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Engl 399W

Anthropomorphic Agency in *Winnie-the-Pooh*: Animals Characters functioning as Narrative Forces Acting Outside the Text

Located in the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building on 42nd and Fifth, the New York Public Library’s Treasures section tells the story of a boy, Christopher Robin Milne, who was gifted a teddy bear for his first birthday. Along with some of Christopher’s other stuffed animals, this teddy bear would later inspire several literary classics such as *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*, all composed by Christopher’s father, A.A. Milne. This story, which has just been paraphrased from a placard found in the aforementioned Treasures section beneath a glass case containing some of Christopher’s stuffed animals, in its presentation, begins with relating Christopher’s “reciev[ing of] a teddy bear” to its being “purchased from Harrods department store in London” (*Winnie-the-Pooh and Friends* exhibit). By the telling of this story starting with the “purchas[ing]” of a “teddy bear”, the teddy bear is first contextualized in having a material quality, in which it is an acquired object that’s bought. Despite this original conception of the teddy bear, the story continues to develop a new means of framing the stuffed animal, as is seen when it becomes “Christened Winnie-the-Pooh”, thus transcending from being a “purchased” “teddy bear” to a confirmed entity indicated by a name (*Winnie-the-Pooh and Friends* exhibit). In perceiving a progressive evolution of Pooh from department store product to individualized identity, one can recognize how Pooh grows to be a more actualized figure over time. The difference which constitutes Pooh as this actualized figure, as depicted in Pooh’s capacity to “inspire several classic works…written by…A.A. Milne”, consists of Pooh’s ability to influence others and impact their environment. This development shared by Winnie-the-Pooh and his animal “companions”, in which they transition from being material objects that are “purchased” to being pronounced subjects that “inspire”, is the facet of Milne’s work this paper aims to examine.

The narration which comprises the text that’s positioned here as speaking to Milne’s “poohverse” establishes and portrays character dynamics that demonstrate a complicated relationship with the narration, in which these characters become narrative agents. The work of A.A. Milne which involves such literature relating to the characters of Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet, Owl, Christopher Robin, Eeyore, Tigger ect., and the general setting of the Hundred Acre Wood, may be predominantly found within such texts as *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*. In an attempt to understand the nature of the narration that constitutes this literature, particular sections within Milne’s text are apprehended as alluding to a developed and perhaps nuanced comprehension of the narrator's, and by extent the text’s, relationship to the anthropomorphic characters. Such sections, which are conveniently judged to be too numerous to fully notate here, that reveal these complex narrator to character relations can be broadly signified by acknowledged interpersonal exchanges that occur between the narrator and the animal characters, which result in the animal characters influencing the narration. In addition to perceiving the animals’ manipulation of the narration as being tied to dialogic exchanges with the narrator, such narrative involvement is also recognized as being present when the narration aligns with and maintains an anthropomorphic characters’ perspective, regardless of how valid or invalid it may be. In this paper’s interrogation of the Pooh text’s narration, anthropomorphic characters are approached as being powerful enough to control and impact the narrative voice by virtue of their own involvement. This narrative engagement that the animal characters exhibit is contextualized by Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of double-directed discourse in which the significance of incorporating another, alternative utterance into a narrative is established. In applying Bakhtin’s understanding of double-directed discourse to Milne’s text, each anthropomorphic character is attended as having a subjective consciousness which subverts and undermines the dominion of the narrator’s otherwise objective world. This comprehension of the narration, in which the animals are not regarded as narrative objects to be utilized by the narrator, but are instead narrative agents who are capable of controlling the narration as they please, challenges a critical tradition where Pooh and his animal friends are abstracted as being imagined entities that are rejected from being a part of the narrator and Christopher Robin’s “reality”. Although there may be justification for conceiving Milne’s work as employing what Megan Palmer-Browne refers to as “liminal spaces”, a reading which vitalizes the animal characters persists. While the critical literature mentioned in this paper positions the anthropomorphic characters as being figurative entities of the narrator and Christopher Robin’s invention, this paper argues that an inspection of the text’s narration tells a different story. In reflecting on the development and evolution of an artistic portrait throughout a creative process, Henry James offers a conception of the literary figure which allows for an expanded understanding of the idea that the anthropomorphic characters in the Pooh texts can function as working outside of the narrative constraints. Milne’s literature presents a complex narrative scheme in which a multitude of voices originating from the anthropomorphic characters are able to master the narrative and begin to function with the narrator as narrative equals. The narrative interplay within Milne’s Pooh literature represents the anthropomorphic characters as exceeding the narration, which exhibits them and then develops as a result of their agency.

One can start seeing a representation of this anthropomorphic engagement with the narration in the “*Introduction*” (Milne xv) to A.A. Milne’s *Winnie-the-Pooh*. The anthropomorphic action here is depicted by the narrator referring to “the others”, in relating “now all the others are saying, ‘What about Us?’ So perhaps the best thing to do is to stop writing Introductions and get on with the book.”(Milne xvi). In this reading, the narrator’s remark about “the others” and what they “are saying” exhibits a narrative awareness of these “others” and a means by which “the others” can communicate with the narrator. A stipulation of the narrator as having an awareness of, and contact with, the animal characters addresses the dynamic that exists between the narrator and the animals. In the instance of the quoted section of the “*Introduction*” the nature of this character to narrator dynamic is attended to, by acknowledging the use of the word “So”, as indicating a response to the quoted utterance of ‘What about Us?’ which precedes it. Because the narrator is illustrated as responding to the characters, the following clause where the narrator contends “get[ting] on with the book” as “perhaps the best thing to do” is a narrative thought which is enabled by the expression of “the others” asking “‘What about Us?’”. This comprehension of the narrator’s “get[ting] on with the book” is facilitated by “the others” saying “‘What about us?’”, and therefore “the others” are partially responsible for the narrator’s continuance from the “*Introduction*” to “CHAPTER ONE…” (Milne 1). By the animal characters being narrative forces, the characters' engagement with the literature becomes pertinent to the development of the story and the text itself. Even before the first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh* commences, the narrator is shown in the “*Introduction”* as being informed by the animal characters. Prior to this collective display in which “the others” get the narrator to ”get on with the book.”, Piglet is depicted as interrupting the narrator mid-narration.

The conversational exchange that arises between the narrator and Piglet indicates a closeness between the pair, thus allowing Piglet to commandeer the text in a similar manner to the narrator, demonstrating that Piglet’s mastery and understanding of the text rivals that of the narrator. Piglet’s self-designated involvement in the narration in represented when the narrator relates that “I had written as far as this when Piglet looked up and said ‘What about Me?’” (Milne xvi). This quote, portrays the anthropomorphic character, Piglet, as engaging in dialogue that the narrator responds to, “‘My dear Piglet,’ I said, ‘the whole book is about you.’” (Milne xvi). Here, there is a dialogic exchange between the narrator and Piglet, further demonstrating that there’s a directness to the relationship between the narrator and these characters, in which the narrator can make contact with and even converse with the characters. Also, the narrator’s mention of “the…book”, indicates that the narrator attends their telling of this narrative as being that of a book, and by extension, one might even ascertain that Piglet too registers the “writ[ing]”, that the narrator is engaging in, as representing a book, granting that the narrator is using terms that Piglet would be responsive to, as may be expected in a conversation. Judging that both the narrator and Piglet are similar in their evaluation of the process of “writ[ing]... the…book”, explains how Piglet, in being aware of the process, is able to interrupt the narrator mid-narration, “I had written as far as this when Piglet…said”. This interruption of the narrator’s “writ[ing]” in which Piglet asks “‘What about Me?’” signals that Piglet’s previously mentioned awareness of the narrative, extends to encompass the exact content of the narrative. Knowing what the narrator has already written, allows Piglet to ask questions, like “‘What about Me?’”, which conceivably relate to what the narrator has already relayed through the narration. Piglet’s response to the narrator’s assurance that “‘the whole book is about you.’” by rebutting “‘So it is about Pooh,’” (Milne xvi) indicates that Piglet is perhaps abreast of what the narrator has been saying in the “*Introduction*” prior to Piglet’s “‘What about me?’”, in which the narrator raises such phrases as “he was Winnie-the-Pooh,”, “I have explained the Pooh part”, and “Winnie is called after Pooh,... Pooh after Winnie” (Milne xv) etc.. Piglet’s question “‘What about me?’” as well as the claim that “‘So it [the book] is about Pooh,’”, correlates with the narrator’s addressing of Pooh throughout the “*Introduction*”, meaning that Piglet is aware of what the narrator has been saying and can thus parce together a reading in which Piglet acknowledges the significance with which the narrator has held Pooh thus far. Piglet’s ability to understand and comment on the narration can be seen when the narrator says “I have explained the Pooh part” and Piglet replies “‘So it is about Pooh’”. From this analysis it is evident that Piglet is able to communicate personally with the narrator, comprehend that the narrator is writing a book, and furthermore, garner an understanding of what the narrator is writing, allowing him, Piglet, to respond and object in turn. The tools that Piglet has access to which allow him to understand and engage with the narration extend to his competency to influence the narrative to his liking.

While these features of the narrator and Piglet’s dynamic can distinguish the nature of their relationship, what is perhaps the most significant aspect to this interaction is how the narrator responds to Piglet’s interjection of “‘What about me?’” and Piglet’s supposition of the book being “about Pooh”. Following this dialogue from Piglet, the narrator says, “You see what it is. He is jealous” (Milne xvi), commenting on what is presumably Piglet’s response to the narration. Although, as intimated by the narrator’s reference to Piglet in the third person, “He”, the narrator might be viewed as disregarding Piglet by discontinuing their dialogue, the narrator does indeed continue to recognize Piglet by imparting “Piglet comes in for a good many things which Pooh misses;...” (Milne xvi). This snippet of narration, where the narrator describes Piglet as “coming in for a good many things which Pooh misses;...”, reaches the reader as a consequence of Piglet’s intervention into the narration. In light of Piglet’s “‘What about me?’” a response is triggered from the narrator in which they observe and discuss Piglet’s character. As a result of Piglet dialogically breaking into the narration after the narrator “had written as far as this” the narrator, in responding to Piglet, characterizes him “He is Jealous” and thus apprehends Piglet, causing the narrator to transition into a summation of Piglet, “Piglet comes in for a good many things which Pooh misses;...”. Here, one sees how Piglet is the instigator of this narrative piece. Not only does Piglet, through his narrative intervention, cause the narrator to pursue certain narratives, by directly engaging with them, facilitating a narrative tangent, but Piglet’s interruption of the narrator also promotes the narrator to talk specifically about him, Piglet. It is as if Piglet asking “‘What about me?’” generates the narrator to talk precisely about Piglet. In this way, the reader sees Piglet as willing the narrative in a manner which corresponds to his, Piglet’s, concerns. This reading of Piglet’s involvement with the narrator demonstrates how much power Piglet wields in his ability to understand the narrator’s narrative as well as contact them personally. Piglet’s occupation with the narrative here displays the extent to which these characters can impact and sway the narrative according to their implementation of themselves.

The narrative agency which has been presented in the narrator to character interactions thus far may be positioned within the framework of what Mikhail Bakhtin denotes as “double-directed discourse”. In attending to Milne’s Pooh texts as exhibiting a narrative scheme where anthropomorphic characters affect the narration by functioning as narrative forces imploring the narration to their preference, Bakhtin’s musings on narration, which invites a multitude of voices, proves relevant. In Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* there’s reference to “The chief subject of our investigation…*double-[directed] discourse*” which is described as “aris[ing] under conditions of dialogic interaction”(Bakhtin 185). Already, one can see how Bakhtin’s concept of double-voiced discourse relates to the previously given examples within Milne’s text, in how the narrator is depicted as having dialogic exchanges where they respond to the verbalizations of the animal characters. These dialogic exchanges seen between Milne’s narrator and the anthropomorphic characters, in relation to the Bakhtin quote, constitute the “conditions” which give “rise” to “*double-[directed] discourse*”. Bakhtin expands on double-directed discourse by saying “it has a twofold direction” (Bakhtin 185). These directions are addressed as being “toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and towards *another’s discourse*, toward *someone else’s speech*” (Bakhtin 185). Bakhtin acknowledges the “relationship to someone else's utterance” as being “an indispensable element” in double-directed discourse (Bakhtin 186). Given the pertinence of the “relationship to someone else's utterance” double-directed discourse develops out of a multiplicity of voices that are directed at each other. Milne’s text, in exemplifying double-directed discourse functions similarly out of this multiplicity of voices which constitutes the narration. As seen in Piglet's exchange with the narrator, the presence of multiple expressions originating from different speakers allows for Piglet’s speech to be incorporated into the narrator’s, thereby influencing the outcome of the narration. Bakhtin also reports double-directed discourse as involving more than just “the referential object” and thus existing outside of a “monologic context” which comprises “usual approach[es]” (Bakhtin 186) to discourse. By embodying double-directed discourse, the anthropomorphic characters in the Pooh texts become more than just referential objects, and maintain a discourse which is subject-oriented, allowing for the numerous voices and utterances to break the monologic strain of narration, instead creating a polyphony of narrative consciousnesses. Bakhtin explains Dostoevsky's characters as not being “voiceless slaves” but instead “free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him” (Bakhtin 6). Pooh and his animal companions can similarly be reckoned as existing alongside the narration that constitutes them, being able to engage in double directed discourse with the narrator, integrating their voice into and imprinting on the narration. Because these characters are given voices and embodied as being able to take part in and play with the narrative content, the animals of the Hundred Acre Wood can be subjects, not objects, of the narration, that comprise a dynamic interplay of ideas, thoughts, and expressions that resist the existence of a homogenized, singular narrative voice.

In a continuation of pursuing the dynamic which exists between narrator and character, Milne’s book *The House at Pooh Corner* begins with the section titled “*Contradiction*” (Milne 164). The disparity which exists between Milne’s first book, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, starting with “*Introduction*”, and his second starting with “*Contradiction*” is acknowledged by the narrator in his saying “AN INTRODUCTION is to introduce people, but Christopher Robin and his friends, who have already been introduced to you, are now going to say Good-bye” (Milne 164). With this first sentence of the book, the narrator is seen as distinguishing himself from “Christopher Robin and his friends” as indicated by the narrative’s lack of first person pronouns. The narrator is depicted as removing himself from “Christopher Robin and his friends”, in their “say[ing] Good-bye.”. However, with the next sentence of the “*Contradiction*” the narrator does join himself with the other characters in saying “we asked Pooh what the opposite of an Introduction was, he said ‘The what of a what?’ which didn’t help us” (Milne 164). In this quote, the narrator is again illustrated as interacting with the other characters, except that in this particular instance, one sees the narrator turning to the characters and initiating an exchange which then becomes an aspect of the narration. It is as if the narrator, in searching for a path for the narration to take, looks towards other characters, such as Pooh, as means of generating such narration. Following the narrator’s acquisitioning of Pooh into the narration, the narrator is presented with another narrative animal agent, saying, “Luckily Owl kept his head and told us that the opposite of an Introduction…was a Contradiction;” (Milne 164). Here, Owl is proposing a manner in which one could attend the kind of dilemma presented by the narrator, in which the narrator asks, “What[‘s] the opposite of an Introduction?”, by saying “the opposite of an Introduction . . .[is] a Contradiction.” In the narrator situating himself as literally being at a loss for words regarding how to describe the start the book, Owl vocalizes and participates in the narrative by providing a means of articulation that the narrative can utilize to actualize the desire of the narrator to know “What[‘s] the opposite of an Introduction?”. Not only does Owl integrate himself into the narration such that he’s providing perspective in which the nuance of the book’s beginning can be apprehended, but his input, “the opposite of an Introduction . . .(is) a Contradiction”, is received by the narrator as the narrator relates, in speaking of Owl, “as he is very good at long words, I am sure that that’s what it is” (Milne 164). In this line, the narrator constructs an opinion of Owl, which presumably informs his narrative. By saying Owl is “good at long words” the narrator garners that a “Contradiction” is a good way to start the book. The narrator here is regarding Owl’s engagement with the narrative text as being worthy of implementation. Owl’s exchange even functions in a structural mode in which the narrator is not able to initiate the novel in the conventional way with an introduction so instead he acquisitions Owl’s use of the word “Contradiction” as a means of getting at his, the narrator’s, unique conceptualization of an introduction having an opposite. This acquisition of Owl’s wording emanates from the narrator’s feeling that it isn’t apt to utilize the term “introduction” in beginning the book and thus looks for another means to get at what it is the narrator wants to say. The other animals and essentially Owl provide the means of beginning the book by articulating the solution as to how to appropriately and effectively introduce the text. By taking into account the definition of “Introduction” as “to lead or bring in especially for the first time” and “Contradiction” as “to say the opposite of (something that someone else has said) : to deny the truth of (something)” (Merriam Webster), it may stand to reason that, despite the narrator’s claim that because Owl is very good at “long words” and that the narrator himself has accepted that “the opposite of an Introduction is a Contradiction”, Owl’s perspective on the relation between “Contradiction” and “Introduction” may not be exactly appropriate for the narrator’s purposes. Even in taking this consideration into account, the narrator is nonetheless still seen as regarding Owl as an authority of sorts. The narrator chooses to adapt Owl’s philosophy by using it as part of the narration in establishing the foundation of the *House at Pooh Corner* by titling the section “*Contradiction.*” Furthermore, there is a disparity which arguably exists between the terms “Introduction” and “Contradiction”. In not being completely dichotomous, there is an undercurrent of complexity which facilitates an interpretive value to the text, all of which is due to the involvement of Owl as someone who acquires the narrative and takes hold. Through Owl’s involvement, the narrator is able to subtly relate a nuanced idea, the “opposite of an Introduction” which is articulated as being a “*Contradiction*” in a manner which adds depth to the narration.

The general nature thus far of this paper’s argument is that there are instances in which the narration is manipulated by the characters of the Hundred Acre Wood. At the same time, Pooh scholarship often focuses on the distinction between the Pooh characters and the narrator and Christopher Robin, who are considered as being part of a more concentrated “reality”. Ellen Tremper, for instance, in describing Christopher Robin as not being the “creator” of “all the animal characters” posits, “Milne . . . makes no mystery of his being the narrator”(Tremper 34). The distinction that Ellen Tremeper makes between the narrator and Christopher Robin regarding the “creator” of the animal characters insinuates that Tremper is attending to “the animal characters” as being “crea(tions)” while Chritopher Robin and the narrator are entrenched in a sense of reality. In this section of Tremper’s “Instigorating *Winnie-the-Pooh*” she regards what many of Pooh scholars acknowledge as the framing narrative of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, in which the narrator speaks to the notion of “sit[ting] quietly in front of the fire and listen[ing] to a story” in response to Christopher Robin’s request, “‘What about a story?’” (Milne 1). By referring to this part of the first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh* as an indication of the narrator being a creator of all the animal characters, Tremper may be overlooking a perceptively dominant feature that complicates this reading of Pooh and all the animal characters being inventions, namely the centrality that Pooh has in framing the narrative. The first chapter of *Winnie-the-Pooh* starts with the narrator saying, “HERE is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now” (Milne 1), making Pooh the first character that the reader is acquainted with: “Here he is at the bottom” (Milne 1). Also, in indicating the significance of Pooh in the framing narrative, it should be said that the narration specifies in bringing up “sit[ting] quietly in front of the fire and listen[ing] to a story” that “sometimes Winnie-the-Pooh likes . . . to sit quietly in front of the fire and listen to a story” (Milne 2). It appears here that the narrator is centering his focus on Pooh and making Pooh the vehicle for the telling of the story. Christopher Robin functions similarly in saying about a story, “Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?” (Milne 2). Here, Christopher Robin is also centering Pooh, making Pooh the one responsible for the story and the one who wants to hear the story, particularly a story that is “about himself” (Milne 2). In this framing narrative both the narrator and Christopher Robin are positioning Pooh as being the one who generates the story. Christopher Robin insists that Winnie-the-Pooh wants to hear the story and what’s more he wants to hear a story about himself. The narrator tells us that Winnie-the-Pooh likes to sit by the fire and hear stories. The framing narrative, to Tremper’s point, identifies the narrator as the teller of these stories, but also, in doing so renders Pooh as being the inspiration for the stories. The stories are not generated by the narrator and Christopher Robin but are created because of what Pooh wants as confirmed in the narrator and Christopher Robin’s dialogue. The narration is a consequence of Pooh as opposed to Pooh being a consequence of the narration. Pooh is driving the story. The focus that Christopher Robin and the narrator have on Pooh, puts Pooh front and center in the creation of the narrative. This is another way in which the essence of Pooh emerges and constructs the narration.

The significance of Pooh as a subject who is listening to the stories is maintained throughout this first chapter. In starting with “once upon a time” the narrator describes how “Winnie-the-Pooh lived in a forest . . . under the name of Sanders” (Milne 2). Christopher Robin interjects with “*What does ‘under the name’ mean*?” and explains his question by saying “*Winnie-the-Pooh wasn’t quite sure*” (Milne 2). Christopher Robin continues the theme of his interjections into the narrative as being a consequence of Pooh, as exemplified by Christopher Robin saying “*Winnie-the-Pooh wasn’t quite sure*” as a means of justifying the question “*What does ‘under the name’ mean*?”. Both Christopher Robin and the narrator turn to Pooh as the figure who makes the narration possible and moves the story forward. This section becomes more interesting and relevant to the point of regarding Pooh as being an influential and palpable entity because after Christopher Robin tells us “*Winnie-the-Pooh wasn’t quite sure*”, there is the line, “‘*Now I am,’* said a growly voice” (Milne 3). Here, with the introduction of a growly voice we get a characterization which aligns with the way Pooh’s voice is characterized throughout the stories. Now it seems that there is a material presence of Pooh within this framing narrative. It’s not only that Christoper Robin and the narrator are turning to Pooh and hailing him as the figure who gives them the power to articulate themselves but Pooh here is also represented as someone who is physically speaking for himself within the framing narrative of Christopher Robin and Pooh listening to the stories. It appears that Pooh has a voice and speaks for himself within the context of the text. He is seen as taking on the role of what Ellen Tremper would call the “creator”. Pooh’s admittance of “*now*” understanding what “‘*under the name*’” means, displays a correlation with Chrisopher Robin’s claim that Pooh “*wasn’t quite sure”*of what “‘*under the name*’” means. Christopher Robin’s acknowledgement of Pooh’s presence in the novel correlates with Pooh’s clarification that he is “now sure” of “what under the name of Sanders” means. This exchange between Christopher Robin and Pooh shows that Pooh’s articulation correlates with Christopher Robin’s description of him thereby providing a basis to which Christopher Robin’s representation of Pooh can be authorized and to which Pooh becomes the author or the articulation that Christopher Robin parleys into the narrative.

Roger Sale regards, in a way that parallels Tremper, Pooh as being an object that is manipulated and compromised through the narration. He seems to present Pooh as being a victim of the narration in the sense that the narration is used as a tool to undermine Pooh as opposed to Pooh having agency in manipulating and driving the narration. Roger Sale speaks to this strain of dialogue from Chapter 8 in which Christopher Robin says to Winnie-the-Pooh “‘We are all going on an Expedition,’”, to which Pooh responds, “‘Going on an Expotition?’”. It would appear that Sale registers Chistopher Robin’s response, to Pooh’s “Expotition”, with “Expedition, silly old Bear. It’s got an ‘x’ in it.” (Milne 110) as causing Pooh “to feel inferior because [he doesn’t] know . . . how to spell” (Sale 168). Roger Sale seems to be of the mind that in this comparison between Christopher Robin and Pooh, Christopher Robin is being reductive of Pooh. Sale would say Pooh is represented as being inferior due to the disparity that exists between Christohper Robin’s “expedition” and Pooh’s “expotition”. Robert Hemming, like Robert Sale, is playing off the idea that Pooh looks to Chrisopher Robin as having a kind of mastery of the world that the other animals don’t have. Hemming states that, “Christiopher Robin’s authority is never questioned.” (Hemming 72). This argument, which deems that Christopher Robin plays a god-like role in the Hundred Acre Wood, a locale that Alison Lurie prescribed as being “Christopher Robin[‘s]... self-created Eden” (Lurie), and hails Christopher Robin as being the primary governing figure and designer within the stories. However, as depicted thus far in the paper, the narrative exists as a consequence of Pooh and all the other animals reaching out and engaging with the narration. It may be the case that Christopher Robin corrects Pooh’s use of “expotition” but it appears, upon close reading, that Pooh’s articulation is sustained and thus enforced by the narration which exists within Chapter 8, which reads “CHAPTER 8 In Which *Chrisopher Robin leads an Expotition to the North Pole*” (Milne 108). In addition to Pooh’s utterance of expotition being used in the title of the chapter, we also see it used in the narrative voice for example in “The expotition started . . .” (Milne 113) and “the front of the expotition . . .” (Milne 114) whereas Christopher Robin’s “expedition” is only included in the context of his own dialogue. It appears that through the narrative voice, Christopher Robin’s dialogue is being subverted and instead Pooh’s “expotition” is being supported. Pooh’s creation of “expotition'' is valued over the more traditionally correct version offered by Christopher Robin. Despite Sale’s apprehension of the “expotition” versus “expedition” dilemma as undermining Pooh, the dominant narrative mode says otherwise. Pooh’s articulation here is symbolic of the nature that the overall narrative inhabits as the narrative adapts to Pooh’s outlook. In this instance we see the narration as favoring Pooh’s comprehension of the world and thus the narrator’s representation of the world reflects that of Pooh, thus consecrating Pooh as being the preferred narrative agent.

A similar instance in which narration purports to align the animals’ particular perspectives, thus making narrative agents of them, is seen in Chapter 5 where Piglet, after having made a Heffalump trap with Pooh, “they…dig a Very Deep Pit, and then the Heffalump would come along and fall into the Pit” (Milne 56), goes to visit the trap the next morning, “[Piglet] crept to the side of the Trap and looked in” (Milne 66). Meanwhile, during the night Pooh had decided to go into the Heffalump trap, “he ran out of the house, and he ran straight to the [Heffalump Trap]”, to retrieve a jar of honey he had left there as bait “I should put a Jar of Honey in the Trap” (Milne 58). Subsequently, he found himself in a situation where he got the honey pot stuck on his head, “he pushed his head right in, and began to lick” (Milne 64) and could not escape “Winnie-the-Pooh had been trying to get the honey-jar off his head” (Milne 66-67). Piglet, being unaware of Pooh’s escapades during the night, comes upon the trap in the morning to find Pooh, who he perceives to be the Heffalump “"Help, help!" cried Piglet, "a Heffalump, a Horrible Heffalump!" (Milne 67). Piglet runs in terror from the trap to Christopher Robin to appeal for help, “he didn't stop crying and scampering until he got to Christopher Robin's house”. Piglet leads Christopher Robin to the scene, “off they went” (Milne 68), at which point we are told that “Christopher Robin began to laugh”. After it is revealed through Christopher Robin’s laughter we are shown that he and Piglet have varying perceptions. Piglet is seeing a Horrible Heffalump!” caught in the trap while Christopher Robin is seeing “Pooh bumping his head against a tree-root he had found.”. In spite of the contrasting perspectives represented by Piglet and Christopher Robin, there’s a piece of narration following Christopher Robin’s laughter saying, “*Crash* went the Heffalump’s head against the tree-root” (Milne 69). This narration, in which a Heffalump is described as banging its head against a tree-root, lines up with Piglet’s vision of the scene. In Piglet viewing the creature in the pit as being a Heffalump the narration orients itself around Piglet’s point of view while Christopher Robin’s attestment of the creature being Pooh is disregarded and exists as a fixture of Christopher Robin’s outlook. Yet again, as was the case with Pooh’s “Expotition”, we see the narrator purport and sustain the outlooks of the animal characters, which was in this instance Piglet’s belief that there was a Heffalump in the sand pit. The narration substantiates Piglet’s viewpoint as being the pinnacle of narrative preference.

The apprehension of the anthropomorphic characters of *Winnie-the-Pooh* as being separated or removed from the narrative frame and the notion of the “invention of the Pooh narrative” continues to be present in David Rudd’s article “How Pooh Sticks . . . and Comes Unstuck”. In Rudd’s text he claims in attending to the Pooh stories that “these are just bedtime stories about an imaginary space that Milne’s son, Christopher, is envisioned as inhabiting with his nursery toys” (Rudd). In this summation of Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh texts, the stories that are told within the previously mentioned narrative frame are addressed as being imaginary and devices that Christopher Robin uses to pass his time as a carefree child. It seems that in Rudd’s rendering of these stories he’s definitely putting Christopher Robin in the center and having the other characters acquiesce to Christopher Robin’s imaginative zeal. The Pooh books are often regarded as being about childhood as depicted in Rudd’s apprehension of the texts. Rudd is saying that the stories are a consequence of Christopher Robin. The stories and the anthropomorphic characters come into fruition because of Christopher Robin’s imagination. These toys as Rudd calls them come to life through Christopher Robin’s imaginative play. Rudd is claiming that these characters of Pooh, Piglet, Owl, Eyeore, etc. would not exist if it weren't for Christopher Robin’s interaction with them. It appears that Rudd is saying that the animals in reality are material objects that are at the service of Christopher Robin. They activate according to his whims and their activity is a byproduct of his being a child. Christopher Robin inhabits the real world of his framing narrative. Then there is the fictional world where the animals exist. The characters depicted in the book don’t exist in the real life of Christopher Robin. Their lived lives are objects of fantasy. Therefore, as opposed to the animals of the Hundred Acre Wood being provocateurs of the narration they are instead narrative objects that the narrator as well as Christopher Robin impose themselves on. In addressing the animals of the Hundred Acre Wood in this light, their actuality is rejected in a narrative sense.

While this notion of the animals in the Hundred Acre Wood contradicts the consecration of these animals, as narrative agents, which has been the project of this paper, there is some merit to this approach to *Winnie-the-Pooh*. In having the animal characters be removed from Chrisopher Robin and the narrator, there’s an objectification or a dismissal of these characters as being figures that don’t have an existing, bona fide personality and spirit. Oftentimes the Pooh characters can be dismissed as coming from what Megan Palmer-Browne calls, in referring to “the dream framework’”, a narrative technique in which the content of the narration is contextualized as being that of a dream. A feature of this dream framework as Palmer-Browne presents it, is that it is a space which “allow[s] writers to explore liminal states”, a cross between reality and not reality, “the transition between sleep and waking or the effective and the perceptive”. These “liminal states” are cognitive spaces where that which is fantastical can overlap with the physical, and, in the animals from the Hundred Acre Wood being regarded as imaginative, renders “Christopher Robin’s fantasy” as something that is produced as story because it is a product of these liminal spaces. The idea of liminal spaces provides Christopher Robin with the facility to create this world in which he is engaging with the animals, such as Pooh, Piglet, Owl, Eeyore, etc. Palmer-Browne approaches these liminal spaces as providing “additional borderland: that between land and animal” (Palmer-Browne 207). Megan Palmer-Browne’s understanding of liminal spaces in this context further associates with the particulars of Christopher Robin’s situation in which his engagement with the Hundred Acre Wood is a departure from his typical life.

While these ideas of liminal spaces as a means of explaining the existence of these anthropomorphic characters in the narrator and Christopher Robin’s life may be appealing to most critics in its dissociation of these animals from reality, this argumentative position needs to have a resonance with Milne’s text. In appealing to this argument, there is a section in the “*Contradiction*” to Milne’s *The House at Pooh Corner* where, after Owl’s suggestion of “Contradiction”, the narrator proceeds to specify “why we are having a Contradiction”). In this explanation the narrator tells us that there are times when Christopher Robin asks, “What about that story . . . about what happened to Pooh—-” (Milne 163) to which the narrator cuts off Christopher and says, “What about nine time a hundred and seven?”. Following this description where the narrator admits to introducing new activities in response to Christopher Robin’s asking for a story, he says, in presumably referring to the types of questions he asks Christopher Robin as an alternative to telling the stories of the Hundred Acre Wood, “We find these very exciting, and when we have been excited quite enough, we curl up and go to sleep”. Here, following this instance in which, being awake, Christopher Robin has asked the narrator to tell the story about Winnie-the-Pooh, and the other animal characters, and instead the narrator responds with mathematical, problem solving questions, thus inducing sleep for both the narrator and Christopher Robin. This distinction between what Christopher Robin and the narrator do when they are awake and asleep is related to the consequences of liminal spaces within the context of dream framework. We can reason that although Chritsopher Robin isn’t told stories by the narrator when Christoopher Robin is awake, both the narrator and Christopher Robin are able to access these stories through the narrative technique of the dream framework, which provides that space. This dictates that there is an overlap between the imaginary and the material. We can conjecture that a dream framework is at play here in a concrete sense because after the narrator and Chrispopher Robin go to sleep, the narrator describes, “Pooh sitting wakeful a little longer in his chair by our pillow, thinks Grand Thoughts about Nothing, until he, too, closes his eyes and nods his head, and follows us on tiptoe into the Forest.”. This quotation, which positions Pooh as entering the “Forest” after he nods off, produces an understanding that this is how the Hundred Acre Wood is accessed. As a result, there is an abstraction of the stories which depict this life that Pooh, Piglet, and the other animals share. The narrator and Christopher Robin are also said to engage with the Forest this way, seeing how Pooh falls asleep after the narrator and Christopher Robin and follows them, insinuating that the narrator and Chirstopher Robin have gone through a similar process in entering the Forest. Here it could be ascertained that because Christopher and the narrator fall asleep first, they are the gatekeepers to this liminal space and they allow Pooh to enter it and to transcend into that space where he is finally given the ability to engage with Christopher Robin, the narrator, and the other animals in the story.

While this appears to be an argument that is generally in line with the way readers, or scholars, normally consider the Winnie-the-Pooh books to be a consequence of the narrator and Christopher Robin’s creation, one can maintain that there is a realness that preserves these animals’ actualities. In the case of the previously mentioned section of the “*Contradiction*”, which presents the idea of Christopher Robin, the narrator, and Winnie-the-Pooh falling asleep as a means of entering the Forest, one can maintain that in that section the narrative still presents Pooh in physical terms similar to that of the narrator and Christopher Robin. The narrator describes Pooh as, “sitting wakefully a little while longer on his chair by our pillow”, which positions Pooh as being in the same space as the human characters as he is “by our pillow”. Pooh is engaging with the same world as the narrator and Christopher Robin prior to their falling asleep and entering the Forest, which may maintain that the dream narrative and the liminal space is not the only means by which the narrator and Christopher Robin can engage with the animal characters. As described before, the narrator tells us that he has conversations with Piglet in which Piglet interjects and asks, “What about me?”. Owl suggests the word “Contradiction”, thus influencing the narrative structure of the text. The narrator hears “the others” saying “What about us?”, which provokes him to tell the story. These examples in the narration contextualize the narrator and the animals of the Hundred Acre Wood as existing in the same space, giving them the ability to communicate with each other. This dynamic that is repeated throughout these stories demonstrates the homodiegetic nature of the narrator in which he is part of the same world as the characters. He can communicate with them and they can provide him ideas. This has an impact on the way the narration reflects the world that the narrator, Christopher Robin, and the animals occupy. The narrator having conversation and engaging in dialogue with these characters proves that there is something that connects them and allows them to engage with one another, not in an ethereal sense but in a sense which allows the characters not just be an object of narration but to be narrative subjects talk to the narrator and have an influence on the way they tells the story.

This engagement that Pooh and the other character have with Milne’s work as indicated by the narrative where they are seen as constituting themselves as the arbiters of narrative content, can be spoken to by Henry James in his preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* in which he describes “my grasp of a single character” (James 8). In explaining this grasp he has of a character, he attends to it as “an acquisition I had made” such that he was “incomplete possession of it”. In regarding this character that James says he has ownership of, as well as dominance over, James says that the character became “familiar” and that due to his engagement with this character, he “saw it in motion, and so to speak, in transit” (James 8). James describes the development of his engagement with this character as producing, “a vivid individual” that “constitutes an identity”. It appears that James’s engagement with this character begins with an objectified substance he describes as being in possession of, with the ability to manipulate it, contextualize it, and mold it. This character then transcends or moves in what James describes as “what, at a given time, had extraordinarily happened to [the character]”. He says, “The character had been able to take over (take over straight from life) such and such a constituted figure or form. The figure has to that extent, as you see, *been* placed in the imagination”. It seems here that James moves to say that this character, like Pooh and his animal friends, which was once a creative commodity within the authorial process, and became something real, something that is taken from somewhere else and put into the imagination of the author. The character transcends the imagination, is no longer owned by it, but has its own self-actualized figure, form, disposition, and agency. James’s acquisition of the portrait starts as a constitution of his conscious and intentional narration, but when the character becomes conscientious of its presence and starts functioning outside of the control of the narrator, the character becomes a kind of extratextual force that works outside of the narrator’s own implementation and craft. Perhaps it’s this process that is conveyed within the narration of *Winnie-the-Pooh* where the characters are not devices, as substantiated by the narrative examples in this essay, where the characters self-actualize themselves and dictate the nature of the narration as opposed to the narration inventing them. Milne can perhaps be seen here speaking to James’s sentiment that subverts the authority of the narrator and Christopher Robin by placing the authority and authorial control of the narrative in the hands of the animal characters, who project themselves onto it.

One instance that indicates the influence that the animal characters have in establishing themselves in the narration is depicted in Milne’s collection of verses, *Now We are Six*, in which the narrator concludes the introduction by saying, “P.S. Pooh wants us to say that he thought it was a different book; and he hopes you won’t mind, but he walked through it one day, looking for his friend Piglet, and sat down on some of the pages by mistake” (Milne 456). Again, we see the narrator acquisitioning what “Pooh wants us to say”. Thus we have another example where Pooh’s desire is attended to by the narrator so that Pooh’s perspective is inserted in the narration because he wants the narrator to say particular things as is indicated by that very narration. More significantly though is this narrative representation of Pooh in which Pooh is not merely seen as obliging the narrator as a means of entering his narrative. He, Pooh, is depicted as walking through the book and sitting on the pages, meaning that he himself is engaging with the text of his own fruition. He is the one walking through the book and inserting himself inside the book. Pooh is not a textual figure contained within the book, he is a figure which has now transcended it and has the liberty to pass through it as a consequence of his own will. Here we see the agency that Pooh has in participating in the story. He is not only a narrative agent that appeals to the narrator, but a being who enters the book “by mistake” thus interweaving himself within the pages indicating that the book is not a fixture that produces Pooh but rather Pooh is a being that enters the book “of his own accord.”.

This analysis of the narration and the narrative techniques within Milne’s Pooh textsshowcases how the animal characters of the Hundred Acre Wood are not so much removed from the narrator and Christopher Robin in the sense that they are abstract, ethereal entities that are figments of creative endeavors, but instead the narration shows that these characters actually are proactive and motivated in their engagement with the narration. Through the narrative techniques that are displayed in Milne’s text, there is a manifestation of a dynamic which reflects how the anthropomorphic characters of the narration start to dictate the nature of the story as well as the narrative design. This is facilitated through their existence. One could say that the text is not only a product of this dynamic but it also displays how the narrator is not the sole arbiter of the narrative. He appeals to the characters’ sensibilities and it is within their viewpoint that the narrative is oriented and fabricated. By representing the narrative sculpting of Milne’s work, one can grasp the significance of letting others speak, creating a polyphonic, democratization of language and expression.

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