

Chapter 3

Analysis

Simpson's narrative framework will be applied in this chapter to *Peter Pan*'s text to examine the narrator's stance, and the results will be used to compare with the interpretations of *Peter Pan*'s narrator presented in the previous chapter.

The narrator in *Peter Pan* remains unidentified from the beginning to the end of the story, and it is unclear whether the narrator is one of the story's characters. According to the two approaches discussed in the previous chapter, it is difficult to determine whether the story is told from an outsider's or an insider's point of view. For instance, this excerpt shows that the narrator tells the story from an outsider's point of view.

All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother.

(Barrie, 1995, p.1)

According to Rose (1988, p.67), this shows that the narrator tells the story from a person who can judge from an external viewpoint as the third person pronoun "they" is used. On the other hand, the narrator sometimes tells the story as an insider participating in the story.

On these magic shores, children at play are for ever breaching their coracles. We too have been there; we can still hear the sound of the surf, though we shall land no more.

Of all delectable islands, the Neverland is the snuggest and the most compact; not large and sprawly, you know, with tedious distances between one adventure and another, but nicely crammed.

When you play at it by day with the chairs and table-cloth, it is not in the least alarming, but in the two minutes before you go to sleep it becomes very nearly real. That is why there are night-lights.

(Barrie, 1995, p.7)

This excerpt shows that the narrator participates in the story and tells the story from an insider's point of view (Green, 1969, p.35). These two excerpts illustrate the complexity of the narrative which is due to the ambiguity and inconsistency of the narrator's stance. However, the two approaches do not make a distinction between the narrator and focalizer. Simpson's framework, on the contrary, make a distinction between the focalizer "who sees" and the narrator "who speaks", this research will employ Simpson's framework to the text, in the attempt to generate a new literary interpretation of the story.

According to Simpson's categorization, the narrator in this story falls into the B category in which the narrator sees the story from the position outside the story. The narrator of *Peter Pan* cannot be the insider type A because the narrator does not reveal himself/herself any of the particular characters and inclines to remain disembodied throughout the story. Due to the inconsistency of textual evidence, it is not entirely accurate to say that the narrator is an insider. The narrator also falls under Narratorial mode (N) because the narrator cannot be identified with a particular character. The B(N) narrator in *Peter Pan* also features different shading of narration. That is, sometimes the narrator gives or makes evaluations; other times the narrator may show his uncertainty. These different stances of the narrator fall under Simpson's B(N) positive, or B(N)+ve, and B(N) negative, or B(N)-ve, modes.

As Simpson's narrative framework focuses on modality in language, a B(N)+ve narrative is a story told by a disembodied narrator who offers opinions and judgments on the story. A B(N)+ve narrator uses deontic, boulomaic modality, evaluative adjectives and adverbs, and these suggest the narrator's obligation, duty commitment and desire of the situations recounted (Simpson, 1993, p. 51). A B(N)+ve narrator does not use epistemic modal adverbs such as "possibly", "probably", "maybe" and "perhaps". Modal auxiliaries in verb phrases like "might have been", "could have been" and "must have been" tend to be rare. Perception

modal adverbs such as “evidently” and “apparently” are also uncommon in this mode of narration. The narrator’s words of confidence, such as “of course” and “certainly” in situations uttered as well as absence of modality, also carry the positive shading.

On the other hand, a B(N)-ve narrative is told by a narrator who attempts to “make sense” of the characters and events. This category of narrator also implies distance and “bewilderment” (Simpson, 1993, p.72) of the narrator in certain scenes. Epistemic and perceptive modality, signifying knowledge, belief, cognition and perception is eminent in this category. Epistemic modality is concerned with the speaker’s lack of confidence in the situations recounted. Modal lexical verbs, such as “I think”, “I imagine”, “I assume” “I suppose” or “I believe”, also fall under the negative shading. Perceptive modality, such as “feel” or “hear”, is also commonly found in the negative shading. Furthermore, comparative structures which have some basis in human perception (“it looked as if...”; “it seemed...”; “it appeared to be...”) can be seen in the negative shading.

Positive Shading

Both B(N)+ve and B(N)-ve narrators are found in the story of *Peter Pan*.

At the outset, the B(N)+ve mode is found in the following excerpts:

...and **I wish** for the moment **I could** pretend that this was such a story, and say that Peter replied intelligently to the Never bird; **but truth is** best, and **I want to tell** only what really happened. Well, not only could they not understand each other, but they forgot their manners.

(Barrie, 1995, p.101)

I hope you want to know what became of the other boys. They were waiting below to give Wendy time to explain about them; and when they had counted five hundred they went up.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 172)

The first excerpt comes from the story's ninth chapter, describing characteristics of Never Bird in the Neverland's lagoon. The second one is the opening passage of the story's last chapter. These excerpts feature boulomaic modality ("I wish...I could", "I want to" and "I hope") and, therefore, carry the positive shading. The narrator falls into the B(N)+ve mode in these circumstances. Moreover, words expressing the narrator's "commitment" to the story, such as "must", "will" or "should", can be seen as crucial premises of the positive shading as shown in these following excerpts:

One thing **I should like to do** immensely, and that is to tell her, in the way authors have, that the children are coming back, that **indeed they will be here** on Thursday week.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 163)

I **will tell** you where they are. With the exception of Nibs, who has darted away to reconnoitre [look around], they are already in their home under the ground, a very delightful residence of which we **shall see** a good deal presently.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 58)

These two excerpts show the narrator's commitment in recounting certain situations. In the first excerpt, the phrases "I should like to do" and "they will be here" express the narrator's obligation to tell Mrs. Darling that the children have already returned to their home. In the second excerpt, the positive shading can be seen from the phrases "I will tell you where they are" and "we shall see a good deal presently", and these signify the narrator's sense of duty in the story.

...That is a pretty story, and the end shows how grateful a bird can be; but if we tell it **we must also tell** the whole adventure of the lagoon, which would **of course** be telling two adventures rather than just one...Or again, **we might choose** Peter's defiance of the lions, when he drew a circle round him on the ground with an arrow and dared them to cross

it...Which of these adventures shall we choose? The best way will be to toss for it. **I** have tossed, and the lagoon has won.

(Barrie, 1995, p.83)

The above excerpt is a good example of how the narrator is inconsistent, moving from unidentified “we” to “I”. The excerpt, nevertheless, shows that the narrative in this situation falls under the B(N)+ve mode. The phrases “we must also tell” and “we might choose” show deontic modality, suggesting the narrator’s commitment in the situations recounted.

Not only the narrator, but also the addressee “you” are described in the B(N)+ve mode of narrative.

If you shut your eyes and are a lucky one, you **may see** at times a shapeless pool of lovely pale colours suspended in the darkness; then if you squeeze your eyes tighter, the pool begins to take shape, and the colours become so vivid that with another squeeze **they must go** on fire. But just before they go on fire you see the lagoon **This is the nearest you ever get** to it on the mainland, just one heavenly moment; if there could be two moments you **might see** the surf and **hear** the mermaids singing.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 85)

This excerpt comes from the eighth chapter which describes the Mermaid Lagoon in an “optical illusion” (Frey, 1987, p.189). However, the narrative falls under the positive shading, for the deontic modality is eminent (“you may see”, “they must go”, “you might see and hear”) and the evaluative adjective is also shown in the phrase “This is the nearest you ever get”. The words such as “see” and “hear” may be problematic in categorizing the narrative into the positive shading for they are perceptive verbs. However, these words are used like action verbs and the deontic modality (“might” and “may”) is more important in accordance with Simpson’s narrative framework.

The positive shading in the story is expressed by the modality. Moreover, evaluative words or sentences, indicating the narrator's opinions or judgment towards situations recounted also falls under positive shading, according to Simpson's narrative framework.

In the bitterness of his remorse he swore that he would never leave the kennel until his children came back. **Of course this was a pity**; but whatever Mr. Darling did he had to do in excess; otherwise he soon give up doing it. And **there never was a more humble man** than the once proud George Darling, as he sat in the kennel of an evening talking with his wife of their children and all their pretty ways.

(Barrie, 1995, p.165)

From the above excerpt, the narrator sees that when the children escape from the house, Mr. Darling is so ashamed of himself that he has to crawl into Nana's kennel. The narrator also offers opinions and judgments on Mr. Darling's behavior. The evaluative phrases ("Of course this was a pity" and "there never was a more humble man") signify the B(N)+ve narrative. Not only is Mr. Darling described in B(N)+ve narrative, but Captain Hook, the story's antagonist, is also seen in the positive shading.

Thus **it was offensive to him even now** to board a ship in the same dress in which he grappled her; and he still adhered in his walk to the schools distinguished slouch. But **above all** he retained the passion for good form. Good form! However much he may have degenerated, he still **knew** that this is **all** that really matters.

(Barrie, 1995 p.141)

It is humiliating to have to confess that this conceit of Peter was one of his most fascinating qualities.

To put it with brutal frankness, there never was a cockier boy.

(Barrie, 1995, p.27)

The narrator uses evaluative statements; for instance, “there never was” and “above all”) and evaluative adjectives (“it was offensive to him even now” and “It is humiliating”) are seen in the chosen excerpts.

Of course, when you have mastered the action **you are able to do** these things without **thinking** of them, and **then nothing can be more graceful**.

But **you simply must fit**, and Peter measures you for your tree as carefully as for a suit of clothes: the only difference being that the clothes are made to fit you, while you have to be made to fit the tree.

(Barrie, 1995, p.76)

This excerpt is from the seventh chapter in which the narrator describes the home underground where children live in Neverland. This excerpt shows that the chosen narrative falls under the positive shading. Not only the narrator can access you’s actions (“when you have mastered” and “you are able to do”), the narrative also has an evaluative adverb (“Of course”), an evaluative adjective (“nothing can be more graceful”) and the modality expressing a degree of obligation (“you simply must fit”). These chosen excerpts depict the positive shading, or B(N)+ve. They also show that the narrator’s sense of obligation and confidence in making evaluations in situations recounted. However, sometimes parts of the narrative in *Peter Pan* do not fall under the positive shading; on the contrary, the narrator’s lack of confidence can be seen throughout the story. These following excerpts will demonstrate how the narrative fall under negative shading or B(N)-ve mode of narration according to Simpson’s categorization.

Negative Shading

Throughout the story, the B(N)-ve mode of narration can be exemplified by these following excerpts.

I suppose she **must have looked rather delightful**,
for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried,
“Oh, why can’t you remain like this forever!

(Barrie, 1995, p.1)

In this paragraph, the narrative falls under the B(N)-ve mode with the epistemic modality and modal lexical verb, “I suppose”. This reveals that the narrator expresses his lack of confidence in recounting this situation.

Perhaps it is tell-tale to divulge that for a moment Hook entranced her, and we tell on her only because her slip led to strange results. Had she haughtily unhanded him (and we **should have loved** to write it of her), she **would have been** hurled through the air like the others, and Hook **would probably not have been** present at the tying of the children; and **had he not been** at the tying **he would not have discovered** Slightly’s secret, and without the secret **he could not presently have made** his foul attempt on Peter’s life.

(Barrie, 1995, p.130)

This excerpt features many modal auxiliaries in verb phrases such as “would have been”, “would probably not have been” and “had he not been”. These verb phrases suggest that this excerpt is merely part of the narrator’s speculation in the situations recounted. The phrase “Perhaps”, one of the perception modal adverbs, indicates the narrator’s uncertainty in a B(N)-ve narrative.

Modal lexical verbs expressing the negative shading, such as “I think”, “I suppose” or “I believe”, can also be seen from the story.

He was accompanied by a strange light, no bigger than our fist, which darted about the room like a living thing; and **I think it must have been** this light that wakened Mrs. Darling

(Barrie, 1995, p.11)

I think all were gone when a group of savage boys surrounded Hook, who **seemed** to have a charmed life, as he kept them at bay in that circle of fire. They had done for his dogs, but this man alone **seemed** to be a match for them all.

(Barry, 1995, p.157)

The first one is the scene when Peter Pan sneaks into the Darlings' nursery to find his shadow, and the narrator "thinks" that "it must have been" Tinker Bell ("this light") who wakes Mrs. Darling. The second excerpt is the scene when Hook is among the group of his enemies, the lost boys. From these two excerpts, "I think" expresses the narrator's uncertainty in situations recounted. Moreover, the perception modal verb "seemed" in "who seemed to have a charmed life" and "this man alone seemed to be a match" suggests the negative shading.

If he thought at all, **but I don't believe** he ever thought, it was that he and his shadow, when brought near each other, would join like drops of water; and when they did not he was appalled.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 24)

I believe some of it was bad words, but it sounded kind, and she flew back and forward, plainly meaning "Follow me, and all will be well."

(Barrie, 1995, p. 49)

The first scene is when the narrator tells that Peter Pan tries to attach his shadow to his body. The second one is the moment when Tinker Bell is jealous of Wendy so she attempts to lure Wendy to danger. These excerpts also show the negative shading. They both fall into B(N)-ve, for phrases with a modal lexical verb "I don't believe" and "I believe" appear in the text.

I suppose it was all especially entrancing to Wendy, because those rampageous boys of hers gave her so much to do. Really there were whole weeks when, except **perhaps** with a stocking in the evening, she was never above the ground.

(Barrie, 1995, p.78)

I rather wonder at the bird, for though he had been nice to her, he had also sometimes tormented her. **I can suppose** only that, like Mrs. Darling and the rest of them, she was melted because he had all his first teeth.

(Barrie, 1995, p.101)

I suppose it was because Wendy knew this that her last words to him were these plaintive ones: You won't forget me, Peter, will you, before spring-cleaning time comes.

(Barrie, 1995, p.176)

These three excerpts come from different episodes. The first one comes from the scene when Wendy is happy with nurturing the boys in the home underground. The second one is the scene where the narrator describes the Never Bird helping Peter by lending him her nest. The third one is the last words of Wendy to Peter. These three excerpts comprise of modal lexical verbs (“I suppose”, “I rather wonder” and “I can suppose”), in the negative shading, B(N)-ve, and the narrator’s lack of confidence can be seen from the word “perhaps”.

Sometimes the narrator straightforwardly lets readers know that he lacks knowledge in certain situations. These three following excerpts are some of the good examples.

I know not why it was, perhaps it was because of the soft beauty of the evening, but there came over him a desire to confide to his faithful bo'sun the story of his life.

(Barrie, 1995, p.59)

In they went; **I don't know** how there was room for them, but you can squeeze very tight in the Neverland

(Barrie, 1995, p.74)

I don't know whether any of the children were crying; if so, the singing drowned the sound; but as the little house disappeared in the forest, a brave though tiny jet of smoke issued from its chimney **as if** defying Hook.

(Barrie, 1995, p. 131)

The first one is extracted from the scene when the narrator attempts to describe the dimension of the home underground. The second one is when the narrator attempts to describe Smee, one of Hook's crews. The third one is from the story's Chapter Thirteen where the children are captured by Hook. These three excerpts reveal that the narrator sometimes cannot describe in detail the scenarios or the character's thought ("I don't know" and "I know not why it was, perhaps"). The word "as if" in the third excerpt also shows that the narrator makes a comparison based on human perception, and that features in Simpson's negative shading.

In a few cases, both of the positive and negative shadings can be seen in one excerpt. For instance:

Instead of watching the ship, however, **we must now return** to that desolate home from which three of our characters had taken heartless flight so long ago. It **seems a shame** to have neglected No. 14 all this time; and **yet we may be sure** that Mrs. Darling

does not blame us. If we had returned sooner to look with sorrowful sympathy at her, she **would probably have cried**, “Don’t be silly; what do I matter?”

(Barrie, 1995, p.162)

The excerpt is the moment when the children consider going back to the Darlings family. It shows both positive shading and negative shading in the narrative. The excerpt shows contradictory modality, with a deontic shading in the positive shading (“we must now return”), and an epistemic modality in the negative shading (“It seems a shame”; “we may be sure” and “probably”). Following Simpson’s assertion that “large sequences of positive and negative narratives are psychological interpretations of characters and events” (1993, p. 79), the changeable shift from B(N)+ve into B(N)-ve in *Peter Pan* can be seen as that the narrator’s viewpoints and attitude in these characters or events are irresolute.

In conclusion, the analysis reveals that there are both positive and negative shadings in *Peter Pan*’s narrative. It reveals that the narrator’s stance in the story is changing from the status of commitment, obligation or duty into the status of uncertainty or lack of confidence in some situations recounted. The results of the analysis will be used to evaluate the narrator’s stance, compared to that of the interpretations from the positivist and psychological studies, in the next chapter.