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BEYOND THE HUNDRED ACRE WOOD: POSTHUMANISM IN A. A. MILNE'S *WINNIE-THE-POOH*

Nilay Erdem Ayyıldız

Fırat University

Abstract. Children's literature is a field of study that contributes to the evolution of the posthuman. English author A. A. Milne's prominent book, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), is set in a posthuman space, the Hundred Acre Wood, inhabited by the human character, Christopher Robin and his animal friends in harmony. The book sets a balance between the human and the nonhuman, culture and nature, reason and sensation. The study analyses how *Winnie-the-Pooh* exemplifies the exercise of posthumanism in a children's work to enlighten how the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman are blurred, animal agency and nonhuman subjectivity are constructed in the book, and how communication and nonhuman expressivity transgress anthropocentric language and rationalist discourse by adopting a posthuman approach. Thus, the study reveals that *Winnie-the-Pooh* contributes to the comprehension and exercise of posthumanism through stories for child readers, transgressing the boundaries set by anthropocentricism in the Disney production of the book.

Keywords: posthumanism, anthropocentricism, children's literature, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, A. A. Milne, the Hundred Acre Wood, animal agency

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1. Introduction

Published in 1926 and translated into over fifty languages, English author A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* is one of the four volumes composing the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books: *When We Were Very Young* (1924), *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), *Now*

We Are Six (1927) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928), which were published between 1924 and 1928. Thanks to the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books, Milne became an acclaimed children's author. The worldwide sales of Miles's four children's books were counted in millions within a considerably short time after their release in a multitude of languages (Thwaite 1990: 318, Connolly 1995: 23). Moreover, translations into many languages and critical studies on the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books ensure its status as 'a permanent classic' (Window 1964: 3). The first and the third books are in verse, while the second and fourth ones are books of stories. This paper focuses on the storybooks of the series from the perspective of posthumanism.

With Ernest Howard Shepard's illustrations, *Winnie-the-Pooh* consists of different short stories exploring an insight into human-nonhuman relations. The stories are set in the Hundred Acre Wood, which is a fictional place (Figure 1). They revolve around a teddy bear called Winnie-the-Pooh, and his adventures with his friends. *The titular character, in Thwaite's words, is "the most famous and loved bear in literature" (1990: 292). In Harrison's words, "[h]is spectacular journey was to take him into the hearts of people of all ages, around the world" (2011: 8). Anthropomorphic protagonist Winnie-the-Pooh befriends the human character Christopher Robin and animals such as Piglet, Eeyore, Rabbit, Owl and Kanga.

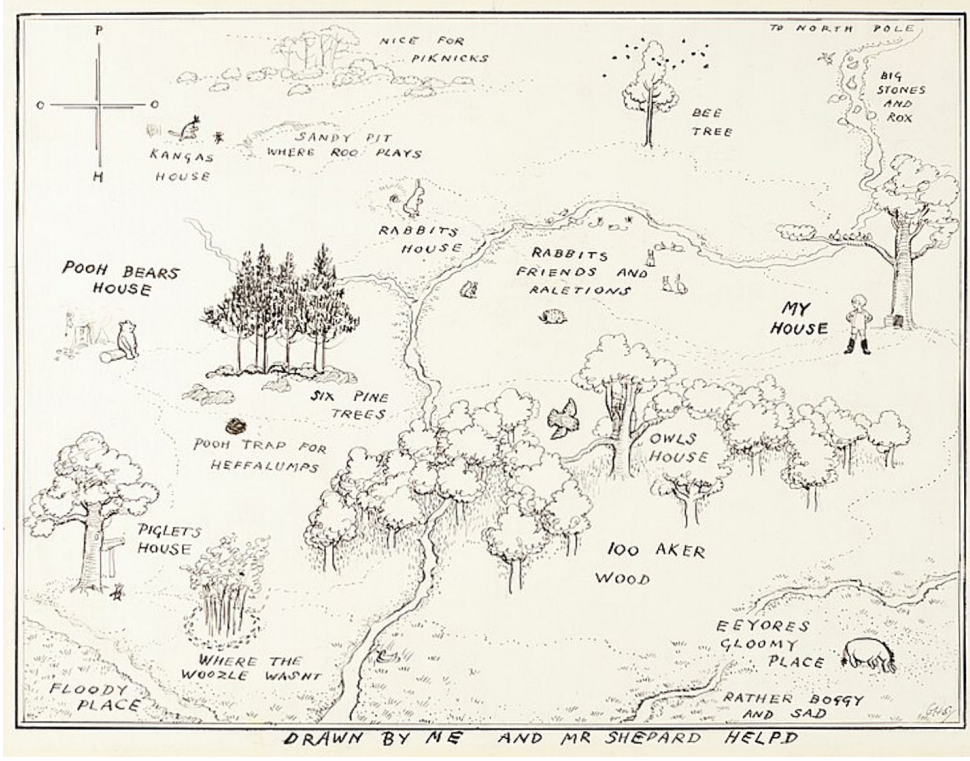

Figure 1. Ernest Howard Shepard, "The original map of the Hundred Acre Wood, published in the opening end-papers of the 1926 first edition of *Winnie-the-Pooh*". Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Milne was inspired by his son, Christopher Robin Milne, and his toys to create the protagonist Christopher and his animal friends in the book. The adventures in which the characters are involved are about the topics concerning children, such as friendship, food, birthdays, treehouses, jokes, songs and expeditions, free of any "economic necessity or competition" (Thwaite 2017: 96). Through these topics, the *Winnie-the-Pooh* stories "struck a strong chord with families, adults, and children alike, desperate for an escape into a comforting fantasy" after experiencing the trauma of World War I (Campbell 2018: 8). In this regard, the *Winnie-the-Pooh* stories present a fascinating series of subtexts that tell about the relationships of child, adult, nature, animals and many more. Written in the decade of social, political, industrial and cultural upheaval following World War I, the *Winnie-the-Pooh* stories present a world where every creature can live in companionship and peace (Connolly 1999: 201).

Although it has been approximately a century since the publication of the original story in 1926, its many adaptations have been introduced on TV, in theatre and cinema. Numerous animated productions of the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books have been released by Disney since 1966. Initiated with *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree* (1966), the production series was followed by *Winnie-the-Pooh and the Blustery Day* (1968) and *Winnie the Pooh and Tiger Too* (1974), and the combination of these three productions with *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* in 1977. Exploring the posthumanist aspects of the book, the study also argues that the romantic portrayal of Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* has been violated through Disney's reproduction of the book. The study focuses on *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* to discuss it, as the animated production is comprehensively based on the original story, much more than its other adaptations, and it asserts Crews's argument that *Pooh* is 'stuffed with humanism' in Disney's versions (2006: xvi).

2. Posthumanism and children's literature

Posthumanism criticises the humanist ideology, which privileges the human subject due to his intellect, self-determination and agency (Flanagan 2014: 12-13). Posthumanism presents a critical approach to the condition of 'Man', which is used with a capital letter to reflect humanist ideology, putting humans at the centre of the universe and the starting point of life and history, entirely distinct from machines, animals and any other nonhuman entities. Such an anthropocentric approach relies on binary oppositions including "human/inhuman, self/other, natural/cultural, inside/outside, subject/object, us/them, here/there, active/passive, and wild/tame" (Badmington 2004: 1345). Rejecting these binary oppositions, the term 'posthuman' refers to "the condition of existing in a world that has been irreversibly altered by technology" (Flanagan 2014: 14) in a critical approach to humanist ideology, privileging humans in all terms. As asserted by Ihab Hassan, first in 1977, five decades of humanism have come to an end with posthumanism unavoidably due to the constant change in all aspects of life with science and technology (843). This shift to posthumanism from humanism marks the emergence of "a new world of

science, technology, and space," where entities with human-like qualities blur the boundaries between themselves and humans (Baysal 2020: 177).

All in all, posthumanism challenges human exceptionalism and anthropocentricism. Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe and Rosi Braidotti are among the key thinkers of posthumanism who contribute to comprehending the current condition of the human in relation to other beings. Haraway rejects Western dualism through her conception of cyborg and companion species; Wolfe regards posthumanism as a way out of "the ethical and ontological priority of the human" (2010: xxv), and Braidotti calls for "nonhuman affirmation" and the recognition of "entangled human-nonhuman subjectivities" (2013: 60).

Haraway rejects the Western dualisms between human and nonhuman through her conception of cyborg, which transgresses the "boundaries, potent fusions and dangerous possibilities" to be explored (1985: 154). The concept of 'companion species' comprises a larger space than 'cyborgs'. Haraway draws attention to the bond between humans and other beings through the term 'companion species' in her *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003). They comprise a multitude of species, ranging from "rice, bees, tulips, and intestinal flora", composing life for living beings (2003: 15). All living beings, such as humans and dogs, live together in "co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality" (2003: 4). Like the concept of 'cyborg', this concept also challenges the Western dualities serving the same purpose, bringing together "the human and the nonhuman, the organic and technological, […] nature and culture in unexpected ways" (2003: 15).

Wolfe provides posthumanism with a new aspect through his notion of 'trans-species affinity', which refers to the interrelationship between the human and the nonhuman based on "trust, respect, dependence, and communication" through compassion (Wolfe 2010: 141). He regards caring for other beings as the human's responsibility (Wolfe 2010: 141). Regardless of the species, the common sense of compassion creates affinity among entities and connects the human with the nonhuman. Thus, the ontological status of the human becomes a human animal as one of the 'trans-species being-in-the-world' (Wolfe 2010: 141).

Braidotti's posthumanist attitude towards humanist understanding of 'Man' is also critical. She views posthuman subjectivity as a "process-oriented political ontology" rather than a fixed, alleged essence (*Posthuman* 35-38). Thus, she contributes to the posthuman theory, introducing the posthuman subject as a self-organising, immanent and relationally and differentially defined being through its interrelationships with both human and non-human beings (Braidotti 2013: 6).

Considering the standpoint of posthumanism as a reaction to humanism, it may be argued that children's literature has been home to both ideologies since its advent. Under the influence of the humanist ideology, children's literature is dominated by liberalist humanism, underlining individual agency (Flanagan 2014: 13-14) and middle-class values such as family and altruism besides individuality and free will (Nodelman 2008: 177, Ostry 2004: 236). The humanist worldview is based on differing categories, one of which is taken as superior to the other. Binaries, such as reason/emotion, mind/body, human/nonhuman and master/slave,

on which humanism feeds, are often found in literary works intended for child readers (Nodelman 2008: 228-229). Most young-adult fiction works inculcate liberal humanist values in readers (Ostry 2004: 243). However, in recent years, technology and artificial intelligence have changed all aspects of life, and a growing number of young adult works have relied on a posthuman framework to explore the meaning of existing as a human being in a technology-dominated world (Bjerregaard 2018: 14). The changes are also represented in children's literary works. In this regard, as asserted by Jaques, children's literary works are noteworthy contributions to the evolution of posthuman ideas (2015: 21).

The humanist side of literature for children and young adults contradicts their posthumanist fantasy nature, which permits them to go beyond ontological limitations by problematising the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman. Children's literature exercises posthumanism through toys, animals, machines and puppets embarking on adventures. It presents 'being' beyond environmental and bodily constraints to appeal to child readers. Thus, it paves the way for the debate about what it means to be 'human' or 'nonhuman', offering alternative imaginings of the 'posthuman' in the juxtaposition of fiction and truth, imaginary and reality, and impossible and possible. Thus, children's literature creates, in Donna Haraway's words, 'an optical illusion' for the boundary between science fiction and social reality (1985: 66). In this regard, children's literature and posthumanism meet on the common ground uniting the possibilities of the fantasy of 'being' with the one in the real world. In Haraway's concept of cyborg as "a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (1985: 65), children's literature is abounded with imaginative beings, making readers believe in them. As 'uncertainty is nothing to fear' in posthuman terms (Pepperell 1995: 174), children's literary works also handle the firmly defined boundaries on slippery grounds. Thus, both posthumanism and children's literature stand hand in hand in their approaches.

The study argues that children's fantasy fiction transgressing the ontological boundaries between the human and the nonhuman is extended to the life in the Hundred Acre Wood in Milne's children's book *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Therefore, it enquires how *Winnie-the-Pooh* challenges anthropocentricism by setting the stories in the fictional place as a posthuman space. It also examines how the book blurs boundaries between human and nonhuman, allowing nonhuman characters to exhibit agency and subjectivity. A novelty of this study lies in analysing how posthumanism exercises in Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, challenging humanist ideology. In this regard, posthuman theory is applied to enlighten how the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman are problematised in the posthuman setting of the children's book *Winnie-the-Pooh.*

3. The Hundred Acre Wood as a posthuman space

The posthuman does not always refer to being in an environment entirely covered or designed by technology. The Hundred Acre Wood, where the stories of

Winnie-the-Pooh are set, is a fictional forest as a natural environment, inhabited by stuffed animals, Christopher Robin's friends. As argued by Graham, a child-centred understanding of a posthuman ethic "can be neither as an escape into technocratic invulnerability nor a retreat into the imagined purity of organic essentialism" (234; cited in Jaques 2015: 182). In this regard, the Hundred Acre Wood displays a posthuman space away from humanist essentialism but in a natural environment away from technology.

The binary opposition between nature and culture is gently subverted in *Winnie-the-Pooh*. The innocence of the human character, Christopher Robin, finds harmony with his animal friends in nature. Thus, the Hundred Acre Wood stands out as a posthuman space where, in Haraway's words, the separation of human and animal, culture and nature is no longer felt as necessary (1985: 68), both for the reader and the characters in the book. As asserted by Rose, children occupy a sphere of inherent innocence, unlike adults, in Western children's literature (1992: xi). In Lesnik-Oberstein's words, 'the original goodness of man' (1993: 95), possessed by a child, makes him/her pure and precious (Rose 1992: 8), which should be preserved in adulthood. The notion of the innocent child is associated with nature in a positive sense since John Locke and J. J. Rousseau, though, in Rose's words, 'glorification of the child' (1992: 8). On the other hand, children are often represented "as animal-like in their irresponsible focus and reliance on emotion and sensation" (Nodelman 2008: 191) in Western children's literature that relies on humanist ideology, privileging the human subject and rationalism. Furthermore, Connolly criticises Milne's narrative frame in the book by arguing that the Romantic notion that the child is the father of the man is refuted by the imaginative power of the father who writes about the fictional world of the Forest in the book (1999: 195). This contradictory representation of childhood innocence and emotional complexity is replaced by positive representation in alignment with animal agency in *Winnie-the-Pooh.* The interconnection between children and nature is posthuman as a representation of 'significant otherness' in Haraway's term (2003: 16).

Christopher Robin's innocence aligns with the animals' intuitive intelligence in the book. Christopher Robin is portrayed as a non-dominant figure; however, he is a part of a multispecies collective. Although he appears throughout the book, the central world of the Hundred Acre Wood is animated by the animals. Their adventures, including Pooh's leisurely strolling in search of honey and Piglet's cautious explorations, display a space where human sight is decentralised. In similarity to Robin, Pooh is also childlike and unselfish. As argued by Thwaite, a child reader can easily recognise himself in the toy bear Pooh "as he longs to be, as he thinks he will be in Christopher Robin" (2017: 94). In this posthuman space, Haraway's conception of 'companion species' (2003) resonates as the animals and Christopher Robin coexist in equal terms rather than in a master-servant relationship.

Animal characters in the book are not mere human allegories in contrast to classic fables. They act out as protagonists. *Winnie-the-Pooh* creates a fluid and interconnected ecosystem through community and cooperation among the characters rather than hierarchy and human-dominated animal interactions. The Hundred Acre

Wood functions as an open-ended, dynamic space where Christopher and animals coexist without rigid hierarchies. The interactions among the characters in the book, Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore and others, indicate cooperation. Their adventures and problem-solving approaches in collaboration reflect a network of mutual dependence despite their differences. They constitute a posthuman space inhabited by, in Haraway's words, 'companion species' where humans and nonhumans form reciprocal relationships beyond mere utility (2003: 15). The interactions among the characters reflect posthuman thought that sees life as a dynamic web for all beings rather than a hierarchy, echoing Haraway's emphasis on relationality. As argued by Thwaite, the stories derive their strength and charm from 'the juxtaposition of toy animal and forest' (2017: 92). Furthermore, the animals in the book do not seem to exist to serve Christopher Robin; instead, they exist with their own perspectives and emotional worlds. As for the trees in the wood, they are portrayed as, in Aalto's words, "a long-lived provider of food, beauty, play, and shade, as well as the origin of what many would regard as one of the greatest children's books," *Winnie-the-Pooh* (2015: 97). In this regard, the Hundred Acre Wood serves as, in Wake's words, 'an enclosed and extended space' for the pastoral time (2009: 37). Thus, the book celebrates a fluid and interconnected ecosystem instead of human governance or autonomous animal and nature interactions.

The anthropocentric perspective of Disney is also implied through the intrusion of technological gadgets such as television in the lives of the characters in the forest. Thus, the romantic and posthumanist portrayal of the Hundred Acre Wood is corrupted with the portrayal of the superiority of the human to the nonhuman through industry and technology. Thus, the idealised romantic conception of childhood as close to nature and God, which is preserved in Milne's book, is violated in the Disney version (Walt Disney 1977). The forest becomes a setting marked by the romantic visions of the child and stuffed animals as well as material concerns through the Disney versions, which marketed "[t]he plump, cartoonlike Pooh, clad in a red T-shirt and goofy smile, adorns plastic key chains…and animated videos" (cited in Leonhardt 1997: 82, Connolly 1999: 202). These are the anthropocentric symbols that posthumanism is against.

4. Animal agency and nonhuman subjectivity

The book *Winnie-the-Pooh* treats the stuffed animal characters as more than ordinary toys but as nonhuman subjects who become subjects by gaining agency. Animal agency and nonhuman subjectivity are portrayed throughout *Winnie-the-Pooh* with Pooh's intuitive intelligence in contrast to rationalist thought, Piglet's vulnerability as strength and Eeyore's nonhuman emotion.

Although Pooh is depicted as foolish, his embodied, intuitive knowledge draws contrast with modern rationalist thought. Pooh's constant pursuit of honey is reflected not simply as a childish craving but as an expression of a kind of embodied wisdom. His simple but effective problem-solving ¾ whether figuring out how to

reach a honeypot or interpreting a situation with his signature 'think, think, think' – suggests a mode of knowing rooted in instinct. Considering Hayles's criticism of Western 'liberal humanism' for privileging disembodied intellect over embodied cognition (1999: 2), Pooh's actions indicate this embodied cognition, reflecting that intelligence can be intuitive and grounded in the physical world. In this regard, his wondering "if it's true/That who is what and what is who" (Milne 2011: 49) and his engagement with the world following his 'hummy' songs, instinctively finding honey – align with posthuman rejection of rationalist supremacy.

Rosi Braidotti argues that posthuman subjectivity is related to 'relationality, vulnerability, and becoming-with' rather than mastery (2013: 190). This posthuman ethics of care and interdependence is depicted through Piglet's smallness, fear, and hesitation, which do not diminish his value; rather, they emphasise interdependence. His anxiety when facing unknown parts of the Wood and his gentle and fragile nature are portrayed with sympathy rather than as weaknesses. As argued by Window, the narrator of the book gives the animals traits of humility, enthusiasm, spontaneity and obedience, balancing didacticism and egoism among the animals (9). Braidotti's conception of posthuman subjectivity, characterised by relationality, vulnerability and becoming-with (2013: 35-40), is embodied through Piglet. These features render him a part of a network of care within the group. Thus, his smallness becomes a counter-narrative to human exceptionalism. Piglet represents the ethics of care and dependency rather than dominance.

Emotional complexity goes beyond anthropomorphic projections throughout *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Eeyore's melancholy is not treated as a defect but as an authentic expression of his being. His comments, such as "Thanks for noticing me" (Milne 2011: 47), are portrayed as a genuine emotional state. As a male character, Eeyore's emotional complexity turns the phallocentric humanism upside down. Posthuman deconstruction of hyper-gendered Eeyore's case problematises the human hierarchy regarding masculine and feminine identity in patriarchal humanist society. His melancholy, such as his habitual, quietly resigned comments, is not mocked but portrayed as a genuine emotional state. Derrida argues about the dismissal of animal emotions as projections of human sentimentality, urging us to take nonhuman experiences seriously (2008: 33). In this context, Eeyore's sadness is recognised as legitimate, and the book validates Eeyore's sadness, suggesting that animals have emotional complexities beyond human interpretation. It draws a powerful counterpoint to the anthropocentric dismissal of nonhuman affect. Thus, the book acknowledges that the line between human and nonhuman is blurred. Haraway's conception of 'companion species' comprises a multitude of species ranging from 'rice' to 'intestinal flora', all of whom make life for humans and nonhumans (2003: 15). In this regard, the Hundred Acre Wood is home to companion species in the book, bringing together the human and nonhuman, and nature and culture.

Besides the boundary set between the human and the nonhuman, animal agency and nonhuman subjectivity are also corrupted in the Disney version of the work. Pooh appears to be deficient in his sense of insight about himself and his environment. The Heffalumps and Woozles are left as imaginary characters which are responsible

for Pooh losing honey in the Disney version, whereas the book version evokes the impact that they are Pooh's own fears and concerns he needs to overcome. The insightful characterisation of Pooh is replaced with a nonsensitive, sleepy and materialist animal greedy for honey. Thus, the self-revelation of the characters is not well presented in the Disney version, as it reproduces the work through a humanist viewpoint, which inferiorises the nonhuman to the human (Walt Disney 1977).

5. Language, communication, and nonhuman expressivity

Winnie-the-Pooh draws parallels between the nonhuman forms of expression and the directness and repetition of children's language. The book rejects rigid and rationalist discourse of anthropocentric language through a playful and poetic language. Wolfe argues that posthumanism "requires attention to forms of communication that exceed human linguistic structures" (2010: xxvii). More concretely, Pooh's repetition of the word 'think' like a refrain reflects his unique, non-linear way of processing the world. It is more about capturing the rhythms of nature and instinct than logical precision. More precisely, Pooh's descent of the stairs, making the 'bump, bump, bump' sound, symbolises both physical and linguistic repetition. On the other hand, his thinking aloud by repeating the words in a logical pattern is striking:

> That buzzing-noise like that, just buzzing and buzzing, without its meaning something. If there's a buzzing-noise, somebody's making a buzzing-noise, and the only reason for making a buzzing-noise that I know of is because you're a bee. […] And the only reason for being a bee that I know of is making honey. [….] And the only reason for making honey is so I can eat it (Milne 2011: 49).

Bright interprets the repetition of the pronoun I as an emphasis of Pooh's existence as a conscious being, independent from Christopher and the other beings (2010: 32). In this regard, it is underlined that Pooh exercises his own agency. The nonhuman expressivity draws a conscious parallel with the child language. Thus, "the child as it appears in literature is necessarily constructed in terms that entail its passage" in the stories (Wake 2009: 40) because the nonhuman expressivity constitutes the linguistic equivalent of pastoral space. In this respect, Pooh can be regarded as 'the Poet of the Forest' who is capable of reading the nature as an intrinsic part of it (Connolly 1999: 198-199). His songs reveal his insight about the nature. Pooh's humming while walking through the forest questioning "what it felt like, being somebody else" (Milne 2011: 23-24) privileges emotion over reason, unlike humanism. In this regard, animal speech is celebrated as meaningful in animals' own speech patterns, reflecting their distinctiveness rather than imitating human patterns, reflecting human rationality. Thus, the animals in the book achieve, in Wolfe's words, "exceed[ing] human linguistic structures" (2010: xxvii) in a posthuman context, and the book celebrates non-anthropocentric expressions.

Christopher Robin's role as a mediator between human and nonhuman realms, rather than a master, also makes *Winnie-the-Pooh* universe a posthuman context. Human characters in most children's works act out as masters and authority figures over animals, asserting anthropocentricism. However, Christopher Robin interacts as an equal being with animals, dismissing the hierarchy between human and nonhuman beings. He listens to his animal friends and learns from them rather than controlling or commanding them, trying to assert authority over them. The stories display the intersection of childhood and adulthood through the common language used by humans, animals and toys, thus transgressing the boundaries of anthropocentric language (Nodelman 2021: 180-182). Hayles argues that the posthuman deconstructs the conception of "humanity who had the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualise themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice (1999: 286). Such a posthumanist approach proposes the fact that the grand narratives about the man are turned upside down.

In *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), Haraway suggests a move away from hierarchical human-animal relations toward 'sympoiesis' (33), or co-creation. In this regard, *Winnie-the-Pooh* portrays a world which is shared by both human and nonhuman entities jointly by rejecting hierarchical control to embrace co-creation. All the characters in the *Winnie-the-Pooh book* have their own individuality, and each of them is an essential part of the setting of the stories. It asserts Bennett's posthumanist argument that each entity is an agent possessing "an agentic capacity to the vitality of the materialities that constitutes it" (2010: 34). The book complicates the concepts of identity and unity through the instability of language, creating a posthuman space for the reader to get lost in (Rudd 2021: 15-18). In this regard, the book departs from the child-animal hierarchy in children's literature and reinforces posthuman ideals of mutual existence of all entities rather than domination over each other.

Lastly, in Wolfe's terms, Christopher Robin acts as a 'human animal' (2010: 141), demonstrating compassion and experiencing affinity between his animal friends in the stories. Such a trans-species experience by feeling empathy with his animal friends and being concerned with their problems and suffering altogether compromises the gap between Christopher and the animal characters. All in all, when the relationship between the human and the nonhuman is in the light of the points argued above, the book *Winnie-the-Pooh* asserts the interdependency of the human and the post-human at the same time (Wadham 2021: 195-200).

6. The blurring of human and nonhuman boundaries

The boundaries set between the human and the nonhuman are blurred through hybrid identities in stuffed animals and posthuman continuity after Christopher Robin's departure from the Wood in *Winnie-the-Pooh.* Jaques argues that "toys trouble the boundaries of being" through the power of imagination (2015: 213). Christopher has a subjective relationship with Pooh, which is inferred from his

concern, "I didn't harm Pooh, did I?" (Milne 2011: 12), indicating that he sees Pooh as a living being. In this regard, Pooh acts as a subject in Christopher's world, rather than an object. Haraway calls the connection between the child and the toy 'significant otherness', which she identifies with the child's feeling of being both independent from and dependent on the toy as a being (2003: 16). As argued by Simonsen, Shepard's drawings in the book also create a sense of Pooh's inanimateness and capacity for sensation at the same time (2021: 6-7). Shepard's illustrations align with Milne's portrayal of Pooh, drawn as a bear who can think and feel despite his inanimateness. Not only Pooh but also the other stuffed animal figures can speak and act as characters with their own attributes. Thus, this case results in the duality which blurs the anthropocentric boundaries between human and nonhuman.

The book exemplifies Haraway's argument that the boundary between human and animal has been so 'thoroughly breached' by the late twentieth century that the division between them is no longer settled (1985: 68). The story continues without human oversight. The stuffed animals exist in a liminal space – neither fully animate nor inanimate, the line between which is blurred in the book. Within the framework of New Materialism as another philosophy encompassed in the posthumanist ideology, Karen Barad theorises 'intra-action', where entities do not pre-exist their relationships but emerge through interactions (2007: 33). Barad's notion of 'intra-action' asserts that identities are built on relationships. The animals' existence is co-constructed through their interactions with each other and with Christopher Robin, challenging the boundaries between animate and inanimate, life and non-life. The stuffed toys' agency arises through their relationships with each other and with Christopher Robin, challenging traditional ontological categories. Milne's posthuman setting presents possible words, rejecting dualities between all kinds of biological and mechanical entities.

The humanist ideology which privileges reason over emotions and human over animals is refuted in the book *Winnie-the-Pooh* by the titular character, Pooh. Although he is called a Bear of Very Little Brain (Milne 2011: 43), it is Pooh who helps most of his friends, helping Eeyore find his tail, organising a birthday party for Eeyore, planning to save baby Roo from drowning and coming up with the idea of how to protect Piglet from the rainstorm. In this context, Hunt states Pooh to be "both the inside and outside of childhood" (1992: 117) with "child-like qualities both adult and child readers can sympathise and empathise" (Hunt 1992: 117). As confirmed by Connolly, the *Winnie-the-Pooh* characters' adventures are "internal journeys to hunt and tame their fears" (1999: 196). All the challenges which they try to come over are indeed the ways out of their concerns and fear, creating harmony in the company among themselves. As argued by Thwaite, Pooh's and his friends' cases suggest our perplexity, as "we are all bears of very little brain trying, as Pooh does to bluff our way through life" (1990: 302).

Winnie-the-Pooh presents a world where nonhumans go beyond human influence because when Christopher Robin leaves the Wood, the animals continue existing without human oversight. The Hundred Acre Wood does not collapse in Christopher Robin's absence, affirming nonhuman persistence beyond human influence. It

indicates that the world is self-sustaining. As argued by Latour, culture and nature are co-constitutive even though modern life separates them from each other (1993: 6). The continuity of the Hundred Acre Wood without Christopher Robin suggests the posthuman idea that nonhuman entities possess their own enduring agency beyond the control of human beings. The anthropocentric mindset creating the gap between the human and nonhuman, resulting in the sense that the nonhuman exists to serve the ends of the human. However, the posthumanist approach acknowledges the continuity and reciprocity of human-nonhuman relations. As argued by Bennett, all nonhuman entities contribute to the maintenance of human culture (2010: 94-95). This posthumanist viewpoint is reflected throughout book through Robin's animal friends, as non-human entities have a crucial role in human life and cognition. Thus, any hierarchical understanding of the relationship between human and nonhuman is rejected in the book.

Disney displays the humanist version of the *Winnie-the-Pooh* book, upsetting the posthumanist nature among the characters and in the narrative voice. It puts the male human character Christopher Robin into the centre and treats him as the true protagonist of the work while degrading his animal friends. Christopher is portrayed as the hero in every adventure, rescuing his animal friends from dangers; Piglet from drowning, while displaying Pooh as afloat with his head stuck in a honey pot, underlining his incompetence by satirising him with the adjective 'brave' (Walt Disney 1977). Thus, the boundaries transgressed with the posthumanist narration of the book are violated through this humanist presentation in the Disney version.

7. Conclusion

Winnie-the-Pooh presents a refined criticism of anthropocentricism by subverting anthropocentric narratives. In contrast to anthropocentric narratives, *Winnie-the-Pooh* illustrates a posthuman space inhabited by nonhuman characters with agency, subjectivity, and emotional complexity. The Hundred Acre Wood, where the book is set, serves as a dynamic and interconnected space where human dominance is replaced by interdependence. In this context, the book challenges traditional children's literature's reinforcement of human supremacy and suggests alternative ways of building child-animal relationships that do not rely on control or mastery. Unlike anthropocentric animal stories, celebrating human supremacy, *Winnie-the-Pooh* goes beyond anthropocentricism in narratives for children. It paves the way for reconsidering the boundaries set between human and nonhuman, which could be based on co-creation, mutual respect and vulnerability in posthuman terms. As a posthuman narrative, *Winnie-the-Pooh* suggests a delicate subversion of human exceptionalism, raising a series of ontological queries for the sake of a non-anthropocentric approach to life. This study contributes to posthuman studies in children's literature. Some future research could examine how the book invites the reader to comprehend how the role of imagination creates a posthuman space where difference and interdependence are achieved.

Address:
Nilay Erdem Ayyıldız
Department of Foreign Languages Education
Faculty of Education
Fırat University
Fırat Üniversitesi, *Üniversite* Mah.
Elazığ, 231119
Türkiye
Email: nerdem@firat.edu.tr
Tel: +90 424 237 00 00

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