THE FLIGHT FROM NEVERLAND: COMING OF AGE THROUGH A CENTURY OF PETER PAN

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of English
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

June, 2015

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Caitlin McMahan for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of English to be taken June, 2015

Title: The Flight From Neverland: Coming of Age Through a Century of Peter Pan

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This thesis makes an attempt to track the progression of the social expectations placed on children and adults through J.M. Barrie's play, *Peter Pan*, and various subsequent adaptations of that work. Spanning the length of approximately a century, I have compared the works of Barrie, both his play and his novel, to film adaptations from time periods which I believe to highlight pivotal moments in the evolution of Western culture, primarily those of England and the United States. Issues of gender roles, family structures, and the definition of the individual as a member of a community all contribute to the fashioning of society, both the young and the old. This work attempts to comment on the changes made to primary characters within the Peter Pan narrative which depict these social changes, reflecting on the audience's expectations of society, contemporary to that work.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor O'Fallon for all of her support throughout this endeavor. Thank you for helping me explore the ways in which literature pertains to the evolution of culture. I would also like to thank Professor Rumbarger and Professor Fracchia for agreeing to serve on my thesis committee as a secondary reader and a CHC Representative. I understand the demands on your time and I appreciate your support. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who not only supported my project, but offered enthusiasm and encouragement from beginning to end. This would not have been possible without all of you.

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Introduction

In her article, “Magic Abjured: Closure in Children's Fantasy Fiction,” Sarah Gilead introduces her topic by stating that “[c]hildren's literature...[reflects] the adult writer's intentions and [satisfies] adult readers' notions about children's tastes and needs, as well as fulfilling the needs of the adult societies to which the children belong” (Gilead 277). Gilead, impressing upon her readers the importance of the adult within children's literature, explains the tie between that literature and the society for which it was created. Society is a construct of adults, and children are raised as a product of that construct. This is a cycle which repeats itself with the assistance of cultural elements such as literature. However, children's literature not only focuses on the social needs of the adult, but also the adult's understanding of a child's “tastes and needs.” Here, childhood is stated as being distinct from adulthood and therefore must be catered to. As young members of society, children must be introduced to their social responsibilities. Gilead describes this transition within children's fantasy as “the ending [completing] a frame around the fantasy, reestablishing the fictional reality of the opening” (277). Essentially, once the adventure is been completed, there is a return to the normal social sphere as well as the responsibilities of that society. Growing up, in the end, established as the superior reality. One story in particular, not only creates a world for children, but also an escape from it, is J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

Though *Peter Pan* introduces the world of Neverland as a place where children never have to grow up and adventures wait around every corner, all of Peter's companions return to what Gilead refers to as the “reality of the opening.” All children, save Peter Pan, reject Neverland and choose to grow up at the end of the story. This life

of eternal childhood, though initially tempting, is revealed to be a hollow existence. One can never progress if one remains a child. The natural desire to be a productive member of society must be stifled, otherwise the characteristics of a child become villainous as an adult.

Barrie sets his story in late-Victorian London, focusing on the adventures of the Darling children and his hero, Peter Pan. Barrie's story was first introduced to audiences as a play, debuting on December 27, 1904 at the Duke of York's Theatre in London. The opening scene was a familiar sight: a nursery containing three small beds with a large window nestled between them. A picture of Victorian domesticity. However, this symbol of childhood in the Victorian era is soon challenged by the appearance of Peter Pan. The nursery, filled with children and their parents transitions into the world of Neverland, a child's fantasy world. The reality of this dreamland calls into question the roles of the children as well as the importance of the society in which they live. In the end, however, the influences of their culture are too great, and the children, except Peter, leave Neverland, returning to London to assume their places in society.

Within Victorian society changes were taking place in regard to childhood. The idea that childhood was a crucial stage in one's social and mental development was becoming a more generally accepted idea within the middle and upper classes. During the Victorian era “the...to opportunities for play and entertainment” began to create a culture of childhood. The appearance of “[g]ames, toys, and books...especially designed for children” (Tatar xli) emphasized the importance of the life of a child. This acknowledgment of the importance of childhood and the creation of a culture of children continues to grow in strength from the Victorian era and beyond.

Though not a wealthy family, the Darlings, who are the central family within Barrie's play, clearly demonstrate these social changes within Victorian England. Members of the middle-class, the Darlings are able to subsist on the wages of the male breadwinner Mr. Darling. Supported by the earnings of her husband, Mrs. Darling is able to remain at home with her three children and provide the nurturing environment believed necessary for the rearing of social responsible children. This family, though perhaps not ideal economically, represents the very picture of late-Victorian domestic bliss. Both parents are providing for their children in their own, often gendered, way which allows their young children a degree of freedom from social conventions, if only for a short time.

Prior to the Victorian era, children and their parents, especially among the higher social classes, experienced relatively little social interaction. Nursemaids and governesses, women trained to raise children, were often employed by families in order to establish an environment for children which was separate from the world of adults. Among lower classes the separation between child and parent was not as extreme. However, this lack of separation stems from the early induction of children into the workforce. For a lower-class family, it was necessary for children to help support their families by assisting with the family's income.

Though not always the ideal society for children, the Victorian era, a time known for “the Industrial Revolution and the rise of urban poverty...also ushered in a new commitment to education, with a dramatic increase in the number of children attending schools and...a stronger personal and social investment in them” (Tatar xli). Not only was education becoming a primary focus for society as a whole, but

relationships within the family unit were also growing in importance in the nineteenth century. During Queen Victoria's reign, “[h]arsh childrearing practices gave way to more permissive modes and to expressive affection” (Tatar xli), allowing the middle and upper class Victorian families to become more centrally focused. The roles of parents gradually required them to become more involved in the lives of their children which allowed true familial relationships to blossom at a much earlier age. In Victorian society, parents, who were once alien figures, soon became the social role models of the next generations.

As the distinct qualities of childhood and adulthood were becoming more concrete social concepts, distinctions between periods of one's life were given greater attention. The first and perhaps most obvious distinction was that of sexual maturity. Once a child had reached a certain age they were inducted into the realm of their own gender and were groomed to fulfill the social expectations of that gender. However, as shown by the growing social importance of education, Victorian society also recognized the need for one to develop mentally. The combined focus on a child's physical and mental maturity can be encapsulated by two words: growing up. As individuals grow up, they become aware of not only their own desires and needs, but also the way in which they fit into the world around them. The list of expectations, dreams, and responsibilities grows with each year of maturity. It is this process of growing up which is closely observed by Barrie in his play *Peter Pan or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* and his subsequent novel *Peter Pan and Wendy*.

By creating a protagonist who acts as the antithesis of adulthood, that is to say an eternal child who is completely free of all social expectations and responsibilities,

Barrie highlights those aspects of childhood which are altered as one matures into adulthood. Barrie so completely captures the idiosyncrasies of childhood that a definite line of maturity is drawn. If Peter Pan were to grow up, yet retain the behavior of his youth, he would become something which borders on villainous. It is Peter's innocence which allows him to remain Barrie's hero. Unlike the other children, Peter, is unable to shift from childhood to adulthood. The other children, such as Wendy, eventually assume a role and a set of responsibilities, fitting themselves into their social surroundings. It is this acceptance of social responsibility which dictates whether or not one has truly grown up.

Barrie's play was an immediate success in 1904. It created the nostalgic feeling of childhood for the adult members of his audience and created a world which appealed to the imagination of his younger audience members. The play had so much success, that in 1911 Barrie published a novelized version of his play entitled *Peter Pan and Wendy*. For generations, children and adults alike have been fascinated with the story of the “boy who would not grow up” and have continued to experience the story in a variety of ways. The effect of *Peter Pan* on Barrie's later audiences have inspired some to adapt the Peter Pan story into their own works of art.

Though many adaptations of Barrie's *Peter Pan* have been created, I have chosen to analyze three film adaptations of Barrie's *Peter Pan*: Walt Disney Studio's *Peter Pan*, Columbia/TriStar Picture's *Hook*, and Universal Studios' *Peter Pan* (2003). Each of these films highlights different aspects of social changes in regard to adulthood and childhood over nearly a century, from 1904 to 2003. These changes include altering gender roles, the focus on sexual maturity, and the growing interest in extending the

duration of childhood itself. I have chosen these three films to compare to both Barrie's original play and his novel in order to track how generations perceives the metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood. However, given the great number of adaptations not included in my research, I have included a list of all major stage productions and film adaptations of *Peter Pan* in an appendix, to which the reader may refer throughout the course of their reading. Works of fiction have been excluded from this list in the interest of preserving the storyline of Barrie's original work within the adaptations chosen.

Through the course of my thesis I will primarily analyze the characters of Peter Pan, George Darling, Captain James Hook, and Wendy Darling in order to track progress from childhood. Each work, both Barrie's as well as my chosen adaptations stresses the importance of the influence of both childhood and adulthood on one's identity. Self-awareness becomes the gateway to adulthood within the narrative of *Peter Pan* and without this self-awareness, one is not able to fully become integrated into society.

A crucial part of this social integration stems from the shared desire to receive recognition and a position of prominence within *Peter Pan*. Each character, male and female, is striving to insert themselves into a position which they feel bound to fill, from Wendy who desires to be the epitome of a woman to Peter Pan who attempts to reinsert himself in society by playing the part of a dutiful son. Peter, who has long since rejected the late-Victorian social setting, instead creates his own space on the island of Neverland where he is able to manufacture his own society. Neverland becomes the scene of another alternate society for the figure of Captain Hook, an adult leading a

band of pirates around the island of Neverland in order to live outside of English society. Hook, however, is suggested to represent who Peter Pan might become if he were to physically age, yet not completely accept his social role as an adult male.

Each Peter Pan story ties Captain Hook and Peter together. Captain Hook, a social outcast given his career as a pirate, is in conflict with Peter because he highlights Captain Hook's failings as a man who was created by English Victorian society. What is essentially an ethical conflict between Hook and Peter is not fully portrayed in Barrie's play. Barrie provides most of the psychological and historical background within the stage directions where it cannot be directly observed by the audience. Each character, not simply Hook and Peter, is explored more fully within Barrie's novel. Within the novel, Barrie's narrator is able to provide the reader with psychological explanation, rather than simply a visual representation. It is through the combination of Barrie's two works that later film directors such as Steven Spielberg and P. J. Hogan are able to gain a full understanding of Barrie's story and translate these social and psychological elements into their own works.

Barrie's novel is similar to his play in many ways. What Barrie was attempting to achieve in his stage directions is fully realized through his narrative. A history of the Darling family is provided and a greater amount of attention is paid to the transition from childhood to adulthood as Wendy knowingly grows from toddler, to child, and eventually into adulthood herself. The idea of growing up as a fact is given within the first chapter, naturally with Peter Pan being the exception to the rule. Barrie's play does not fully realize Wendy's transition, beginning sometime during her childhood, bypassing crucial years of her life for the sake of plot.

Though the male characters struggle with insecurities which hinder them from fully maturing into adults, Wendy is a character who is extremely aware of the progression from childhood to adulthood and gracefully embraces these changes therefore serving as the ideal child. Though just a girl when the play and novel begin, "she [is] one of the kind that likes to grow up. In the end she grew up of her own free will a day quicker than other girls" (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 184). Wendy provides a striking contrast to men in the Peter Pan story. She is neither afraid of becoming an adult and assuming the social responsibilities expected of her, nor is she striving to gain admiration, as her competency in her social role secures it for her. Wendy represents the gradual, though inevitable, transition from childhood to adulthood, which ideally every child will experience. However, Wendy also understands the importance of childhood to adults within society. Wendy alone is able to recall the events of her childhood and is therefore able to fully conceptualize her own transition from childhood to adulthood, remembering not only who she was as a child but also who she is as a mother.

The idea of the family unit is significant to Barrie, as well as to each of the film adaptations chosen for this thesis. The idea that the "primary source of identity and security for the...youths of late Victorian and Edwardian England was their families...[and] the role of the family as an agency of nurture, protection, and socialization" (Childs 3) is expressed within each version of the Peter Pan story. In each version, Wendy flies off to Neverland to become a mother, and it is the importance of the family unit which calls the children back to London to resume their normal lives. Those individuals without a family unit, such as Peter Pan and Captain Hook, are outsiders and reject the family unit while simultaneously desiring a mother figure.

Within a family, one inherently has a place where one belongs and is therefore given a meaning and a purpose. Without a family, a person may have complete independence, but their life is also lonely and at times empty. Understanding the family unit is the simplest way to decipher the responsibilities of adulthood placed in juxtaposition to the general freedom of childhood.

The mother and father, two of the most prominent adults in a child's life by the end of the nineteenth century, are the initial representation of society for their children. Parents represent social responsibilities as well as the sacrifices necessary to ensure the well-being of the family unit, which in turn, secures the freedom of childhood. Without parents, children would not have the luxury of childhood, nor the protection. The responsible position of parents is to allow children to fully be children, growing into adulthood under the careful supervision of an older generation.

The idea of the family unit is still of great importance today, yet the shift of attention from eventual adulthood to perpetual childhood is becoming more pronounced. Like Peter Pan, who ran away from his social responsibilities before they were thrust upon him, the “children” of today are gradually putting off their own adult responsibilities to retain their childlike freedom. Adulthood has become such a gradual process that not every individual reaches adulthood at the same time. Indeed, the distinction between adulthood and childhood has become so blurred that without the factor of physical maturity, one might have great difficulty deciding what constitutes adulthood in the twenty-first century.

Through the study of *Peter Pan* and its later adaptations, I hope to not only establish what coming of age meant to the contemporaries of Barrie, but what it means

to become an adult to a modern audience. Since the early 1900s when Barrie's play was first performed, society has undergone many of changes. Women are no longer seen as belonging strictly in the domestic sphere, people of all classes are expected to attend some form of secondary school, and general economic stability allows for greater freedoms in the lives of every individual, adult and child alike. Even the family unit has changed. Men are expected to undertake more responsibility with the domestic sphere, slowly changing the idea of what it means to be a man in modern society. These alterations to the social expectations of adulthood and childhood can be tracked through the narrative of the adaptations of *Peter Pan*. One can observe how modern individuals are beginning to relate less to the more socially aware characters, such as Wendy and more to the erratic figure of Peter Pan.

Chapter 1: *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* by J.M. Barrie

The World in Which They Lived

J.M. Barrie was already an established writer and playwright by the beginning of the twentieth century, however in December of 1904, Barrie would produce the work that would solidify his name in literary history. On the 27th of December Barrie's first production of his play Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up was performed in London and was an instant success. The magical world created by Barrie touched his audience both the young and the old.

The play was also in a sense a living creation. After its first performance, Barrie would continue to add to his story, developing it throughout his life. A year after its original performance, the “first revival...at Christmas, 1905, the scene of the Marooner's Rock or The Mermaid's Lagoon was added, with the famous exclamation of Peter...'To die will be an awfully big adventure?'” (Walbrook 100). These small additions to the play would continue as Barrie went on to write a novelized version of his play in 1911. With each subsequent version of his play, Barrie added new depth to his characters and to his story. The position of Peter Pan was increasingly problematized, moving from “not only one of the prettiest, but one of that happiest, of Tales for Children” (104), toward the tragedy that lived at the heart of the story of the “boy who would not grow up”.

The world in which the play is set is early-Edwardian England, just following the reign of Queen Victoria. However, though the play is technically set after what has come to be known as the Victorian age, the influence of Victorian life weighs heavily on the play and its characters. The primary adults of the play, Mr. and Mrs. Darling and

Captain James Hook, would have grown into adulthood during the Victorian era and the effects of those social influences would shaped their lives.

The life of a Victorian would have been highly structured and each person would have understood their roles within society from childhood. For a woman, life would have been confined to the world of the domestic. Those women who upheld the social standards of the time, regardless of class, would have functioned within this sphere whether one was a “young lady [being] prepared to be mistress of a large and comfortable house” or “the young person from the village to be housemaid or kitchenmaid, rising perhaps to be cook or even housekeeper” (Lochhead 23). The exception to these socially stable positions would have been “the village girl...finding herself in a bad place;...the young lad, that of a paternal loss of fortune” or “Breeding without money” (23). There was also the class of the extremely poor. Those women, along with their families, toiled away in the dregs of society in order to survive their situation of extreme poverty. However, though an obvious and crucial component of Victorian society and its progress, Barrie chooses to focus his lens upon the ideal family life, leaving poverty in the background as a vague threat to the Darling family if they do not obey Mr. Darling's will and respect his position.

As is the case with Mrs. Darling, the Victorian “young lady was educated to take her place in parental society and then, it was hoped, in her husband’s home” (23). Receiving a sparse education, which only served to add to a lady's “accomplishments” the primary position of a woman within Victorian England was to be the domestic support of her husband as he attempted to make his way in the world of Victorian men, that is to say the career driven world. The “Late-Victorian middle-class society had

developed a very marked sexual division of labour. Men went outside the home to earn money and to maintain the household. Their wives, on the whole, stayed in the home and were economically dependent on the male breadwinner" (Dyhouse 4). This social dynamic is perfectly portrayed by the Darling family in Barrie's *Peter Pan*. Mrs. Darling is the shining example of the supportive wife, bearing three children and maintaining a small, though by all accounts lovely household. While Mrs. Darling does everything in her power to make her household socially and aesthetically pleasing, Mr. Darling leaves the domestic sphere dominated by his wife and children to serve as a bank clerk. His profession allows him to provide his family with an income, though a meager one, so that they may retain a respectable position within society.

Children within Victorian society were prepared for their adult roles at a very early stage in life. Their childhoods would have been cut relatively short. Girls would be trained at an early age either by their governesses, headmistresses, or their mothers to begin taking on the duties of a wife and mother, as well as cultivating the skills to present "a genteel appearance in the drawing-room" (Lochhead 16). Young men, if they came from a family belonging to "the professional and upper classes went to grammar or public school, then to Oxford or Cambridge" (16). Schools for girls and boys were segregated by gender, introducing the children to a mono-gendered society from an early age. This further solidified the sexual division of labor within the Victorian era. Girls understood their position within the home as the definitions of their world. The boys, who had been removed from their home in order to attend school, lived in a world that was made almost entirely of men and boys. Though it was a world which offered a

great deal of potential, it was also a stifling atmosphere that did not provide a parental level of affection or support.

The world of a boy's early childhood, the world which Mr. Darling and Captain Hook would have experienced, was the world of the public school. In these schools "discipline was stern, conditions were Spartan and there was an appalling amount of cruelty and of bullying" (Lochhead 24). Though this situation does not appear to be an ideal place for young boys to grow into adulthood, in the Victorian age, though "most boys were miserable in their first years at school...these foundations won and held the loyalty of their sons, and this retrospective sentiment helped to form the Victorian man" (24). The memories of the suffering at these public schools were overshadowed by the generational belief that it was within these school that a boy transitioned into a gentleman of character. The conditions were certainly not ideal, but it became a nostalgic place of a man's childhood which he then impressed upon his sons. Boys grew into men within the walls of a public school, and being essentially cut off from their own families they therefore created bonds with their school mates and teachers.

The strikingly different worlds of the young boys and girls of Victorian society effectively created equally different worlds of adulthood. The Darling children are presented at an age that is too young for this division, yet each child is aware that they will soon enter into a time of life that will draw them away from each other and into a world that is constructed for creating the ideal member of one sex or the other.

Barrie was aware of this division and creates characters which support his idea of social order. He presents parents which generally uphold late-Victorian and early-Edwardian values, values that have shaped his own childhood and adulthood. He also

presents children in the early stages of their lives who are free to play and socialize with one another, yet are ultimately destined for different worlds. However, Barrie also includes complications to this idyllic world. Mr. Darling is not a stoic father who deals with his children benevolently and maturely. Captain Hook, the villain and a pirate, does not maintain the social order, yet believes heartily in the social conventions of his youth. Wendy is the perfect copy of her mother, yet runs away from home with her brothers. Finally, there is Peter Pan himself, consciously rejects all aspects of society which the Darling family hold dear, yet attempts to duplicate those conventions in Neverland.

Peter Pan is the symbol of youth, gaiety, and the freedom of childhood. He has chosen to remain in that childhood rather than assuming his position within society, thus rejecting the natural progression of life. Peter acts as a foil for each of the other characters. His presence as a social outcast highlights the social responsibilities of those who choose to remain members of society. However, though Peter's position is the epitome of freedom, his is ultimately isolated through his own rejection.

Mr. Darling: The Estranged Father

The isolation of the male from the domestic sphere was a reality within early-Edwardian society. Maintaining many of the social expectations and traditions of the late-Victorian era, the social spheres in which men and women functioned were generally kept separate, only occasionally crossing over into the opposite realm. Mr. and Mrs. Darling express this separation within the play. Barrie utilizes the nursery within the first act to establish Mrs. Darling's dominant presence within that space. Dedicating nearly all of the first stage directions to this feminine quarter, he establishes

the close connection between a mother and her young children, as well as presenting the father figure as an outsider through his physical absence. Mr. Darling, though the sole provider for the family, is forced to exist outside of his family in order to fulfill his role in respectable society. To suggest that he is a complete stranger to his family would be incorrect, however one cannot deny that the lack of understanding and intimacy between the Darling children and their father, an intimacy which is overtly present between Mrs. Darling and her children.

The distance placed between Mr. Darling and his children is further heightened by the children themselves. The introduction of Mr. Darling to Barrie's audience is surprisingly not given by Mr. Darling himself. Within the nursery, the two eldest Darling children are mimicking their parents in a game. John, playing the part of his father, asserts the division between sexes by expressing displeasure at the birth of a daughter. Though this caricature of Mr. Darling is colored by the personality of John, who is a young boy and according to Wendy "just despises [girls]" (Barrie, Peter Pan 35), John recognizes at an early age that there is a social distinction created between men and women. John can relate to his father in a way that Wendy never will. For young girls, fathers presented "their first examples of paternalism – distance, indifference or benevolence, perhaps" (Dyhouse 3-4). This paternalistic view of girls and women within the Darling family extended into society as a whole, where women were seen as needing protection and respect, yet it was never to be assumed that the two sexes could relate to one another on equal ground.

However, though Mr. Darling must conform to an extent to John's rather misogynistic caricature of him in order to conform to his social role as a middle-class

father in early-Edwardian England, Mr. Darling is also a man of great feeling. John's performance may lead one to believe that Mr. Darling was dissatisfied with the birth of his daughter due to her gender. Barrie, however, gives a small insight into the Darling family's history within his stage directions. He assures the audience that “[Mr. Darling] is really a good man as bread-winners go” (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 10) and that after Wendy was born “he [was] very conscientious...holding [Mrs. Darling's] hand while he calculated whether they could have Wendy or not, and coming down on the right side” (11). This picture of Mr. Darling may at first appear cold, for why would a parent not want to keep their child? However, in early-Edwardian society, if one could not afford to feed their child then one must either send the child to an orphanage or allow the child to die. The government did not yet assist families that could not afford to provide for their children. Society expected that if one were to have a child, that individual needed to be prepared to care for that child or accept the consequences.

Mr. Darling's obvious desire to be a father, as shown by his care in his financial planning to ensure the support of his family, is complicated by his need for recognition. As a clerk, “he is so like all the others on stools that you recognise [sic] him not by his face but by his stool, but at home the way to gratify him is to say that he has a distinct personality” (11). In his desire to receive respect from his family, Mr. Darling is often prone to taking himself too seriously and possesses a flair for dramatization. Upon the moment that he enters the nursery, the domain of his children watched over by their mother, Mr. Darling immediately begins competing for the attention of his wife. Upset that he cannot tie his tie in preparation for a dinner party, he announces that “unless this tie is round my neck we don't go out to dinner to-night, and if I don't go out to dinner to-

night I never go to the office again, and if I don't go to the office again [Mrs. Darling] and I starve, and our children will be thrown into the streets" (12). Mr. Darling, acting very much like an unruly child himself, enters into the nursery and throws a tantrum. Unwilling to cope with the minor stress of his wardrobe situation on his own, Mr. Darling instead demands the attention and assistance which he believes the situation warrants.

Once pacified, having been able to exert his authority over his children and his wife, Mr. Darling becomes much more amiable. He shares feelings of parental pride with his wife as he exclaims that "there is not [the Darling children's] equal on earth, and they are ours, ours!" (13). His children are a social symbol that Mr. Darling has met all of the criteria of manhood according to early-Edwardian society. He has a career, a wife, three children, a house, even servants. By definition, Mr. Darling is a respectable man within society, regardless of his inability to embody the traditional male role within his own household. Outward appearances suggest that he is the epitome of the middle-class man, yet his success within the male sphere casts a shadow on his domestic life. He must compensate for his lack of recognition at his office and therefore is not able to fulfill the role of husband and father within his own family. He cannot fully see to the needs of his children because he is continuously focusing on his own need for attention and respect.

The social separation of Mr. Darling from his children also hinders him from being an effective protector for Wendy, John, and Michael. When the appearance of a strange shadow and "a strange little face outside the [nursery] window and a hand groping as if if want to come in" (8) is addressed by Mrs. Darling, her husband is fairly

dismissive of the issue. The matter is completely forgotten once a threat to Mr. Darling's absolute authority within the household is questioned through an unfortunate situation concerning Nana.

Mr. Darling, in an attempt to provide a manly example to his youngest son Michael, enters into a sort of competition with his son. Both agree to take their medicine, Mr. Darling, however, wishes to avoid this task and instead attempts to hide his cowardice behind a joke. Rather than taking the medicine himself, Mr. Darling pours his medicine into Nana's bowl, pretending that it is milk. Of course the joke is in very poor taste, and his children “all [look] as if they did not admire him, and nothing so dashes a temperamental man” (21). Mr. Darling, rather than becoming a hero to his children, has become the villain, victimizing their nurse and true guardian. Naturally, the children and Mrs. Darling sympathize with Nana, which upsets Mr. Darling further. Rather than being humbled and swallowing his pride, Mr. Darling becomes more irate and essentially accuses his family of a kind of treachery, sneering “Coddle her; nobody coddles me. Oh dear no. I am only the bread-winner, why should I be coddled? Why, why, why?” (22-23). Once more Mr. Darling is attempting to gain respect and admiration from his family by suggesting that they are indebted to him for his efforts in the workplace. He becomes a bully not unlike those which may have haunted his own childhood. As the head of the household, Mr. Darling has seniority and this seniority, as it would in a public school “[brings] an escape from persecution and...a large measure of freedom, even of grandeur...even the horrors [are] seen in a mellowing light” (Lochhead 29). Mr. Darling acts in a cowardly and cruel way attempting to impress his children, yet his attempts fail. In order to retain respect he makes an example of his

importance and his ultimate authority. He, an outsider of the nursery and the domestic sphere, removes both guardians of this domain. This first, as was the evening's plan, is his wife. The second guardian which he removes is Nana.

As a final exertion of power Mr. Darling exclaims “Am I master in this house or is she?” (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 23) and forcibly removes her from the nursery and the house itself. This is not the behavior of an ideal paternal figure within Victorian society. Mr. Darling should not feel the need to prove himself to his family and the servants, because his social status alone should secure his authority. However, upon entering the nursery and lowering his status to that of a child by exhibiting childlike behavior, he has created peers out of his children. In doing this, Mr. Darling forsakes his role as a father in order to assume the role of a child bully attempting to become their superior in this childish setting.

Mr. Darling's removal of Nana from the nursery on that fateful night enables Peter to enter the nursery, which then leads to the flight of the children to Neverland. Sadly, “the broken-hearted father and mother arrive just in time to get a nip from TINK as she too sets out for the Never Land” (42), unable to hinder their children's escape. While the children pursue their adventures in Neverland, Mr. and Mrs. Darling anxiously await their return in London. Mrs. Darling and Nana retain a vigil in the nursery while Mr. Darling is called by necessity to assume his responsibilities as the breadwinner. However, as a sign of penance for his rash behavior which lead to the disappearance of his children, Mr. Darling “[has] changed places with his dog...[going] to his office in a kennel, with the street boys running alongside cheering” (145). The servant, Liza, does not deem this behavior to be respectable, yet Mrs. Darling believes it

to be “out of remorse” (145). Mr. Darling, initially, began carrying around the kennel because his “sorrow [had] taught him that he was the kind of man who whatever he does contritely he must to do excess; otherwise he soon abandons doing it” (146). Mr. Darling's pursuit of atonement must air on the side of dramatic because he is a dramatic individual. He is also not a humble individual by nature and therefore must do something extreme to create feelings of humility within himself. However, as time continues, he begins to relish in the attention which riding in the kennel brings. As the boys cheer he mentions that “it is very gratifying” (146) to have distinction amongst other people, even if that distinction is only recognized by “lots of little boys” and “several adults” (146). Once again, Mr. Darling is stepping outside of the traditional male role of late-Victorian society and enters into the world of children through his extreme behavior. Just as his attempt to prove himself to Michael with the medicine reduced him to nothing more than a school bully, his comic attempt at repentance has only reduced him to a clown amongst the children of London. He begins to lose sight of the meaning in his charade, stating that “[they] should not be such celebrities if the children hadn't flown away” (147). Two conflicting emotions rage within Mr. Darling. He does miss his children and mourns their loss, yet the glimmer of admiration is extremely tempting. He must remind himself in his assurances to his wife that his time in the kennel is meant to be a time of suffering, not a chance to gain recognition.

Mr. Darling never truly redeems his position as an adult within the play, despite his toting around of the kennel as penance for his parental failure. His temper is improved through his new position as a London celebrity and he is able to express his happiness at the return of Wendy and her brothers. However, Mr. Darling is never able

to provide the level of care to his children that they deserve. Rather than distinguishing himself from them as an adult from children, acting objectively as their caretaker, Mr. Darling acts subjectively, becoming another child and competing for the attention of the only adult in the play: Mrs. Darling. It is Mrs. Darling who keeps the window open so that her children will always know that they are wanted. It is also Mrs. Darling who keeps Wendy from flying back to Peter upon her return home. Though restricted to the domestic sphere, Mrs. Darling is the true hero within the play, completely fulfilling her social role both outwardly as well as inwardly.

Peter Pan: The Eternal Youth

Peter Pan is the ghost of childhood which haunts the lives of those who must grow up. Adults generally cannot see him and if they can he is an indistinct figure. Children can see him as well as interact with him, yet as they grow he becomes more and more distant. The first depiction of Peter Pan given within the play is, however, not that of a ghost but of an intruder. He lurks at the window, attempting to gain entrance to nursery, yet is foiled by the women who guard it. However, once the parents leave the house to attend a dinner party, Peter enters the nursery through the window which is "blown open, probably by the smallest and therefore most mischievous star" (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 26). Before Peter even utters a word, the audience has already been cautioned against trusting this strange young boy. With an air of mystery and mischief surrounding the boy, it is suggested that though he may not be a dangerous figure himself, the adventures which surround Peter are perhaps something which respectable people should take pains to avoid.

Peter does not enter the nursery with plans to lead the Darling children away. In truth, he is initially very cautious about waking them. What Peter has come back to the Darling household to retrieve is his shadow, which he lost during a previous encounter with Nana. However, being “dreadfully ignorant” (29), upon finding his shadow Peter is unable to get it to reattach to his body. He quickly forgets his attempts to not wake the children and begins to cry. Wendy, hearing Peter, utters what is perhaps her most memorable line within the play: “Boy, why are you crying?” (27). With these words, Wendy begins her relationship with Peter.

Ironically mirroring the ceremonies of adult society, Peter “bows to her in the fairy way” (28), impressing Wendy with this very formal gesture to begin their introductions. However, having spent little time in Victorian English society, Peter knows little about how to proceed and must be guided by Wendy through the rest of the procedure. Though Wendy is polite in her treatment of Peter, their interaction calls attention to the ways in which Peter is different from other children of the age. His name “lamentably brief” (28), his address “funny”, and his lack of a mother as something that borders on the edge of tragedy. Wendy, whose mother represents the social ideal, is horrified by Peter's lack of a maternal figure and “leaps out of bed to put her arms round him” (28). This gesture, meant to offer Peter the small portion of maternal comfort and support that Wendy can give, has a curious effect. Rather than Peter accepting the embrace, he instinctively “draws back; he does not know why, but he knows me must” (28-29). He then warns Wendy that “[she] mustn't touch [him]. No one must ever touch [him]” (29). Barrie adds emphasis to Peter's statement in his next stage direction, saying that “[Peter] is never touched by any one in the play” (29), with

the one exception of the fairies. For reasons left unexplained, though it is perhaps due to their role as Peter's caretakers when he was an infant, they are the only beings that may touch him.

This physical alienation of Peter from the rest of the characters is an element which is not pursued within Barrie's novel, nor is it included within the more modern adaptations of Barrie's story. In fact it is completely removed. As Barrie expands upon the psychology of Peter within his novel, the need for physical separation becomes less necessary. Indeed, at times the physical interaction between Peter and other characters, particularly Wendy, adds a level of depth to Peter's resistance towards growing up, making him a much more complicated figure. However, as this earlier version of the story, Barrie creates this the complication of Peter's character through his physical removal from intimacy. This isolation hinders Peter from experiencing any amount of physical affection, which is often the form of attention that children desire most, especially from a mother. It is only through violence which Peter can be touched, by being nicked with the blade of a sword or slashed at with the claw of Captain Hook. Peter's own nature forces him into a world of his own creation, which is the world of boys. The nursery window becomes a symbol of Peter's inability to experience the physical love of a mother. Just as the window keeps him from entering the domestic sphere, his instincts keep him from the embrace of a woman. Because he has never been touched by the loving hands of a maternal figure Peter “cannot understand what all the...fuss is about” (152). He understands what it is to play and to fight, but he does cannot comprehend what it is to love. The feminine touch is therefore dangerous to Peter, for “it has something to do with the riddle of his being” (159). If he were to fully

experience every facet of childhood, then he would no longer be able to remain the legendary Peter Pan. He would have to grow up.

Though Peter lives in a world that is full of excitement and adventure, it is a world without balance. Mirroring Mr. Darling's London, Neverland is a world that is essentially created for the enjoyment and pursuits of males. There is no domestic sphere within Neverland, which is why Peter needs Wendy to create fill the domestic void within his world. Though he cannot receive physical attention from Wendy, he can receive her recognition and admiration. Not only does he receive this attention from Wendy, his pseudo-mother figure, but he can also receive it from his peers who view him as their leader. Every aspect of Neverland attempts to cater to Peter's emotional needs, however the only aspect which truly satisfies him is Wendy's presence.

Though they often play at mother and father, Peter identifies as Wendy's son, for she is the only mother that he has ever known. He half-heartedly pretends to be indifferent to these feelings, however Peter gives himself away during the final act of the play. As the children are making their way home, Peter arrives at the Darling residence first and attempts to bar the window to the nursery. He succeeds and proceeds to gloat at the unwitting Mrs. Darling. He informs her that “[she] will never see Wendy again...for the window is barred” (149). He is aware that “[Mrs. Darling] is awfully fond of Wendy...[but] [he] is found of her too. [They] can't both have her...” (149). Peter, like most children, does not have a fully developed sense of social responsibility and therefore has a tendency towards selfishness. However, despite this glaring flaw, he is a noble figure. “A funny feeling comes over him” (149) and he opens the window again, allowing his former comrades to return to the Darling household and reenter

society. This “funny feeling” relates to Peter's own loss of his family and his secret appreciation and need for the family unit. Peter may say that he had no need for mothers or responsibility, yet he spends the entirety of the play creating a family in Neverland with the help of Wendy.

Peter does not allow himself to become reabsorbed into society, because he believes that he does not want to. He sneers at Mrs. Darling's attempt to adopt him and rejects all of the requirements which would lead him into adulthood. He vows that “[he] [doesn't] want to go to school and learn solemn things. No one is going to catch [him]...and make [him] a man” (155). Peter then restates the line that has become his mantra: “I want always to be a little boy and to have fun” (155). Peter's venomous rejection of Mrs. Darling seems to confirm Peter's wish. However, in the stage direction just following Peter's statement says that “so perhaps he thinks, but it is only his greatest pretend” (155). This line reveals that Peter's world of pretend has been created in order to shield him from his true desire to grow up. Peter has created this protective world of make-believe in order to forget the life that he had before he flew away to Neverland. Peter was once a boy, like any other boy, but he was scared to grow up.

Long before Peter met Wendy something happened in Peter's life which made him reject the idea that he ever wanted to be a part of a family. After Peter ran away from home to avoid growing up, he “stayed away for moons and moons, and then [he] flew back, but the window was barred” (108). He, like Wendy had thought that his mother would always leave the window open for him, eagerly awaiting his return. However, Peter found that “[his] mother had forgotten all about [him] and there was another little boy sleeping in [his] bed” (108). He had stayed away too long and lives of

his parents progressed without him. This is why Peter forces himself to pretend and allows himself to forget. Peter carries with him a memory that is more painful than those of many other children. Peter was rejected by his parents. He was not allowed to reenter society and therefore has established his own world which exists outside of it. In order to forget the rejection he simply pretends that it is he who has rejected growing up, not that he was denied the option to do so. If he were to allow himself to be vulnerable to the family unit, especially the love of a mother, “his cry might become 'To live would be an awfully big adventure!' but he can never quite get the hang of it, and so no one is as gay as he” (159-60). Because Peter cannot grow up he cannot truly live life. His immortality as a child causes him to exist in stagnation, in which he experiences no growth and receives no love. Adulthood, though it does not allow for the same type of gaiety as perceptual childhood, it also makes room for true meaning in life.

Captain Hook: The Genteel Pirate

It is with the promise of encountering pirates that Peter finally lures the children out of their nursery and off to Neverland. Barrie introduces a fierce band of pirates which occupy Neverland, but the “cruelest jewel in that dark setting is HOOK himself” (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 51). Captain James Hook is the leader of the pirates of Neverland, being portrayed in every way that he is the fiercest man to have set sail under the black flag of piracy. However, Hook is also presented as a man of gentility, possessing “elegance of...diction, [and] the distinction of his demeanour, show him one of a different class form his crew, a solitary among uncultured companions” (52). This separation of Hook from his crew even extends to his costume, due to an instance in which he “[had] heard...in an earlier period of his career that he bore a strange

resemblance to the ill-fated Stuarts” (52). Hook is continuously given the markings of gentility, yet is ultimately a pirate. How he became a pirate is not known, nor is how he came to Neverland. One aspect of Hook's life is known however, and that is that he is the sworn enemy of Peter Pan.

Barrie manipulates the language of his play to link the characters of Peter Pan and Hook together. When Peter is first describing his life in Neverland to Wendy he refers to himself as the “captain” of the Lost Boys. These mirroring aspects of both figures continues as the play progresses. Peter's attitude amongst the Lost Boys is lofty, much like that of Captain Hook, creating an inability to relate to their immediate companions. Each figure also has a special softness for Wendy, Peter in his attention to her and Hook for his politeness to her, yet it is to achieve the same end. Both characters desire to keep Wendy in Neverland to act as their mother. Even the musical tastes of Peter and Hook are the same, both characters play a version of the flute: Peter his pipes and Hook is described as “no mean performer on the flute” (117). The final, and possibly most telling, parallel between Peter Pan and Captain Hook is given after Hook's death. Two stage directions are given after Hook's death, the first is the actual stage direction and the second is a speculative situation. Barrie says that “the curtain rises to show PETER a very Napoleon on his ship. It must not rise again lest we see him on the poop in HOOK'S hat and cigars, and with a small iron claw” (143). The idea that Hook is the future of Peter Pan is a shocking one, given that they are mortal enemies, yet Peter carries within him all of the potential to turn to darkness as Hook. Both are social outcasts, but deeper than that both are incredibly lonely. The only way in which Peter escapes is because he lacks the bitterness of Hook, because of his innocent nature

as a child. The only sliver of bitterness within Peter's life is the anger which he harbors towards mothers created by the rejection he received from his own. However, in order to protect himself from this anger, Peter simply imagines that a life of eternal boyhood is preferable to that of an adult.

Hook not only serves as a mirror image of Peter, but also of Mr. Darling. Traditionally, beginning with the first production of the play in 1904, the roles of Mr. Darling and Captain Hook are played by the same actor, the first being Mr. Gerald du Maurier. Hook, like Mr. Darling, attended a public school in his boyhood. However, Hook did not attend just any school, but one of the most prominent in all of England, Eton College. Barrie discloses this element of Hook's past in his dying words, "'Floreat Etona'" (143) or "let Eton flourish" the school's motto. This alma mater lends Hook a level of distinction which Mr. Darling seems never to obtain. Both men represent the product of a Victorian upbringing for boys: Mr. Darling the successful, if not remarkable, family man and Hook the former member of the elite who obtained fame, but not respectability.

Eton, though "one of the most aristocratic schools in England" (Lochhead 28), maintained all of the harsh qualities of all public schools within the Victorian period. A former pupil of Eton College, Arthur Duke Coleridge, wrote in Eton in the Forties that "'[t]here is no exaggeration in saying that some of the best men I have ever known ran the risk of becoming the worst, from the ordeal of the Long Chamber" (28). The Long Chamber was a famous dormitory at Eton and "this 'rough barrack...on occasion became a torture-chamber'" (28). Hook seems to have been one of these individuals to which Coleridge alludes. Barrie assures his audience that "[Hook] is not wholly evil" (Barrie,

Peter Pan 117), yet he has certainly become sinister and cruel as he has grown into adulthood. Hook has somehow lost his desire to meet the social responsibilities which were instilled in him as a student at Eton, yet he maintains a feeling of fidelity towards the school. Mr. Darling, contrary to Hook, has received his education from what can only be assumed to be a less prominent school, yet has moved into the social realm of adult men within Victorian society and has gone on to produce the next generation. Hook has no responsibilities, social or familial, which require him to act selflessly. Mr. Darling, though he is often rather childish, does sacrifice his time and energy to provide for his family. He is employed as a clerk, a fairly thankless position, yet he returns to his job each day because it is his responsibility as a father and a husband.

Though Mr. Darling presents the adult contrast to Hook within the play, it is Peter Pan who acts as Hook's antagonist. Both Hook and Peter have made the conscious choice to live as social outcasts within the world of Neverland, yet one is old and the other is young. Hook discloses the fact that it was Peter who cut off his right hand, which he then fed to a hungry crocodile. This crocodile, a symbol of Hook's mortality, stalks him throughout the entirety of the play, a clock “[going] tick, tick, tick, tick inside him” (55). Hook is able to escape the jaws of the crocodile until the end of the play because of these warning ticks. However, just as Peter allowed the symbol of Hook's death to enter his life, it is the final confrontation between Hook and Peter which brings Hook's life to a close.

Hook does not represent the traditional role of the adult male as Mr. Darling does, nor does his non-traditional behavior set him apart as a model male figure. He is a pirate, a traitor, and a villain who obtains his sense of importance by accosting those he

views as inferior. In many ways, Hook has never left Eton. He is still playing the part of a bully, attacking the younger boys to improve his reputation among his peers. Hook's childishness represents the cruelty of childhood. He is the dark potential in children to do harm to others. However, Hook is no longer a child, but a man, and is therefore more detestable. The disgust one feels for Hook stems from his lack of initiative to move beyond his own selfish desires. Like Peter, rather than facing adulthood he simply ran away. However, though he attempted to run away from adulthood, Hook is not able to escape death. The thought of his mortality haunts him, just as the crocodile haunts him. In contrast, Peter can die, but mortality does not bother him. Indeed, his is only vaguely aware of his mortality. Peter believes that "'[t]o die would be an awfully big adventure!'" (91), a new beginning rather than the end. Upon facing death "a drum [beats] in his breast as if he were a real boy at last" (91). Peter is very nearly freed from the gilded cage of his existence by death, however at the last moment he is saved. Hook has already experienced real boyhood and has progressed into adulthood, and he must complete his experience through death. As he dives into the mouth of the crocodile, "[he] knows the purpose of this yawning cavity, but after what he has gone through he enters it like one greeting a friend" (143). Hook, ultimately, is also freed by death because he is finally able to release the regrets of his life. Mr. Darling, though a greatly flawed man, does not regret his choice to become a husband or a father. These are aspects of his life which give him meaning and purpose. Hook's life has no meaning or purpose, except to his revenge on Peter. However, once he realizes that death does not frighten Peter, his attempts to kill him are utterly pointless. Hook's life immediately becomes meaningless, and so he throws himself into the mouth of the waiting crocodile.

Wendy: The Little Mother

From her introduction to her exit, Wendy Darling is the representation of future generations of mothers. Having an exemplary mother herself, who provides her with the "[model] of feminine behaviour" (Dyhouse 3), Wendy is quickly set up as the perfect mother for Peter. She is herself a child and therefore obviously an imagined mother, yet while maintaining her own youthful innocence she attempts to fulfill all of the expectations of a Victorian mother for Peter and the Lost Boys. Wendy is also a story teller, which is crucial for Peter and ultimately the reason why he desires to take her away to Neverland. Peter derives his own sense of meaning from stories about himself. Wendy is able to provide those stories. In this way, just as Mrs. Darling pacifies Mr. Darling and provides him with a sense of importance, Wendy is able to provide Peter with admiration.

Though Peter's feelings for Wendy are "those of a devoted son" (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 103), Wendy desires more. From the moment she attempts to give Peter a kiss it becomes obvious that Wendy would much rather Peter play the role of a husband than that of a son, yet what she does not realize is that Peter does not understand any other intimacy between a man and a woman. In Peter's mind, men are fathers and women are mothers. The concept of husband and wife eludes him. However, Peter does recognize that there is an element of male and female relationships of which he is ignorant. The girls in his life "are so puzzling...there is something or other [they] [want] to be to [Peter], but...it is not [his] mother" (104). Peter is able to recognize that there is another possible role for him to play and he desires to know what exactly it is. Sadly, propriety

on the part of Wendy hinders him from ever discovering his potential as a husband because “it isn't for a lady to tell” (104).

Gradually, the realization that Peter will never grow up dawns on Wendy. She begins to understand that her game of mother and father with Peter truly is just make-believe and slowly she begins to let Peter go. As Wendy distances herself from Peter she begins to grow up, as children do. The following year, when she returns to Neverland to do Peter's spring cleaning, Wendy has obviously grown and no longer fits in the surroundings of Neverland as she once did. She cannot even see Peter as distinctly as the year before. Before leaving, Wendy has one final confrontation with her feelings for Peter. One part of her wishes to remain the special girl in his life, yet is afraid that “another little girl...one younger than [her]” (159) may come to take her place. She also feels the desire to embrace Peter, just as a mother would embrace a child. Of course, Peter does not allow this to happen, and Wendy returns home where she will continue to grow up and distance herself from Neverland and Peter Pan. Her romantic and maternal potential will grow and blossom as she mature, and eventually it will not be Wendy that is replaced, but Peter.

Chapter 2: *Peter Pan and Wendy* by J.M. Barrie

Barrie's Novel

In 1911, seven years after the first production of his play, Peter Pan, Barrie completed and published his novel Peter Pan and Wendy. In the novel, Barrie retells the story of Peter Pan and his adventures with the Darling children in Neverland. However, within the novel Barrie is fully able to explore what, at the time, was an unconscious message within the story. Peter Pan, both the play and the novel, are not simply stories about the adventures of an eternal youth. In 1922, Barrie reflects on his work and for the first time pinpoints the message which lies at the heart of his beloved story. Within one of his notebooks, Barrie writes, "'It is as if long after writing 'P.Pan' its true meaning came to me –Desperate attempt to grow up but can't'" (Tatar 12). Many assumptions have been made as to whether the story of Peter Pan was a reflection upon Barrie's own life, or even the tragic life of his older brother David. However, what is clear is that regardless of Barrie's inspiration for his protagonist, the boy who wanted to remain a child forever is actually a prisoner trapped within his own youth.

Barrie greatly utilizes the character of Wendy to track the natural progression from childhood into adulthood. Just as in his play, the character of Wendy is her Victorian mother's miniature, the perfect specimen of a future wife and mother. As the reader is drawn into Wendy's childhood, long before she meets Peter Pan, she is shown in her family's garden as a girl of two. After an interaction with her mother, Wendy becomes aware that "she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end" (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 1). By establishing a definite time at which the transformation from childhood to adulthood begins, Barrie creates a shared

experience between the characters in his novel and his readers. Since “all children, except one, grow up” (1), the trials of Wendy become the trials of every individual, except of course, Peter Pan.

Along with drawing the audience's awareness to the increasingly evident conflicts between childhood and adulthood, Barrie also presents a greater divide within childhood itself, displaying the great disparity between Peter Pan and all other children within the novel. This suggests that Peter is not an ideal child, but an anomaly of childhood. Barrie's narrator states within the first chapter of the novel that all children become aware of their destiny to grow up at an early age. Peter, who directly challenges this universal truth, suddenly becomes an unrelatable figure and therefore alienates himself from the reader. However, to compensate for this separation between Peter and the reader, Barrie adds more complex psychological elements to his narrative, truly making Peter into a tragic hero, rather than a carefree fairy-child. Gradually, the truth of Peter's reality is revealed to be the average individual's nightmare. Childhood, even within the novel, is certainly often portrayed as a unique time of life during which magic is almost real and responsibilities exist far beyond the horizon. However, once people reach the age of two, “when the child suddenly becomes knowing” (Tatar 13), the confines of childhood become evident and eventually they begin to feel too restricting, too limiting.

Mr. Darling: Barrie's Apologia to Fathers

Within Barrie's works, the figure of Mr. Darling is portrayed in quite different ways. Barrie's stage directions offer an apology of sorts for Mr. Darling's poor behavior within the nursery. The reader of the play's stage directions is assured that this blustery,

self-conscious individual is actually a good man and a decent father. The audience had simply come upon him at an inopportune moment. As if to make amends for his rather poor portrayal of the father figure within Peter Pan, Barrie's novel provides not only a more sympathetic character, but also a man with a personal history. Mr. Darling's various merits are displayed before his faults, and when the faults are mentioned, Barrie's narrator takes time to explain the emotional condition of Mr. Darling before exposing him.

Peter Pan has a tendency to lean towards a comedy. Barrie expressly states within his stage directions at the beginning of the first act that “all the characters, whether grown-ups or babes, must wear a child's outlook on life as their only important adornment. If they cannot help being funny they are begged to go away. A good motto for all would be 'The little less, and how much it is'” (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 6). Children often take themselves very seriously, not always noting their own comic nature. In the novel, Barrie is able to avoid to some extent the natural comedy which appears within the plot, especially concerning Mr. Darling and later Captain Hook. He relies on character history and their psychology to mediate the occasionally ridiculous behavior of the characters.

Mr. Darling is presented not only as a sympathetic individual, but also a fairly clever individual. He secured the hand of Mrs. Darling by “[taking] a cab and [nipping] in first” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 2). He is also presented as a careful father. As in the play, Mr. Darling must calculate whether or not they are able to keep their children, due to the expenses. However, Barrie states that “Mr. Darling was frightfully proud of [Wendy], but he was very honourable” (2). He loved his daughter and was very proud of

his first born, but he would not allow her to starve just for the sake of his own pride. In order to keep all three of his children, Mr. Darling makes sacrifices within his own life to secure economic stability for his family.

Though Mr. Darling, as well as his wife, make sacrifices for the benefit of their children, both adults are also subject to the social expectations of Victorian social conventions. For example, “Mrs. Darling loved to have everything just so, and Mr. Darling had a passion for being exactly like his neighbours” (4). These desires to conform to society's expectations of the family on the part of the parents lead to the employment of Nana as a nurse for their children. However, as depicted in the play, the employment of a dog to do the work of a woman is a bit unorthodox and causes Mr. Darling in particular some anxiety. Though “no nursery could possibly have been conducted more correctly, and Mr. Darling knew it...he sometimes wondered uneasily whether the neighbours talked” (5). This anxiety about the opinions of an immediate social group is not mentioned within the play. The primary concern about the employment of Nana is that she perhaps views the children as puppies rather than human children.

The opinions of the neighbors and Nana's view of the children aside, the most important point of discord between Mr. Darling and the faithful nurse concerns Mr. Darling himself. Though a softer, more amiable character with the novel, Mr. Darling is still a prideful, though self-conscious man at the opening of the story. He believes himself to be an important figure within his family and a person of social merit within the male realm of Victorian England. He “has his position in the city to consider” (5) when he makes decisions for his family, and he desires respect for that position. Despite

his position and his sacrifices he “sometimes [had] a feeling that [Nana] did not admire him” (5), viewing herself as a more crucial figure to the family unit. This thought is, of course, contradicted by Mrs. Darling, assuring him that he is not only admired by Nana, but also by the entire family.

Admiration and position are of great importance to Mr. Darling in both Barrie's play, and as his novel. At times these two aspects of his life overshadow Mr. Darling's natural sense of propriety. This shift of focus from social expectations to selfish desires causes Mr. Darling to forget his position as the bread-winner and protector instead causing him to act in a selfish, childish way. Because he is an adult and has certain responsibilities and expectations in regard to his person, one's opinion of Mr. Darling is lowered by his deviation from his social role. As in the play, Mr. Darling enters into a competition of sorts with his youngest son Michael in an attempt to make Michael take his evening medicine. His poorly conceived joke and cowardice, as in the play, leads to the disapproval of the children. He “was frightfully ashamed of himself, but he would not give in” (20), allowing the joke to run its course. This sense of shame is only deepened once Nana is forcibly removed from the nursery in Mr. Darling's final attempt to reassert himself as the master of the house. Knowing his behavior is irrational and unworthy of him, Mr. Darling is “ashamed of himself, and yet he did it. It was all owing to his too affectionate nature, which craved for admiration. When he had tied her up in the backyard, the wretched father went and sat in the passage, with his knuckles to his eyes” (21). This is a scene of regret and sorrow is absent from the play. Barrie notes in the stage direction after the removal of Nana that he hopes that “[Mr. Darling]...retires to his study, looks up the word 'temper' in his Thesaurus , and under the influence of

those benign pages become a better man" (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 24). These contradicting reactions to the same situation establish two very different pictures of Mr. Darling's character. The play, portraying a man who is devoid of empathy and a conscience, suggests that Mr. Darling is not more than an overgrown child. The novel, which describes a much more caring and compassionate individual allows Mr. Darling to retain some of his adult qualities. Though he acts selfishly in an attempt to retain the admiration of his family, it is not their loss of respect for him which causes him to weep in the hall, but the knowledge that his has acted in a way that was beneath him. He is a husband and a father, not a school bully. He has forgotten himself, and it is this fact that evokes an emotional reaction.

Just as Barrie gives greater insight into the actions of Mr. Darling at the beginning of the Peter Pan and Wendy, he also adds more clarity to Mr. Darling's behavior at the end of the novel. In the play's stage directions, the reasoning behind Mr. Darling's choice to inhabit the kennel during his children's absence is only briefly explained. He must do something extreme in order to display his regret or he will quickly lose interest in the endeavor. Within the novel this facet of Mr. Darling's character is explained as well, but the reader is allowed a deeper sense of Mr. Darling's guilt as a father. He has failed his children through his own childish outburst, and the disgraceful nature of the situation is made greater by Mr. Darling's knowledge of his misconduct during the act. Because of this, "Mr. Darling felt in his bones that all the blame was his for having chained Nana up" (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 171). As a father, it is Mr. Darling's responsibility to not only provide a respectable upbringing for his children, but also to protect them from danger. When he sacrifices the safety of his

children to protect his own ego, Mr. Darling forsakes his position as a father. He also fails his wife, who must abide by Mr. Darling's choices in order to maintain her own social position. She does not agree with the removal of Nana, but in order to maintain the supportive and ideal wife, she must do as her husband demands. This choice compromises Mrs. Darling's position because not only is she forced to act against her better judgement, but she also loses her children, her primary joy and responsibility in life.

Aware of his own failure, Mr. Darling proceeds to carry around Nana's kennel as a sign of penance. Again, the extreme nature of this self-mortification falls into the realm of comedy, but Barrie explains the nature of Mr. Darling's character, saying that “he was quite a simple man; indeed he might have passed for a boy again if he had been able to take his baldness off; but he had also a noble sense of justice and a lion courage to do what seemed right to him” (170). The simplicity of a child's atonement is matched with a gentleman's resolve in Mr. Darling. Though he is childlike in many ways, especially when he loses his temper, Mr. Darling desires at his core to be a Victorian gentleman. He hopes to uphold the sense of honor and decorum which is expected of a man in his position, acting as a model for his children so that they may in turn be productive and honorable members of society.

The Victorian social structure created many distinctions between the masculine and the feminine. Mr. Darling, in his attempt to stay rigidly within the masculine stereotype, often resorts to a childlike behavior in order to express his emotions. This portrayal of the child forever living within the body of a grown man is the definition of Mr. Darling. However, despite this aspect of his personality, the purpose of his life is

not to be, in a sense, the favored child of his wife, but a father. Mr. Darling, with a little persuasion, agrees that the family can manage the expenses of adopting the Lost Boys upon their return from Neverland, expanding his family from five to eleven. He not only agrees, but is extremely happy about these six new sons and “went off dancing through the house” (179) to find places for his new sons to sleep.

Peter Pan: An Anomaly of Childhood

The eternal boy is increasingly distanced from the world of humanity within Barrie's novel. Just as Disney's later adaptation illustrated Peter Pan as physically more of a fairy than a boy, Barrie's narrator emphasizes Peter's ability to pretend to the point that one might consider him a magical being. As a child that is surrounded by fairies, a magical island, and characters from a story book, Peter can no longer relate to being a normal little boy. He is so distance from his origins within Victorian society that the everyday life of George and Michael becomes the subject of a game. Barrie's narrator states that this game of ordinary life was “for several suns...the most novel of all adventures to him” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 82), though naturally to boys like John and Michael these games were horribly dull. However, the true difference between Peter and the other children is not his ability to transform make-believe into reality, nor is it his closeness with magical creatures such as fairies. Barrie's narrator says that it is Peter's unique way to cope with the unfair situations in life. The everyday injustices are a familiar part of life for an adult. A part of the adult experience is learning to cope with these situations. Barrie's narrator relates unfairness to growing up, not only in that it is a very real aspect of adult life, but even in his language when discussing the disparity between Peter and other children. The narrator explains this self-awareness amidst an

unfair world by saying that “after you have been unfair to [a] [child] [they] will love you again, but will never afterwards be quite the same...no one ever gets over the first unfairness; no one except Peter” and “that was the real difference between him and all the rest” (98). Coping with the unfair aspects of life is a part of becoming an adult, yet Peter, though often experiencing unfair situations, has never been able to internalize the effects. This inability to grow and adapt impedes Peter's maturing process, forcing him to remain a static character trapped in childhood.

Though Peter cannot relate fully to other children, his character expresses the fundamental needs of all children, not only the need to play and to imagine, but also to experience the love of a family, particularly that of a mother. He brings Wendy to Neverland to act as “just a nice motherly person” (75) to satisfy the needs of himself as well as the other Lost Boys. The knowledge that Wendy is not his real mother creates a parallel situation to the experiences of Mr. and Mrs. Darling. Mr. Darling, who seeks the attention of his wife, understands that he is not truly her son, but her husband, yet he still resorts to the behavior of a child in order to secure her attentions. He plays on her maternal instincts to gratify his need for recognition. Peter's need for admiration does not stem from his desire for admiration, but his fear of being forgotten. Having been barred from his own home after his initial flight, Peter spurns his mother and flies away to Neverland to create his own family, collecting the Lost Boys and eventually even searching for the one thing he is said to despise: a mother. It is only once a maternal figure is found that his society in Neverland will be complete.

The lure of Neverland is that of endless adventure and the trap is that one might lose track of time. Children, as Barrie's narrator says, “are the most heartless things in

the world...but so attractive; and we have an entirely selfish time, and then when we have need of special attention we nobly return for it, confident that we shall be embraced instead of smacked" (119). As Maria Tatar observes in her annotation, the narrator uses the first person plural in this section to identify with children themselves, but also to create shared identity between all children and the reader. The self-serving nature of children, which is in part related to their uncertain position within society as well as their general lack of responsibility, is considered their primary defect. Ironically Peter, who has the least amount of experience with parental figures who might offer this "special attention" seems to understand these repercussions of childhood best. It is because of his own "selfish time" that he was forgotten by his mother and replaced by another child after not returning home for "moons and moons and moons" (119). As an effect of this experience, Peter's memory is compromised. He becomes forgetful, creating a protective shield against life's disappointments. Because of this aspect of his personality, Peter is unable to build lasting relationships; however, he is also spared the fate of becoming bitter.

Captain Hook: The Symbol of Mortality

The character of Captain James Hook is first introduced in Barrie's play as "one of a different class from his crew, a solitary among uncultured companions" (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 53). However, within Peter Pan and Wendy, the division between the captain and his crew is described with a marked loneliness which surpasses a solitary demeanor. The narrator in the novel often refers to Hook's crew as dogs, alternately cowering and nipping at the man who looms so greatly over them all. Because he does not consider them his equals, they are both inferior in rank and in class, Hook does not seek

admiration and recognition from his fellow man like Mr. Darling, or even Peter. Hook becomes the ultimate outsider, belonging neither in the society which he rejected nor in the community which he has helped to create. As a solitary man, “it [is] not [the crew's] belief in him that he [needs], it [is] his own” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 95). At one point, while on Marooner's Rock, Hook's ego is challenged by Peter, who is surreptitiously mimicking Hook's voice, calling him a “codfish” as part of his game. Hook's ego, bolstered by his sense of “good form” is “slipping from him” (95) as Peter continues his jeering. Not only does Hook begin to doubt himself, but he also begins to lose the faith of his crew. In an attempt to steady himself, knowing that it is only his opinion of himself that matters, Hook speaks directly to his ego: “'Don't desert me, bully,' he whispered hoarsely to it” (95).

The origin of this “good form” which dominates the life of Hook can be traced back to his time spent at Eton College. The obsession with “good form,” or the compliance with social conventions, was a standard at Eton, believing more in “'good form rather than good manners'” (Lochhead 207). The narrator attests to the fact that Hook possesses good manners, yet what of “good form”? In the chapter entitled “The Pirate Ship,” Hook struggles with this very concept, attempting to discover the true definition of “good form” because, “However much he may have degenerated, he still knew that [good form] is all that really matters” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 146). Hook is haunted by his own choice to abandon English society for a life of piracy, and in order to atone for this misstep, Hook clings to the only element of his former society that he believes to still be obtainable: “good form.”

The ticking of the clock inside the crocodile within Barrie's play and novel is a symbol of Hook's mortality. However, within the novel the clock runs down as Peter flies towards the Jolly Roger for his final confrontation with Hook, foreshadowing Hook's imminent death. Peter “at first thought this eerie” (153), but giving his thoughts over to logic he decides to use the loss of the crocodile's ticking to his own advantage. In order to pass quickly through the forest, just as he earlier imitated Hook, Peter now imitates the crocodile. However, Peter's ticking had “one unforeseen result. The crocodile...heard the sound, and it followed him, though whether with the purpose of regaining what it had lost, or merely as a friend under the belief that it was again ticking itself, will never be certainly known, for like all slaves to a fixed idea, it was a stupid beast” (154). This passage, which refers to the compulsive behavior of the crocodile is closely linked with the behavior of Hook himself. Hook, like the crocodile, hears a methodical “tap-tap” of his school calling to him, reminding him of his Etonian duty to “good form” at all times. Hook, unable to fully embody “good form” himself, remains obsessed with the idea becoming a “[slave] to a fixed idea...a stupid beast” (154), following the “tap-tap” of Eton throughout his life.

Wendy: Transformed in Neverland

Wendy Darling remains constant throughout the works of Barrie. She is not only a little girl who dreams of exploring the island of Neverland, but she is also a hero. She flies to Neverland to take up the position of mother to a group of orphans, showering them with all of the affection and attention which her mother has bestowed upon her. Each boy is a tragedy whose motherless condition breaks the noble heart of Wendy.

It is ironic that through her experiences in Neverland Wendy becomes better trained to become an adult than to remain a child. As in all children's games which concern themselves with playing “house,” the children are mimicking their future roles as adults with parental responsibilities as well as social expectations. With the absence of her own mother from Neverland, Wendy is given the opportunity for the first time to act on her own, utilizing the skills which she has observed in her mother and putting them into practice with her own “children.” However, Wendy is still a child and because of this aspect, she is able to comfort Peter in a way that no adult ever can. An adult's inability to comfort Peter extends even to an adult Wendy who “[does] not know how to comfort him, though she could have done it so easily once. She [is] only a woman now” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 189). Peter, who has been replaced by a mother once experiences this sense of loss for the second time as he looks at Wendy's daughter lying in the bed. Peter has been replaced for a second time and Wendy can no longer see to his needs. He has become a foreign child to her just as she has become “only a woman” (189) to him.

Time marches steadily on for everyone except for Peter Pan. Individuals such as Wendy and her brothers must grow up and therefore they must make decisions which have effects. Peter, who will not grow up, makes no decisions which alter is life. He remains the same always and therefore is left behind. Wendy could not help breaking her promise to Peter not to grow up. In truth, Peter assisted her in breaking this promise because he did not return to her. However, unlike Peter's own mother, Wendy never forgot him, keeping him present in her stories, but she had to put the dream of him aside in order to live her life.

Chapter 3: Walt Disney Studio's *Peter Pan*

In 1953, Walt Disney Studio produced their own film adaptation of Barrie's Peter Pan. Walt Disney himself stated:

I don't believe that what James M. Barrie actually intended ever came out on the stage...It's almost a perfect vehicle for cartooning. In fact, one might think that Barrie wrote the play with cartoons in mind. I don't think he was ever happy with the stage version. Live actors are limited, but with cartoons we can give free rein to the imagination. (Tatar 325-26)

This transition from live action to a cartoon format did allow the story to transcend the physical limitations of live action of the time. No longer were individuals constrained to wire work and nor did fairies need to be portrayed by bells and a bit of light on the wall. Children could fly through the air with ease in a cartoon and Tinkerbell could finally have a face.

In order to make his dream a reality, Walt Disney began to negotiate with the Great Ormond Street Hospital for film rights to Barrie's Peter Pan in 1935. It was not until after the Second World War in 1953 that the film was actually produced. Disney's Peter Pan was the film that created a recognizable Disney style" (326). Many of the chief characters become stock Disney figures in both demeanor and physical appearance as Walt Disney Studios began producing more films and gaining more attention. Wendy is the respectable, curious female lead, Peter the mischievous and youthful rascal, Captain Hook a comic villain. These similarities between characters not only suggest a particular style of early Disney, but also signal to the audience what to expect from each of the characters. One is not disappointed in Peter's non-committal

and at times rude behavior towards Wendy, because one immediately draws a connection between the figure of Peter and the young and troublesome boys in Pinocchio. Wendy is an innocent young maiden like Alice or Snow White, who despite her situation always acts in a correct manner. One does not simply experience Peter Pan when the film is watched, but an entire history of Disney films.

Though the film generally follows the plot of Barrie's play, Disney did take artistic liberties in one rather significant way. Barrie, in both his play and his novel, suggests that the adventure of the Darling children is a particular moment in the life of Peter Pan. That is not to say that it is the greatest adventure that is had by Peter or the children for that matter, but simply that it is a unique experience. Disney, however, "emphasizes that Never Land exists only in the imagination" (329). The film begins with a scene of London Bridge and a disembodied narrator stating that "all this has happened before, and it will all happen again, but this time it happened in London" (Disney, *Peter Pan*). Suddenly, rather than this being a unique situation, it becomes a universal experience. It is suggested that all children will experience the adventure with Peter Pan in Neverland, just as Wendy and her brothers do. This point is reinforced at the end of the film, when the parents return that same evening and find the children exactly how they left them, with the exception of Wendy who is sleeping by the window. There is no remorse, no loss, and no movement. It is as if nothing happened at all. Upon waking, Wendy begins to explain her adventures to her parents and shows them a symbol of Peter Pan in the night sky. Mr. and Mrs. Darling stand at the window with Wendy, looking up at a cloud formation of Hook's pirate ship and as Mr. Darling stares up at the sight and says nostalgically, "I have the strangest feeling that I've seen

that ship before. A long time ago, when I was very young" (Disney, *Peter Pan*). Suddenly the adventures of Peter Pan are no longer real, but a figment of Wendy's imagination. Just as Wendy and Mr. Darling have experienced the same adventure, with the help of Disney, all children can experience the story of Peter Pan. The story brought to life in film becomes a shared experience of childhood, internalizing the story of Peter Pan within all children regardless of time or place.

Mr. Darling: A "Practical Man"

George Darling plays a relatively minor role within the Disney film. Focusing primarily on the happenings in Neverland, the Darling household simply sets a stage for this particular instance of the Peter Pan story. Disney removes the childish exchange between Mr. Darling and Michael and the entire incident with Nana and the medicine. Mr. Darling, rather than being painted as an insecure child trapped in a man's body, simply becomes a rather boisterous man, who is too preoccupied with his preparations for a party to have much patience with his wife and children.

Though Mr. Darling still removes Nana from the nursery in a jealous rage, his actions are spurred not only by jealousy, but his nature as a "practical man." He sees that his eldest child Wendy is growing up and believes that she has outgrown the nursery as well as her need for a nursemaid. As Mr. Darling ties Nana out into the yard, he explains in rather an apologetic way that, the children are "not puppies. They're people and sooner or later...people have to grow up" (Disney, *Peter Pan*).

The pressure to grow up is a new element within the Peter Pan story. Though Barrie himself paid a great deal of attention to the transition from childhood to adulthood, Wendy being the primary normal child figure, is never explicitly told that

she must grow up. It is just a fact that she has always known. Mrs. Darling had begun teaching her the lessons of the social expectations of womanhood since infancy and though Wendy lived in the nursery with her brothers, she knew that her life would eventually mirror the life of her mother. However, in Disney's adaptation, not only is Wendy expressly told that she must grow up, but from the mouth of her practical father that she hears these words. During their confrontation, he states that it is her last night in the nursery, abruptly cutting her off from her childhood and forcing her into the world of adulthood with the dawn of the next day. Mr. Darling is no longer the symbol of an incomplete transition into manhood, but the powerful authority figure that desperately wanted to exist in Barrie's works, but lacked the confidence to do so. Mr. Darling's power carries so much weight that he can even demand a child to grow up and they will defy nature to do so.

As an American film which was produced nearly fifty years after Barrie's first production of his play, Disney's *Peter Pan* carries with it the feeling of an American family unit with the early 1950s. Both parents are fairly outspoken, yet it is ultimately the father's opinion which wins in the end, but not until the newly empowered post-WWII female expresses her opinions. Much of Barrie's stage directions and narrative was devoted to the inner workings of Mrs. Darling's mind, but very little dialogue actually given to her character. Since her position within the family unit was to support, the idea of her offering criticism or questioning the motives or actions of her husband would have been unthinkable, especially in the presence of the children. Disney's Mrs. Darling, though still a relatively mild character, does not shy away from making her displeasure with her husband known. When he is acting childish she treats him like a

child, yet also questions his behavior with her tone. Disney makes an attempt to adhere to the Victorian social traditions, yet the growing power and opinions of women cannot be hidden within the film, especially in the presence of self-absorbed characters such as Mr. Darling and Peter Pan.

Peter Pan: Creature of Neverland

The figure of Peter Pan in Disney's adaptation is perhaps the least relatable of all of the incarnations of the character. Disney's Peter is a creature that has no ties to the world of the Darling family. He has no idea of what a mother is, nor does he understand English society. Another interesting deviation from Barrie's original works is that Peter seems to be considered inseparable from Neverland. Not once throughout the entirety of the film is he ever confronted with the idea of returning to London to become a man. The thought does not seem to cross anyone's mind.

Not only is Peter's relationship with Victorian society changed, but physical appearance is altered as well. First, Disney has aged Peter, making him noticeably taller than the Lost Boys and appearing to be bordering on the ages of 13-15, rather than a child who still “[has] all of his first teeth” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 11). He also has pointed ears, like one might expect to see on a fairy as well as clothes are fairly-like, making him easier to identify with Tinkerbell than with Wendy.

Peter Pan is never confronted with Mrs. Darling, nor does he seem to remember his own origin story. Mothers are of no importance to him because he does not remember what one is. Since Peter does not feel the need for a person that he does not know exists, he instead wishes to take Wendy back to Neverland for the sake of her storytelling abilities, as well as to saver her from the fate of growing up if she remains

in London. He only decides to call her a mother because she seems to place a great deal of importance in the idea of a maternal figure. The nonchalant way in which Peter says “you can be our mother” (Disney, *Peter Pan*) as he pulls Wendy towards the window highlights his lack of care about mothers. Even the Lost Boys, who in the play discuss mothers in Peter's absence, are not familiar with the term mother. Suddenly, the idea that a mother is a crucial figure with a child's life is given very little notice. Disney focuses on the story of the adventures of Peter, just as Peter himself wishes to do.

There is a militaristic style to the behavior of the Lost Boys and Peter. When Wendy desires her brothers to also come to Neverland, Peter agrees but only under the condition that the boys can “take orders” (Disney, *Peter Pan*). As the boys adventure through Neverland, they are repeatedly moving in a military formation, whether it is standing at attention or marching in lines. Following the Second World War, the idea of the soldier replaced the father figure as the epitome of a masculine hero. The Allies had won the war and those victorious soldiers where heroes. In Disney's film, nearly every aspect of Peter's life in Neverland are presented through the familiar scope of war imagery, rather than typical domestic surroundings. Even the danger presented by Hook takes the form of a bomb rather than poisoned medicine.

Following the victory of such an influential war, it seems only natural that the protagonist Peter, though still a boy, would be modeled after a brave solider with a loyal band of followers. Peter is certainly a hero, often flying in from off-screen to save a damsel in distress and he literally commands the respect of all of the boys with the film. Disney's Peter is a semi-grown boy who has little need for the positive influence of a mother. He does not need coddling, nor is he in need of maternal care. Peter is a self-

sufficient individual who rules the island of Neverland. He is the hero of every story and is not haunted by his own abandonment. Neverland is his home and, as far as the audience can tell, it always has been.

Perhaps because of his lack of interest in mothers, Peter's behavior is also noticeably ruder to Wendy. He is not apologetic for his cockiness and he tells Wendy to "get on with it girl" (Disney, *Peter Pan*) when she offers to sew his shadow on for him. Though he does not have a background which alerts him to the social expectations of the different sexes within society, Peter seems to have a concept of "women's work" within his mind. Wendy shows a slight resistance to this, just as Disney's Mrs. Darling might, but ultimately she complies with Peter's demands. Throughout the film it is obvious that Wendy is at least partially romantically inclined towards Peter, but his behavior is so lofty, even to Wendy, that is seems impossible to even imagine a relationship between the two characters. Peter attempts to act the part of a hero and therefore helps Wendy and plays the part of her guide on the island, but he is not overly interested in her presence on the island. In fact the longer Wendy remains in Neverland, the more often she becomes the butt of Peter's jokes. When Wendy proposes that she and her brothers leave Neverland, mainly due to her decision that she will not contend for Peter's attention any longer, Peter tells them to leave, but warns them that they cannot return to Neverland once they grow up. Peter likes Wendy, but she is just a girl in his mind. It is Tinkerbell which is his true companion, the one that "[means] more to [him] that anything in the whole world" (Disney, *Peter Pan*). Disney's *Peter Pan* has no need for mothers and certainly no desire to grow up. He truly wishes to remain a boy and to have fun, so much so that he does not even need to say it.

Captain Hook: The Comic Villain

Just as Disney changed many of the other characters to comply with a less psychologically complex analysis of childhood and adulthood, the figure of Captain Hook is also altered to fit the stock character of a Disney villain, rather than attempting to portray a conflicted adult living in a child's world. Disney's Hook is a comic figure, and Disney makes no attempt to hide this fact. With Mr. Smee, Hook's boatswain, acting as his comedic partner, Disney does not presenting the sinister figure which Barrie described in his works. Instead, Hook is simply made to look the part of a ridiculous clown.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Barrie's Hook and Disney's Hook is that Disney's villain not only does not receive respect from Peter and the Lost Boys, but he has lost the respect of his crew. The first scene on the pirate ship, members of the crew are throwing knives at a crude drawing of their captain. There is also an air of discontent amongst the crew. Just as the Darling children lost respect and admiration for their father in Barrie's work when he did not fulfill the role of the father by nobly taking his medicine, Hook has lost the admiration of his crew because of his unpiratelike behavior. They wish to return to sea to pursue proper pirate endeavors, not remain on an island chasing a mischievous teenager.

Hook is also presented as a character which perhaps should not be respected. When Mr. Smee reminds him that it is not “good form” to “shoot a man in the middle of his cadenza” (Disney, *Peter Pan*). To this observation, Hook replies, screaming “Blast good form!” (Disney, *Peter Pan*). Hook is primarily concerned with exacting revenge on Peter for cutting off his hand and throwing it to the crocodile, not to uphold the

convictions of his former public school. Hook exhibits very little self-control, becoming irate at merely the mention of Peter's name. Throughout the film Hook attempts to keep his temper under control, but his rejection of his own good-breeding becomes evident with every scream and wail that issues from Hook's lips.

In the tradition begun in 1904, the characters of Hook and Mr. Darling are voiced by the same actor in Disney's *Peter Pan*. Though the characters only slightly resemble on another, the figure of Hook greatly resembles Barrie's depiction of Mr. Darling and, in turn, Mr. Smee becomes a sort of Mrs. Darling figure. This shift the traditional roles of Mr. and Mrs. Darling onto Disney's two primary villains creates an interesting picture of the husband and wife dynamic. Though not romantically involved with one another, Disney's Hook is a more comic and self-conscious character, whose goal in life is to seek revenge. He does not appreciate his hook as Barrie's villain does and only sees it as a symbol of the crocodile which hunts him. Mr. Smee must do everything in his power to pacify Hook's bursts of temper and low spirits. Also like Mrs. Darling, Mr. Smee attempts to maintain the crew's respect for their captain, just as Mrs. Darling plays the part of a supportive wife to inspire similar feelings of respect in her children.

The pirates in Disney's adaptation of *Peter Pan* are the most prevalent adults within the film, with Hook as their captain. However Hook, like Peter, deviates from Barrie's works because he too does not feel the need for a mother. He seems to think them respectable creatures, but these feelings do not stop him from having Wendy walk to plank.

There is a lack of psychological depth within Disney's characters. Peter lives to have adventures, Mr. Darling to be the ideal man, and Hook a comic villain completely fixated on revenge. These individuals, which in Barrie's works struggle to cope with the conflicting desires presented by both childhood and adulthood have in Disney's adaptation settled into their respective roles, deviating as necessary to fit their stock character rather than relying on any social conventions to dictate the actions of their characters, whether they are aspects of a Victorian society or post-WWII America.

Wendy: The Little Lady

In order to reflect the slow changes which were taking place within lives of America's women, Wendy is presented as an obedient, if not self-aware individual. Like a proper lady, she is still very aware of her future position within the household, yet desires to, for the time being, to have her domain restricted to the nursery and its carefree atmosphere. She has happy to play alongside her brothers, yet also act as their storyteller and the nursery help if need be.

The nursery continues to remain a symbol of youth and freedom within childhood in Disney's adaptation. However, for the first time there is an unnatural force which is attempting to push Wendy out of this domain. Though she has been physically aged by Disney to appear older, like Peter. However, Wendy still identifies as a child. Mentally, she is not yet prepared to grow up and the idea that she is being forced to do so against her will is extremely upsetting.

Upon her flight to Neverland, Wendy is ironically presented with a number of situations which gently nudge her in the direction of adulthood, given that Peter brought

her to Neverland to save her from such a fate. As in the works of Barrie, Wendy harbors affectionate feelings for Peter, yet not only does he not reciprocate her feelings, but Peter appears much more interested in the women of Neverland than in Wendy. He guides her through Neverland and saves her when the occasion calls for it, yet it is clear that he acts more from a sense of duty than from feelings of true affection. The final situation which pushes Wendy to grow up is the celebration in honor of Peter and the Indian's camp. As Wendy is attempting to join the Lost Boys in the dance, an Indian woman appears in front of her and promptly says, “Squaw, no dance. Squaw, get'um fire wood” (Disney, *Peter Pan*).

Though presented in a very racially derogatory way, the suggestion made by this grown native woman is that it is Wendy's place not to join in the fun, but to see to the needs of the men by gathering firewood to keep the fires stoked. Tiger Lily is the exception to this rule because she is royalty within the tribe. She dances, sings, and even potentially kisses Peter, taking all of the liberties as a woman with relatively few social obligations and expectations. Wendy does not appreciate this difference in treatment and promptly leaves, deciding to return home rather than to waste her time or her affections on Peter Pan any longer. Though if she returns to her own life she must grow up, at least she will experience a freedom and a sense of respect which she is not receiving in Neverland.

Though Wendy is still a very obedient individual, her passion and increasing demands for respect symbolize the shift in girls and women in the 1950s. Women, though they did not serve as soldiers in the war, did their part as civilians to support the men who were serving in the armed forces during the war. After the WWII ended, many

European economies continued to rely on women remaining in the workforce. Within American the situation was different, women were being called back into the home, yet not every woman was willing to give up her newfound freedom. Slowly ideas about women and their roles within society were changing and the proper, yet fiery personality of Disney's Wendy represents that gradual change

Chapter 4: Columbia/TriStar Pictures' *Hook*

“Years after Peter Pan had been performed at the Duke of York's Theatre in London, Barrie toyed with the idea of writing The Man Who Couldn't Grow up or The Old Age of Peter Pan” (Tatar 332), however, Barrie never wrote this extension of his original story. In 1991, the American director Steven Spielberg brought his own version of this aged Peter Pan story to life. The only work, literary or cinematic within this study that deals with an adult Peter Pan, *Hook* casts an interesting perspective on Barrie's protagonist. Peter, having chosen to grow up must face the responsibilities of adulthood. In addition to these new responsibilities, Peter must also allow himself to become vulnerable to the expectations of society, as well as those of his family. Set in the early 1990s, the adult Peter is expected to achieve a greater amount of social balance between the secular and domestic spheres.

As the end of the twentieth century neared its close, the world of Spielberg's *Hook* depicts a vastly different society from that of Barrie's Peter Pan. The strict Victorian values that dominated the plot of Barrie's play have all but vanished in Spielberg's modern American and English settings. Gender roles have become blurred, technology has altered the dynamics of the workplace, and an increased focus on the family unit have given both parents equal opportunity to be involved in the lives of their children.

Though it is unclear as to whether Moira Banning, Peter's wife, is a member of the work force, the obvious accepted presence of women in the workplace acknowledges a crucial social change: women are no longer restricted to the domestic sphere. This inclusion of women to the career-oriented world calls attention to the fact

that it is no longer the social duty of the woman to care for the children. As can be seen in *Hook,* though Moira is the constant parental figure, it is very clear that she expects her husband Peter to be an active member in the lives of their children. Moira, disappointed with her husband's absence, confronts him with a very powerful message, which encapsulates the parent/child dynamic of the end of the twentieth century. Moira explains to Peter, "Your children love you. They want to play with you...how long do you think that lasts? We have a few special years with our children when they're the ones that want us around. After that, you're going to be the one running after them for a bit of attention" (Spielberg, *Hook*). She then goes on to reiterate a line that has become her signature line in the film. She tells Peter that "[he] [is] not being careful and [he] is missing it" (*Hook*). This idea that Peter should be involved in the lives of his children reflects a social expectation that began to permeate Western culture, especially that of the United States, for some time prior the 1990s. However, though this cultural norm has been clearly expressed within the film, it also becomes obvious that Peter is failing to meet that social expectation.

Spielberg deviates from the original Peter Pan narrative in another crucial way. In *Hook,* Peter assumes the role of a father and is therefore inducted as an intimate member of the family unit. In the film, because of Peter's new position, there is an emphasis on the importance of the father within the family as a nurturer, not simply a wage-earner. Barrie, with his constant references to mothers and the presentation of a heroines in the characters of Mrs. Darling and her daughter Wendy, looks upon fathers as either an absent figure or one that is difficult for small children to identify with, especially for daughters. Spielberg, in placing the figure of Peter Pan in a more

contemporary setting, adheres to a more modern understanding of the father figure. A father is an individual, like a mother, who exists to provide for their children, but rather than men assuming the role of the bread-winner and women the nurture, both sexes must share these responsibilities. Even if a woman does not work, it is still expected that father spends time caring for the children.

There is a greater emphasis of sons modeling the behavior of their fathers in Spielberg's film than in either of Barrie's works. Due to the focus on the maternal figure, Barrie spent a great deal of time depicting different ways in which Wendy was modeling her behavior after her mother, yet the most apparent modeling of the boys after Mr. Darling is the single line “A little less noise there,” which is repeated both by John and Peter throughout the play. With this line, the play suggests that children, in the eyes of a father, as simply a nuisance and a distraction. Fathers are expected to love their children, but it is a benevolent sort of love that is not conveyed through the show of physical affection or a great deal of social interaction. Though the Darling boys will eventually enter the male dominated sphere, a time that will afford more social interactions with their father, there is a significant amount of time within a young boy's life in which is father is a relative stranger. *Hook* removes that social barrier between fathers and sons, encouraging the building of relationships which not only provide increased social interaction, but also allow a father to become his son's hero, not simply a masculine model.

Peter Banning/Peter Pan: The Old and the Young

In *Hook*, Peter Pan grows up to become a man named Peter Banning. Much like Mr. Darling within Barrie's works, Peter Banning is a man who has become separated

from his family, primarily his children, by his profession. However, unlike Mr. Darling, Peter is not receiving outside pressure from a social standpoint to focus on his livelihood, nor is his family in a difficult financial. Peter, a successful corporate lawyer works for the joy of working. Peter has become an ambitious workaholic who relishes in his own success.

Peter's triumph in the workforce, however, has a negative effects. Not only does he become estranged from his children, especially his son Jack, but he has inadvertently become his own worst enemy. In one scene, as Peter is vaguely trying to explain to Wendy, now “Granny Wendy,” his job description, Jack interjects with his own interpretation of his father's career. Using suggestive phrases, Jack states that his father “sails in...[and] blows them out of the water” (Spielberg, *Hook*) while Peter offers the explanation of being “in mergers and acquisitions” (*Hook*). Wendy, who appears quite stricken by Jack's aggressive description gravely notes that “Peter...[has] become a pirate” (*Hook*).

The violent images created by Jack immediately draw connections between Peter Banning and Captain Hook. As suggested by Barrie himself towards the end of his play, Peter always had the potential to become like Captain Hook, though his youth and innocence shielded him from such a fate. However, Peter Pan has grown up and has been exposed to a world which is full of disappointments, fears, uncertainty, and even death. Peter's youth has left him and as Peter has aged he has not been able to retain the innocence of childhood. Ambition is the drive of Peter's adult life and as he delves deeper into his work-centered life, one cannot help but recall Captain Hook's dying speech within Barrie's play,

> All mortals envy me, yet better perhaps for Hook to have had less ambition! O fame, fame, thou glittering bauble...No little children love me. I am told they play at Peter Pan, and that the strongest always chooses to be Peter...they force the baby to be Hook. The baby! that is where the canker gnaws. (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 125)

The children in *Peter Pan* desire to emulate those whom they believe to be heroes. Hook, despite all of his success in his career as a pirate, is not loved by children because he cannot be a model to them. Peter Pan, as a child, can be a heroic model for other children. Hook is an adult and a fiend. He is not the respectable man which their fathers are suggested to represent, nor is he a man with whom they can relate on a social or national level. Hook is a traitor to the Crown and a social outcast. His is a life that no respectable child would willing chose for himself, and it is brought into question by Hook himself whether or not he is pleased with his own path.

Peter Banning, becoming a pirate, cannot act as model for his children, especially his son. He no longer plays the role of a father, but simply that of a tyrant. Because of his relatively unquestioned authority, Peter, like Hook, is a man who does not seek out admiration. His success in the work place provides him with enough recognition that he does not feel the need to seek it out at home. In fact, his success in his career hinders him from seeking out any admiration from his family, because Peter's career has come to define his sense of self. Peter Banning and James Hook are defined by their careers.

Hook kidnaps the Banning children in order to lure Peter back to Neverland. Upon Peter's arrival to the island, he must remember the boy he was and why he chose to become a man if he hopes to save his children from the clutches of Hook. The secret to Peter's choice is comprised of two elements that are quintessential parts of Barrie's Peter Pan narrative: a happy thought and a kiss. The kiss, which is exchanged between

Peter and Wendy, is not a literal kiss, but tokens which represented Peter's ignorance of romantic love and therefore sexual desire. As a child, who received no known physical display of affection, a kiss represents something that is unfamiliar and even dangerous for Peter. A kiss could be a potential awakening for a character who is designed to remain sexually dormant, both mentally and physically. In *Hook*, Peter Pan sees Wendy's granddaughter Moira when he returns for Wendy for spring-cleaning. As he gazes at her, asleep in her bed, Peter decides that he wants to give her a kiss, a real kiss. This initiation on the part of Peter in a display of romantic affection shows that he has reached a new stage of development. Peter Pan is ready to grow up. This romantic love for Moira, however, is not the only reason which Peter decides to finally grow up. As Peter is trying to remember how to fly, he finds Michael Darling's teddy bear in the tree house, a remnant of Peter's past. Through the use of a flashback, the viewer is immersed in Peter's memories as he remembers his own infancy and why he initially decided to run away from his family and society. Peter states that his infant self was frightened by the idea of growing up and so he ran away to prolong his childhood. However, it is the desire to become a father which allows Peter to overcome his fear of adult responsibilities. This desire to make a sacrifice for the sake of another enables Peter to open himself up to vulnerability, allowing him to fall in love and begin a family. The moment that he becomes a father serves as Peter's happy thought and he remembers how to fly. So much of Peter Pan and Peter Banning's life has been entrenched by fear of one sort or another. However, in remembering his conscious decision to make a sacrifice for another person, namely his son, Peter is able to remember the pivotal

moment in his own life which shifted him from childhood into the beginnings of adulthood.

Upon Peter's victory against Captain Hook at the end of the film, Peter choses to again leave Neverland and resume his role as a father, now fully appreciating the responsibilities and joys of this position. Before he leaves, however, he chooses his successor as leader of the Lost Boys from amongst the boys themselves. This choosing of a successor removes the importance of Peter Pan as a person, transcending the individual to conceptualize the nature of childhood. However, upon making his decision, he tells his chosen successor, the largest of the boys, that he "[wants] [him] to take care of everyone who's smaller than [him]" (*Hook*). Peter's return allowed Lost Boys an opportunity to witness Peter's behavior not only as Peter Pan, but also as Peter Banning the father. This gives all of the boys, not simply Peter's successor an example of how one truly takes care of those smaller than one's self. The phrasing of Peter's last command suggests an added parental responsibility to the role of the leader, which was not present when Peter Pan held the role. Peter has grown as a character, not only physically, but also mentally. He now understands that childhood is not simply about playing, but it is also being able to receive the care and comfort of a parental figure. Since no such figure exists in Neverland, Peter must trust that the new leader of the Lost Boys will do his best to perform the role of a pseudo-father for his followers.

The plot of *Hook* pertains to Peter's transition between childhood and adulthood the importance of one's youth for one's adult life is called into question. In the beginning of the film, Peter cannot remember his youth and jokingly even asks his wife, "was [he] ever that young" (*Hook*) as he looks at a youthful picture of himself. Though

a grown woman, Moira is overwhelmed by the memories which return to her as she enters the Darling residence, where she spent much of her own childhood. As she runs from room to room she exclaims that “some of those things [she] was when [she] was young have never left [her]” (*Hook*). This sentiment, just as it applies to Peter throughout the film, applies to adults in general. Though they have all grown up, parts of their childhoods remain within them, making up a part of their adult identity. Childhood is a necessary part of an adult's life, however it is acknowledged within Hook that adulthood is also an important aspect of a child's life. In order for a child to be cared for an adult figure must be present, and adults must be prepared for this responsibility. In becoming a father, Peter finally understands the importance of adulthood and at the end of the film he cries, “To live would be an awfully big adventure” (*Hook*), a cry that his younger self could not understand.

Captain Hook: A Skewed Perspective on Adulthood

In Spielberg's *Hook*, Captain Hook was not eaten by the crocodile after the conflict between Peter Pan, Darling children, and the Lost Boys. Instead, he defeated the crocodile and transformed it into a monument not only to Hook's physical victory over his nemesis, but also to Hook's victory over time. Thought Peter has aged living outside of Neverland, Hook has remained the same. After Peter vanishes from the island, the Lost Boys, though still in existence, have lost their potency and Hook and his crew are able to establish a permanent society on the island of Neverland. Despite his successful colonization of the island, Hook still desires closure from his final interaction with the Peter Pan. Since Peter left to grow up, Hook was denied a final battle between himself and Peter. In order achieve this final battle, Hook kidnaps Peter's children and

holds them hostage, forcing Peter to return for them. It is interesting to note however, that though Hook is aware that Peter Pan has married and has become a father, Hook seems to expect to find Peter exactly the way he was when he left Neverland. He is amazed when Peter stands before him, admittedly unaware of who is truly is, an adult man who does not physically meet the expectations of Hook.

Unlike the issues which confront him in Barrie's play and his novel, in *Hook*, Captain Hook appears to struggle with a conflict of a different kind. Though he still desires to kill Peter Pan, it must be done the proper way. Aligning himself with the ideas of "good form," Hook demands that Peter must remember to fight, fly, and resemble his former self as much as possible. As long as Peter lives, Hook cannot find peace. However, with their final confrontation drawing, Hook wonders what meaning life will hold once Captain Hook or Peter Pan is vanquished. Smee asks him "what would the world be like without Captain Hook" (Spielberg, *Hook*) and to this Hook cannot reply. Captain Hook has become as much of a fixture within one's childhood as Peter Pan himself. He represents the ultimate villain in the eyes of a child, as portrayed in the film's school room scene. Hook's cabin is set up like a school room, with Jack and Maggie his only pupils. Hook is now the teacher and he is lesson for the children is about the stressful nature of the lives of parents. He tells Jack and Maggie that their parents do not love them and how life essentially ends for those adults who become parents. The selfish nature of children wearies their parents and the only things which parents truly crave is a rest from the constant demands of children. Hook tells Jack and Maggie that their parents were happier before they were born, because then they were free. Maria Tatar mentions in her annotation of *Peter Pan and Wendy* that "Barrie had

envisioned Hook ending as a schoolmaster, and he was to be 'dressed as a schoolmaster and carrying a birch.' Hook described his role in a soliloquy: 'I'm a schoolmaster – to revenge myself on boys.'" (Tatar 148-49). Playing on the authority of the school room and the fatigue and drama which happens within families, Hook uses these half-truths and his own authority as an adult to dishearten the children in order to convince them to forsake their parents. If he can convince the Banning children that their parents do not love them, then perhaps he can begin to convince them that he can fill that parental void. Maggie fights against these negative images of her parents. Jack, suffering from a more strained relationship with his father, begins to believe Hook. He feels neglected by his father and is also under a significant amount of pressure from him. Jack understands that he is still a child and will remain a child for a number of years yet. He is not ready to grow up nor does society expect that of him. His father, however, often yells at him, asking "when are you going to stop acting like a child" (Spielberg, *Hook*) and telling him to "grow up," just as Mr. Darling tells Wendy in Disney's adaptation.

Because of this strained relationship with his father, Jack begins to forget his family and feels drawn towards Hook, who treats him the way he believes a father should treat his son. Hook supports Jack's need to play, listens to him, he even organizes a baseball game so that Jack can exhibit his skills athletic prowess. Hook tries to be all of the parts of a father that Peter Banning was not. He begins to form an attachment of sorts with Jack, yet he cannot forget the fact that Jack is simply a pawn to weaken Peter during their final confrontation. This use of Jack hinders Hook from developing deep parental feelings for the boy.

Wendy: All Grown Up

In Spielberg's film, Wendy Darling has become an old woman, yet has continued her role as a story teller. She also becomes the ultimate mother figure of many orphans throughout her life, finding homes for those children who have none. Like Moira, Wendy has never forgotten the child that she once was and therefore understands the importance of a supportive family unit as well as taking part in society. Not only did Wendy support her own family, but she also reached out to others who needed her help, namely orphans. Though no longer living within Victorian society, Wendy still believes in the role of a mother. However, since the film is primarily focusing on the role of the father, which until this point had been virtually neglected in Barrie's works as well as other adaptations, Wendy attempts to help Peter find himself in remembering who he was before he became Peter Banning. It is a bittersweet feeling which Wendy seems to have for Peter. In her heart, Wendy always believed that Peter would come back for her and decide to grow up for her, yet he never did. Instead, he chose to marry her granddaughter and therefore Wendy became not only a mother figure to Peter for many years, but eventually a grandmother to him and his children.

Maggie, Peter's daughter, becomes the next Wendy during her stay in Neverland. Though her brother begins to forget their parents, she does not forget them nor does she doubt them. Though she is there as a hostage, she believes that her father will save them and that their mother will be waiting for their return in London. Maggie also places a great deal of importance on the role of the mother, referencing her own mother much more often than her father, who is in Neverland and is attempting to save them from the clutches of Hook. Maggie does not seem to be preoccupied with the idea of becoming a mother herself, but she realizes the importance of her mother's presence in her life. As

Peter claims victory over Hook and almost administers a death blow, Maggie, on the verge of tears, asks if they can go home, saying that Hook is “just a mean old man who needs a mommy” (Spielberg, *Hook*). Maggie attributes Hook's criminal behavior to his lack of a mother, and the love and guidance which that figure brings to the life of a child. Hook is spared by Peter's sword, but it is Hook's own rejection of “good form” which brings about his demise, just as it did in Barrie's novel.

Chapter 5: Universal Studios' *Peter Pan*

Written and directed by P.J. Hogan, the most contemporary of the adaptations I've chosen to analyze is entitled Peter Pan, sharing a title with Barrie's original work. This film was produced in 2003 by Universal Studios, yet rather than attempting to place the setting of the film in a modern context like Spielberg does with his film Hook, Hogan closely follows the storyline of Barrie's works, as well as including a great deal of the language used in Barrie's play and novel in his adaptation of the dialogue. The film was licensed by the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children "which found it 'in keeping with the original work whilst communicating to an audience with modern sensibilities'" (Tatar 334). These "modern sensibilities" refer to the romantic nature of the film, rather than focusing primarily on the plot or the parental influence on the lives of the children. This adaptation instead spends much of the film looking at the issues brought about by "Wendy's infatuation with Peter and [his] seductive charms" (335) which are "emphasized in ways that are unusual for cinematic, musical, and theatrical adaptions, most of which move briskly along rather than lingering on enraptured facial features" (335). The mutual attraction as well as shared feelings between Peter and Wendy, is something that Barrie's Wendy only dreamed of. Hogan's Wendy, however, was just the sort of girl to attract Peter Pan.

Though set in the late-Victorian era, just as Barrie's play was originally set, the Darling family must adhere to the social demands on both sexes. This physical manifestation of Victorian society takes the form of Aunt Millicent, a character which does not exist in Barrie's works, but allows a modern audience to understand the social pressures of the late-Victorian and early-Edwardian time periods. The expectations of

society were very different for boys and girls, and just as Wendy and her brothers struggle with the picture of adult life presented by Aunt Millicent, so do Hogan's young viewers who exist within a completely different world than the Darling family.

Hogan also has the benefit of hindsight. Barrie, who wrote his play and then his novel to represent a world which was contemporary to his own time, did not know that the future held for adults, children, men, and women. He could only rely on history as well as his own culture. However, Hogan, who is adapting Barrie's work nearly a century later, understands what the world would hold for an adult Wendy and her brothers. Wendy, as an adult, would have lived through not only World War I and potentially World War II, thereby further introducing women into the workplace, but she would have also lived through the Suffragette movement, advocating for women's rights. It is not so strange for Hogan to imagine an adult Wendy as a novelist when observing the place of women in modern society.

A fellow playwright of Barrie, George Bernard Shaw, said of Peter Pan, that the play was “'holiday entertainment for children but really a play for grown-up people'” (Tatar vii). Though Shaw was intending this comment as a slight, his insight was partially correct. Though the story holds all of the themes and adventure that excite most children, the deeper themes, especially in Barrie's own later versions of the play as well as the novel, suggest a more mature content that appeals specifically to adults. This content, which becomes more apparent in Barrie's own works, is an aspect of the story which Hogan emulates in his film. Though the film appears to be aimed primarily at children, given that it is the story of Peter Pan, the themes must appeal to an audience that either is already an adult or will very soon become an adult. Older children and

young adults are not as interested in a story about children eventually taking up the role of their parents and future parents themselves. The future for a modern viewer is unknown, with less social constraints concerning position within society as well as dictating one's career. A child's life is full of a potential which has been growing exponentially since Barrie's original production in 1904.

One aspect of life which most modern youths imagine for themselves, which is relatable to the story of Peter Pan, is not only the struggle in transitioning between childhood and adulthood, but the lure of romantic love expressed by Wendy. Roger Ebert, in his review of Hogan's Peter Pan “notes that the movie is not 'overtly sexual,' but emphasizes that the 'sensuality is there and the other versions have pretended that it was not'” (336). Through this remark, Ebert is acknowledging not only other adaptations of Peter Pan, but the works of Barrie himself, that sexual attraction, which is experienced in adulthood, is felt to an extent by children. Peter is a boy who, in nearly every version of the Peter Pan narrative, is confronted not only with the idea of adulthood as a parent, but also as a husband. Because Wendy is willing to fulfill both roles, Peter is confronted with both ideas, yet must reject both in order to preserve his existence. However, though he ultimately rejects Wendy, not fully comprehending what it is she truly wants of him, the attraction between the two children is undeniable. Peter is continuously placing himself in the position of a son, because it is the only male role which he truly understands because it is the only role that he has ever experienced. In order to understand the role of a husband, Peter would have to grow up.

Mr. Darling: The Ideal Victorian Man

The character of Mr. Darling in P.J. Hogan's Peter Pan is not a man which invokes the image of an overgrown child, which is the general appearance of Mr. Darling within Barrie's works. Hogan choses to portray Mr. Darling in a more heroic light, allowing his audience to appreciate Mr. Darling as a father in a way that was absent from Barrie's play, which he later emphasized in his novel. Mr. Darling is a shy, insecure man, who in Hogan's film is apparently satisfied with his career as well as his home life. However, upon Aunt Millicent's “appraisal” of Wendy, the fact that Wendy is becoming a woman is a sort of call to arms for Mr. Darling. Millicent, thinking of Wendy's future as a wife, alerts Mr. Darling that his position as a clerk will not attract desirable suitors for Wendy. He must move up his career ladder if he wishes to continue to provide for his family. It is obvious by Mr. Darling's reaction to Millicent's announcement that he is both proud of his daughter growing into a woman, but afraid of the steps he must take in order to secure her future. Though Barrie never mentions that Mr. Darling is particularly shy or introverted within his works, this alteration in the character promotes a kind of sympathy for the character. Mr. Darling, obviously outside of his comfort zone, takes steps to do what is necessary for his family. He does not ask for respect, nor does he demand admiration. He simply does what is necessary.

The moment in which the children momentarily lose their admiration for their father comes at his moment of rage and vulnerability. Rather than entering into a contest of sorts with Michael over the issue of medicine, Mr. Darling, as is proper for a Victorian father, maintains his paternal distance from his children, rather than crossing into the realm of childhood himself and exposing his own childish tendencies. Instead, Mr. Darling is humiliated by the actions of Wendy at his place of work in the presence

of his employer. This scene does not appear in Barrie's work, but it does create a situation in which Mr. Darling can lose his temper while simultaneously maintaining his adult demeanor. Nana is still punished in the film and is removed from her post in the nursery. Mr. Darling, as he ties Nana up in the yard states that “[he] must become a man that children fear and adults respect” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). He then turns on Wendy and informers her that she will be inducted into the world of womanhood the following day and that it is time for her to grow up. This insistence on Wendy growing up is an issue which is brought up not only in Hogan's film, but also Disney's adaptation. The idea that Wendy, primarily due to her role as the nursery storyteller, is creating an atmosphere of childhood which she is beginning outgrow and it is infecting those around her in a negative way. By telling stories, Wendy is inviting her brothers, as well as herself, to indulge in worlds which exist outside of late-Victorian society and which also encourage behavior which is not become of English ladies and gentlemen. Wendy, like her parents, must become an example to her brothers and she cannot become that example as a storyteller.

Though Mr. Darling becomes a villain of sorts as he loses his temper, his character is almost immediately rectified by Mrs. Darling, who explains Mr. Darling's situation to her children. When the children beg her not to go to the party that evening, suggesting that their father should go by himself, Mrs. Darling immediately states that she must be there in order to support Mr. Darling even though he is “a brave man” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). The children do not consider their father brave, especially after his display in the yard with Nana, but Mrs. Darling has just the answer for her children. She explains that there are many types of bravery, not just the kind that is talked about in

stories. Mr. Darling has “the bravery of thinking of others before [himself]” and that “he has made many sacrifices for his family and put away many dreams” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). This selflessness is a quality which Mr. Darling has always had, yet his need for admiration clouded this aspect of the character for Barrie's audience, except perhaps in the novel. Hogan has stripped away nearly all need for admiration, instead allowing Mrs. Darling to praise her husband without his coaxing and whining. She defends him because she loves him and believes him to be the brave man she says he is. Mrs. Darling understands the sacrifices of giving up dreams and making sacrifices for one's family because she has done it as well. Her children, who have not yet made sacrifices for those that they love, can only understand the bravery of acts like those in fairy tales. To them, Peter Pan is much more heroic than their father, yet by the end of the film they realize that, though Peter is also very brave, he can only die for a cause. He cannot live for one.

In an extended version of the film, Mr. Darling does choose to remain in Nana's dog house as a sign of his penance for removing Nana, the nursery protector, from her post the night which the children flew away to Neverland. However, in the feature length film, all scenes concerning the dog house are cut, only depicting a sorrowful father and his distraught wife as they wait for their children's return. Since Mr. Darling in Hogan's film is generally devoid of childlike behavior and exaggeration, it seems out of character for Hogan's Mr. Darling to insist upon living in a dog house. Instead he allows Mr. Darling to yet again become vulnerable, not necessarily by his actions within society (like being carried through London in a dog house), but through a touchingly emotional scene at the time of his children's return. Mr. Darling, running to the window

after being called for by his wife, initially runs passed his children to search the skies for a sign of them. Slowly, however, he turns around and setting his eyes on his children, he visibly begins to lose his composure which has exemplified him throughout the film. He breaks down and begins to cry, drawing his children towards him as he calls them “[his] angels.” This display of fatherly affection suggests that, beyond the distant exterior of the father figure in late-Victorian society, one's father did truly care about and love their children. They were simply less encouraged to show the full range of their emotions. For children of the Victorian era, such as Wendy and her brothers, though their lives were divided by specific gender roles, they generally understood that their “father was affectionate and benevolent, and their mother intensely loving and beloved” (Lochhead 201). This picture of growing domestic felicity provided a stark contrast to the childhood of their own parents whose mid-Victorian families generally offered “repression, harshness and parental antipathy” (201).

The role of the father as an equally loving member of the family is a social norm that resonates with a modern audience. Even since the appearance of Hook in 1991, the decade which elapsed between Hook and Hogan's Peter Pan continued to close the gap between men's social expectations within the home and that of women. Even more than the character of Peter Banning, Hogan's Mr. Darling would be expected to be on par with his wife concerning their emotional attachment to their children. A modern father, in the idealized family, is generally expected to be an equal caregiver to the child. If Mr. Darling were completely aloof and vying for the attentions of his wife against his children, this social construction would have been relatively unrelatable for many members of a modern audience. Mr. Darling, though placed within a late-Victorian

setting amidst the influences of Barrie's work, still represents a modern father figure. He is an individual who fully understands not only his familial responsibilities for providing for the family, but also the nurturing aspect of his role as a father.

Peter Pan: The Noble Hero

P.J. Hogan highlights the virtues of Peter Pan within his film and stated about his film that "'This is Peter Pan as J.M. Barrie originally intended–a heroic, magical, real boy who fights pirates, saves children and never grows up'" (Tatar 334). Though Peter still has moments of selfishness and conceitedness, ultimately he is a heroic figure. He is also, as Tatar puts it, "less spritely youngster than teenage heartthrob" (335). The carefree Peter Pan that is expressed in Barrie's works as well as other adaptations is strangely absent from Hogan's film, primarily due to Peter's fixation with Wendy. Though he does not understand his feelings for her, nor does he ever truly acknowledge them, Peter becomes more selfless for Wendy's benefit in order to be her hero.

The common thread within all Peter Pan stories is the role of Wendy as a storyteller. In Hogan's film however, Wendy takes an active role in her storytelling and plays the part of an adventurer just as often as her brothers. These stories, told by a more modernly constructed Wendy, have more action and swordplay, even stories like Cinderella. Peter comes to the window of the nursery for these stories, just as in Barrie's works as well as other adaptations, yet there is less of an emphasis on Peter's attraction to stories about himself. Instead, as Captain Hook observes, Peter shows a surprising interest in romantic stories which "all end in a kiss" (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). The kiss, perhaps not surprisingly, becomes a symbol of love within Hogan's Peter Pan that is far more potent than any of the other Peter Pan stories. In Barrie's works, the kiss was a

suggestion of Wendy's own sexual awareness and her future role as a wife. By wanting to kiss Peter, she not only desired to show her appreciation for his opinions about girls, but also to begin to mimic the roles of a husband and wife. Peter never comes to understand a true kiss and instead exchanges innocent tokens with Wendy, a sign that Wendy is perhaps willing to physically and sexually mature, but she will never share this experience with Peter. In Hogan's *Peter Pan,* Peter and Wendy do share a "thimble," Wendy's hidden kiss which can only belong to Peter. In Barrie's novel, Mrs. Darling is said to possess a hidden kiss, which her own family cannot reach, the "kiss that had been for no one else, Peter took quite easily. Funny. But she seemed satisfied" (Barrie 182). Just as Peter's kiss was said to belong to no one else within Barrie's novel, Wendy's hidden kiss is given to Peter as well. Though she decides to grow up and Peter decides to remain a child in Neverland, Wendy gives Peter her kiss to reassure him that she will never forget him. Peter is given a special place in Wendy's heart and memories, which no other boy, or man, can replace.

The game of father and mother which Peter and Wendy play with the Lost Boys quickly shifts from the focus on the parental to the roles of husbands and wives. The Lost Boys refer to Wendy as their mother, but her actions do not resemble those of a mother and in fact remain more along the lines of that of an older sister. She obviously cares about the boys, but is willing to tease them and play with them. Rather than focusing on Wendy as a mother to Peter, it is obvious that she is intended to play the role of a potentially romantic partner. The children tentatively explore the realm of physical intimacy by holding hands and even dancing. In a romantic scene in which Peter and Wendy sneak away to join a moonlit fairy dance, Hook spies the children

dancing and collapses lamenting, “Evil day...he has found himself a...Wendy. And Hook is all alone” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). The mutual isolation of Hook and Peter provides the pirate with some solace. In order to cope with their own loneliness, Hook and Peter play a game against one another, which is compromised by the intrusion of Wendy into Peter's life. The presence of a mere mother encourages an indulgence in childlike behavior. The presence of a lover encourages one to move beyond the realm of childhood and enter into adulthood, a realm in which the fullest level of intimacy might be expressed.

With these heightened levels of intimacy, especially between Peter and Wendy, yet also between Peter and Tinkerbell, Hogan must erase the thoughtless and emotionally immature persona of Barrie's Peter and create a character which possess a depth of feeling, even if Peter himself is unaware of his feelings. A way in which Hogan achieves this goal is by showing his audience that Peter is aware of emotion through a game of word association. Peter's understanding of emotion is portrayed in a childlike manner through this game, yet the fight which ensues after Peter tells Wendy he offended by even the thought of love, suggests that he has not only felt it in order to feign disgust, but that he becomes visibly upset when Wendy pushes the matter. Peter, apparently on the brink of frustrated tears, demands of Wendy what more there is to life that flying and fighting. He appears at once defiant and utterly desperate for an answer. However, being just a young girl herself, Wendy is unable to give him a completely answer. She says that “there is so much more” to life that the existence Peter lives, and that though she does not currently understand it “[she] [thinks] it becomes clear once you grow up” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). Peter ultimately rejects this answer and leaves

Wendy, who returns to her little house emotionally distraught by Peter's unwillingness to express his feelings for her.

There is never any doubt in the mind of Wendy within Hogan's film that Peter holds romantic feelings for her. The figure of Tiger Lily is placed in a flirtatious relationship with John, thereby removing Wendy's other female competition, and the figure of Tinkerbell becomes a relationship of intense friendship which is compromised by Wendy. Wendy is the key that could solve the “riddle of [Peter's] existence,” which Hook discovers in his interview with Wendy on the Jolly Roger. Ultimately, it is Hook which inspires Wendy to leave Neverland and to grow up. Though the thought of growing up is frightening and also presented as full of problems and complexities, becoming an adult is to enter into a world that is full of possibilities and untapped potential. Even Hook appears to Wendy to be a more complex figure than Peter, because Hook expresses his emotions. Once again, Wendy and Peter fight after Wendy returns to the home of Peter. Wendy, fed up with Peter's childlike behavior and unwillingness to commit to her lashes out, saying that Captain Hook is not the villain which all of the boys believe him to be. Instead, Wendy states, “I find Captain Hook to be a man of feeling” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). She goes on to insult Peter further, entering into perhaps the most revealing conversation which occurs between the characters:

> “Sir, you are both ungallent and deficient.”
>
> “How am I deficient?”
>
> “You're just a boy.”

This idea that Peter is somehow incomplete because he has not entered into manhood, is expressed for the first time explicitly in this scene. So much attention is given to Peter as a child that the unnaturalness of this permanent childhood is given little thought, because it is stated as fact that “all children, except one, grow up” (Barrie 1). One is told from the beginning of Barrie's novel that Peter Pan is the boy who will never grow up, but it is precisely that he will not grow up that creates the tragedy and stagnation of his character. Perhaps Barrie's opening line should state, all children, except one, choose to grow up.

Peter is said to be a lonely character within Hogan's film. This is why “he needed a Wendy” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). Peter's existence, though “[he] had countless joys which other children can never have” (*Peter Pan*), he can never experience the joy of being a part of a family. This is the “one joy from which he must be forever barred” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). Because Peter cannot forsake his life of complete freedom of responsibility, he can never undertake the responsibility for someone else's happiness, or someone else's affections. Hook tells Peter, “you're a tragedy...she was leaving you...why should she stay...you are incomplete” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). He goes further to emphasize Peter's lonely existence to relate it to his own. Hook states that “[Peter] will die alone and unloved. Unloved, just like me” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). However, Wendy proves to Peter that he is not only loved, but he will never be forgotten. Through her stories, both as a child and as an adult woman, she spreads the story of Peter Pan to her children and her children's children. The legend of Peter Pan continues beyond Wendy's lifetime, exemplifying what it means to be a child and why one choses to grow up.

Captain Hook: As J. M. Barrie Intended

In his screenplay for a proposed film of Peter Pan, which was produced by Universal Studios, Barrie includes a note about the playing of the part of Captain Hook. Barrie dictates that,

> Hook should be played absolutely seriously, and the actor must avoid all temptation to play the part as if he was conscious of its humours. There is such a temptation, and in the stage play the actors of the part have sometimes yielded to it, with fatal results. He is a blood-thirsty villain, all the more so because he is an educated man. The other pirates are rough scoundrels, but he can be horribly polite when he is most wicked. He should have the manners of a beau. But above all the part should be played with absolute seriousness and avoidance of trying to be funny. This should be insisted on throughout, and especially later in the pirate-ship scene. (Tatar 288-89)

As in the stage play, other adaptations of Barrie's work have allowed Captain Hook to be a clown rather than the sinister villain which Barrie intended him to be. Hook has many foibles, which can make him appear comic. These attributes, paired with his costume and the antagonistic nature of his relationship with Peter can make Hook appear completely foolish. P.J. Hogan's representation of Captain Hook, however, maintains the serious nature of the character, while highlighting the flaws within his own character, as well as his conflict with Peter Pan.

Hook, ever the Eton school boy, is surprisingly rather disheveled in his first appearance. His hair a mess, he is also shirtless, with the Eton crest tattooed on his left bicep. This picture of Hook is a man who has been removed of all his accoutrement. Even his hook is missing. Essentially naked, the true nature of James Hook is bared for the world to see. He is a man who has received little to no benefits from the choices of his adult life. He is rather devoid of meaning, except for the experience of his own childhood. Hook's experience at Eton within the mid-Victorian era would have been an extremely harsh experience. Given Hook obvious ambitions and knack for inciting fear

in those who follow him, suggest that Hook was probably a head boy of some kind, an individual who was given attention and responsibility, yet was also taught through his experiences to be cruel.

Captain Hook becomes the ultimate villain in for a late-Victorian child. He represents familiar ideals such as “good form,” which is the very code of Hook's life, yet he is also an individual who lives on the fringes of society, rejecting national and familial ties in order to live a life of freedom. Hook is portrayed as a seductive character, which was only briefly acknowledged within Barrie's works. The life of a pirate is portrayed as thrilling, often being the villains within the children's games and stories, yet given the children's general respect for social structure as well as the family nucleus, the pirates must ultimately serve as the villains rather that the hero. Wendy, in Hogan's adaptation, is not afraid of Hook, but is said to be “entranced” by his forget-me-not blue eyes. Wendy, who is a victim of the constraints of society has not an ultimatum, but a series of choices within the film. She can remain in Neverland with Peter and “never, never have to worry about grown up things again” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*), she can chose to leave Neverland and assume her responsibilities as an adult, or, she can choose to stay aboard the Jolly Roger as a pirate, able to grow into adulthood yet also able to reject the roles placed upon her by society. Ultimately Wendy leaves Neverland, desiring to experience the known and unknown of adulthood, but to say that she was not tempted to stay with Peter or to remain with Hook in Hogan's film would be false.

Though Hook obviously hates Peter Pan, it is suggested in Hogan's film that Hook may derive his meaning from Peter. By pitting himself against the boy, Hook is

attempting to exert his dominance within a community of outcasts. Peter, the supreme being of the island is Hook's only true adversary, and, though in Barrie's novel it is said to be Peter's cockiness which is the source of Hook's hatred for Peter, Hogan seems to be suggesting that is Peter's youth with Hook covets. His youth and his lack of life experience. A number of times Peter refers to Hook as “old,” becoming unique jab to Hook's ego just as Disney's version insisted upon calling Hook a “codfish”. Hook's apparent age in respect to Peter's obvious youth is a point of contention between the two characters. However, it is not simply Hook's age which is being held against him, but also his experiences. In the scene in which Hook attempts to kill Peter with poison, Hogan utilizes a quote from Barrie's play describing a poison which was “distilled when [Hook] was weeping from the red of his eye” (Barrie 118). Hogan goes further than Barrie to state that the poison was “a mixture of malice, jealousy, and disappointment” and it was “instantly fatal” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). The poison is the essence of Hook, coming from his eye, the window to the soul. In stating that the poison is a mixture of malice, jealousy, and disappointment, Hogan is stating that these are the primary components of Hook himself. Hook has turned his back on everything which he was intended to represent. Yet rather than finding meaning in his life of freedom from social expectations, Hook cannot escape the effects of his youth and therefore is haunted by his own perceived failure. He is not a man in the eyes of society, yet he is not a boy in regard to his maturity. Hook resides somewhere in between these two stages and therefore, in Hogan's adaptation, is tortured by the presence of Peter, who escapes those same torments by remaining a child, shielded by his innocence and inexperience.

Wendy: The Picture of Modern Girlhood

As previously stated, Wendy Darling within Hogan's film adaptation represents the modern conception of femininity and gender roles. Not only is Wendy not expected to grow up simply to become a mother and a wife, it is suggested that a romantic role of a lover, not just a legal spouse, is a possible role for the young heroine. Though Wendy acknowledges periodically that she may perhaps be a mother, she does not relish this fact. She respects and loves her own mother, yet cannot understand the appeal of the role as of yet. For Wendy, as for modern girls, the appeal of adulthood is the opportunity to express one's individuality and to follow one's dreams. As a storyteller, Wendy hopes to become a novelist and an explorer. Though Aunt Millicent does not approve of such pursuits, a modern female audience would be cheering for Wendy as she pursued her dreams rather than simply pursuing a man to the altar.

The ending of both Barrie's play and novel takes place in Wendy's future. She is a mother herself and her daughter takes her place as Peter's mother in Neverland, returning once a year to help with “spring-cleaning.” However, in order to preserve the unique relationship between Peter and Wendy, Hogan leaves Wendy at the nursery window, asking Peter if he will ever return. He of course replies in the affirmative, yet his expression conveys a sense of finality. Peter will not return for Wendy. He cannot return for Wendy, lest he be tempted to remain with her and become a man. As he looks in through the nursery window, at the one joy that he cannot experience, Peter says sadly to himself, “to live would be an awfully big adventure” (Hogan, *Peter Pan*). Hogan's Peter, unlike Barrie's character, understands the tragic nature of his own being and the implications and limitations of his existence. Peter can remain a child forever,

having one adventure after another, yet he will never truly live. He will always be a lonely little boy, hiding from his own loneliness by immersing himself in a world of make-believe. Wendy alone is able to break this illusion, not because she represents a maternal figure to Peter, but a romantic figure. This is why Peter cannot return for Wendy, but to honor Peter and the special part of her childhood which he represents, Wendy continues to tell the story of Peter in order to never forget the boy who would not grow up, Wendy's first love.

Conclusion

The social understanding of Peter Pan has changed considerably over the past century. At the time of Barrie's first production of *Peter Pan*, the figure of Peter was not only meant to embody the spirit of youth, but also highlight the importance of transitioning from a child into an adult. As exciting as the life of Peter is, the message from the play as well as Barrie's novel argues that the stagnation of childhood can only be overcome by entering into adulthood. If one refuses to grow up then one will essentially be forced to live outside of that society.

Barrie's *Peter Pan* is blissfully unaware of his own isolation, except in his darkest moments. At those times, such as in his dreams or the Darling's moment of departure, Peter becomes aware of his own lonely existence. He subconsciously desires to escape his gilded cage of Neverland because Neverland isolates him from the possibility of a family. The isolating aspect of Neverland is not reserved for Peter alone. Though it is said to exist in the imagination of every child, Neverland isolates children from one another, allowing each child to have their own adventure though not always through a communal experience. This changes vastly as one enters into adulthood, especially within Barrie's Victorian setting, where the sense of social obligation and the one's duty was very strong. Community and the upholding of social values bound individuals together, for better or worse. The time of childhood and its solitude was limited. Soon one was indoctrinated into a world of established community and social conventions. It was only in those few short years of childhood that one could experience the world of the individual, before becoming a part of the whole.

Wendy, who is a child within Barrie's works, as well as the discussed adaptations, represents the transition between childhood and adulthood. Though desiring to initially remain within the familiar realm of the nursery and all that the space entails, Wendy's journey to Neverland solidifies her decision not only remain within her society, but also to make that transition into adulthood. The end-goal of this transition is often represented by Wendy's mother. Wendy feels the desire to experience life as a child, cared for by her mother, and then to gradually transforming into an ideal wife and mother herself. However, in P.J. Hogan's *Peter Pan*, Wendy returns home because she becomes aware that there is a greater adventure to be had than the make-believe adventures of childhood. To grow up is to take a chance, it is to live one's own life, and in Peter's words, as represented by Hogan, “To live would be an awfully big adventure!”

Though the children are an obvious focal point with each narrative, the adult presence with the Peter Pan story is just as telling of social constructions as Peter and Wendy. Figures such as Mr. and Mrs. Darling and Captain Hook represent different facets of adult life, both within Victorian society and beyond. Mr. Darling comes to represent the image of the father, which alters through time as the division of labor between the sexes grows smaller and smaller from 1904 until 2003. Initially Mr. Darling is not only socially alienated from his wife and children due to his position in society as a male bread-winner, but his natural insecurities hinder him from relating in a positive way with his family. He desires to be an ideal man for his wife and a symbol of success for his children, yet Mr. Darling competes against his children for the attention of his wife. This picture of Mr. Darling changes over the course of time. Gradually, he becomes less of a childlike character who is depicted as competing with his children,

and he moves into the realm of a self-sacrificing father, who can interact with his children and his wife as an adult. He gains the respect of his family through his humility and through showing true affection, not through a display of power. As shared social and familial responsibilities between the sexes becomes more in vogue through the course of the century between Barrie's time and Hogan's film, the pressures of gender roles becomes less constraining for both parents.

Mrs. Darling, regardless of the work, represents the ultimate mother. The figure of a mother has always been of great importance to a child, though the impact of the father on a child has fluctuated throughout the years. This importance of the mother in a child's life is the reason for Peter's horror at his rejection by his own mother, who replaced him rather than leaving the window unbarred. Peter's running away and later abandonment represent an upset within established family structure. Peter should not have rejected his place as a son, yet his mother should not have withdrawn her love and faith in her child. Though the role of a mother is considered one of great importance, it is no longer the only role which a woman can play. As portrayed in Hogan's film, the idea that a woman can have her own career and live a life of her choosing comes to life in the character of Wendy: a future novelist, a wife and mother, or perhaps all three. In the twenty-first century, the choices of women are no longer constricted. However, whatever becomes of Wendy she will always have the model of her mother, a representation of maternal love.

Captain Hook is a figure that lives on the edges of society, taking an example from a culture's traditions yet ultimately rejecting those social expectations. Hook became a mature adult, yet like Peter could not conform to society. Within Barrie's

works this is perhaps Hook's greatest failing. He was not able to become a part of society and therefore rejected it, preserving his opinions of himself yet leaving his life devoid of meaning. Like Peter, Hook does not allow himself to truly bond with any individual and therefore he becomes isolated. Yet, without Peter's innocence, Hook becomes jaded and bitter, regretting at times the choices that he made in his life. There is also the matter of respect due to Hook as an adult which Peter refuses to yield to him. Within Victorian society, a child was expected to respect their elders and defer to them in every way. Peter breaks this tradition at every chance and Hook, the adult who has the most contact with Peter, sees it as a serious disruption to the idea of “good form” which dictates every action of his life.

For a modern audience, though it is still a social expectation to respect one's elders, the truth of that matter is that this tradition is not always upheld. Since the appearance of the “teenager” as a social construct after World War II, the division between parents and their children has become wider. Teenage children are given the freedom of a child with the physical and mental facilities of an adult. Since the influence of one's parents are not always as pressing as the influence of one's peers, the idea of growing old rather than growing up becomes a point of anxiety for a modern audience. The chant of the children moments before Hook's death in Hogan's *Peter Pan* is “Old! Alone! Done for!” This fear of old age and its consequent impotency and loneliness, is a greater fear than not conforming to specific social roles. Society and its expectations have become more fluid. The effects of old age have remained the same.

Wendy was the model for a Victorian and early-Edwardian child, one who possessed all the sweetness of childhood, yet was ready at a moment's notice to enter

into society. Wendy, however, no longer serves as the model child for a modern audience. For them, it is Peter Pan who becomes the ideal. In his essay “Peter Pan Goes to College,” Nathan Harden explains the new phenomenon of prolonged childhood for the current generation of “children,” which can span the age of two all the way to one's early thirties. Harden's abstract states that “today's college students are a lot like Peter Pan–they are in no hurry to grow up. Young people are staying in school longer, and taking longer to become economically self-sufficient. They are also waiting longer to marry and start families” (Harden 257). Harden equates this extended childhood with the “unprecedented economic prosperity amassed by the developed world in the last 40 years...”(1), which has allowed young adults to attend college, change career paths, “and endlessly [explore] that all-powerful question: What do I want to do with my life?” (257).

The idea that one does not have a socially dictated plan for one's life is an extremely new social concept. With Barrie's world, men to some extent could chose a career path, but only if they were of a certain social class and economic means. For women, there was even less of an opportunity to explore possible opportunities within life. The primary goal was to marry, have children, and above all, be respectable. Since 1904, the lines between gender roles, social structure, women's rights and education, have all vastly changed. These changes, in turn, have created a new social climate for those who live in the developed world. There is an opportunity for exploration and social freedom which puts off “growing up” for decades longer than children at the turn of the twentieth century.

Once again, one must ask the question which Barrie asked in his original play so long ago; is prolonged childhood a positive thing? According to the author's texts, one would have to reply in the negative. If one could not fit within society and assume the roles which not only allowed a person to function within that society, but act as a positive force for one's culture, then there was an element of failure to an individual. Barrie's works also suggest that there is a part of life that is lacking in childhood, experience that only adults can have and that children do not fully understand, such as parenthood and romantic love. These social experiences are difficult for children to grasp because they are learning how to interact with the world around them in relation to their person. Childhood is a time for play, but it is also a time for processing difficult concepts which one must encounter upon reaching adulthood.

One is still expected to be an active member of society within today's culture. However, extended childhood has become something of a luxury. Childhood is a time for self-exploration and gaining experience that one must set aside upon becoming an adult. Because of this new emphasis on the experience of extended childhood, adulthood has become a time of stagnation. Since childhood extends into adulthood, no longer are children repressed sexually because many “children” are technically sexually mature adults, which is the reason for Hogan's focus on the romantic relationship between Peter and Wendy. Modern women do not want to be told that they must be constrained to the realm of femininity as defined by the Victorian era. A modern woman desires to be recognized as a man's equal. His partner, not his mother or his doting wife. Modern “children” are also generally not children under federal law. If one is over the age of eighteen, then one is a legal adult, yet many individuals are treated like children

by their families as well as by society. They have reached an age of accountability, yet eighteen has simply become a time of more freedom and relatively little responsibility.

However, whether it is 1904 or 2015, adulthood looms on the horizon of every childhood, regardless of when exactly that childhood ends. At some point, as Barrie says, “all children, except one, grow up” (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* 1). With all of the experiences both behind and ahead, the world is a place of uncertainty and unpredictability. No number of adventures can truly prepare an individual for what lies ahead, yet one must be brave enough to rise to the occasion. The adventures of Peter Pan, the boy who would not, or could not, grow up exists as a collective memory. The story of Peter and that special girl Wendy Darling reminds children that childhood is lovely, but to grow up is not only natural, but necessary. Like Wendy, the children who chose to return from Neverland, the metaphor of childhood, must eventually face adulthood. However, after all of their experiences one must ask themselves, are they ready?

Appendix

Peter Pan. Dir. Herbert Brenon. Paramount Pictures, 1924.

This adaptation of J.M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan*, was the play's first film adaptation. Barrie himself wrote the introduction to the film, as well additional scenes for the film. These scenes however, were ultimately rejected in order to follow Barrie's original plot. Barrie did however have the final word on casting choices, choosing Betty Bronson to play Peter Pan. This film is the only silent *Peter Pan* adaptation and is also set in the United States rather than in England.

Peter Pan. Dir. Jerome Robbins, 1954.

This first American musical production of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* appeared on Broadway in 1954. Mary Martin starred as Peter Pan and, being a musical, this theatrical adaptation included songs, the most famous of which being “I Won't Grow Up.” which is included in the opening scenes of Steven Spielberg's *Hook*.

Peter Pan. NBC. With Mary Martin. 1955.

After the success of the Broadway production, NBC featured the Peter Pan musical as a television special in 1955. This television special featuring Mary Martin would run again in 1956 and 1960.

Peter Pan. NBC. With Mia Farrow. 1976.

A live-action musical adaptation of *Peter Pan* which featured new songs that did not appear in the earlier renditions featuring Mary Martin.

Peter Pan. Dir. Rob Iscove, 1979.

The first Broadway revival of the 1954 *Peter Pan*. The role of Peter was played by Sandy Duncan.

Peter Pan. Dir. Fran Soeder, 1990, 1991.

The first of a series of *Peter Pan* revivals during the 1990s. The productions in both 1990 and 1991 were directed by Fran Soeder and casted Cathy Rigby as Peter Pan. Rigby would go on to play the role of Peter in revivals staged in 1998, 1999, as well as a live-action television special in 2000 all under director Glenn Casale.

Peter Pan. Dir. Glenn Casale, 1998, 1999.

Peter Pan. A&E. With Cathy Ribgy. 2000.

Peter Pan Live!. NBC. With Allison Williams and Christopher Walken. 2014.

The most modern adaptation of *Peter Pan*, drawing much of its influence from J.M. Barrie's novel rather than his play. It is interesting to note that the role of Peter Pan is again played by a female actor, rather than casting a male actor for the part. *Hook* and Universal Studio's *Peter Pan* remain the only major adaptations to actually cast a male for the role of Peter Pan.

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