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ANIMALS AND POSTHUMANIST DISCOURSE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

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Children's literature is associated with various imaginary, impossible, and real creatures that blur the line between reality and fiction, creating a challenge that prompts us to question the rigid, hegemonic humanist worldview in line with the principles of post human thought. Both children's literature and posthumanism possess a unique potential to present progressive agendas that blend fantastical possibilities with tangible real-world transformations. This article aims to analyze the role of animal characters in challenging anthropocentrism and traditional humanist viewpoints in children's literature, and to answer research questions How do animal characters in children's literature function as a critique of anthropocentrism, going beyond mere anthropomorphic portrayals to challenge societal perceptions and prompt considerations of the potential of other entities? To achieve this objective, the qualitative interpretive method is employed, utilizing the data source "Doctor Panda Cures Mr. Gecko's Tail | Super Panda Rescue Team | Baby Bus Cartoon". The findings reveal the following: First, animal characters serve as a counterpoint to anthropomorphism. This underscores the notion that animal characters are necessary for conveying messages effectively to children. Second, animal characters are portrayed on an equal footing with humans. The portrayal of animals in roles such as rescue teams, welders, drivers, and the like is based on their inherent traits. Finally, animals function as a critique of anthropocentrism. This critique extends beyond the concept of animals merely "thinking and acting" like humans; it pushes us to reconsider animals' roles and to explore the potential of non-human entities. This study bridges children's literature and posthumanism, contending that children's fiction offers a nuanced contribution to the discourse on the essence of humanity, particularly in the context of human-animal relationships.

Keywords: Animal-centered narratives; rethinking anthropocentrism; non-human entities; literary representation; childhood imagination

1. INTRODUCTION

Posthumanism studies are gaining prominence in academia, paralleling rapid advancements in technology. The advent of the digital era has ushered in a multitude of changes (Janchoungchot, 2022). While the discourse on posthumanism has primarily revolved around technological innovations, it is important to recognize its broader implications. One such sphere significantly influenced by posthumanism is children's educational media, particularly children's literature. The simplicity of children's literature, with its immediacy

and relevance, plays a crucial role in shaping children's understanding of life. For instance, the utilization of animal characters to illustrate human characteristics, like using foxes to portray deceit, aims to convey the idea that animals are utilized for human benefit. However, this reliance on animal characters falls short in fostering an appreciation among children for the intrinsic value of nature and its diverse species. This is due to their inherent anthropocentric nature, which is perpetuated through the narratives of children's literature. Shouldn't we strive to help children recognize the equality of all living entities in the universe?

Within the realm of literary scholarship, posthumanism asserts that humans no longer maintain an exclusive position at the center of narratives, as the distinction between humans and animals, machines, and other life forms has become less distinct (Wolfe, 2010). This perspective necessitates a reconsideration of anthropocentrism in order to establish a fresh foundation for Literature, thereby preventing it from becoming obsolete. Otherwise, literary theories could find themselves lagging behind the very literary works they seek to analyze. Posthumanism underscores that the hierarchical superiority of humans over other species is a concept requiring reevaluation, given the intricate interdependencies that exist among various species on Earth. One of the intriguing dimensions that posthumanism adds to Literature is the novel paradigm of animals as reflections of humanity. While fables have existed, posthumanism posits that animals should not be relegated to the status of mere objects; rather, they should be recognized as entities of agency, comparable to humans.

Traditionally, animals depicted in children's literature have often been portrayed as subservient to human authority. In the context of Indonesia, the mouse deer (known as "kancil" in Bahasa Indonesia) is characterized as a mischievous creature inclined towards theft, invariably necessitating its capture. Animals in such narratives rarely articulate their own stories, instead being channeled through human characters. These animal portrayals underscore human virtues and qualities (Harju & Rouse, 2018). Frequently, animals serve as vessels for conveying human attributes through anthropomorphism. For instance, the weasel and the wolf may symbolize negative traits, while the bear, pig, and rabbit are emblematic of noble characteristics. A common trope in children's literature is that weaker, smaller herbivorous animals often assume the roles of protagonists. Initially positioned as submissive or feeble, they ultimately emerge victorious by the story's conclusion, as seen in works like "A Wolf and Three Little Pigs" (Dunn, 2011). Meanwhile, posthumanism perspectives argue that the rigid division between humans and non-humans is no longer essential, urging us to reconsider anthropocentrism. Animals in children's literature often embody metaphoric significance. Consequently, their roles warrant examination through the lens of posthumanism to unveil the implications of deferral or "otherness" within the text (Derrida, 1992). This lens brings fresh interpretations to long-standing elements in children's literature, creating new layers of meaning.

As products of imagination and fantasy, the fictional creatures that populate children's literature possess a distinct form of materiality. As highlighted by Willard Van Orman Quine in his 1953 work "On What There Is," the assertion that "Pegasus must exist" is rooted in the notion that negating his existence would render the statement nonsensical (Quine, 1953). Denying the existence of Pegasus implies that he lacks the "specific attribute of actuality." Nonetheless, in the context of this analysis, these beings, classified as "unactualized possibilities," retain a form of actuality within children's literary compositions. They incite readers to either "believe" in them or, at the very least, in the potential they represent. These imaginative entities exert an influence on the perceived "reality," existing as both products of social reality and the realm of fiction (Haraway, 1991). Yet, what if addressing our evolving role as humans requires more than just confronting anthropocentrism? It raises the question of whether anthropocentrism alone suffices to comprehend our shifting position and the complexities we encounter as inhabitants of the world.

The children's fiction titled "Doctor Panda Cures Mr. Gecko's Tail | Super Panda Rescue Team | Baby Bus Cartoon" prominently features animal characters as its central protagonists. A variety of animal types are employed to portray characters with traits inherent to their respective species. For instance, the tiger assumes the role of a ruler, aligning with its natural character. While animal characters frequently appear in children's fiction alongside fantastical elements like Pegasus, an airborne horse, "Doctor Panda Cures Mr. Gecko's Tail | Super Panda Rescue Team | Baby Bus Cartoon" differs from this norm. In this instance, animal characters behave in a manner akin to real human interactions, thus deviating from conventional fantasy portrayals. It is important to note that while the animal characters themselves inherently embody a fantastical aspect, the narrative's context treats them as plausible within a realistic human-like setting. The selection of this work was informed by the abundance of available data, and data saturation guided the author's decision to halt their exploration at a certain point. Moreover, as of 2021, Baby Bus stands a preeminent position as a favored animation series on the YouTube platform, further enhancing the significance of this work.

Numerous studies have underscored the multifaceted role of animals within children's literature, categorizing them as both components of fiction and educational tools. Deckha's (2009) research, as exemplified by her work from 2016, elucidates that the incorporation of animals into media and Literature

serves as a conduit for addressing human quandaries. This approach ensures that human perspectives and critiques are brought to the fore through the lens of these animal portrayals (Deckha, 2009). Conversely, Jackson's research suggests that the human species is intricately interdependent with various aspects of nature, with animals constituting an integral component. Animals often operate as metaphors for life due to their profound connection with human civilization. Jackson further explains that animals hold significance in every facet of human existence, leaving an indelible mark on the human experience (Jackson, 2013). Collectively, these studies illuminate the multifarious dimensions through which animals in children's literature serve as both allegorical conduits and pivotal contributors to human narratives.

Dunn's analysis emphasizes that anthropomorphization extends beyond merely assigning speech to animals, it encompasses other dimensions that warrant exploration (Dunn, 2011). This notion aligns with Koprina's research, which explores the shift in narrative focus from humans to other elements existing in nature, aligning with the principles of posthumanism (Koprina, 2020). While these studies examine the portrayal of animals through the lens of humanism, few have approached the topic from the perspective of posthumanism. This article, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by presenting an exploration rooted in posthumanist ideology. The study harmonizes the realms of children's literature and posthumanism to propose that children's fiction serves as an intricate platform to engage with the discourse surrounding the essence of humanity, especially in terms of human-animal relationships.

The conventional paradigm wherein humans occupy the central position in literary works has endured for a considerable duration. Posthumanism has emerged as a means to expand this perspective within literary discourse. The article seeks to address a pivotal issue: the portrayal of animals in children's literature through the framework of posthumanism. This initiative thus urges literary scholars to embrace novelty, as it challenges the conventional perception of human exceptionalism and superiority in the broader context of existence and intellect.

2. METHOD

This study employs an interpretive method grounded in a qualitative approach. Interpretive qualitative research focuses on the examination of signs and textual elements as primary subjects of investigation, alongside the researcher's role in interpreting and interpreting these signs and texts. The dataset utilized for this study consists of examples portraying animals as representations of humans, sourced from screenshots extracted from the animated video titled "Doctor Panda Cures Mr. Gecko's Tail | Super Panda Rescue Team | Baby Bus Cartoon" released in 2020. The choice of this specific data source was informed by the availability of abundant data.

The analytical process comprises the following steps:

1. Repetitively viewing the data multiple times (5 times).
2. Identifying and extracting "signs" that indicate of animal-human representations within the data.
3. Interpretation of these identified "signs."
4. Formulating conclusions based on the interpretations derived from the analysis.

This methodological framework enables a comprehensive exploration of the representations of animals as symbols of humans within the chosen animated video, facilitating a nuanced interpretation of their role within the context of the study's objectives.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 A narrative set in an animal world

"Doctor Panda Cures Mr. Gecko's Tail | Super Panda Rescue Team | Baby Bus Cartoon" (hereafter referred to as SPRT) presents a narrative set in an animal world where animals adopt human-like roles. The storyline, as shown in Table 1, revolves around situations where various animal characters encounter work-related mishaps and subsequently receive assistance from a rescue team. This analysis aims to break down the content into sub-chapters to facilitate the categorization of findings.

Table 1: Outlines the initial steps in data analysis


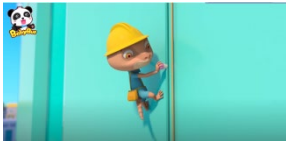

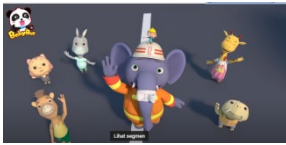
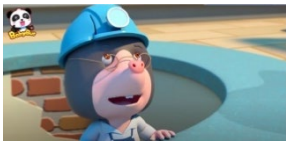

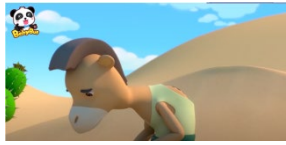

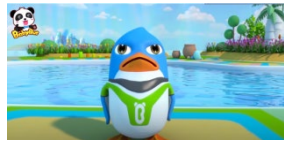
Sub-Chapters	Description
Introduction to SPRT	Overview of the animated video and its premise
Portrayal of Animal Professions	Examination of animal characters and their roles

Table 1: Outlines the initial steps in data analysis (continued)

Sub-Chapters	Description
Work Accidents and Rescue Team Intervention	Analysis of the incidents and the rescue team's involvement
Depiction of Animal-Human Characteristics	Exploration of how animals emulate human traits
Concluding Themes	Identification of overarching themes and messages
Implications of Posthumanism	Linking the analysis to the concept of posthumanism

The subsequent sections will delve into each sub-chapter to explore the intricacies of SPRT, offering a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between animal characters, their roles, and the broader themes addressed within the animated video, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Animal characters analysis

No.	Figures	Signs	Description
1		Two pandas become the main characters who act as a rescue team	A panda is a typical Chinese animal with a combination of black and white
2		A gecko is a skyscraper's glass cleaner	A gecko is a reptile. The tail is used for defense
3		Elephants are firefighters	Elephants are animals that have a trunk as a vital tool for survival
4		A turtle, a giraffe, a donkey, a cat, and a camel as civilians	A turtle is a type of reptile. A giraffe, a donkey, a cat, and a camel are four-legged animals.
5		A gopher as a plumber	A gopher is an animal that usually lives on the ground, gnawing to find food
6		A tiger as a mayor	The tiger is known as the king of the jungle because of his bravery
7		A camel as a civilian	The camel is a humped animal whose habitat is in the desert
8		A sea horse as a driver of an underwater train	Seahorses are a monogamous type of fish and the only animals whose males can get pregnant
9		A penguin as a water policeman	Penguins are aquatic animals that can't fly

3.1.1 Animals as main characters: negation of anthropomorphism

SPRT showcases a diverse array of 12 animal types including pandas, lizards, elephants, cats, turtles, camels, donkeys, giraffes, gophers, tigers, seahorses, and penguins. In this exploration, we will abstain from delving into the intertextual connections of utilizing animals as central characters, opting instead to examine the scenario through the lens of posthumanism. Animals undeniably captivate the attention of many children, often surpassing the appeal of human characters (Dunn, 2011). This preference might arise from the fact that animal characters are inherently more alluring in children's narratives. Furthermore, these characters are frequently endowed with attributes that children are thought to admire, such as bravery and positive role-models.

Intriguingly, these attributes extend beyond the boundaries of human consciousness, yet they can be effectively communicated through the portrayal of animal characters. This illustrates the potential for animals to convey messages that resonate deeply with children, transcending traditional human-centric narratives. Such an approach aligns with the tenets of posthumanism, challenging the conventional hierarchy between humans and animals. It underscores the significance of examining animal characters in SPRT within the context of post-humanist thought, thereby illuminating novel dimensions of storytelling that foster a closer connection between children and the narratives they engage with.

3.1.2 Animals' responses and anthropomorphism

Animals' adaptability and survival strategies, often adopted and adapted by humans, provide a compelling basis for examining their roles in SPRT. For instance, the portrayal of elephants (Figure 3 in Table 2) as creatures capable of extinguishing fires using their trunk to spray water. This imagery evokes parallels with firefighting hoses, offering a remarkable testament to animals' adaptability being mirrored in human technologies. A similar example emerges with the depiction of the Gopher (Figure 5 in Table 2) as a gas pipe worker, leveraging its keen sense of smell. These instances highlight animals' capacity to engage with their environment in ways reminiscent of human actions.

Interestingly, this portrayal challenges the notion of anthropomorphism as a purely sentimental attribution. Fawcett's (1989) perspective on anthropomorphism as a sentimental attitude gains resonance here, particularly in how it reflects human perspectives on their relationship with the natural world. Western cultures often distinctively separate themselves from other beings. This perspective emanates from the anthropocentric ideology that forms the bedrock of Western thought, a worldview centering on human significance that influences perceptions of animal cognition. This anthropocentric outlook, ingrained in children's literature over centuries, reinforces the notion of human dominion over nature, viewing it solely as a resource.

Considering that ideologies are inherently embedded within literature, it becomes crucial to reassess narratives that present animals as unique individuals. SPRT's portrayal of animals not only as responsive entities but also as agents capable of engaging with the world in ways analogous to humans prompts a reevaluation of prevailing paradigms. These narratives have the potential to challenge the historical encoding of anthropocentrism within children's literature, offering a refreshing avenue for presenting animals as integral entities deserving of nuanced representation.

3.1.3 Challenging anthropocentrism through narrative strategy

Children's literature plays a crucial role in shaping children's perspectives, often instilling beliefs in fantastical tales or concrete realities interwoven with objects that endorse a personalized worldview (Nikolajeva, 2016). Consequently, narratives depicting animals in realistic scenarios or representing animal life fall short in fostering an authentic appreciation for nature and diverse species. This limitation stems from the inherent anthropocentrism embedded in these narratives, prevalent in children's literature.

For instance, in "Rosie's Walk," a story that chronicles a hen's obliviousness to a trailing fox. Substituting human characters for these animal counterparts would drastically alter the narrative, possibly even unsettling readers. Moreover, the characterization of the fox necessitates no elaborate development it inherently embodies notions of cunning and threat to the hen, underscoring anthropocentric perspectives (Dunn, 2011).

However, this anthropocentric viewpoint in anthropomorphism can inadvertently foster disregard for animals' roles. Posthumanism emerges as a countermeasure, challenging this stance by negating anthropomorphism and the confines of rigid realism through strategic narrative approaches (Harju & Rouse, 2018). By presenting animals in roles that transcend their conventional anthropomorphic portrayals, SPRT and other posthumanism narratives seek to recalibrate the balance, redefining the interaction between humans and the animal world. This reimagining serves as a potent strategy to counteract anthropocentrism, promoting a holistic understanding of the diverse array of species coexisting on Earth.

3.1.4 Animals' decision-making and posthumanist perspectives

The presence of animal figures within narratives serves as a powerful vehicle to juxtapose animals' decision-making awareness with the cognitive abilities of humans. Wolfe's (2010) assertion that posthumanism reveals human responses as formulaic constructs formed within the human mind underscores the replicability of these processes across other living entities, including animals. While it might seem unusual to compare human and animal cognition, posthumanism challenges this traditional perspective by envisioning cognitive capabilities extending beyond human boundaries.

Turning to Figure 2 in Table 2, we encounter the gecko a reptile skilled at wall-clinging, utilizing a safety helmet, and autonomously deciding to become a skyscraper cleaner. Similarly, the tiger, depicted as the mayor (Figure 6 in Table 2), assumes a role driven by its reputation as the jungle's rulers. In certain literary contexts, authors advocate retaining animals' inherent behaviors to craft narratives unique to each species (Asiain, 2015), resounding posthumanism sentiments, which contends that attributing to animals the capacity to respond to the world in a manner akin to humans is a logical deduction, rooted in the shared coexistence on the same planet (Harju, 2006). These instances collectively illustrate posthumanism's aspiration to blur the lines between human and animal cognitive abilities, fostering narratives that acknowledge the diverse forms of consciousness present within the intricate web of life on Earth.

3.2 Deconstructing humanism and shifting center stage

Understanding fundamentally deconstructs the conventional construct of humanism. Derrida's (1992) elucidation underscores that interpreting texts cannot remain bound to archaic intentions and rejects logocentrism. This transformative outlook resonates with animals' role within literary narratives, as they evolve beyond mere companions or supporting elements to become the central protagonists and focal points of stories. Posthumanism, in this light, heralds a shift that undermines anthropocentrism, challenging the prevailing notion of the liberal humanist subject.

Posthumanism redefines animals' presence in literature, simultaneously unsettling anthropocentrism. This paradigm shift serves to destabilize the established concept of the human self. Animals emerge as entities boasting unique attributes and capabilities (You, 2021). Consequently, animals are reconceptualized as vessels embodying a form of computational biology, capable of accommodating human cognition. This paradigm reframes the transferability of human thought into the biological frameworks of animals.

Significantly, this reimagining erases social class and racial divisions attributed to animals, thereby prompting a re-evaluation of our very humanity. The presence of animals as central figures in narratives questions the boundaries of our humanity, transcending categorizations and unsettling the conventions that have defined our understanding of the human experience. Posthumanism invites us to embrace this complex, interwoven tapestry of life, enriching our comprehension of existence beyond narrow anthropocentric confines.

SPRT was created as entertainment for children. The work challenges anthropocentric human liberalism by hiding human existence through children's literature. Dependence on animals in children's literature during the last two centuries has become a means of the civilizing process that children go through the medium of animal bodies. Harju and Rouse explained that Animal stories (fables) are suitable for children (Harju & Rouse, 2018). These animals in children's literature are personified as humans. They can think and interact like humans. They, as the main characters, seem to function to adjust human identity (Endaswara, 2021). Humans, in this case, children, through literary works, are stimulated to grow a "connection to nature," which, according to Lerman, is necessary so that children can maintain engagement with nature, even when they cannot be in it (Lerman, 2012).

3.2.1 Expanding perspectives and non-human forces

In conclusion, the initial exploration reveals the diverse array of animal characters employed to supplant humans as central protagonists, thereby tackling the underlying issue of humanism. This practice, rooted in both anthropomorphism and the necessity of authors to communicate life's lessons through children's literature, underscores a deep-seated human inclination. Children's innate tendency to embrace animal characters stems from these creatures' enduring presence in legends and myths passed down through generations.

This phenomenon powerfully underscores that human-centric narratives do not invariably occupy the core of storytelling. Instead, non-human forces animals emerge as pivotal entities that resonate with readers. By featuring animals as central figures, children's literature extends its reach beyond traditional anthropocentrism, ushering in a narrative realm that embraces a broader spectrum of consciousness. This shift both challenges and expands our perception of the narrative focus, engendering a more encompassing understanding of the intricate tapestry of existence. As the dialogue continues, further examinations can delve

into the implications of this perspective on contemporary literary discourse and the evolving relationship between humans and the animal kingdom.

3.2.2 Animal and human equality: nature of animals and human professions

In Figure 2 (Table 2), a gecko acts as a skyscraper glass cleaner. The job requires the ability to go up to the top of the building while cleaning the exterior windows. Usually, humans use the help of tools such as excavators or devices such as harnesses and carabines to reach tall skyscrapers. Geckos, as reptiles, have the natural ability to crawl in vertical planes because their feet are covered with fine microscopic hairs called setae. The fine hairs on geckos have tiny pads at the ends called spatulae that are about a tenth the diameter of a human hair. Interestingly, these small pads can increase the surface area of the geckos' feet so that they can stick tightly to the wall and help them to crawl. Usually, geckos use a circular motion to attach and remove their feet from certain surfaces, such as the house's ceiling (Main, 2021a). The role of the gecko character in SPRT is per its natural traits, such as crawling on vertical and high surfaces.

Second, in Figure 3 (Table 2), the elephant character has a role as a firefighter. There are 150,000 muscles in the elephant's trunk, so it can suck up to 14 liters of water. Elephants spray water on their bodies to clean themselves and drink water into their mouths (Main, 2021b). SPRT adopts the nature of the elephant. The trunk is used as a tool to spray water like a hose on a fire engine. Third, in Figure 5 (Table 2), gophers are described as plumbers. A gopher is a rodent that can bind to the ground with its long fingers and teeth. They make a channel that makes it easier to find worms (Quaglia, 2022). In Kompas Daily, the gopher is said to be able to make underground passages integrated with water and food, i.e., worms. That makes them said to be equal in human ability in farming (Novena & Dewi, 2022). Their natural ability to manage natural resources and the need to arrange underground channels are the reasons they act as plumbers.

Fourth, in Figure 6 (Table 2), the tiger acts as the mayor. The tiger has a character as a strong and decisive animal, even scary. There are no tigers in Africa. The masculinity of the tiger as the ruler has not been replaced, so it follows the mayor's character as the ruler of the city in SPRT. Fifth, in Figure 8, seahorses as a pair of driver and conductor. These two professions are inseparable. It's the same as a seahorse loyal to its mate (Coleman, 2022). It is the male who stores the female's eggs after fertilization.

Finally, in Figure 9 (Table 2), the penguin acts as a marine policeman. The penguins have the image of being a good guard. During the reproductive season, males and females guard their future offspring so predators do not eat them. Moreover, penguins can dive to a depth equivalent to the height of the Eiffel Tower (National Geographic, 2021). Their nature as good guards and reliable divers is the background for them to act as marine police/water police.

The human professions played by these animals are not classified based on the highs and lows of the job. All animal characters respect the work of other animals. All animal characters appreciate the work of other animals. For example, a plumber is played by a black actor while a white actor plays the mayor. There will be a gap in meaning by the reader or connoisseur of the work related to the use of actors based on skin color or physical condition. Posthumanism fights for equality not only for humans but also for all inhabitants of the earth (Vita-More, 2019).

The nature of animals and human professions that go hand in hand with the characterizations in children's literature shows that animals have abilities beyond human abilities. Therefore, humans adopt and adapt the skills of these animals in their daily lives. Meanwhile, animals do not need additional assistance from tools other than their natural ability to do human jobs or professions. The meaning of "human" becomes deconstructed. They are no longer omniscient and central creatures but equal and parallel to animals because their thinking abilities are not much different. For example, the data and discussion above show that gophers can cultivate the soil below the surface for survival. With that nature, they act as plumbers. That fact should remind humans that we are not the most incredible creatures on earth (Halapsis, 2019). Humans need the inspiration to develop their civilization; it is obtained from the nature of animals. In his research, Jackson explained that animals have a role in every human footprint; for example, every human technological progress is continually inspired by animals' natural abilities (Jackson, 2013).

As connoisseurs of children's literature, children must learn to realize that humans are not the only creatures on earth so that there is a regeneration that respects each other between species. Animals are not lifeless things that are governed by human nature (anthropomorphic); instead, they have the right to life and abilities that inspire humans. That way, children learn to love animals more and not be arbitrary, as described in Dekcha's research. Most children in Canada despise animal life. They are considered worthy of torture as a form of entertainment (Deckha, 2009). Children's literature is one of the things that shape children's identity. Children learn to know and understand the world through Literature (Nodelman, 2018). That way, the narrative attempts to teach a post-humanist perspective in which humans are equal to other members or species on earth (Buruk et al., 2020). It's not just about "acting-thinking animals" like humans, but also our attempt to think of animals as central along with other possible beings (Shakespeare, 2012).

3.3 Children's and animal literature: a critique of anthropocentrism

3.3.1 Animals as other centers

For the last two centuries, children's literature has relied on animals as the primary means of conveying the story's message. The process of understanding human problems is transferred to children through the mediation of animal characters. These animals think and interact like humans. So far, animals are still seen as "the others" (Derrida, 1992), objects that can be subject to any action by humans. In literature, they are used as a medium to explain good and evil (see "The Wolf and the Three Little Piglets") (Dunn, 2011). As a result, the wolf has an image as a metaphor for evil. The one who has an evil nature is the humankind. "The wolf is evil" is a human creation that takes advantage of the wolf's nature as a predator.

SPRT uses 12 types of animals as characters in the story. Children are required to have high-order thinking skills to receive the implicit message. Why? Children can't just think that animals can talk or work like humans. More than that, children should realize that other species on earth have rights and abilities equal to those of humans. Thus, it is inappropriate for humans to be the only center (Nikolajeva, 2016; Wolfe, 2010). Similar abilities do not mean that animals can work in banks to earn wages, but rather reflect the ability to survive with their scientific nature. In SPRT, gophers manage their environments to organize underground resources such as water and worms as their food.

However, as generations of cultural change have demonstrated, ideology is not fixed. Non-human rights have recently been enshrined in the legal systems of some governments. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has served to motivate initiatives such as the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth (International Rights of Nature Tribunal, n.d.). Also, recently, more Western consumers have turned to veganism (Kopnina, 2020).

Animals as the main characters, which not only represent the human way of thinking but also show their animal instincts, show a critique of anthropocentrism (concern for human interests at the expense of the interests of other species) (Kopnina, 2020). For example, they are involved in several environmental issues, such as the destruction of wild habitats or the abuse of animals used for consumption, pets, and medicine. Animals must often appear as representatives of their species in literary works and their advantages over humans. Based on the data in the SPRT, readers will find the character of an elephant as a firefighter (see Figure 3 in Table 2). Posthumanism hopes the reader will accept a new meaning with an anthropocentric shift (Wolfe, 2010). The hope is that children will understand that the fire extinguishing system is inspired by the elephant survival system, a trunk that can suck in and spit out water. That way, human supremacy will be lost so that children agree that there is a center for storytelling other than humans, namely animals.

3.3.2 Response to posthumanism: paradigm shift from anthropocentric to cosmocentric

In posthumanism, the challenge to anthropocentric human liberalism is how humans are hidden through animal characters in children's literature. Derrida destroys assumptions about the meaning of humans and animals. He questions whether humans have the right to deny equality with animals (Derrida, 1992). Posthumanism seeks to interpret texts that are not only limited to human nature but extend beyond it. Analyzing animals through a lens that recognizes racial and animal differences ultimately paves the way for rethinking what it means to be human and defining how we perceive the non-human (Curry, 2019).

According to Kidner, making humans the main topic in the living system is not anthropocentrism but "industrialism," or a focus on industrial neoliberalism, which subordinates humans and nature to the economic system (Kidner, 2014). Humans do not know what the needs of other species are, even though humans are thought to be able to understand the world and morality with their senses. It also does not mean that we can give nature an intrinsic value. Anthropocentric motivation proves inadequate for the protection of biodiversity because species that do not contribute to human well-being will be abandoned and neglected (Cafaro & Primack, 2014; Shoreman-Ouimet & Kopnina, 2016).

Anthropocentrism is the "legality" of concern for humanity that blinds humans to the character of the industrial colonization system (Kidner, 2014; Kopnina, 2020). When industrial centrism supports the human desire to be in balance with nature, it also camouflages the colonialism between nature and humans. Instead of making anthropocentrism an advantage of nature having humans (with their intellect and intelligence), humans make nature a resource for their lives. Environmental collapse is one of many important issues that humanity must confront collectively under globalization processes, and all issues affect everyone (Sajjaphatanakul & Mangkhang, 2019). As a result, anthropocentrism gives birth to several propositions: the love of one's species (humans only), discrimination against other species, and the belief that non-humans will have value if they are helpful to humans. The anthropocentric view makes humans believe that they are the center of everything, the most important thing in the universe and that all good things were created for humans (Vita-More, 2019; Wolfe, 2010). Everything is only measured by its effectiveness and efficiency.

As a consequence, transcendent and sacred values are neglected. Suppose the desacralization of the cosmos or the loss of a sense of connectedness with the universe is left unchecked. In that case, the effect is none other than the desacralization of human beings themselves. Humans are not only alienated from the Ultimate Reality, but are also increasingly alienated from themselves in everyday life, fellow living creatures, and their environment. All of that then becomes the primary source of ecological disaster. Therefore, through animal characters in children's literature, humans are invited to realize their place in reality. Humans are not only the subject that dominates or vice versa; such a small and excluded object, but also part of the whole of nature. Humans are not only on one side but are located between intertwined subjects, becoming complementary and fulfilling parts, not judging. This is the purpose of a journey of human life: to participate.

Posthumanism evokes a sense of "sympathy" and "empathy" that connects (trans-affective) humans to other species in nature. These feelings are a part of human consciousness that connects with the universe so that humans are no longer just "being" but "being with," "being for," and "being in" the regularity of reality (McMillan, 2021). With the presence of animal characters in children's literature, humans are brought to gratitude and admiration for the omnipresence and mystery of the universe. Humans are no longer the center (anthropocentric) but part of reality itself. This is a point of transition from humans to the cosmos (a human 'sense of wonder' triggered by the presence of other species as a center), from egology to ecology, and from anthropocentric to cosmocentrism.

4. CONCLUSION

The idea of animal characters in children's literature from the point of view of posthumanism can be interpreted as follows: First, there are 12 types of animals in SPRT. They can think and interact like humans. The animals, as the main characters, function to regulate human identity. The meaning of humans is deconstructed through the presence of various types of animal characters that are used to replace humans as the main character, even though the problem presented is humanitarian problems. It is not only a form of anthropomorphism but rather the human need as a writer or author of animal characters to convey messages, teach and educate life. This illustrates that humans are not always the story's center, but non-humans (animals) also have a significant presence.

Second, children as readers of children's literature must learn to realize that humans are not the only creatures on earth to regenerate mutual respect between species. Animals are not inanimate objects that have human nature (anthropomorphic), but they have the right to life and abilities that inspire humans. In this manner, children learn to cultivate love, avoid arbitrariness, and refrain from devaluing the lives of animals, which should never be subjected to torture for entertainment purposes. It is not just about "acting-thinking animals" like humans, but also the human endeavor to seriously consider animals as the center and other possible beings.

Third, with the presence of animal characters in children's literature, humans are delivered to gratitude and admiration for the omnipresence and mystery of the universe. No longer are humans the center (anthropocentric) but reality itself. This is a point of transition from humans to the cosmos (a human 'sense of wonder' triggered by the presence of other species as a center), from egology to ecology, and from anthropocentric to cosmocentrism. Posthumanism evokes a sense of "sympathy" and "empathy" that connects (trans-affective) humans to other species in nature. These feelings are human consciousness with the universe so that humans are no longer just "being," but "being with," "being for," and "being in" the regularity of reality.

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