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Keywords:

Adam Waytz,
anthropomorphism, children
literature, human
characteristics

Article history:

Received: 2024-10-30

Accepted: 2024-11-16

Available online: 2025-02-01



The Significance of Anthropomorphism in Children's Stories A Study of Rudy Kipling's *The Jungle Book*.

A B S T R A C T

Anthropomorphism is giving human qualities and characteristics to non-humans, whether they are animals or plants, as in children's stories. Because animals play an essential role in literature, this study examines the social and political aspects of anthropomorphism in *The Jungle Book*. Using animals in their real environment to represent stories directed at specific groups of people, instead of using humans to represent them, inevitably has great reasons and importance. Anthropomorphism gave these animals in stories abilities and characteristics related only to humans, including the ability to speak and other human qualities such as empathy, hatred, and friendship, as in the novel *The Jungle Book*. Enabling non-humans to speak, for example, opens new horizons for children and adults alike to learn about the behaviors and lifestyles of animals in their real environments and their relationships with other animals and humans alike. It also enables adults to obtain a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the writer's messages about human societies, their types, behaviors, and political orientations by representing them in the form of animal groups. The study uses an objective approach by adapting the views of Adam Weitz and other theorists to analyze these aspects. The study concluded that giving human characteristics to non-humans, especially in literature, enables the writer to instill moral and cultural values and customs in the hearts of children by making the characters their beloved animals. On the other hand, anthropomorphism allows drawing a picture in children's minds of human behaviors and feelings such as love, hate, love of power, and establishing friendships by embodying them with talking animals. Last but not least, anthropomorphism gives the writer a real opportunity to avoid directly presenting controversial and critical topics and representing them with non-human characters.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol21.Iss1/Pt1.785>

أهمية التشبيهية في قصص الأطفال دراسة في كتاب الأدغال لرودي كبلينج

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المُستخلص

التشبيه هو إعطاء صفات وخصائص إنسانية لغير البشر سواء كانوا حيوانات أو نباتات كما في قصص الأطفال. ولأن الحيوانات تلعب دورا أساسيا في الأدب، فإن هذه الدراسة تبحث في الجوانب الاجتماعية والسياسية للتشبيه في كتاب الأدغال. إن استخدام الحيوانات في بيئتها الحقيقية لتمثيل قصص موجهة لمجموعات محددة من البشر، بدلا من استخدام البشر لتمثيلهم، له حتما أسباب وأهمية كبيرة. إن التشبيه أعطى هذه الحيوانات في القصص قدرات وخصائص مرتبطة بالبشر فقط، بما في ذلك القدرة على الكلام وغيرها من الصفات الإنسانية مثل التعاطف والكرهية والصدقة، كما في رواية كتاب الأدغال. إن تمكين غير البشر من الكلام، على سبيل المثال، يفتح آفاقا جديدة للأطفال والكبار على حد سواء للتعرف على سلوكيات وأنماط حياة الحيوانات في بيئاتها الحقيقية وعلاقاتها مع الحيوانات الأخرى والبشر على حد سواء. كما أنه يمكن البالغين من الحصول على فهم أوسع وأشمل لرسائل الكاتب حول المجتمعات البشرية وأنواعها وسلوكياتها وتوجهاتها السياسية من خلال تمثيلها في شكل مجموعات حيوانية. وتعتمد الدراسة على منهج موضوعي من خلال تكييف آراء آدم وايتز وغيره من المنظرين لتحليل هذه الجوانب. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن إعطاء الصفات البشرية لغير البشر، وخاصة في الأدب، يمكن الكاتب من غرس القيم والعادات الأخلاقية والثقافية في نفوس الأطفال من خلال جعل الشخصيات حيوانات محبوبة لهم. ومن ناحية أخرى، يسمح التشبيه برسم صورة في أذهان الأطفال عن السلوكيات والمشاعر البشرية مثل الحب والكرهية وحب السلطة وإقامة الصداقات من خلال تجسيدها مع الحيوانات الناطقة. وأخيرا وليس آخرا، يمنح التشبيه الكاتب فرصة حقيقية لتجنب تقديم مواضيع مثيرة للجدل والنقد بشكل مباشر وتمثيلها بشخصيات غير بشرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آدم وايتز، التشبيه، أدب الأطفال، الصفات البشرية، غير البشر.

Anthropomorphism Background

Animal characters play a large and essential role in most literary works, especially children's literature. The use of animals in stories is not limited to modern literary works, because stories and narratives in previous eras used non-human characters, both realistic and imaginary, in their works, such as monsters, gods, and other predatory animals. The use of non-human creatures in those eras was to give a dramatic character to the human struggle against the evil forces represented by monsters and non-humans creatures. The reason that writers became more interested in using animals in their stories is when the purposes of using these animals and non-human creatures that were given human characteristics expanded. Instead of being limited in the past to conveying human struggle and submission to these creatures, they used domestic animals to convey broader and more comprehensive messages to the readers.. Anthropomorphism is giving human characteristics and behaviors to non-human beings. Leshner in his book noted that:

Xenophanes (6th Century B.C) was the first to use the term anthropomorphism when describing how gods and other supernatural agents tended to bear a striking physical resemblance to their believers. This technique includes attributing humanlike physical features to nonhumans (like a face, hands) and/or attributing a humanlike mind to nonhumans (like intentions, conscious awareness, and secondary emotions such as shame or joy) (Leshner, 1992, 34).

Regarding the definition of anthropomorphism and the meaning of the word, Rajsi Rajora writes "This intrinsic tendency of human psychology can roughly sum up the idea of anthropomorphism, which is, by definition, the attribution of human traits, emotions, and intentions to non-human entities (the term derives from the Greek word "anthropos" and "morphe" meaning "human" and "form")" (Rajora, 2017, 774). According to the meaning of the word in Greek, we understand that anthropomorphism is giving characteristics and behaviors to non-human beings so that that being becomes human-like.

After the study has indicated the origin of anthropomorphism and its linguistic meaning, it has become necessary to recognize the justifications for using anthropomorphism in literature in general and in children's stories and novels. Esmeralda G. Urquiza-Haas points out the reasons for using anthropomorphism, writes "anthropomorphism emerges as an automatic response to any human-like behaviour or human-like feature that requires a swift identification or interpretation, which cannot be accounted for using the knowledge at hand." (Esmeralda, 2015, 168). Dealing with animals that speak, dress, and behave like humans is in itself a world unfamiliar to humans, and this matter can constitute a strong incentive for all readers to delve into this world, even if it is not realistic, and discover its secrets. Relating to that, Jame Derby noted "Inanimate objects can do what people are not able to, or cannot." (Derby, 1970, 190). Attracting readers and drawing their attention to events and characters is the most important thing that all story writers look for to convey their social messages. Concerning this idea Blount writes, "The representation of animals in children's stories is aimed at achieving three major purposes: getting and sustaining the interest of the young reader, as a subtle way of intimating children with some complex life issues, and as a tool for social and moral instructions". In addition, for readers, dealing with non-human characters who act, speak, and suffer in the same way that the reader himself does explains a lot about his internal problems and suffering. In this regard Leesa Fawcett suggests: "[w]e know ourselves as human, only insofar as we live in connection with and experience non-humans" (Blount, 1975, 18). Therefore, dealing with non-human beings can increase our awareness and understanding of ourselves.

As for the use of anthropomorphism in children's literature, since children's literature is an artistic work whose purpose is to simulate the intellectual and mental level of children in order to deliver educational and moral messages, Hisham M. Ismail points out that "children's literature plays a vital role in forming the young generations' personalities and leaves an ever last impression and impact." (Ismail, 2023, 593) Therefore, the use of anthropomorphism in children's stories aims to further simplify

complex topics for children and convey the greatest amount of moral and educational values to them through beloved creatures.

Like all new theories and ideas, anthropomorphism has not been immune to criticism and rejection by some theorists and researchers. Some of them believe that anthropomorphism is unrealistic and biased because it depicts the world with non-human characters from a human point of view. Concerning this idea Fawcett suggests: "[t]he way in which people conceive of anthropomorphism is intimately connected to the way in which they perceive their relationship to nature and Western cultures tend to see themselves as distinct from the natural world" (Fawcett, 1989, 14). Since the Western view believes that humans are the best creatures on this planet and everything that exists is created for its service and comfort, Fawcett also refers "'dominance over nature and nature valued as a human resource'" (Fawcett, 1989, 14). According to his words, as long as humans believe that the Earth belongs to humans and that other non-human beings were created to serve them, the issue of anthropomorphism will inevitably tend to glorify humans and belittle other beings, even if human qualities are given to those creatures. But the number of opponents remains very small compared to those who support the use of anthropomorphism in stories and novels.

The Study Problem

Giving human characteristics and behaviors to non-humans is inevitably important in literary works, as the problem of the present study lies in examining the importance of anthropomorphism in the pedagogical, educational, and political aspects.

The Importance of the Study

The importance of the current study lies in presenting the importance of anthropomorphism in literature, especially children's stories and novels, and its role in instilling values, principles and cultures on the one hand, and simplifying the lives of wild animals for children by giving animals the ability to speak. It also shows the importance of anthropomorphism in children's stories for adults.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to analyze and discuss the purpose and importance of anthropomorphism in literary works, especially children's stories, and its role in simplifying complex topics for the children and displaying hidden political messages and overtones for the adult.

The study discusses the following set of questions:

- 1- Can anthropomorphism convey political overtones through animals?
- 2- How anthropomorphism contributes to enhancing children's more comprehensive understanding of wildlife?
- 3- Does anthropomorphism enhance the educational message of children's literature?

Methodology

The present study is a qualitative and analytical study that aims to discuss the role of anthropomorphism in enhancing children's understanding of wildlife, especially children who have not dealt directly with animals, as well as the role of anthropomorphism in facilitating understanding the hidden political messages in animal dialogues. A document analysis approach used in the present study to collect data. The collected data, which includes human behaviors and characteristics given to non-humans, and the importance of their use in children's stories, will be analyzed according to the opinions of some theorists and researchers in this regard.

Discussion

1.1 The moral Significance of Anthropomorphism in *The Jungle Book*

In *The Jungle Book*, Kipling was able to break the stereotypical image of forest life and people's belief that the forest is based on predation and constant struggle between animals for their daily sustenance. Kipling used the forest and its animals to raise issues related to humans. Helen Adhuze refers to the moral side of anthropomorphism, writes: "In children's literature, [Anthropomorphism] is used as an attention grabber and a means of sustaining the interest of the young audience in exploring literary texts and giving moral instructions to children."

(Adhuze, 2022, 49). Anthropomorphism has enabled Kipling to delve into humanity's positive and negative instincts and ways to deal with them. We must point out that there are two types of anthropomorphism, which is giving human formal features to non-human beings, such as hands, feet, etc., and giving human qualities and characteristics to non-human beings, including love, hate, sacrifice, etc. Waytz et al. point out to Anthropomorphism and write: "The essence of anthropomorphism is therefore attributing capacities that people tend to think of as distinctly human to nonhuman agents, in particular humanlike mental capacities (e.g., intentionality, emotion, cognition)." (Waytz, 2010, 220). Making animals talk explained that many of the values must instill in children. For example, Kipling focuses on the role of the individual and the group in achieving a balanced and healthy life. What was going on in terms of events and behaviors in the wolf herd were messages for the human race to learn from. Concerning Kipling's jungle law, Mackie writes "Its provisions are a judicious mixture of individualism and collectivism, prescribing graduated and qualified rights for fathers of families, mothers with cubs, and young wolves, which constitute an elementary system of welfare services. Of course, Kipling meant to give moral instruction to human children." (Mackie, 1978, 455). Respect, obedience, following orders, and bearing responsibility, these and other correct behaviors were the basis of interaction between members of the wolf pack, which sent messages to the human race about the secret of the success of any society.

One of the moral issues that Kipling addresses in his book *The Jungle Book* is equality and acceptance of others. Although Mowgli was a human child, he was adopted by a pack of wolves that were supposed to be predatory animals, and that this child could serve as easy prey for them. . The matter did not stop at this point, but the rest of the animals in the forest, especially Mowgli's friends, the monkey and the bear, treated Mowgli as a wolf even though he was human. Although Mowgli did not learn the law of the jungle through soft and easy ways, he did not treated by wolves in a racist or gender manner, as humans do with other non-human creatures. Baloo the Bear was raising and teaching Mowgli harshly so that he could face life, he always

said "Better he should be bruised from head to foot by me who love him than he should come to harm through ignorance" (Kipling, 2009, 29: ch.2). On the contrary, the wolves accepted Mowgli, included him in their group, and began teaching him their behavior. On the other hand, when Mowgli became an adult and a young man, he realized that he had to leave the jungle and join his human race. Unfortunately he and his adopted family were chased and thirteen. Even he did not pose a threat to them. All his fault was that the animals were obeying him and carrying out his orders, so they accused him of witchcraft. Regarding Mowgli being falsely accused by humans of sorcery and witchcraft, Kareem states "When the members of the dominant group feel that they are about to lose the competition with outgroups, they usually find the means and pretexts to limit the role of those groups and seize their preference and exclude them from the competition" (Kareem, 2023, 1230). According to what is mentioned earlier, Kipling wanted to send a moral message that it is possible to find your belonging and your life if there is acceptance and tolerance between groups, and that you may not find your belonging with the race to which you belong because of the racism and bias of its members towards their thoughts and cultures.

The other ethical subject mentioned in *The Jungle Book* is the theme of mercy. Mowgli was taught that hunting other animals should only be done only when truly needed. When Bakira hunted a deer, he asked Mowgli to look into its eyes so that she would not feel alone and sad, because they killed it to feed on it, unlike humans who hunt animals for other unnecessary purposes such as entertainment, competition, or confiscation of their original habitats. This is an important gesture from Kipling to make people reconsider the necessity of giving priority to compassion and kindness over selfishness in dealing with animals.

1.2 The Importance of Anthropomorphism in a more accurate understanding of Wildlife

Although the writer used anthropomorphism by giving human characteristics to the animals, those characteristics were used very carefully by the writer so that they did not distort or change the natural life of the animal in its original environment. On the contrary, anthropomorphism enabled readers of *The Jungle Book* to trace the wildlife of the animals depicted in the story, their most important characteristics, and the way they live in the forest. Basically, *the Jungle Book* is a collection of interesting and adventurous stories about the boy Mowgli and the animals of the forest. For children, the element of suspense is present in every part of the book, which encourages children to continue reading the book carefully. Through the enjoyable narration, Kipling was referring to the characteristics and types of animals in a simplified way for the children's group. To make things smoother and clearer for children about the nature of each animal and its relationship with other animals and its environment, Kipling used anthropomorphism. Thomas A. More refers to the importance of anthropomorphism in enhancing children's comprehension, writes: In this type of learning, words that appear together frequently become associated. Thus, children come to learn about the sly fox, the bad wolf, the slow turtle, or the friendly bunny. In fact, these adjectives may represent the very foundations of anthropomorphism. It would be interesting to investigate the frequencies with which certain adjectives are associated with different species. (More, 1984, 20)

Even for children who live in the forest, they are ignorant of their ways of living and their relationship with their environment and with humans. Therefore, anthropomorphism clarifies all of this and more to expand children's understanding of animals and enable them to be good at dealing with them and avoiding their danger.

As everyone knows, it is not possible for all children to see or interact with animals, especially children who live in cities or areas where there are no animals. Therefore, animal stories such as *The Jungle Book* give children an opportunity to develop their imagination and understanding of these creatures, and also provide them

with the opportunity to learn about these animals, their ways of living, and their food chain. Thomas A. More adds about the essential role of literature in implanting a clear idea about wildlife in the mind of children, writes "The attitudes, beliefs, and values acquired by children through literature will exert tremendous influence over their adult behavior. The preferences for and aversions to different species obtained in childhood stick with us for a long time." (More, 1984, 21). Based on what was mentioned, the writer must be careful in presenting and narrating information, especially in children's literature, because children will treat any information as if it is an established fact. Helen Adhuze refers to the role of anthropomorphism in facilitating child's perception to the environment, writes "anthropomorphization of animals is cultivated in children as a result of urbanization unlike their counterparts from rural areas. It facilitates a better understanding /interpretation of the natural environment as intentionality offers the best model of description for such a relational attitude between man and the natural entities around him" (Adhuze, 2022, 49

On the other hand, as we know, *The Jungle Book* was not directed only to children, but rather to all age groups, because its stories carry social, cultural, religious, and political messages. The use of anthropomorphism in this story enabled adults rather than children to have a more comprehensive and broader understanding of wildlife and dispelled the blurry image of predatory animals that was lurking in the minds of most people. The conversations that took place between members of the wolf pack and the laws of the jungle that Baloo the Bear taught Mowgli are evidence that these animals hunt for a purpose and a real need to survive, contrary to the prevailing idea that they are animals that attack humans and pose a real threat to their lives even when they do not need to prey on them. Drawing a new picture of wildlife through *The Jungle Book* and similar stories that give animals the ability to speak paved the way for building new relationships between humans and animals based on the animal a living being with rights and a partner with us on this planet, in contrast to the

prevailing belief that animals must be killed. Because it is either an enemy to get rid of its danger, or a source of food that we kill to feed on.

1.3 The Importance of Anthropomorphism in Embodying the Political Aspect in *The Jungle Book*

One of the most important aspects that Mowgli's story focused on, in addition to the moral and educational topics, is the political aspect. It must be noted that *The Jungle Book* was written during the era when India was under British occupation. Through the use of animals, Kipling wanted to address the nature of the system and laws prevailing in that era. The division of animals into groups is only an indication of the divisions that prevailed at that time. There is a group of monkeys, a pack of wolves, the tiger and its follower, the hyena, as well as the snake. Each group symbolized a specific human group. Anthropomorphism gave Kipling a wider space and tools to present the political aspect through animals.

The jungle represented the land of India, which the occupier sought to sow discord and rivalry among the segments of its society so that he could control it. Just like the tiger, Sherkhan, who was a tool of colonialism in breaking established laws and causing strife by abusing the humans and animals they own. Within the law of the forest, no animal can attack a person or his animals, including a cow, because it is sacred. But we find that Sherkhan preyed on Mowgli's family, and in another incident he killed a cow and threw it on the side of the road in areas where wolves were present so that they could be accused, and this is exactly what the British occupation forces were doing, killing and displacing the Indians.

One of the most important topics that *The Jungle Book* focused on is the law of the jungle. The law of the jungle is considered one of the oldest laws that governed the forest and its inhabitants, and all animals complied with it. Kipling likened British law in India to the law of the jungle that everyone must follow in order for everyone to live in peace. A pack of wolves in terms of leadership and arrangement is like the British and their intentions in India. According to the events of the story, accepting Mowgli's adoption was to serve the wolf pack and it was not a humanitarian goal, just

as the British occupation did with the Indians, as it approached and trained some of them to represent them after their withdrawal, and not to give the Indians power on a golden platter. While the group of monkeys represents the rest of Indian society, which lives in constant chaos and is not governed by any law, even Kipling did not give them the ability to speak like the other animals in the story, as an indication that even if they spoke, they would not say anything useful. We find that the group of monkeys united with Sherkhan to break the law of the jungle, not for a real purpose, but to create chaos, unlike Sherkhan, who represents tyrannical rule, and who was exploiting their stupidity and chaos to his advantage so that he could weaken the pack of wolves, which represents the British occupation authority, to monopolize power for himself. Warning Mowgli not to mix and deal with a group of monkeys, Baloo said:

I have taught thee all the Law of the Jungle for all the peoples of the jungle--except the Monkey-Folk who live in the trees. They have no law. They are outcasts. They have no speech of their own, but use the stolen words which they overhear when they listen, and peep, and wait up above in the branches. Their way is not our way. They are without leaders. They have no remembrance. They boast and chatter and pretend that they are a great people about to do great affairs in the jungle, but the falling of a nut turns their minds to laughter and all is forgotten. We of the jungle have no dealings with them. We do not drink where the monkeys drink; we do not go where the monkeys go; we do not hunt where they hunt; we do not die where they die. (Kipling, 2009, 36)

Here we understand the accuracy of Kipling's dealings with Indian society and its social and political classes. By not giving the group of monkeys the full embodiment of humans like other animals, this is an indication that this class of Indian society, which is called the untouchable class, do not have human characteristics in terms of soundness of mind and unity of leadership, but rather they are random groups that have no audible voice and no real position. The group of monkeys believes that they are the most worthy and best among the remaining animals in that they live in

the tops of trees and can see everything, so we always find them attacking animals that abide by the law of the jungle and trying to harm them to create chaos. Here we find the importance and necessity of anthropomorphism in describing the writer's point of view and the ability to present political and social problems by giving some human characteristics and withholding them from others, in order to demonstrate the strength and weakness of each group in a clear way that is accessible to everyone, whether young people or adults.

If the study take the character of Shere Khan from another side, then Shere Khan, on the other hand, did not accept intruders into his kingdom, and his violation of the law of the jungle by killing and hunting people and their livestock came as a response to the continuous human encroachment on the jungle and the reduction of their area. Shere Khan's hatred of Mowgli represented his hatred of the human race as a whole, or rather all intruders, and this in itself is a hint of his vindictive hatred of the colonizing intruder. Shere Khan addressing wolf pack, saying "Free people, he was my meat from the first. Give him to me. I am weary of this man-wolf folly. He has troubled the Jungle for ten seasons. Give me the 'man-cub,' or I will hunt here always, and not give you one bone. He is a man, a man's child and from the marrow of my bones I hate him!" (Kipling, 2009, 21). Shere Khan's hatred stems from the fact that the colonizer always brings trouble and problems wherever he goes, and that the human presence of Mowgli violates the natural order and must be eradicated. Even if everyone pretends that he is a wolf, he remains an intruder. Because the era in which the story was written believed that the white man and the occupier was the savior from chaos because it was more cultured and educated, therefore Shere Khan was portrayed as a rebel against the law who deserved to be killed.

Conclusion

Anthropomorphism plays an essential and real role in most children's stories, especially those that deal with animals and maintain the general framework of wildlife. The current study finds that the role and importance of anthropomorphism was not limited to the children's group alone, but rather went beyond that and

simulated the adult group by revealing and clarifying the hidden messages behind children's stories. The study sought that anthropomorphism gives a comprehensive idea of wildlife, the ways of living of animals, their characteristics, and their relationship with other animals and humans. The importance of anthropomorphism in presenting wildlife is not limited to children who have not met animals or certain types of them, but even to those who live near them but are ignorant of their ways of living and the things that animals fear. On the other hand, the study finds that the role of anthropomorphism in the moral and educational aspect was essential, as it allowed readers to follow the true laws of the forest, which are based on moral rules, and that the instructions that Baloo the Bear dictated to Mowgli are instructions for all humans. Sending moral and educational messages to children through characters that are beloved to them and narrated by animals is the greatest incentive to attract the largest possible number of children to reading and loving stories. The study also finds that anthropomorphism has another importance in simplifying complex matters for children, especially those related to behaviors and feelings. As for the political aspect, the study shows that the designation enabled the reader to trace the hidden messages of the writer about the political conditions of India in that era, as each group of animals referred to a group of Indian society. Anthropomorphism also spared the writer from the persecution of Indian society and likening its groups to a group of monkeys and wolves by enabling the animals to speak. In short, anthropomorphism has apparent dimensions that mimic the category of children, simplifies life matters for them, and presents to them matters related to the living beings that share the same planet with them. Anthropomorphism also has latent and hidden dimensions that clarify the deep messages of the writer, which are intended for the adults, and which the writer avoids revealing directly.

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