

Chapter 1

Introduction

J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* is one of the classic children's literatures and favorite books for generations of readers. This story comprises unforgettable adventures in Neverland, the land where children never grow up. Since its first publication, *Peter Pan* has been adapted in numerous productions, plays and films including the well-known 1953 animated film *Walt Disney's Peter Pan*, stage musicals, live-action feature films *Hook* (1991) and *Peter Pan* (2003). There was also the sequel *Peter Pan in Scarlet* (2006) to the novel.

The story of *Peter Pan* takes place in Edwardian London, and the action begins at "No. 14," the home of the Darling family, in the nursery where the three Darling children, Wendy, John and Michael, are nurtured by Nana, the Newfoundland dog hired as the family's nursemaid. With an unexpected invasion of Peter Pan, the discretion of Darling's family erupts into extraordinary adventure for the children, and turmoil and anguish for the parents.

In Neverland, the Darling children are caught up in adventures with Peter Pan, Tinker Bell and the lost boys. They encounter the legendary Captain Hook and his pirates, the Indian braves of the Piccaninny tribe and their princess Tiger Lily, and the wolves, beasts and birds of the island. The children acknowledge the infamous crocodile to which Peter Pan has fed Hook's right arm after severing it in combat, and that Hook may be tracked by the tick-tock of the clock he swallowed long ago. The children's picturesque lives in Neverland are interrupted by Wendy, the eldest of the Darling children, as she remembers and tries to teach John and Michael to remember their parents, Nana and life on the mainland. The Darling children and the lost boys return to London where the lost boys are adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Darling.

Peter, although extremely lonely, refuses to be adopted by the Darlings. He will not be made to grow up and become a man with a beard, a business suit and a briefcase; he wants to remain a boy forever. Mrs. Darling promises Peter Pan that Wendy may fly to Neverland for two weeks in the spring to take care of his spring-cleaning. Peter promises to return each spring for Wendy, but after the first spring he

totally forgets. When Peter finally lands on the nursery floor to take Wendy to Neverland, she is already married and has a daughter of her own. All the children have become adults. They have already forgotten about Peter and their wonderful adventures in Neverland. Peter believes that no more than one year has elapsed since his last visit, for he has no memory. In Barrie's novel, Peter Pan belongs to the island of childhood that exists apart from, and invisible to, the adults' world and he comes back in endless cycles to find his surrogate mother as long as "the children is gay, innocent and heartless" (Barrie, 1995, p.167)

Besides the exciting contents of the novel, the narrator makes the story intriguing. The unidentified narrator tells a wondrous, though inconsistent, story. It is difficult to identify the narrator as sometimes he/she appears as if a participating character in the story; other times an outsider. This inconsistency and ambiguity as to the stance of the narrator makes the narrative of *Peter Pan* a complex one, in terms of narratological structure.

This narrative complexity has been the focus of many studies. Intrigued by the story, many literary critics examine the narrator's stance in *Peter Pan*, in order to understand the whole story. One approach is to study the author's biography in order to understand the condition of the narrator. Another studies the story's characters and language from the psychoanalyst point of view in order to understand the relationship between the characters and the author-narrator. These critics relate the narrator to the real-life author. In order to expound on the studies of *Peter Pan*'s narrator, this research reviews the two approaches mentioned above and studies the narrator's stance by scrutinizing the contents textually. The aim of this textual study is to find out if the new approach will introduce a new interpretation to the story or correspond in anyway to the previous studies.

The studies of the narrator of *Peter Pan* will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. They can be classed into two groups: namely positivist and psychological criticism. Positivism refers to the author's biography to interpret the text, and the psychological critics study the text to comprehend the author's mental condition. These two approaches share the main aim: the attempts to understand the relationship between the author and the narrator in *Peter Pan*. Chapter 2, also, will introduce Simpson's narrative point of view, a stylistic framework which is the main framework employed in this study to analyze the text, in order to respond to positivist

and psychological criticism. The third chapter is an analysis of some excerpts from *Peter Pan*, based on Simpson's narrative framework. The analysis in Chapter 3 will focus on the narrator's attitudinal feature as reflected in the text. The last chapter of this research presents an evaluation and conclusion, in which results of the textual analysis from Simpson's narrative framework are compared to those reached by other literary critics.