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Studentka v teoretické části své práce představí regionální literaturu a obecně i zobrazení místa v literatuře. Do tohoto literárního kontextu pak zasadí analyzovaného autora. Dále pak bude charakterizovat zvolený region, zejména ty jeho kulturní aspekty, které budou reflektovány v praktické části. Ta bude obsahovat kritické literární analýzy vybraných primárních zdrojů.

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James Herriot: *If Only They Could Talk*. London: Pan Books, 1975.
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James Herriot: *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*. London: Pan Books, 1976.
James Herriot: *Vet in Harness*. London: Pan Books, 1976.
James Herriot: *Vets Might Fly*. London: Pan Books, 1977.
Land of Moors and Dales. London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited, 1999.
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ANNOTATION

The bachelor thesis analyses the way in which James Herriot depicted Yorkshire in selected works: namely, how he portrayed the landscape of the Yorkshire Dales and the dialect and character traits of people who lived there in the late 1930s and 1940s. To understand these aspects of the region, theoretical background regarding the North of England, Yorkshire, and the Yorkshire Dales, as well as the most important features of the Yorkshire dialect are provided as part of the thesis.

KEYWORDS

James Herriot, North, Regional Identity, Regional Writing, Yorkshire, Yorkshire Dales, Yorkshire Dialect, Yorkshire traits

NÁZEV

Yorkshire v dílech Jamese Herriota

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce analyzuje způsob, jakým James Herriot zobrazil Yorkshire ve vybraných dílech, konkrétně to, jak zobrazil krajinu Yorkshire Dales a dialekt a charakter lidí, kteří tam žili na konci 30. a ve 40. letech 20. století. Pro porozumění těmto aspektům daného regionu je součástí práce i teorie týkající severu Anglie, Yorkshire, Yorkshire Dales a také nejdůležitější znaky dialektu hrabství Yorkshire.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

James Herriot, sever, regionální identita, regionální literatura, Yorkshire, Yorkshire Dales, dialekt hrabství Yorkshire, rysy lidí v Yorkshire

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL IDENTITY AND WRITING.....	8
1. ‘UP NORTH’ OR THE REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE NORTH.....	11
2. ‘THERE’S NOWHERE ELSE QUITE LIKE IT’ OR YORKSHIRE AND THE YORKSHIRE DALES.....	15
3. ‘THERE’S NOWT WRONG WI’ REIGHT FOWK’ OR DALESMEN: THEIR DIALECT AND CHARACTER TRAITS.....	28
CONCLUSION.....	45
RÉSUMÉ.....	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	49
APPENDICES.....	51

INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL IDENTITY AND WRITING

Regional literature reflects the writer's regional identity, that part of the author's identity which says what place or region he (or she) perceives as his home, or where he feels he belongs to. Smith explains that the self is composed of multiple identities, territorial, i.e. regional identity being one of them. He also points out that regions are geographically difficult to define, and they easily fragment into localities, which further disintegrate into separate settlements.¹ It would not be hard to imagine that the initial joy of two Englishmen who meet abroad and find out that they are both from the North may slightly diminish upon the realisation that one is from Lancashire and the other from Yorkshire; if both are from Yorkshire, one may be from a post-industrial city and the other from a village in the Dales or Wolds. Despite the possible rivalry or any differences between them, they have a lot in common: they share the same collective regional identity, whether more loosely as Northerners or more strongly as both Northerners and Yorkshiremen.

This collective regional identity is usually born into but may be also 'adopted' or acquired. Urbanová says that the relationship between man and the place he calls his home finds itself along the axis of the landscape – author – literary myth: the author was either born in the region or appeared there by the workings of fate, and reflected it literarily.² Melvyn Bragg, for example, is an author born near the Lake District; and although he (like so many others) moved south, he claims that the place came south with him and figured more and more in his fiction.³ The land he was born in is part of him and his identity, which is why he returns as often as he can.⁴ Alf Wight known as James Herriot, on the other hand, grew up in Glasgow, a city where he spent the first twenty-three years of his life and which he never stopped being fond of, but he found his home in Thirsk, in Yorkshire and in the North of England: he put down his roots there and made the region part of his (other) regional identity. Even though the region of the Yorkshire Dales was not the place of his childhood, Herriot conveyed it so, as 'an Eden, a place representing the harmony between man and nature, and the harmony between the past – lost forever, yet still present – and the future.'⁵ He adopted the area of and around the Dales as his home region, one which he 'understands and where he recognizes the symbolic meanings.'⁶ In

¹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 4.

² Svatava Urbanová and Iva Málková, *Souřadnice míst* (Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita and Tilia, 2003), 16.

³ Melvyn Brygg, "The Lakes," in *Britain: A World by Itself* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1998), 106.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵ Urbanová et al., *Souřadnice míst*, 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

that sense he became a Yorkshireman over the course of years; yet his keen eye of a Scotsman unfailingly noticed the local farmers' patterns of behaviour, often bewildering at first but later put to good use in his writing, which may be termed 'regional.'

Herriot's writing meets the criteria of regional writing. Snell defines the regional novel as 'fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its people,' and he includes 'fiction with a strong sense of local geography, topography or landscape' in regional writing.⁷ Snell also explains that 'detailed description of a place, setting or region, which bears an approximation to a real place; characters usually of working or middle class origin; dialogue represented with some striving for realism; and attempted verisimilitude'⁸ are to be expected in regional writing. Snell's definition tallies with Herriot's writing: the wall-strewn hills of the Dales are described by him in such a manner that on seeing them they are immediately recognizable to a visitor acquainted with his writing. Moreover, Herriot's stories are autobiographical to a very high degree: in his father's biography, Jim Wight insists that ninety per cent of his father's stories are based upon fact and incidents and personalities who really existed,⁹ and that in fact a proportion of them originated from his own (not his father's) experience.¹⁰ This brings the level of verisimilitude almost to that of verity: Herriot described the lives of farmers and other people accurately, just as he encountered them in his veterinary profession in North Yorkshire – so accurately that the 'similitude' part of the compound word almost ceases to apply to his writing. The level of verisimilitude is so close to verity that it seems to take his writing out of the regional fiction prototype, and towards the non-fiction genre of autobiography. Due to the proportion of fabulation, however, it classifies as fiction – and more narrowly as regional fiction.

Snell offers one more definition of regional novel, that of the Yorkshire regional novelist Phillis Bentley, who said that the regional novel may be seen as

the national novel carried to one degree further of subdivision; it is a novel which, concentrating on a particular part, a particular region of a nation, depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from others in the common motherland.¹¹

⁷ Keith Snell, "The regional novel: themes for interdisciplinary research," in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Keith Snell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Jim Wight, *James Herriot: A Memoir of My Father* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 6-7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹ Snell, "The regional novel: themes for interdisciplinary research," 2.

In James Herriot's case, the particular part or region of a nation was around and in the Yorkshire Dales. His depiction makes the reader conscious of it happening there both by mentioning real place names like 'the Yorkshire Dales' or 'the Plain of York' and by the description of the landscape and the people in the period of transition from traditional to modern farming and way of life. Morris states that in her essay *Yorkshire and the Novelist* Bentley argued that 'Yorkshire fiction is characterised by an underlying realism and clearness of diction: a determined preoccupation with ordinary people and ordinary lives.'¹² This definition again tallies with Herriot's writing which was essentially a collection of clear and uncomplicated true (and thus realistic) short stories of ups and downs of a country veterinary surgeon amidst his clients, mostly ordinary people of the area. Herriot's affection, however, portrayed them and their region also as unique and exceptional.

It is Herriot's portrayal of the region which is analysed in the thesis: namely the landscape and the people. As far as the people are concerned, the focus is on their dialect and character traits. To understand the Dalesmen's behaviour, Northern and Yorkshire character traits and dialect are explored, and the character of Yorkshire and its Dales is outlined.

¹² Richard Morris, *Yorkshire: A Lyrical History of England's Greatest County* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2019), 32.

1. 'UP NORTH' OR THE REGIONAL IDENTITY OF THE NORTH

When thinking about the county of Yorkshire, two kinds of legacies mutually intertwined open up: that of the land and that of its people. They resemble two sides of the same coin; the people's character was shaped not only by the experiences of their ancestors during the region's long history but also by the physical character of their land. As Kahn puts it: 'If there really is such a thing as a typical Yorkshire personality, then it has probably been formed over the years, shaped by the region's traditional way of life, and the physical environment that sustained it.'¹³ The land, in turn, was also shaped and changed to a greater or lesser degree by successive generations of people who lived on it and from it. Both sides of the coin will be dealt with.

Nevertheless, before exploring Yorkshire and its Dales, it feels important to stress that on a larger scale, Yorkshire is part of a bigger body of land: The North of England. Yorkshire shares some characteristics with other northern counties, particularly in contrast to the South, and this applies both to the landscape and to the human character. Although the landscape of the Lake District is not the same as that of the Yorkshire highland, the level of their harshness or wildness is roughly comparable. The same is true of the people of the North: some distinctly Yorkshire character traits in fact characterise all northerners to a degree although Yorkshiremen may be more famously their possessors.

Speaking about the northern character, it is useful to try and define who the northerners are. Russel points out that it is the southern boundary which poses the problem since the east coast of the North Sea, the Welsh and the Scottish borders define the remaining three.¹⁴ He states that some scholars have given the North generous dimensions, positing the Severn-Wash line as its southern boundary.¹⁵ Crystal explains that the line is a famous isogloss which distinguishes northern speakers (who pronounce *ʊ* in words like 'cup') from southern speakers (who pronounce *ʌ*).¹⁶ Russel himself, however, adopts the core of seven historic counties as the focus of his study on the North, comprising of Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire; Cheshire being 'the most troublesome' of them all in terms of being northern but still included as 'the least problematic of the border counties.'¹⁷ Within the seven counties, Russel distinguishes between 'far North' and 'near

¹³ John Kahn, "Exploring Yorkshire," in *Land of Moors and Dales*, ed. Elizabeth Tatham and Steve Savage (London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited, 1999), 9.

¹⁴ Dave Russel, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 20015), 15.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ David Crystal, *How Language Works* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 297.

¹⁷ Russel, *Looking North*, 16-17.

North' counties – the latter being Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. Lancashire and Yorkshire, however, also belong to the 'far North' in part: the boundary line in them is drawn from Morecambe Bay across Yorkshire roughly along the Wharfe to Flamborough Head.¹⁸ Russel explains that one of the reasons for drawing the line there is the fact that it runs above the intensely industrialised areas of the two counties and draws attention to the substantial rural belt that separates the North's two major industrial clusters (south of the Ribble and north of the Tees).¹⁹ It is within this rural belt of the 'far North' that 'Herriot country' is situated. The map²⁰ in Appendix 1 shows the seven-county border of the North as well as the line dividing far and near North and the Severn-Wash line.

The North has been traditionally looked down upon by the so-called South, South-East, or London. Russel argues that the North of England has held a marginal and often problematic place within the national culture²¹ and that 'its position has been secondary, [...] called up when needed but only then, and one never able to shed its accretion of negative images.'²² Taylor shares the view when he says that the North has largely been disparaged, seen as inhabited by second-rate people who live in second-rate places in their own country.²³ It has been so despite the fact that its elements of scenic North have been enthusiastically claimed for 'Deep England'²⁴ and it has been perceived, particularly since 1950s, as 'authentic,' 'virtuous,' 'self-sustaining,' 'having the capacity to cleanse and rejuvenate,' even as 'a bulwark against the threat of [...] Americanisation.'²⁵ Russel asserts that even then the South allowed the North this space from the position of superiority, and the North's Englishness was in fact only perceived as alternative or complementary.²⁶ Taylor explains that the 'Deep England' idea is the presumption that everything good about England is rural and the Industrial Revolution was only a historical aberration, a presumption under which North sank from the land of the future in mid-nineteenth century to a working (industrial) adjunct, necessary in war but otherwise despised.²⁷ The North had long simply equalled equalled industry²⁸; and later, when the mistake of this concept was realised, the North was accepted by the South only when the so-called

¹⁸ Russel, *Looking North*, 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, xii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 267.

²² *Ibid.*, 269.

²³ Peter J. Taylor, "Which Britain? Which England? Which North?," in *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robins (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 135.

²⁴ Russel, *Looking North*, 267.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 268.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Taylor, "Which Britain? Which England? Which North?," 134-135.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

'Black England' was downplayed or turned a blind eye to. H. V. Morton, for example, said in his immensely popular *In Search of England*:

In the south of England we suffer from a false idea of the manufacturing north. [...] The commercial prominence of those recent giants, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford and Halifax, blinds us to the real north [...] Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford are the small circles in a land of abbeys, churches, castles, wild moorland and beautiful dales [...]²⁹

Similarly, Taylor cites Morton saying that 'the monster towns and cities are a mere speck in the amazing greenness of England.'³⁰ The specks or small circles, however, had been a daily experience of generations of Northerners whose toil had fuelled the English Industrial Revolution; they 'had been a major engine of British economic growth in the nineteenth century'³¹ and deserved better than to be shunned. They were neither unimportant nor unreal and their lives spent in their black and ugly cities was as English as their environs. The well-meant defence of the North which downplayed its industrial element denied a vast number of Englishmen authenticity and Englishness as though they were too unsightly for it.

Travel literature illustrates well the marginal position of the North within the country. According to Russel, of the seven northern counties often only the Lake District and Yorkshire had a guaranteed place in travel literature, as in Stanford's *Tourist Guides*' series from 1880 (out of 20 English regions) or in Dulau's *Thorough Guides* from 1902; in the *Fodor Guide 2000*'s fourteen-day *Highlights of Britain* tour, only the city of York and the Lake District were in the North.³² Taylor describes the same phenomenon when he says that in *I Saw Two Englands* (where the two meant pre-war and war England) Morton unwittingly speaks about two Englands in terms of geography: the South being full of history and taking up a large proportion of the book; the North being dreary, industrial, queer, inhabited by 'the average provincial' and gearing up to protect pre-war England,³³ in effect the South.

Moreover, Northerners have long been regarded as wild, philistine, and rebellious. Russel says that the twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury used disparaging adjectives about the earlier Northumbrian kingdom and termed Northerners 'a ferocious race of people... ever ripe for rebellion' and later, Tudor chroniclers described them likewise, as 'savage and more eager than others for upheavals.'³⁴ Naturally, these sentiments did not go unnoticed in the North, an example being the case of York citizens petitioning for a university

²⁹ Russel, *Looking North*, 53.

³⁰ Taylor, "Which Britain? Which England? Which North?," 137.

³¹ Russel, *Looking North*, 49.

³² *Ibid.*, 47.

³³ Taylor, "Which Britain? Which England? Which North?," 135-136.

³⁴ Russel, *Looking North*, 33.

in 1652 and noting that they were regarded as a rude and barbarous people.³⁵ The same feelings were conveyed three centuries later by Bentley who wrote: ‘Yorkshire people are often vexed by the attitude of more southern counties, who seem to regard us as uncultured barbarians...’³⁶ By the same token, their region was often depicted as ‘a primitive, unsophisticated place blessed with harsh climate and bleak environment.’³⁷ Russel explains that the industrialisation and its social upheavals did not create the negative picture of the North: it merely added descriptions of the horrors of northern townscapes, only sharpened the already existing negative notions; the Romantic celebrations of the countryside were secondary and did not alter the overall negative picture.³⁸ Russel compiled a remarkable table of adjectives, which compares Northern self-image to how the South see the North, and how the Northerners, in turn, see the South (see Appendix 2).³⁹ For example, the Northerners see themselves as independent, they see the Southerners as subservient, while the South deems them truculent. Similarly, they see themselves as straight-talking, see the Southerners as evasive, while the South deems them rude. Typically, the Northerners are seen as mean, see themselves as careful with money, and see the Southerners as wasteful. Another stereotype is parochial – proud of roots or identity – rootless. There are two instances when the South does not look down on the North (but the North still looks down on the South): hardworking – hardworking –wasteful; and homely – friendly/hospitable – unfriendly/unsociable. There is also one instance when everybody thinks everybody ‘a breed apart’ and only one aspect which the Northerners admit is better in the South: the weather. Russel says that ‘notions of Yorkshireness particularly influence the first and second columns’ (how the South sees the North and the Northern self-image) due to its reputation for an especially intense county pride.⁴⁰ In other words, Yorkshiremen share their perceived characteristics with other Northerners; at the same time they determine them to a great degree by means of their distinctiveness or strong regional identity. The size of Yorkshire is in all probability among the chief reasons for its leadership: being a giant, it sets the tone. It is conceivable that Yorkshiremen’s great pride in their county – and generally the Northerners’ pride in their roots – has evolved in reaction to the centuries-lasting disparaging by the South: that it is their defence against it and response to it, quite apart from the fact that there is much to be proud about as will be shown in the next chapter.

³⁵ Russel, *Looking North*, 35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

2. 'THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE QUITE LIKE IT'⁴¹ OR YORKSHIRE AND THE YORKSHIRE DALES

It has been suggested that Yorkshire covers a substantial area of Northern England. According to Morris, Daniel Defoe wrote: 'We entered the great county of York, uncertain still which way to begin to take a view of it, for 'tis a county of very great extent.'⁴² Howse says that Yorkshire is larger than any other three English counties put together,⁴³ which is why it used to be nicknamed 'the Broad Yorkshire' or 'the County of Broad Acres.'⁴⁴ It is its vast space of land that enables Howse to say that 'no English County presents such a variety of dramatic scenery as does Yorkshire.'⁴⁵ This dramatic scenery can largely be found in the two Yorkshire national parks, the North York Moors and The Yorkshire Dales, the latter immensely popularised by Herriot. Kahn aptly visualizes the shape of Yorkshire

as though it were a diamond divided into four triangular segments, which meet in the city of York, after which the entire surrounding shire was named. The Pennines run down the western side of Yorkshire and stretch across the two left-hand segments. In the lower of these, we find the region's industrial heartland – notably Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield – and the upper skirts of the Peak District; while the hilly top-left segment is roughly covered by the Yorkshire Dales.⁴⁶

Kahn's description of the two remaining segments is as follows:

The North York Moors, another major upland area, is in the top right segment, and one other minor upland area – the Yorkshire Wolds – lies between the top right and the bottom right segments. The rest of the region is low-lying: the long, wide strip in the middle, including the Vale of York, and almost all of the bottom-right segment: the hinterland of the North Sea coast and Humber estuary.⁴⁷

See Appendices 3⁴⁸ and 4⁴⁹ for maps of Yorkshire. It is easy to see the unique variety now, which Morris pins down when he states that 'no other English shire contains so many different landforms: Yorkshire is mountains, caverns, plains, precipices, chalk downs, valleys, estuaries, marshland, peat bogs and upland heath.'⁵⁰ The land of Yorkshire has continuously provided people with an abundance of resources: not only crops for sustenance and building material for Yorkshiremen's dwellings, but its beds of lead, coal and ironstone also significantly contributed

⁴¹ James Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet* (London: Pan Books, 1978), 63.

⁴² Morris, *Yorkshire*, 3.

⁴³ Geoffrey Howse, *The Little Book of Yorkshire* (Stroud: The History Press, 2017), 10.

⁴⁴ Arnold Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore* (Otley: Smith Settle Ltd., 2002), 20.

⁴⁵ Howse, *The Little Book of Yorkshire*, 4.

⁴⁶ Kahn, "Exploring Yorkshire," 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁹ Morris, *Yorkshire*, 150.

⁵⁰ Ibid., xvii-xviii.

to the rich history of its inhabitants. Yorkshire rivers gave not only water but also enabled the transportation of goods, and the North Sea provided generations of fishermen with a means of earning a living. The land has been the canvas for the painting of the rich cultural heritage of Yorkshire.

Unfortunately, the limited space does not allow to delve into Yorkshire history, so at least a few unique personalities and facts will be presented. Out of the many outstanding Yorkshiremen, five have been selected: the poet Caedmon, ‘who first among the English made verses’⁵¹; William Tuke, a York Quaker and philanthropist who founded the York Retreat, the first humane home for the mentally sick in England⁵²; the famous explorer Captain James Cook; William Wilberforce who with true Yorkshire grit campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade all his life; and Joseph Wright, a man of humble origins and immense assiduity, who became a professor of philology at Oxford and published his six-volume *English Dialect Dictionary* at his own considerable expense.⁵³ The historic county of Yorkshire has more manor houses, mansions and stately homes per square mile than any other county, ⁵⁴ one of which, Wentworth Woodhouse, has been described as ‘the greatest of Britain’s country houses’ and ‘probably the largest private house in the world.’⁵⁵ The oldest chemist’s shop in England is situated in Knaresborough⁵⁶; Sheffield FC (founded in 1857) is the world’s oldest football club⁵⁷ and the Petrifying Well near Knaresborough is England’s oldest visitor attraction (opened in 1630).⁵⁸ York Minster is the largest Gothic cathedral by volume in England and has the largest expanse of medieval stained glass in the world.⁵⁹ All these outstanding facts and people stem from as well as form the wealth of Yorkshire cultural heritage of which the Yorkshire dialect(s) and the people’s character traits are also part: they will be dealt with presently in Herriot’s literary characters set in the Yorkshire Dales. The Dales, therefore, are the focus of the following paragraphs.

The Yorkshire Dales is an upland area of the Pennines in the north-west of the historic county of Yorkshire. Historically, the southern part of the Dales was situated in the West Riding of Yorkshire and the northern part in the North Riding. Following the county reorganisation of

⁵¹ Howse, *The Little Book of Yorkshire*, 174.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵³ “About the Yorkshire Dialect Society,” Yorkshire Dialect Society, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://www.yorkshiredialectsociety.org.uk/society/>

⁵⁴ Howse, *The Little Book of Yorkshire*, 9.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁷ “The World’s First Football Club,” Sheffield Football Club, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://sheffieldfc.com/>.

⁵⁸ Howse, *The Little Book of Yorkshire*, 35.

⁵⁹ Ingrid Barton, *The Little History of Yorkshire* (Stroud: The History Press, 2019), 77.

1974, the Dales is situated in North Yorkshire but small parts also in Lancashire and Cumbria (see Appendix 5).⁶⁰ The word ‘dale’ means ‘valley’ and is one of the many words (such as ‘fell’ for ‘hillside’) which the local language absorbed during the Norse invasions.⁶¹ Due to the area’s outstanding beauty, a large part of the Dales was designated as the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 1954,⁶² and another as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Nidderdale AONB). The Prince of Wales once commented on the special qualities of the Dales saying: ‘With its potent mix of rolling fells, deep valleys, swirling rivers and limestone scars, all bound together by a rich tapestry of drystone walls, the Dales is rightly regarded as one of the most treasured landscapes in Britain.’⁶³ The area is similar to yet different from the other Yorkshire National Park, the North York Moors: Kahn explains that ‘the Moors seem to consist mainly of fells scored by occasional valleys, while the Dales seem to consist mainly of valleys divided by fells or ridges.’⁶⁴ The Dales are mostly named after their rivers, except for Wensleydale named after the village of Wensley (although its older name was Yoredale after the river Ure⁶⁵); two photographs of Wensleydale⁶⁶ are in Appendix 6. The northern valleys run from west to east, while the southern valleys run roughly from north to south.⁶⁷ Kahn describes that

viewed from on high, the terrain resembles a green, crumpled parchment: five or six main furrows (Swaledale, Wensleydale, etc.) intersected by numerous lesser wrinkles (smaller dales); the dale in each case is a deep river valley, covered no longer by ancient forests but with farms of sheep and cattle, and dotted with old stone barns and stone villages.⁶⁸

The windswept hills covered with heather moorland slope down to hillside pastures and fertile valley bottoms. There is also the dramatic scenery of caves, scars, waterfalls, and limestone pavements (which are among the finest in Britain⁶⁹). The highest hill in the Dales is Whenside (2,415 ft/736 m).⁷⁰ Only about 1% of the Dales is covered by woodland,⁷¹ but barn-strewn hay

⁶⁰ “Yorkshire Map,” The Yorkshire Ridings Society, accessed March 6, 2021,

https://www.yorkshireridingsociety.org.uk/spage-plotted_history_-yorkshire_map.html

⁶¹ John Waddington-Feather, *Yorkshire Dialect* (Clapham: The Dalesman Publishing Company Ltd., 1977), 15.

⁶² Colin Speakman, *The Yorkshire Dales National Park: A Celebration of 60 Years* (Ilkley: Great Northern Books, 2014), 7-12.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁴ Kahn, “Exploring Yorkshire,” 19.

⁶⁵ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 208.

⁶⁶ Andrew Caffrey, *Bradwell’s Images of the Yorkshire Dales* (Sheffield: Bradwell Books, 2014).

⁶⁷ “The Dales,” The Yorkshire Dales Community Website, accessed March 6, 2021,

<https://www.yorkshiredales.co.uk/the-dales/>

⁶⁸ Kahn, “Exploring Yorkshire,” 15.

⁶⁹ Speakman, *The Yorkshire Dales National Park*, 132.

⁷⁰ “The Mountains of the Yorkshire Dales,” The Walking Englishman, accessed March 6, 2021,

<http://www.walkingenglishman.com/dalesmountains.html>

⁷¹ “Features of the Yorkshire Dales,” Yorkshire Dales Online, accessed March 6, 2021,

<https://www.yorkshiredales.net/features/>

meadows were an important part of the traditional way of life. Some traditionally managed meadows contain 80 or more plant species⁷² and are a beautiful sight in late spring. Between the Yorkshire Dales and the Hambleton Hills lies the Vale of Mowbray, often mistakenly termed the Vale of York but in fact its northern continuation. The Hambleton Hills form the westernmost part of the North York Moors and were Alf Wight's favourite vantage point of the Vale and the Dales beyond, which, following the massive success of his books, became known as 'Herriot Country.'⁷³ Herriot called the Vale of Mowbray 'the Plain of York' and it is in this Vale that the town of Thirsk with the famous Skeldale House is situated. To the south-east of the Dales lie the (now post-) industrial towns of the former West Riding of Yorkshire, 'the other Yorkshire,'⁷⁴ as Herriot once remarked.

Drystone walls are one of the most characteristic features of the Dales. Speakman says that there are about

8,000 km (5,000 miles) of drystone walls in the National Park. Many [...] date back to medieval times and most were built in the last five hundred years enclosing small fields around farms using locally quarried stone. There was a massive spate of wall building from late 18th to the mid-19th century at the period of Parliamentary enclosures of the open common lands [...].⁷⁵

Trueman explains that dry stone builders rely on gravity and an educated eye instead of mortar. They start with a shallow foundation ditch and methodically lay stone upon stone. Wider stones are added to bind the wall, which is capped with flat, upright topstones ('capes' in the North Riding⁷⁶); stones in these walls may contract and expand without damaging the wall.⁷⁷ For a drawing of a Yorkshire dry-stone wall⁷⁸ see Appendix 7. Hartley and Ingilby write that the men who built them were wallers (not masons) by trade, and according to the local geology the walls were built of sandstone, limestone or slate; many were examples of craftsmanship, standing sixty to a hundred years without budging.⁷⁹ Just like the walls, houses and barns were also built using locally quarried stone.

Outlying stone barns are just as typical a feature of the Dales landscape as are the dry-stone walls. Originally they were made of wood and stone-built ones probably started replacing

⁷² Yorkshire Dales Online, "Features of the Yorkshire Dales."

⁷³ James Herriot, *James Herriot's Yorkshire Revisited* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 11.

⁷⁴ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 223.

⁷⁵ Speakman, *The Yorkshire Dales National Park*, 58-61

⁷⁶ Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby, *Life and Tradition in the Yorkshire Dales* (Leeds: The Yorkshire Archaeological & Historical Society, 2018), 131.

⁷⁷ Fred Trueman and Don Mosey, "Fred Trueman's Yorkshire," in *Land of Moors and Dales*, ed. Elizabeth Tatham and Steve Savage (London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited, 1999), 44.

⁷⁸ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 53.

⁷⁹ Hartley and Ingilby, *Life and Tradition in the Yorkshire Dales*, 131-132.

them in the early 18th century.⁸⁰ They were used for storing hay and provided shelter for cattle during the long winter. Hartley and Ingilby say that this system of farming (where the barns were built at some distance from the farmhouses) was, to their knowledge, unique in the UK. The barn was called the ‘cowhouse’ (cow’us), ‘field house’ and ‘lathe’ or ‘laithe’ and in the North Riding Dales, they were simpler and smaller, two-storey oblong buildings with two single doors (one leading into the cow shed and the other into the hay mow) and a forking hole high up. In more southern dales, the barns were much larger, with porches and double doors.⁸¹ (see Appendix 8)⁸². They were paved with cobblestones (and larger ‘settlestones’) and the ‘booses’ (standings) were partitioned by large flagstones,⁸³ although Herriot mentions wooden partitions. The man-made walls slithering over the fells and the barns scattered all over them represent the two sides of the coin: the land and the people living there; not of the whole of Yorkshire anymore, but of the specific landscape of the Dales. The way in which Herriot portrayed this landscape will constitute the content of the paragraphs immediately to follow. The people will be dealt with afterwards when the background upon which they led their hard lives has been coloured.

James Herriot was greatly surprised when he first saw the Yorkshire Dales. Russel remarks that ‘from Scotland, the whole English North looks rather like the British Midlands’⁸⁴ and indeed Herriot said that Yorkshire had always raised a picture of a county as stodgy and unromantic as its pudding. He had expected dullness and total lack of charm but as he was approaching the Dales he began to wonder: he saw grassy hills and wide valleys at the bottom of which rivers twisted and where grey-stone farmhouses lay among fields of cultivated land, and higher up the dark heather.⁸⁵ His first sighting of the dry-stone walls was as follows:

I had seen the fences and hedges give way to dry stone walls which bordered the roads, enclosed the fields and climbed endlessly over the surrounding fells. The walls were everywhere, countless miles of them, tracing their patterns high on the green uplands.⁸⁶ When he arrived in Darrowby, he found it beautiful with its pebbly river and the houses clustered thickly and further off straggled unevenly along the lower parts of Herne Fell, rearing its calm, green bulk more than two thousand feet above the village.⁸⁷ ‘There was a clarity in the

⁸⁰ “Barns,” *Out of Oblivion: Landscape through Time*, accessed March 6, 2021, <http://www.outofoblivion.org.uk/barns.asp>

⁸¹ Hartley and Ingilby, *Life and Tradition in the Yorkshire Dales*, 41.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 42-45.

⁸⁴ Russel, *Looking North*, 14.

⁸⁵ James Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk* (London: Pan Books, 1975), 15.

⁸⁶ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 15.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

air, a sense of space and airiness [...], the confinement of the city, its grime, the smoke – already they seemed to be falling away from me,’⁸⁸ says Herriot about the beginning of his romance with the county’s high corner, a romance which later extended also to its people and which never subsided: rather, it deepened with time.

The long stretches of dry-stone walls held a fascination for Herriot. There are places when he mentions them only fleetingly but they are present, for example when he describes a local man on a bicycle: ‘Sam was riding away and the strange black headwear was just visible, bobbing along the top of the wall’⁸⁹ or when he speaks about his own musings in a car, thinking about the case he was going to and noticing the walls flipping past the car windows.⁹⁰ Once a wall was a cause of a dog’s injury when it jumped over a wall and dislocated a hip.⁹¹ The stone walls also form part of his larger description of the countryside, as in the extract when Herriot first arrived in the Dales, or here:

I [...] looked out at the checkered greens of the little fields along the flanks of the hills; thrusting upwards between their walls till they gave way to the jutting rocks and the harsh brown of the heather which flooded the wild country above.⁹²

There are numerous similar examples which show that the walls were integral to the character of the hills: speaking about the Skeldale House garden, for example, he added that above and beyond it were the green hills with their climbing walls.⁹³ There was not much more than the walls to one farm high up in the Dales: ‘There was no softness up here, no frills. The stone walls, sparse grass and bent stunted trees, the narrow road with its smears of cow muck. Everything was down to fundamentals [...]’⁹⁴ Occasionally, the walls move towards the central focus of the description, for example when he comes across a group of wallers and explains that they were repairing a gap in one of the dry-stone walls which trace their patterns everywhere on the slopes of the Dales⁹⁵; or even more distinctly when he says: ‘If I had been able to paint I would have wanted to show how the walls climbed everywhere over the stark fell-sides.’⁹⁶ The walls appear in numerous descriptions of the Dales landscape, as will be also apparent later when his descriptions of the seasons of the year are presented.

⁸⁸ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 17.

⁸⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 69.

⁹⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 183.

⁹¹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 197.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 74.

⁹³ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 19.

⁹⁴ Herriot, *James Herriot’s Yorkshire Revisited*, 156.

⁹⁵ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 95.

⁹⁶ Herriot, *James Herriot’s Yorkshire Revisited*, 98.

The same applies to the barns which Herriot was only too familiar with due to his profession, and in fact the very first page of his first book starts with a description of the discomfort he had to endure working in one:

I lay face down on the cobbled floor in a pool of nameless muck, my arm deep inside the straining cow, my feet scrabbling for a toe-hold between the stones [...] no, there wasn't a word in the books about [...] the cobbles digging into your chest.⁹⁷ The same page ends with him saying that he had had to climb half a mile of white fell-side to the doorless barn where his patient lay⁹⁸; a few pages further he repeats how he rolled and grovelled on the filthy cobbles while the farmer watched him in morose silence.⁹⁹ The simple sentence 'When I had first entered the hillside barn...' ¹⁰⁰ shows nicely the lonely position of the barn out on a fell side, and there is a number of similar ones. When he first met his future wife and she led him to a calf with a broken leg, she said that they had a bit of a walk as the calf was in one of the top stone barns high on the fell side. To this Herriot adds that he knew all about these top buildings, scattered all over the high country and used for storing hay and as shelter for the animals on the hill pastures.¹⁰¹ A farmer called Mr. Kay 'pointed to a tumble down grey-stone barn at the summit of the long, steeply sloping pasture' ¹⁰² when he showed Herriot where his heifers are to be driven to; when they finally managed to gather them there, Herriot 'crashed the half door behind them,' ¹⁰³ a sentence revealing that this particular farm (like many other) was one of the bigger kind with double doors, located in the West rather than the North Riding. Herriot says that the barns were very dark places and when he opened the double door he could hardly see his patient in the dark interior heavy with the fragrance of hay piled nearly to the roof.¹⁰⁴ Another description of the dimness inside, together with an explanation for its cause, runs as follows:

The farm buildings had been built massively of stone hundreds of years ago with the simple object of sheltering the animals. Those ancient masons were untroubled by regulations about the light and ventilation and the cow byre was gloomy, thick walled, almost windowless. [...] I went in, groping my way until my eyes grew accustomed to the dim light.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰¹ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 60.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 69

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁰⁵ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 79.

There was so little light that Herriot likened the barns with their slit windows to fortresses.¹⁰⁶ They were often draughty buildings in disrepair: Herriot speaks about a ‘gaping doorway’¹⁰⁷, a ‘half-ruined barn,’¹⁰⁸ ‘broken wooden partitions’¹⁰⁹ between the cows or says that so many of them were primitive and draughty,¹¹⁰ although occasionally there were also barns with electricity instead of the usual oil lamp.¹¹¹ Just as miles of dry-stone walls, a number of barns were much later repaired under various grants and schemes.¹¹² Herriot, however, wrote about the Dales in the 1930s and ’40s when the barns were still being used for their original purpose, even though they were in a poor state.

Although from Scotland, Herriot was shocked by the cold when the first winter came and his perception of the countryside changed with the changing seasons. That is not to say that his admiration faltered in the winter: rather, the fells showed their wild and harsh side to him. He says that ‘as autumn wore into winter and the high tops were streaked with the first snows, the discomforts of practice in the Dales began to make themselves felt’ and specifies the discomforts as having to drive for hours with frozen feet and climb to high barns in biting winds, and also as ‘the interminable stripping off in draughty buildings and the washing of hands and chest in buckets of cold water, often using a piece of sacking for a towel.’¹¹³ Having returned from a farm one morning, his boss Siegfried once said that he had been in one of the high buildings where it was so cold that he could hardly breathe.¹¹⁴ The verbs and adjectives speak for themselves when Herriot says that he bumped over miles of frozen snow and climbed half a mile of white fell-side,¹¹⁵ that bitter wind whipped over the snow, stinging his eyes as he plodded down the slope¹¹⁶ or that the full force of the wind and rain struck him and the farmer as they battled towards the house.¹¹⁷ Herriot also describes real struggle with the elements when trying to get to remote farms, as for example Mr Clayton’s Pike House reachable only by crossing Pike Edge: his visit to a coughing bull turned into an unintended adventure. He says that traffic crawled laboriously between the mounds thrown up by the snow ploughs¹¹⁸ and

¹⁰⁶ James Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie* (London: Pan Books, 1976), 206.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹¹⁰ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 166.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹¹² Speakman, *The Yorkshire Dales National Park*, 62-63.

¹¹³ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 94.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹¹⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 135.

when he reached the uncleared side road, its solid, creamy, wall-to-wall filling said ‘No, you can’t come up here’¹¹⁹ as he stood gazing at the fell curving clean and cold into the sky.¹²⁰ Setting off he reflected on the fact that it was hard to relate the smiling landscape of the previous summer with this desolation: the flat moorland on the fell top was a white immensity rolling away to the horizon with the sky pressing down like a dark blanket.¹²¹ In the snow drifts, he sank over the top of his wellingtons, then a blizzard hit him and soon he began to fall into deep holes, up to the arm-pits in the snow, which reminded him of the fact that the ground was not really flat on the high moors.¹²² And although he kept reminding himself that he was not on the North Pole, he describes the chilling sense of isolation and the feeling of panic when he thought about the great stretch of moor beyond the farm. A description of almost a struggle for survival, strongly evoking Jack London’s Klondike adventures, follows:

The numbing cold seemed to erase all sense of time. Soon I had no idea of how long I had been falling into the holes and crawling out. I did know that each time it was getting harder work dragging myself out. And it was becoming more and more tempting to sit down and rest, even sleep; there was something hypnotic in the way the big, soft flakes brushed noiselessly across my skin and mounted thickly on my closed eyes. I was trying to shut out the conviction that if I fell down many more times I wouldn’t get up [...] ¹²³ Here, Herriot leaves his readers in no doubt about the harsh nature of the Dales in the winter in the 1930s and ’40s. The wind was often to blame, as when he describes an Arctic blast screaming from the east: despite his wearing a heavy overcoat and woollen gloves, the wind whipped its way right into his bones and made him gasp.¹²⁴ In the winter, the fells are described also as ‘massive, smooth and inexpressibly cold,’¹²⁵ even as ‘the most desolate stretch of country in all England’¹²⁶ - and the drifts deadly despite their satin smooth and beautiful look.¹²⁷

Not only was it cold outside in the winter but inside, too. Herriot says that he shivered in the tub in the vast, draughty bathroom [...] hopping about to keep warm,¹²⁸ that he pulled his scarf higher until it almost covered his eyes as he waited for Siegfried to give him his morning list of farm visits¹²⁹ or that the icy air of the room gripped him.¹³⁰ Once he goes as far as to say

¹¹⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 136.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 138.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Herriot, *James Herriot’s Yorkshire Revisited*, 124.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 209.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹³⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 138.

that the temperature inside did not differ from that outside.¹³¹ His son Jim (born in 1943) describes Skeldale House as having plenty of charm but being extremely cold, with perpetually moving curtains and draughts blasting up and down the long corridor.¹³² When he complained about the cold as a boy, Alf used to tell him: ‘Run, Jimmy, run!’ and he would hurtle up and down the house to keep warm.¹³³ When comparing contemporary Yorkshire weather with that of his youth, Jim says that the winters nowadays are tropical in comparison to the ones they endured when he was a boy: snow fell regularly and huge icicles hung from the gutters; the windows were white with frost and his memories of 23 Kirkgate are of the beautiful wintry patterns on the glass.¹³⁴ Indeed, Herriot mentions ‘the single large window [in the dining room] patterned with frost’¹³⁵ as one of his description of Skeldale House in winter.

Jim also remembers the massive snowfall of 1947 when it snowed almost every day from January until April, often confining his father to the house for days.¹³⁶ Herriot said about that winter that it was the year of the great snow and that he had never known snow like that, before or since: snow fell for weeks and weeks, sometimes lazily, sometimes in fierce blizzards, and obliterated all familiar landmarks.¹³⁷ Understandably, the family felt relieved when they eventually moved out of Skeldale house. The Dales, fortunately, also offered clear winter days when the sun came out. Herriot says that once a day like that even temporarily changed his negative attitude to the farm gates which he had to keep opening for himself:

These farms of many gates were places of dread [...] but this particular morning, as I got out of the car, the sun struck warm on my face and the crisp air tingled in my nostrils and, pushing back gate one, I looked around at the wide landscape, silent and peaceful under its white mantle, and blessed my good fortune. There were six of these gates, and I hopped out happily at each one, the snow crackling under my feet.¹³⁸

The thrill felt at seeing the white sunlit beauty of the Dales radiates from the extract, as it does from the following one, where the sun combined with snow improved visibility as if by magic:

Today the vast chequerboard of fields and farms and woods stood out with a clarity I had never seen before. The distance was magically foreshortened in the clear, frosty air and I felt I could reach out and touch the familiar landmarks below. I looked back at the enormous white billows and folds of the fells, crowding close, one upon another into the blue distance, every crevice uncannily defined, the highest summits glittering where the sun touched them.¹³⁹

¹³¹ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 156.

¹³² Wight, *James Herriot*, 165-166.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 105.

¹³⁶ Wight, *James Herriot*, 166.

¹³⁷ Herriot, *James Herriot's Yorkshire Revisited*, 160.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹³⁹ Herriot, *James Herriot's Yorkshire Revisited*, 38.

The Winter Dales was a region both dangerous and beautiful, both challenging and rewarding, both deadly and radiant; yet its white vastness held a threat rather than respite experienced in the summer months.

The spring came slowly and shyly to the Dales and Herriot experienced innumerable gusts of piercing wind in the spring fields. For him, spring was inseparable from, even identical with, the lambing season. In his third book, Herriot says that his second spring in the Dales was like the one before all the springs after: full of din from lambing pens high up in the fields: it was this din that announced the end of winter to him and the beginning of something new¹⁴⁰ because to him, the sound of sheep was the sound of spring.¹⁴¹ Despite the sharp winds, the expectation of warmth and hope in the air could be felt:

It was as though a breath from the nearby hills had touched me. A fleeting fragrance which said winter had gone. It was still cold – it was cold in Darrowby until well into May – but the promise was there, of sunshine and warm grass and softer days.¹⁴²

Herriot says that even though the snow still lay in long runnels behind the walls and the grass was lifeless in early spring, there was the feeling of change and almost of liberation, because he was able to shed the carapace with which he had unknowingly surrounded himself against the iron cold of the winter.¹⁴³ There was also a great difference between the low-lying parts of the Dales and places higher up. Herriot writes that driving from valley bottoms upwards he experienced almost violent transitions: the tree branches with fresh green leaves lower down were replaced by bare and wintry-looking ones, and the lush greenery by rocky hillsides with miles of limestone walls.¹⁴⁴ When resting outside, Herriot found the walls useful as a shelter behind which he could enjoy the bright spring sunshine, with the still cold wind singing above him over the wall top.¹⁴⁵ Often it feels as if a picture is being painted in front of the reader's eyes by means of words: '[...] the last red streaks in the sky, the dark purple of the enclosing fells. There was no wind, but a soft breath came from the quiet moors, sweet and fresh and full of promise.'¹⁴⁶ Herriot takes this readers to the fells and makes them feel the coming spring. Later, the Dales meadows provided an experience to the senses. Speakman says that there are few lovelier sights in England than to stand in the Dales in late May or early June and look

¹⁴⁰ Herriot, *James Herriot's Yorkshire Revisited*, 72.

¹⁴¹ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 24.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁴³ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 158-159.

¹⁴⁴ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 204.

¹⁴⁵ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 31-32.

¹⁴⁶ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk* 153.

across the rich meadows with their subtle mixture of greens, yellows, golds, pinks, even touches of purple; and that these flowers thrived in the traditionally managed meadows, i.e. from the medieval times up until the 1950s.¹⁴⁷ Herriot describes this sight: ‘Through May and early June my world became softer and warmer. The cold wind dropped and the air, fresh as the sea, carried a faint breath of the thousands of wild flowers which speckled the pastures.’¹⁴⁸ When he and Siegfried operated on a horse, they did so in a remarkable operating theatre: ‘In the early haze I looked over the countless buttercups; the field was filled them and it was like sitting in a shimmering yellow ocean.’¹⁴⁹ Understandably, late spring and particularly the summer when the weather was at its warmest seem to be Herriot’s favourite parts of the year, much looked forward to and enjoyed.

In the summer, the piercing quality of the wind was gone, and it became a refreshing agent. Herriot speaks about wind that was sweet and welcome at the top of a hill, about the fragrance of warm grass and shy flowers of moorland which the wind stole and carried to him and beyond.¹⁵⁰ In the summer, not only could magnificent views be fully enjoyed in the warm weather but the Dales became a haven, a place of rest for the troubled soul or the exhausted body, a space where Herriot could stop for a moment, take a deep breath and reconsider his life. He describes an instance when, having been kicked and bruised by cattle on a farm, he wondered whether he had chosen the right profession for himself (something he often did, particularly when the telephone rang next to him in the small hours). He stopped, got out of the car, and dropped down on the fell side. As he rested looking into the blue sky and feeling the sweet breeze play over, he realized that he preferred his job, however difficult at times, to working in an office in a city full of petrol fumes and traffic noise.¹⁵¹ He realized that he had nothing to complain about and it was the open countryside which restored his spirits and enabled him to step back from either his bodily aches or the troubles of his mind. He did so time and time again, for example when he said: ‘And I could find other excuses to get out and sit on the crisp grass and look over the airy roof of Yorkshire. It was like taking time out of my life. Time to get things into perspective and assess my progress.’¹⁵² And again: ‘[...] the peace which I always found in the silence and the emptiness of the moors filled me utterly. At these times I often seemed to stand outside myself [...]’¹⁵³ The Dales in warm weather was a place

¹⁴⁷ Speakman, *The Yorkshire Dales National Park*, 57.

¹⁴⁸ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 161.

¹⁴⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 38-39.

¹⁵⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 205.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁵² Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 61.

¹⁵³ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 31.

capable of restoring Herriot's energy and spirits; but it was also a place that he came to cherish as his home. After a demanding fortnight spent in Harrogate working for a morose colleague, he describes his journey back to the Dales as that of a prisoner set free by the highland:

As I drove across the Plain of York I began to catch glimpses [...] of the long spine of the Pennines lifting into the morning sky; they were pale violet at this distance and still hazy in the early sunshine but they beckoned to me. And later, when [...] the hedges gave way to the clean limestone walls I had the feeling I always had of the world opening out, of shackles falling away.¹⁵⁴

Strictly speaking, the world does not open out when leaving a plain for mountains: it opens out in the opposite direction. Yet for Herriot, mentally, it was the other way round; he felt that the highland delivered him from the grip of the dour couple and that it welcomed him as home. Herriot also ponders over the causes of the change to his original plans: a major change from his dreams of an ultra-modern small-animal surgery to the reality of life as a country vet travelling from farm to farm. He eventually decides that he must have given up his aspirations predominantly 'because he hadn't dreamed there was a place like the Dales.'¹⁵⁵ Actions speak louder than words and Herriot, whose words of fondness presented above speak loud enough, confirmed his words with his deeds. Alf Wight loved the Dales and Yorkshire stayed there all his life, even when it meant the loss of enormous sums of money for his family: in the late 1970s, he remained the only best-selling English author residing in England and paying the 83% tax – but also the one whose fame altered his lifestyle the least.¹⁵⁶ The Dales was a place of major importance for him: at the end of *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, he describes spending his honeymoon there, tuberculin testing cows with his new wife as his assistant and the vast, swelling glory of the Dales around them.¹⁵⁷ Later, when Alf suffered from depression, it was the Dales that helped to restore him back to health: Jim Wight says that they went on a memorable walking holiday in the Dales and the fresh air and the fell sides that Alf climbed did him much good and helped to wash away the worries that had long plagued him.¹⁵⁸ In the final years of his life, there was nothing Alf liked better than to be driven across the Dales, taking in the fresh air and looking at the places he had known for so long.¹⁵⁹ Apart from being a major character by itself, the Dales also formed the background to the colourful people that Herriot so keenly observed, and their language and personalities constitute the last part of the thesis.

¹⁵⁴ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 29.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁵⁶ Wight, *James Herriot*, 282-284.

¹⁵⁷ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 250.

¹⁵⁸ Wight, *James Herriot*, 217-220.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

3. 'THERE'S NOWT WRONG WI' REIGHT FOWK'¹⁶⁰ OR DALESMEN: THEIR DIALECT AND CHARACTER TRAITS

Language is a major means by which people manifest their identity. Jones says that 'the way we use language is inseparable from who we are and the different social groups to which we belong'¹⁶¹ and that 'whenever people speak [...], they are enacting their identities.'¹⁶² Crystal points out that speech is the most universal way of expressing our regional identity (and the cheapest), usable over distance and in the dark.¹⁶³ Therefore, whenever Yorkshiremen open their mouths and speak, their Northern and Yorkshire identity is at once revealed (unless they choose to refrain from speaking their native dialect in favour of a different one, e.g. that associated with education and power). Crystal says that people often hold negative views about dialects because of the traditional associations of the term: primitive, tribal,¹⁶⁴ and he adds that some people think of dialects as sub-standard varieties of a language, spoken only by low-status groups.¹⁶⁵ Such notions are still widespread today: Katie Edwards, for example, writes about her (and her niece's) Yorkshire dialect being 'disparaged and denigrated by those who find it uncouth, a signifier of backwardness or poor education.'¹⁶⁶ She correctly terms her variety of speech as a dialect rather than just an accent because it differs from Standard English in vocabulary and grammar as well as in pronunciation. This regional dialect is perhaps a prototypical one: Suzanne Romaine explains that a regional dialect is a variety of a language associated with a place, such as the Yorkshire dialect in England.¹⁶⁷

The Yorkshire dialect reflects the county's long history. Waddington-Feather says that the Celtic language survives only in place names: e.g. the Pennines from 'pen' meaning 'a head/a summit.'¹⁶⁸ He further explains that after the Anglian invasions, there were two sorts of Anglian dialects: Northumbrian of the Angles north of the Humber, and Mercian, the speech of the Midlands Angles; Yorkshire in 600 AD spoke entirely Northumbrian dialect but later the dialect of the Midlands asserted itself in the south and west Yorkshire.¹⁶⁹ The division line

¹⁶⁰ Peter Lindup, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Proverbs* (Skipton: Dalesman Publishing, 2019), 41.

¹⁶¹ Rodney H. Jones, *Discourse Analysis: A Resource Book for Students* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 2.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶³ Crystal, *How Language Works*, 294.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 289.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹⁶⁶ "Gerraway with Accentism – I'm Proud to Speak Yorkshire," *The Guardian*, last modified June 10, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/10/accntism-yorkshire-regional-dialects-english-snobbery>

¹⁶⁷ Suzanne Romaine, *Language in Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁶⁸ John Waddington-Feather, *Yorkshire Dialect* (Clapham: The Dalesman Publishing Company Ltd., 1977), 7-8.

¹⁶⁹ Waddington-Feather, *Yorkshire Dialect*, 11.

between these two dialects is sometimes called the Humber-Lune line; in fact it keeps moving north but a hundred years ago it ran through Yorkshire as shown in Appendix 1.¹⁷⁰ These two Anglian dialects were inflected and their nouns had genders and five cases; remnants of which can still be found in plural endings of dialect words like ‘een’ (eyes) and ‘shoon’ (shoes).¹⁷¹ Typical short dialect words derived from the Angles’ speech are ‘nobbut’ (only), ‘summat’ (something), ‘owt’ (anything) and ‘nowt’ (nothing).¹⁷²

The Danish invasions of the 9th century and the Norse invasions of the 10th century enriched the dialect enormously: it is from this time that there are fells, dales and becks (streams) in Yorkshire and Yorkshiremen say words like ‘barn’ (child), ‘haver’ (oats), ‘laike’ (play) or ‘lug’ (ear).¹⁷³ Waddington-Feather states that the Northumbrian-Mercian dialects and the language spoken by the Vikings were cousin languages and the peoples were able to understand each other; he also says that when William the Norman landed in 1066, the basis of Yorkshire’s dialects had been laid down.¹⁷⁴ He further explains that it was from Northern areas with strong Norse settlements like Yorkshire that the dropping of inflexions spread. He also claims that here originates the dropping of word endings or whole words such as the definite article ‘the.’¹⁷⁵

After the Norman Conquest, French words began to infiltrate the dialect, for example ‘cham’er’ (bedroom), ‘arran’ (spider), ‘cape’ (topstone) and ‘bonny’ (beautiful).¹⁷⁶ During the 15th century (due to the invention of the printing press) the development of Standard English (using the London dialect) accelerated and regional dialects were discredited: by late Tudor times, they had become the speech of the illiterate.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the dialect survived, and Yorkshire was the first region in the world where a dialect society (the Yorkshire Dialect Society, founded thanks to Joseph Wright’s efforts) was established in 1897.¹⁷⁸

The Yorkshire dialect shares some features with other Northern dialects, which are the absence of the vowel /ʌ/ (see the Severn-Wash line), the absence of ‘bath broadening’ (‘dance’ or ‘bath’ pronounced with /æ/), no distinction between short /ʊ/ and long /u:/ (‘pull’ and ‘pool’ do not differ in pronunciation) and monophthongising the diphthongs /ei/ and /əʊ/ (‘late’ or

¹⁷⁰ “Yorkshire Dialect – an Explanation,” Yorkshire Dialect Society, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://www.yorkshiredialectsociety.org.uk/yorkshire-dialect-explanation/>

¹⁷¹ Waddington-Feather, *Yorkshire Dialect*, 13-14.

¹⁷² Arnold Kellett, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Dialect* (Skipton: Dalesman, 2019), 9.

¹⁷³ Waddington-Feather, *Yorkshire Dialect*, 15-16.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 17-18

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21

¹⁷⁸ Morris, *Yorkshire*, 26.

‘take’ pronounced with /e:/, ‘nose’ or ‘know’ pronounced with /o:/). Further features of the Yorkshire dialect include h-dropping in the initial position, the pronunciation of /n/ in -ing suffixes, the glottal stop used to replace a medial or final /t/ or even a final /k/ and the definite article ‘the,’ and also the omission of final stops /d, t/ and fricatives /f, θ, ð/ in function words like ‘of’ or ‘with.’¹⁷⁹ As far as grammar is concerned, non-standard subject-verb agreement occurs (t’days is getting brighter) and also the preservation of the distinction between ‘you’ in the subject or object form (thou kissed her and she kissed thee); in reflexive pronouns, -self is -sen or -sel (‘yourself’ is therefore ‘’thasen’ or ‘thysen’).¹⁸⁰

To some extent, Herriot captured the dialect and its features in his writing. The dialect speech was predominantly uttered by members of the farming community; Herriot’s eloquent boss Siegfried never used it and neither did his brother Tristan (apart from the instances when he imitated the farmers). The farmers, on the other hand, are always portrayed as speaking Yorkshire to a greater or lesser degree. The tendency to monophthongise /ei/ is shown for example in the following farmers’ sentences: ‘Just tek a bit o’care and you’ll get here’¹⁸¹ or ‘[...] wash ’em or mek ’em into dusters’¹⁸² (when speaking about an old pair of underpants). In ‘I’ll haud him and you’ll have no trouble,’¹⁸³ a sentence of a horseman offering to hold a kicking horse, the diphthong /əʊ/ is monophthongised into /o:/. Phin Calvert shouted: ‘Mother! Feller ’ere wants a glass o’ beer!’¹⁸⁴ showing the h-dropping as well as the omission of a fricative in ‘of.’ Other examples of the same features, together with the glottal stop replacing the definite article, are in the sentences: ‘Bugger t’morning. Get on wi’ some work,’¹⁸⁵ and ‘Jeff Mallock’ll have ‘er in t’finish,’¹⁸⁶ a remark about an ill cow doomed to the knacker.

Jeff shows the use of ‘allus’ for ‘always’ as well as the use of the glottal stop in his diagnosis of the cause of death in a cow: ‘Stagnation o’t’lungs. I can allus tell by the look in their eyes and the way their hair lies along t’back.’¹⁸⁷ But Mallock was told off for his boasting by Mr Cranford: ‘Shut your big, stupid mouth, Mallock, tha knows nowt about it.’¹⁸⁸ The dialect was probably originally broader and Cranford also used ‘abaht’ or ‘about’ instead of the

¹⁷⁹ “Linguistic Features,” Yorkshire Dialect, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://yorkiedialect.wordpress.com/linguistic-features/>

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 135.

¹⁸² Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 160.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 145.

¹⁸⁴ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 170.

¹⁸⁵ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 95.

¹⁸⁶ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 179.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 186.

¹⁸⁸ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 186.

standard English ‘about,’ depending on whether he was from the North of the West Riding.¹⁸⁹ Another nice example of the dialectal ‘allus’ as well as the Yorkshire humour is a farmer saying ‘She allus likes to shake hands’¹⁹⁰ when laughing about a kicking cow.

‘Ta’, ‘tha’ or ‘thi’ or ‘thoo’ means ‘you’ in familiar contexts¹⁹¹ and when the singular farmer Phin Calvert asked Brigadier Julian Coutts-Browne ‘Now then, Charlie, ’ow is ta,’¹⁹² he said: ‘Hello, Charlie, how are you?’ Other examples of the familiar ‘you’ are in ‘Tha must keep it to thaself, nobody but thee and me’¹⁹³ although here again, ‘thaself’ was probably broader ‘thasel’ or ‘thasen,’ and Mr Cranford’s ‘tha knows nowt’ mentioned above. Here, the -s ending in second person singular, typical of the dialect as in ‘tha laiks’¹⁹⁴ is shown nicely, just as in ‘We want these puppies alive tha knows.’¹⁹⁵ ‘Hast-ta’ means ‘have you’¹⁹⁶ and can be seen in a well-meant question to Herriot: ‘Hasta tried a teaspoonful of Jeyes’ Fluid in a pint of old beer every two hours?’¹⁹⁷ or in ‘Hasta come to see Nudist?’¹⁹⁸ as well as in ‘Now then, lads, hasta come back for more beer?’¹⁹⁹

‘Owt’ and ‘nowt’ are among the most famous Yorkshire dialect words and are ubiquitous in Herriot’s writing: ‘There’s nowt like a bit of experience,’ one farmer informed Herriot at the very beginning of his career. Another farmer asked him: ‘But can’t you do owt better than that?’²⁰⁰ A typical blunt answer to an idea a farmer did not think wise would be ‘I’ve never heard owt as daft in me life.’²⁰¹ Herriot frequently heard ‘Can you do owt for her?’²⁰² and when a miraculously fast recovery was attained, the farmers would say: ‘I’ve never seen owt like that afore.’²⁰³ A fine example is also shown in the grumbling remark ‘Nobody does owt for nowt these days.’²⁰⁴

‘Summat’ and ‘nobbut’ are also very frequent words: ‘She’s nobbut going on three cylinders and if we don’t do summat she’ll go wrang in ’er ewer,’ one farmer told Herriot just

¹⁸⁹ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, xxix.

¹⁹⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 33.

¹⁹¹ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 180 and 183.

¹⁹² Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 168

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁹⁴ “Grammar,” *Yorkshire Dialect*, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://www.yorkshiredialect.com/>

¹⁹⁵ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 203.

¹⁹⁶ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 77.

¹⁹⁷ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 11.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁰⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 170.

²⁰¹ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 145.

²⁰² Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 33.

²⁰³ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 20.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

after his arrival in Yorkshire, adding: ‘Don’t want felon, do we?’²⁰⁵ Siegfried later explained to the baffled young vet that the cow had a blocked teat, ‘ewer’ was ‘udder’ and ‘felon’ the local term for mastitis.²⁰⁶ There were many more dialectal words like that, for example ‘nanberries’ were little dangling growths.²⁰⁷ ‘There’s summat wrong, she’s putten it out again’²⁰⁸ shouted Herriot on the telephone at Tristan when he was imitating a farmer complaining about his cow’s displaced uterus; in this sentence he also showed one of the Yorkshire past participles; other examples being ‘shutten’ (shut) or ‘getten’ (got)²⁰⁹ although Herriot reproduces it as ‘gotten’: ‘Jeff said if you’d nobbut cut tail off, that cow would have gotten up and walked away.’²¹⁰ Other non-standard verb forms are shown in sentences ‘I’ve never seen him beat yet,’²¹¹ and ‘I have all t’numbers wrote down’²¹² where the past participle is replaced with the past tense form. Double negatives are also widespread in the dialect, for example in ‘Haven’t got no ’ot water. Fire’s out’²¹³ or in ‘I didn’t have no choice.’²¹⁴

‘Nay’ means ‘no’ and ‘aye’ means ‘yes’ as in ‘Nay, you should pull on the legs now’²¹⁵ or ‘Aye, just lakin’ about down here, retired like,’²¹⁶ the latter sentence showing also the dialectal Norse word ‘lake’ or ‘laike’ for ‘play,’ although again, the words ‘about’ and ‘down’ were probably monophthongised. ‘I reckon she’ll be off to Mallock’s afore long’²¹⁷ shows ‘afore’ meaning ‘before,’ although Kellett specifies it as ‘afooare.’²¹⁸ ‘Over’ is ‘ower’ in Yorkshire, as in ‘It’s ower with him,’²¹⁹ and in ‘And ah took pains ower it an’ all.’²²⁰ It can also take on the meaning of ‘very,’²²¹ as in ‘Don’t take ower long.’²²²

‘Mi’ or ‘ma’ means ‘my’²²³ and is well illustrated (as ‘me’) in a farmer’s sentences remembering his late father’s abilities: ‘Surely there’s summat you can do [...] I poured some

²⁰⁵ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 21.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁰⁹ “Grammar,” Yorkshire Dialect, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://www.yorkshiredialect.com/>

²¹⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 181.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹² Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 71.

²¹³ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 126.

²¹⁴ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 158.

²¹⁵ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 13.

²¹⁶ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 96.

²¹⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 179.

²¹⁸ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 1.

²¹⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 206.

²²⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 183.

²²¹ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 131.

²²² Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 156.

²²³ “Grammar,” Yorkshire Dialect, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://www.yorkshiredialect.com/>

cold water down her lug 'ole. Me dad used to get 'em up in that way and he was a very clever man with stock was me dad'²²⁴; the dialectal use of Norse 'lug' for 'ear' is shown here as well. 'Un' is 'one'²²⁵ and again is one of the very frequent words, as in 'He's nobbut a young 'un'²²⁶ or in 'Damn, it allus happens to the good 'uns.'²²⁷ 'Bonny' was used about a late farmer's wife: 'She was the grandest lass for miles around and the bonniest.'²²⁸ 'Fettle' meaning 'sort out'²²⁹ is another dialectal word captured as said to a horse 'I'll bloody fettle you!'²³⁰

Four Yorkshire phrases conclude Herriot's portrayal of the Yorkshire dialect: 'middlin' means 'moderate, average,' esp. about health²³¹ as in 'Oh, middlin' lad, just middlin.'²³² Exclamations 'by gaw' or 'by gum' mean 'by God'²³³ and are very frequent, as in 'By gum, he could eat,'²³⁴ or in 'By gaw, it's working!'²³⁵ 'Fair capped' means 'really surprised'²³⁶ and was used about a bitch: 'She's fair capped wi' them pups.'²³⁷ Lastly, 'think on' means 'remember'²³⁸ and was used by a disrespectful farmer who said to the vets: 'I want a good job doin', think on!'²³⁹

It has been suggested that Herriot probably did not portray the dialect in its fullness. Herriot must have been perfectly familiar with the dialect: he was a keen observer, spent his whole adult life with the local people, and mentions explicitly the fact that he found the dialect incomprehensible to begin with.²⁴⁰ And there probably lies the answer to the question why he chose not to depict it as broad as he had heard it. Jim Wight gives an example of a dialogue impossible to decipher for an outsider: Mr Musgrove said that he had 'a beast wi' a waart i' ya pap' and tells Alf: 'Thow'd better gitten tiv'er afower she's segged i'yower!'²⁴¹ It seems likely that Herriot did not wish his readers to experience the same puzzlement as he himself had had

²²⁴ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 8.

²²⁵ "Yorkshire Sayings, Phrases and Expressions and what they mean," I'm From Yorkshire, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://imfromyorkshire.uk.com/yorkshire-sayings/>

²²⁶ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 67.

²²⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 145.

²²⁸ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 228.

²²⁹ Kellett, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Dialect*, 96.

²³⁰ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 146.

²³¹ Kellett, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Dialect*, 114.

²³² Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 56.

²³³ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 24.

²³⁴ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 85-6.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

²³⁶ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dictionary of Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 205.

²³⁷ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 205.

²³⁸ Kellett, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Dialect*, 92.

²³⁹ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 231.

²⁴⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 21 and 29.

²⁴¹ Wight, *James Herriot*, 97.

to and therefore often opted for clarity rather than perfect authenticity. It is hard to tell whether the readers' enjoyment of his stories would be the same, increased, or diminished if broader Yorkshire had been captured. For all that, he managed to convey at least the essence of the vernacular, making it possible for generations of his readers (both native and foreign) to discover the various aspects of the dialect and relish them.

The words and sentences which Herriot's clients uttered testify not only to the place where they lived but also to the kind of life they led and their character traits, the most prominent of which form the last part of the thesis. At the beginning of the thesis, Northern traits, based on the strong Yorkshire character to a large degree, were dealt with; it is conceivable that some of them were even more pronounced in Dalesmen due to the unforgiving nature of their environment. The following paragraphs are going to focus on the most important traits and show how they manifested themselves in some of Herriot's literary characters.

Although not pinpointable in Herriot's writing, one distinctive Yorkshire trait must be mentioned first: the enormous pride of Yorkshiremen in their county and its heritage. The very fact that Yorkshiremen call Yorkshire 'God's own county' or even 'God's own country' testifies to the strength of their patriotic feelings. Kahn also says that it is 'Yorkshire' to be unashamedly proud of the region and its cultural legacy.²⁴² In all probability there is no other English county which has issued its own passport: although a humorous publication – see Appendix 9 for its map of the world²⁴³ – the pride in the county and its traditions and achievements radiates from every page. It can also be seen in Yorkshiremen's jokes like: 'Yorkshire fowk'll push their way through t'Pearly Gates while other fowk stand an' stare at 'em.'²⁴⁴ Although obviously hyperbolic, the saying bears witness to Yorkshiremen's sentiments about their county.

Yorkshiremen are also famously untalkative, not fond of small talk or any talk which bears little meaning. This attitude is reflected in Yorkshire proverbs which convey contempt for excessive speaking: 'E talks – an' 'e says nowt'²⁴⁵ or 'Fowks 'at think least, talk mooast.'²⁴⁶ Some proverbs go as far as to advise not saying anything at all, e.g. 'Whativver question thoo gits axed, know nowt.'²⁴⁷ It is natural that in an environment where people had to toil to survive, work rather than words was appreciated, which is why many of the farmers Herriot came into

²⁴² Kahn, "Exploring Yorkshire," 9.

²⁴³ Adrian Braddy, *Yorkshire Passport: Blue Edition* (Skipton: Dalesman, 2018), 26-27.

²⁴⁴ Lindup, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Proverbs*, 112.

²⁴⁵ Kellett, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Dialect*, 40.

²⁴⁶ Lindup, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Proverbs*, 86

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

contact with said little. In the first chapter of his first book, Herriot introduces his readers to Mr Dinsdale: ‘The farmer was a long, sad, silent man of few words...’²⁴⁸ The shepherd who led his herd uphill was the same. When he saw Herriot inexplicably crash into a dry-stone wall right in front of him, he just passed him without saying a word:

I suppose some people would have asked me what the hell I was playing at, but not a Dales shepherd. He went quietly by without invading my privacy, but when I looked in the mirror after a few moments I could see him in the middle of the road staring back at me, his sheep temporarily forgotten.²⁴⁹

Similarly, when Herriot bathed himself in Mrs Hall’s pink bath salts in a desperate attempt to rid himself of the relentless muck smell and then had to strip off at calving, the distinctively feminine smell made the onlooking farm workers sniff incredulously and stare open-mouthed, yet none of them spoke.²⁵⁰ Herriot also tells his readers that the farmers commonly limited their communication with the vet to a few words scribbled on a label tied to a cow’s tail, as for example Mr Bellerby whose label just said ‘Felon, back quarters’²⁵¹: they communicated their message silently. Old Boardman, a Skeldale House inhabitant, appears to be a typical silent Yorkshireman; when he does say a sentence or two, it is only to the charming Tristan. Boardman lived inconspicuously in the servant’s quarters of the house and silently put his hand to whatever work was just needed. Herriot says about his unexpected clearing of the snow: ‘In the yard I found that old Boardman had done a tremendous job in his quiet way; he had dug open the big double doors and cleared a way for the cars to get out.’²⁵² Women were just as Yorkshire as their male counterparts in this respect: when Herriot first arrived in Skeldale House, the housekeeper and cook, Mrs Hall, opened the door to him and just nodded after he introduced himself,²⁵³ not wasting a single word. When Siegfried used to disappear and miss his meals, she would remove his food without comment.²⁵⁴ Miss Bramley is another example of a woman of few words. She lived on a remote farm with her unmarried brothers and was emotionally attached to her cats which at one point contracted an incurable disease and one after another died. Herriot managed to save some of her kittens by means of a brand-new vaccine which he had heard of and had requested from a laboratory in Leeds. He asked Miss Bramley to inform him about the results, and after a long time she pushed a concise letter through his door: ‘Dere

²⁴⁸ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 9.

²⁴⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 127-128.

²⁵⁰ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 224.

²⁵¹ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 80.

²⁵² Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 135.

²⁵³ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 19.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

Sir, Them kittens is now big cats. Yrs trly, R. Bramley.’²⁵⁵ In a true Yorkshire manner, she thought it inappropriate to waste words and expressed herself economically. The affluent Mrs Pumphrey was an exception, she was much more talkative than her working-class employees but her wealth caused her to belong to a different world and have nothing in particular to do – the Yorkshiremen in her employ are portrayed as speaking little, whether it be her cook who said nothing at all, communicating her frustration only by means of body language after a piglet was placed in her kitchen²⁵⁶ or old Hodgkin who will be portrayed presently. Often, the Dalesmen considered it improper to speak while eating: ‘I had learned enough of Dales ways to keep quiet at meals,’²⁵⁷ says Herriot whose attempts at small talk during mealtimes had been repeatedly met with questioning and disapproving glances.

Being sparing with words, Yorkshiremen are also very reserved, preferring understatement to exaggeration (with the exception of the God’s own county subject). The farmer who Herriot managed to reach after the snow storm had hit him, quite unmoved by Herriot’s snowman-like appearance, just remarked that it was a plain sort o’ day.²⁵⁸ Another farmer merely said: ‘Your brakes aren’t ower savage, mister’²⁵⁹ after crashing into a wall with Herriot’s car because the brakes were out of order. Another farmer, whose cow had eaten a nail and who was passing instruments to Herriot during the operation, just whistled to himself all the time and his only words were ‘ello, ’ello’ when Herriot produced the nail from the cow’s stomach.²⁶⁰ Similarly, Mr Crump did not boast about the hours he had spent massaging his horse’s legs in an effort to ease the swelling and just said: ‘Aye, ah did as you said’²⁶¹ but an experienced eye could read pleasure in his face when Herriot expressed astonishment at the improved condition of the horse. In the same way, the reserved Yorkshire nature shows in Mrs Hall: Herriot said that he could tell when she was really pleased – she almost smiled.²⁶² One of the most telling examples of Yorkshire reservedness is Herriot’s description of an old brass band conductor who appeared entirely motionless while conducting at a country show:

The Yorkshireman’s loathing of exhibitionism or indeed any outward show of emotion made it unthinkable that he should throw his arms about in the orthodox manner. [...] Even the most imperceptible twitching of the finger-ends had something guilty about it as if the old man felt he was being caught out in something shameful.²⁶³

²⁵⁵ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 188.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁵⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 147.

²⁵⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 139.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁶¹ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 50.

²⁶² Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 30.

²⁶³ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 74.

In his father's biography, Jim Wight confirms that in Yorkshire, people kept their feelings to themselves and that it took Alf some time to get used to it.²⁶⁴ Which he did but he remembered his initial feelings of bewilderment, and described them in his amusing stories decades later.

When already saying something, Yorkshiremen are famously straight-talking and blunt because of their practical and down-to-earth by nature: they speak their mind without beating about the bush. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote about them: 'Their accost is curt, their accent and tone of speech blunt and harsh. [...] The dwellers among them must be prepared for certain uncomplimentary, though most likely true, observations pithily expressed.'²⁶⁵ To a southern and/or unaccustomed ear, their straightforward approach often sounds rude and is one of the most parodied Yorkshire traits. Herriot's wife's father, Mr Alderson, is a perfect example of a straight-talking Yorkshireman. He said nothing at all at the beginning of the tea to which Herriot had been invited; when the subject of glucose treatment of lambs arose, he grunted: 'I think nowt to glucose. I've had a go with it and I think nowt to it.' A moment later, when the subject was changed to a new vaccine, he said: 'I think nowt to the vaccines. And those sudden deaths you're on about – they are caused by wool ball on t'stomach. Nowt to do wi' the kidneys.'²⁶⁶ Mr Alderson hardly ever spoke but when he did he left no one in doubt about his opinion and cared little whether it suited the listeners or not. And again, women were no less direct. Mrs Cooper, for example, rapped out at the soaked-through Herriot in her kitchen: 'All right, off with the socks' and then 'put your feet in this,' after placing a bowl of steaming water in front of him. Next, a cup of tea landed in his hands and soon afterwards she pushed his chair and his bowl towards the table in silence.²⁶⁷ The strong, down-to-earth woman was fully in charge, and expressed herself clearly when already saying a sentence or two. It has been said that Yorkshiremen's bluntness may sound rude or border on rudeness, and three examples will now demonstrate this. Arriving late, Herriot was welcomed by a farmer snapping: 'This isn't one o'clock, Maister!' and was told off for the mess the cows had made while waiting for him inside. Later, when Herriot suggested that he would take a milk sample from one of the cows to test it, the farmer said: 'Please yourself. There's nowt wrong with her but I suppose it'll make a job for somebody.'²⁶⁸ Another example is Mr Worley who was originally a city newsagent and later an inn keeper in the Dales. His response to a customer who asked him for a cup of tea was clear

²⁶⁴ Wight, *James Herriot*, 97.

²⁶⁵ Morris, *Yorkshire*, 31.

²⁶⁶ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 45.

²⁶⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 147.

²⁶⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 75.

and curt: 'You can 'ave some, maister, but when I'm ready.'²⁶⁹ Mr Worley was a good-hearted man but his ginger pigs were all that mattered to him and he was still speaking about them to Herriot when the customer butted in with the trivial matter of his order. Being a Yorkshireman, Mr Worley showed his displeasure without unnecessary verbiage. Old Hodgkin, on the other hand, probably valued his job with Mrs Pumphrey too much to voice his views aloud yet at the same time found it impossible to say nothing to the nonsense around him. He solved the problem by swearing silently and only his lips moved when he supervised Mrs Pumphrey's dog's and pig's play times and when he threw rubber rings to the Pekinese. His true nature, however, eventually revealed itself anyway when Mrs Pumphrey saw him laugh (for the first time in 24 years) at the collapse of the little dog. Hodgkin hated his ridiculous tasks and his practical disposition suffered greatly having to look after the pet dog and the pig which could never be hoped to turn into pork pies just because of his employer's eccentricity.²⁷⁰ The farmers' habit of expressing themselves openly also showed when they laughed without restraint at other peoples' misfortunes. Herriot once managed to escape a kicking cow by a hole in the byre wall and he later related the incident to the farmer:

Even the friendliest farmer seems to derive pleasure from a vet's discomfiture and Mr Bell listened with an ever-widening grin of delight. By the time I had finished he was doubled up, beating his breeches knees with his hands.²⁷¹

Herriot also recalled that farmers laughed for weeks after a colt's hooves landed on Mr Kenny's head and he spent weeks in hospital with a fractured skull,²⁷² which seems rather extreme; but they probably did not laugh so much at his fractured skull as at the fact that the incident happened while Mr Kenny was demonstrating the advantages of the new standing castration method. Be that as it may, they did not feel the need to conceal their amusement, just as they did not hesitate to express their views openly.

The next character trait to be dealt with is Yorkshire toughness, the ability to work hard and endure hardship. Their hardiness goes hand in hand with perseverance, which is in turn related to stubbornness and independence. Willie Riley wrote that dogged perseverance and great strength of will (along with sound judgement and ready wit) characterise Yorkshiremen²⁷³; Gaskell wrote that they possess a remarkable degree of self-sufficiency which gives them an air of independence, relying upon themselves rather than any outside help, and

²⁶⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 44.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁷² Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 162.

²⁷³ Braddy, *Yorkshire Passport*, 41.

that they are characterised by dogged power of will.²⁷⁴ Herriot wondered many a time how some of the farmers were able to scrape a living from their limited resources; it was their Yorkshire determination and willpower that helped them to persist. Many of them were hard to convince and stubborn in their views, but that may be viewed simply as the reverse side of their toughness. Bishop Eric Treacy said about them: ‘Yorkshiremen are suspicious, obstinate, [...] nonconformist and blunt – and I like them as they are.’²⁷⁵ The Yorkshiremen’s tendency to go determinedly their own way emanates from Treacy’s utterance. Kahn also says: ‘It is Yorkshire to be doggedly and enduringly stubborn.’²⁷⁶ Yorkshire proverbs also reflect the past generations’ hard work and adversity. ‘Where there’s muck there’s brass’²⁷⁷ is one of the best-known Yorkshire proverbs reflecting the fact that for generations, Yorkshiremen earned their living doing dirty and unpopular jobs. Perseverance in spite of hardship is encouraged in the saying: ‘Doon’t fret ovver a small crisis – there’ll soon be a bigger un to worry abaht’²⁷⁸ because ‘misfortunes never come singly.’²⁷⁹ Independence is praised in: ‘Thou mun mek the most o’thissen; it’s all tha’s getten.’²⁸⁰ And Dalesmen lived these proverbs. Herriot writes: ‘They had a toughness and a philosophical attitude which was new to me. Misfortunes which would make the city dweller want to bang his head against a wall were shrugged off with ‘Aye, well, these things happen.’’²⁸¹ Some Dalesmen were big, strong and tough physically as well as mentally but many of them (and perhaps the majority) were slender and sinewy and Herriot often expressed wonder at how they could have coped with the demands of the farming life. Terry Watson is an example of such a man. Herriot writes: ‘I looked at the slender figure and I thought, not for the first time, that he didn’t look robust enough for his hard trade.’²⁸² Terry was a farm worker in his early twenties, had a wife and a small baby and daily started working for himself only after a day’s work on someone else’s farm was over. When one of his cows had mastitis, Terry wanted to know if there was anything he could do after Herriot’s departure. He was told to rub and strip the udder as often as possible. Harry applied himself to the job: he sat by the cow all night and achieved the impossible: there were no signs of illness the following morning when Herriot arrived and Terry was about to set off for work instead of getting some

²⁷⁴ Morris, *Yorkshire*, 32.

²⁷⁵ Braddy, *Yorkshire Passport*, 41.

²⁷⁶ Kahn, “Exploring Yorkshire,” 8.

²⁷⁷ Lindup, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Proverbs*, 73.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁸¹ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 57.

²⁸² Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 34.

rest.²⁸³ There was a tough and determined spirit in his slender body. Another example is the old horseman Cliff Tyreman. Herriot says: 'In a community where toughness and durability was the norm he stood out as something exceptional.'²⁸⁴ He was small and wiry, but the wildest horse was as meek as a lamb when Cliff held it. Although he was seventy, he had the air of a middle-aged man because he stayed young in spirit. He loved horses, had worked with them all his life but did not complain when he saw them disappear in favour of tractors. When the last horse died, Herriot told Cliff that he had heard about the farmer getting some sheep and Cliff becoming their shepherd. Cliff's invincibility radiates from his reply: 'Aye, I don't mind learnin' summat new. I'm nobbut a lad yet!'²⁸⁵

Unlike Terry and Cliff, the Copfield brothers were solidly built men, with wide shoulders, wrestlers' arms, and thick legs.²⁸⁶ Herriot describes how they fought their cattle which threw them about like dolls, their cigarettes dangling from their mouths' corners all the time. They took the job as a game, shouting encouragement at each other, and threw themselves on top of their calves to bring them down for injections.²⁸⁷ They were as tough as their own cattle. The Allen brothers were the same. Herriot says: 'I had been watching all morning in something like awe as they man-handled the wild, scattered beasts, chasing and catching tirelessly hour after hour.'²⁸⁸ Another interesting pair of brothers were the Bennisons, but each of them was different: Maurice was medium-sized but George was huge, yet it was George who fainted at the sight of the injection needle, after which, at Herriot's request, Maurice and his father hauled him away by the ankles, his head beating on the cobbles. They were then willing to sit George up but flatly refused to give him a drink, saying they needed to get on with the job.²⁸⁹ Had it been up to them, George would have lain next to the cow the whole time. The veterinary surgeon who Siegfried bought the surgery from was eighty when he stopped working²⁹⁰ and worked single-handed, for sixty years, in all weathers. He only stopped working because he found it hard to attend to the cattle at night: he was a Yorkshireman as tough as his clients. When the lambing time arrived, Herriot shivered stripping off in the wind and rain but the shepherd spent days with his sheep, which is why he had a 'purpled, weather-roughened

²⁸³ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 33-36.

²⁸⁴ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 147.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁸⁶ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 58.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁸⁸ Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 246.

²⁸⁹ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 101.

²⁹⁰ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 35.

face almost hidden by the heavy coat which muffled him to the ears²⁹¹ and his hands were ‘huge, rough and swollen with the years of work.’²⁹² He had to be as tough as his sheep which were as different as people to him and which, as Hartley and Ingilby say, ‘have extraordinary powers of survival: when overblown with a sudden snowstorm, they may live for weeks.’²⁹³ Dick Rudd, Tim Alton and John Skipton could be also considered the epitome of Yorkshire determination, toughness and independence. Dick was very tough and very likeable. He did not find it difficult to cycle for miles to the surgery and back, in rain and after a sleepless night spent with his cattle. Although he and his wife had seven children, they were very hospitable. When their only pedigree cow Strawberry was dying, it was he who comforted the vet (and not vice versa) saying: ‘Never mind, lad, you’ve done everything anybody could do.’²⁹⁴ Herriot says about him: ‘He seemed to embody the best qualities of the Dalesman; the indestructibility, the tough philosophy, the unthinking generosity and hospitality.’²⁹⁵ Tim Alton was similar to Dick. He had a small farm on a windswept hill, a few acres of land with flattened grass. He made his living by selling milk from his few cows to bigger dairies and by making butter.²⁹⁶ Herriot describes his face as they sat in the farm kitchen:

... for a moment he closed his eyes and his face became a mask of weariness. [...] Alton was only forty but his body was already bent and ravaged by the constant demands he made on it; you could read his story on the corded forearm, the rough, work-swollen fingers.²⁹⁷

But Tim’s face showed more than tiredness when he looked at his daughter: ‘I saw a serenity in his eyes, a nobility in the seamed face,’²⁹⁸ says Herriot. What little Dick and Tim managed to earn, they shared with their family; John Skipton, on the other hand, managed to accumulate incomparably more but had no one to share it with. He was an admirable man and one to be pitied at the same time; he started off as an agricultural labourer and eventually became a wealthy and respected landowner. Herriot explains: ‘The miracle hadn’t happened easily; old John had a lifetime of grinding toil behind him which would have killed most men, a lifetime with no room for a wife or family or creature comforts.’²⁹⁹ But he had also acumen in agricultural matters and a mind of his own: ‘When all t’world goes one road, I go t’other,’³⁰⁰ he used to say

²⁹¹ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 160.

²⁹² Herriot, *Let Sleeping Vets Lie*, 15.

²⁹³ Hartley and Ingilby, *Life and Tradition in the Yorkshire Dales*, 65.

²⁹⁴ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 149.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 206-207.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

and his stubborn independence yielded good results. Yet Herriot remarks that although he had conquered, he himself seemed to have been conquered in the process; he was always on the trot, never stopped working and when Herriot came to see his horses, he was wearing a tattered buttonless coat secured by binder twine.³⁰¹ The only creatures that John found time for were two very old horses which they spent their days by the river and which John visited every single day of the year. ‘They were two slaves when I was a slave,’³⁰² he explained to Herriot. John was very tough, and probably too tough, too stubborn, and too hard-working.

The last character trait to be dealt with is generosity or the lack of it. A Yorkshireman is a Scotsman with all generosity squeezed out of him, goes the well-known saying. ‘You mustn’t believe all these stereotypes,’ warned a laconic Dalesman. ‘They’re all true, you see’³⁰³: Kahn explains that it is very Yorkshire to be economic with your ‘brass’ (and to have a dry sense of humour).³⁰⁴ It is small wonder with proverbs like: ‘Nivver give it.’³⁰⁵ Yet the answer to the question if Yorkshiremen are portrayed as mean by Herriot is not easily answered. Jim Wight says in his memoirs about Alf that he (as Herriot) did not exaggerate when he described the trouble they had with their slow-paying clients: some of them owed the practice large sums of money for years. Jim reproduces one of their conversations (when Jim was already a qualified vet in their practice): ‘I met two grand blokes today, Dad! Full of laughs with hardly a care in the world.’ Alf asked who they were and when he heard the names he replied: ‘You know why they are so happy? They receive a prompt service for which they pay me very infrequently. They receive totally free overdraft facilities from our practice.’³⁰⁶ Jim adds that many clients never paid at all, which is why Alf had many a good story to tell about the Yorkshiremen’s reluctance to part with their brass.³⁰⁷ Herriot explained that money had always been a barrier between the farmer and the vet and that this barrier was even more perceptible after the NHS and free agricultural advisory service were established: the vet remained the only man to be paid.³⁰⁸ When going over the quarterly bills, Herriot’s boss Siegfried said about their client Henry Bransom: ‘More than two years since we saw a penny of his money, yet he lives like a sultan.’³⁰⁹ Another client of the sort was Old Summers: ‘I bet he’s got thousands of pounds

³⁰¹ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 94.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁰³ Kahn, “Exploring Yorkshire,” 9.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁰⁵ Lindup, *The Little Book of Yorkshire Proverbs*, 5.

³⁰⁶ Wight, *James Herriot*, 231.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 232.

³⁰⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet*, 156.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

hidden under his bed but by God he won't part with any of it to me.'³¹⁰ They were not the only ones and Bert Mason's bill received this comment: 'I saw him driving past the surgery yesterday in a brand new car. The bloody scoundrel!'³¹¹ Major Bullivant went as far as not pay anyone at all: he was a man of immense presence and managed to persuade everybody to work for him for free, being 'a genuine artist' and a 'master of his chosen craft.'³¹² Major Bullivant was a singular character but Siegfried, in accordance with Jim Wight's experience described above, admitted that a lot of non-payers were in fact very charming people. Dennis Pratt, for example: he was always ready to laugh and was very hospitable, always having a thermos flask with hot coffee ready for the vets on cold days and always asking them in afterwards to sample his wife's baking. Some Dalesmen, like Dennis Pratt, were generous as far as food and drink was concerned, yet quite the opposite when they were supposed to give money: they managed to be both generous and mean. It may be that money has a special place in a Yorkshireman's mind due to the hard times so many Yorkshire families experienced in the past. The sound of money was even capable of bringing a Dalesman round, as Henry Dickson once demonstrated. Henry pushed a ten-shilling note into Herriot's pocket for an operation on his pig but Herriot was unable to give him the change as his hands were already clean; when the operation was over and Herriot gave him the wrong change, Henry woke up and he shouted: 'Hey! I want another shillin'!'³¹³ It is true that Herriot also describes people who were downright mean, like Mr Cranford, a prosperous farmer who tried to talk Herriot into an insurance fraud³¹⁴ or Mrs Griers who was as dour and mean as her (Scottish) husband and saw waste in everything Herriot did while he was helping them (for free) during old Grier's illness.³¹⁵ It is also true that Herriot describes the farmers on bill-paying days as moaning about the vets being 'ower heavy wi' t'pen' and wanting 'bit knockin' off.'³¹⁶ Just as it is true that Herriot characterises the region as one where thrift was general³¹⁷ and where ten per cent of people did not pay their bills,³¹⁸ as explained above. But whether this figure was higher or lower than that of other practices in other parts of the country and whether there were more (or indeed fewer) misers in Yorkshire than elsewhere remains open.

³¹⁰ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 157.

³¹¹ *ibid.*

³¹² *ibid.*, 158-159.

³¹³ *ibid.*, 106.

³¹⁴ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 182-188.

³¹⁵ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 22-23.

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, 162.

³¹⁷ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 182.

³¹⁸ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 156.

What is clear, on the other hand, is the fact that a lot of Herriot's clients were very hospitable people who offered him bottles of beer (or home-made wine), invited him in for meals and placed sausages, 'bit o' butter,' eggs, pies, scones, cabbage and other farm produce and products in Herriot's car during his visits. The Rudds, for example, never missed the opportunity, although they undoubtedly found it difficult to make ends meet. One of Herriot's stories was about a poor pensioner who ran after him with an old cigar, the only thing he managed to find in his desperate attempt to reward Herriot for his visit³¹⁹; and another pensioner was full of apologies when he realized that his bill had not been paid.³²⁰ Some Dalesmen were very generous and sometimes it seems that the poorer they were the more generous they tended to be. The truth is, however, more complicated as some of Herriot's wealthy characters were very magnanimous. Mrs Pumphrey, for example, lavished Herriot with gifts at every opportunity. The level to which Yorkshiremen resisted the temptation of meanness was therefore highly individual, and not everyone seems to obey the Yorkshireman's motto: 'Ear all, see all, say nowt; Eyt all, sup all, pay nowt; An' if ivver tha does owt fer nowt – do it fer thissen!'³²¹

Herriot describes Dalesmen as admirable Yorkshiremen, tough to the point of indestructability, reserved, blunt, independent, down-to-earth, thrifty but hospitable, as people whose carefully given friendship he valued immensely. Jim Wight says that his father's writing was not just a collection of stories about animals and vets: the stories were a background to a description of many different lives.³²² The Yorkshire traits of these lives were undoubtedly one of the reasons why Herriot's books were so extremely successful.

³¹⁹ Herriot, *If Only They Could Talk*, 88.

³²⁰ Herriot, *It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet*, 162.

³²¹ Kellett, *The Yorkshire Dialect, Tradition and Folklore*, 212.

³²² Wight, *James, Herriot*, 263.

CONCLUSION

Regional identity is one of the many identities that any author has, and it is either born into or acquired during the author's lifetime, the latter being Alf Wight's aka James Herriot's case. Herriot's writing may be safely termed regional as it meets all criteria for regional, as well as for Yorkshire regional writing.

Yorkshire is part of the North of England: it shares its identity features with other Northern counties and determines them to a large extent. The North of England as a whole holds an inferior position within the nation: it is disparaged by the South, deemed uncouth, industrial, and philistine, in spite of its contribution to the wealth of the nation, its scenic beauty, and its perceived virtues such as authenticity and self-sufficiency.

The historic county of Yorkshire takes up a large part of northern England and is very varied: it includes three upland areas as well as large low-lying parts and a variety of natural phenomena, many of which are situated in the two Yorkshire's National Parks. Its cultural legacy is just as rich, making Yorkshire unique in many ways. One of the three upland areas is the Yorkshire Dales, situated in the north-west of Yorkshire and formed by several large valleys intersected by smaller ones. Due to its beauty, most of the Dales was designated as a National Park. Fell sides with fields, pastures, and moorland, with miles of dry-stone walls and thousands of outlying barns are typical features of the Dales landscape, and therefore central to Herriot's description of the Dales. The nature of the Dales changed greatly with the changing seasons. Herriot describes the winter Dales as beautiful but very harsh and the spring as cold but hopeful. In the summer, the peace of the Dales could be enjoyed fully and provided Herriot with a space where his inner peace could be restored and distance from pressing problems attained. The Dales was also home to many interesting Dalesmen.

Their dialect is a Northern regional dialect which reflects the county's long history. Herriot's characters are shown to be speaking it, although in reality their dialect was probably broader. Many Yorkshire proverbs and sayings reveal not only the dialect but also Yorkshire values and character traits, the most important of which are being patriotic, untalkative, reserved, straight-talking, tough, and determined (and stubborn if need be), thrifty and hospitable. Except for patriotism, all the Yorkshire traits are shown in Herriot's literary characters, whose nature was probably a key element in the popularity of Herriot's writing and whose Yorkshire (and Northern) hardiness has been inspiring for generations of Herriot's readers.

RÉSUMÉ

Regionální identita je ta ze složek identity každého člověka, a tedy i každého autora, která vypovídá o tom, kde se autor narodil nebo kde se cítí být doma. Tato část identity je většinou vrozená, ale delším pobytem v regionu, který není autorovým rodištěm, ji lze také během života získat. To je případ Alfa Wighta, který psal pod pseudonymem James Herriot. Alf Wight vyrostl ve skotském Glasgow, ale byl to sever Anglie, hrabství Yorkshire a hornatá krajina Yorkshire Dales, kde našel svůj druhý domov a které literárně ztvárnil. Knihy Jamese Herriota mohou být právem považovány za regionální literaturu, protože splňují všechna kritéria, která regionální literaturu vymezují. Zároveň splňují i kritéria platná konkrétně pro regionální fikci hrabství Yorkshire. Cílem práce je zjistit, jakým způsobem Herriot zobrazoval hrabství Yorkshire, a přesněji jeho část Yorkshire Dales, z hlediska krajiny a jejích obyvatel, u nichž je zacíleno na dialekt a charakterové rysy.

Předtím, než se práce zaměří na Yorkshire, poukazuje na fakt, že toto hrabství je součástí většího celku, s nímž sdílí regionální identitu většího měřítka, a to je sever Anglie. Jižní hranice anglického severu se definuje obtížně a názory badatelů se zde různí, nicméně hrabství Yorkshire je jeho součástí vždy a v Russelově pojetí je jeho severní neindustrializovaná část zároveň součástí tzv. dálného severu Anglie. Právě do této venkovské oblasti, kde začíná anglický dálný sever, jsou zasazena Herriotova díla. Sever Anglie má po staletí v celonárodním měřítku druhořadé postavení, které mu přisoudil vlivný jih země, a to i přesto, že tento v různých obdobích objevoval kladné stránky severu, jako např. jeho oblasti s překrásnou přírodou nebo zemitost jeho obyvatel, která postupem moderního věku nabývala na přitažlivosti. Jih Anglie těžko chápe, že sever není jen průmysl, nebo naopak jen kouzelná příroda s ruinami klášterů, ale kloubí v sobě obojí. Jih se již po staletí dívá na sever spatra a považuje jeho obyvatele za neotesané barbary; je proto možné, že některé rysy severanů, jako např. obrovská hrdost na svou část země, jsou zčásti odpovědí na toto pohrdání. Zcela jistě však ne zcela, protože přírodní, ale i kulturní bohatství severu je velké.

Ve zmenšeném měřítku lze toto bohatství vidět na historickém hrabství Yorkshire, které samo o sobě zabírá velkou část severu Anglie. Yorkshire disponuje třemi oblastmi vrchoviny, z nichž ve dvou jsou národní parky (The Yorkshire Dales National Park a The North York Moors National Park) a část Yorkshire Dales byla prohášena za oblast výjimečné přírodní krásy. Dále jsou v něm rozsáhlé oblasti úrodných rovin a část pobřeží Severního moře. Všechny tyto části sehrály úlohu v historii hrabství, jíž se bohužel práce z prostorových důvodů nemůže zabývat. Zmiňuje tedy alespoň několik unikátních faktů a osobností zde narozených a upírá

další pozornost na část hrabství spjatou s Herriotem, tedy Yorkshire Dales, jejichž drsnou krásu Herriot zprostředkoval celému světu. Dales, v překladu „údolí,“ jsou umístěna v severozápadní části hrabství a sestávají z několika velkých údolí protnutých údolími menšími. Dales jsou kopce, na nichž směrem vzhůru pole přecházejí v louky a ty ve vřesoviště. Typickými znaky Dales jsou všudypřítomné nasucho stavěné zdi a bezpočet odlehlých stodol, které se používaly na prezimování dobytka a uskladnění sena. Nasucho stavěné zdi v Dales Herriotovi učarovaly, a proto tvoří součást mnoha jeho popisů krajiny. Někdy se ocitají v ústřední části popisu, jindy jsou zmiňovány jen mimochodem, ale přítomné jsou stále. To samé platí i o stodolách, které Herriot znal intimně díky své profesi veterináře; v popisech krajiny nemohou chybět. Byly často v chatrném stavu, táhlo do nich a byla tam tma, ale stále ještě sloužily svému původnímu účelu. Herriot popisuje, že v zimních měsících byl problém se k nim vůbec dostat a že zažíval krušné chvíle, když se v nich musel svlékat do půl těla, mýt se v ledové vodě a otírat pytlou. Zimy byly v té době v Yorkshire mnohem studenější, než jsou nyní, plné sněhu a nebezpečné. Přesto (nebo právě proto) byla zimní krajina v Dales krásná. Jaro znamenalo pro Herriota rození jehňat a jejich bekot na stráních, kde ještě vládl studený vítr, ale konec jara a začátek léta byl krásným časem rozkvetlých strání. V létě byly Dales nejprívětivější a poskytovaly útočiště znavenému tělu i duchu. Byly místem, kde byl Herriot schopen získat odstup od svých starostí a kde trávil volný čas nejraději.

Dales však byly i místem, kde Herriot poznával dialekt a povahu místních farmářů, jejichž dobytek léčil. Dialekt hrabství odráží jeho historii a v Dales jsou to vlastně dialekty dva, ale pro zjednodušení mluvíme o dialektu jednom. Práce pojednává o nejdůležitějších rysech tohoto nářečí a ukazuje, jak se tyto rysy uplatnily v mluvě místních obyvatel, které Herriot popisuje. Práce poukazuje také na fakt, že nářečí bylo ve skutečnosti zřejmě výraznější, než jak ho Herriot zachytil. Dále se práce zabývá charakterovými rysy farmářů a dalších postav a ukazuje, jak se některé rysy typické pro hrabství Yorkshire (a potažmo pro sever Anglie) u nich projevovaly. Jedná se o mlčenlivost, rezervovanost a přímočarost ve slovním projevu a v řeči těla. Tyto rysy spolu souvisejí, a proto pojednání o nich na sebe vzájemně navazují. Dále je to nezdolnost a nesmírná pracovitost a nezávislost až paličatost. Tyto rysy se opět vzájemně prolínají a doplňují a není dost dobře možné oddělit jednu od druhé, a z toho důvodu o nich práce pojednává v jednom delším celku. Z důvodu charakterističnosti pro tamější lid se jim práce snaží věnovat patřičný prostor. Posledními rysy jsou lakomství a štedrost místních obyvatel, přičemž tyto dvě vlastnosti jsou nejvíce individuální. Někteří lidé byli lakomí, mnoho z nich však (a zdá se, že především mnoho z těch, kdo měli hluboko do kapsy) bylo velice štedrých, ale někteří v sobě dokonce dokázali skloubit obě tyto vlastnosti. Mnohokrát však zvali

Herriota k prostřenému stolu, kde ho štědře pohostili, a mnohokrát poté ještě našel ve svém autě jejich dary v podobě farmářských výpěstků a výrobků.

Je pravděpodobné, že Herriotovy knihy dosáhly tak obrovské popularity právě kvůli tomu, že pojednávaly o rozličných lidských osudech s jorkšírskými rysy charakteru. Tyto osudy a rysy těchto lidí, a z nich především nesmírná houževnatost a odolnost až nezdolnost, zůstávají inspirací generacím Herriotových čtenářů.

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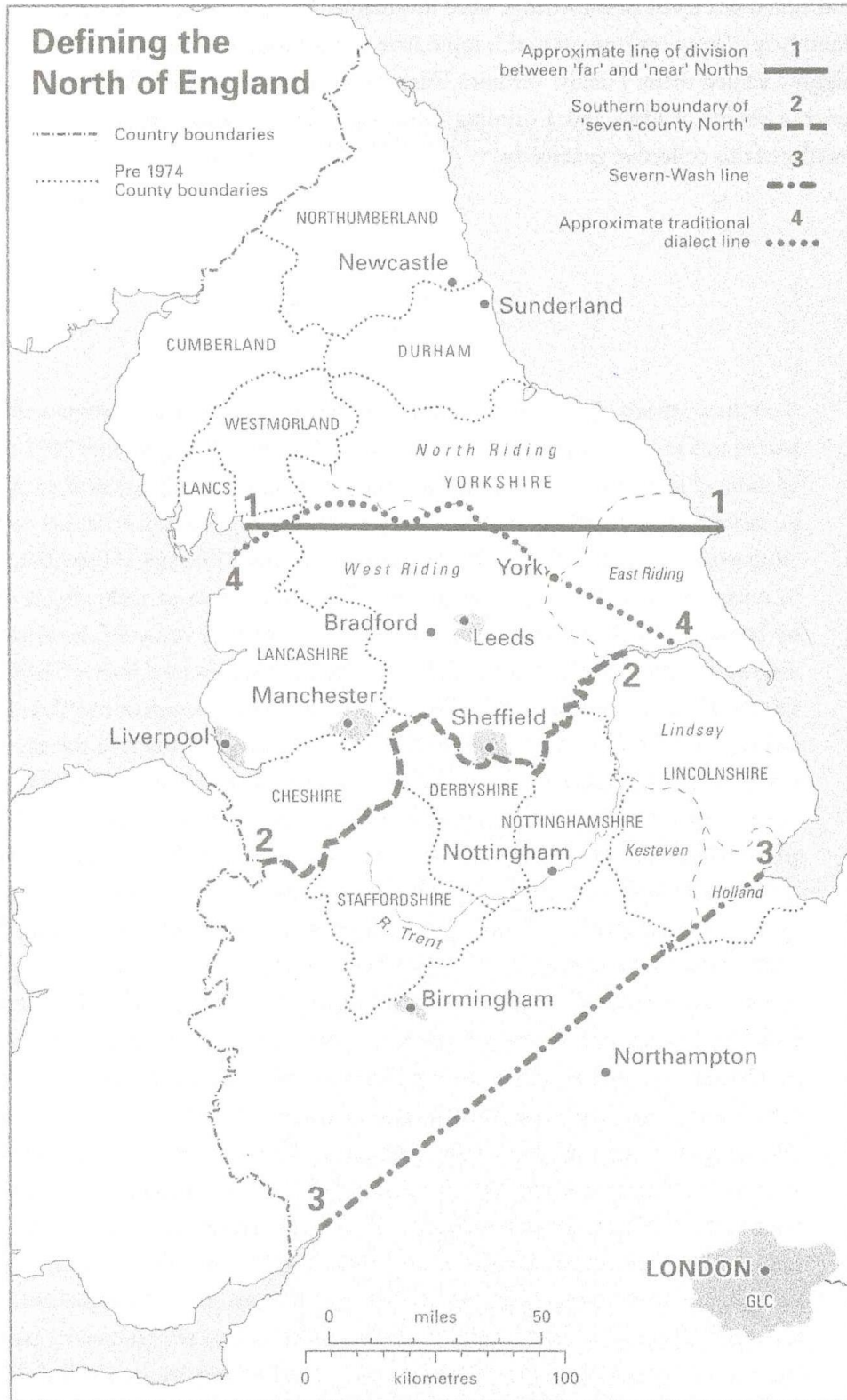
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

The seven-county boundary of the North, the Severn-Wash line, the Humber-Lune line, and the line approximately dividing 'far' and 'near' Norths



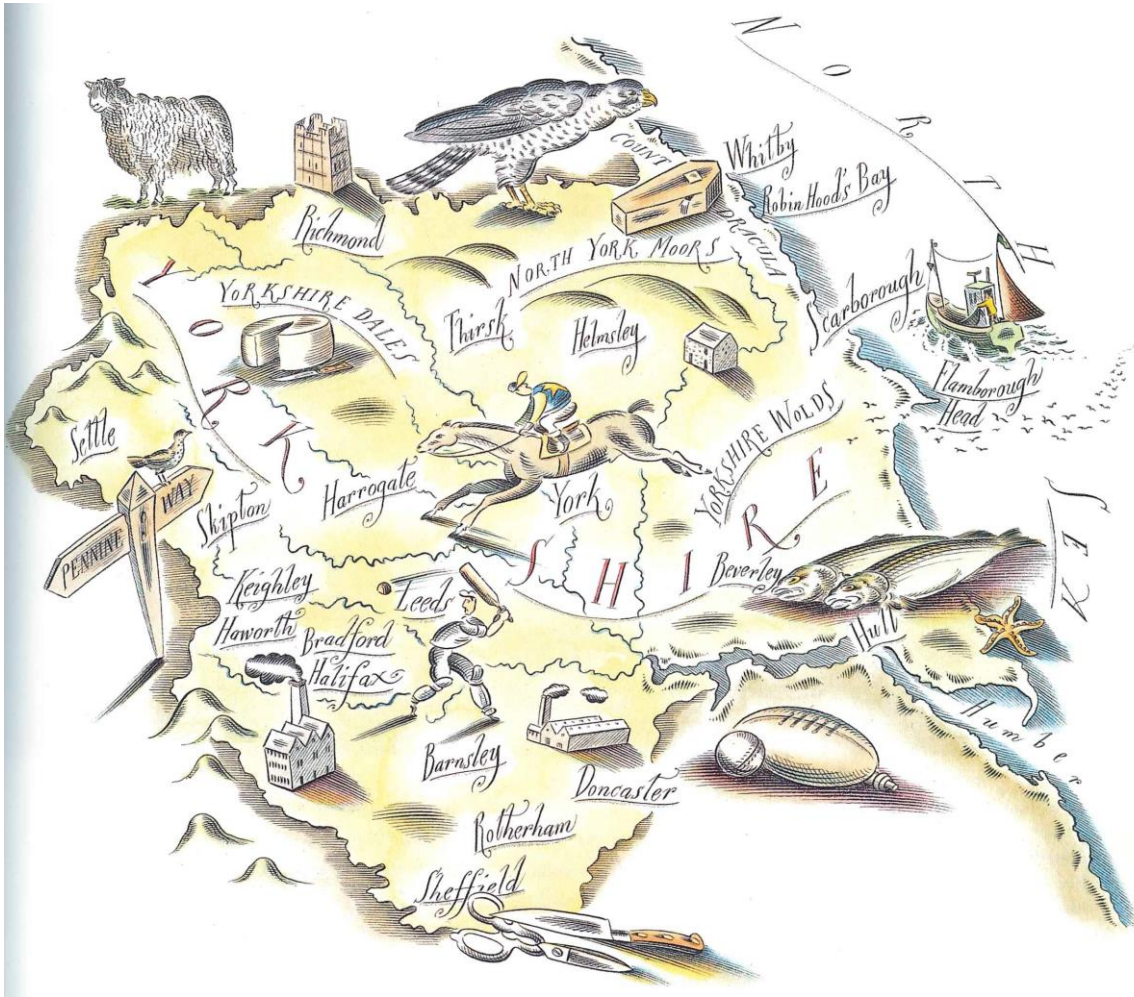
APPENDIX 2

Table of adjectives describing the way in which the South sees the North, the Northern self-image, and how the North sees the South

External (especially southern) images of the North	Northern self-image	Northern images of the South
<i>Character</i>		
Truculent/carrying chip on shoulder	Independent	Subservient
Rude/lacking social graces	Blunt/straight-talking	Evasive/duplicitous
Hardworking	Hard-working/physically tough	Effete/wasteful/absorbing efforts and energy of the rest of the country
Over-competitive/ungentlemanly	Competitive	Dilettante/lacking spirit
Philistine/unpolished, albeit highly musical	Practical/productive	Snobbish/wasteful/superficial
Mean	Careful with money	Wasteful
Homely	Friendly/hospitable	Unfriendly/unsociable
Parochial	Proud of roots and identity	Cosmopolitan/rootless
Working-class	Meritocratic/egalitarian	Nepotistic/elitist
Prejudiced/biased	Knowledgeable/holding strong views	Evasive/equivocal
Humorous if crude	Humorous/witty	Quick-witted but overly fond of <i>double entendre</i>
A breed apart	A breed apart	A breed apart
<i>Landscape and geography</i>		
Relentlessly urban/bleak/site of much open, often wild countryside	Varied in nature	Soft countryside/London an exciting place offering much opportunity, but too dominant and too marked by extremes of wealth
Wet/cold/bracing	Harsh but better than often claimed	Warm/pleasant
Industrial	Industrial but economically more varied than usually appreciated	Financial/place of consumption rather than production

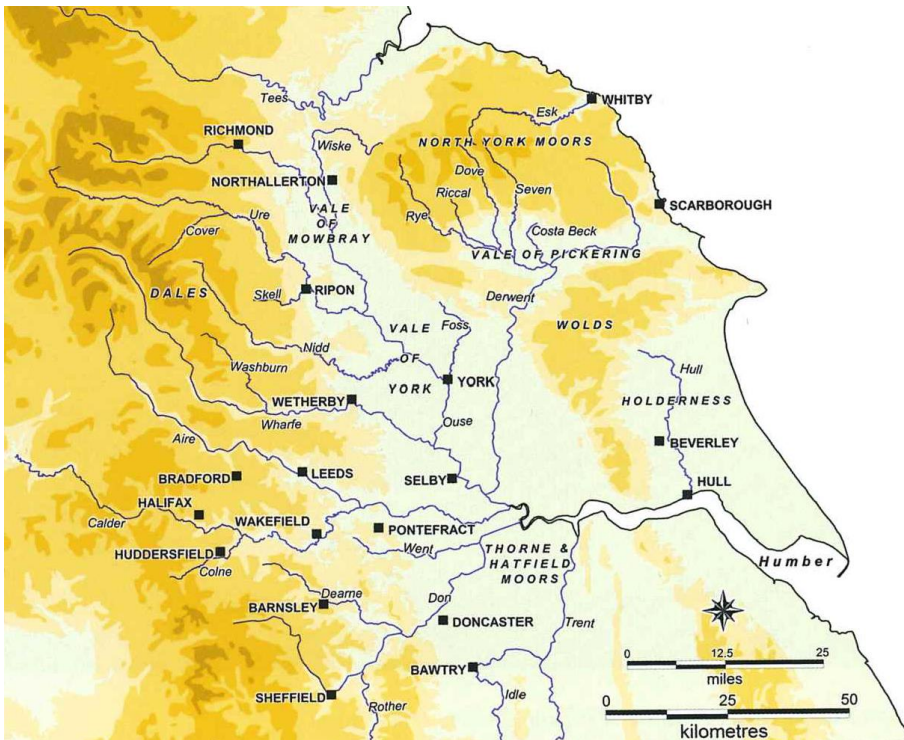
APPENDIX 3

Map of Yorkshire by Kahn



APPENDIX 4

Map of Yorkshire by Morris



APPENDIX 5

Map of the historic county of Yorkshire and its three Ridings

About this map:

Successive reorganisations of boundaries have brought counties for Local Government, the post and for the ceremonial purposes of the Lieutenancies - to name a few. Through all of this change, the boundaries of the historic county of Yorkshire and its Ridings have never changed, been disbanded nor faded into oblivion.

Ceremonial Counties:
 NY - North Yorkshire
 SY - South Yorkshire
 EY - East Riding of Yorkshire
 WY - West Yorkshire

Local Authority Areas:
 1 - Redear and Cleveland Borough
 2 - Middlesbrough Borough
 3 - North Yorkshire
 4 - City of York Council area
 5 - East Riding of Yorkshire District
 6 - Kingston-upon-Hull City Council area
 7 - City of Bradford Metropolitan District
 8 - City of Leeds Metropolitan District
 9 - Calderdale Metropolitan District
 10 - City of Wakefield Metropolitan District
 11 - Kirklees Metropolitan District
 12 - Barnsley Metropolitan District
 13 - Doncaster Metropolitan District
 14 - Rotherham Metropolitan District
 15 - City of Sheffield Metropolitan district

Administrations mainly outside Yorkshire, but serving parts of it
 D - County Durham
 GM - Greater Manchester Metropolitan County
 C - Cumbria
 L - Lancashire
 S - Stockton-on-Tees Borough

This map is provided for illustrative purposes, no claim is made to accuracy of the positions of features and locations on the scale.

The Association of British Counties map of

Yorkshire

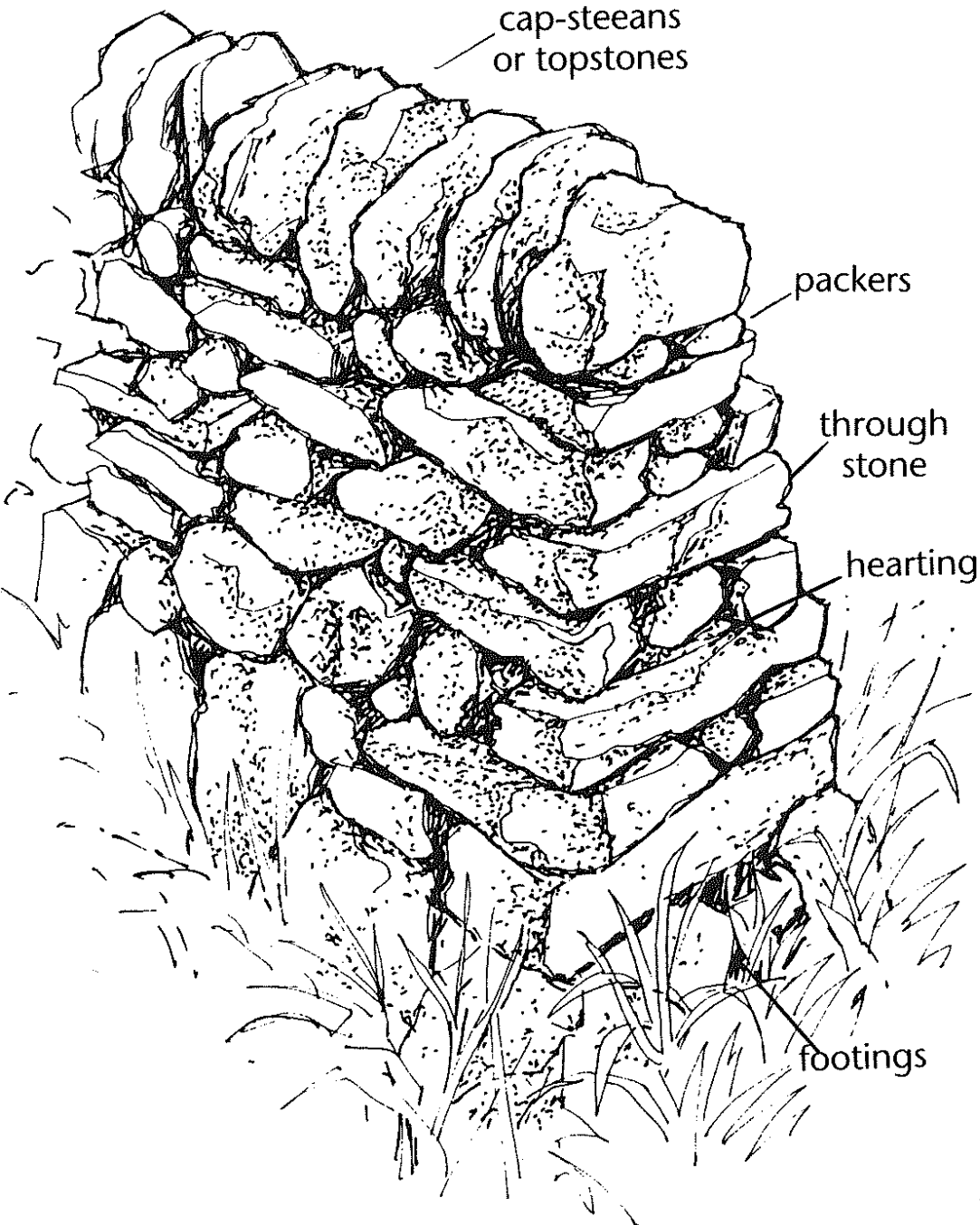
This unique map shows the historic County of Yorkshire and its three Ridings, together with the current (2013) areas for administration within its borders. While these areas are subject to periodic reorganisation, the historic County remains unchanging.



Key to the Borders:
 — Historic Counties
 — Ridings of Yorkshire
 - - - Ceremonial Counties
 — Local Authority Areas

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Drystone walling, a time-honoured craft.

APPENDIX 8

Photograph of two barns: a bigger barn of the West and a smaller barn of the North Riding



Littondale barn



Swaledale barn

APPENDIX 9

Yorkshire map of the world

