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The Text that Did Grow Up

How Peter Pan became a Culture Text

BA Thesis

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Abstract

Peter Pan is a character known by virtually everyone who has ever come into contact with western popular culture. There are many texts, films, and theatre productions about him and his story. However, putting the general story presented in these cultural products next to the original texts by J. M. Barrie shows how much the cultural idea of Peter Pan has evolved into something different than the first text in which he appeared. This thesis aims to analyse why the idea of the story behind Peter Pan in the cultural imagination is so distinctly different from any of the texts that were written by its original author, J. M. Barrie. By applying the concept of Paul Davis' culture-text onto the work and analysing the fluidity of the text as proposed by John Bryant, the thesis will show how different elements in the works characters, setting, and genre have created an environment in which approaching and adapting the central narrative of the work in new ways was a logical step and explains why there are so many versions that all differ in one way or another.

Keywords:

J. M. Barrie, culture text, fluid text, Peter Pan, *The Little White Bird*, *Peter and Wendy*, *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*

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Introduction

“All you need is faith, trust, and a little bit of pixie dust.” When reading this line most people will immediately think of one character only, J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*. The quote, however, does not appear in any of the texts published by the author. In fact, it does not even appear in this exact form in the hugely popular 1953 Disney adaptation. How then, did this become one of the most famous “Peter Pan quotes?” In fact looking at one of the many articles online claiming the display “18 inspirational Peter Pan quotes” only one actually appears in Barrie’s novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911), one appears in *The Little White Bird* (1902), some are from one of the many *Peter Pan* adaptations and others do not appear in any published text or film (np).

The popularity of these (mis)quotes from *Peter Pan* show that the character has gained a fixed place in popular culture. Even if somebody had never read or seen anything relating to the text, it is difficult to avoid the character. The name Wendy in itself is a direct result of the text’s popularity, as rarely any girls were given this name until the premiere of the play in 1904 (Billone 186), playhouses are still called “Wendy Houses (Robertson 55), round collars are still called “Peter Pan collars” after the costume used in the first Broadway production (Seville 143), and there is the “Peter Pan syndrome” to describe men who are unable to grow up emotionally (Kavey 2). *Peter Pan* has thus become so embedded in popular culture that he has become nothing short of an icon.

However, even though he is an icon now, *Peter Pan* was extremely popular in his own time as well. Poet Rupert Brooke was supposedly addicted to the play and wrote in his journal:

“As I stroll through Cambridge, Trinity Street fades and I find myself walking by the shore of the Mermaid's Lagoon, King's Chapel often shrinks before my eyes, and rises, and is suddenly the House in the Tree-tops” (qtd. In Byatt np).

And still today theatrical productions of *Peter Pan* draw in large numbers. As was common practice even in Barrie’s time, it is usually performed at Christmas time. However, whereas Barrie’s play does contain elements of the traditional British pantomime (Stirling 84), nowadays the Christmas performances are full modern pantomimes. Last year, there were at least three large scale *Peter Pan* pantomimes performed in Britain (“Best Pantomimes to watch this Christmas 2018” np).

The problem with the many adaptations and the general idea that many people have surrounding the work, however, is that it does not seem to be the same work that was published by Barrie. Seville mentions present cultural ideas of Peter Pan are “sugar-coated” (150). The difficulty in the case of Peter Pan, though, is that there is not one “definitive” text to go back to. The character Peter Pan first appeared in Barrie’s novel *The Little White Bird* (1902). He subsequently wrote and staged the play *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn’t Grow Up* in 1904. The chapters with Peter Pan from his previous novel were published separately in 1906 and Barrie published the novel *Peter and Wendy*, adapting his play, in 1911. He finally published a print version of his play in 1928. So, as Ohmer describes, what is usually described as “the narrative of Peter Pan” actually consists of a collection of text produced over a period of thirty years (151).

Studies on Peter Pan, and children’s literature in general, are a fairly new field. The difficulty regarding Peter Pan is also that as a work of children’s literature, it is often only read by adults today, making it a “hybrid work” (Holmes 134). The issue of children’s literature that was published in the past and is today mostly read by adults has caused debate among scholars, who are interested cultural concept of childhood (Holmes 134). Most of the earlier studies on Peter Pan mainly focus on the many transparent biographical elements Barrie added to his texts. Corcuera and Di Biase mention that after Barrie had met the Llewelyn Davies family, he and the family’s children created many adventures in Kensington Gardens. These adventures eventually became *The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island* (1901), of which many aspects are present in the *Peter Pan* (viii). This focus on biographical elements led to a psychoanalytic approach to the story and laid the groundworks for academic studies into the *Peter Pan* texts. Later, scholars focused on issues of gender, empire, nature and folklore. More recently, the focus has been on the lasting appeal and allure of *Peter Pan* (Holmes 136-139). That is also the direction this thesis will take, while also focussing on the phenomenon where the *Peter Pan* in contemporary popular culture and Barrie’s texts seem to be from two different worlds.

Paul Davis explained the phenomenon described above as a “culture text,” through which he analyses another popular work in Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. As he describes it, there are two texts: “The one that Dickens wrote in 1843 and the one that we collectively remember” (2). The same has happened to *Peter Pan*, even though it is difficult to say the text that Barrie wrote, since he rewrote and revised so many times there is not a single text, but what White and Tarr call a “textual history” (viii). While looking at the idea

of a culture-text, this thesis aims to answer the question: to what extent have revisions within the characters, setting and genres of the four main texts on the character Peter Pan aided in it becoming a culture-text? To answer this question, this thesis will look at the four main Peter Pan text: *The Little White Bird*, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, *Peter Pan*, or *the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, and *Peter and Wendy*. It will analyse the different main characters, settings, and genres that the texts have displayed to see how they might have had such a lasting appeal and ultimately how this appeal created the culture text. The expectation is that the characters, setting and genre have changed in smaller or larger scale over every publication of the work, which created a different experience for readers starting in Barrie's own time. Because all these readers consumed an ever so slightly different version of the work, it creates the effect that is usually only found in text that are passed down orally where everyone tells a different story.

By looking at what John Bryant calls his "fluid text" the thesis will analyse the main texts written by Barrie. This form of analysis focuses on the effects of revision and different versions of certain texts. When analysing the culture text of the *Carol* in his book *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, Davis looks at the way the setting of the text, its characters and its different perceptions of genre changes outlook on the text through time. For the scope of this thesis, that would be too much. However, as there are four main texts, this thesis will look at the fluidity of the texts when also focusing on the characters, setting, and genres. Bryant argues that all texts are fluid, that there are always multiple versions. This can be as small as going from a draft to a published version, but, as in Barrie's case, there may be different versions within one work. There is thus a difference between the *work* Peter Pan, which contains all the different *texts* that Barrie wrote and published.

The first chapter will explain the theories behind Davis' "culture-text" and Bryant's "Fluid text" in more detail. The fluid text will be contextualised within the work of Peter Pan. For the culture text it is impossible to ignore Davis extensive analysis of the *Carol*, which will thus be mentioned. The chapter will, however, contrast it to *Peter Pan* to see where and how some parts of their respective culture text might be different or similar.

The second chapter will provide a textual analysis of *The Little White Bird*, and its separately produced chapters *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. It will look at the culture-text elements and textual fluidity of Peter Pan, minor characters within Kensington Gardens and the three main characters form the overarching novel. It will then look at the two settings as the urban environment of London and the traditionally natural world present in Kensington Gardens. Lastly, it will look at issues of genre ambiguity, as *The Little White Bird* had an

intended adult audience and the Peter Pan chapters were republished as a children's book. It will also look at elements of oral tradition and folklore that are present in both texts.

The third chapter will provide a textual analysis on the play *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* and the novel *Peter and Wendy*. This chapter will look at the characters Peter Pan, Captain Hook and Wendy. It will look at dual dynamics for the first two and issues of gender for the last. The settings here are London, this time as a "real" world and Neverland as a "secondary" or "fantasy world." In terms of genre, there is a distinction between the theatrical convention of the play and the issues of children's literature in the novel. The chapter will look at both to see how these and all the other aspects created an appealing work of texts that eventually all became in some way or another part of the culture-text.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

1.1 John Bryant - The Fluid Text

John Bryant opens his book on Fluid text by saying “the fluid text is a fact, not a theory” (1). He explains this claim saying that this is because all works exist in more than one version. This goes against many critics over the years who have always lobbied for the idea of works having “definitive” texts, but Bryant argues against this, saying that even if the versions of a work are only the published one and several unpublished drafts, this makes it fluid (3). It is exactly this what makes it difficult to analyse texts as fluid. Often there is only one text available for the general public. However, for many texts, including *Peter Pan*, we do have multiple versions available.

When talking about texts as fluid, it is easy to talk about the author’s intent in different versions of it. Over the years, discussing authorial intent has almost become a crime within the field of literary criticism and is defined as the “intentional fallacy.” Bryant argues that this position is rather extreme, and keeping in mind authorial intent is needed to visualise the fluidity of different texts. However, it is important to note that here still, there is a difference between reader interpretation and author’s intent, and both should be analysed separately (8, 9)

Within the analysis of fluid texts, there is a distinction between three different states of being within literature: works, texts and documents. A *work* consists out of the authors intentions and visions, the intangible concepts (31) and the collective effort put into the piece by writers, editors and culture (89). A *text* is what is written down, the wording of it, and the *document* is everything from the first manuscript to the published versions (32). When looking at *Peter Pan*, then, there is a distinction between the work (or in this case works) that were within the minds of both Barrie, producers of his plays and the actors giving life to the characters on stage, all that he wrote down, and the many different published versions of the overarching text.

One of the difficulties within fluid text analysis is in the definition of different versions. To what extent, for instance, must two text vary to be defined as different “versions” of the same text (70). Some only see a text as a new version whenever whole scenes are added or removed, but in some instances, a single typo could change the meaning of an entire text and could thus create a whole new version (66). To make defining versions easier, Bryant proposes eight determinants. The most important are that versions must always be linked to each other, are revisions on a level that creates a macroscopic difference to an

earlier version, and that all versions are physical and have audiences (88-90). For Peter Pan, all these apply, as the most important aspect connecting all the texts discussed within this thesis are about the character Peter Pan, but are revised, or at least different, in plot, genre, and other characters, but do have physical copies.

The creation of these physical copies, argues Bryant, consists of three different modes. The first is *creation*, which covers anything from the first scribbles to the documents that are ready to be sent to publishers. Looking at Peter Pan, there are many documents and versions that were not published, the most important one being *The Boy Castaways*, but also several versions of the play that were revised by Barrie time and time again. The second mode is *publication*, which is quite logically any manuscript or print publication. The third mode is *adaptation*, which is here defined as “transforming into a different format or genre” (90-93).

Concluding, Bryant sums up his theory by saying “a literary work is more than the sum of its texts; it is the combined energies of individual and social forces which through the process of authorial, editorial, and cultural revision evolve from one version to the next and emerge from time to time as documents to be read by readers (112). I will argue throughout this thesis that Barrie’s different text on Peter Pan are a prime example of this.

1.2 Paul Davis - The Culture Text

When talking about Peter Pan, it could be said there is a stark difference between the original texts written by Barrie, and the idea surrounding Peter Pan that most people recognise today and is most prevalent in popular culture. Seville mentions that the Peter Pan has become more of a stereotype, a trope almost, instead of a character from a text, and that because of that, his name is more associated with a general idea within culture than directly with Barrie’s work (144). Paul Davis described this phenomenon with the term “culture text” in his work *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*. Szwydky further explains the idea of a culture text through an example of Frankenstein. There are multiple versions of the text as it has been continuously rewritten throughout time. Not many people would know the actual text as it was published, but they will all recognise the idea, the culture text, of *Frankenstein* (131). She concludes that this “culture text” model is very useful in studying the place of novels within cultural memory (132).

Davis explains the phenomenon of the culture text by analysing Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol*. Within his analysis, he says that in contrast to folk stories, that are passed on orally through generations, culture texts like the Carol are first written down, but later passed on by

retellings and adaptations (1). He explains that most remember the *Carol* as “a cluster of phrases, images and ideas [that] echo in our minds. Yet other parts of Dickens’s story have almost disappeared from our folk version (1). To sum up the general idea of a culture text, he mentions that the *Carol* “could be said to have two texts, the one that Dickens wrote in 1843 and the one that we collectively remember” (2).

The question that appears now is *how* a text becomes a culture text. In the first place, as Davis argues, it is because of its readers. The interaction of readers and texts is what gives meaning to any literary work, but, in the case of culture texts, readers create new versions (13). These versions appear either through adaptations, but also through different readings of a text overtime. In the case of the *Carol*, as mentioned by Davis, it has been received as several different genres (14). In the end, a culture texts is “the sum of all its versions, of all its revisions, parodies, and piracies,” they become “cultural property” (5) and are born anew in each iteration (15). Other than oral folk stories, these stories “begin as a text and become a culture text” (5).

Looking at a text such as *Peter Pan*, it is impossible to ignore its ties to children’s literature. Davis explains that one of the reasons the *Carol* ultimately became a culture text is partially because of its reception as children’s literature during the first decade of the twentieth century (14). It was, in that time, compared to works like *Peter Pan*. Davis mentions that some thought of the *Carol* as “a literary *Peter Pan*, a text that would not grow up” (14). As the title suggests, this thesis argues that *Peter Pan* as a (culture) text did, in fact, grow up. Davis mentions that some argued that the *Carol* mixed fairy tale themes with darker themes to go from a children’s story to a mythlike tale (14). The same could be said of *Peter Pan*, even though there are many differences between the texts. The appeal of children’s fiction is often due to their duality. They capture childlike innocence, but also portray a tension between this innocence and adult experience (106).

By looking at the *Carol* in its multiple receptions, Davis gives an elaborate overview of all the reasons the *Carol* turned into the culture text it is today. As mentioned above, the *Carol*, went from one text written by Dickens to a cultural idea. The case of *Peter Pan* is different because of the several different texts that were written and published by Barrie himself. This thesis will thus look at the different aspects present in the work and texts written by Barrie that made it into a culture text almost immediately after the play’s premiere in 1904. Davis considers the reception and different analyses of the *Carols* characters, most notably Scrooge himself, setting within urban London, and genre, as it was received as

(children's) literature, and was produced as a play many times over. These are then the three main aspects of the Peter Pan texts this thesis will look at.

Chapter 2: *The Little White Bird* and *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*

The Little White Bird is the first work by Barrie in which the character Peter Pan appears. It was published in 1902, and the chapters in which Peter Pan appears were subsequently published as a children's book with the title *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1906) after the popularity of both the novel and the play which premiered in 1904. In this novel, Captain W observes the relationship between Mary A and her fiancé as they struggle to make ends meet. He secretly provides them with money and later befriends their son, David. The two of them regularly meet in Kensington Gardens where they have many 'adventures.' These adventures are the reason for the Captain to tell David the story of Peter Pan and how he came to live in the Gardens. The novel ends on the sentimental note that eventually, David will have to go to school and grow up, and the narrator will have to let him go. He thus decides to write down the experiences in a book he calls *The Little White Bird*. This chapter will analyse the novel as a whole and the chapters about Peter Pan by looking at the effects of the characters, both in the overarching novel and the 'story-within-a-story' of Peter Pan, the settings of urban London and the natural Gardens and the issues of genre to show that this early text by Barrie contains elements that would eventually make up the culture-text of Peter Pan.

2.1 Characters

2.1.1 Peter Pan

In this version of the story, Peter Pan is only a week old:

"His age is one week, and though he was born so long ago he has never had a birthday, nor is there the slightest chance of his ever having one. The reason is that he escaped from being a human when he was seven days' old; he escaped by the window and flew back to the Kensington Gardens" (97).

He can, however young, still move about and communicate with birds, fairies, and other children throughout the story after he flies out his window. Most people will not think of Peter Pan as an infant, but most other characteristics that make up the character that is so beloved today are present here in one way or another, including him flying, his involvement with "lost children," and his ties to mythology.

Peter's ability to fly is not a natural ability or because of fairy dust. The text explains that all children are birds before they are born and become babies when sent to their mothers.

When still very young, all children remember being birds and try to fly away. The narrator tells David that he can remember by rubbing his temples and recall:

“All children could have such recollections if they would press their hands hard to their temples, for, having been birds before they were human, they are naturally a little wild during the first few weeks, and very itchy at the shoulders, where their wings used to be” (98).

This shows that even though the narrative of Peter Pan is a ‘story-within-a-story’ here, it is taken as truth by children like David. When children grow older, they become aware of their human nature and lose this ability of flight. Peter is an exception to this, even though he cannot fly, he is not entirely human either. The bird Solomon describes him as “betwixt-and-between” (102). His ties to birds shows in his character in many ways, even in the later texts. The reason they are discussed here is because they are explained in this text, whereas they are merely present in later texts.

Peter’s identity of being not entirely human and not entirely bird, and his life in Kensington Gardens in general is very much rooted in and often alludes to British fairy tale and folk traditions. One of these, as Kavey argues, is the myth of changelings. She explains them as “elves who stole human children and brought them to live in their world, leaving behind replacements in the shape of old or sickly elves” (75). In this text, Peter Pan does not “steal” children. He does try to convince Maimie, the first girl to stay behind in the Gardens after “lock-up time” to stay with him. He later gives himself the job of burying all the children that stay behind in the Gardens, even though he is not always entirely sure whether they are alive or dead. The stealing of children is not to be taken literally here but should be interpreted as him taking care of all the children who are lost in the Gardens at night. In later texts, Peter is seen “stealing” the Darling children, and audiences would have recognised this allusion (Kavey 85).

Another folk tradition in the character of Peter Pan is the reference to the god Pan in Greek mythology. This god, as Kavey explains, is usually depicted as a “half-man and half-goat,” and thus could be said to be not quite human and not quite animal. Peter Pan in this version of the story is also described as being “betwixt-and-between” (102), being half-human and half-bird. His half being is further established when the fairies in Kensington Gardens accept his presence, while they are known for killing all children who stay out in the Gardens at night. The story further alludes to the god Pan when Peter is left a goat by Maimie, which later plays an important role in the story. As mentioned, the text here describes a “fluid text moment” (Bryant 64) when the narrator tells David:

“If you ask your mother whether she knew about Peter Pan when she was a little girl she will say, “Why, of course, I did, child,” and if you ask her whether he rode on a goat in those days she will say, “What a foolish question to ask; certainly he did.” Then if you ask your grandmother whether she knew about Peter Pan when she was a girl, she also says, “Why, of course, I did, child,” but if you ask her whether he rode on a goat in those days, she says she never heard of his having a goat.” (97).

This illustrates that the story of Peter Pan is not a fixed one within the text. A similar occurrence happens later when Barrie wrote the play. After its premiere in 1904 it ended with the scene in which Wendy goes back to Neverland for Peter’s spring cleaning. In 1908, Barrie added another scene in which Peter finds a grown-up Wendy and her daughter, Jane. He then comes back for Jane each year and it is explained this happens to every Darling girl. If you were to ask an audience member in 1904 the name of Wendy’s daughter, they would not know. An audience member in 1908, though, would. Both this occurrence in the text of *The Little White Bird* and the adding of a scene in real life show textual fluidity, and, as this thesis argues, that the fluidity of the text and many audiences seeing or reading a different text of the same work eventually lead to a culture text.

The goat gifted by Maimie Mannering also connects Peter to the (sexual) rejection symbolised by Pan (Kavey 79). After Maimie rejects Peter’s proposal of marriage and goes back to her human life and family, she gifts him the toy goat that the fairies turn real for Peter. As Kavey explains, Peter expresses the Pan-like and child-like behaviour easily going past his mourning for Maimie and living his life as happy as ever. He turns into a shepherd with his goat and scours the garden for lost children at night, either saving or burying them and thus expressing the herder-like characteristics of the god Pan (79-80). The fact that there is a Peter without a goat, and a Peter with a goat shows his rejection. Even though he goes on about life merrily, he is changed ever so slightly, and so is his story.

Their musical pipes are the second attribute that Peter and the god Pan share. They are also another link to how Peter is not quite human and not quite bird: “Peter’s heart was so glad that he felt he must sing all day long, just as the birds sing for joy, but, being part human, he needed an instrument, so he made a pipe of reeds” (104). Kavey explains this link to birds as the pipes are “a human invention that allows him to express his birdlike joy” (80). Two of Peter Pan’s main characteristics in this text are thus heavily connected to the mythological figure Pan, implying that Peter Pan himself was created as a form of mythmaking. This is further implied by the story ‘explaining’ several occurrences in the

Gardens. It is said, for example, that the nightingales men hear at night walking by the Gardens is Peter playing his pipe. The little house that Peter and the fairies build for Maimie is something that supposedly everyone has heard of but never seen:

“In a kind of way everyone may see it, but what you see is not really it, but only the light in the windows. You see the light after Lock-out Time. David, for instance, saw it quite distinctly far away among the trees as we were going home from the pantomime” (128-129).

The fluidity explained earlier is part of this as well, as it expresses characteristics of folk stories, which were told, not written down. This way, the character Peter Pan in this novel combines childlike imagination with allusions to myth and folk tradition to create something that everyone believes they knew all along, even when they did not. Through this character the text expresses an oral tradition within a written text.

2.1.2 Fairies and birds of Kensington Gardens

After lock-up time, when all the humans leave the Gardens, they are occupied by fairies and birds. During the daytime, birds are still there, but fairies in the story disguise themselves as flowers. They are supporting characters within the narrative of Peter Pan but do attribute to the mythmaking and folk traditions present here in an important way, which is why there are discussed separately.

Like the changeling myth that Peter is partially based on, stories about or involving fairies have a long tradition in the British cultural imagination (Kavey 85) and were often present in fiction of that time (Seville 151). Kavey further explains that while fairies were often used to express social critique by portraying them as a more ‘evil’ or less accomplished version of royalty or court, the fairies in Barrie’s story portray a more hedonist and positive image of the fairy folk (86-87). They still have the characteristics of the more ‘trickster’ fairies that were more common, as they do cause trouble for children that they dislike. However, in this story, it is the fairies that build a house around Maimie when she falls asleep in the snow at night and the fairy queen grants Peter some wishes, which is how he reattributes his ability of flight.

Aside from the Pagan traditions that are visible in the fairies, they, like Peter Pan, are connected to parts of Greek mythology. Most notably they represent the Olympian Gods in their family dynamics: “it is a very noticeable thing that, in fairy families, the youngest is always chief person, and usually becomes a prince or princess” (119). In the myth about the Olympian Gods, it was Zeus, the youngest, who outsmarted his father and became the ruler

of Gods and men (Encyclopaedia Britannica NP). If “ruler” is replaced by prince or princess, as the fairies call the leader, it clearly states the similarities. This way, the fairies continue to show many pagan and mythological elements in the story.

The other important figure within the Gardens is Solomon Caw, the old bird who lives on the island in the Serpentine, and with whom Peter stays in his first days in the Gardens when he forgets how to fly. He is described to be the ‘wise old mentor’ figure to Peter when they first meet: “He promised very kindly, however, to teach Peter as many of the bird ways as could be learned by one of such an awkward shape. [...] and certainly he was a wise old fellow” (102). He is also the one that chooses which bird will go to which mother to become a baby and is thus an important character for the mythmaking of the story. He is known for his wise mottoes: “Solomon had several excellent mottoes for keeping them at their work, such as “Never put off laying to-day, because you can lay to-morrow,” and “In this world there are no second chances.”” It is when Peter does not listen to this last one that he finds the window of his mother’s room closed and realises he cannot go back. He is now stuck as betwixt-and-between forever. So, it is through Solomon that the story gives the moral lessons that are so well known in fairy tales and mythological stories. So, both the fairies and Solomon show their own ties to myth and folk tale. It is also because of stories from their parents that children know about them, once again pointing out how important textual fluidity and oral tradition are here.

2.1.3 Captain W, Mary A, and David

These three characters are arguably the most important of the overarching story of *The Little White Bird*. Captain W serves as a somewhat surrogate father for Mary A’s son David, who does still have his biological father. It is here that the biographical elements in the Peter Pan stories come through. Many have linked the Peter Pan stories to the relationship J. M. Barrie had with Sylvia Lewellyn Davies and her sons, whom he met one day in Kensington Gardens. The connection between Barrie and Captain W is a simple one. Holmes explains that biographical studies of Peter Pan have been and remain a trend (135). On the subject, Hollindale says this biographical fascination with Peter Pan is mostly due to *The Little White Bird*, which he says is “a fictionalised version of Barrie’s relationship with the Davies family” which lead to this trend continuing into other Peter Pan stories (qtd. in Holmes 135).

David can be described as a double-figure with Peter Pan. Captain W describes him by saying: “No sooner do you cast eyes on him than you are thinking of birds. It is difficult to believe that he walks to the Kensington Gardens; he always seems to have alighted there: and

where I to scatter crumbs I opine he come and peck” (6). Even though in this novel, all children are birds before they are born, Captain W describing David as if he were a bird can signal that he is, like Pan, somewhere in between. The naming of David after Barrie’s brother who passed away at a young age (Jack 2) and him being a Peter Pan figure is an easy conclusion. Death is, as Kavey describes, an important theme in all Peter Pan texts (98). She also proposes the idea that all children allow two worlds to exist in their lives; their real ones, and their imaginative “Neverlands” (97), an idea that is also very prevalent in later Peter Pan texts. Later in life, these imaginative worlds disappear, but children who die at a young age remain in their Neverlands forever. This idea is expressed in Captain W not wanting David to grow up and expresses an almost Freudian longing for childlike innocence. The mythmaking of the Peter Pan figure is present in David’s world, which makes it seem more “realistic” to readers. This way the Peter Pan myth becomes one present in the world of a reader, and the written text reaches the level of a folk tale.

2.2 Setting

In this novel there is a distinct difference between the urban world and the natural world, but not in the traditional sense. The urban world is, of course, the city of London in which many of the interactions between Captain W and Mary A take place. The natural world here is the Kensington Gardens. During the day, the Captain and David have many adventures, but more importantly the story of Peter Pan is set here.

Fairies and children are inherently connected. The novel explains: “When the first baby laughed for the first time, his laugh broke into a million pieces, and they all went skipping about. That was the beginning of fairies” (119). Kavey explains that when children moved away from nature and into the cities, the fairies followed and moved into Kensington Gardens. This means the Gardens as a location should be seen as natural area, and a place where children can escape their parents (89). The story of Peter Pan within the novel creates mythology surrounding the Gardens. For example, when children misbehave here, they become ‘marked’ by the fairies and bad things happen to them because of the fairies: “Nearly all the nasty accidents you meet within the Gardens occur because the fairies have taken an ill-will to you, and so it behoves you to be careful what you say about them” (131). It gives the Gardens pastoral characteristics and through fantasy elements it is the early version of Neverland. The difference is that this is an existing place, which adds to the mythmaking aspects of the text. Besides the oral traditions that it characterises, the fantasy world being in an existing area gives adds to the mythmaking for the reader.

2.3 Genre

The Little White Bird was published as adult literature. However, that the chapters that were later published as the separate novel *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* are essentially a fairy tale within the larger text. Williams explains it is difficult in this day and age to decide what does and does not count as a ‘fairy tale,’ and whether this category only contains ‘classics’ like the ones written down by the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Anderson, or to see it more broadly and include, for example, a novel such as *Jane Eyre*, which contains many elements of a ‘Cinderella story’ (565). She also explains, though, nearly all fairy tales contain some form of elements from folklore and myth, and that seen historically, fairy tales are embedded in a larger story (565-566). Both elements are present in *The Little White Bird*, as the story of Peter Pan is embedded within the larger narrative, and contains traditional British folkloric elements such as explained above. Peter Pan can be connected both to the myth of changelings and the mythological figure Pan. Arguably, these aspects combined with the first-person narrative by Captain W, the chapters on Peter Pan in *The Little White Bird* contain more characteristics of the fairy tale than the novel *Peter and Wendy*, which is also often read as a fairy tale novel. The issues of assigning a genre to this novel will be discussed in the next chapter.

These lines in the beginning of the chapter “Peter Pan” show that this is a story that everyone knows, but all know it in a different way:

“First, I tell it to him, and then he tells it to me, the understanding being that it is quite a different story; and then I retell it with his additions, and so we go on until no one could say whether it is more his story or mine” (98).

This shows once again that an oral tradition is very important in the story and the version read here might not be the version somebody else knows. In other words, the story is fluid. Ironically, as Captain W says, through many additions to the work throughout more than a century, this version of Peter Pan the one most people know today. The main difference in the oral tradition described here and the actual text is that this was written down, and had an intended adult audience. Because of its fragmented narrative in story-within-the-story, it is difficult to assign a definitive genre to this text. Especially because the chapters on Peter Pan were republished with an intended children audience. McGavock describes Barrie having difficulty with fixity and closure as one of the reasons he kept revising Peter Pan and his origin story (197). This difficulty is also visible in the ambiguity of genre in the entire work of Peter Pan, and within this one text in particular. The genre ambiguity somehow does speak to a broad audience.

Chapter 3: *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* and *Peter and Wendy*

This chapter discusses the play *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, which premiered in 1904 and was published in 1928. The play was turned into the novel *Peter and Wendy*, which was published in 1911. In these texts, Peter Pan visits the Darling household to regain his shadow and ends up taking the three children to Neverland. Here they have many adventures with Wendy as their mother. When Wendy decides it is time to go home there is a final showdown with Captain Hook and the pirates before they all return to London. Peter then comes back a year later to take Wendy away for his spring cleaning. In 1908 Barrie added the scene *When Wendy Grew Up - an Afterthought*. Here, Peter comes to get Wendy for the second time only to discover her daughter Jane. This scene is the last chapter of the novel as well. Though the overarching plot remains the same, many revisions were made in going from the first performance of the play, to the novel, and finally to the publication of the play. Considering the revisions, this chapter will follow a similar structure as the last one. It will first discuss the characters, then the setting, and finally the issues of genre within both the play and novel.

3.1 Characters

3.1.1 Peter Pan and Captain Hook

One of the most interesting dynamics in these two works is the one between Peter Pan and Captain Hook. The latter, of course, was not present in *The Little White Bird* in any way or form, contrary to most characters. He was however, part of the photo memoirs of Barrie and the Llewellyn Davies boys, *The Boy Castaways*, as Captain Swarthy, and some might argue his origins are present in Captain W. Friedman mentions that in the first draft of the play, there was no Captain Hook, because Peter Pan was still the antagonist (188). McGavock also mentions that the inclusion of the Captain in the play was purely practical: "The stagehands needed a front cloth scene to give them time to change the scenery" (207). However, nowadays it seems impossible to mention the two characters without the other, so it is important to analyse how exactly this dynamic between the characters work to find out how this happened.

Peter Pan would be the faultless hero and Captain Hook the villain representing the miseries of growing up, when looking at the text in black and white and fairy tale terms. But as Friedman argues, this reading of the play and novel is too simple (189). Hook is very

clearly based on another notorious pirate in literature. When first appearing in the novel, Hook is described as “the only man that the Sea-Cook feared (62). This is a clear allusion to *Treasure Island*’s Long John Silver (Friedman 193). This means that Hook is in fact a typical pirate character, who are rarely portrayed as mature in literature of the time. Friedman describes pirates in literature as “boy-men who spend their lives playing games, dressing up in costumes, and living by their own rules” (195). Hook is therefore more the older version of Peter Pan, instead of the grown up one. This is visible in both the play and the novel, as the pirates and Hook want a mother just as much as the lost boys do when Smee tells Wendy: “see here honey [...] I’ll save you if you promise to be my mother” (164). It is clearly stated that Hook is not a native of Neverland: “he had been at a famous public school; and its traditions still clung to him like garments” (157). The traditions show in Hook’s constant obsession with “good form” and his feminine appearance with long hair, earrings and overall emphasis on his appearance give him feminine characteristics. The issues of gender and masculinity make him a dual character. He is both a child and a grown up, both masculine and feminine (Friedman 201). This way, Hook is the character that really displays the issues surrounding growing up.

Peter Pan in this text is not described as a “half-bird,” but he does still have some very bird-like characteristics. As Kavey describes, he can fly easily and for long periods of time where the Darling children barely manage to keep afloat with fairy dust and almost die several times when they fall asleep mid-air (77). Peter, however, is described in the novel as being “so light that if you got behind him and blew, he went faster” (103). He is thus still a dual figure who is not quite human, and it is the lack of humanity that blocks him from becoming the typical “child-hero” of the text. Peter not being the hero of the narrative is described further during their adventures in Neverland. Peter is not always on the same side, for instance: “It was a sanguinary affair, and especially interesting as showing one of Peter’s peculiarities, which was that in the middle of a fight he would suddenly change sides” (92). These two examples show the dual nature of the character. Both Hook and Pan are not evil or good, nor are they fully masculine or feminine.

The duality of the protagonist and antagonist in fantasy stories is not an uncommon one, as argued by Yeoman. He explains of Peter and Hook:

“They both have difficulty relating to others; they are isolated and self-centred; each is motivated by a lust for power and control; and each fears the passage of time with the inevitable changes and transformations it occasions ... Both

Pan and Hook enjoy extraordinary powers, yet each suffers a desperate and self-destructive loneliness” (qtd. in Friedman 211).

Their duality is expressed, for example, in the scene where Peter and Wendy are on Marooners’ Rock, and Peter can perfectly personify Hook to save Tiger Lily. Hook and the pirates are dumbfounded and cannot figure out what the phantom voice is until Peter Pan literally tells them “In a moment Hook was himself again, and Smee and Starkey were his faithful henchmen” (105). The fight that follow also shows the only real difference between the two, as Peter cannot be unfair, but Hook can. When Hook fights unfairly it is “not the pain of this but its unfairness [that] dazed Peter (107). Because of their dual nature, and despites Hook’s apparent demise at the end of the novel, the text gives the idea that neither can exist without the other.

3.1.2 Wendy

Wendy, like Hook not part of the text until the play premiered in 1904. However, it Maimie Mannering in *The Little White Bird* was an early version of what would become Wendy. Her role within the narrative is somewhat up for debate. Barrie once said that Wendy might have “bored her way in at last whether we wanted her or not. It may be that even Peter did not really bring her to the Never Land of his free will, but merely pretended to do so because she would not stay away” (84) (qtd. in Billone 186). And indeed, interpretations in which Wendy is no more than a naïve girl who somewhat resembles another princess taking care of seven little people is possible (McGavock 209). However, more interestingly it could be argued that, as a mother, Wendy is the only real ‘grown-up’ in Neverland. Kincaid agrees with this view and even goes so far as to describe Wendy as “an intruder, a disturber of the peace and play, sets up a school, and is last seen on a broomstick, where she should have been all along” and he mentions that Hook is “only a child playing the part of a grownup” (qtd. in Billone 186). This brings up gender issues in which boys and men could remain “boy-men” whereas girls were expected to become mothers once they reached a certain age deriving from the “cult of the little girl” (Roth 54). The novel even opens by stating that Wendy knew she must grow up when she was only two years old. Once she is, she becomes the mother and literally replaces Mrs. Darling. While Mr. Darling still lives in the final chapter “Mrs Darling was now dead and forgotten” (200) and when Peter finds a grown-up Wendy and her daughter he asks “Hallo, is it a new one?” (204) and she takes Wendy’s place in doing Peter’s spring cleaning.

However, Wendy is arguably the character with the most agency, as she is the one who makes the decision to go home (Friedman 191). This way, she is not just a naïve girl, but the one who drives the plot and thus a hero in her own right. The novel describes how everything that happens in Neverland is repetitive “The lost boys were out looking for Peter, the pirates were out looking for the lost boys, the redskins were out looking for the pirates, and the beasts were out looking for the redskins” (58). This dynamic changes when Wendy comes to Neverland. Which is why Kincaid described her as a “disturbance” (qtd. in Billone 186). She brings English domestic values by becoming a mother and tries to lead the narrative towards a happy lovers ending that many folktales follow, but Peter seems to be following a different narrative and remains in the same static pace that he was in, leading Wendy to choose to go home (Stirling 90). She is thus both a heroine and a traditional “Angel in the House” deriving from older Victorian values (Morse 285).

3.2 Setting

Both the play and the novel are set in two locations, London and Neverland. These are respectively the “real world” and the “fantasy world.” However, Neverland is both a location the Darling children travel to, and a metaphor every child’s imagination:

“I don’t know whether you have ever seen a map of a person’s mind. Doctors sometimes draw maps of other parts of you, and your own map can become intensely interesting, but catch them trying to draw a map of a child’s mind, which is not only confused, but keeps going round all the time. There are zigzag lines on it [...] It would be an easy map if that were all, but there is also first day at school, religion, fathers, the round pond [...], and so on, and either these are part of the island or they are another map showing through, and it is all rather confusing, especially as nothing will stand still” (7).

By this logic, everyone has their own “Neverland.” This is once again established when the Darlings arrive and they say they recognize certain parts of the island. But looking at this as two actual locations, the logical division would be to say London is the “real world” and Neverland is the “fantasy world.” Nikolajeva explains that an important aspect of the fantasy world is that it is difficult to say where they are exactly (“Aesthetic Approaches” 139). Neverland’s location is: “Second to the right, and straight on till morning” (Barrie 45), so it definitely fits that description. Where it does not fit with this description is that Nana, a dog, can be a nurse. The dog knows everything about taking care of children, without anyone thinking it even a bit strange.

It is anything but realistic. Mr. Darling too, who is supposed to be the typical grown up, is more concerned with Nana's opinion of him than that of his neighbours (Friedman 192). This shows there is a distinction between the two worlds, but the real world does have fantasy elements.

Just as the fantasy world is included in the real world, so is the real world included in the fantasy world. Most notably, because of John's top hat. After saving Peter with its nest, the Neverbird finds John's hat floating in the lagoon, it decides to use it as a nest (Friedman 193). After that a fantasy bird uses a real object, the top hat, as something it is not supposed to be. The fantasy and real world then, are not necessarily two distinct worlds, but are in some way interrelated. Fox argues that it is because of the Neverland in children's minds. They are affected by elements from the real, or adult, world, which then creates new images that are formed within the space between real and imaginary (255). The worlds within Peter Pan are thus not fully "real" and not fully "fantasy." Davis argued that the difference between the *Carol* and *Peter Pan* is that Scrooge is affected in life by his experiences in the "fantasy world" and the Darlings go home and their life does not change (117). However, the divide between fantasy and reality is not wholly black and white and whereas Neverland has not changed the adult lives of the Darlings, they have changed the everlasting life of Peter Pan, as he has a mother now: "When Margaret grows up she will have a daughter, who is to be Peter's mother in turn; and thus it will go on, so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless" (Barrie 207).

3.3 Genre

3.3.1 Theatre

Peter Pan; or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow up premiered at the Duke of York theatre in 1904 and was so popular critics wondered at its "cult-like appeal" and only revivals were performed during Barrie's lifetime for fear of criticism. Fans of the play went as far as hissing and booing actors who missed a line (Tuite 115, 116). Because of the play's popularity, it is safe to say that this iteration of the story has had a large contribution to the continuing popularity and eventual culture text of Peter Pan and aspects that are exclusive to this medium have had a lasting effect on the narrative. One audience might have seen Nina Boucicault originating the role, which resulted in darker sentiments of rebellion going by her own Irish identity and Barrie's identity as an "exiled Scot" (McGavock 199, Tuite 112). In contrast, American audiences saw Maude Adams portraying uniquely American

values, even raising the Stars and Stripes instead of the Union Jack after the scene where Pan defeats Captain Hook (Tuite 117, 119).

These names already suggest an interesting aspect of the play, namely that the character of Peter Pan on stage is almost always played by a woman. This was not necessarily Barrie's choice, as he had wanted a young boy to play Peter. Because of labour laws and Barrie's producer wanting to show off a leading actress this was changed (Tuite 109). Actresses playing boy parts in theatre at the time was nothing new. It was common practice in most Christmas Pantomimes at the time that the part of the "principal boy" was played by a woman, a tradition dating back to restoration theatre (Stirling 85). Barrie had also intended for Hook to be played by the same actress that played Mrs. Darling to further establish Peter Pan's hatred of mothers. It was the actor already cast as Mr. Darling who asked and was granted to play Hook and the roles of these characters are still often played by the same actor. Tuite notes this can alter the way the play is read and both roles address issues of gender and motherhood (110). Even though boy characters were played by women for their petite build and higher voices, many actresses did not necessarily play Peter very masculine. In the case of Maude Adams one of the crew members fell obsessively in love with her and the American press called her "the ideal American woman" (Tuite 121, 122).

Even though because of media we often have animated or other images of Peter Pan, many actresses helped shape the character and create buzz and popularity in the early days. As Tuite notes, where these actresses are often forgotten, Barrie's character never will be (126). It is important to note that, as with reading a novel, each audience member constitutes their own reading of a play and each actor plays a character in a slightly different way (Tuite 122). Due to the massive success of Peter Pan in its early theatrical days and several actresses playing the role in very different ways, many people saw the same text performed in an entirely different version. Therefore, it is likely many people already had massively different opinions on what exactly the character of Peter Pan was. It is because of this that the theatrical productions and in particular the gender issues surrounding the performance of the title character massively contributed to the fluidity of the text and thus the becoming of the culture text.

3.3.2 (Children's) Literature

As Holmes explains, the definition of "children's literature" has long been the topic of debate (133). In the end, the debate usually comes down to a few different questions: "are [these books] really for children, are they good for children, how do we evaluate such books,

why do adults read them, what is children's literature?" (Jones qtd. in Holmes 134). The novel *Peter and Wendy* was intended as children's literature and is still advertised as such today. However, whereas most Christmas pantomimes about Peter Pan are still advertised directly at children, the novel and the work have a much broader audience nowadays.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, Rose exemplifies the difficulty in categorising Peter Pan by explaining Peter Pan as being about adult desire for fantasy of childhood (qtd. in Holmes 135). It could therefore be effective to look at Peter Pan through a lens of fantasy fiction. Kincaid also argues that children's literature can work as a way for adults to express their desire for childlike qualities. In this way, both Rose and Kincaid place Barrie's novel in a hybrid place of being both children's and adult literature (qtd. in Holmes 136). This would explain the appeal the narrative has to both children and adults, and a distinction could be made wherein the culture text Peter Pan is usually directed at children, but especially the novel written by Barrie has a broader audience, at least today. To explain this broader appeal than was probably intended, McGavock says:

“*Peter Pan* masquerades as a simple and pure tale, yet this façade merely conceals the tools through which Barrie dismantles the enclosed and privileged genre it has entered. Barrie occupies two places simultaneously. He exists both within and outside categories” (211).

It is, therefore, hybrid in the sense that it is both for children and adults, and a simple yet complex narrative at the same time. As mentioned, a difference between the *Carol* and *Peter Pan* is that while Scrooge's life has been significantly changed by his ghostly fantasy visits, the Darling's adventures with Peter Pan have not changed the rest of their lives (Davis 117). The *Carol* is thus a tale of change for a “real world”, whereas Peter Pan is a story that is recognisable for everyone. The flight of the Darlings to Neverland were made by everyone as a child when looking at it as a metaphor for childlike imagination. As mentioned, all children have their own personal “Neverland,” their own fantasy worlds and their own Peter Pan to accompany their childhoods. But just like the Darlings, they must grow up and they forget. The easy to recognize tale combined with some darker and more difficult themes could explain why *Peter Pan* was a children's classic even before 1911, when Barrie published the novel. Rose says on the topic:

“J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* was retold before he had written it, and then rewritten after he had told it. By 1911 *Peter Pan* had already become such a universally acclaimed cultural phenomenon that Barrie himself could only intervene back into

its history from outside. The paradox is that Barrie's attempt to reclaim *Peter Pan* – [...] – failed. *Peter Pan* went on without him (67).

Because of its familiarity, but complexity in genre the text had and has an incredibly broad appeal, and through its many revisions became the phenomenon it still is today.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to see to what extent revisions within the characters, setting and genres of the four main texts within the *Peter Pan* work have aided in it becoming a culture-text. That there is a difference between the body of texts on *Peter Pan* as written by Barrie, and the *Peter Pan* that is present in contemporary cultural imagination was very clear when starting this thesis. How Paul Davis stated there were two versions of the *Carol*, so are there at least two versions of *Peter Pan*: Barrie's texts and "the one we collectively remember" (2). The aim was to see how the first constituted the latter through textual fluidity.

Looking at the characters the most notable thing is that the only character to appear by name in all texts is Peter Pan himself. Granted, he is also the character that changes the most throughout the revisions. He starts off as a baby of only a week old in *The Little White Bird* (1902), becomes boy played by an adult woman in the 1904 play and eventually a child of undetermined age in the 1911 novel. Contemporary adaptations tend to portray him as a (pre)teenager. Looking at this evolution, Munns argues that as the text grew up, so did Peter Pan (220). However, even though Peter Pan as a character changed in age, many other aspects to him remained similar. He has a connection to birds and folklore that make him not quite human, but as was shown "betwixt-and-between" (102). The allusions to the changeling myth and the god Pan are ones that would have been familiar to audiences and still help making Peter Pan into a character that fits into myth, folklore and fairy tale. For a boy that remains young forever, he changes quite extensively through the years.

After the premiere of the play, Peter Pan found a foe in Captain James Hook, whose origins are found in Barrie's time with the Llewelyn Davies boys as Captain Swarthy in *The Boy Castaways*. In these stories, it was always Barrie who played the captain. Taking this into account combined with Hook following the literary pirates as boy-men characteristic, it is easy to see Hook not as a grown up, but as an older child who longs for youth and envies Peter Pan. Although he is seen as the antagonists, the duality in his traits make give his character more depth within a relatively textbook and simple narrative, and even make him somewhat relatable for older readers.

The characters "taken" by Peter Pan are Wendy Darling and her predecessor Maimie Mannering. However, aside from being the girl enchanted by Peter, there is not much the two have in common. Maimie displays a rebellion that could almost be described as masculine when compared to Wendy's role as mother to the lost boy, which derives from the "cult of the little girl" and the idea of "the angel in the house" (Roth 54, Morse 284). Maimie is more

a plot-device to explain why and how Peter gained certain attributes, such as him burying children in the Gardens and his goat. Wendy, on the other hand, has more agency even when reduced to her role as mother. She is the one who affects Peter, as he now has a mother. Even if, eventually, it does not matter whether that mother is Wendy, her daughter, or granddaughter. And like the effect she had on Peter, her appeal made her name in almost as much of a phenomenon as Peter Pan's, as shown by a huge rise in girls with the name and playhouses now being called "Wendy houses" (Billone 186, Robertson 55).

The minor character appearing in Kensington Gardens in *The Little White Bird* create a fantasy world within these Gardens that are situated within urban London. In traditional folk tales, fairies only appear in very natural areas such as forests, but the text explains that they are connected to children and thus 'moved' to the Gardens. The fairies and the bird Solomon also appear in Neverland, the latter being renamed the Neverbird and fairies are mostly represented by Tinker Bell. However, where in the culture text Tinker Bell has become a permanent 'sidekick' to Peter, she is dead by the last chapter of the novel explains fairies do not live very long and Peter has already forgotten her.

The element of fairies was an often used one in fantasy stories. In both the earlier version of *The Little White Bird*, the play and *Peter and Wendy*, there is a division between the "real world" and the "fantasy world." However, in both stories, elements of the worlds are present in the other. In *The Little White Bird*, children are able to stay behind in the fantasy world because it is located in the real place Kensington Gardens, and Maimie can leave gifts for Peter to use in this world. In the play and *Peter and Wendy*, John's top hat stays behind as a nest for the Neverbird and Wendy brings "real" family dynamics to Neverland by becoming a mother to Peter. In the real world, it is notable that Nana the dog as a nurse is a fantasy element. So even when there is a distinct difference in the worlds at first glance, they are not so entirely different.

In terms of genre the texts are particularly ambiguous, as every text seems to fit one or more different genres. All texts contain elements from fairy and folk tales, but they are not folk tales. *The Little White Bird* was intended for an adult audience, but its most popular chapters were republished for children. The play contains elements from traditional Christmas pantomimes, but is not actually a pantomime. *Peter and Wendy* is a children's novel, but today has a very broad audience. So, all texts use elements from familiar genres, but eventually use them in a slightly different way.

The folk elements in the characters, setting and genre are particularly interesting, as these always originate in oral tradition and these texts were first written down. Nikolajeva

explains the omniscient narrator in the text fulfils the roles of storyteller, collector and publisher all at once (“Children’s Literature” 14, 15). This starts with the story-with-a-story concept of *The Little White Bird*, but storytelling remains an important theme in subsequent texts. One of Wendy’s main ‘tasks’ as mother is telling the lost boys stories. Ohmer explains how these separate texts that make up the work *Peter Pan* show how fantasy can be “constructed and reworked” (155). These texts were reworked, or as a fluid text analysis would put it, revised. But Bryant argued that the work in a fluid text is more than “the sum of its texts” (112). This is certainly true for *Peter Pan*. Particularly in different productions of the play, many audiences saw a show with the same lines, but different interpretations. While revivals of the play during Barrie’s life remained very true to the source, other production of the time already tried different approaches that were accepted by Barrie (Tuite 124). Ohmer describes how Barrie was a supporter of adapting his work into a film, and even wrote his own scenario acknowledging that every medium can show the work in a different way (155). So, it can be concluded that by revising, and almost adapting his own texts. Where Davis describes that Dickens lost authority of the *Carol* because of pirating (12), Barrie arguably never claimed authority over his. The revisions of the texts created an ambiguous work without a definitive origin story of characters that have many folkloric characteristics. This created a work that exists as an idea, instead of a text, in cultural imagination that eventually became more rooted than the text and created the culture-text.

This thesis only looked at the texts that were written and published by J. M. Barrie, and how these texts made up the initial culture text of *Peter Pan*. As mentioned before, however, over the more than a century that has passed since his first appearance, many adaptations of the Peter Pan work or other texts that contain the character have appeared. These adaptations helped in creating even more new images surrounding the culture text. A next step would thus logically be to look at the evolution of *Peter Pan* throughout its portrayal and reception adaptations over different decades and how this has affected the culture text. As with the *Carol*, *Peter Pan* was likely viewed differently in different periods of time, and it would be interesting not only to see how the culture text is today, but how it has been over this past century. It is safe to say, however, that even though Peter Pan is still an eternal boy after all this time, the culture text surrounding him has evolved, or more fitting, it has grown up.

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