JACLR

Journal of Artistic Creation & Literary Research

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Volume 1 Issue 1 (September 2013) Article 2

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"Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult"

Recommended Citation

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27 <https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

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Abstract: Childhood and adolescence are recurring themes in literature. From the archetype of the rogue in medieval literature (i.e the Spanish novella *Lazarillo de Tormes*, credited with founding the picaresque, genre which was to influence Cervantes and many other European writers after him) to Charles Dickens' or Mark Twain's young protagonists, children are used to offer sordid portraits of social realities. Many stories, with titles such as *Children's and Household Tales*, edited by the Grimm brothers, include narratives of hardship, where both women (hence the term 'household') and young people face a future devoid of opportunities. These figures have frequently been used in literature to present a portrait of middle classes as they struggled to make a place for themselves within the rapidly changing world of Western capitalism. This paper explores one of the main topics associated

Márquez García, Carmen M. “Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult.” JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

to young protagonists in the novels: the confrontation of the world of children and the world of adults. I will focus on Victorian society in particular and, more specifically, in the well known work authored by Scotsman J.M. Barrie, Peter Pan. I will make use of some psychoanalytic concepts in order to focus my analysis.

Key words: Childhood, adult world, mourning, Peter Pan, transactional objects.

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Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult in Barrie´s Novel *Peter Pan.* Mourning During Childhood

0. Peter Pan: the Boy Who Never Grew Up

Peter Pan tells the story of a child who, shortly after birth, runs away from home to live with the fairies in Neverland, where he will remain as a child forever. There, Peter becomes the leader of the so-called Lost Children, who fell down from their baby carriages and were not claimed. At night Peter enjoys flying to London and listening to the stories that Wendy Darling tells her little brothers. One day Peter´s shadow escapes and Wendy discovers it. That night, the Darling´s children meet Peter and go with him to Neverland where they will meet Captain Hook, the eternal enemy of the protagonist. They also meet Tinker Bell and the Lost Children, among other characters. After some time in the little house in Neverland, Wendy, in conversation with Peter, tells him that Curly, one of the Lost Children, has a nose like his. Peter smiles and immediately assents uncomfortably: “It is only make-believe, isn´t it, that I am their father?” (Barrie 110) Pretending to be a father to the Lost Children might be funny at times, but it can also be a burden. “It would make me seem so old to be their real father”, he adds. “But they are ours, Peter, yours and mine” (Barrie 111), Wendy insists. When she asks him about his feelings towards her he replies “Those of a devoted son.” (Barrie 111) While Wendy expresses her desire to move to a different kind of relationship Peter refuses to compromise and insists in remaining within the “mother-child” status.

The ensuing separation between them is inevitable. Wendy returns home, but promises Peter that she will visit Neverland “before springcleaning time comes.” (Barrie 176) As Wendy grows older, her promise becomes more and more difficult to fulfill.

> Wendy was a married woman, and Peter was no more to her than a little dust in the box she had kept her toys. Wendy was grown up. You need not to be sorry for her. She was one of the kind that likes to grow up. […] Years rolled on again, and Wendy had a daughter. She was called Jane.” (Barrie 176)

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
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One night, years later, the window suddenly opens and Peter Pan comes in, still a child. They greet each other while Wendy hears a hidden voice screaming: "Woman, woman, let go of me." When Peter discovers that Wendy has grown up, he shouts in pain. It is now her daughter Jane who visits Neverland, Wendy's childhood desires passed on to her. The novel ends with the following description:

> As you look at Wendy you may see her hair becoming white, and her figure little again, for all this happened long ago. Jane is now a common grown-up, with a daughter called Margaret; and every spring-cleaning time, except when he forgets, Peter comes for Margaret and takes her to the Neverland […] 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 185)

The author beautifully describes the eternal love, embodied in Wendy, Jane and Margaret, and the perennial youth of Peter, who spring after spring takes one of them to Neverland.

In Greek mythology, Pan is the god of shepherds and flocks, belonging to the cortege of Dionysus and holding lustful desires for the nymphs. Half of his body resembles that of a goat, and he is frequently portrayed playing the flute. In the ancient Rome he is identified with Sylvan, the god of forests, and with Faun, who had power over dreams. Like Pan, Peter represents youth, cheerfulness and every time he visits Wendy he leaves a trail of dry leaves from the forest.

1. Peter Pan Syndrome

The expression "Peter Pan Syndrome" was coined by the psychologist Dan Kiley in 1983, inspired by Barrie's story. The syndrome usually refers to men who never want to grow up and enjoy their adventures living permanently in a fantasy world refusing to age and grow up. From a psychological point of view, people, mostly men, suffering from this syndrome are narcissistic, dependent and even manipulative. Their narcissism is a protective mask against their insecurities. They may also present problems in sexual behavior, and hide their fears by focusing on rapidly changing desires for changing partners, as they fear commitment, and by buying things compulsively (videogames in the case of men, clothes in the case of women). They need to be constantly praised, to have their egos busted, and may suffer from anxiety attacks or even more complex disorders such as bipolarity, with frequents ups and downs. Experts add that the unconscious mind of these eternal teenagers hides anguish, old fears and guilt, which they try to put behind by refusing to accept adult responsibilities.

The following lines present briefly Sir James Matthew Barrie's life, author of *Peter Pan*. It may help to shed some light on the conscious and unconscious impulses that inspired his tale. Barrie was born in Scotland, 1860, the third of three boys and seven sisters.

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

Since childhood, Barrie was obsessed by the death of his older brother David, his mother's favorite. After David's death he may have secretly aimed at replacing this predilection in his mother's eyes. Mother figures are persistent in Barrie's descriptions of female characters. David is recalled in the first story of Peter Pan, the listener of the author's story who projects a shadow of memory upon their common childhood. The reminiscences of this problem constitute the core of an inevitable psychiatric interpretation of Peter Pan. In the eleventh chapter of the book, entitled "Wendy's story," Barrie explains that "our heroine knew that the mother would always leave the window open for her children to fly back by; so the stayed away for years and have a lovely time […] there is the window still standing open. Ah, now we are rewarded for our sublime faith in a mother's love." (115-116) However, when Peter flies back home the window has been locked, and there is a little boy sleeping in his bed. The episode may exemplify the sense of abandonment and neglect that Barrie may have experienced after David's death.

Barrie moved to London where he succeeded in his career as a novelist and playwright. His wife, Mary Ansell, was a young beautiful actress, and they got married in 1895. They divorced some time after. Barrie never had children, and adopted the five kids of his lawyer and his wife, a couple he befriended, her being the woman he secretly loved, Sylvia Llewelyn Davies. The children were named George, Jack, Peter, Michael and Nicholas. Barrie spent large periods of time in their house near Kensington Gardens, transforming it into a kind of Neverland. In 1928, Barrie wrote "I have created Peter Pan character by rubbing violently each other, as the wilds that produce fire with two sticks do. That is Peter Pan, the fire you have created." (quoted in Tébar *Cuadernos de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil*, Nov.2004 n/p) One of the children would also die soon, bringing the souvenir of David back again. Barrie himself died at the age of 77 and was buried in Scotland.

2. Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*

Trauma is generally brought about by absence and loss; generally the death of a loved one but it can also refer to his/her psychological absence. Freud's own research on loss and trauma, *Mourning & Melancholia* (1917), was developed in the context of his personal experience in mourning the death of his father in 1896. Two years before Freud had written about the traumatic experiences of the war in *Thoughts for the Times on War & Death*, and his study *On Narcissism* was published in 1914. Freud puts states of mourning and melancholia in relation to chronic depression and long-term outcome of trauma, where the sufferer cuts off from social reality and experiences a regression into narcissistic identification in reaction to real loss or disappointment. He distinguishes between mourning, when the external world becomes empty, and melancholia, where it is the ego itself, "even if the patient is aware of the loss that has given rise to his melancholia […] (it's) only in the sense that he knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him." With these insights Freud reaches right to the unconscious meaning of the experience and what it is that the external loss represents internally.

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

Trauma can also cause emotions to become restricted, even numb, to protect against distressing thoughts or reminders of what happened. Feelings of detachment and estrangement from others may also lead to social withdrawal. Some people continue to encounter places, people, sights, sounds, smells, and inner feelings that remind them of past traumatic experiences, as they try to block them. David, the sympathetic listener at the beginning of Barrie's story represents not just the dead brother, but also the coming to terms with social order; that is, Barrie's attempt to make sense of the loss of his brother and his mother though the imaginary dimensions of the narrative. He goes as far as negating this desire for the lost mother, as Barrie explains that Peter Pan "had not the slightest desire to have a mother. He thought them very overrated persons." (Barrie 25).

In his book *Psicoanálisis de los Cuentos de Hadas*, B. Bettelheim analyzes the story of The Fisherman and the Genie. In this story, a fisherman accidentally liberates a genie confined in a bottle for hundreds of years. The genie had promised to fill his liberator with riches. However, as his patience becomes exhausted over the years, he becomes angry and resentful, promising to kill his rescuer. A similar feeling is shared by abandoned children or anyone who has suffered loss. First, the person imagines a hypothetical reencounter. As time passes, anguish increases and narcissistic feelings set in, as way of protection. The idealizing phase is left behind and a curtain of unconscious negative feelings, generally vindictive, is created as means of self-protection. In his book *The Affective Loss*, Bowlby provides the example of a woman who comes to his office with her three years-old daughter who barely speaks. The woman claims that her daughter has always been a very cheerful and talkative girl, but since she spent two weeks in the hospital without seeing her, her character had become reticent. (Bowlby 57).

In *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, Melanie Klein also explains that while the pain is experienced with intensity and desperation reaches its climax, the love for the other (the object) appears, and the subject in mourning feels more powerfully that the inner and outer life will continue to exist. The lost loved object can be stored internally, stimulating sublimations. For Klein, this is frequently done by engaging in the creation of alternative fantasy worlds through artistic activities such as writing or painting. Thus, Peter Pan exemplifies the figure of a narcissistic and egocentric boy, unable to externalize the feelings and emotions derived from this stage of mourning that have him trapped in a fantasy world, unable to grow up and leave the childhood stage behind. Mourning is an emotional state experienced by most people, including children. The sense of loss parallels the separation from the parents. Generally, it is relatively easy to overcome by focusing on other models, like those found within the social circle of close friends. However, in Peter Pan, the lack of an affective figure, embodied in the character of Wendy as mother, and later in Wendy's substitutes (Jane, Margaret) is forever perpetuated.

3. Psychological Analysis of Neverland and its Male Inhabitants

Neverland is an imaginary place where children never grow up and there is only fun and happiness. This magic land is inhabited by the Lost Children, under the leadership of their

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<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

hero, Peter Pan. Enemies such as Captain Hook, wild Indians, and other fantastic creatures such as mermaids and fairies also populate this fantasy world. According to the legend, if someone wants to get to Neverland, he or she must take "second to the right, and straight on till morning." (Barrie 39)

Although the things that happen in Neverland are characterized as meaningless or assimilated to events that are only possible in dreams, the trip that Wendy and her little brothers take has the purpose of discovering Wendy's own Self. During her stay in Neverland, she encounters several female characters who embody different feminine attributes (Tinker Bell, the mermaids, Tiger Lily, etc). In contrast to the female characters, men in the story (Captain Hook, the pirates, the Lost Boys), male characters are even more childish, concerned only for their own happiness, and selfish to the point of cruelty. An exception to this is the Indian village, governed by its own rules; a place where its inhabitants do grow up.

The relationship between the fairy Tinker Bell and "the boy who does not want to grow up" is full of shades. Tinker Bell is overprotective with Peter, and Wendy's intrusion on their lives causes her to develop feelings of jealousy and vindictiveness, going as far as trying to kill Wendy. Between the lines, it is obvious that Tinker Bell has romantic feelings for Peter Pan, who only sees another mother figure reflected in her.

A widespread psychological interpretation of this relationship is inspired by the Oedipal subject/object relation. In his book *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott proposes another implication based on the idea that "love for the internal representation of a lost object could temper the hatred of the beloved introjected object that loss entails." (Winnicott 243) This entails that, in the process of separation and individuation between mother and child, the latter one, as Lacan also held, develops his/her own symbolic world by means of creating an illusion or duplicity of the imaginary (the id in Freud's terms), that is, an intermediate zone between the object (the others –people and things in the world) and the perceiving subject, struggling to become a Self. Winnicott terms this area "transactional space," and in cases of childhood traumas, this symbolic world may be more strongly associated to creativity and artistic imagination.

The transitional object (exemplified in the imaginary world of artistic creation) is the first "non-self" (aesthetic) possession of the child. It represents the mother's breast, that is, the object of the first relationship. In the case of Barrie's Peter Pan, the transactional object (the fantasy of Tinker Bell) can become even more important than the mother, but also includes her. Indeed, following Winnicott, Tinker Bell has some of the features that characterize these transactional objects: she is a concrete object, chosen by Peter, but who has her "own life," and who protects the child, being virtually irreplaceable. The use of this object allows the transition between the imaginary (the child) and the symbolic (growing up), and subjective and objective relations, that place Peter in a permanent state of immobility, always flying between Neverland and London.

The antagonist of the story, Captain Hook is an evil pirate who pursues Peter Pan in order to destroy him. He can be seen as a kind of phallic figure who, nonetheless has been

Márquez García, Carmen M. “Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult.” JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

castrated (his hand eaten by the crocodile but with an artificial ‘hook’ in it). In some readings, Hook has been related to the authoritarian figure of Wendy’s father, or as Peter’s “alter ego.” Thus, while Peter is personified as young, innocent and free, Hook represents the chains of adulthood, doubt, pride and the loss of innocence.

Hook is an adult trapped in a child’s fantasy world, dreamt up by children like Wendy, Michael or John, ruled by a boy who does not want to grow up. Hence, Hook’s interventions in this world which refuses to play by the rules are doomed to failure. David Park Williams describes Hook´s feelings toward Peter Pan as “hatred of a demon for a god,” (Williams 487) an arrogant Captain castrated by a younger and stronger figure, almost a metaphor of the Neverland of the British empire striking back at the metropolis.

Another important element in Barrie’s story is Peter Pan’s shadow, unreal and fugitive, this dark reflection trains the ground after its owner, getting lost from him at the time when Peter enters Wendy’s room. The shadow may be read here as Peter’s past, which he leaves behind in order not to accept the challenge to grow up. Peter conveniently returns to find it. A shadow is also the darkness that results from the absence of light. Darkness and light are prevalent motifs throughout the novel. Traditionally, darkness represents sadness, ignorance, and fear, while light represents happiness, knowledge, and courage. Thus, another possible interpretation of Peter Pan´s shadow is the Doppelgänger phenomenon, a paranormal double that may represent the movement between the id, the self and the superego, in Freudian terms, or between the imaginary, reality and the symbolic, in Lacanian psychoanalysis.

In his book *La Traición de Wendy*, José Alberto Arias Pereira refers to Peter Pan as a child who, after being neglected by his mother, was picked him up from the street and brought to Neverland by the fairy Tinker Bell. She expected the Indians to look after him and provide him with a family. Fast Eagle adopted him and raised him with his own children until Peter was twelve, when he decided to leave the village because he did not want to grow up. Governed by their laws and traditions, the Indians that populated North America, the offspring of the British colonial empire, represent in Barrie’s story a world turned upside down, for they exemplify adulthood. Pereira explains how the laws of time operate differently in the Indian village.

What to say of the Lost Children? The offspring, the boys who fell of their prams when their Victorian nurse was distracted, and having gone unclaimed for seven days, the time that God took to create the world, were then whisked off to Neverland, where they live with Peter Pan. Interestingly, there are no girls in the group because “girls, you know, are much too clever to fall out of their prams and be lost in this manner.” (Barrie 33) The Lost Children enjoy the freedom of their wild lifestyle, but they usually have a hidden (or not-so-hidden) desire for a "mother," even if they don't exactly know what this is. To them, Wendy is the perfect maternal figure, and Neverland is a kind of heaven for abandoned (Barrie) and dead (his brother David) children. Sentences such as, “To die will be an awfully big adventure,” (Barrie 99) may suggest

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

that Peter is in charge of guiding the souls of dead children, and that Neverland is a kind of purgatory or, as Barrie implies, "part of the way" to their final destination. The existence of this "limbo" may be due to the fact that for children, loss of parental affection is perceived as a sort of death.

The Lost Children are stuck in their childhood but, unlike Peter, they agree to grow up at the end. However, Peter tells Wendy: "I ran away the day I was born because I heard father and mother talking about what I was to be when I became a man," (Barrie: 28) so that, unable to overcome the grief of the loss, he insists in escaping adulthood. Peter is trapped in that fringe that divides the real and the imaginary; in the aforementioned universe of transactional objects. In his rebellion, Peter is in love with stasis, because his model of adulthood, provided by the Victorian world, does not make sense and growing up has been misrepresented to him by his elders.

4. The Female Characters of Neverland

Men in Neverland are childish and cruel. This lack of maturity is shown in Wendy's confusion about masculinity, which may develop from the absence of a well-developed and properly functioning father figure in her life. For a young girl, her father must represent the principles of order, rationality or authority but above all, the paternal figure is the primary source of a young girl's knowledge of the male universe. On the opposite side we can find the very few, but very important female characters in the story: Wendy, Tinker Bell, Tiger Lily and the mermaids.

As mentioned above, Wendy Darling´s journey to Neverland has been often seen as an inner trip, and there are similarities with Lewis Carroll´s *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Both Alice and Wendy are Victorian prepubescent girls who are transported to a fantasy world of dreams. They are two young ladies belonging to a refined and hypocritical British tradition of common sense, restraint and integrity, principles that are challenged by means of all the mad adventures presented in the books. However, unlike the traditional heroines of fairytales, Wendy´s identity is not determined by biology or lineage. It is defined by the experience she lives. Wendy carries out a profound journey of discovery that reveals modern and postmodern contents relate to gender categories and sex definitions.

On the surface, Wendy is an older sister who exhibits maternal instincts toward her younger brothers and the Lost Boys, and who is captivated by manifestations of female beauty and femininity being, for instance, excited by Mrs. Darling's elegance, Tinker Bell's cunning, the sensuality of the mermaids, and envious of Tiger Lily's regal personality. But once the girl is in the context of the house in Neverland, she falls into the stereotype of the "happy homemaker," utterly entranced with the idea of tending to the young Lost Boys.

The so-called "Wendy´s syndrome" defines women who act as a mother to Peter Pan kind of men, women who do everything to avoid emotional rejection by their partners, and who have a strong need to be accepted, and whose behavior

Márquez García, Carmen M. “Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult.” JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

carries an implicit inferiority complex that leads them to forgive and justify everything in these men attitudes, even if this means suffering to them.

Wendy syndrome can be defined as the set of behaviors that a person performs for fear of rejection, and by an important need of security. They set their partners free from responsibility, acting as mother/father figures in their relationships. They can also become over-protective parents.

As an alternative view of feminine identity in Barrie´s novel, the presence of Tinker Bell is linked to Peter´s own existence. She has a vivid personality, presented as, “another light in the room now, a thousand times brighter than the night lights.” (Barrie 23) Like her fiery personality, Tinker Bell’s initial description establishes her identity in the novel as the most exuberant female figure in the fantasy world of Neverland.

Unlike Wendy, who still possesses a childish identity, Tinker Bell appears to have burst into the light of young womanhood. Her entrance as the companion of Peter suggests a difference in status between her and Wendy. Wendy fulfills Peter’s apparent need for a maternal figure, while Tinker Bell acts as his inseparable partner. The fairy appears to have moved beyond Wendy’s stage of gendered self-awareness and into a new role of partner, seemingly positioning Tinker Bell as the libidinous, imaginary wife of Peter Pan.

As an archetype, Tinker Bell represents impulsive provocative femininity. In positive terms, she is the model of the woman who is liberated and authentic. She also represents an allegory of jealousy and manipulation. She is capable of betraying his beloved Peter Pan not only because he is not paying attention to her but because he is also interested in Wendy, whom Tinker Bell perceives as a silly girl.

Other female characters are the mermaids who live in the lagoon. They enjoy the company of Peter Pan but seem malevolent towards anybody else, including the fairies. As in Homer’s *Odyssey*, in J.M. Barrie's world, mermaids are dark and dangerous creatures identified with the figure of the “femme fatale”. A new approach to the story of Peter Pan describes the mermaids as evil characters. For example, in the novel *La Traición de Wendy*, they have become cannibals and eat girls and anyone who dares invade their territory.

In the story, the mermaids misbehaved towards Wendy. This may be due to their inability to develop as complete women (they have no genitalia but fish tails). Like Captain Hook in the presence of Peter Pan, the mermaids envy Wendy´s ability to develop sexually, and their powerless leads them to develop a threatening attitude towards her.

The last female character to be described is Tiger Lily, the Indian princess. At the very beginning, she performs the role of the "lady in distress" Tiger Lily is rescued by her knight in shining armor (Peter Pan). Consequently, Wendy recognizes in this scene the potential for a romance between herself and Peter. This transforms Wendy from an object of envy (for Tinker Bell) into a subject who is envious (of Tiger Lily), awakening in her dormant female intuitions. She perceives in Tiger Lily a feminine entity that is not solely cultural and/or aesthetic, but deeper and rounder. She is a genuine princess, the daughter of a race

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

whose ancient culture is closely tied to and nourished by nature. Tiger Lily is quiet, boyish, and rebellious, and the authenticity and integrity of her character expose the distortions in the others'. Under the spotlight of Tiger Lily's personality, Peter and Wendy are shown for what they are: he is not a knight in shining armor, who will make the princess his queen; and she is still a girl without a clear understanding of her femininity. Tiger Lily represents the female archetype of the "noble savage." On the one hand, as a member of an Indian tribe she is allied with the primeval tradition of femininity, sexuality, and instincts associated with the cycles of nature, and thus not merely provocative. On the other hand, as a princess, she belongs to a venerable cultural dynasty. In Tiger Lily, femininity takes the form of a true balance between the "savage" and the "noble," and thus this option enjoys a high degree of validity and authenticity.

Bruno Bettelheim indicates that the characters and events of fairy tales represent archetypical psychological phenomena, and suggest the need to achieve a higher level of identity, an internal renewal, that is gained when the personal unconscious and rational forces become meaningful for the individual. (Bettelheim 68) This is achieved by means of storytelling. Children need magic and fantasy in order to understand the world where they live. They need to believe in higher powers, like guardian angels, fairies or wizards, all of which would protect them. Thus, fairy tales can be very useful for the proper development of children. Boys reading *Peter Pan* may see themselves in the figure of Peter, the adventurer, brave hero and leader of the Lost Children. Girls might fall in love with this character, feeling identified with Wendy, and may feel antipathy towards Tinker Bell. Both boys and girls will hate the villain, Captain Hook.

5. Conclusion

For Barrie the adult and the child world constitute two separated universes so that communication between them is rendered difficult or impossible. Growing up means renouncing the cheerful childish life; remaining forever as a child is equivalent to giving up the pleasures of adult life, especially love. This radical separation between children and adults is reinforced by the features of the places where the novel takes place, and by the changes that the characters experience every time they move from one place to another.

Neverland is a small imaginary island where impossible and exotic inhabitants -Indians, pirates and countless wild animals- coexist with fantastic beings like fairies and mermaids. In this way, London is the place of realities, where, if fantasy exists, it remains hidden. In Neverland fantasy is the rule. Time is also different in the worlds. In Neverland, time does not pass for its inhabitants, who remain the same age since they arrive. On the contrary, in London time passes normally, and staying there means accepting that the Lost Children will grow up and become adults. This different way of perceiving time –eternity vs. transience- has also implications in the children's memory, for shortly after deciding to stay in London, they forget how to fly back to Neverland.

Márquez García, Carmen M. "Peter Pan and the Horror of Becoming an Adult." JACLR: Journal of Artistic Creation and Literary Research 1.1 (2013): 16-27
<https://www.ucm.es/siim/journal-of-artistic-creation-and-literary-research>

Neverland, and by extension children world, is not only the place of fantasy but also the place of happiness, innocence and freedom. In this sense, Peter represents youth and cheerfulness, and the Lost Children are described as innocent and joyful by the author. Meanwhile, London –the adult world- is a space devoted to work, obligations and boredom, as is showed at the end of the story after the return of Wendy and her brothers to their home: "…we must now return to that desolate home from which three of our characters had taken heartless flight so long ago." (Barrie: 162)

However, this description of the children and adult world needs to be nuanced. On the one hand, that Neverland represents an idyllic place does not mean that eternal childhood was synonym of absolute happiness to Barrie. In fact, this island has been compared several times with purgatory, a place where time stops for those who visit it.

At the same time, Peter is unable to understand his own nature; he does not know why he does not want, or cannot, grow up, nor why no one can touch him. This prevents him from enjoying real life. Wendy continues to visit Neverland for years in order to look after the Lost Children. Her desire of touching Peter symbolizes her secret wish of a relationship with him. Finally, she has to confront reality: the fact that, to Peter, everything is a game. He not only does not know what a kiss is, but neither understands what Wendy, Tinker Bell and Tiger Lily, expect from him. Peter Pan is not interested in women beyond the Oedipus complex that characterizes him.

To conclude, we might say that not only eternal childhood is a tragic event. Becoming an adult supposes big sacrifices too. These are not just associated to the fact of entering the world of work, responsibility and boredom. It signals the enforced resignation of freedom and happiness that the child suffers, a resignation perfectly illustrated in Wendy's last scene, when after realizing that she has grown up, Peter starts to cry as she leaves the room.

Her daughter Jane is awakened with Peter's weeping, and he will resurface as a child again to teach her how to fly to visit Neverland. Right then, Wendy reappears, and with melancholy, she expresses her impossible desire of coming back to the island. She cannot fly anymore, but Peter does not need her now that he has replaced her with a new mother in the figure of Jane. And so it goes…

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Bioprofile of the author

Carmen Márquez holds a Grade in “English Studies” by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and studies “Spanish Language and Literature” at UNED. Although most of her student life has been devoted to the field of sciences, she was finally seduced by the charm of language and literature. Carmen started to write at an early age, participating in poetry forums or competing in diverse literary contests such as the national one “Ana Mª Aparicio Pardo”, where she was awarded the first place.

In the academic year 2013-1014, Carmen Márquez will study a MA program in “Advanced Language Skills” at the National University of Ireland (Galway), and continue her literary projects and publications in the two blogs she manages.

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