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Rarely, in the history of literature, has a fictional character condemned its author to oblivion. The fact that Peter Pan is one of the key symbolic names in world literature is backed by the great relevance that he still holds one hundred years after his birth. But, where does this leave his creator? J. M. Barrie was an author who by the turn of the century had already tasted the sweet flavour of success. However, the birth of his creature—which he said contained the devil inside—annulled everything he had done before. Peter Pan became known to the general public in a play in 1904. Seven years later he had reached such popularity on stage that Barrie decided to transfer his adventures to a novel, *Peter and Wendy*. This work, which quickly became considered a classic, has recently turned one hundred years old. In honour of its anniversary, it was the subject of discussion at an international conference held at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and the present study, *Barrie, Hook and Peter Pan: Studies in Contemporary Myth*, is a compendium of the reflections generated therein. Given the variety of disciplines presented in the event, the book is divided into six parts, which are defined in accordance with the nature of the seventeen papers here collected. Nonetheless, throughout the whole volume, a special interest is found in recognizing the influence of Peter Pan on Western culture. It is worth mentioning that the different sections are named with images which directly refer to characteristic elements of the novel. But the most remarkable aspect of the book is its accessibility to all audiences as it is presented in English and Spanish.

The first part in the collection, “London”, includes two articles. The first one is signed by Ronald D. S. Jack who deserves a prominent place in the present volume due to his extensive research on Barrie. For that reason, “Creating the Deathless Boy” is one of the articles which presents the most solid and compelling arguments. With the intention of finding the seeds of *Peter Pan*, Jack focuses on the formative years of the author, a time when he started to display his natural strengths as a writer. Jack claims that Barrie’s taste for experimentation in form and content reached its most ambitious height with *Peter Pan*.

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He also shows his opposition to psychoanalysis, which is so rooted in the study of Barrie's most famous book. But, as Peter Hollindale writes, "Barrie's early life and experience, [...], form a complex pattern of potential influences on his later work, and especially on *Peter Pan*" (1991/2008: xiv). Nonetheless, Jack maintains that a generative research of *Peter Pan* helps to consolidate Barrie's critical views and academic training.

The next article is probably the most touching of the entire book – in both content and writing-style. "The Legacy of the Phantoms, or Death as a Ghost-Writer in *Peter and Wendy*" presents a psychological analysis of the author. Céline Albin-Faivre goes back in time to explore the personality of Barrie, who was deeply influenced by the painful relationship that he maintained with his mother as a child. She explains that Barrie, like his creature, was abandoned by his mother. In fact, "the emptiness, solitude, and jealousy at the heart of [Peter Pan] have their likely origins in [Barrie's] childhood ordeal of perceived rejection" (Hollindale, 1991/2008: x). So the author chose to escape to Neverland, as Faivre cleverly notes. Like his creature, the island was the only place where he could express his own personality. This is the reason why Barrie in his adult life once stated: "I would feel as if I had left off clothing if I were to write without an island" (1938: 56).

The second part, "The Shadow", begins with a paper on comparative literature. In "The Lost Children Meet the God Pan: *Peter and Wendy* and *Lord of the Flies*" Mara González de Ozaeta analyses the Greek myth of Pan in these two narratives. As she notes, their distance in time – almost half a century – is essential in the perception of the myth. This point is also supported by Silvia Herreros de Tejada, who claims that "Pan's attributes change according to the times" (2009: 171). In this way, González states that *Peter and Wendy* represents the last attempt of Western civilization to recover the classic image of the myth whereas, due to changes over time, fear and panic are integrated into the mythological representation of *Lord of the Flies*. She justifies this revision of the myth as a result of the outbreak of two world wars, since all historical events influence the general consciousness of society. González claims that both representations of Pan are equally valid, as considerations around this figure are manifold. However, she forgets that Peter Pan, unlike its counterpart in the novel by William Golding, can represent any aspect of the myth: from the more arcadian and pastoral side to the more savage and terrifying one. In this regard, Barrie reminds us that for many years "there were odd stories about him" (1911/2008: 75).

The following article addresses the Freudian vision which hitherto only Faivre has defended. In "Never, Never, Never Land: The Dangerous Appeal of the Sublime Object of Ideology" David Rudd argues that *Peter and Wendy* contains images and concepts which can be easily read through psychoanalysis. As stated before, there have been numerous studies addressing such a dimension of the text. Here Rudd does not only follow the tradition but also offers a new turn in the analysis. According to him, Peter Pan does not undergo the Oedipal stage that Freud considers part of normal development. M. Joy Morse makes a similar point when claiming that "having left his mother as an infant, Peter remains a pre-Oedipal child, free of the anxiety surrounding adult sexuality" (in White and Tarr, 2006: 295). What is more, the character never substitutes his father; it was never his intention to do so, since he refuses to take on any position in the symbolic order of things. In this regard, Peter Pan shows his concern when asking Wendy, in her role of mother: "It is only make-

believe, isn't it, that I am [the Lost Boys' father]?" (Barrie 1911/2008: 161). The author then demonstrates the impossible correspondence between the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

The closing article of this section is one of the most interesting parts of the book. In "The True Identity of Captain Hook" Alfonso Muñoz Corcuera aims to fill a gap in the biography of one of the most famous villains in literature. As he notes, the narrator in *Peter and Wendy* constantly plays with the known and the unknown. In this regard, the question about the true identity of Captain Hook is the issue that best exemplifies his whimsical personality. Although the pirate is traditionally regarded as the epitome of all seamen, the complexity of the character, as Muñoz suggests, forces us to reject such an idea. In an effort to find the inspiration for the creation of Captain Hook, he first focuses on history and literature. Once the origins of the character are clarified, Muñoz proceeds to analyse the pirate within his own framework. Then he develops an idea supported by many scholars: Captain Hook is the adult double of Peter Pan. Noting the long defended identification between Barrie and his creature, Muñoz then goes one step further and states that, by extension, the pirate is also the literary version of the author. Although he bases this comparison on personal characteristics, Paul Fox notes that the temporal experience of Captain Hook – imprisoned by the linearity of time – also "makes his life the true tragedy of Barrie's story" (in White and Tarr, 2004: 42).

The third part of the book, entitled "Neverland", consists of three articles. "On that Conspiratorial Smile between Peter Pan and the Mermaids" stands out for the originality of its content. Elisa T. Di Biase bases her arguments on the similarity between Peter Pan and the mermaids. Although this association may seem awkward at first, Di Biase succeeds in demonstrating the validity of her proposal. Mermaids are traditionally regarded as dangerous creatures. However, they maintain a friendship with Peter Pan, the only character in the story who can approach them. At this point, Di Biase wonders about the reason for this closeness and – noting that they have a winged origin – comes to the conclusion that they recognise him as an equal. Thus, she looks into ancient cultures to analyse the image and meaning of bird-women, the earliest representation of mermaids.

In "Betwixt-and-Between: The Novelization of *Peter Pan* as Literary Hybrid" Fabio L. Vericat analyses the text history of *Peter Pan*. In this respect, a valuable source of information, to which he often refers, is the preface to the printed version of the play, where Barrie himself explains the creative process of his work. Vericat notes that *Peter and Wendy* was published after the play – on which it is based – was performed. Although it was a common practice at the time, he considers novelization a non-natural process since it constitutes the return journey of dramatization. But, as Karen McGavock states, "the evolution of texts from one genre to another was not unusual for Barrie" (in White and Tarr, 2006: 201), who had already adapted his novel *The Little Minister* into a play in 1897. Thus, Vericat describes the text history of *Peter Pan* as a process of cross-fertilization, where the result is a hybrid. In this regard, he references Barrie's interest in experimenting with new types of writing – as Jack has also noted.

The following article is one of the most outstanding contributions of the book due to its attachment to Barrie's works. In "The Image of Peter Pan: Objects and Symbolic Spaces in J.M. Barrie's Texts" Patricia Lucas analyses the importance of visual and space elements in the two novels in which Peter Pan is the protagonist: *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*

(1906) and *Peter and Wendy* (1911). She first stops to look at the representations of the hero by Arthur Rackham and F.D. Bedford, the first artists who respectively illustrated the adventures of Peter Pan. In both cases, the image of the hero is faithful to the descriptions by Barrie, as it escapes from the influence of the iconographic tradition. Lucas also notes that growing up has meant for Peter Pan a detachment from the real world. So the new age of the character, as she points out, enables him to expand his horizons and freedoms. He leaves Kensington Gardens for Neverland, a place where all his adventures centre on “a rejection of adult roles and responsibilities in the real world”, as Allison B. Kavey notes (in Friedman and Kavey, 2008: 102-03).

The fourth part, “The Lost Boys”, is introduced by an article which is surely the most provocative of this collection. “Peter Pan: A Colonial Myth” stands out for its harsh accusations. Pradeep Sharma bases his research on the premise: “Peter Pan is the creation of a colonial mindset” (2012: 139). In accordance with this idea, he states that Barrie as a narrator in *Peter and Wendy* speaks from the vantage point of a dominating metropolitan centre. Although he is right, he fails to further develop this idea. To illustrate this point, he states, for instance, that the hesitation of Mr. and Mrs. Darling to adopt the Lost Boys is due to the imperial prohibition placed upon the aliens to settle down in the metropolis. However, most scholars maintain that Barrie’s privileged position did not influence his vision of the world. Indeed, Emily Clark states that “[the author] makes apparent from the outset of [*Peter and Wendy*] that he intends to satirize the culture surrounding empire” (in White and Tarr, 2006: 304). Thus, it seems clear that, depending on the perspective of the reader, Sharma’s arguments may or may not be questionable. But he goes one step further when claiming that Barrie, throughout his career, ridiculed the image of Scotland and its people. This is how Sharma justifies his triumphant entry in English society, as his countrymen did not have a good reputation in the neighbouring country. He refers to this issue as “Barrie’s betrayal of his own people” (146). However, Barrie never acted in this way at all, but in fact, quite the opposite! According to Mackail, Barrie was even accused of being too sentimental and tragic since his works set in Scotland could only have been written by “the kindest and most merciless of men” (1941: 154). In conclusion, Barrie never addressed most of the issues here analysed. Therefore, there is no factual reason to discredit him along these lines.

In “A Shattered Ideal of Youth: Experiencing Time in *Peter and Wendy*” Jaime Cuenca addresses the reductionist power of the categories of hero and villain which, as he states, emphasise the positive and negative qualities of both without questioning them at all. From this perspective, Cuenca aims to deconstruct the popular image of Peter Pan and his nemesis in *Peter and Wendy*. To that end, he analyses the temporal experience that each character shows, since Peter Pan and Captain Hook represent the conflict between generations. Paul Fox takes a similar approach in his analysis of the novel and bases this conflict on the inability of adults “to live, as Peter does, solely in the moment” (in White and Tarr, 2004: 42). In this sense, the words that the hero utters to the villain – “‘I’m youth, I’m joy’ [...], ‘I’m a little bird that has broken out of the egg’” (Barrie 1911/2008: 203) – are probably those which best illustrate the detachment of children from the linearity of time.

The article “The Brave and the Narcissistic: Bullying in Neverland” offers an original view of *Peter and Wendy*. Making reference to the richness of the text, Esther Charabati

presents a new reading of the work: *Peter and Wendy* as a didactic resource. Her findings are derived from an experiment carried out at a primary school in Mexico. For Charabati, the themes of the novel are transferable to reality. So the novel itself functions as a mirror in which young readers can be reflected. Through Peter Pan's gang of Lost Boys, she analyses the relationship between leaders and subordinates, roles which also exist in our society. To that aim, she worked in her classes with different passages from the novel which were intentionally presented to cause a moral debate among students.

In the next article, the last of the fourth part, Paige Gray states that the concept of the eternal boy is so deeply embedded in popular culture that it has come to life outside of Barrie's original work. Thus, "Finding our Timeless Neverland: Reconstructing Age Identity through Imagination" deals with the image of Peter Pan as a symbol of youth. To remain young forever, as David P. D. Munns states, is "a byword in many parts of modern consumerist and materialist culture" (in Friedman and Kavey, 2008: 220). "Youth sells", he adds. Thus, taking this cultural phenomenon into consideration, Gray addresses the power of Peter Pan within the population that tries to resist the effects of time through eating disorders. Before addressing this issue in depth, Gray looks at how the concepts of childhood and adulthood have been defined and redefined along the last two centuries. Finally, she states that people can only keep their spirit young throughout their lives by challenging social conventions.

The fifth part, "The Pirate Ship", begins with an article by Silvia Herreros de Tejada, well known among Barrie scholars in the Spanish speaking world for her fascinating work *Todos crecen menos Peter* (2009). In "The Nonsense of Being a Child Forever: Peter Pan as a Metaphor for Human Life" Tejada addresses the different ages of the character in the postmodernist works in which he appears as the protagonist. In the last hundred years, many writers and filmmakers have reinvented the character of Peter Pan from different perspectives, each of them more daring and creative than the last. Indeed, many have violated the only law in Neverland – the one that the boy himself imposes – and have made Peter grow up. In order to study in detail the character's behaviour at different ages, Tejada follows the psychosocial stages of the life cycle articulated by Erik Erikson. She notes that, during his evolution, Peter Pan must be prepared to meet the expectations that society places on him according to his age. Tejada then analyses the hero not as an archetype of eternal youth but as an archetype of transformation.

"Lost Boys, *Lost Girls*, Lost Innocence: J.M. Barrie and Alan Moore" analyses a work which, among all the recreations of Peter Pan, is probably the most controversial: *Lost Girls* (2006), by Alan Moore. Here John Keith L. Scott analyses the process of transmigration of three female characters – belonging to the Golden Age of children's literature – from their original works to *Lost Girls*. Due to the moral values of the time at which they were created, Alice, Dorothy and Wendy have been traditionally regarded as perfect examples of innocence. However, Moore uses this quality to his advantage, and gives a completely new twist to their personalities. Then, in a deliberate act of provocation, he takes a look at how they live their sexuality. For Scott, *Lost Girls* represents a path of liberation for pornographic narrative as it enhances, by means of beloved characters, the most central element of human nature. Although he is right, he forgets to allude to the sexual content of *Peter Pan*, which has been the subject of countless discussions. In this regard, M. Joy Morse

states that, in her role as mother of the Lost Boys, Wendy constantly attempts to “emulate [with Peter] the sexual influence of wife over husband” (in White and Tarr, 2006: 297). Thus, what Moore really does in *Lost Girls* is to take Barrie’s proposal one step further.

The last article in this part is signed by Fernando Ángel Moreno and Eliana Dukelsky. In “The Language of the Uncanny: Deconstructing the Myth of Peter Pan” these scholars approach the creature not from his origins but from his transformation into myth. According to them, the myth was created after some authors took certain aesthetic resources from Barrie’s work. On the whole, they are right, as this theory comes to prove the richness of the original text, but such a statement cannot be taken literally. Contrary to what Moreno and Dukelsky claim, it must be mentioned that before the first recreation of Peter Pan appeared, the story by Barrie had already achieved the status of a myth. As Mackail states, “volumes could be written [...] on what it has added to English and American imagery, and literature, and language” (1941: 367). Thus, any work based on it benefits from its solid popularity. In this article, Moreno and Dukelsky analyse two works which reinvent the story of the eternal boy through the use of sinister elements: *Peter Pan* (1990) by Régis Loisel and *6* (1994) by Daniel Mares.

“Return to Barrie: Text and Subtext in the Film Adaptations of *Peter Pan*” is the article which introduces the last part in the collection, “Skull Rock”. Here Cristina Manzano Espinosa addresses how cinema has depicted the close relationship between Barrie and his creature. Although she denounces the psychoanalytic approach of *Peter Pan* – because, according to her, it has created numerous prejudices against the rest of his literary works – she recognises, as many scholars do, that “[the author] habitually converted himself into literature” (Hollindale, 1991/2008: xiv-xv). Thus, she analyses three films which explore in detail the ties between creator and creature. *El Río de Oro* (1986), *Hook* (1991) and *Finding Neverland* (2005) do not miss the opportunity to tell their own stories but the three coincide in their negative attitude toward adulthood. Here the protagonists suffer the consequences of growing up and, like Barrie, try to invent their own defence mechanisms. Thus, filmmakers demonstrate their support to psychoanalysis and, consequently, audiences witness the validation of this traditional view.

The final article in the book, “Children Who Will Never Grow Up: Rereading *Peter Pan* in Gothic Literature and Cinema”, continues with the translation of *Peter and Wendy* into modern times. Here Auba Llompart Pons analyses the retelling of the story within the genre of horror. She notes that, since the publication of *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James in 1898, the association of childhood with sinister elements has caused great distress in society. Hence, it is not surprising that during the 20th century horror literature and cinema have created the figure of the child who returns from the shadows to terrify adults. This child, reminiscent of Peter Pan, cannot grow up because he or she is already dead. Thus, Llompart analyses the reinterpretation of the character in the short story *Children of the Corn* (1978) by Stephen King and the film *El orfanato* (2007) by Juan Antonio Bayona. Regarding the notion of an eternal child, she makes the same claim as Silvia Herreros de Tejada, who states that “[it] implies two concepts: who has died or who is never going to die” (2009: 113) – in this last case because he or she has been immortalised in a book or a film.

As we have seen, the subjects of the articles are quite varied. But we can trace some thematic evolution in their organization, as the central focus shifts from Barrie to Peter Pan

and his numerous recreations. Nonetheless, we can recognise a theme which is interwoven in several articles: the need of the author to create parallel worlds in order to cope with reality. Although not a developed idea in the book –since it can only be inferred– we observe that, through literature, Barrie tried to make sense of his life. When Faivre describes Peter Pan as “a wandering soul” (2012: 31), she is clearly referring to his author. This is the reason why Barrie escaped to Neverland, to find a place where he could belong. But Rudd gives an important warning: living in Neverland may result in one being “locked out of human existence and trapped within one’s [own] narcissistic and illusory mirror image” (64). This is how Barrie became the real personification of Captain Hook. Surely both would have wanted to decide their own destinies, but faced with the difficulty of going against traditions and expectations, they became two misfits and were only accompanied by “loneliness and melancholy”, as Muñoz states (81). Thus, we learn that there is a close interaction between Barrie and his work, which comes to corroborate the psychoanalytical reading of *Peter and Wendy*.

In summary, this collection of articles brings us closer to an author who is yet to be discovered. However, it must be mentioned that the book is not about Barrie, but about *Peter Pan* and his multiple reinterpretations which have ultimately consolidated the status of the character as a myth. For this reason, it is important to note, as a sort of warning, that the book may be disappointing – particularly the second half – for those readers interested in Barrie. This is because many postmodernist works where Peter Pan appears are the subject of analysis and, consequently, they are considered to have the same merit as the original text. However, those readers interested in tracing the path of the character in Western culture will find a great ally in this book. One of its strengths is the selection of authors. Among them, we find some leading figures in the study of Barrie’s life and work. However, it lacks a contribution from Andrew Birkin, who is probably the foremost expert in the field. Nonetheless, the quality of the articles mitigates his absence. A special mention about the discovery of Captain Hook as a literary character must be made, since he has traditionally been reduced to the category of villain of a tale. Like him, all characters created by Barrie are rich in nuances. With this in mind, an article on Wendy is lacking since – as the title of the novel evidences – she is just as much a protagonist as her companion. Indeed, she is the only character who evolves throughout the story. For this reason and many others, she also deserves special attention. In short, this book, besides paying tribute to the novel, serves two purposes: first, to demonstrate the complexity and magnitude of the original text and, second, to enrich the vision of the myth. Hence, despite its shortcomings, this is an excellent new collection of articles which deserves its own place in the increasing bibliography on Peter Pan.

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