CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0   Summary of Main Findings

This study has undertaken a linguistics analysis on the human characteristics of two anthropomorphic frogs – Mr. Jeremy Fisher (JF) and Freckle Frog (FF) - and two anthropomorphic foxes – Mr. Tod (MT) and Little White Fox (LW) - found in animal fantasy stories of the early 20th century. In bringing out the human characteristics of these animals, the system of transitivity of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) was deployed as a major tool. The transitivity descriptions by Thompson (2004), Bloor and Bloor (2004) and Eggins (2004) were also incorporated in the elucidation of the analysis. The aims of the current study were attained through the guidance of two pairs of parallel research questions: 1.a) How are human characteristics in the frog protagonists characterized through the system of transitivity? 1.b) How are human characteristics in the fox protagonists characterized through the system of transitivity? 2.a) Do the frog protagonists in both stories carry similar human characteristics? and 2.b) Do the fox protagonists in both stories carry similar human characteristics?

It was found that JF, FF and LW used all the process types except existential processes, while MT used all the six process types. Material processes were the most used process type by all the protagonists. The rest of the process types were used differently by them. Of all the protagonists, FF was the only one found to use all the process types fairly evenly. JF, MT and LW used material processes extensively (52%, 52.7% and 30.8% respectively) as compared to the other process types. Between JF and FF, FF was found to use mental processes more than JF (20.6% and

4.2% respectively). FF also used relational processes more than JF (17.5% and 10.4% respectively). Verbal processes, however, were used rather equally by them (18.8 % and 23.8% respectively). The only process type that JF used more than FF was behavioural processes (14.6% and 9.5% respectively). On the other hand, between MT and LW, LW was found to use mental processes more than MT (24% and 12.2% respectively). Verbal processes were also used more by LW than MT (15.6% and 6% respectively). However, both MT and LW used relational processes (16% and 15.8% respectively) and behavioural processes (13.7% and 13.6% respectively) almost equally.

As participant roles are directly related to the process types, the roles undertaken by the protagonists were also found to be in differed proportions. In determining the actual active participant, the roles of the protagonists themselves were compared with the roles of their body parts. It was found that, of all the participant roles, the protagonists themselves highly dominate the participation at 92% for JF, 98.4% for FF, 95.7% for MT, and 95.3% for LW.

Of all the participant roles, the Actor role was found to be the most held by all the four protagonists and their Goal role was insignificant. Therefore, they can be regarded as active participants. Nonetheless, JF was found to be a more active Actor than FF (45% and 19.4% respectively), and MT was observed to be a more active Actor than LW (47.8% and 27% respectively). As Actors they were found, among others, to be *carrying a rod and a basket* [JF/C10], *going to a party* [FF/C32], *staggering a pailful of water* [MT/C78], and *scratching head* [LW/C75].

In the use of their inner consciousness (expressed by material processes), only FF and LW were found to undertake the role as Senser at a fairly high percentage (17.7% and 21.7% respectively). JF and MT undertook the role as Senser at only 4%

and 9% respectively. As Senser they were observed to be *liking feet getting wet* [JF/C2], *thinking of pretty things* [FF/C8], *determining to move house* [MT/C22], and *remembering being fooled* [LW/C58].

All the protagonists were also found to engage in speeches (realized by verbal processes). But, MT partook the role as Sayer at a very low percentage (3%), whereas JF, FF and LW were found to undertake the role as Sayer almost equally (16.3%, 16% and 14.5% respectively). Apart from saying, they were found *crying* (saying loudly) [FF/C30], *boasting* [LW/C9] and *teasing* [LW/C14].

Behaver role then was found to be undertaken by JF, MT and LW almost equally (12.2%, 12.7% and 12% respectively), fairly superceding FF (9.7%). As Behaver, they were observed *crossing legs* [JF/C16], *sighing* [FF/C27], *peeping* [MT/C114], and *laughing* [LW/C236].

Apart from the human actions mentioned above, the protagonists were also depicted for their attributes (expressed by relational processes) which signify them to carry the role as Carrier. FF, MT and LW were found as Carrier fairly equally (15.2%, 11.7% and 13.9% respectively), whereas JF partook as Carrier at only 8%. With regard to this, JF was less directly exposed as compared to FF, MT and LW. As Carrier they were indicated as *quite pleased* [JF/C5], *kind-hearted* [FF/C4], *upset* [MT/C19], and *worried* [LW/C1].

Although circumstantial elements are not directly related to process types, they contribute substantially in further describing the human characteristics of the protagonists. Among the circumstances most found were circumstance of location and circumstance of manner. Among the protagonists, the human actions of JF were found to be the most associated with circumstance of location (64%), followed by MT (53.1%), LW (50.4%), and FF (45%). Circumstance of manner, on the other hand, was

found to be accompanying the human actions of JF, MT and LW at 24%, 27.1% and 27.6% respectively. However, the human actions of FF were found accompanied by circumstance of manner at only 5%.

From the overall examination, it was revealed that, generally, both frogs carry pleasant human traits. In contrast, both foxes carry contradicting traits where MT was found to carry negative human traits, whereas LW was found to carry a mixture of positive and negative human traits. Both frog protagonists and both fox protagonist were also found not to carry entirely similar human actions and emotions as reflected through the transitivity analysis.

5.1   Significance and Implications of the Study

Hunt (1992, p. 18), in general, has interestingly noted that "the argument for using the tools of literary criticism and theory to discuss children's literature is in fact a tribute to the value of the subject". As a tribute to children's literature, the current study has thus attempted to illuminate a neglected genre in literary analysis, i.e., the animal fantasy genre. The findings of the current study may be helpful to literary analysts, teachers of literature, and authors of animal fantasy stories.

Children's fictions, notably animal fantasy stories, have not been regarded as "interesting" and "sophisticated" by many (Copeland, 2003, p. 288). Although they are made up of simple plots and personified characters, the current study has shown that animal fantasy stories are worthy of being critically evaluated and appreciated. The current study has shown that anthropomorphic characterization is one area that can be productively investigated. Through a systematic and objective methodology, there should be more areas that can be explored in this genre. Perhaps literary analysts

and teachers of literature should broaden their choice of genre and not to constraint their selection to heavy plots and real human characters only.

Stories written for children are normally didactic in nature and aim to educate. Hence, the findings of the current study may trigger the awareness of animal fantasy authors on their purpose and linguistic choices. Through the findings of the current study, it was found that the story *The Tale of Mr. Tod* was encumbered with negative conceptions humans have about foxes, like most of its predecessors of fox stories. Perhaps future authors of animal fantasy could tone down this negative portrayal by making foxes more of a round character so that children are less imbued with this negative conception. The other three stories (*The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*, *How Freckle Frog Made Herself Pretty*, and *Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends*) used in the current study should be commended as they do not profoundly reflect the inherent negative conception about frogs and foxes. This shows that it is possible to portray frogs and foxes not according to similes, idioms and metaphors associated with them, and at the same time not digressing from the nature of the animal themselves.

As a conclusion, when it comes to analysis, there should not be any disparities between adults and children's literature. It is the after-effect that contributes to its significance.

5.2   Recommendations for Further Research

To recapitulate, the current study analyzes the human characteristics of two anthropomorphic frogs and two anthropomorphic foxes found in animal fantasy stories of the early 20th century. The findings of the study however are strictly constrained within the scope of these four stories. The rationalization on the purpose

of animal fantasy stories is also drawn from this small sample size within the same publication period. In reference to these limitations, the current study would like to put up a two-fold suggestion in order to get a more comprehensive picture on this area of study.

First, synchronic analyses are to be carried out, like the current study, but on a larger sample of texts. In other words, comparisons are to be made between stories of the same century. Since there are countless talking animal stories in different languages and cultures, synchronic analyses may be done within a culture and across cultures. This is because, in almost every culture there is an animal tale to tell, be it in written or oral form. An animal may also be symbolized differently from one culture to another.

Second, it might be useful to do a diachronic comparison, i.e., to compare the stories that have been analyzed synchronically according to the different centuries. The final diachronic comparison may provide better consistency in the findings. In addition to this, authors of contemporary stories may be consulted to validate the actual purpose of the stories.