic Channel, Enzo learns:

> In Mongolia, when a dog dies, he is buried high in the hills so people cannot walk on his grave. The dog's master whispers into the dog's ear his wishes that the dog will return as a man in his next life. Then his tail is cut off and put beneath his head, and a piece of meat or fat is placed in his mouth to sustain his soul on its journey; before he is reincarnated, the dog's soul is freed to travel the land, to run across the high desert

> plains for as long as it would like. I learned that from a program on the National Geographic Channel, so I believe it is true. (Stein 98)

A television program on the National Geographic Channel, for Enzo, is enough evidence on which to base a system of spiritual beliefs about life after death. However, this is not Enzo developing his own non-human religion. Instead, he is adopting the beliefs of multiple known human religions. Therefore, human influences not only abound in Enzo's physical life, but rule his spiritual beliefs as well.

In addition to Buddhist beliefs about reincarnation, Enzo believes in the Buddhist/Hindu idea of Karma:

> I have an imaginary friend. I call him King Karma. I know that karma is a force in this universe, and that people like the Evil Twins will receive karmic justice for their actions. I know that this justice will come when the universe deems it appropriate, and it may not be in this lifetime but in the next, or the one after that. The current consciousness of the Evil Twins may never feel the brunt of the karma they have incurred, though their souls absolutely will. (Stein 250)

Enzo's beliefs, unlike White Fang's, are based on metaphysical concepts. Even though, by the end of each story, both are domesticated dogs, they do not develop similar religions. This may be because White Fang is a first-generation domesticated dog, with his domestication process an important aspect of his story. In contrast, Enzo comes from many generations of domesticated dogs. Thus, his ancestors have experienced the "god-like" abilities of humans for hundreds of years, possibly beginning to understand them. However, like White Fang's, Enzo's religion still places humans at the center since it is, ultimately, a conglomeration of human religions.

Enzo is a spiritual seeker, who develops a religion based on the beliefs of Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Daoism, to name a few. Enzo is not embedded in one specific culture as a dog linked only to humans. As a spiritual seeker, his religion does not have a law-based approach. Even though Enzo's religion does not adhere to the human trope of religion founded on laws, Enzo creates his system of beliefs based on collecting ideas from actual human religions. This reinforces the anthropomorphic nature of Enzo's character in addition to how Enzo idolizes humans, hoping to someday become one.

Culture and Naming

In the previous section, I discussed each text one at a time, but this section will attempt to draw connections across the texts regarding animal culture and naming, an important element of culture for texts with animal protagonists and narrators. As seen in the above section about religion, the wild animal texts have more to discuss regarding culture and naming. In this section, I will argue that the level of culture included in the text is correlated with the level of folk-tale anthropomorphism, with more culture meaning less folk-tale anthropomorphizing and possibly more complex anthropomorphism.

The wild animal texts, excluding "The Hillside," have the most developed animal cultures, mirroring the fact that they have the most developed religions. The text with the most un-human animal religion is *The White Bone*. Elephant culture in *The White Bone* revolves around memory. This novel plays into the common association between elephants and memory, taking the comparison a step further than the common saying "elephants never forget." In the first chapter of the novel, the third-person limited-omniscient narrator gives the readers insights into the mind of elephant protagonist, Mud. The narrator reveals:

> They themselves think this [memory] accounts for their size. Some go so far as to claim that under that thunderhead of flesh and those huge rolling bones they *are* memory. They contain memory, yes, but what may not be so well known is that they are doomed without it. When their memories begin to drain, their bodies go into decline, as if from a slow leakage of blood. (Gowdy 1, emphasis in original)

In addition to having great memory, this novel proposes the idea that elephants *need* memory to survive. In the previous chapter, I discussed how descriptions of sensory experiences are often used to characterize how animal narrators experience the world around them. In *The White Bone*, the presence or absence of memory, as the recollection of noticed sensory experiences, determines the value of an elephant's existence. The novel even claims that elephants are doomed without memory. Further, the idea that elephant bodies are repositories of memory sets the stage for the quest narrative of this novel to find "the white bone." Since elephants are described as made of memory, this implies that their bones are memory. Thus, the white bone is a physical embodiment of the elephant body as memory. The white bone is believed to be a magical calf bone that "'has the power to direct you to The Safe Place… you throw the white bone, and when it lands it points you in the right direction'" (Gowdy 71). Although the quest narrative structure is recognizably human, the purpose of the quest in *The White Bone* operates on unique anti-human principles. The elephant's quest to find safety is significant because human poaching necessitates it. After a brutal massacre of elephants by humans, the She-S family decide that it is necessary to find asylum away from the murderous humans. The white bone becomes a cultural symbol of security: the only thing that can save the elephants from a savage death, in addition to a loss of their precious tusks.

The elephant culture in this text also centers female cows, motherhood, and family relationships. Naming is important in *The White Bone,* with cows being given both a birth name and a cow name. Near the beginning of the text, the She-S's are:

> absorbed in deciding Mud's name, but not all of them are, only the five biggest cows. And not completely absorbed either. At intervals they enter the swamp to browse and drink, and the matriarch even dozes and has to be nudged awake late in the afternoon when they summon Mud and announce in chorus: 'From this day forward and forevermore Mud shall be She-Spurns!' (Gowdy 3)

Mud is disappointed with this choice, and the narrator observes:

> Even She-Stumbles—the name she had so dreaded—would have been better, would have been, at least, appropriate. Why did she let Tall Time mount her? She knew that she would eventually lose her birth name if he did… A bull can mount a hundred cows and still be entitled to keep his birth name forever. (Gowdy 4)

Female elephants are given their cow name based on the traits of the individual cow. Clumsy Mud believed she would be "She-Stumbles," but instead receives the name "She-Spurns" due to her aloof nature. Mud wants to keep her birth name, but the other cows do not take her opinion into account. The third-person narrator reveals, "What the big cows do (she knows from when Echo became She-Scavenges) is to assail you with your cow name until you accept it" (Gowdy 20). Another example of elephants being named due to their traits is She-Stammers, who speaks, "'B-b-b-bad dreams,' she [She-Stammers] tells everyone wither her usual terrorized fluster. 'Loud n-n-n-noises, com-commotion'" (Gowdy 26). As She-Spurns' personality determines her cow name, She-Stammers was named based on her stutter.

However, this intricate naming practice does not extend to bulls, who get to keep their birth name forever.

In addition to cow names, there are also specific rules regarding how calf names are chosen. These practices, including Mud's birth name, are explained:

> Mud's birth family is not the She-S's, it is the She-M's. And the She-M's did not know her as Mud but as Tiny. A cow calf who comes into the world at the unusual hour of high noon—the hour when all things have become so diminutive that they fail to throw a shadow—is called either Tiny or Speck. (Bull calves are given the slightly more consequential-sounding name of Small Time). (Gowdy 8-9)

This passage reveals that the time of day and the gender of the calf determine what name they will be given. This illustrates that elephant naming practices somewhat revolve around fate, but eventually shift due to the emergence of individual traits and personalities of each elephant female. Names are given power in this context, with the ability to reveal something interior about the elephant characters. Rather than external feature-based naming, naming based on traits emphasizes individuality and the importance of the mind.

Animal characters in "The Hillside" are named in a similar way as elephant calves: based on features. For example, "Speedy, known for his quickness, was the stallion High Note most hoped to breed with her first season" (Smiley 4). Another example is Whiney, a horse who "every time he whinnied, the sound was so piercing that most of the other mares ran away" (Smiley 4). Horses name each other in similar ways to how they are named by humans. This could be a byproduct of domestication that has not yet worn off or, as in *The White Bone*, a logical naming practice which takes each individual animal's personality and quirks into account.

"The Hillside" defies the common practice of humans giving animals names, instead giving an example of a horse naming a human. It is revealed that "It was High Note who had named her Plucky, after a horse friend who'd moved into the Mare-Reproductive Sector; she didn't know what the female human's self-designation was" (Smiley 3). High Note names Plucky after a horse friend, illustrating that, in this text, a human is just one more animal to the animals in this story. Further, after the death of Plucky the human, High Note chooses to name her newborn foal Plucky. Naming the foal after a human (who is named after a horse) illustrates that animals may use naming to signify personal importance.

The Bees is the last text in which humans do not determine the names of animals. However, the naming practices in *The Bees* are complicated because of the resonances of being numbered. Unlike being named to encourage and display individuality, female bees in this text are named based on their kin groups and given a number. These kin groups include nature-sounding family names, including Flora, Sage, Thistle, and Clover. Female bees are not meant to have individuality but are required to work in the hive for the benefit of the collective. The protagonist of this novel is born with the knowledge of her family group and her number. Immediately after hatching, Flora 717 narrates, "This was the Arrivals Hall, and she was a worker. Her kin was flora and her number was 717" (Paull 3). These "family" designations are somewhat anthropomorphic. Ecocritic Timothy Clark argues:

> Yet even the observational science of natural history has been shown to be deeply affected by unwarranted social and cultural assumptions, often in the form of projecting onto non-human creatures what are clearly forms of human patriarchy, with use of terms like 'family' to designate some groups of animals. (Clark 33)

Clark belief that humans project unrealistic cultural expectations onto non-human animals, which relates to how grouping works in *The Bees*. Although not patriarchal, the structure of the hive mimics human hierarchies. In *The Bees*, bee culture reflects bee religion, especially if it is based on Catholicism, which is a highly hierarchical religion.

Kin groups determine bees' places in the hive hierarchy in *The Bees*, with some kin groups having more status and prestige. As discussed earlier, the Sage, because they are of the same kin as the queen bee, are the most powerful kin group. In contrast, the Flora, sanitation worker bees, are the lowest kin group. Sister Sage remarks to Flora, "'All of them are mute. Presently you will join them in Sanitation, and perform valuable service to our hive'" (Paull 6). As Flora gets to know her kin sisters better, she narrates:

> Certain routes were blocked by kin-sensitive scent-gates, which stopped the floras from unauthorized visits to holy areas of the hive, like the Nursery on the midlevel or the Fanning Hall and Treasury on the top level. After being buffeted back by the powerful scents once or twice, even the slowest sanitation worker like Flora learned not to try that way again… Despite their status as lowest of the low, even in the kin of Sanitation there was a hierarchy of ability. (Paull 37-8)

This passage details the complex nature of the hive's hierarchy. Not only is there an overarching hierarchy, which prioritizes the queen bee, the Sage, and male bees, called drones, but hierarchies within each kin group. Further, this passage illustrates the importance of the bees' kin in the workings of the hive: only certain kin groups can travel to holier or more important areas of the hive. The name the bees are born into determines their status in the hive, making naming a vital element of culture. Although the *practice* of naming does not

have a large place in bee culture, names determine what jobs bees must complete and how much respect they will receive from the other kin groups.

In contrast to how female bees are named based on their kin group and number, male bees are given individual names and are revered in bee culture, often referred to as "Your Maleness." This might be because there are fewer male bees in a beehive, and, therefore, it would be easier to remember individual names for them. However, this element, within a matriarchal religion and culture, is confusing. Scarcity is the most likely explanation for why male bees are valued differently than female bees.

The animal protagonists in the last three domesticated animal texts, *White Fang*, *Black Beauty*, and *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, are named by their human owners. With *White Fang* somewhat as an exception, these texts do not feature developed animal culture (or religion, as I discussed earlier). Naming in White Fang reflects his domestication process–he is unnamed when he is wild and named as he becomes more and more domesticated.

When White Fang is born, he is not given a name by his mother Kiche. He is solely referred to as "the gray cub" in this portion of the novel. For example, after a famine, the narrator explains, "When the gray cub came back to life and again took interest in the far white wall, he found that the population of his world had been reduced. Only one sister remained to him. The rest were gone" (London 82). Before White Fang has contact with humans, he is an unnamed wolf pup. As I discussed in chapter one, he begins life with an unconscious mind that is minimally anthropomorphized. White Fang is only named after the dawn of his conscious mind *and* the beginning of this domestication process.

As White Fang grows up, he accidentally stumbles into a camp of men. It turns out that these are the same men who had owned his mother before she ran away. A human there at the time, named Gray Beaver, states:

> 'It is plain that his mother is Kiche. But his father was a wolf. Wherefore is there in him little dog and much wolf. His fangs be white, and White Fang shall be his name. I have spoken. He is my dog. For was not Kiche my brother's dog? And is not my brother dead?' The cub, who had thus received a name in the world, lay and watched. (London 118)

The naming of White Fang by humans relates to how humans name horses in *Black Beauty* in addition to how wild animals name themselves in *The White Bone* and "The Hillside." Naming based on features seems to be a human practice which is grafted onto animals in the wild animal texts. I argue that this method fails to "give voice to the non-human… in ways that do not seem merely fanciful or weakly anthropomorphic" (Clark 9). However, *The White Bone*'s use of this naming practice is the most believably non-human, since elephants name their family members based on personality or interior traits rather than observable physical features. Further, it is interesting to note that White Fang's master, Gray Beaver, has an even more overtly specific feature-based animal name. This implies that the naming practice used to name White Fang may also be used among humans in the text.

Next, Black Beauty cycles through many different names throughout the text. His owners determine his name, and since he has many different owners, he is called many different things during his life. These names include Darkie, Black Beauty, Black Auster, Jack, Blackie, and Old Crony. Black Beauty realizes he is named based on features, especially his color, narrating, "I was a dull black, so he called me Darkie" (Sewell 13). The

only two names that do not relate to Black Beauty's outward features are Jack and Old Crony. Black Beauty is named Jack by human character Jerry Barker. Jerry states, "'we'll call him "Jack," after the old one…'" (Sewell 185). The fact that Black Beauty is named after another horse the Barker family had previously owned takes away his individuality, illustrating that all work horses are the same to the Barker family. Although Black Beauty is treated well during his time with Jerry Barker as his owner, he is viewed as merely a tool which will allow Jerry to complete his work.

Naming in *The Art of Racing in the Rain* is even less explicit. Enzo's name is presumably given to him by his human owner Denny, but there is no naming scene. Enzo is merely introduced at the beginning of the novel with Denny calling out his name. Enzo is given additional "pet" names throughout the text including "Zo" and "Enz." I found it interesting that the nickname "Zo" is almost the same as the name of Denny's daughter "Zoë." This implies that Enzo is as important, or almost as important since he's missing one letter, to Denny as his daughter. As naming is nonexistent in *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, Enzo does not have any dog culture. From this text, the long history of domestication seems to have stripped dogs of any culture outside human culture.

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In the wild animal texts, naming is determined by non-human animals, but in the domesticated texts, including *White Fang*, humans name non-human animals. Although it is more realistic to depict humans as name-givers, depicting non-human animals naming other non-human animals gives animals more individuality and culture. By removing humans from animal naming processes, the wild animal texts can build worlds in which humans are not necessarily the pinnacle of intelligence and culture.

The more a text deviates from how humans usually name animals, the more it implies that non-human animals have the capacity to develop unique cultures. However, when non-human animals revert to common human naming practices, the reader might be more comfortable and relate more to the animal. Therefore, depending on the extent and type of empathy a text wants to build, authors make different choices regarding the uniqueness of animal cultural practices.

Chapter 4: Interspecies, Intraspecies, and Human-Animal Relationships

As some texts focus on animal religion and culture, other texts utilize inter- and intraspecies relationships to create believable representations of animal narrators. Relationships between animals of the same species, animals of different species, and animals and humans can shed light on how animals are viewed as functioning in the world around them. Since many animals in the wild are dependent on other animals within and outside their species to survive, some writers believe it is important to depict these bonds. Many authors have considered how these bonds work, including renowned writer C. S. Lewis who "appears to have been haunted throughout his life by the possibility of a friendship that unites beings who are fundamentally different" (Woodruff Tait 43). However, humans may not view interdependence as important to consider for domesticated animals, since they are viewed as purely dependent on humans. Depending on which relationships each text prioritizes, the reader can make assumptions about how interested the writer is in depicting the web of relationships that exist among animals. In a writer's portrayal of an animal narrator, it is vital to question whether individuality or community is emphasized, by looking at which relationships are prioritized in the text.

This chapter will discuss the effects of how domesticated versus wild animal texts construct relationships between same-species animals, with different-species non-human animals, and with humans. The centering of humans goes beyond the plot and the question of anthropomorphism into whether the text endows animal-animal relationships with importance and emotional intensity. If a text is more interested in developing the full range of animal consciousness, animals are seen forming emotional connections rather than just

coexisting. I will consider the relationships in each text based on their complexity, emotionality, and focus on animal interdependence, describing relationships as emotional, practical, or instrumental. I will argue that the more emotionality animal-to-animal relationships are given, the more readers will empathize with the animals in the narrative. However, some writers are not willing to depict intense animal-to-animal relationships, because they want to create empathy in other ways or because they have a different goal altogether.

Working/Domesticated/Wild to Domesticated Animal Texts

Black Beauty

In *Black Beauty*, relationships between horses and between horses and humans are most emphasized. At the beginning of the novel, Black Beauty has a close relationship with his mother. He narrates:

> Whilst I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the day time I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her… There were six young colts in the meadow beside me; they were older than I was; some were nearly as large as grown-up horses. I used to run with them, and had great fun; we used to gallop together round and round the field, as hard as we could go. (Sewell 12)

Black Beauty's relationship with his mother, although always depicted as loving, is barely described outside of the first few chapters of the novel. Further, this relationship is mostly practical, with some emotional elements, because Black Beauty only needs his mother at the beginning of his life for nourishment. If Anna Sewell emphasized a close attachment between Black Beauty and his mother, the reader might have been outraged when Black Beauty is sold away from her. Therefore, this book could not depict a mother-foal relationship that was

too emotional due to the nature of how humans buy and sell work horses. If Black Beauty was embedded any more into his community, the novel might have implied that humans cause horses pain solely by owning them and separating them from other horses.

However, more horse-horse relationships are emphasized in the text. This could be inevitable, as horses often are made to work together and live in close quarters. Thus, if Sewell left out these connections, readers might have been confused. The closest horse-horse connection formed in the novel is between Black Beauty and another work horse named Ginger. Black Beauty meets Ginger at Birtwick Park, learning her emotional backstory and socializing with her often. Eventually, the friends are separated, but meet later in the narrative when both have become cab-horses. They have an emotional exchange when they see each other after many years apart. Black Beauty narrates, “I was very much troubled, and I put my nose up to hers, but I could say nothing to comfort her. I think she was pleased to see me, for she said, ‘You are the only friend I ever had’” (Sewell 230). This quotation, more so than the passage describing Black Beauty’s connection with his mother, gives the relationship between Black Beauty and Ginger intense emotionality. It sparks empathy not only for Black Beauty, but for Ginger, almost questioning whether or not humans have a right to rule over horses. Since human ownership has separated two close friends who are emotionally invested in each other, in addition to hastening Ginger’s demise, this may cause the reader to question what humans should have the right to do to horses. Therefore, apart from this section, Sewell mostly portrays practical horse-to-horse working relationships.

Black Beauty forms instrumental connections with many humans in the novel who express empathy for working animals. One example is his groom John Manly, who “makes friends of [horses] if ever a man did” (Sewell 73). John is framed as a model for how humans

should treat their horses. However, their relationship is instrumental, because their interactions only involve John doing his job to care for Black Beauty. This relationship is representative of how Black Beauty creates instrumental bonds with humans, because most of his human connections are with his masters and grooms who treat him well but still force him to work. John believes Black Beauty has a primitive level of intelligence, possibly justifying his belief that horses should work for humans. He considers Black Beauty's understanding of human affairs after Black Beauty saves his mistress. Black Beauty overhears a conversation between John and his master, Squire Gordon, recounting:

> John told my master he never saw a horse go so fast in his life, it seemed as if the horse knew what was the matter. Of course I did, though John thought not; at least I knew as much as this, that John and I must go at the top of our speed, and that it was for the sake of our mistress. (Sewell 106)

Even though John appreciates Black Beauty's work and considers the possibility that Black Beauty might have a rudimentary understanding of the night's events, he is unable to fully accept that Black Beauty could have a human-like emotional comprehension of his life experiences.

Stronger connections between horses and other animal species might influence the reader to have more empathy for these creatures. However, Black Beauty does not communicate with any non-horse animals in the text. Other domesticated and wild animals, including dogs and birds, are referenced as deserving of ethical treatment in a general way, reminding the reader of the importance of being kind to all creatures. When considering the treatment of animals other than horses, Black Beauty explains:

> Our master and mistress were… good and kind to everybody and everything; not only to men and women, but horses and donkeys, dogs and cats, cattle and birds; there was no oppressed or ill-used creature that had not a friend in them, and their servants took the same tone. If any of the village children were known to treat any creature cruelly, they soon heard about it from the Hall. (Sewell 65)

This approach promotes human ownership of animals, only stipulating that animals must be treated kindly. In other words, it is implied that humans have the right to own and control animals as long as these animals are given ethical treatment under the guidelines of Christianity. This plays into the belief of "dominionism," that Christians have a divine right to control all of Earth's creatures (DeSantis et al. n.p.). Black Beauty's master and mistress are given a powerful, almost god-like status in the narrative with the jurisdiction to enforce humane treatment of animals. Because they are depicted as possessing superior Christian values, they are glorified by the text and are assumed to have the right to pass judgment and control the actions of other, less Christian human characters. These characters are used by Sewell as moral exemplars, whose behavior should be admired and mimicked by all readers.

The Art of Racing in the Rain

Like *Black Beauty*, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* prioritizes relationships with humans but leaves out emotional interspecies *and* intraspecies relationships. There are no other dog characters in the narrative, so Enzo is only shown forming relationships with his human family. Thus, Enzo is framed as an individualist, who does not need connection to other members of his species. For example, when Enzo thinks back on his mother, he narrates:

> …I remember my mother, a heavy bitch of a lab with pendulous teats that swung to and fro as my litter mates and I chased them down from across the yard. Honestly, our mother didn't seem to like us much, and she was fairly indifferent to whether we ate or starved. She seemed relieved whenever one of us left. One fewer yipping mammal tracking her down to bleed her of her milk. I never knew my father. The people on the farm told Denny that he was a shepherd-poodle mix, but I don't believe it. I never saw a dog that looked like that on the farm… He [Enzo's breeder] expounded at length on the relative intelligence of dog breeds, and he firmly believed that shepherds and poodles were the smart ones, and therefore would be more desirable–and more valuable–when 'bred back to a lab for temperament.' All a bunch of junk. Everyone knows that shepherds and poodles aren't especially smart. They're responders and reactors, not independent thinkers… I'm sure my father was a terrier. Because terriers are problem solvers. (Stein 9-10)

Not only is Enzo apathetic toward his mother and siblings, but he also constructs a human-like ethnic vision of dog breeds in this passage. Based on what we see in the narrative, this conception is not based on Enzo's own experiences with other dogs. Rather, it is based on human opinions about the temperament and relative intelligence of various dog breeds. Although he once refers to coyotes as "my brethren," Enzo does not long for a kinship with other members of his species (Stein 134).

Enzo's most meaningful and emotion-filled connection is with his human master Denny. Enzo once states, "I love Denny so much. I know everything about him, and yet he always surprises me" (Stein 307). This bond would have satisfied C. S. Lewis who strongly desired a close relationship with a rabbit. Lewis lamented, "the Rabbit and I have

quarreled…[H]e has cut me dead several times lately… [S]o fair and yet so fickle!" (qtd. in Woodruff Tait 42). Like Lewis' connection with the rabbit, Enzo and Denny's relationship is not only filled with loving exchanges:

> 'You stupid dog,' he [Denny] growled, and he grabbed the back of my neck, taking a huge fistful of my fur and jerking. I went limp, afraid. He'd never treated me like this before. He dragged me through the kitchen and down the hall, into Zoë's room where she sat, stunned, on the floor in the middle of a huge mess. Her dolls, her animals, all torn to shreds, eviscerated, a complete disaster. Total carnage. I could only assume that the evil demon zebra had reassembled itself and destroyed the other animals after I had left. I should have eliminated the zebra when I had my chance. I should have eaten it, even if it had killed me. Denny was so angry that his anger filled up the entire room, the entire house. Nothing was as large as Denny's anger. He reared up and roared, and with his great hand, he struck me on the side of the head. I toppled over with a yelp, hunkering as close to the ground as possible. 'Bad dog!' he bellowed and he raised his hand to hit me again… He stopped… He *hadn't* hit me, I know, even though I could feel the pain of the blow. He had hit the demon, the evil zebra, the dark creature that came into the house and possessed the stuffed animals. (Stein 56-7)

Despite a moment of physical abuse by Denny, Enzo does not even need to forgive him. Instead, Enzo completely dissociates himself from the event, clearing Denny of any wrong against him. This passage illustrates the extent of Enzo's devotion to humans. Even after Denny directs his anger at Enzo, who had starved alone in the house for several days after being forgotten there by Eve, Enzo's admiration of him does not waver. In this passage, Enzo

feels afraid of Denny and confused about the situation, but he still wishes he would have sacrificed his life, by eating the zebra, to have saved the rest of Zoë's stuffed animals.

Enzo does not have any meaningful relationships with animals of different species. However, Enzo does develop a detailed hatred for crows. Although this scene seems to be played a bit for humor, it still shows how uninterested the text is in depicting meaningful interspecies relationships. Enzo makes his strong opinions about crows known to the reader, observing:

> They sit in the trees and on electric wires and on the roofs and they watch everything, the sinister little bastards. They cackle with a dark edge, like they're mocking you, cawing constantly, they know where you are when you're in the house, they know where you are when you're outside; they're always waiting. The smaller cousin of the raven, they are resentful and angry, bitter at being genetically dwarfed by their brothers… They are scum, creatures of cluster, they call them a murder when they are in a group. A good word, because when they are together, you want to kill them. (Stein 68-9)

As Enzo does not feel connected to other dogs, he is openly antagonistic toward a different wild animal species. Enzo is framed as disconnected from all creatures other than humans in the narrative. This is more than a wish-fulfillment element of the text, but a necessary feature if the author does not want to raise questions about what humans should be able to do with domesticated animals. If Enzo is depicted as having emotional connections with his mother and siblings or is embedded in a context of animal interdependence, the text would question whether it is ethical for humans to own dogs. The individualistic dog narrator, then, is necessary to protect human readers. If ripping dogs away from others of their kind and

forcing them to solely interact with humans is framed as causing dogs pain, pet-owner readers' conceptions of their lives would be called into question.

White Fang

In *White Fang*, wolf-dog protagonist White Fang has a practical relationship with his mother when he is a puppy but outgrows this connection during his domestication process. His mother, Kiche, is very protective of him, illustrating strong maternal instincts. The narrator reveals:

> She had heard the cry of her cub and was dashing to save him. She bounded in amongst them, her anxious and militant motherhood making her anything but a pretty sight. But to the cub the spectacle of her protective rage was pleasing. He uttered a glad little cry and bounded to meet her… (London 116)

Although there is a positive relationship between mother and cub near the beginning of White Fang's life, it is purely practical. In most wild animal species, the mother stays with her offspring for the first few months or years of life until the baby is strong enough to survive on its own. Therefore, the connection between White Fang and his mother is only a bond of necessity, encouraged by the process of natural selection. Since wild baby animals do not have a high chance of surviving on their own without protection, it makes sense that the beginning of White Fang's life would be characterized by a close relationship with his mother and protector.

Further, White Fang does not get along with other domesticated dogs. After White Fang begins living with the man named Gray Beaver in a human camp, he meets other young, domesticated dogs. The third-person narrator explains:

> He found himself an outcast in the midst of the populous camp. All the young dogs followed Lip-lip's lead. There was a difference between White Fang and them. Perhaps they sense his wild-wood breed, and instinctively felt for him the enmity that the domestic dog feels for the wolf. (London 143-4)

Not only do the other dogs dislike White Fang, but White Fang eventually becomes completely alienated from all other dogs. The narrator observes:

> If ever a creature was the enemy of his kind, White Fang was that creature. He asked no quarter, gave none. He was continually marred and scarred by the teeth of the pack, and as continually he left his own marks upon the pack. (London 188)

Like Enzo in *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, White Fang's only emotion-filled relationships are with humans. At the beginning of his domestication process, White Fang does not feel love for his human owners, only loyalty and devotion: "He belonged to them as all dogs belonged to them. His actions were theirs to command, his body was theirs to maul, to stamp upon, to tolerate" (London 131). This human-dog relationship, although not as openly emotional, has some of the same elements as the relationship between Denny and Enzo. As we saw in the passage in which Denny hits Enzo, Enzo seems to feel the same way as White Fang about his place with humans–believing that humans have the right to do what they please to the bodies of dogs. Since dogs belong to humans, Enzo and White Fang tolerate abuse. After becoming domesticated, White Fang irrevocably lives "...with the gods to whom he had given himself and upon whom he was now dependent" (London 157). Thus, in addition to belonging to humans, White Fang believes he can no longer function without them.

White Fang eventually forms an understanding of the process of domestication. The more time he spends in the company of men, the more he understands why animals would choose to abandon life in the wild for life in the captivity of humans. The narrator asserts:

> The months went by, binding stronger and stronger the covenant between dog and man. This was the ancient covenant that the first world that came in from the Wild entered into with man. And, like all succeeding wolves and wild dogs that had done likewise, White Fang worked the covenant out for himself… The possession of a god implies service. White Fang's was a service of duty and awe, but not of love. He did not know what love was. He had no experience of love. Kiche was a remote memory. Besides, not only had he abandoned the Wild and his kind when he gave himself up to man, but the terms of the covenant were such that if he ever met Kiche again he would not desert his god to go with her. (London 169-70)

Like Enzo, White Fang does not yearn for affection with other members of his species. He is framed as an individualist, only needing the companionship of humans. White Fang's connections to his first two human owners, Gray Beaver and Beauty Smith, are not overly emotional or loving. These two human-dog connections depicted in the narrative are only bonds of necessity due to White Fang's domestication. However, later in the narrative, White Fang forms an emotionally charged bond with a human named Weedon Scott.

Weedon Scott, who White Fang terms the "love god," shows White Fang that humans can create emotional bonds with animals. White Fang behaves differently in this relationship, becoming agitated whenever he is apart from his master due to the intense connection they share. The narrator notes:

> White Fang had already sensed it… His god was preparing for another flight. And since he had not taken him with him before, so, now, he could look to be left behind. That night he lifted the long wolf-howl. As he had howled, in his puppy days, when he fled back from the Wild to the village… (London 274)

White Fang is agitated even at the thought of separation from his master. This shows how emotionally invested he is in this human-dog relationship. As he howled in despair when he attempted to return to the captivity of men when he was a puppy, White Fang howls when he believes he will be abandoned by his master. In this passage, White Fang seems to fear a return to the wild. He is now dependent upon humans, not only for sustenance and protection, but for love. Since he now has an emotional connection with Weedon Scott, separation is fear-inducing for White Fang, who has become entirely reliant upon humans for his emotional satisfaction.

Like Enzo, White Fang does not form any emotional relationships with animals of different species. At the beginning of his life, White Fang sees other non-human animal life either as threatening or as potential food. For a young wolf-dog, he has detailed beliefs about the nature of interspecies relationships in the wild. The narrator explains:

> There were two kinds of life, —his own kind and the other kind. His own kind included his mother and himself. The other kind included all live things that moved. But the other kind was divided. One portion was what his own kind killed and ate. This portion was composed of the non-killers and the small killers. The other portion killed and ate his own kind, or was killed and eaten by his own kind. (London 107)

White Fang learns through experience that other animal species are either weaker or stronger than himself and his mother. He uses this information to create a categorical system to

understand other animal life. This is a practical strategy, illustrating that, although other wild animals are occasionally important in the narrative since White Fang inevitably encounters them in the wild, White Fang does not care about making interspecies connections. After White Fang becomes fully domesticated, other non-human animals are no longer a threat to him and become mostly nonexistent in the narrative. Thus, White Fang's connection to humans completely separates him from any interconnection with other species in his environment. Because White Fang is framed as an individualist, this novel is able to glorify the process of domestication, arguing that wolves/dogs only need the company and love of men to be fulfilled in life. Although this text is interested in telling an adventure story from the perspective of a wild animal, it does not place importance on the depiction of interspecies interconnection in natural environments. Like *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, if *White Fang* had framed domestication as separating wolves from meaningful relationships with other wolves or other non-human animals, the text would challenge many readers' worldview about the human right to own dogs.

Wild Animal Texts

The Bees

Unlike the domesticated animal texts which center relationships with humans, most of the wild animal texts center same-species relationships and include more references to connections between different species. In *The Bees*, bee-bee relationships are the only important connections emphasized. Flora narrates:

> The scent of the priestesses faded as Flora went deeper into the aromatic crisscrossing of her sisters, their body heat blending their kin-scents together in fragrance and gossip. To listen to their bright voices and understand all they said was a wonderful

> thing, and she was soon caught up in the major news coming through the floor codes and the excited antennae all around her: the rain had stopped, the clouds had parted, the foragers were returning. (Paull 43)

There is a strong camaraderie between the bees in the text. However, the relationships between the bee characters are more practical than emotional since they need each other to survive and for the hive to function properly. They have a highly intertwined society that revolves around worshiping the Queen. For example, Flora narrates, "All around her, sisters were enraptured in a blissful state of union with the Queen…" (Paull 85). Referring to the other bees as "sisters" implies a familial, and therefore loving, connection between all bees. However, this is not what we see in the story. The bees are seen operating within families, known in the story as kin groups, with prejudiced beliefs about other bees from other groups. Although they have similar goals and a shared system of beliefs, the bees do not behave like sisters, despite the inclusive language in the text. Flora does bond with her offspring, but she does not form any lasting connections with adult bees in the hive. The prioritization of close family relationships plays into the story's assumption that collectivist societies, although necessary for bees, are inevitably inequitable and often abusive.

The bees in the story overtly do not get along with other animal species. They even have a derogatory name for non-bee animals: the Myriad. For example, when Flora speaks with a spider, "Flora's anger lifted her off her feet and her chest roared. 'They would not! You are the Myriad and you are evil!'" (Paull 194). She believes that all non-bee animals are corrupt, villainous, and often actively conspiring against bee society. The bees do not even get along with wasps, who are close to bees genetically. Flora describes the aftermath of a wasp invading the hive:

> The great wasp lay dead. So did hundreds of brave sisters closest to her, killed by the colossal heat. Many others were maimed in the fight, and outside on the landing board, fallen Thistle sisters lay dead or mutilated in the sun. The air was thick with the foul scent of the wasps and the blood of bees, but the hive was saved. (Paull 63)

The way the wasps are described, including having a "foul scent," is very different from the word choices for the bees, which includes the phrase "brave sisters." Wasps are framed as malicious predators, seeking to destroy and steal from beehives. Instead of working together, bees and wasps are framed as enemies in the narrative. The fact that the text does not include positive interspecies relationships reduces the level of empathy the reader feels for bees as embedded in their natural ecosystems in addition to decreasing the possibility of empathy for other non-bee animals. Since bees have more positive relationships with flowers than they do with other animal species, humans do not need to feel guilty about moving hives and displacing bees from their natural habitats. In contrast, the idea of humans taking honey from beehives is framed as traumatizing and unethical. When a human takes a wall of honey from the hive, it is described ominously as "the Visitation." Flora narrates:

> The old man bent to pick up the angled wooden roof. It was heavy and he staggered as if he would fall—then with a great effort he replaced it over the exposed hive. He stooped for his smoker and the white plastic bag, and shuffled barefoot back through the orchard. (Paull 179-80)

Other than this single instance, the bees are not shown interacting with humans. Therefore, even though emotional interspecies relationships are not included, the fact that bees do not form meaningful bonds with humans implies that humans should not infringe upon their existence.

Since the only emotional bond depicted in the novel is between Flora and her daughter, it reduces the empathy felt for bees as a whole. Although the bees are complexly anthropomorphized and given human-like levels of intelligence and consciousness, they are not depicted as having an emotionally complex society with many friendships or bee-to-bee bonds. In my opinion, this reduces the amount of empathy induced by the text. If bees are not given a large capacity for love or emotional bonds, then it could be implied that their society is less complex and meaningful than human society. However, inducing empathy may not have been Paull's goal in writing this novel. Instead, the author may have solely wanted to create a compelling story with a human-like plotline from the perspective of an individual bee.

The White Bone

The White Bone highlights inter- and intraspecies relationships, granting the most intense emotionality to elephant-elephant relationships. Unlike any other text addressed in this project, *The White Bone* is extremely interested in portraying the elephant characters as integrated assets to their environment, connected with their own species and with other animal species. Relationships are utilized as important tools in this text, promoting empathy for many non-human animal species. Elephant intraspecies relationships are framed as emotional rather than practical and do not only involve the protection of elephants' genetics. For example, elephant protagonist Mud is adopted, but still has a strong bond with her family. The narrator describes:

> Beneath its layer of dust her foot is black with the dried blood of the slaughtered, and it seems dismally fitting to her that she does not bleed but wears the blood of her

> adoptive family, as if this were the mark of her connection with them: the undeniable distance, the inescapable attachment. (Gowdy 93)

Referring to groups of elephants as “families” implies that human-like bonds exist between them. Although most wild animals’ attachment to their parents does not last past infancy, this text implies that elephants have lifelong commitments to their families, no matter whether they are biological or adopted. Mud is especially close with fellow calf Date Bed. Specifically, “They were so devoted to each other that they walked with Date Bed grasping Mud’s tail, and they said ‘we’ instead of ‘I’— ‘we are tired,’ ‘we want,’ ‘we can’t’—as if they were a single calf” (Gowdy 169). Even though they were not born into the same family, Mud and Date Bed have a sister-like relationship (even more than the bees who call each other sister). When Mud and Date Bed are separated, this bond creates a high amount of empathy, due to the emotional characteristics of this relationship. Further, elephants even mourn their fellow elephants after death. The narrator describes, “They encircle and fondle the carcass…” (Gowdy 319). Mourning implies that elephants miss other elephants after death, illustrating the importance of bonds during life.

In *The White Bone*, although the most emotionally charged relationships are between the elephant characters, there are important cross-species bonds. This is illustrated by the existence of a “mind talker” within each elephant family. As I have discussed in previous chapters, mind talkers can communicate telepathically with many diverse animal species. Mind talkers are important, because they provide an avenue for elephants to communicate with other animal species. This feature allows the text to completely bypass the issue of language, framing elephants as completely embedded within their natural environment.

Therefore, a mind talker makes it possible for elephants to form connections not only amongst themselves but with animals of other species. The narrator explains:

> In all but a few families there is a mind talker, only one. She is either a cow or a cow calf, never a bull, and when she dies some other member of the family assumes her gift, first hearing the thoughts of her own kind and then finding that she not only understands the language of most other creatures (insects, humans and snakes are the exceptions) but is able to converse with them, from her end simply by thinking hard. (Gowdy 22-3)

This passage implies that there are some limitations for mind talkers, including the inability to communicate with insects, humans, and snakes. Further, the narrator reveals, “From the minds of humans came a silence so absolute and menacing that many of those who heard it forswore mind talking altogether” (Gowdy 43). This completely decenters humans, because elephants, although they are able to form meaningful cross-species relationships, are afraid of humans due to the evil nature of their minds. Additionally, “From the minds of snakes and insects [mind talkers can hear] only a faint chiming” (Gowdy 43). These barriers for elephant mind talkers imply that humans, snakes, and insects may lack a certain connection with their fellow species. Another explanation could be that the minds of these species are less complex than elephant minds or are inherently evil and therefore morally inaccessible.

There are numerous examples in the text of Date Bed, the mind talker in Mud’s family, forming emotional bonds with animals of other species. The narrator states:

> The mongooses are dear to her. They are what she is not: quick, thriving, fierce, part of a family. Well after sunrise they emerge from their den. ‘Big, Big, Big, Big,’ the twittering starts. ‘Big’ is their name for both her kind and her individually. Usually

> she is lying down, and they blimp on her and eat her ticks. They are excessively careful, moving as weightlessly as flies and skirting her infected burns. (Gowdy 272)

Describing mongooses as "dear to her" implies that this is an important relationship for Date Bed. Further, this passage describes mongooses as having families, illustrating that elephants are not the only non-human animals who form strong, lifelong intraspecies bonds with human family-like qualities. This passage also describes the mongooses helping Date Bed even though they are not getting anything in return. Humans do not usually endow animals with the capacity for altruism. This helpful behavior frames mongooses as generous and kind, possibly increasing empathy for them in the reader.

However, not all interspecies connections depicted in *The White Bone* are positive. During the narrative, Date Bed reveals her opinions about different animal species. For example, the narrator acknowledges that "She [Date Bed] will have to ask for help from somebody. Not from the vultures, those sadistic liars" (Gowdy 102). This is the second novel in which animal narrators have a negative view of birds, creating a strange link between Date Bed and Enzo. Date Bed also has unfavorable beliefs about wildebeests:

> Mad she may be, but he and his entire species [wildebeests] are demented. Most fallen species are, if you ask her. Humans, who are fallen she-ones. Snakes, who are fallen mongooses. Wildebeests are fallen warthogs, hence their slab heads and preoccupation with size. (Gowdy 103)

The idea of "fallen" species implies that some animal species have devolved and become evil versions of their former species. As humans and snakes are both fallen, it makes sense that elephant mind talkers cannot communicate with them. Despite the negative relationships between elephants and some other animal species, elephants are largely depicted as getting

along and working together with other animals in ways that are not purely practical. These relationships promote empathy not only for elephants, but for many other animals in the text. Gowdy is extremely interested in portraying elephants as integral to the natural habitats, embedded in numerous emotional within- and cross-species relationships. This emphasis on elephants as creatures of community implies that captivity of elephants by humans is unethical and hurtful to elephant families.

"The Hillside"

High Note, the horse protagonist of "The Hillside," has practical relationships with other horses, an emotional relationship with one human character, and working relationships with other species of animals. Inter- and intraspecies relationships, although not given emotional intensity through High Note's narration, are vitally important for the narrative. Further, human readers will often infer some emotion by reading in between the lines, even though High Note does not disclose her feelings. Bonds between horses are alluded to rather than overtly explained with emotional detail, suggesting that the reader does not have full access to High Note's consciousness or that High Note is just a less emotional character. When High Note discusses another horse, she narrates, "Speedy, known for his quickness, was the stallion High Note most hoped to breed with her first season. She liked the idea of a foal who could run as fast as the wolves. And she had known him since they were both foals themselves" (Smiley 4). She is not depicted as loving Speedy but having very practical reasons to choose him as a mate. However, it can be assumed that High Note did have an important friendship with another horse, because she decides to name the human Plucky after a "horse friend."

High Note's emotional relationship with the human Plucky begins out of a general curiosity. Initially, High Note merely notices Plucky and finds her interesting to watch: "Plucky was the human in the band she oversaw that High Note found the most intriguing–a mature female, but small and nimble, no offspring" (Smiley 3). Since it is High Note's job to monitor humans, she is not going out of her way to become interested in human affairs. Further, High Note understands why animals spurn humans. She comments:

> … it was easy to look at humans and see why they were reviled outcasts in this long valley, and why the small band that still remained had to be closely monitored by young mares like High Note—they were quick and deceitful, and contributed nothing of value to the larger community of animals, too weak, too lacking in special skills, too unintelligent to ever understand the consequences of their activities. (Smiley 1-2)

Therefore, her interest in and eventual connection with Plucky comes as a shock due to the negative views she holds about the human race.

Even High Note herself seems confused about her connection to and interest in Plucky. The first time they make physical contact, Plucky is seen jumping onto High Note's back. According to the narrator:

> High Note stood still. Plucky wiggled a little bit, then tickled High Note's ribs with her feet. High Note was required by law to rear up, but she remained reluctant to do so… High Note stepped forward, and Plucky let out a lighthearted vocalization, which High Note had heard before, and it caused her to flick her ears, toss her head, and prance forward a few steps. (Smiley 11)

The only indication that High Note enjoyed the interaction is that she did not rear up. High Note's actions are described as instinctual rather than pleasurable when she tosses her head

and prances forward with Plucky on her back. She seems to be accessing some sort of *Black Beauty*-like memory of how horses used to behave with humans. After this event:

> High Note did seek Plucky out a few more times, and Plucky sought her out too. She didn't allow Plucky to sit astride her, though she could tell by the way that Plucky stroked her side and tickled her nose that Plucky wanted to. She did eat the handfuls of greenery that Plucky offered her. (Smiley 12)

From this passage, again, there is not much indication that High Note enjoys being with Plucky. There is only the fact that High Note seeks out Plucky. More intuitively, the reader can perceive a connection due to the trust High Note places in Plucky when she eats the greenery offered by Plucky. A desire for food is something that humans and non-human animals share (Woodruff Tait 45). Thus, a human giving an animal food is a believable friendship-inducing strategy. Further, since High Note understands what Plucky wants out of the interaction, the reader can assume that there is a blooming cross-species relationship between the two characters.

Despite her positive relationship with Plucky, High Note feels differently about humans in general, especially human males. High Note "was stricter with the human males–every time one of them even approached the boundary of the human containment area, she ran at him with her head down and her ears back" (Smiley 14). Although she behaves harshly with human males, other animals recoil from humans even more than horses. High Note narrates, "Someone had to watch them [humans]. Horses were the ones who did it, but perhaps, High Note thought, her very job tainted her reputation among the turkeys, the wolves, the deer, the cats, the ground squirrels. Most horses kept to their own kind" (Smiley 8). High Note believes that the connection between horses and humans causes other animal

species to distance themselves from horses. This is reflected by the fact that horses are not depicted as having any important interspecies emotional relationships in the story. However, there is no overt hostility between the animals, who all seem to work together well in government. Further, when High Note is thinking about escaping from the hillside with Plucky, she observes, “There was no one, no avian, no snake, no cat, to discuss this with, because no one would sympathize with her idea–everyone recoiled from the humans but the horses” (Smiley 17). Even though High Note herself does express some hostility toward humans, this story implies that other animals hate humans even more, to the extent that they cannot even stand to interact with them.

In addition to High Note, all the animals in the text are framed as unemotional and detached, purely focusing on running a just and law-governed society. In other words, only instrumental interspecies relationships are depicted in the story. However, this could just be because High Note is personally unemotional, which might influence her narration and perception of the other characters in the story. On the other hand, emotionality could be seen as a human trait that should be avoided due to the destructive nature of humans’ past behavior. This explanation would create an interesting contrast between emotionally volatile humans and emotionally controlled non-human animals. It would frame animals as better rulers of the Earth than humans due to their less over-the-top nature. Despite all the beautiful things humans have created, this explanation would argue that the terrible environmental effects caused by humans outweigh the positives, like beautiful art and music, calling for a new type of leadership of the world: non-human wild animal leadership.

Further, the unemotional protagonist in “The Hillside” could be necessary for several reasons: to argue that animals just do not form emotionally intense relationships, that it is

important for animals to be impartial and less emotionally invested due to the nature of the animal-run governmental structure, or that an unemotional protagonist is necessary to allow readers to imagine a human-centric, emotional version of Plucky's experience. Since human culture is centered around emotional relationships, Smiley may assume that human readers will read emotion in the story no matter if it is expressed by the protagonist or not. Further, it may be important for horses to be less emotional, and thus less empathy-inducing, allowing human readers to further sympathize with the other humans in the story.

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Depicting cross-species friendships satisfies reader curiosity about what these relationships might look like in real life. It is evident that this curiosity exists due to the multitude of YouTube videos with titles such as "dog friends with deer" or "goat friends with horse." Since cross-species connections are not very common, the public is fascinated by the possibility that animals, like humans, can forge bonds with creatures unlike themselves. This possibility would create an interesting angle for animal rights activists, increasing the empathy-inducing capacity of non-human animals if they can form altruistic cross-species friendships.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

After discussing how animals are represented as narrators and protagonists in literature, the question remains–why are humans so interested? I believe human readers may read these stories to determine what responsibilities they should have toward animals in real life. Even though we know these books are not actual representations of animal minds, we are still trying to gather evidence and imagine those minds. Humans want to make sense of the world around them; however, humans are also innately self-centered, constantly projecting themselves onto non-human creatures. Thus, anthropomorphism in literature is not only unavoidable but necessary if writers want to induce empathy. Internet memes, movies, and many other media outlets use anthropomorphism to make jokes or make an animal character more relatable to a human audience. This can be damaging to humans who do want a deeper understanding of animal behavior, which is where literature with complex anthropomorphism, in addition to scientific research, might come into play.

On the other hand, people may continue to read stories with folk-tale anthropomorphism for comfort or nostalgia for childhood. Since this type of anthropomorphism is prevalent in children's literature that includes animals, stories with animal narrators or protagonists might hold appeal for individuals in the way a mystery or romance novel plot does. Although returning to an old method of storytelling might be compelling, a question that comes out of this explanation is: what would get readers to want more complex depictions of animal consciousness as they get older? The answer to this question could go back to my first point: as humans age and gain more complex understandings of real-life animals, they need more complex animal narrators and protagonists to help them determine how they should treat animals. Or, to take it another

direction, as humans age, we may view stories with folk-tale anthropomorphism as “too kiddy” or “not adult enough” to justify enjoying anymore. Thus, we may be more attracted to “literature” written for the adult audience, which uses more complex methods of depicting animal narrators and protagonists such as animal cultures and cross-species relationships.

As I brought up earlier in my analysis, human readers might be threatened by animal narrators who do not conform to popular human understandings. Thus, the method of using meaningful animal-animal relationships for inducing empathy only works for wild animals, since humans would not be ethically threatened by seeing a wild animal depicted as an integral part of their environment. In contrast, showing wild animals as embedded within ecosystems *does* question some human practices, including support for zoos, circuses, and the exotic pet trade. Although literature from the viewpoint of a non-human animal has its drawbacks, it is able to create empathy effectively by drawing human readers into an animal’s consciousness.

If humans are willing, and even eager, to think of animals as having consciousnesses as developed and complex as humans’, I would like to question: why do we treat them the way we do? Peter Singer argues that an ‘animal liberation movement’ is necessary to change the moral status of non-human animals (3). In his piece entitled “Animal Liberation or Animal Rights?”, Singer argues:

> Once nonhuman animals are recognized as coming within the sphere of equal consideration of interests, it is immediately clear that we must stop treating hens as machines for turning grain into eggs, rats as living toxicology testing kits, and whales as floating reservoirs of oil and blubber. All these practices–and the list could be continued for a long time–are based on treating animals as things to be used for our

> advantage, without any thought being given to the interests of the animals themselves. The inclusion of animals within the sphere of equal consideration could not leave such practices intact. (5)

In literature with animal narrators, animals are often represented as "individuals with beliefs, desires, perception, memory, a sense of the future, an emotional life, preferences, the ability to initiate action in pursuit of goals, psychophysical identity over time, and an individual welfare in the sense that things can go well or badly for them" (Singer 6). Therefore, if humans acknowledge that animals have inherent value in literature, do they take on any responsibility by experiencing the consciousnesses of non-human animals? I argue that these texts do not always cause humans to feel morally responsible for changing their viewpoints on animals, because we know we are just experiencing a human-produced facsimile of animal consciousness. Another possible argument is that, despite knowing that animals have some level of consciousness, many humans still believe that human consciousness is more complex or advanced.

If I ever chose to expand this research, I would like to consider how these texts could be linked more explicitly to ethical debates regarding animals. For this project, my focus was on how the texts used narrative structures to create believable animal narrators and protagonists. However, I would be interested in considering how literature that centers or features animals could contribute to animal rights movements. Although I argue that humans do not necessarily take on complete responsibility by "experiencing" the minds of non-human animals, I do believe reading these stories does have some effect. More empathetic choices might be made in specific circumstances, including rescuing a baby rabbit, picking up a stray dog from the side of the road, or avoiding stepping on a worm. More abstractly,

these stories may encourage readers to donate time or money to an elephant conservation group or avoid buying from companies that exploit animals. Therefore, animal narrators and protagonists, although they are only imagined by humans, are enjoyable, and useful, for humans who want to feel closer to non-human animals.

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