"It’s a Missage,’ he said to himself, ‘that’s what it is.’

Morals in A.A. Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh and the House at Pooh Corner

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Winnie-the-Pooh (WP) and The House at Pooh Corner (HPC) are written by the well-known author Alan Alexander Milne. A. A. Milne wrote his first book about Winnie-the-Pooh in 1928 after his son Christopher Robin was born. Christopher Robin and his stuffed animals were the inspiration for Milne when creating the loveable bear that became famous almost all over the world (Milne). The books about Winnie-the-Pooh are children’s books and like most books written for children, they contain valuable lessons that are meant to teach children something, usually something about morals.¹ Both Winnie-the-Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner have as I will discuss, different kinds of morals in them, which vary between different characters. This gives the young readers a chance to see – and learn from - the perspectives of the different characters. Though the Pooh books have traditional aims, as noted, they are internationally popular. I believe that one reason why these books stand out is their realism. As Kimberly Reynolds explains, what makes these books function as realist texts is the strategy of illusionism; the world that Pooh and his friends live in is constructed in a way that creates the illusion of the real world. The world of the Hundred Acre Forest also follows the rules and natural laws, to some extent, of the world as it is recognized by even the youngest reader (91).

This essay will focus on the morals of the different characters in A.A. Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner, how the texts convey these different moral attitudes through the interactions of the colorful and imaginative variety of characters and what lessons there are to learn from that interaction.

In the every-day world, there are rules and norms to follow. This is reflected in children’s books with lessons regarding morals and moral behavior. Morals are related “to the principles of what is right and wrong behaviour” (Longman). They are the unspoken rules about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil. Morals can also be explained as: when a person feels the need to intervene when someone is suffering (Collste 8-13). Raimond Gaita, lecturer in philosophy, explains that “moral judgments in general are true or false ‘in virtue of the independently existing real world’” (11). This is important since the world of Pooh is, as mentioned, an image of the real world. In The Moral Philosophers, Richard Norman

¹ How and why morals became important in children’s books goes back in time. In England where Milne grew up, morality was a matter for religious institutions, the Church and Puritanism and how they wanted children to learn what is right and wrong. At the end of the 19th century, control of morality shifted in a secular direction, as children began to be regarded as human beings with the right to be educated. Around the same time, many books for children were produced, one of them being Winnie-the-Pooh (Marshall 31-32)
describes morals as “[t]he area of philosophy traditionally known as […] ‘moral philosophy’ which is the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the nature of human values, of how we ought to live, and of what constitutes right conduct” (1). As Jean-Paul Mussen explains, Jean Piaget (famous for his work on cognitive development) theorizes how children’s morals develop through the different stages in life. At the first stage the child is most likely to make up rules concerning, for example, games that regard the child’s own desires. During the next stage, the child starts to obey rules of the person that is regarded as the authority; lying is mentioned at this stage since a child starts to learn that lying is morally wrong by realizing that there are consequences to lying. At the third stage, known as moral relativism, the child realizes that e.g., game rules can be changed as long as everyone involved agrees (Mussen 446-447). The shifting development of values occurs at many levels; Margaret R. Murray notes that Piaget found e.g., that children at different ages have different ideas regarding lying. A younger child can tell that lying is wrong but not why. Older children can tell that lying is wrong because it is not true; still older children perceive that to lie is to deceive someone (Murray). Jean Piaget’s theory on cognitive development is important when discussing the Pooh books, since the characters are at different stages in life and can therefore be seen as having different kinds of morals.

Morals and moral behavior are obviously important in children’s books since the books are meant to teach children valuable lessons, for example on how to act in real life. It is important for children to be able to connect to the characters in the story; for if they do not, they will not read the book and the moral lessons will be lost. Hence, Winnie-the-Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner are populated with animals that have been given the features of humans and the only one in the story that actually is human is Christopher Robin (Marshall 60). This makes the books more accessible for children since they can both identify with the animal characters and at the same time have a distance towards them. However, Christopher Robin might be easier for the children to see themselves in – and learn with - since he is an admirable child, a role model.

Daphne M. Kutzer speculates that Milne created the world of Pooh from nostalgia for his own childhood (95). This can be supported by the fact that Milne bought a home near one of the places where he grew up (Carpenter 201). The setting in the books is a real forest that inspired Milne, named Ashdown Forest (Thwaite 83). It can be found between East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells nearby the village of Hartfield in Sussex (Barrett 138). The fact that the Hundred Acre Forest reflects a real forest also supports the claim for realism. Ann Thwaite cites Russell Davies, who claims that the trees are also symbolic and stand for the adult world
I agree with Davies in some aspects, but as noted, I also believe that the Hundred Acre Forest, reflecting as it does a recognizable natural environment, is an image of the real world, and not only the adult world. This is where the characters live, most of them in trees, which is one sign for how important the trees are. They are the solid realistic foundation of the books.

“One day when the sun had come back over the Forest, bringing with it the scent of May, and all the streams of the Forest were tinkling happily to find themselves their own pretty shape again, and the little pools lay dreaming of the life they had seen and the big things they done, […]” \(\text{(WP 145)}\)

The trees are not the only important part of the forest; the river plays a big role as well. The river floats through the whole forest, acting as a realistic stream, through the stories. The characters play near the river but they are also respectful towards it since it can be dangerous if you fall in, like in real life. Pine trees are mentioned often too, they sit under them, climb in them and pass by them, which brings me back to my point of the trees being important, not only as a symbol for the adult world but also as a symbol for the real world. It is in this world, this forest that all the different animals lives together with their close friend Christopher Robin.

Christopher Robin is a central figure in both books about Winnie-the-Pooh. Even if he does not appear in all of the stories, he is always present in the thoughts of the other characters. When Christopher Robin first is mentioned, he is coming down the stairs dragging his bear after him: “Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin” \(\text{(WP 1)}\). After Winnie-the-Pooh has been introduced Christopher Robin asks for a story, but he does not ask for himself, instead he claims that Winnie-the-Pooh is the one that wants to hear the story:

“What about a story?” said Christopher Robin.

“What about a story?” I said.

“Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?” \(\text{(WP 2)}\)

From this point, it becomes clear that the lessons intended for Christopher Robin – and the young audience – will be conveyed through Pooh. Christopher Robin also blames Winnie-the-Pooh when he does not understand things by saying that Pooh does not understand:

“What does ‘under the name’ mean?” asked Christopher Robin.

“It means he had the name over the door in gold letters, and lived under it.”

“Winnie-the-Pooh wasn’t quiet sure” said Christopher Robin. \(\text{(WP 2)}\)

Christopher Robin is the one who sets the rules in the forest and as soon as a problem appears, the other characters turn to him for help and guidance, when he is in their thoughts: “But I
wonder what Christopher Robin would do?” (WP 131) or by deciding to look for him: “I must find Christopher Robin […]” (WP 135) or by wanting him to appear “[…] Pooh thought how nice it would be if they met Christopher Robin suddenly […]” (WP 38). Christopher Robin does not only help his friends, he is also the one who knows about everything that happens in the forest.

“Does Christopher Robin know about you?”

“Of course he does,” said Tigger. (HPC 187)

The fact that he is the one that knows about everything can be explained in terms of Piaget’s theory on cognitive development, since a result of his investigations was that power is handed down from the adults. Hence, Christopher Robin sets the rules for the forest, the younger animals will obey, since Christopher Robin is visibly in charge (Murray). Though Fredrick Crews’, Postmodern Pooh are tongue-in-cheek, I do think that he makes some valuable points, for example, when he states that Christopher Robin is a mini God in the forest (10). Beth Beard supports this; she is of the opinion that Christopher Robin is a leader, boss and challenger (12). He is the one that decides everything and knows everything; if there is something he does not know, he blames Pooh or tells the other characters that this is how it is. None of the others would ever question him.

Now, this makes Christopher Robin’s role multiple, since on the one hand, he is followed by the animals, but on the other, he is himself a young child. At times, Christopher Robin’s way of acting is quite selfish; when the forest is flooded, he goes outside to play, not thinking of his friends. Instead, he finds it amusing that he now stands on an island since the water has risen so far up land. “[…]’isn’t this fun? I’m on an island!’” (WP 138). This is to say that Christopher Robin is not unambiguous; his morals and moral behavior can be looked at in two different ways. On the one hand, he helps his friends when they are troubled, which is something morally good. At the same time, he is the one that makes up the rules for the forest, the one that makes all the decisions which is quite selfish of him and as Piaget noticed when researching moral judgment, the young child makes up rules for how to play as he goes along. This self-centered behavior can be seen as morally wrong since obviously it is not good to be too selfish. However, unless children take into account his interactions with his friends, what seems to be selfishness is learning to take one’s feelings and thoughts into consideration, and then to aid your friends. Interestingly, Piaget’s beliefs on cognitive development is also supported with the fact that at the first stage, the child makes up his own rules but at the second one he starts to acknowledge the rules of the authority (Mussen 446). This can be seen
when Christopher Robin in the last story realizes that he has to act more mature now and therefore says goodbye to his friends and the Hundred Acre Forest.

“When I’m—when—Pooh!”

“Yes, Christopher Robin?”

“I’m not going to do Nothing any more.”

“Never again?”

“Well, not so much. They don’t let you.”

Pooh waited for him to go on, but he was silent again.

“Yes Christopher Robin?” said Pooh helpfully.

“Pooh, when I’m—you know—when I’m not doing Nothing, will you come up here sometimes?” (HPC 343)

Christopher Robin understands that he has to grow up, but perhaps he can prolong his childhood by playing in his world, when he has a chance to do so, with his best friend Pooh.

Winnie-the-Pooh is a character that almost never puts himself first. He is always thinking of his friends and does not complain. The only time that he does put himself first is when he is hungry and wants honey. For example, when Pooh plans to give Eeyore honey for his birthday, he ends up eating it himself: “And then, suddenly, he remembered. He had eaten Eeyore’s birthday present!” (WP 78). John Tyerman Williams claims that when Pooh in fact ate the honey he did it “absentmindedly” and afterwards he decides that the pot will still be “Useful” (94). Even though I agree with Williams’s notion about Pooh not regarding the consequences when eating Eeyore’s birthday present, I believe that Pooh’s idea of the useful pot is a rationalization, to cover up the fact that he ate the present. There is in fact a series of occasions when young readers can see Pooh, rationalizing his mistakes; for example, when he tries to disguise himself as a cloud so that he can steal honey from the bees. When Pooh realizes that the bees do not believe he is a cloud, he has his own explanation for their reaction.

“Christopher—ow!—Robin,” called out the cloud.

“Yes?”

“I have just been thinking, and I have come to a very important decision. These are the wrong sort of bees.” (WP 16)

These are not the only times that Pooh ends up in a tight place because of his love for honey. At one point when Pooh visits his friend Rabbit, he eats so much that he finds himself stuck in Rabbit's door and has to starve for a whole week so that he, when he is slim enough, can squeeze out of the entrance he is stuck in. Pooh’s desire for honey makes him quite selfish.
and as noted, he always end up in trouble. This is, according to Murray, what Piaget calls
egocentrism; the younger child is not able to consider the feelings of others together with their
own feelings (Murray). When Pooh feels the urge for his beloved food, he is unable to regard
the feelings of others. However, his love for honey only occupies brief moments of desire,
and does not make him completely immoral. Pooh shows his good morals many times. Since
morals are the “rules” for right and wrong, good morals are for example, aiding friends in
need, as noted above. Pooh shows that he always helps his friends when something is
bothering them. When Eeyore at one point is particularly gloomy, Pooh tries to find out what
is wrong.

“And how are you?” said Winnie-the-Pooh.

Eeyore shook his head from side to side.

“Not very how,” he said. “I don’t seem to have felt at all how for a long time.”

“Dear, dear,” said Pooh, “I’m sorry about that. Let’s have a look at you.” (WP 43)

Pooh, discover that Eeyore’s tail is gone and he decides to help by talking to Owl, who is one
of the characters in the forest that knows of many things. As it turns out, Owl’s new bell-rope
is Eeyore’s missing tail. When Pooh decides to help Eeyore, he shows that he is a good friend
that puts the feelings of his friends before his own. Another example is when Pooh helps his
best friend Piglet when the forest is flooded. Piglet is his dearest friend, and also, he is quite
helpless and young. Here Pooh reveals courage and unexpected wisdom. Indeed, Christopher
Robin does not know how to save Piglet from the water but Pooh comes up with an idea.

And then this Bear, Pooh Bear, Winnie-the-Pooh, F.O.P. (Friend of Piglet’s), R.C.
(Rabbit’s Companion), P.D. (Pole Discoverer), E.C. and T.F. (Eeyore’s Comforter and
Tail-finder)—in fact, Pooh himself—said something so clever that Christopher Robin
could only look at him with mouth open and eyes staring, wondering if this was really
the Bear of Very Little Brain whom he had known and loved so long.

“We might go in your umbrella,” said Pooh. (WP 142)

Pooh shows that he is ingenious when coming up with the idea to save Piglet by sailing
there in an umbrella. The day after the rescuing of Piglet, a party is held in Pooh’s honor.
Williams makes an interesting comparison of the party held for Pooh with Plato’s
Symposium: “Just as the drinking party Plato describes was given in honour of Agathon, […]
so our party was given in honour of Pooh Bear, because his courage and ingenuity had
rescued Piglet from the flood” (32). The party held for Pooh shows how much his friends love
him and what great courage he showed when rescuing Piglet. When looking at Pooh’s morals
and moral behavior it is useful to apply the research of Lawrence Kohlberg, who worked with
elaborating Piaget’s theory; at what Kohlberg calls the third stage (Piaget’s stage of moral relativism) children “are aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations which take primacy over individual interests” (cited in Murray). This can be applied to Pooh who decides to rescue his friend from the flood instead of staying in a safe place. Even though Pooh is selfish when it comes to his favorite food, honey, he still puts the needs of his friends before his own when something has happened. Pooh shows that caring for others is always important - except when it is time to eat. However, the most important lesson from Pooh is, always to help others.

One of Pooh’s best friends is, as mentioned above, Piglet. Piglet is a very small and frightened animal but he tries his best not to show it: “’What?’ said Piglet, with a jump. And then, to show that he hadn’t been frightened, he jumped up and down once or twice in an exercising sort of way” (WP 37). Even though Piglet is scared of almost everything, he pretends to be brave. Indeed, like Pooh, Piglet tries to rationalize his mistakes, but so transparently that the young reader spots the strategy immediately. For example, Piglet is very emotional and when his birthday present for Eeyore breaks, he is immensely sad. “’Oh, dear!’ said Piglet. ‘Oh, dear, oh, dearie, dearie, [sic] dear! Well, it’s too late now. I can’t go back, and I haven’t another balloon, and perhaps Eeyore doesn’t like balloons so very much.’” (WP 82). Piglet wants to make Eeyore happy so when the balloon breaks he does not know what to do. More important than his rationalizing, is that here Piglet regard Eeyore’s feelings more than anything else which shows how much he cares about others. Piglet even gives up his own home to Owl after his home has been destroyed in a storm.

And then Piglet did a Noble Thing, and he did it in a sort of dream, while he was thinking of all the wonderful words Pooh had hummed about him. “Yes, it’s just the house for Owl,” he said grandly. “And I hope he’ll be very happy in it.” And then he gulped twice, because he had been very happy in it himself. (HPC 324)

When Owl finds this “new” home, Piglet does not say that it is in fact his dwelling. Instead, he gives it away to his friend, showing once again that he puts the feelings of others above his own. Piglet’s problem, I would say, is that he does not put himself and his needs first. It is good to help others but Piglet does it by giving up his own home. Friendship and commitment are important for Piglet (Beard 8). I believe that Piglet’s morals are advanced since he always regards the feelings of others before his own. Piglet is a very conscious animal that does not want to stand out, he is happy when following the rules of others. If comparing Piglet to Piaget’s theories, Piglet would be at the second stage. He likes to know what is right and wrong and he needs someone to guide him, who is often Pooh, though Christopher Robin is
the most important role model for being an adult. Piglet also shows that he has some adult morality, when helping others; he can be seen as a guiding hand, teaching that it is important to care for others. However, even if the lesson is to help others Piglet has to learn from his friends to regard his own needs a little more, not sacrificing his own wellbeing.

Quite different from Piglet is Eeyore, a character in the Hundred Acre Forest that does not think of others as much as his friends do. He is a very gloomy character; Beth Beard believes that Eeyore’s “sullen, dramatic moods often come from a place of feeling the pain and glory of life more keenly than others” (5). I agree with Beard, since this aspect of Eeyore is clearly seen from the moment he is introduced: “Sometimes he thought sadly to himself, ‘Why?’ and sometimes he thought, ‘Wherefore?’ and sometimes he thought, ‘Inasmuch as which?’—and sometimes he didn’t quite know what he was thinking about” (WP 42-43). Eeyore is not satisfied with the way things are and he does not seem to like himself:

Eeyore, the old grey Donkey, stood by the side of the stream, and looked at himself in the water.

“Pathetic,” he said. “That’s what it is. Pathetic.”

He turned and walked slowly down the stream for twenty yards, splashed across it, and walked slowly back on the other side. Then he looked at himself in the water again.

“As I thought,” he said. “No better from this side. But nobody minds. Nobody cares. Pathetic, that’s what it is.”

Eeyore is unhappy most of the time and he does not try to hide it from his friends.

“Good morning, Eeyore,” said Pooh.

“Good morning, Pooh Bear,” said Eeyore gloomily. “If it is a good morning,” he said.

“Which I doubt,” said he.

Sarah E. Shea speculates (in “Pathology in the Hundred Acre Wood”), that Eeyore suffers from chronic dysthymia, a depression disorder (1558). Eeyore is a sad character and he is gloomy all the time, which makes Shea’s analysis of him believable. In fact, since Eeyore is so very gloomy, it would be easy to claim that there is no lesson to be learned from him. However, I would say that because of his gloominess a young child would learn to look at things more positively, since the poor sad Donkey serves as a none too subtle hint of how not to approach the world – unless one wishes to be miserable all the time.

Moreover, being gloomy does not mean that Eeyore does not have any morals. When Tigger first appears in the stories, he is searching for food and does not know what he likes. Eeyore shows his good morals by trying to help Tigger find something to eat.
Eeyore led the way to the most thistly-looking patch of thistles that ever was, and waved a hoof at it. “A little patch I was keeping for my birthday,” he said; “but, after all, what are birthdays? Here today and gone tomorrow. Help yourself, Tigger.” (HPC 194)

Eeyore offers Tigger his favorite food though he has saved it for a special occasion; by doing so, he shows good morals since he is helping Tigger. Eeyore has the morals of an adult, he helps the others when they are in need and he has an approach to life that only an adult would have.

Another character in the Hundred Acre forest that is also in a gloomy mood sometimes is Rabbit. Rabbit – like Eeyore - is considered one of the intelligent animals in the forest. Beth Beard describes Rabbit as a perfectionist, reformer and judge. “He takes it as his sole moral obligation to make life better for everyone […]” (1). However, when Pooh visits Rabbit and eats so much honey that he is stuck on the way out, Rabbit is not at all happy. “‘It all comes,’” said Rabbit sternly, “‘of eating too much. I thought at the time,’” said Rabbit, “‘only I didn’t like to say anything,’” said Rabbit, “‘and I knew it wasn’t me,’” he said (WP 27). Even though Rabbit is not so happy with the fact that Pooh is stuck in his burrow, he makes the best of the situation. Another example of Rabbit’s morals is seen when Kanga comes to the forest. Rabbit is not at all happy about this and he makes sure to let the others know that.

“Here—we—are,” said Rabbit very slowly and carefully, “all—of—us, and then, suddenly, we wake up one morning and, what do we find? We find a Strange Animal among us. An animal of whom we have never even heard before! An animal who carries her family about with her in her pocket! […] (WP 90)

Rabbit shows his disapproval even more by producing a plan to force Kanga to leave the forest, the plan being to steal baby Roo from Kanga and not return him until she promises to go away. Rabbit produces a plan at one other point in the stories as well, when he wants Tigger to stop bouncing. None of his plans work as he wanted them to and when Rabbit wants to teach Tigger a lesson, he is the one that ends up in trouble. As mentioned above, Beard claims that Rabbit makes it his moral obligation to help the other characters in the forest (1). This is something that I do not agree with. Rabbit puts himself before everyone else and is not at all happy when something is not as he wants it to be in the forest. Piaget mentioned that the morals of younger children are changeable: they make up their own rules when interacting with others. I believe that Rabbit has the morals of a younger child since he wants to set the rules for how everything should be in the forest. Paradoxically, however, at the same time Rabbit can be seen as an adult in the forest. He wants to be in control and make the decisions for how things should be. Yet each time he makes an elaborate attempt to order and control
others, he fails comically. Hence, I believe that the lesson from Rabbit is to let go some times and trust your friends, not trying to manipulate or be in control all the time.

Being in control is perhaps what Owl strives for as well. Owl is also one of the clever and learned animals in the forest - at least that is what the other characters believe. When someone in the forest needs help, Owl is one of those considered able to help, besides Christopher Robin. When Pooh eat Eeyore’s birthday present he went to Owl to ask him to write Happy Birthday on the pot that used to contain honey.

“Can you read, Pooh?” he asked, a little anxiously. “There’s a notice about knocking and ringing outside the door, which Christopher Robin wrote. Could you read it?”

“Christopher Robin told me what it said, and then I could.”

“Well, I’ll tell you what this says, and then you’ll be able to.” So Owl wrote…and this is what he wrote:

HIPY PAPY BTHUTHDTH THUTHDA BTHUTHDY.  

Shea claims that Owl is dyslexic, which does not seem that wrong if considering his writing skills (1558). However, there may be a moral aspect to Owl’s actions: I believe that Owl wants to be able to write and therefore does not tell the others that he cannot. According to Mussen, Piaget discovered that, as mentioned above, lying is considered wrong when the child realizes that there are consequences to lying, and at older age, the child realizes that there might be circumstances for lying (446-447). This is precisely what we see with Owl’s spelling; so the young reader will appreciate why Owl has lied and, hopefully censure him for it. There are other occasions when Owl resorts to untruths. When his house has blown down and Pooh asks him to fly Piglet to the door so that he can squeeze out, he does not want to, but instead of refusing, “Owl explained about the Necessary Dorsal Muscles” (HPC 305). Owl excuses himself from helping by saying that his back muscles are not going to be able to carry Piglet. The fact is that Piglet is a very small animal and Owl would be able to carry him but he does not want to, even if it would help to get them out of the house. Beth Beard describes Owl as a thinker and observer (7). This is probably true since Owl would rather observe than intervene. When the forest is flooded and Christopher Robin asks Owl to rescue Piglet on his back, he declines.

[…] Owl, could you rescue him on your back?”

“I don’t think so,” said Owl, after grave thought. “It is doubtful if the necessary dorsal muscles——“

“Then would you fly to him at once and say that Rescue is Coming? […] And, still thinking of something to say, Owl flew off.  

(WP 80)
Owl wants to help, as long as he does not have to do much himself. He likes to be the intelligent one in the forest and is happy to help his friends even if his help is not always that good. I believe that a lesson to learn from Owl is to always try to solve problems yourself. Indeed, Owl’s way of acting can be seen as an adult way of acting because of his encouragement of others, as Piaget mentioned, a younger child is egocentric but even though Owl might seem egocentric at some times I believe it is only because he wants to help the others. This means that even if Owl does not help the others much, he still show good morals by encouraging the others to come up with their own solutions.

Tigger is a bouncy and colorful character in the stories that always seem to have his own solution to problems. When Tigger first arrives in the forest, he is on a quest for food. The problem is that Tigger does not know what he likes.

“[…] Do Tiggers like honey?”

“They like everything,” said Tigger cheerfully. \( (HPC 187) \)

As it turns out, Tigger does not like honey:

“Tiggers don’t like honey.”

“Oh!” said Pooh, and tried to make it sound Sad and Regretful. “I thought they liked everything.”

“Everything except honey,” said Tigger. \( (HPC 189-190) \)

When Tigger is described in this way, it tends to make the reader believe that he is a character that does not know what he wants and is afraid of letting the other characters know that. But, this action is in line with Piaget’s observation that children of early ages play in an idiosyncratic way. This means that they are making up rules as they go along exactly like Tigger. It is not until the child is a little older that he or she realizes what consequences lying can have (Mussen 446). However, John Tyerman Williams believes that Tigger’s way of trying different types of food shows that he is Stoic (38-46). A Stoic is “someone who does not show their emotions and does not complain when bad things happen to them” (Longman). He goes through a lot to find out what he likes and when he has found it he “proceed [s] to live in accordance with it” (Williams 46). At the same time Williams says that Tigger’s quest for food is a sign of experimental reasoning. Tigger forms a hypothesis that Tiggers likes everything and as he tries different kinds of food, he realizes that he does not like everything, therefore has to change his hypotheses (84-87). I do not agree with Williams’ ideas about Tigger; he simply does not know what he likes and he does complain about it when telling the others that Tiggers do not like the different kinds of food that he is offered. As the story progresses and we get to know Tigger more, the image of him as scared and insecure changes.
and he becomes more explicitly an immature child. For example, the other characters are not so fond of his continual bouncing; this is shown when Tigger at one point bounces Eeyore into the river. The others find Eeyore floating on his back down the river and when Rabbit asks him how he got into the river, Eeyore says, “I was BOUNCED” (HPC 266). Eeyore is not the only one who dislikes Tigger’s constant bouncing. Piglet thinks it is scary and Rabbit dislikes it a lot. Rabbit even produces a plan to make Tigger stop bouncing by teaching him a lesson, which does not work as he has thought. When Tigger is described as a character that bounces all the time, he could be seen as inconsiderate. However, the other characters do not tell Tigger how much they dislike his bouncing, so he is not consciously inconsiderate. He is a big child that likes to play and have fun – in what might be called Piaget’s moral stage one.

Rabbit’s plan to make Tigger stop bouncing is to take him on a walk deep into the forest, and then when he is not looking, Rabbit and the others will run away so that Tigger will be lost. Naturally, they would find him and bring him home the next day. However, when Rabbit, Pooh and Piglet are going home, they are the ones that end up lost. When Tigger finds out that the others are lost, he shows that he is a good friend with good morals. “I shall have to go and find them,’ explained Tigger to Roo” (HPC 286). It is at this point that the others realize that their love for childish Tigger is more important than their discomfort with his childish behavior; they understand that a Tigger should bounce.

Roo is Tigger’s best friend in the forest and he impresses him with all the tremendous skills that Tiggers have, and says that he can do almost everything Roo asks him to do, only not right now. One thing that he does think he would be able to do is to climb trees. Therefore, when Roo asks him if he can do it he decides that he can:

> “Climbing trees is what they do best,” said Tigger. “Much better than Poohs.”
> “Could they climb this one?”
> “They’re always climbing trees like that,” said Tigger. “Up and down all day.”
> “Oo, Tigger, are they really?”
> “I’ll show you,” said Tigger bravely, “and you can sit on my back and watch me.” For of all the things which he had said Tiggers could do, the only one he felt really certain about suddenly was climbing trees. (HPC 227-228)

As it turns out, Tigger realizes half way up the tree that he cannot climb down. Nevertheless, he does not admit that either, so when Pooh and Piglet happen to walk by, Roo tells them what Tigger told him:

> “How did you get there, Roo?” asked Piglet.
“On Tigger’s back! And Tiggers can’t climb downwards, because their tails get in the way, only upwards, and Tigger forgot about that when we started, and he’s only just remembered. [...]”

(HPC 232)

Tigger is a bad role model for Roo and leads him into danger by climbing trees, which he is not really skilled at. Sarah E. Shea claims that Tigger suffers from ADHD and that he is dangerous to Roo. She calls Tigger “socially intrusive” (1559). I agree with Shea that Tigger can be seen as a bad role model, but at the same time, I do not think that Tigger is capable of seeing the danger in trying to do something that he apparently cannot. As we have seen earlier, Tigger is simply not grown up enough to realize this, and the other animals learn to make allowances.

We can deduce from Tigger’s behavior that he does have some morals. He helps his friends in need, which is something that a Tigger without any morals would not do. When it comes to his erratic behavior, it can be seen as a lack of morals but I would rather see it as the morals of a child, which as Piaget and his followers theorize, are not fully developed. This is the lesson learned by Tigger’s friends: that annoyingly immature behavior can be forgiven in a child one loves. Tigger has not learnt that lying is something that one should not do and he does not think of the consequences of his constant bouncing around. Therefore, from a perspective very different from that of Owl, the lessons that children should learn are that lying is something that one should not do. It is through the actions of those around Tigger that this lesson is learned: Everyone should be honest and always be respectful of those around them. However, children can learn something from Tigger’s behavior as well. He is independent and is not afraid to try new things; even though he might not be able to succeed, he still tries. Tigger does not care what others think of him and that can be seen as both good and bad. He might ignore the feelings of others but at the same time, he does not try to change who he is and that is something to learn, to always be true to oneself.

The last characters in the stories about Winnie-the-Pooh are Roo and Kanga. Kanga is the mother of Roo and the only female in the forest. She is also the only one that is clearly an adult. Rabbit does not like the fact that a new animal has appeared in the forest and decides that they should show her that by stealing baby Roo and replacing him with Piglet. However, Kanga realizes what they are up to and decides to teach them a lesson. “‘If they are having a joke with me, I will have a joke with them.’” (WP 101). Kanga decides to play along because she knows that Christopher Robin would never let anything happen to Roo, so she pretends that Piglet is Roo, showing the others that they cannot fool her and that it is not nice to steal
someone’s child. Kanga shows her tender side as well when letting Tigger move into her home.

Which explains why he always lived at Kanga’s house afterwards, and had Extract of Malt for breakfast, dinner, and tea. And sometimes, when Kanga thought he wanted some strengthening, he had a spoonful or two of Roo’s breakfast after meals as medicine. (HPC 201)

Kanga is the mother in the forest and she is not only a good mother to Roo, she takes care of Tigger as well. She is not mentioned much in the stories but the times she is, it is always in a caring way.

Roo is Kanga’s son, and as mentioned above, Tigger’s best friend in the Hundred Acre Forest. Roo is the only one in the stories that actually is a young child and that is reflected in his actions. For example, when Roo is about to take his medicine, he reacts as most children would do.

But Kanga and Christopher Robin and Piglet were all standing round Roo, watching him have his Extract of Malt. And Roo was saying, “Must I?” and Kanga was saying “Now, Roo dear, you remember what you promised.” (HPC 200)

Roo does not want his medicine and makes sure to let his mother know that. Kanga reacts as most aware parents would do and reminds him what he has promised. Beth Beard supports the fact that Kanga is the caregiver and nurturer in the forest, explaining that Roo is a status-seeker that wants to challenge everything (2-3). I agree with Beard’s analysis of Kanga and Roo. Roo is a curious child that wants to explore the world around him. There is not much to say about Kanga’s and Roo’s morals, but we can interpret that they both have good morals and moral behavior since we are never shown otherwise; Kanga is a caring parent and gives Roo a solid moral ground. I have not employed Piaget to explain Kanga’s actions, since he researched children’s moral development – not adult moral strategies. However, her actions are those of a responsible adult; she never shows any kind of childish behavior such as egocentrism. Roo shows that he is a child but he has good morals because of his mother. He might be seen as egocentric since he always wants to learn new things and explore the world, but that is only healthy behavior for a young child; he wants to learn about the world. Hence, the youthful reader learns from the interaction of Kanga and her child: Roo shows respect for his mother at all the time and Kanga is always trying to teach him right from wrong which are good lessons to learn on how to live.

In the forest, the characters live together in symbiosis. Everyone has his or her own special role to play for everything to function. Christopher Robin, as mentioned above, is the leader
of them all. He is the one that sets the rules in the forest. However, there are other leaders as well. Rabbit is one of them; he is smart and wants to set the rules for how everyone should act. Owl is another leader but he is more an observer, who watches over the others. Eeyore might not be a leader but it is shown from time to time that he is smarter than some of the other characters. Kanga is not so much of a leader but she is the mother of them all and tries to give good advice on how to act. In contrast, Tigger and Roo are the children in the story; they are the playful ones that sometimes need guidance and admonishing. Piglet is the scared and insecure one, but he does his best to be brave and help, when help is needed. Pooh is everyone’s friend. It is said that he does not have any brain but he has the biggest heart of them all and is always there to help his friends.

In conclusion, Winnie-the-Pooh and the House at Pooh Corner expose young readers to a spectrum of moral situations, from morals that are not fully developed through the mature morals of adults. This can especially be seen in Christopher Robin who is the one that actually changes through the stories. Roo and Tigger represent the morals of children while Kanga, Owl and to some extent Rabbit represent the morals of adults. The other characters are so to speak in the middle where they are still developing their morals. However, none of the characters is without morals and not one of them can be considered evil; it is a question of the stage of moral development the characters are at. The way the morals and moral development vary between the different characters gives the author a perfect opportunity to teach the reader something. The characters in the stories are teaching the readers to always be honest, help those in need, be a good friend and do not forget to have fun with your friends!
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