

Leiden University

Faculty of Humanities

Academic Year: 2019/2020

Supervisor: Dr M. S. Newton

Second Reader: Dr M. J. A. Kasten

Reigniting the Blaze:

Captain Hook's 'True Identity' Revisited in J. M. Barrie's

***Peter Pan* Saga and Popular Adaptations**

P. F. Majerus (2680963)

p.f.majerus@umail.leidenuniv.nl

MA Literary Studies:

English Literature and Culture

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr M. S. Newton. Dr Newton's course *Fantasy Islands*, alongside Dr Kasten's *Of Witches and Wardrobes*, was one of the primary reasons why I chose to pursue my Master's degree at the University of Leiden. I knew early on that I wanted to write a thesis on *Peter Pan* and was thrilled when Dr Newton agreed to supervise my research. I am immeasurably grateful to Dr Newton for his shared expertise, his invaluable and without exception swift and detailed feedback, as well as, and perhaps above all, his constant patience and calming nature, even hundreds of kilometres away, during a global pandemic which brought along unforeseen circumstances and personal setbacks for everyone.

I would also like to thank the University of Leiden and all the professors that have passed on their great knowledge during my studies. Every course I attended had a profound impact on my overall approach to literature, research, and writing, which I dare say, without conceit but gratitude, has made me a better student on the whole.

Last but certainly not least, I owe a thousand thanks to my family, my friends and, in particular, my girlfriend. Words cannot do justice to her unwavering moral support and belief in me. Though the act of writing may usually happen in solitude, the process of it is made easier through the invaluable support of people believing in you and your work.

It is this kind of support that has made the writing of this thesis truly an awfully big adventure.

Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
1. <i>Chapter One</i>	15
<i>'Proud and Insolent Youth': Hook's Lack of Jouissance and the Impossibility of</i>	15
<i>Growing Up</i>	15
1.1. Introduction: Barrie's Sentimental Heartlessness	15
1.2. Hook, The Solitary	17
1.3. The Pirate Who Would Not Grow Up	20
1.4. Conclusion	24
2. <i>Chapter Two</i>	27
<i>'Good Form': Hook's Identity as an Etonian and a Gentleman</i>	27
2.1. Introduction: 'Floreat Etona'	27
2.2. Hook and Silver: The Last Gentlemen Pirates	29
2.3. 'Was he not a good Etonian?'	32
2.4. Conrad's <i>Lord Jim</i> : 'I am—a gentleman too....'	36
2.5. Conclusion	39
3. <i>Chapter Three</i>	41
<i>'The Hook Shoots Forth': Hook's Mutilation as a Herald of Death and a</i>	41
<i>Symbol of Fragmented Identity</i>	41
3.1. Introduction: Disability as Tragedy or Melodrama	41
3.2. 'He is not so big as he was'	43
3.3. 'That's the fear that haunts me'	47
3.4. Conclusion	51
4. <i>Chapter Four</i>	53
<i>'Blast Good Form': Captain Hook's Legacy and Identity in Popular Film Adaptations</i>	53
4.1. Introduction: James Hook, the Immortal	53
4.2. 'Save Me Smee': Hook as a Cartoon	55
4.3. 'My Life Is Over': When Hook Lost His Shadow	58
4.4. 'Old, Alone, Done For': Hook as a Gallant Pirate	63
4.5. Conclusion	68
<i>Conclusion</i>	69
<i>Works Cited</i>	73

Introduction

The purpose of my research is to illuminate the complexity of Peter Pan's mysterious archnemesis and the villain of James Matthew Barrie's most famous story: Captain James Hook. Throughout this thesis, I will argue that Hook is an educated, even gentlemanly anti-hero figure in his own quest for redemption against the eternal boy who maimed him. Hook, however, is tragically and constantly denied any redemption and ultimately only finds partial peace in death. I will further argue that despite Hook being doomed to be swallowed in every reincarnation, modern adaptations have come to grant this anti-hero a form of immortality which even rivals that of Peter Pan.

In 1905, just a year after the colossal success of the acclaimed novelist and dramatist J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* in Britain, the play's producer, Charles Frohman, opened the play in New York. American audiences embraced the play with emphatic enthusiasm that even surpassed that of its London audience. With enormous impact and financial success, Frohman took *Peter Pan* all across the US. As Lisa Chaney points out 'people everywhere were clamouring to see it and Peter became the most talked-about "child" in America' (232). Captain Hook, however, has remained to this day a fairly undiscussed entity, when compared to his arch-nemesis Peter. It is the object of this thesis, to bring the pirate captain to the foreground and illustrate the complexity of this would-be gentleman, illuminate his tragic and melancholic characteristics as an anti-hero, as well as argue why, in addition to discussing the eternal boy, it is a worthwhile study to shift the focus to his opposite force, the immortal James Hook.

In 1925, Barrie wrote a short story called 'Jas Hook at Eton, or the Solitary'. Instead of being published in an anthology of short stories for children, however, Barrie

rewrote the story as a speech which he delivered to the First Hundred at Eton on 7 July 1927 (Rose 115). During this speech, now renamed 'Captain Hook at Eton' and published in *The Times*, Barrie addressed his audience as follows:

This talk with you arises out of a sort of challenge from the Provost. I was here this year on June 4, and in a speech at luncheon the Provost challenged me to disprove this terrible indictment, "James Hook, the pirate captain, was a great Etonian but not a good one." Now in my opinion Hook was a good Etonian though not a great one, and it is my more or less passionate desire to persuade you of this—to have Hook, so to speak, set up for good [...]. (*The Times* 15)

It may seem odd for an author such as Barrie, whose literary oeuvre and reputation are almost entirely based on his eponymous hero Peter Pan, to write and give a speech about his almost equally famous villain and argue with 'passionate desire' that 'Hook was a good Etonian' and to have him 'set up for good'. This thesis will argue, however, that this speech is fully in line with Barrie's ambivalent and ironic writing style, portraying the villain Hook as a 'not wholly unheroic figure' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 132). Barrie's account of Hook's time at Eton includes biographical details such as Hook's adherence to the exclusive Etonian social club 'Pop', as well as him ranking among the top scholars of the college, having been a member of The Hundred (top hundred students) as well. The most interesting aspect of the story, however, is the fact that Barrie turns Captain Hook into a sort of tragic Etonian hero by having Hook reluctantly denounce his proud connection with Eton; one night he breaks into the school and erases his contemptible fame as a pirate from the history of the college in order to save the reputation of his beloved school. The tale ends with the information

that ‘a little boy—his implacable enemy— had struck Hook from the lists of Man’ (*The Times* 16) and that he left all his possessions to Eton. The ‘little boy’, though not mentioned by name, is, of course, Peter Pan.

In Barrie’s 1911 novel *Peter and Wendy*, the author treats Hook’s connection to Eton as the most carefully guarded secret of his story and writes of his villain:

Hook was not his true name. To reveal who he really was would even at this date set the country in a blaze; but as those who read between the lines must have guessed, he had been at a famous public school. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 117)

Years later, ‘Captain Hook at Eton’ finally betrayed the name of the ‘famous public school’ and in Barrie’s 1928 stage directions for *Peter Pan*, Hook, at the moment of his death murmurs ‘Floreat Etona’ (May Eton Flourish) before being swallowed by the crocodile (Hollindale 321). Four out of five of the Llewelyn Davies boys—who were, by Barrie’s own admission, responsible for ‘the spark’ (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 75) that helped create Peter Pan—went to Eton themselves, paid for by Barrie (Green 118).¹ George Llewelyn Davies became a ‘full-blown Eton blood’ and, like Hook, a member of the Etonian elite social club ‘Pop’ (Birkin 185). Michael, the second-youngest brother, was a less full-blown Etonian but eventually became a member of ‘Pop’ as well (*Ibid.* 278). Jacqueline Rose argues that finally making Hook’s cultural allegiance explicit, years after it had been nothing more than a rumour within Barrie’s story, is ‘like drawing back the veil on a mystery [...]’ (116).

¹ Barrie first met George and John (called ‘Jack’), the two eldest sons of Arthur and Sylvia ‘Jocelyn’ Llewelyn Davies, in Kensington Gardens. Over the next summers, Barrie would take George, Jack, and Peter on trips and play out adventures with them (Hollindale 306).

The idea of Captain Hook's 'true nature' will serve as the central research point for this thesis. My research aims to disentangle and draw back the veil, as Rose puts it, of Hook's mysterious identity. Though the admission of Hook's connection with Eton may not have set the country in a blaze, this part of the *Jolly Rogers'* captain's identity is often either forgotten or deliberately minimised, ignoring Captain James Hook's identity as not only a pirate but a formerly well-educated gentleman of good repute and social standing. Additionally, I will investigate how Barrie's capricious writing style and relentlessly melancholic depiction of Hook turn the pirate captain into a tragic anti-hero figure when compared to the actual perceived hero Peter who represents youth and joy but is also the one who cut off Hook's right hand and maliciously fed it to a crocodile. Hook's iron hook instead of a right hand is a constant reminder of his losing struggle against Peter Pan. This mutilation paired with his dejection and loneliness is generally brushed aside by posterity and by modern film adaptations, specifically the 1953 Disney adaptation (which is arguably most children's first encounter with the character) where Hook is relegated to a comedic blundering villain afraid of a crocodile. I will thus also investigate how posterity has dealt with Hook as a villain. Cinematic adaptations, in particular, have rendered Captain Hook's character even more complex through distortions and additions, while also censuring the ambiguity of Hook's nature as a well-educated man who was also ashamed of his own pirate career. Far more than simply being one side of the dichotomous 'age against youth' coin shared with Peter Pan, this thesis argues that Captain James Hook, as a character and concept, transcends simple villainy, while also having the potential of being a tragic anti-hero figure within the *Peter Pan* saga.

The corpus of primary literature for this thesis will constitute what I have called the *Peter Pan Saga* in my title. There is an abundance of original texts, as well as literary

and cinematic adaptations to choose from. As Rose points out, Barrie's novel for adults, *The Little White Bird* (1902) introduced the idea and character of Peter Pan. The attempt to adapt an adult novel into a play for children, as well as Barrie's constant rewritings of the play and its endings, underline Rose's argument that '*Peter Pan* was both never written and, paradoxically, has never ceased to be written.'² I will not include Barrie's novels *Sentimental Tommy* (1895) and *Tommy and Grizel* (1900) in my close reading approach. Scholars such as Naomi Lewis or Roger Lancelyn Green have argued that Tommy, a character who can't face adult responsibilities and actually ponders about writing a Peter Pan-like character in one of his novels (Lewis 64), is a proto version of the Peter Pan character and casts an 'angry shadow of tragedy [...] that lingers in the background of *Peter Pan*' (Green 12). Nevertheless, Green also points out that, even though 'the character of Tommy Sandys [...] represents at least a side of Barrie's personality' and 'certainly the side from which the idea of Peter Pan was developed', reading too much into the character of Tommy Sandys 'is not safe' (10). While it is tempting to read both of the Tommy novels through a critical biographical lens, my research foregoes any biographical criticism. Furthermore, the character of Captain Hook had not yet been written at the time of *Tommy and Grizel's* publication in 1900. Another work of Barrie which does not include the character Captain Hook but is nonetheless part of my research—albeit a small one—is the already mentioned novel for adults *The Little White Bird* (1902). However, this thesis only analyses the novel's chapters concerning Peter Pan, which were published separately in 1906 as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. My primary reason for using *The Little White Bird* for my research instead of *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* is the complex textual history of *Peter Pan* as

² Barrie himself said in his dedication 'TO THE FIVE' that he has 'no recollection of having written it [*Peter Pan*]' (*Peter Pan* 75). In *Peter Pan In and Out of Time*, Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr point out how Barrie's early handwritten manuscript was considerably different from the version that the Duke of York's Theatre's audience got to see on 27 December 1904 (ix-x).

a children's book. The play in 1904 was called *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*. Seven years later, the novelised version was called *Peter and Wendy* (1911). Generally, this is the book most people think of as *Peter Pan* and indeed in 1924, it was renamed *Peter Pan and Wendy* before it became simply *Peter Pan*, in a way usurping the title of the famous play and causing confusion among scholars (White & Tarr ix-x). In 1928, Barrie eventually published the written play itself, also called *Peter Pan* (*Ibid.* x). Due to this confusing textual history, I have opted to use *The Little White Bird* as a reference whenever I analyse those chapters which have been separately published as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. Furthermore, I will always refer to Barrie's novelised version as *Peter and Wendy* and to his play version as *Peter Pan* in order to try and minimise any possible confusion.

Thus, my thesis will primarily deal with *The Little White Bird* (1902), the published play *Peter Pan* (1928), *Peter and Wendy* (1911), and the speech *Captain Hook at Eton* (1927) which has already briefly been touched on above. In my following chapters, I will, of course, discuss different texts as well as cinematic adaptations, however, these works will always be read or analysed with this primary literary corpus as a comparative reference point.

Before discussing some of the scholarly work that has already been done on Barrie and *Peter Pan*, as well as explaining my methodology and chapter structure, it may be useful to give a brief summary of both *The Little White Bird* and *Peter and Wendy*. All other works that will be analysed will be summarised where necessary in the relevant chapters. As has been mentioned before, *The Little White Bird* is the first novel where Peter Pan appears in print and by name. Throughout the chapters that were separately published as *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, Captain W. tells a boy, David, a story about a baby called Peter Pan. In this story within a story, Peter is a half-human

and half-bird, a liminal 'Betwixt-and-Between' character (Barrie, *The Little White Bird* 66) who got out of his nursery window because it 'had no bars' (*Ibid.* 64). Peter flies out of his nursery to spend time with other birds and fairies in Kensington Gardens. Being half-human, Peter longs for the company of actual children and he tries to return home to his mother. When he gets back, however, Peter's mother has replaced him with a new baby and has barred the window to the nursery. Peter decides to return to Kensington Gardens and live out adventures among the birds and fairies, seemingly forever.

The plot of *Peter Pan* and *Peter and Wendy* are similar enough that I will only summarise *Peter and Wendy*. Significant differences between the two versions will nevertheless be touched upon throughout this thesis. *Peter and Wendy* starts off in the Darling family's household, comprised of Mr Darling and Mrs Darling, as well as their three children, John, Michael, and Wendy. One fateful evening, when the parents are away, Peter Pan enters the children's nursery with a fairy called Tinker Bell, in search of his shadow. Naturally, Wendy wakes up and, charmed by Peter, the stories of Neverland and the motherless Lost Boys, she decides to escape the nursery with her brothers and accompany Peter to Neverland. On this magical island, the Darling children get caught up in many adventures, most of them revolving around the feud between Peter's Lost Boys, pirates led by Captain Hook, and the Indian Piccaninny tribe. The island also inhabits an infamous crocodile that swallowed Hook's right hand when Peter cut it off in a fight and fed it to the crocodile. Ever since, the crocodile is in pursuit of Hook, to swallow the rest of him. The Darling children's adventures in Neverland conclude with a battle on the pirate ship between pirates and Lost Boys and a fight to the death between Peter and Hook. Peter is triumphant and forces Hook to walk the plank, causing him to finally be swallowed whole by the crocodile. After Peter's victory, Wendy decides to take her brothers back home and tries to convince Peter to stay with the happily

reunited Darlings. Peter, however, refuses, and, like his earlier version in *The Little White Bird*, he retains his freedom of youth, but must forever remain an onlooker when it comes to motherly love.

Over the last few decades, both Barrie and *Peter Pan* have been an indispensable object of study for scholars and critics in the field of children's literature and theatre. The critical attention afforded to the influential myth of a boy who doesn't grow up and his creator has generally been either biographical or psychoanalytical, focusing on Barrie's relationship with his mother, his failed marriage, as well as his affectionate, yet complex relationship with Arthur and Sylvia Llewelyn Davies' five sons (Wiggins 79). For scholars taking a biographical criticism approach, Andrew Birkin's extensive biography *J. M. Barrie and The Lost Boys* (originally published 1979) has become invaluable for its sheer quantity of information. Birkin also developed a friendly relationship with the last surviving Llewelyn Davies son, Nicholas (1903-1980), who acted as a consultant for Birkin's series and book. Lisa Chaney's biography, *Hide-and-Seek with Angels* (2005) takes a slightly more critical approach in comparison to Birkin as her research, among other things also focuses on late-Victorians' attitudes on gender and their contemporary obsession with youth. Another biography among many worth mentioning is the writer Lady Cynthia Asquith's *Portrait of Barrie* (1954). Asquith befriended Barrie during World War I and became his secretary until his death in 1937. Her work was invaluable for this thesis as she directly contradicted many of the myths that have been propagated by some of the psychoanalytical study of Barrie's life, such as his sentimental streak and obsession with youth being linked to never having grown up himself. Some of these works also critically discuss Peter Pan as a figure, however, none generally focus on the character of Captain Hook in the same manner.

In the area of psychoanalytical discussion on Barrie and *Peter Pan*, Hook has been the object of more in-depth study. Nevertheless, the psychoanalytical discussion of Hook often risks becoming one-dimensional. Few critics have been able to resist the temptation to read the battle between Peter and Hook, in Freudian terms, as an Oedipal conflict. Critics such as Michael Egan in his essay 'The Neverland of Id' have argued that the confrontation between Peter and Hook is 'sharply Oedipal both in its nature and its resolution' (37). As Maria Tatar points out in the centennial edition of *Peter and Wendy*, this approach has some merit due to the doubling of Hook (the evil father) and Mr Darling (the benevolent father) who are generally played by the same actor, while the Darling children in Neverland encounter their father in symbolic form and then conspire to kill him by proxy with the help of Peter Pan.³ However, Tatar also argues that the Oedipal comparison does not hold up to scrutiny because in the Neverland conflicts, everyone, including the pirates, act like children, unlike the typical structure of the Oedipal struggle (lii). Additionally, David Rudd points out that this struggle remains incomplete in *Peter Pan* as Peter never seriously tries to take Hook's place and eventually kills him. The Oedipal struggle, however, is only resolved when the child accepts that the father has the superior phallus (Rudd 274). Whatever the struggle between Peter and Hook may be, an exclusively Oedipal reading is thus not supported by the entire plot. Jacqueline Rose, who said that an Oedipal interpretation of *Peter Pan* is 'too easy' (35), is less interested in Freud and derives her interpretations of Freud in *The Case of Peter Pan; or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (first published in 1984)

³ Birkin mentions that Dorothea Baird, the actress playing Mrs Darling in the first stage version, was apparently set to play Hook. However, Gerald du Maurier, the actor playing Mr Darling, persuaded Barrie to give him the double role and thus started a doubling tradition (Tatar 59). No scholar has been able to give any official reasons for the eventual casting choices. The double role has thus remained a subject of scholarly debate and interpretation. It is clear, however, that both double performances would have made sense. Baird's doubling would certainly have pointed to the 'touch of the feminine, as in all great pirates' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 80) in Hook, as well as his reverence of mothers while also seeing the longing for them as 'weakness' (*Ibid.* 78).

from the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. Rose uses Lacanian theory of the unconscious to argue that the paradox of adult authors writing children's literature makes children's fiction effectively impossible.

This thesis will follow Rose's example of using Lacanian theory in order to illustrate my argument on Captain Hook's 'true identity' as an educated gentleman and a tragic anti-hero in the *Peter Pan* saga. However, rather than analysing the question of the possibility or impossibility of children's fiction, I will use Lacan's theory of the Symbolic and *jouissance* (French for strong enjoyment or sexual orgasm) to discuss Captain Hook's almost idiosyncratic fear of time and death in the face of Peter who, contrariwise, sees death as 'an awfully big adventure' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 84). In Lacanian theory, the subject—in my research Hook—is positioned in relation to mainly two orders: the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In summary, the Imaginary is predicated on notions which make one feel whole, such as a parent figure, a lover, or a philosophy. The Symbolic cuts this potential feeling of wholeness up into differential signifiers, which represent not the presence of wholeness but the absence. The Symbolic thus represents one's lack of wholeness. In Lacanian theory, we have to move away from the Imaginary because it represents false wholeness and we have to take our place in the Symbolic. Here a signifier (our name) marks our place. While this transition is necessary in Lacan's theory in order to experience our own being and self, we simultaneously cease to exist as an object because we now stand outside ourselves. This causes in ourselves a *manqué à être*, a want of being, where we always attempt to repair our sense of incompleteness. Moreover, for Lacan, this lack of wholeness is precisely what constitutes our prime desires (Rudd 265). Lacan's concept of *jouissance* is what he calls 'beyond [Freud's] pleasure principle' (*Four Fundamentals* 184). In summary, according to Lacan, the attempt to achieve *jouissance* compels one to push the boundaries of

ordinary enjoyment, which ultimately leads to pain and suffering, not *jouissance*. Worse even, *jouissance* becomes pain. Captain Hook's 'want of being' in his tragically unsuccessful conflict with Peter Pan, who represents *jouissance* because he *is* 'youth', 'joy' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 130) and heartlessness, leads not only to making Hook's existence a melancholic one but, ultimately, to his death.

The first chapter of this thesis will engage with Barrie's ambivalence and irony, as well as his highly melancholic depiction of Captain Hook. Barrie's writing style has been the object of much scholarly attention and, more often than not, he has been portrayed as overly sentimental or whimsical. David Daiches' 'Sexless Sentimentalist' (1960) is a case in point. R. D. S. Jack in his revision of *Peter Pan's* stage history (1991) even asserts that Barrie is now 'usually dismissed as superficial, sentimental and commercial to the point of artistic dishonesty' (n.p.). This whimsical and sentimental side of Barrie's writing became almost idiosyncratic for the author. His 'Barrie-ness', as Rose puts it (22), became frowned upon by some but also cherished and respected by others, such as Robert Louis Stevenson who hailed Barrie as 'a man of genius' (qtd. in Jack 3). Such more positive reviews of Barrie's work are not just explicable by critics having different tastes but also by the fact that Barrie's work, regardless of certain criticism, was far from one-dimensionally sentimental. The critic and novelist George Blake, who was just eleven years old when *Peter Pan* appeared on stage, wrote of Barrie that:

'it is perhaps the most puzzling thing [...] that the expert toucher of emotions, the weaver of charmingly whimsical webs, the delight of the nurseries, had in all his dealings as a writer with such topics as death and grief and suffering the way of a sadist.' (qtd. in Birkin 16-17)

My first chapter will, therefore, analyse and argue how Barrie's implied sadism and melancholic description of Captain Hook's suffering not only complement his whimsy but also turn Hook into a tragic anti-hero, who is denied the potential of Peter Pan's level of youth and joy, or in Lacanian terms, *jouissance*.

In Chapter Two, my thesis will illustrate how Captain Hook is a gentleman first and only pirate second. A close reading approach will focus on Barrie's novel, as well as the published play, and his speech 'Captain Hook at Eton' (1927). Like Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver in *Treasure Island* (1883), Hook redefines the notion of the gentleman, fitting the description of what has come to be known as 'gentleman pirate' and falling perfectly in line with a late 19th and early 20th century questioning of the typical gentleman image. In *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (1981), Robin Gilmour asserts that Victorians were 'much more uncertain than their grandfathers had been about what constituted a gentleman' (3). The rapidly changing society made 'the moral component in gentlemanliness, and its social ambiguity [...] open to debate and redefinition [...]' (*Ibid.*). I will compare Captain Hook with Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver, as well as Joseph Conrad's characters Jim and Gentleman Brown in *Lord Jim* (1900). Illustrating that their depiction underlines the destabilised image of gentlemen in the late 19th and early 20th century, these characters will work as reference points in my argument that Captain Hook, while portrayed as the main villain in *Peter Pan*, is also the only man in the story embodying the gentleman ideals of education, good manners, and dignity, while simultaneously struggling to live up to his self-imposed obsession of having 'good form'.

In Chapter Three, I will analyse Captain Hook's most common characteristic, namely his 'iron hook instead of a right hand' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 43). Hook was

mutilated by his arch-nemesis Peter Pan who then sadistically fed his hand to a crocodile, adding insult to not only a proverbial but very real injury. I will use Lacan's concept of 'life envy' to illustrate the significance of Hook not only struggling against Peter's *jouissance*, but his hook being a constant and cruel reminder of the impossibility of his own contentment, as well as his impending doom. Lacan calls the *corps morcèle*, the fragmented or mutilated body an augur or herald of death (*Écrits* 11). I will illustrate the effect and description of Hook's *corps morcèle* through close analysis of passages from both the novel and published play. In doing so, I will argue that Hook, whose name is obviously derived from his prosthetic limb has seemingly lost any sense of self and is only defined by what has been taken from and is denied to him. In timeless Neverland, the iron hook thus overshadows James Hook as an individual and becomes a symbol of the impossibility of leaving his past behind while also losing any chance of a future and potential redemption.

The fourth and final chapter of this thesis will analyse how posterity has dealt with Captain Hook as a character. There are a range of literary adaptations to choose from. For this chapter, however, I will only focus on cinematic adaptations. My analysis focuses on three adaptations: Walt Disney's animated *Peter Pan* (1953), Steven Spielberg's *Hook* (1991), and P. J. Hogan's *Peter Pan* (2003). Using Barrie's original novel and play, as well as his own script for a film adaptation, I will investigate how Hook's cinematic representation has, on one hand, strayed from Barrie's original conception, often through comedic overindulgence, which is especially true for the Disney adaptation. On the other hand, however, I will also argue that these adaptations have rendered the idea of Captain Hook's 'true identity', which my thesis is predicated on, even more complex. While Peter Pan is the boy who, in almost every adaptation, never grows up, Captain Hook returns every time, only to be swallowed anew. This

different form of immortality can sometimes alter, even mutilate Hook's original conception. At the same time, however, every new reincarnation of the hook-wielding pirate adds a new layer to the elusive character that is Captain James Hook.

1. Chapter One

'Proud and Insolent Youth': Hook's Lack of *Jouissance* and the Impossibility of Growing Up

1.1. Introduction: Barrie's Sentimental Heartlessness

J. M. Barrie had been a famous and successful novelist and playwright well before the first performance of *Peter Pan; Or, The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* in a London theatre in 1904. Barrie was often seen as a form of distinct sentimentalist, sometimes dismissed as whimsical and at other times cherished as an expert weaver of empathy and emotional insights (Rose 16-17). Whereas Barrie is nowadays revered as the creator of Peter Pan, a boy who refuses to grow up and is defined by eternally retaining his boyish carelessness and joyfulness, some of Barrie's contemporaries saw him as an author who was always obsessed with sentimentalism. In one of the most influential magazines of the 19th century, *The Fortnightly Review*, Irish journalist and author Stephen Gwynn remarked that 'just as Thackeray became haunted by a suspicion of snobbery, so with Mr Barrie the fear of sentiment becomes an obsession' (1037). In an article on sentimental masculinity in Barrie's works, Andrew Nash points out that 'to label something "sentimental" is to dismiss it curtly as beneath intellectual concern' (113). Thus, a sentimentalist could be seen as someone who overlooks conventions of sincerity when expressing emotions, regardless of the situation at hand, provoking intellectual scepticism.

However, as the introduction of this thesis has already mentioned, Barrie's sentimentalism was neither considered insincere by all his peers nor is it the only facet of his writing worth analysing. As Naomi Lewis argues the 'sentimental and whimsical

were certainly part of his [Barrie's] stock-in-trade, but they were not accidentally used' (64). Furthermore, Lewis asserts that *Peter Pan* is 'indeed a wonderfully *heartless* book' (*Ibid.*). The word 'heartless' is, of course, the very last word of *Peter and Wendy* when the narrator explains that the cycle of Peter taking girls who are to be his mother to Neverland will continue 'so long as children are gay and innocent and heartless' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 153). Barrie's secretary Lady Asquith refutes the notion of Barrie's sentimentalism as follows:

To my mind the essential Barrie is not sentimental. The real sentimentalist refuses to face hard facts. Barrie does not. For all his reputed 'softness', he is not escapist. He faces the most painful truths. The silver coating of his writing covers a core of hard truth [...]. (218)

In this first chapter, I will analyse Barrie's depiction of Captain Hook, as well as illustrate what Lewis calls 'heartless' and Lady Asquith 'hard facts' and 'a core of hard truth'. The hard truth that Hook has to face in *Peter and Wendy* is the impossibility of his own, in Lacanian terms, *jouissance*, his melancholic existence due to this 'hard fact' and his inevitable demise at the end of the story. This chapter thus argues that Barrie uses a form of sentimental heartlessness or even sadism, as the critic George Blake put it, in order to represent Hook's attempt to achieve Peter Pan's *jouissance*, which, ultimately leads to his death.

1.2. Hook, The Solitary

It would be wrong to completely disregard the part of Barrie's writing that was often considered charming, sentimental, or whimsical. When Peter Pan explains the existence of fairies to Wendy, for example, shortly before leaving for Neverland, it is hard not to see an obvious form of whimsy or sentimentalism in Peter's explanation:

"You see, Wendy, when the first baby laughed for the first time, its laugh broke into a thousand pieces, and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of fairies." [...]

"And so," he went on good-naturedly, "there ought to be one fairy for every boy and girl." (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 27)

Nevertheless, as charming as this explanation may be, the narrator quickly dismisses it as 'tedious talk this' (*Ibid.*). Such capriciousness is indeed found all throughout Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*. Maria Tatar describes Barrie's narrator as 'playful, capricious, and partisan in ways that third-person narrators rarely are' (xlviii). Another example of a charming and slightly sentimental description occurs when *Peter and Wendy's* narrator explains how Mrs Darling tidies her children's minds:

It is the nightly custom of every good mother after her children are asleep to rummage in their minds [...]. When you wake in the morning, the naughtinesses and evil passions with which you went to bed have been folded up small and placed at the bottom of your mind, and on the top, beautifully aired, are spread out your prettier thoughts [...]. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 8)

However, the narrator's fickleness is especially noticeable when it comes to mothers. On one hand, the narrator's explanation of mothers tidying up their children's mind has a highly endearing quality and equates mothers and their behaviour with children's 'prettier thoughts'. On the other hand, however, Barrie inserts the words 'mother' and 'despise' into three sentences throughout *Peter and Wendy*. The narrator explains that Peter 'despised all mothers except Wendy' (70). Explaining the heartlessness of children, Barrie writes that 'mothers alone are always willing to be the buffer' and that 'all children [...] despise them for it, but make constant use of it' (119). Towards the end of the novel the narrator directly admits they 'had meant to say extraordinarily nice things about her [Mrs Darling]; but I [they] despise her, and not one of them will I [they] say now' (136). The narrator even accuses Mrs Darling of having 'no proper spirit' (*Ibid.*). I would argue that all of this ambiguity in Barrie's writing style and tone underline Blake's point on Barrie's sadism and Tatar's assertion of his capriciousness. Tatar further argues that:

The narrator produces a fictional space in which multiple outcomes are possible and in which everything remains provisional and contingent. Like Peter, the narrator is unpredictable, mercurial, and resistant to being fixed. (93)

It can thus be argued that this unpredictability, liminality, and resistance to being fixed not only makes the narrator but also Barrie's tone and style a form of liminal betwixt-and-between, just like Peter's famous description in *The Little White Bird*. Peter's unalterable 'betwixt-and-betweenness' is the major reason for *Peter and Wendy's* tragic

scene where the Darling children are happily reunited with their parents and the narrator explains:

There could not have been a lovelier sight; but there was none to see it except a little boy who was staring in at the window. He had ecstasies innumerable that other children can never know; but he was looking through the window at the one joy from which he must be for ever barred. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 141)

In an almost callous way, Barrie refuses to grant Peter his desire for a mother and keeps the window to this joy 'for ever barred', literally in *The Little White Bird* and, more metaphorically, in *Peter and Wendy*, as well as *Peter Pan*.

Barred not just from the joy of having a mother but seemingly from every other joy too, is Captain Hook. Peter's loneliness is a matter of interpretation and, though tragic, is certainly not consciously experienced by him as he eventually forgets all of his adventures with the Darlings and even who Tinker Bell or Captain Hook is. Hook, however, has his sadness and loneliness written over his face, quite literally. One of the first descriptions of Hook in *Peter and Wendy* explains that his 'eyes were of the blue forget-me-not, and of a profound melancholy [...]' (Barrie 49). Unlike Peter, Hook is thus unable to 'forget' his melancholy and solitude. Towards the end of *Peter and Wendy*, Hook tries to kill Peter with poison. Even though Peter was saved by Tinker Bell who drinks the poison to save him, Hook briefly believes that he has killed his nemesis. While Hook is treading the deck of the *Jolly Roger*, he believes that 'Peter ha[s] been removed for ever from his path' and the narrator describes this moment as Hook's 'hour of triumph' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 116). Interestingly, however, Hook shows no expected signs of satisfaction. Quite the contrary, the narrator explains that:

there was no elation in his gait, which kept pace with the action of his sombre mind. Hook was profoundly dejected. He was often thus when communing with himself on board ship in the quietude of the night. It was because he was so terribly alone. This inscrutable man never felt more alone than when surrounded by his dogs. (*Ibid.* 117)

Hook's 'dogs' are all members of his pirate crew, including the lovable Smee. Hook's dejectedness is caused by his loneliness and at the same time multiplied by it, even causing him to commune with himself despite available company. In Barrie's published play, this sentiment is repeated, and Hook is described as 'a solitary among uncultured companions' (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 108). The idiosyncrasy of Hook's loneliness is also underlined through Barrie's speech 'Captain Hook at Eton'. This speech was written in 1925 and was at one point meant to be a short story for inclusion in an anthology of short stories for children. At the time, Barrie titled the short story 'Jas Hook at Eton, or The Solitary' (Rose 115). Whereas Peter's idiosyncratic nature became known as 'The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up', Hook is thus, most accurately and tragically summarised as 'Hook, The Solitary'.

1.3. The Pirate Who Would Not Grow Up

Captain Hook's helplessly tragic nature is not just apparent in Barrie's heartless descriptions. Hook's entire *raison d'être* seems to be predicated on the unsuccessful attempt to achieve Peter Pan's level of, in Lacanian terms, *jouissance*. Like a sentimental sadist, Barrie makes Hook struggle for happiness and joy, only to deny his villain any

satisfaction, both through his constant loneliness, as well as his eventual death. Karen Coats argues that both Hook and Peter demonstrate versions of the solitary man. She points out that each of them shuns society in their own way and that they are, therefore, only half alive, albeit in different ways (21). For Peter, though, I argue that this is only true to the extent that he will never fully grow up and become part of a functioning society. This, however, happens of Peter's own full accord as he '[doesn't] want to be a man' and even warns Mrs Darling at the end of the novel to 'keep back, lady, no one is going to catch me and make me a man' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 144). Consequently, Peter willingly sacrifices that one joy from which he will be forever barred. Hook, however, is not granted this luxury of choice. While Peter not only possesses eternal youth and enjoyment, or *jouissance*, but in Neverland he *is* *jouissance*, Hook is 'cadaverous' and 'blackavized' (*Ibid.* 49). Additionally, being swallowed by the crocodile when the clock, or his time, runs down, is 'the fear that haunts [him]' (*Ibid.* 54). For Hook, the fear of death thus becomes all-encompassing, all-consuming, and most importantly *real* in a way that it cannot be for Peter, the eternal boy. Hook never hears Peter's fatalistic oath 'Hook or me this time' (*Ibid.* 115). Nonetheless, death is constantly looming in the shadows for Hook to the point that he feels the fate of his demise to be sealed when there 'came to him a presentiment of his early dissolution. It was as if Peter's terrible oath had boarded the ship' (*Ibid.* 118).

This looming and inescapable threat of death for Hook, including his cadaverous appearance, as well as his *corps morcèle* due to his lost hand, is perhaps symbolically best represented in Hans Holbein the Younger's painting *The Ambassadors* (1533). In this painting, depicting two wealthy ambassadors, there is a distorted blot, or stain, which appears to float across the picture. If the painting is viewed from the right angle, however, the blot resolves itself perfectly into a skull which looks back at the onlooker.

In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1977), Lacan uses the famous example of Holbein's painting to explain that the skull looking back at the viewer 'reflects our own nothingness, in the figure of the death's head' (92). As David Rudd similarly argues, the revelation of the skull makes one read the painting of seemingly important ambassadors 'with their wealth and possessions, in a very different light, for they too are the subject of death' (267). Lacan argues that we all see in such a distorted way. In Lacanian terms, our vision is distorted by our lack, our *manque à être*, which leads to desire (Rudd 267). It can thus be argued that in Hook's case, his desire to fill his lack of *jouissance* by battling *jouissance* itself through Peter leads to the skull, or death, being a constant threat for Hook. It is, therefore, no surprise that Hook has the presentiment of his early death on his own ship, the *Jolly Roger*, named after a famous traditional black flag displaying a skull-and-crossbones. Like the skull in *The Ambassadors*, even Hook's own ship thus functions as a sort of *memento mori*. In contrast to Peter, for whom dying is but an 'awfully big adventure' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 84), death is very real and inescapable for Hook.⁴ In the final fighting sequence between Hook and Peter, Barrie's sadistic and tragic depiction of Hook again shines through:

He fought now like a human flail, and every sweep of that terrible sword would have severed in twain any man or boy who obstructed it; but Peter fluttered round him as if the very wind it made blew him out of the danger zone. [...]

⁴ The Real is what Lacan calls 'impossible' for humans and it works in tension with both orders of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The Real is impossible because we cannot express it in language, as the very attempt of this, in Lacan's eyes, underlines our separation from the Real. Being made aware of this split materiality of our existence is what drives Lacan's concept of *jouissance*. (Felluga n.p.)

Hook was fighting now without hope. That passionate breast no longer asked for life; but for one boon it craved: to see Peter in bad form before it was cold for ever. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 130)

Hook knows his heart is about to be 'cold for ever' and his fight for *jouissance* is literally described as hopeless. In the published play version, Peter exclaims that 'no one must ever touch [him]' (Barrie 98) and one of Barrie's stage directions reads that Peter 'is never touched by any one in the play' (*Ibid.*). Indeed, Peter and his *jouissance* are completely untouchable for Hook. The philosopher Slavoj Žižek calls this untouchability of *jouissance* the 'sublime object of ideology', an experience of the 'fullness of enjoyment', that is denied to the rest of us (qtd. in Wright 167). In the play, this certainty becomes too much for Hook and he commits suicide after he tries to attack Peter who is sitting on a barrel while carelessly playing his pipes:

Lifting a blunderbuss [Hook] strikes forlornly not at the boy but at the barrel, which is hurled across the deck. Peter remains sitting in the air still playing upon his pipes. At this sight the great heart of Hook breaks. That not wholly unheroic figure climbs the bulwarks murmuring 'Floreat Etona,' and prostrates himself into the water, where the crocodile is waiting for him open-mouthed. Hook knows the purpose of this yawning cavity, but after what he has gone through he enters it like one greeting a friend. (Barrie 146)

When Hook realises how untouchable the careless and fearless flying boy really is, he has lost all will to live and greets death like a friend. It is only in the novel *Peter and Wendy*, that Hook is granted at least partial redemption with 'one last triumph' (Barrie

132) when he invites Peter to kick him off the bulwark rather than stab him. Peter gladly accepts the invitation and Hook can go 'content to the crocodile' while 'jeeringly' crying 'bad form' (*Ibid.*). Death, however, is still certain for Hook and thus *jouissance* impossible.

Callously and heartlessly, Barrie lets his eponymous character Tommy, a man who never really grows up, choke to death at the end of *Tommy and Grizel* when he climbs a wall and his coat gets pierced by the iron hooks of a gate. Tommy's last thoughts are: "Serves me right!" (210). In *The Little White Bird*, when Peter is locked out of his nursery, Barrie ruthlessly writes that 'there is no second chance' and the 'iron bars are up for life' (81). Tommy and Peter are the man and boy who could not grow up. Finally, in *Peter Pan*, Hook's dying thought is that of his time as a boy at school, being an Etonian, and he proudly exclaims 'Floreat Etona' (Barrie 146). In the end, Barrie also turns his famous villain into someone who never fully grows up. The tragic existence of this anti-hero may thus be called 'Jas Hook, The Solitary; or, The Pirate Who Would Not Grow Up'.

1.4. Conclusion

In this first chapter, I have used some of Lacan's psychoanalytic concepts in order to analyse the tragic, even sadistic implications of Barrie's writing style on the melancholic existence of Captain Hook. Barrie's irony and sadism are directed at Hook, of course, but at the same time the reader, who may find themselves identifying with the adult Hook and his struggle against unattainable youth and joy. Barrie is not just a sentimental or whimsical writer but is also capable of facing the most painful truths, as Lady Asquith puts it. In a way, one could argue that Hook finds salvation in death when

he greets it like a friend in the play version. Nevertheless, even with such a reading, this chapter has illustrated that Hook's life is tragically defined by his loneliness and impossibility of experiencing full enjoyment. I would, therefore, argue that where Peter wants to keep his *jouissance* by refusing to grow up, Hook is ultimately content to abandon *jouissance*, which is, tragically, only possible through his time finally running out.

In the following chapter, I will further analyse Captain Hook's identity as an Etonian and his obsession with 'good form' which has been briefly mentioned above. Hook's education and his intellect are indeed two of the main factors which support his gentleman status. At the same time, however, Hook is also the villain of Barrie's story. By comparing Hook to other ambiguous gentlemen, such as Conrad's Lord Jim or Stevenson's Long John Silver, I will contend that Hook's villainy does not eclipse his gentlemanliness.

2. Chapter Two

‘Good Form’: Hook’s Identity as an Etonian and a Gentleman

2.1. Introduction: ‘Floreat Etona’

In 1915, at the age of just fourteen, Michael Llewelyn Davies wrote an essay titled ‘What makes a Gentleman’. Part of the essay reads:

I believe I am right in saying that John Ball made use of the following couplet in his discourses:

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?”⁵

Doubtless Ball used the word gentleman in the more degrading sense, denoting one of the upper classes — I think he was wrong. Adam was no gentleman, not because he was not Lord Adam, but because he gave away his wife in the matter of the apple [...]

La[wr]ence Oates, a very gallant gentleman, went out into the blizzard because he knew he could not live and wished to give his friends a better chance.⁶ He was a gentleman because when he knew he was being brave he did not say “I’m a hero and I’m going to die for you,” but merely remarked he was going out for a bit, and left the rest to their imagination. (qtd. in Birkin 251)

⁵ John Ball was a prominent English priest during the Peasants’ Revolt in 1381, a major uprising across large parts of England, caused mainly by socio-economic and political tensions (Dunn 22-23).

⁶ Lawrence Oates was a British Army Officer and became an Antarctic Explorer. He died during the *Terra Nova* Expedition to the South Pole, leaving his tent and walking into a blizzard.

In this essay, Michael makes a crucial distinction between a gentleman by right, someone who is of 'the upper classes' and someone who is a gentleman through his selfless or 'gallant' behaviour. As Michael Llewelyn Davies mentions, when Oates suffered from gangrene and frostbite, he chose certain death, rather than compromising his fellow explorers. It is said that when Oates walked to his death, he simply said: 'I am just going outside and may be some time' (Scott 462). These highly understated final words in the face of certain death are certainly what Hook would have called 'good form'. Moreover, having good form without knowing it or proclaiming it, is, as Hook knows, 'the pinnacle of good form' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 130) and thus also of being a gentleman. Just like Michael Llewelyn Davies, as well as Hook himself, Captain Lawrence Oates was an Etonian.

Robin Gilmour echoes Michael Llewelyn Davies' point about the distinction or ambiguity of the gentleman image when it comes to class status and behaviour. Gilmour asserts that towards the end of the 19th century the debate about the idea of the gentleman became 'ambiguous and inconclusive' (7). Gilmour further argues that essays such as Harold Laski's 'The Danger of Being a Gentleman' (1939) point to:

the damaging social exclusiveness of the gentlemanly ethic, its anti-intellectual and anti-democratic bias, its elevation of respectability and good form over talent, energy, and imagination, and its perpetuation (through such institutions as the Victorian public schools) of the values of a leisured elite long after these had ceased to be relevant to the needs of British society. (Gilmour 1)

Even though Gilmour argues that the notion of the word 'gentleman' has been 'in a steady decline' (*Ibid.*) ever since the end of the 19th century, his quote above clearly

indicates how indispensable the elements of 'good form' and its perpetuation through public schools—such as Eton—have always been for the identity of the gentleman. In 'Captain Hook at Eton', when Hook tries to save the reputation of his former school, Barrie asks: 'In that one moment was he not a good Etonian?' (*The Times* 15).

This second chapter will analyse Hook's identity as 'a good Etonian, though not a great one', as Barrie put it (*Ibid.*). To illustrate Hook's gentlemanliness, despite being presented as a villainous pirate, I will compare Barrie's Hook with Robert Louis Stevenson's Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*. In doing so, I will argue that both pirates defy 'moral black and whites and the cardboard characters of the adventure stories' on which authors such as Barrie and Stevenson were brought up (Carpenter 109). For both characters, their appearance stands in stark contrast with their distinguished demeanour and their highly respected education. Further comparisons with characters from Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* will illustrate the destabilisation of the gentleman image at the turn of the 20th century. Conrad's characters further underline my point that Hook, despite struggling with 'good form' and being the tragic villain of Barrie's story, is also the only character embodying the gentleman identity, albeit a declining one. Hook thus represents elements of the gentleman which are in decline, while also mirroring the general redefinition of the gentleman image that was experienced, perpetuated, and questioned by authors such as Barrie, Stevenson, and Conrad.

2.2. Hook and Silver: The Last Gentlemen Pirates

Ever since its publication, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* has become something of a model story for adventure narratives and pirates chasing treasures.

Originally published in serial form, it offered 'everything boys were supposed to enjoy: adventure, danger, travel, guns, and gore' (Noimann 57). In this novel, the protagonist, Jim Hawkins, joins a pirate crew in search of the legendary Captain Flint's treasure, said to be hidden on an island. Unbeknownst to Jim and most of the crew, they are joined by the former quartermaster of Captain Flint, Long John Silver. Silver poses as a sea-cook, plans a mutiny and wants to find the treasure for himself and his men. While Jim Hawkins befriends Silver, he is pulled into a struggle defined by greed and betrayal but also dignity and honour. As Jill P. May points out, 'historical pirates did indeed live by a code of honor' and had 'a set of laws they all agreed to before sailing', such as not stealing from one another or not fighting one another (70). In his history of pirates (1874), John S. C. Abbott similarly claims that pirates were much like 'the robber knights and barons of the feudal ages' and calls their adventures 'chivalric exploits' (19). In the face of both May's and Abbott's points, Long John Silver may seem like the antithesis of a 'gentleman pirate', as he plans a mutiny against his captain, kills a pirate who refuses to join the mutiny and, in the end, steals part of the treasure for himself. As both Stevenson and Barrie were aware, however, what defines a gentleman, or a gentleman pirate for that matter, is not quite so straightforward.

Silver calls himself and other pirates 'gentleman of fortune' (Stevenson 58). While this phrase is certainly just a euphemism for being 'neither more nor less than a common pirate' (*Ibid.* 59), as Jim Hawkins points out, Silver's coinage of the term still manages to emphasise 'something' gentlemanly about himself. Jim Hawkins recognises this side to Silver, despite the mutiny, and refers to him as 'the best man here' (*Ibid.* 154). Silver's ambiguity as a gentleman on one hand but a ruthless and villainous pirate on the other becomes especially apparent when he answers the question of what should happen to those pirates refusing to join the mutiny:

“I’m an easy man—I’m quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it’s serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote—death. When I’m in Parlyment, and riding in my coach, I don’t want none of these sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. [...] Only one thing I claim—I claim Trelawny. I’ll wring his calf’s head off his body with these hands [...]! (*Ibid.* 61)

Silver’s mention of duty alludes to his identity as a man of character and a respected fighter as, even though he has lost his leg in battle, this becomes a recommendation for his crew because ‘he lost it in his country’s service, under the immortal Hawke’ (*Ibid.* 38). Silver’s murderous vitriol concerning Squire Trelawny, however, is similar to Captain Hook whose eyes changed ‘when he was plunging his hook into you, at which time two red spots appeared in them and lit them up horribly’ (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 49). Describing Hook’s viciousness, Barrie writes:

Let us now kill a pirate, to show Hook’s method. Skylights will do. As they pass, Skylights lurches clumsily against him, ruffling his lace collar; the hook shoots forth, there is a tearing sound and one screech, then the body is kicked aside, and the pirates pass on. He has not even taken the cigars from his mouth. (*Ibid.* 50)

Though Hook seems much more sadistic than Silver, provoked to an act of murder by someone simply ‘ruffling his lace collar’, he is nevertheless also described as possessing qualities of ‘the *grand seigneur* [...] so that he even ripped you up with an air’ (*Ibid.* 49), illustrating a high level of stylishness and composure even in moments of rage. This is exemplified by Hook not even needing to put his cigars down to kill someone. He also

minds his gentlemanly manners, even when staging a raid on the Lost Boys' home, where he is described as 'frightfully *distingué*', treating Wendy, in contrast to all other boys, 'with such an air [...] that she was too fascinated to cry out' and Hook's gentlemanly performance even 'entranced her' (*Ibid.* 108). The connection between Long John Silver and Captain Hook is in fact made overt by Barrie himself. Hook is described as 'the only man that the Sea-Cook feared' (*Ibid.* 49) and the one who 'had brought Barbecue to heel' (*Ibid.* 116-17). 'Sea-Cook' and 'Barbecue' are, of course, nicknames for Silver used all throughout *Treasure Island* by various characters.

2.3. 'Was he not a good Etonian?'

Long John Silver talking about being in 'parlyment' and 'riding a coach', like a gentleman, is perhaps uncharacteristic for most of the crew but also exactly why he is regarded as a gentleman by everyone else. Silver explains that all other gentlemen of fortune live a rough life but after they come home with some plunder, their behaviour is different from his own:

"Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywheres, by reason of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise, I set up gentleman in earnest. Time enough, too, says you Ah, but I've lived easy in the meantime; never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and slep' soft and ate dainty all my days, but when at sea." (Stevenson 58)

Silver saving his money and not wasting it on rum like the others allows him to be the legitimate owner of an inn in Bristol, as well as being married to 'a woman of colour' who takes care of the inn in his absence. He is further described as 'a man of substance', who has 'a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn' (*Ibid.* 39). In addition to having a wife and owning property, Silver, like Hook, is a well-educated and well-spoken man:

"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had good schooling in his young days, and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! [...]" All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each, and doing everybody some particular service. (*Ibid.* 54)

Though Silver's former school is unknown, it is his bravery and education paired with his eloquence, acts of performance, which distinguish him from other pirates and make him a respected gentleman among otherwise 'common' seamen. Similarly, Hook is said to be 'a man of indomitable courage' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 50). Furthermore, even though Hook eventually loses his battle against Peter, Hook has a significantly higher literacy than his rival and exudes more gentlemanly distinction. Whereas Peter is the only boy in Neverland 'who could neither write nor spell; not the smallest word' (*Ibid.* 70) and by his own admission does not know 'any stories' (*Ibid.* 30), Hook is 'a raconteur of repute':

He was never more sinister than when he was most polite, which is probably the truest test of breeding; and the elegance of his diction, even when he was

swearing, no less than the distinction of his demeanour, showed him one of a different caste from his crew. (*Ibid.* 50)

Barrie's published play repeats this description almost word for word and adds that Hook is surrounded by 'uncultured companions' (*Peter Pan* 108). In addition to calling his fellow uncultured pirates 'dogs', Hook also refers to them as 'scugs' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 119). As Maria Tatar points out the word 'scug' was used to designate 'Eton boys who, because they had received no colours in any sport, were viewed as losers' (150). In his speech 'Captain Hook at Eton' Barrie gives a possible explanation for Hook's 'elegance of diction'. After attending Eton, Hook went to University, notably Balliol College, and while Barrie claims that he has pursued 'few inquiries' concerning Hook at Balliol, he 'was certainly in residence there for several terms' (*The Times* 15). At University, Hook borrowed a number of books, 'all of them, oddly enough, poetry and mostly of the Lake school' (*Ibid.*).⁷ Barrie explains how Hook signed these volumes as 'Jacobus Hook', his mind, thus, 'was already turning to the classics' (*Ibid.*). Hook being educated in classic literature, as well as classical languages such as Latin and Greek, is a significant detail for his identity as a gentleman. On the importance of gentlemanly education, Gilmour asserts:

Many public school curriculums concentrated on Latin and Greek, as these subjects disciplined the mind, developed the memory, laid on a foundation of linguistic knowledge [...], a study of the classics familiarised a man with the

⁷ The Lake school or Lake Poets were a group of English poets living in and writing from a British region known as the Lake District during the first half of the 19th century. Three of the most notable figures of the Lake school were William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey.

cultural achievements [...] of the most highly developed civilisations of antiquity [...]. (97)

Through their gentlemanly education, both Silver and Hook are certainly no ‘common men’, even though their family history may forever remain a mystery. In order to pass as a gentleman, however, a classical education cannot only give one a ‘foundation of linguistic knowledge’ but one’s familiarity with literature, philosophy, and civilisations of antiquity has to be mirrored in one’s behaviour—an important distinction between a moral and social category which Michael Llewelyn Davies pointed out in his essay on gentlemen.

Where Silver is seen as a gentleman by everyone around him and Hook is a *grand seigneur* with such an air, Mr Darling’s classical education, for example, manifests itself in an expression of ‘Latinate guilt’ (Hsiao 165). Blaming himself for his children’s disappearance, Mr Darling confesses: ‘I am responsible for it all. I, George Darling, did it. *Mea Culpa, Mea culpa*’ (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 15). The narrator sarcastically adds: ‘He had a classical education’ (*Ibid.*). In Barrie’s stage version, Hook and Mr Darling were generally played by the same actor. However, whereas Mr Darling is in both the play and novel ‘a most disdainful portrait of a wimp’ (Chaney 236), Hook dies in the novel with an air of distinction while thinking about his days at Eton and ‘his shoes were right, and his waistcoat was right, and his tie was right, and his socks were right’, a ‘not wholly unheroic figure’ (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 132). When Hook breaks into Eton in ‘Captain Hook at Eton’ and destroys ‘the evidence in its books that he had once been a member’ (*The Times* 16), Barrie explains Hook’s motivation behind this deed:

To obliterate the memory of himself from the tabernacle he had fouled was all this erring son of Eton could do for his beloved. In that one moment was he not a good Etonian? (*Ibid.* 16)

In the published play, Hook, the 'erring son of Eton' accepts his defeat by Peter's hand, and, with his dying breath, Hook murmurs 'Floreat Etona' (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 146). With a final mark of respect 'for his beloved', Hook thus certainly exhibited 'good form' in his last moments.

2.4. Conrad's *Lord Jim*: 'I am—a gentleman too....'

In *Lord Jim*, Joseph Conrad uses what Gilmour calls the accessible 'reinterpretation and modernisation' of the 'moral dimension in the gentlemanly idea' (6) as a primary story framing device. The novel's narrator Marlow tells the story of Jim, a promising young seaman, who serves aboard a ship called *Patna*. However, when the ship appears to be on the verge of sinking, Jim abandons the ship with the rest of the crew, leaving the passengers, Muslim pilgrims, to their fate. The passengers, however, survive and Jim is later shamed and stripped of his title after a trial. Jim finds some redemption in a remote country called Patusan and becomes a hero after killing a bandit. Here, he manages to shed some of the guilt that haunts him due to his previous failures. However, when the pirate Gentleman Brown arrives in Patusan, he plans to prey on its inhabitants and Jim is pulled into the conflict. When Gentleman Brown holes up on a hill after a fight with locals, Jim agrees to let Brown leave without force but unbeknownst to him, Brown ends up raiding the camp of Jim's closest ally's son and kills the son in the process. Jim, struck with terrible guilt for the second time in his life,

takes responsibility—a gentlemanly deed—for the death of his ally's son and is shot dead by the father in an act of retaliation.

Marta Puxan-Oliva argues that Conrad's novel 'implicitly develops the stereotype of the English gentleman [...] so as to unravel the contradictions at the core of that discourse' (339). Jim is not really a 'lord'. He is referred to as 'one of us' (Conrad 30) and thus not part of the aristocracy. Nevertheless, early on in the novel it is said of Jim: 'the fellow's a gentleman' (*Ibid.* 44). Another character in the novel says, referring to Jim: 'I know a gentleman when I see one' (*Ibid.* 114). However, the late 19th century decline of the straightforward English gentleman idea is mirrored in *Lord Jim* through the contrast between the stereotype of the gentleman and Jim's narrative arc (Puxan-Oliva 343). His identity as a gentleman is certainly compromised when he jumps from the *Patna* (*Ibid.* 347). Jim's cowardice in abandoning ship and its passengers to save his own life is arguably what Hook would refer to as 'bad form', conduct unbecoming of a gentleman. Hook himself, however, is no stranger to such behaviour. Though Hook is described as 'a brave man' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 110) and 'of indomitable courage' (*Ibid.* 50), it is also said that 'the only thing he shied at was the sight of his own blood, which was thick and of an unusual colour' (*Ibid.*). At Eton, it is said that Hook 'bled yellow' (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 108) and Barrie reiterates in 'Captain Hook at Eton' that at the University of Balliol 'there is a curious record that when hurt on the football field he "bled yellow"' (*The Times* 15). Bleeding yellow, like being yellow-bellied, is, of course, an expression used to describe cowards. Barrie and Conrad thus give heroic qualities of bravery and courage to their would-be gentleman figures, while also giving them characteristics of the contrary, such as cowardice—pointing towards the inconsistent and sometimes even paradoxical existence of liminal characters such as Hook, Silver, or Jim. These blurred lines are what Gilmour refers to as the 'flexibility and elasticity of the gentleman

concept' (8). Hook is conscious of his own ambiguity, specifically when he faces off against Peter Pan. In one such altercation he 'felt his ego slipping from him. "Don't desert me, bully," he whispered hoarsely to it' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 80). Lord Jim has a similar uncertainty concerning his gentlemanliness and tries to find refuge in Marlow's gentlemanly identity. When Jim confesses some of his guilt to Marlow after the trial, he says: 'Of course I wouldn't have talked to you about all this if you had not been a gentleman. I ought to have known ... I am—I am—a gentleman too' (Conrad 80). Jim's subtle stutter and his act of reassuring his own gentlemanliness is comparable to Mr Darling's repetition of *Mea culpa, Mea culpa* in his own admission of guilt.

Both Jim and Mr Darling, as well as Hook for that matter, are characters who want to adhere to Hook's 'passion for good form' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 117) but find themselves in constant struggle with their own ambivalent gentlemanliness. The code of the gentleman, or of 'good form' in Hook's case, is crucial through its consistency in the face of the characters' inconsistent natures. Jim's initial success in Patusan briefly restores Jim's identity as a gentleman. However, with the arrival of the ferocious pirate and a real outcast in Gentleman Brown, the stereotypical category of the gentleman is completely parodied (Puxan-Oliva 361). When the narrator meets Gentleman Brown, the latter is a dying man. Like Hook, who is described as cadaverous and blackavized and who only has two red spots in his melancholic eyes when he plunges his hook into someone, Brown has a 'racked body' which only writhes 'with malicious exultation at the bare thought of [the dead] Jim' (Conrad 204). Where Hook has a fear of his time running out, as well as the sight of his own blood, Gentleman Brown 'stood in mortal fear of imprisonment' (*Ibid.* 210). Lord Jim helps Brown to escape imprisonment, which ironically results in the death of the former. Jim's death, however, brought about by the antithesis of the stereotypical gentleman figure somewhat reinstates Jim's own

gentlemanliness. When Jim takes full responsibility for the death of his friend's son, caused by Brown, Jim tells the grieving father: 'I am come in sorrow [...]. I am come ready and unarmed' (*Ibid.* 245). Lord Jim is, in fact, ready to die for his recent failure. When the father, Doramin, shoots Jim through the chest, Marlow explains the dignity with which Jim accepted his fate:

The crowd, which had fallen apart behind Jim as soon as Doramin had raised his hand, rushed tumultuously forward after the shot. They say that the white man [Jim] sent right and left at all those faces a proud and unflinching glance. Then with his hand over his lips he fell forwards, dead. (*Ibid.* 246)

Like Hook, who contently goes to the crocodile and, with his head held high, honours his former school in his dying words, Jim also commits a form of gentlemanly suicide with a 'proud' face and 'unflinching glance'. Marlow remains uncertain about Jim's 'inscrutable at heart' character to the end and even asks: 'Was I so wrong after all' (*Ibid.*), reinforcing Gilmour's point on the ambiguity of the gentleman idea. Nevertheless, Jim's last act of taking responsibility is a defining one and exhibits that, like Hook, in the end, Jim retained a final passion for good form.

2.5. Conclusion

This second chapter has illustrated how the character of Captain Hook fits into the late 19th and early 20th century 're-definition or de-definition' (Tanner 109) of the gentleman image, exemplified especially in the literary tradition (Gilmour 183). Barrie, Stevenson, and Conrad destabilise and even subvert the stereotypical image of the

gentleman by having common pirates and seamen claim the status of gentleman. For the subversion to have the intended ambiguous effect, the definition of the gentleman ideal, or the attainment of it, must remain partly unresolved. Long John Silver, the gentleman of fortune, manages to escape with part of Flint's treasure, which he may use to invest into his legitimately owned property and set up as 'gentleman in earnest', yet his fate remains unclear. Gentleman Brown is seemingly only a gentleman in name and dies without true redemption, apart from gloating over the death of Jim. Lord Jim finds redemption in a dignified death after confronting his past failures. Similarly, Hook becomes 'a good Etonian' in saving his former school's reputation by erasing his own existence from the records and by honouring his school with the peroration 'Floreat Etona'. Like Captain Lawrence Oates walking into the blizzard, Silver, Jim, and Hook exemplify the bravery and dignity of a gentleman at the right moment. The rest, however, is as Michael Llewelyn Davies puts it, left to our imagination, doing gentlemanly deeds for their own sake and not only as part of a performance, which is, after all, the very pinnacle of 'good form'.

In the third chapter, I will briefly draw on Martha Stoddard Holmes' *Fictions of Affliction* (2009) to compare Hook to what Holmes sees as a sinister quality of disabled adult male characters in Victorian literature. Additionally, I will employ further concepts by Lacan, such as life envy and the mutilated body as a herald of death, as well as draw on Ann Yeoman's Jungian approach in analysing Hook and Peter as the old man and eternal boy, or in Jungian terms the *senex* and *puer aeternus*. In doing so, I will analyse the significance of Hook's prosthetic limb, both for his appearance as a mutilated body, or *corps morcèle*, as Lacan puts it, as well as how the hook instead of a right hand has become a symbol which overshadows Hook's very existence as an individual.

3. Chapter Three

'The Hook Shoots Forth': Hook's Mutilation as a Herald of Death and a Symbol of Fragmented Identity

3.1. Introduction: Disability as Tragedy or Melodrama

In her survey of Victorian culture, *Fictions of Affliction* (2009), Martha Holmes argues that Victorian discourses of disability, as well as the literature perpetuating them, are 'overwhelmingly melodramatic' (4). She further argues that the long-term connection between the melodramatic stage and the depiction of disability resulted in the latter becoming associated with a 'particular set of emotional codes' which permanently link 'the experience of disability with an expectation of melodrama' (*Ibid.*). One disability Holmes focuses on in particular, is blindness. Here, however, she differentiates between 'tragic' blindings, such as that of Oedipus, and blindness as melodrama, such as Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1848). Holmes asserts that the difference between a tragic and a melodramatic disability is the former 'earning' the emotions of the audience, while the latter is prone to 'emotional excess' (22). The idea of emotional excess, a sort of insincere sentimentality, in Barrie's work has been discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Whether or not Hook's own disability belongs to the category of melodrama or tragedy, may not be entirely clear, even when employing Holmes' analysis. What is clear, however, is that Hook is certainly a tragic but also a highly ambiguous figure, embodying elements of melodrama, tragedy, gentlemanliness, and villainy. Thus, this liminal nature makes Hook not fully 'whole'. Through Lacan's concept of the *corps morcèle*, the fragmented body (*Écrits* 11), Hook's lack of wholeness is not just a symbol of his lack of *jouissance* but also underlines Hook's cadaverous appearance

and thus becomes a 'herald of death' (*Ibid.*). Instead of hindering Hook physically, his iron prosthetic limb renders him even more terrifying to his adversaries and fellow pirates alike. Indeed, as Holmes argues, disabled adult males are often a source of terror in literature:

[...] the world of disabled adult males in Victorian literature is peopled by a host of terrifying, leering old men with avarice, deception, and a smoggy sexuality hovering about them—men with monosyllabic names like Quilp, Hyde, Stagg, and Pew, who bilk money from good people; ogle, stalk, and knock down little girls; and terrify young boys. (95)

Though not all of these characteristics may be said to describe Hook, he is a deceptively entrancing figure, has a monosyllabic name, and certainly terrifies young boys, which is illustrated early on in *Peter and Wendy* when 'Michael began to cry, and even John could speak in gulps only' at the mere mention of Hook's name (Barrie 43). Hook's prosthesis thus also renders him more terrifying and grants him a sinister form of energy.

Furthermore, Hook's prosthetic hook, like Stevenson's Long John Silver's peg leg, does not hinder him in his physical existence as he regularly 'claws with it' (*Ibid.*) to kill his enemies or crew members who get on his wrong side, such as Skylights or Starkey. Hook's loss of a hand symbolises more than just bodily mutilation. As Clare Barker and Stuart Murray assert, villainy can be 'directly connected' to physical abilities, 'but in a manner such that the *actual* disabilities seem clearly less important than the function they serve to underscore' (2). Hook's loss of a limb, the initial cause for his hatred of Peter, thus eventually comes to represent more than mere mutilation. In Martin Brest's film *Scent of a Woman* (1992), the blind and retired Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade (Al

Pacino) defends a prep school student during a formal inquiry concerning a humiliating prank on the headmaster. In his defense, Slade says:

I've been around, you know. There was a time I could see. And I have seen. boys like these, younger than these, their arms torn out, their legs ripped off. But there is nothing like the sight of an amputated spirit. There is no prosthetic for that.
(Brest 02:23:05)

Like Silver, whose leg was 'ripped off' while he served his country, Hook's hand was cut off in a sword fight with Peter Pan. This third chapter will analyse the symbolic significance of Hook's 'iron hook instead of a right hand' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 43). In illustrating how the hook overshadows Hook's own existence, I will argue that Hook's eponymous prosthetic limb, though seemingly useful for Hook, ultimately becomes a symbol of his amputated spirit and thus his constantly looming downfall.

3.2. 'He is not so big as he was'

Unlike most Victorian narratives including disability, where the disabled characters are either used for serene or sinister purposes, as Holmes points out, Hook's loss of a limb was not a tragic accident or birth defect. On the contrary, Hook lost his hand in a fight with Peter Pan and the latter callously fed his severed hand 'to a crocodile that happened to be passing by' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 53). Hook's subsequent fear 'of that one crocodile' (*Ibid.*), as well as the fear of the ticking clock inside its belly running out and the crocodile swallowing the rest of Hook, becomes the bane of his very existence. Neverland, the magical island, where Peter and his *jouissance*

arguably reign supreme, is timeless for Peter. Hook, however, has his iron limb to constantly remind him of the past, while the ticking crocodile warns him of the inevitable future. The contradiction between Peter representing *jouissance* and Hook exemplifying a lack thereof, is, perhaps obviously, mirrored in their dichotomy as the eternal boy and the old[er] man. In *Now or Neverland* (1998), Ann Yeoman discusses Peter's and Hook's dichotomy in terms of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology by which the eternal boy is understood as a form of 'puer aeternus' and the old man as 'senex' (Yeoman 16). While analysing their obvious differences, Yeoman also astutely points out the characteristics which arguably make Peter and Hook two sides of the same coin:

Both Hook and Peter Pan enjoy extraordinary powers, yet each suffers a desperate and self-destructive loneliness: Hook would kill the youth and youthful creativity he envies; Peter Pan is as ruthless and cruel as the "old man" he hates. Inwardly, each falls victim to a tortuous syllogism of his own making.
(139)

Hook's tortuous syllogism is his obsession with 'good form' and Peter's *jouissance*, as well as the attempt at maintaining or achieving these obsessions leading to his eventual death. In Peter's case, it is his obsession with never growing up or becoming a man which essentially leads to an adventurous but ultimately lonely life. Moreover, in Barrie's epilogue chapter 'When Wendy Grew Up', all of the Lost Boys end up getting adopted and become men, unlike Peter who still refuses to grow up. What Yeoman neglects to mention in her comparison between Peter and Hook, is that Peter willingly remains a victim of his 'tortuous syllogism', while Hook's melancholic existence ending

in his 'early dissolution' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 118) is augured by the loss of his limb, his *corps morcèle*, as Lacan puts it. This fragmentation of his own body happens against Hook's will. When John Darling asks Peter about Hook's menacing appearance, the conversation unfolds as follows:

'What is he like? Is he big?'

'He is not so big as he was.'

'How do you mean?'

'I cut a bit off him'

'You?'

'Yes, me,' said Peter sharply. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 43)

This is the first point in the novel at which the reader learns about Hook's mutilation and his eponymic hook for a right hand. Peter, however, leaves out the important detail—which the reader only learns from Hook himself—of feeding Hook's hand to a crocodile and thus sealing the fate of the pirate captain's eventual demise.

This sadistic side of Peter heartlessly mutilating other people is in fact not a singular event. In *Peter and Wendy*, the narrator explains that to access the Lost Boys' Home Underground, everyone has their own hollow tree trunk to descend into the secret home. However, the narrator continues:

[...] you simply must fit, and Peter measures you for your tree as carefully as for a suit of clothes: the only difference being that clothes are made to fit you, while you have to be made to fit the tree. Usually it is done quite easily [...] but if you

are bumpy in awkward places or the only available tree is an odd shape, Peter does some things to you, and after that you fit. (Barrie 67)

Peter doing 'some things' is obviously a euphemism for some form of mutilation, albeit perhaps not as crippling as in Hook's case. Nevertheless, even though the narrator does not go into details, it seems that these 'adjustments' are permanent, and it is said that while 'Wendy and Michael fitted their trees at the first try', 'John had to be altered a little' (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, when members of the Lost Boys 'seem to be growing up, which is against the rules, Peter thins them out' (*Ibid.* 47). Peter's hatred of adults thus extends to those who are adult size. When Peter cuts 'a bit off' Hook, it, therefore, makes Hook seemingly less threatening in size and less of an adult as he is 'not so big as he was', another obvious castration symbol. Hook's identity as the old man, or *senex*, is thus subverted and underlines his tragic existence as The Pirate Who Would Not Grow Up. Hook's liminality is reaffirmed, and his prosthetic limb becomes a symbol of his betwixt-and-betweenness. Hook's lack of a fixed identity is especially clear during Hook's killing of the pirate Skylights where it is said that 'the hook shoots forth' (*Ibid.*), alluding to a disconnect between Hook and his hook. The pirate captain himself does not loathe his prosthesis, however, quite the contrary. When Hook tells Smee how he lost his hand, Smee comments on the positive uses of the hook:

'Ay,' the captain answered, 'if I was a mother I would pray to have my children born with this instead of that,' and he cast a look of pride upon his iron hand and one of scorn upon the other. (*Ibid.* 53)

Hook's prosthetic limb thus not only overshadows him by giving him his name and destabilising his identity but also causes self-hatred in Hook, who scorns his remaining healthy body. The feeling of pride Hook gets when looking at his prosthesis may be explained by the hook being his primary weapon to kill his enemies, as he does not kill anyone with his able-bodied sword hand. However, Hook loathing his own body, as well as the hook having its own separate and overshadowing identity, further emphasises Hook's fragmented existence.

3.3. 'That's the fear that haunts me'

As David Rugg argues, cutting 'a bit off' Hook allows for interpretations of, in Freudian and Lacanian discourse, symbolic castration (273). In Lacanian theory, it is the Symbolic order which chops an individual's initial wholeness of the Imaginary into differential signifiers. These signifiers then represent absence, not presence. In other words, they represent a lack. In order to experience our 'proper' being as an individual, Lacan argues that one has to move from the wholeness of the Imaginary order to the chopped up Symbolic order where the birth to the subject is given as such. Ironically, however, when coming into existence as a signifier in the Symbolic order, one ceases to exist as an object, an individual self. This is precisely the moment when our *manque à être*, our want of being, sets in. This lack is, for Lacan, what ultimately constitutes our desire (Rudd 265).

In Hook's case, Lacan's theory is particularly impactful. Hook seems to have at least felt somewhat whole as an Etonian, considering his final and most peaceful

thoughts are about his time as a student.⁸ However, his iron hook as the ultimate signifier of his fragmented body overshadows Hook as an individual and constantly represents his *manque à être*. Hook does not try to regain his lost limb, but he wants to take revenge on Peter for cutting it off in the first place and then feeding it to a crocodile. Hook's lack and impossibility to fulfil his want of being is continuously made clear through his losing struggle in achieving Peter's level of *jouissance*. The iron hook is the most important signifier in this conundrum. Lacan sees images of mutilation, such as castration, dismemberment, or devouring as images which attack the ego. The ego—Hook's ego—then tries to ward off such threats to its wholeness and integrity. This is what Lacan calls the anxiety about the *corps morcèle* which is usually an augur of death (*Écrits* 11). Hook's anxiety about his own symbolic castration, as well as literal dismemberment and devouring, is made explicit when he tells Smee that the crocodile eventually devouring the rest of his fragmented body is 'the fear that haunts [him]' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 54). Metaphors of castration, of course, imply the presence or absence of the symbolic phallus, which supposedly marks a desire for those lacking it. In contrast to Hook, Peter Pan is made out to be particularly phallic (Rudd 268). The phallus is generally understood as that which 'sticks out' (Zizek 91). Peter's unmissable 'cockiness' is indeed constantly mentioned throughout Barrie's novel. When Mrs Darling 'travels through her children's minds', she realises that the name Peter Pan 'stood out in bolder letters than any of the other words' and she felt that it had 'an oddly cocky appearance' (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 10). When Mrs Darling questions her daughter, Wendy admits: 'Yes, he is rather cocky' (*Ibid.*). Peter's cockiness, or his phallic existence

⁸ It is never made entirely clear in Barrie's original works whether James Hook is called Hook because of his prosthesis or if his name was Hook from the start. Though Barrie writes in *Peter and Wendy* that 'Hook was not his true name' (117), Hook is also said to have signed his University library books with 'Jacobus Hook' in 'Captain Hook at Eton'. Assuming that Hook only became a pirate and met Peter after his time as a student, the origin of Hook's name thus remains an ambiguous mystery as well.

as the representation of a 'superabundant vitality' (Coats 18), creates in Hook a form of jealousy which is much stronger than ordinary jealousy, which Lacan calls 'life envy' (S VII 278). Hook's fear of his impending doom and his self-loathing caused by his mutilation lead to a mortal hatred of Peter Pan and the phallus he represents. The novel's narrator explains that:

The truth is that there was a something about Peter which goaded the pirate captain to frenzy. [...] It was Peter's cockiness.

This had got on Hook's nerves; it made his iron claw twitch, and at night it disturbed him like an insect. While Peter lived, the tortured man felt that he was a lion in a cage into which a sparrow had come. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 106)

Hook's hatred for Peter's cockiness, paired with his carelessness, which arguably caused Peter to callously feed Hook's hand to a crocodile in the first place, is what gives Hook a form of phantom pain when his claw 'twitches' and keeps him awake at night. Hook is obsessed with Peter representing his own want of being and the only way he can free himself from this symbolic imprisonment is to kill Peter.

This, however, is never granted to Hook. On the contrary, his symbolic castration by Peter is reinforced throughout the novel and play. Hook knows that he 'is about to fail' (Barrie, *Peter Pan* 136) and not only fears his own death but also has a 'presentiment' of it (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 118). He is described as 'unhappy', 'impotent' and falling forward 'like a cut flower' (*Ibid.*). Hook's description with its imagery of impotence and castration is what Yeoman calls a 'symbolic description of the ruler who is impotent or deformed and no longer suitable to be king' (137). Though there are no kings in Neverland, Hook is certainly no longer suitable to be Peter's equal

and his mutilated and destabilised identity render his leadership and personality even more impotent. At one point in the novel, Peter imitates Hook's voice in front of the pirate captain and symbolically takes his place, a foreshadowing to Peter literally taking his place as the *Jolly Roger's* captain after Hook dies. Peter humiliates Hook as follows:

'Who are you, stranger? Speak?' Hook demanded.

'I am James Hook,' replied the voice, 'captain of the *Jolly Roger*.'

[...] Hook tried a more ingratiating manner. 'If you are Hook,' he said almost humbly, 'come tell me, who am I?'

'A codfish,' replied the voice, 'only a codfish,'

'A codfish!' Hook echoed blankly, and it was then, but not till then, that his proud spirit broke. He saw his men draw back from him. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 79)

Hook being rendered to nothing but a 'codfish' by his cocky nemesis, breaking his 'proud spirit' and causing his men to 'draw back from him' underline Hook's extreme want of being in the face of Peter Pan. Peter's actions have caused Hook to lose all belief in himself as he 'felt his ego slipping from him' (*Ibid.* 80). Hook's amputated hand symbolises more than just the loss of a limb. 'Ah, envy not Hook,' the narrator of the novel says shortly before Hook's death (*Ibid.* 117). There is, in fact, not much to be envied, apart from perhaps the tragic knowledge that Hook's devouring by the crocodile sets him free from his unhappy and mutilated life. Hook, along with his iron prosthesis heartbreakingly illustrate that, indeed, there is nothing like an amputated spirit.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Hook's eponymous iron hook instead of a right hand reinforce the idea of his existence being a tragic and melancholic one, as well as being a symbol for his inevitable death. Hook is indeed not to be envied as the novel's narrator suggests. There is, however, at least some room for atonement or reconciliation for Hook. Around 1920, Barrie wrote a scenario for a *Peter Pan* film adaptation. In this scenario, Barrie uses the iron hook for a striking image. After the crocodile swallows Hook in this version, he 'shakes out of his mouth the wooden arm with hook of the late captain. He leaves it lying on the shore and plods away' (qtd. in Green 209). Before the epilogue of the film, Barrie writes: 'The last scene is Hook's arm lying among grass. In the hollow made by the hook a little bird has built a nest with eggs in it. This is shown in a close-up' (qtd. in Green 215). Barrie's scenario was never adapted, and the significance of this scene can only be speculated on. On one hand it could be said that the iron hook remaining in the grass, potentially rotting away forever, is an eternal relic representing Hook's impotence and lack of *jouissance*. On the other hand, however, this could also be seen as Hook finally being free from shame and the knowledge of certain failure, as well as the nest with eggs symbolising a form of new beginning. In death, Hook could thus finally be set free from his tortuous cage of unhappiness.

The next and final chapter will analyse posterity's interpretation of the ever-enigmatic Captain Hook in popular film adaptations. Through a close reading of Disney's *Peter Pan* (1953), Steven Spielberg's *Hook* (1991), and P. J. Hogan's *Peter Pan* (2003), I will analyse these three most famous *Peter Pan* film adaptations and compare them to Barrie's original work, as well as his own *Peter Pan* film scenario. In doing so, I will

argue that while adaptations at times tend to further 'mutilate' Hook, by cutting away some of his important ambiguity, these new reincarnations of the hook-wielding pirate captain also allow Barrie's character to stay somewhat immortal, just like the eternal boy Peter Pan.

4. Chapter Four

'Blast Good Form': Captain Hook's Legacy and Identity in Popular Film Adaptations

4.1. Introduction: James Hook, the Immortal

Peter Pan is not the only one of J. M. Barrie's works to have been adapted for the cinema. All in all, there were fourteen screen adaptations of Barrie's works during his lifetime (Chaney 330). The only *Peter Pan* adaptation Barrie saw, however, was Paramount's silent film in 1924. Barrie had written his own *Peter Pan* film scenario of 15,000 words around 1920 and gave all the rights of the film to Paramount. However, apart from two scenes, all of Barrie's ideas were thrown out, much to his disappointment. The result was a silent recreation of the play, which was exactly what Barrie had wanted to avoid. After seeing it for the first time, he wrote: 'It is only repeating what is done on the stage ... and the only reason for a film should be that it does the things the stage can't do' (qtd. in Green 169). Barrie's statement echoes one of Thomas Leitch's *Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory* (2003). Leitch's ninth fallacy claims that 'Fidelity is the most appropriate criterion to use in analysing [the success of] adaptations' (161). Counter-arguing this fallacy, Leitch mirrors Barrie's thoughts and argues that an adaptation's fidelity to its source, be it specific textual details or the effect of the whole, is a 'hopelessly fallacious measure of a given adaptation's value because it is unattainable, undesirable, and theoretically possible only in a trivial sense' (*Ibid.*). Similarly, Linda Hutcheon defines adaptation as 'repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty' (*A Theory of Adaptation* 173). Ann Yeoman, on the other hand, argues that

screen adaptations commit a 'sin of appropriation' by taking something timeless and eternal and bringing it into 'profane time', which fixes 'an image in the popular imagination in only one of its myriad shapes and possibilities' (35). On the effect that Disney's *Peter Pan* (1953) had on Barrie's characters, for example, Yeoman writes:

So the tale and its hero grow thin and pale as each is robbed of imaginative depth by being diminished, for example, to the two-dimensional outline of a Disney cartoon [...]. In order to redeem the many figures and tales of the imagination that have suffered reduction at the hands of the popular media, we must return to the original works to read and reread them [...]. (*Ibid.*)

In Hook's case, the image of 'being diminished' or getting robbed of something is, of course, ubiquitous, as has been discussed in previous chapters. This thesis has returned to Barrie's original works in order to analyse Hook's liminality and multifacetedness. In Barrie's own film scenario, he wrote a note on how Hook should be portrayed in a film saying that the pirate captain is a 'blood-thirsty villain, all the more so because he is an educated man. [...] He should have the manners of a beau. But above all the part should be played with absolute seriousness and avoidance of trying to be funny' (qtd. in Green 183).

This chapter will analyse the ways in which posterity and some of the most successful *Peter Pan* film adaptations have dealt with the character of Captain Hook. For many children born after 1953, Disney's animated *Peter Pan* is arguably their first encounter with Barrie's characters. While not entirely faithful, Disney's cartoon keeps the majority of Barrie's plot intact, though not without relegating Hook to the position of an overly comedic villain. P. J. Hogan's *Peter Pan* (2003) is certainly the most faithful

film adaptation of Barrie's work. Here, however, Hook becomes a figure of seduction and eroticism. Steven Spielberg's *Hook* (1991) stands out as a 'what if' sequel to Barrie's original as it explores the idea of Peter growing up and becoming a workaholic who forgets all about Neverland. In this film, Hook is but a shadow of his former self and tries to take revenge on Peter once again for cutting off his hand. The metaphor for cutting and mutilating will be, once again, essential for this final chapter. I argue that these three adaptations have certainly altered, sometimes even diminished Hook's original conception in Barrie's work. Nevertheless, every new adaptation also adds yet another facet to Hook's liminal nature and highly ambiguous legacy.

4.2. 'Save Me Smee': Hook as a Cartoon

After negotiating the film rights with Great Ormond Street Hospital, to which Barrie had left all perpetual rights in *Peter Pan*, Walt Disney was convinced that a cartoon film was the best medium for Barrie's story:

I don't believe that what James M. Barrie actually intended ever came out on the stage. [...] Live actors are limited, but with cartoons we can give free rein to the imagination. (qtd. in Tatar 326)

What Barrie, however, certainly never intended was his famous villain, the educated, yet blood-thirsty villain with manners of a beau, to be relegated to a slapstick figure. In fact, Hook's obsession with exhibiting good form is completely cut from Disney's film. In his first scene, Hook (voiced by Hans Conried) is plotting to kidnap Tiger Lily in order to find Peter Pan. When he gets frustrated by a fellow pirate singing high up on the mast of

the ship, he shoots him down with a flintlock pistol to which Smee says: 'Shooting a man in the middle of his cadenza? It ain't good form you know?' (Geronimi et al. 00:23:00). In response, Hook calmly asks: 'Good form Mr Smee?,' before flipping his table and yelling 'Blast good form! Did Pan show good form when he did this to me?' (*Ibid.* 00:23:15). Hook threateningly waves his hook in Smee's face, the hook being in place of his left hand, rather than his right.⁹ The phrase 'good form' is then completely omitted from the remainder of the film. Disney's Hook thus fully rejects the idea of good form, even though Barrie's Hook 'knew that [good form] is all that really matters' (*Peter and Wendy* 117). Furthermore, Hook's melancholic and thoughtful nature from the original is replaced by an abundance of overly indulgent comedic scenes, mostly including the crocodile hunting Hook. The first time the ticking crocodile appears outside of the *Jolly Roger*, Hook is pulverised with fear, jumps into Smee's arms, who proceeds to carry him like an infant while Hook pleads: 'Smee... Smee, oh save me Smee, please don't let him get me Smee. Please don't let him get me Smee, Smee' (Geronimi et al. 00:24:00). Hook repeats the name Smee numerous times whenever he is in trouble in Disney's film. These cries for help from Smee are also his very last words in the film, when he is seen swimming for dear life from the crocodile who eagerly snaps his jaw at him. Though the fate of Hook is left open in Disney's film and the possibility of his survival is given, this helpless representation of the pirate captain is a major departure from Barrie's Hook. Though the original Hook is certainly scared of the crocodile and his time literally and figuratively running out, his eventual acceptance of his defeat and demise, give him a final moment of dignity in both the play and novel, which is cut from Disney's film. In Barrie's own scenario, it is Hook who made the crocodile swallow a clock in order to

⁹ The exact reason for this remains unclear. Presumably, Disney's animators felt it was easier to animate Hook's scenes, specifically fighting scenes with Peter Pan, with the hook on the left hand. To this day, Disney's Peter Pan merchandise and art works often switch the hook's placement around.

hear it coming. Barrie wrote this sequence as a flashback and describes Hook as 'very cunning and criminal in manner' and after Hook's plan with the clock succeeds, he 'emerges triumphant and exits in the opposite direction villainously' (qtd. in Green 186). Disney's adaptation thus implies that grown-ups, specifically men like Hook or Mr Darling are just like children; a sentiment which is certainly present in Barrie's work (e.g. Hook as the pirate who won't grow up), though Hook's liminality as a simultaneously serious and tragic character in the originals is generally suppressed in Disney's film.

Despite Hook's multifacetedness being somewhat mutilated by Disney, he is not altogether unserious or unintelligent. As Hutcheon points out, though adaptations may sometimes simplify, they can also 'actualize or concretize ideas', as well as 'amplify and extrapolate' (*On the Art of Adaptation* 110–11). In an early scene, Hook's intelligence is displayed when the pirates use the cannon *Long Tom* to fire at Peter, Wendy, Michael, John, and Tinker Bell. Hook is able to give the perfect coordinates to hit the group by simply looking through his spyglass, a complex mathematical and scientific ability which no adaptation has since granted Hook. Hook's darker side also flares up in certain scenes. When plotting to kidnap Tiger Lily, Hook gleefully contemplates different torture methods to get her to divulge Peter's whereabouts, including 'boiling in oil', 'keelhauling', and 'marooning' (Geronimi et al. 00:22:30). Hook's cultured personality is also somewhat retained by showing him play the harpsichord, of which Barrie describes him as 'no mean performer' (*Peter and Wendy* 111), as well as having a collection of hooks inside a box with a red velvet cushion, mirroring Barrie's comparison of Hook's attire 'with the name of [King] Charles II' (*Ibid.* 50). However, Hook's rare debonair qualities in Disney's adaptation are ultimately diluted in Hook's final battle with Peter. After Peter bullies Hook into loudly exclaiming 'I'm a codfish', Hook merely feigns

surrender and tries to stab Peter in the back. However, Hook misses and falls into the water, where he is chased towards the horizon by the crocodile. In Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, it was Peter who kicked Hook in the back, causing him to fall into the water and giving Hook a final triumph of having his nemesis exhibit bad form. This ambiguity between the 'hero' Peter and a form of 'anti-hero' in Hook is thus suppressed in Disney's version.

4.3. 'My Life Is Over': When Hook Lost His Shadow

Several years after *Peter Pan*'s first performance at the Duke of York's Theatre in London, Barrie allegedly toyed with the idea of writing *The Man Who Couldn't Grow Up, or The Old Age of Peter Pan* (Tatar 332). What had remained only an idea for Barrie, was put into practice by Spielberg's film *Hook*. After his only moderate success with the romantic comedy-drama *Always* (1989), *Hook* was one of several films which marked Spielberg's return to the kind of blockbusters which had brought him early fame and success (Loshitzky 58). *Hook* followed *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) and was succeeded by *Jurassic Park* and *Schindler's List* (both 1993).¹⁰ In *Hook*, Spielberg dramatizes the question of what would happen to Peter if he, of all people, grew up. Played by Robin Williams, Peter now lives in America and goes by the name Peter Banning. He is married to Moira, Wendy's granddaughter, and has two children, Maggie and Jack. The casting choice of Robin Williams, an acclaimed actor, voice actor, and

¹⁰ The historical Holocaust drama *Schindler's List* was a far cry from Spielberg's adventurous and generally uplifting films and its announcement was met with harsh cynicism and an expectation of failure. *Schindler's List*, however, was eventually hailed almost universally for its stark illumination of the Holocaust and Spielberg became a hero figure against insinuations from contemporary Holocaust revisionists (Loshitzky 58). Spielberg later admitted that the seriousness of the film took an emotional toll on him. Robin Williams, whom he had befriended during *Hook*, regularly called Spielberg and did fifteen-minute stand-up routines over the phone, allowing Spielberg to release some of the stress and pressure through laughter (Sharf *IndieWire*).

considered by many critics to be one of the funniest comedians of all time, to play Peter Pan as a simultaneous father figure and mischievous boy seemed like the perfect role for Williams and his own changeling persona (Pace 117). Peter, however, has forgotten everything in *Hook*, even his adventures in Neverland with his grandmother in law. The same cannot be said for Captain Hook (played by Dustin Hoffman). When Peter and his family return to London to visit Wendy in her old apartment, Peter, Moira, and Wendy leave the children in the apartment to attend a ceremony, an obvious allusion to Barrie's original, where Mr and Mrs Darling leave their children at home to attend a party. Whereas Barrie's work sees Peter using this opportunity to convince the Darling children to accompany him to Neverland, in *Hook*, Hook breaks into the old Darling home, kidnaps Peter's children and leaves a note saying: 'Dear Peter — Your Presence is required at the request of your children. Kindest personal regards, Jas. Hook, Captain' (Spielberg 00:25:19). At one point in the film, Smee suggests that Hook should make Peter's children love him and forget all about Peter:

SMEE: We could make the little buggers love you.

HOOK: No Smee. No little children love me.

SMEE: Captain that is the point. That is the ultimate revenge. Pan's kids in love with Hook. It's the ultimate payback! (Spielberg 01:05:10)

The implications of this clearly point to the often-cited Oedipal struggle within *Peter Pan*, albeit with a twist. The Oedipal triangle in *Hook* is inverted and even subverted. Spielberg draws on pop psychology's concept of the inner child as Robin Williams' Peter Banning, who has grown up to resemble the piratical Hook (White and Tarr xix) and realises that he has to recover his lost childhood in order to free his children from Hook,

who can be seen as the 'wounded-father within' (Pace 116), 'clawing' for attention and redemption. As has been mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, however, though often cited, the supposed Oedipal struggle is neither solved in Barrie's work nor in *Hook*, as there is never an acceptance of the superior phallus. Peter's and Hook's dichotomy is only ever resolved through Hook's death, which cannot be defined as Freud's or Lacan's concepts of the Oedipal triangle.

The image of clawing calls to mind Hook's prosthesis, which is an important symbol in *Hook*. Right before Captain Hook is revealed for the first time, a pirate is seen sharpening a new hook and placing it on a red velvet cushion. A cult-like procession to Hook's cabin begins and pirates break out into a chant saying 'Hook, Hook, Hook, give us the hook. Hook, Hook, Hook, show us the hook' (Spielberg 00:38:15). While Hook holds a speech, one pirate can be heard screaming, 'Long live the hook' (*Ibid.* 00:40:25). Just as in *Peter and Wendy*, where the hook shoots forth, an image of mutilation which overshadows Hook's identity as an individual, so Spielberg's *Hook* illustrates that the iron hook instead of a right hand¹¹ has come to replace Hook as, in Lacanian terms, a self. Hook, as the 'castrated (would-be) father' (Pace 116) acknowledges that the primary reason for kidnapping Peter's children and trying to make them love him is his mutilation:

Revenge is mine. I baited that hook and now I'm very proud to announce, we have his children. Finally, I'm going to kill Peter Pan, that cocky boy who cut off my hand and fed it to the crocodile. (Spielberg 00:40:35)

¹¹ As in the Disney version, Hook's hook is on the wrong, namely the left hand in Spielberg's film. Dustin Hoffman is righthanded and allegedly asked for the hook to be put on his left hand, due to the necessity of wielding a sword in a few fight scenes.

In Spielberg's film, Hook actually managed to kill 'that cunning crocodile' and turn it 'into a quiet clock' (00:41:03), a moment of heroism granted to Hook which is reminiscent of his cunning in Barrie's film scenario where he makes the crocodile swallow the clock. This, however, is a rare moment and Hook's heroism, as well as his pirate persona, are shown to be all artifice, including elevator shoes, an ornate waistcoat and a wig of long black curls, hiding a grey and balding head (Pace 116). Apart from his *corps morcèle* still being a herald of his demise, Hook is thus also portrayed as an old man, not merely in the sense as being older than Pan, but as in seriously ageing. Ironically, like Peter who refuses to grow up in the original and is grown up in *Hook*, Hook is an adult in Barrie's work, yet dies before truly 'growing up'. Though never mentioned by anyone involved, Dustin Hoffman's height could have been a factor in his casting for the role of Hook. Hoffman is notoriously short, standing 1.67 meters tall, even shorter than Robin Williams who is 1.70 meters tall. The imagery of castration and phallic lack could thus also extend to Hook's height, in this case being shorter than the eternal boy himself. Furthermore, in *Hook*, Captain Hook has become an old man who tries to hide his ageing process with wigs and elegant portraits of himself, which arguably hints at the sort of rejection of ageing that Oscar Wilde's protagonist exhibits in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) for example.

Images of time passing are manifold in *Hook*, whether it is Spielberg's postcard-like shots of Big Ben, a personal pocket watch which Peter gifts his son Jack or Hook's emblematic museum of broken clocks, including the one the crocodile had swallowed (Friedman 196). The 'fleeting fragility of time' (*Ibid.*) is thus emphasized throughout the film. Hook, as is the bane of his existence, is conscious of his time running out and admits: 'I hate living in this flawed body. And I hate living in Neverland and I hate, I hate ... I hate Peter Pan!' (Spielberg 01:01:00). Hook thus hates his own body and self, though

his hatred for Pan is briefly turned into utter disappointment when Peter Banning tries to save his children for the first time and has not reclaimed his former identity yet. Seeing Peter for the first time, Hook says:

Is it you? My great and worthy opponent? But it can't be, not this pitiful, spineless, pasty, bloated codfish I see before me. You're not even a shadow of Peter Pan. (Spielberg 00:43:20)

For a short while in the film, Barrie's original idea as Peter castratingly insulting Hook as a codfish is thus reversed and Peter's *jouissance* is taken away. In Spielberg's film, however, this circumstance does not please Hook, quite the contrary. Hook has 'a sublime vision':

HOOK: All the jagged parts of my life have come together to form a complete and mystical whole, an epiphany. My life is over.

SMEE: You've lost your appetite?

HOOK: Yes. Goodbye. (Spielberg 01:01:50)

What follows is a comedic suicide attempt by Hook during which he ends up chastising Smee for not stopping him earlier. Though Hook did not really want to kill himself, he indeed has lost his 'appetite' for life in *Hook*. Having the upper hand over Peter for once could ultimately not fulfil him. Worse even, after Peter regains his Pan-like *jouissance* and the ability to fly, Hook is once again, presumably the second time in his life, humiliated by Peter. Exhibiting bad form and trying to attack Peter from behind, Hook inadvertently causes the stuffed crocodile to briefly come back to life and fall on top of

him, swallowing him whole. Hook's last words are: 'I want my mommy' (Spielberg 02:04:00). While Spielberg's death for Hook seems like a slap in the face when compared to the somewhat dignified demise in Barrie's work, *Hook* arguably hit the mark of Hook's essence when it comes to his unchangeable lack of *jouissance* and his inability to escape the passage of time.

4.4. 'Old, Alone, Done For': Hook as a Gallant Pirate

In P. J. Hogan's *Peter Pan* (2003), Jason Isaacs' Hook is arguably the most serious incarnation of the pirate captain. True to Barrie's instructions of avoiding being overly funny and unlike Disney's Hook, Isaacs' Hook is neither the helpless villain and double of the blundering Mr Darling, nor is he like Spielberg's fragile version of Hook as an old man who has lost his shadow. Most of Isaacs' funnier scenes stem from his performance as Mr Darling (as usual Hook and Mr Darling are doubled in performance). Nevertheless, of all Mr Darling incarnations to date, Isaacs' is perhaps the most redeeming and human one. When the Darling children complain about their father to their mother, Mrs Darling says: 'Your father is a brave man' (Hogan 00:10:48). In reply to an incredulous Wendy, Mrs Darling explains:

There are many different kinds of bravery. There's the bravery of thinking of others before oneself. Now your father has never brandished a sword or fired a pistol, thank heavens. But he's made many sacrifices for his family and put away many dreams. He puts the dreams in drawers, and it gets harder and harder to close them. He does, and that is why he's brave. (Hogan 00:11:00)

While Hogan's Mr Darling retains Barrie's middle class parody of his obsession 'for being exactly like his neighbours' (*Peter and Wendy* 7), as well as his frugal nature, this Mr Darling is described as a serious family father who has sacrificed his imagination for the well-being of his family.

Hook's first scene follows a variety of Barrie's own descriptions, although with a few twists. In the play, Hook is the 'cruellest jewel' (Barrie 108). In 'Hook at Eton', he is described as 'the handsomest man', 'though at the same time, slightly disgusting' (*The Times* 16). Jason Isaacs is first seen sleeping with his head resting on his desk. He smashes a ticking clock Smee puts on the desk with a hook in his left hand.¹² Hook is shirtless, with at least two tattoos, one of them being the coat of arms of Eton. Though tattoos would not have been seen as 'good form' in a 19th century public school, as well as the concept of 'good form' never being mentioned in Hogan's film, Hook's elevated level of education compared to everyone else is made apparent from the start. Apart from displaying his half-naked physique, Hook, in a scene which no other adaptation has dared to emulate, reveals his entire residual limb. The graphic scene exhibits an odd mixture of powerful phallic imagery and obvious mutilation due to all the visible scarring and his missing hand. Hook's idiosyncratic liminality is thus perfectly visualised. Hook tells Smee that he was dreaming of Pan:

And in my dream, I was a magnanimous fellow, full of forgiveness. I thanked Pan for cutting off my hand and for giving me this fine hook to disembowel him with and ripping throats and other such homely uses. (Hogan 00:28:05)

¹² This could arguably be interpreted as a cheeky nod at adaptations such as Disney's or Spielberg's which have put the iron hook in place of the wrong hand. The subsequent revelation and brandishing of Hook's right stump seems to call even more attention to the correct 'placement' of Hook's amputation.

'Other such homely uses' is a line taken straight from Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, yet Hogan gives it its own devilish twist. As Green points out, Hook has always had 'a touch of Satan in him', representing the 'Devil whom children feared' in Barrie's time (38). Indeed, Hook directly references Satan in Hogan's film when he says: 'Thank Lucifer, the beast [crocodile] swallowed a clock' (Hogan 00:29:17). Hook is, of course, not full of forgiveness and scorns Smee's suggestion that Pan did him a favour by cutting off his hand. Whereas Barrie's Hook wished his imaginary children to have a hook instead of a hand and looked upon his prosthesis with pride, Hogan's film makes a point about Hook's burdened life as an amputee by having him use a visually laborious mechanism to mount his prosthesis on his stump, a procedure which causes him visible difficulty and pain.

Isaacs' Hook's sinister, yet seductively gallant and 'masculine' performance is primarily illustrated through his scenes with Wendy. In Barrie's *Peter and Wendy*, when Wendy first sees Hook, she is afraid as 'she saw his evil swarthy face as he rose dripping from the water, and, quaking, she would have liked to swim away' (77). Later in the story, the only interaction these two characters have is when Hook takes Wendy and the Lost Boys hostage. Here Hook treats Wendy with good form:

A different treatment was accorded to Wendy. [...] he was so frightfully *distingué*, that she was too fascinated to cry out. She was only a little girl. Perhaps it is tell-tale to divulge that for a moment Hook entranced her. (Barrie, *Peter and Wendy* 108)

Focused on Hook's manners and using the phrase 'only a little girl', arguably removes most of the sexual tension that readers may read into Wendy's thoughts and there is no follow-up or reasons for being entranced given whatsoever. In Hogan's film, however, this is very different. As Chaney argues, Hogan's *Peter Pan*, makes the 'crucially veiled sexual chemistry between Peter and Wendy [...] crassly explicit' (372), through scenes such as a romantic dance scene between the two in the magical fairy woods, as well as a final kissing scene which leaves no doubt that this film has love story elements. Similarly, Hogan's *Hook* seems to have an implicitly sexual effect on Wendy. When Wendy first sees Hook in the film, a female voice-over says: 'Thus, Wendy first laid eyes on the dark figure who haunted her stories. She saw the piercing eyes and was not afraid ... but entranced' (Hogan 00:45:00). Hogan directly contradicts Barrie's assertion that Wendy was afraid of Hook and focuses on Hook as a masculine and entrancing figure. Using Wendy's conflicted feelings against her, Hook manipulates Wendy and tries to convince her to join the pirates. He does this only to get to Peter, as he charmingly yet deceitfully tells Wendy: 'My only obsession is you. Not Peter Pan ... or his whereabouts' (Hogan 01:02:30). For a moment Hook's seduction yields results, when Wendy returns to Peter, who has told her that he cannot love her. She uses Hook to make Peter jealous and they briefly cross swords: 'I find Hook to be a man of feeling [...] you are both ungallant and deficient. [...] You're just a boy. We are going home' (Hogan 01:05:40). While Wendy is probably never seriously attracted to Hook, she unironically sees him as more of a gallant man than Peter, illustrating that she thought of Hook as a sexual being who can be desired, in contrast to Peter who rejects being desired in that way.

Nevertheless, at the end of Hogan's film, Peter gives in to his feelings when Wendy gives him a saving, fairy-tale kiss after losing a fight to Hook. Peter subsequently

turns completely pink and, causing a sort of pressure wave, knocks back Hook, arguably visualising a sexual awakening, which was not present in Barrie's work. This reclaiming, as well as enhancement of Peter's *jouissance*, gives Peter enough strength to face Hook once more and finally defeat him. Before Hook dies, however, Hogan's film daringly grants Hook the brief ability to fly, a miraculous feat denied to all his literary and cinematic predecessors, constituting the most radical deviation from earlier narratives (Friedman 208).¹³ Hook's flight is the result of his grabbing Tinker Bell and shaking her fairy dust on himself. This new-found *jouissance* excites the pirate captain and he exclaims: 'It's Hook! He flies! And he likes it!' (Hogan 01:25:30). Unfortunately for Hook, however, his joy is short-lived. Peter laughs at Hook and arrogantly remarks: 'Not bad for an old man' (*Ibid.* 01:26:00). Hook is visibly shocked and offended by this cocky insult, but Peter emphasizes: 'I know what you are. You're a tragedy' (*Ibid.*). Indeed, Hook's tragic nature from Barrie's originals is retained. Earlier in the film, his harrowing loneliness is made apparent during Peter's and Wendy's romantic dance. Hook looks on, teary-eyed, and mumbles to himself: 'He has found himself a ... Wendy. And Hook is all alone' (Hogan 00:54:20). Even in Hogan's film, which granted Hook more abilities and seriousness than any other adaptation, Hook cannot escape loneliness. Like all other Hook incarnations, he cannot escape his flawed and mutilated *corps morcèle* and, ultimately, even this Hook, the Captain who could fly, cannot avoid his demise. His last words admit defeat when he refers to himself as 'old, alone, and done for' (Hogan 01:33:20), before falling into the crocodile's gaping jaw.

¹³ Another adaptation which grants Captain Hook the ability to fly is the animated prequel film *Tinker Bell and the Pirate Fairy* (2014). Here, Hook (voiced by Tom Hiddleston) is still young and has yet to meet Peter Pan and lose his hand. A pixie dust-keeper fairy turned pirate, called Zarina, befriends Hook and helps him learn how to fly. Though Peter and Hook are yet to meet, the implications of this prequel adaptation hint to a more even matchup between Peter and this version of Hook in a possible sequel.

4.5. Conclusion

Building on the discussion in earlier chapters, this chapter has aimed to analyse how Barrie's original conception of Hook has been remembered and reinterpreted by posterity. Through a close reading of three of the most popular *Peter Pan* film adaptations, by Disney, Spielberg, and Hogan, this chapter has argued that the image of Hook as mutilated and doomed is always retained. At times, posterity has cut even more off of this liminal character, relegating him to a slapstick villain, like Disney, or a pathetic captain who has fully lost his shadow, screaming for his mommy as in *Hook*. At the same time, however, these adaptations have also added redeeming layers to Hook's ongoing legacy as the eternal boy's nemesis. Disney, albeit briefly, turned Hook into a mathematical genius. Spielberg's Hook exhibits good form when he refuses to kill Peter Pan until he can regain his ability to fly and Hogan's Hook is even granted the ability to fly himself. As long as Peter Pan will be reimagined as the eternal boy, so will Hook be reinterpreted as the contrasting pirate captain afraid of time ticking away. The strength of an adaptation lies in involving both memory and change, as well as persistence and variation (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 173). Though Hook is almost without exception eventually swallowed in his various incarnations, his legacy in pop culture is ongoing, while past and future adaptations will make sure that every reincarnation adds something new to the elusive nature of the paradoxically immortal Captain Hook.

Conclusion

This thesis has engaged with the idea of Hook's 'true identity', as J. M. Barrie calls it in *Peter and Wendy*. Over the course of four chapters, I have tried to set out why it is that, while his nemesis, the eternal boy Peter Pan is often the primary focus of scholarship on Barrie's most famous work, an equally focused study of Captain Hook is not only worthwhile, but indispensable to disentangle the both charming and tragic, yet always captivating, intricacies of Barrie's seminal and undying myth. After Barrie's death, his friend and former secretary, Lady Cynthia Asquith commented on always remembering Barrie's patience and his extraordinary ability to instil hope in his writing:

I see him, as I so often saw him, crouched over his Adelphi hearth, busily engrossed in mending the log fire on its great mound of ashes. The persistence and skill with which he would ply the giant bellows, and their ally, the long steel prong, until the dying embers blazed into flame again [...]. No one knew better how to rekindle hope and courage when they sank low. No one was more glad to do it. For the rest of my life the scent of wood smoke will make me see that wide cavernous hearth and, on his knees beside it, Barrie [...] patiently, intently fanning grey ashes into flame. (Asquith 218)

Reading this quote was instrumental in inspiring the writing of this thesis and my overall approach. The image of Barrie, using a steel prong, a hook-like object, to make dying embers burst into flame again became a guiding metaphor for my research. My aim was to closely analyse Barrie's original conception of Hook—which is often

forgotten or relegated to the background in favour of Peter—thus fanning the repressed ashes of Hook’s fascinating character back into flame.

My analysis used a Lacanian approach to argue that Hook is essentially a tragic anti-hero on a personal quest for redemption. However, both revenge for his suffering and the achievement of Peter’s *jouissance* is denied to him. Barrie’s writing style, his irony, as well as his depiction of Hook, make the pirate captain a tragically lonely and constantly failing character who is only granted some relief when his time eventually runs out. Furthermore, I have argued that Hook is an extraordinarily liminal character, embodying elements of the English gentleman, a ruthless villain, a common pirate, a coward, and a well-educated, as well as cultured man all in one. Comparing Hook to Robert Louis Stevenson’s gentleman pirate Long John Silver, as well as Joseph Conrad’s characters from *Lord Jim*, I have argued that Hook fits into a late 19th and early 20th century development of questioning the gentleman image. Though clearly also a villain, Hook tries to be a hero in his own right, exhibiting dignity, good manners, and, most importantly, good form. Nevertheless, the inability to fully live up to the self-imposed pressure of good form, Hook eventually fails, and his gentlemanly identity is overshadowed by his inescapable demise.

This thesis has also used Lacan’s concept of the *corps morcèle* as a herald of death, to investigate how Hook’s eventual fate was sealed from the moment Peter cut off his hand. For the remainder of Barrie’s story, Hook’s mutilation becomes a constant symbol of his impossibility of *jouissance* and reminder that his time is running out and the crocodile is waiting to swallow the rest of him. The hook overshadows the pirate captain as an individual, yet also underlines his multifacetedness. When the hook shoots forth, Hook gains energy, even vitality, yet every time his eyes flare up with hatred before gutting his next victim, he also comes one step closer to his early dissolution.

Finally, I have argued that posterity and its popular adaptations of the *Peter Pan* stories both mutilate the legacy of Hook, while at the same adding individual new layers to his persona. Every new incarnation, whether animated, on the page or stage, in a video game, or live action, keeps the mystery and ironically undying nature of the one-handed pirate captain alive, repeating without replicating, and thus adding a degree of recognition to Hook while always allowing for the possibility of novelty and surprise. Indeed, as Barrie writes, all children except one grow up. Hook, on the other hand, is in the peculiar situation of an adult who never truly grew up, while also dying over and over again in virtually every reinterpretation. It is certainly only a matter of time before the next high-profile actor, author, or animator continue the saga of the immortal and undying Captain Jas Hook. Until that day, I allow myself to end this thesis by slightly adapting Barrie's own adieu to his famous villain:

'James Hook, thou not wholly unheroic figure, *au revoir*.'

Works Cited

Texts:

Barrie, J. M. "The Little White Bird." *The Complete Adventures of Peter Pan*. Benediction Classics, 2013, pp. 3-133.

---. *Peter Pan and Other Plays*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Peter Hollindale, 1995. Oxford University Press, 2008.

---. *Peter Pan: Peter and Wendy and Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Jack Zipes. USA: Penguin Books, 2004.

---. *Tommy and Grizel*. Poland: CreateSpace, 2018.

Conrad, Joseph. *Lord Jim*. A Norton Critical Edition: Second Edition. Edited by Thomas C. Moser. USA: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1996.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Edited with an Introduction by John Seelye. USA: Penguin Books, 1999.

Criticism:

Abbott, John S. C. *Captain Kidd*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1874.

Birkin, Andrew. *J. M. Barrie and the Lost Boys: The Real Story Behind Peter Pan*. Yale University Press, 2005.

Carpenter, Humphrey. *Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2009.

Chaney, Lisa. *Hide-and Seek with Angels: A Life of J. M. Barrie*. London: Arrow Books, 2005.

Coats, Karen. "Child-Hating: *Peter Pan* in the Context of Victorian Hatred." *A Children's Classic at 100*. Edited by Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006, pp. 3-22.

- Cynthia, Asquith. *Portrait of Barrie*. London: James Barrie, 1954.
- Dunbar, Janet. *J. M. Barrie: The Man Behind the Image*. Devon: Readers Union, 1971.
- Dunn, Alastair. *The Great Rising of 1381: The Peasants' Revolt and England's Failed Revolution*. UK: Tempus, 2002.
- Egan, Michael. "The Nevrland of Id: Barrie, *Peter Pan*, and Freud." *Children's Literature*, vol. 10, 1982, p. 37.
- Friedman, Lester D. "Hooked on Pan: Barrie's Immortal Pirate in Fiction and Film." *Second Star to the Right: Peter Pan in the Popular Imagination*. Edited by Allison Kavey and Lester D. Friedman. Rutgers University Press, 2009, pp. 188–218.
- Gilmour, Robin. *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*. Routledge, 2016.
- Greenberg, H. "Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List." Edited by Yosefa Loshitzky. *Film Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 4., Indiana University Press, 1998, p. 58.
- Green, Roger Lancelyn. *Fifty Years of Peter Pan*. London: Peter Davies, 1954.
- Gwynn, Stephen. "The Autumn's Books." *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 74, 1900, p. 1037.
- Holmes, Martha Stoddard. *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2009.
- Hollindale, Peter, editor. "Explanatory Notes: *Peter Pan*." *Peter Pan and Other Plays*. Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 306–22.
- Hsiao, Irene. "The Pang of Stone Words." *Peter Pan; In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Edited by Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006, p. 165.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. 2nd Edition. Routledge, 2012, p. 173.
- Jack, R. D. S. *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J. M. Barrie's Dramatic Art*. Glasgow: humming earth, Zeticula, 2010.

- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Travistock, 1977, p. 11.
- . *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. New York: Norton, 1977.
- . *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–60*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. New York: Norton, 1992. (S VII), p. 278.
- Lewis, Naomi. "Barrie, (Sir) J(ames) M(atthew)." *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, Second Edition. Edited by D. L. Kirkpatrick. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- May, Jill P. "James Barrie's Pirates: *Peter Pan's* Place in Pirate History and Lore." *Peter Pan; In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Edited by Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006, p. 70.
- Nash, Andrew. "'Trying to be a man': J. M. Barrie and Sentimental Masculinity." *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1999, p. 113.
- Noimann, Chamutal. "'He a Cripple and I a Boy': The Pirate and the Gentleman in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*." *Washington & Jefferson College Review*, vol. 58, p. 57.
- Puxan-Oliva, Marta. "Racial Stereotypes as Narrative Forms: Staging the English Gentleman in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*." *Journal of Narrative Theory*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2015, pp. 333–369.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan; or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. University of Pennsylvania Press by arrangement with The Macmillan Press, 1993.

- Rudd, David. "The Blot of Peter Pan." *Peter Pan; In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Edited by Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006, pp. 263–78.
- Scott, R. F. *Scott's Last Expedition: The Journals of Captain R. F. Scott*. Pan Books, 2003, p. 462.
- Tanner, Tony. "Joseph Conrad and the last gentleman." *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1986, p. 109.
- Tatar, Maria, editor. *The Annotated Peter Pan: The Centennial Edition*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- White, Donna R., and C. Anita Tarr. *J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan; In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006.
- Wiggins, Kayla McKinney. "More Darkly down the Left Arm: The Duplicity of Fairyland in the Plays of J. M. Barrie." *Peter Pan; In and Out of Time: A Children's Classic at 100*. Edited by Donna R. White and C. Anita Tarr. Children's Literature Association: Centennial Studies, No. 4. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006, p. 79.
- Wright, Elizabeth. *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reappraisal*. Oxford: Polity, 1998.
- Yeoman, Ann. *Now or Neverland; Peter Pan and the Myth of Eternal Youth: A Psychological Perspective on a Cultural Icon*. Canada: Inner City Books, 1998.
- Zizek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992, p. 91.

Online sources:

- Barrie, J. M. "Captain Hook At Eton." *Times*, London: 8 July 1927, pp. 15–16. *The Times Digital Archive*, <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/apps/doc/CS253172968/GDCS?u=leiden&sid=GDCS&xid=f4b4621a>. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.
- Felluga, Dino. "Modules on Lacan: On the Structure of the Psyche." *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory*. 2011. *Purdue U*, <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacanstructure.html>. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "On the Art of Adaptation." *Daedalus*, vol. 133, no. 2, The MIT Press, 2004, pp. 108–11. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20027920. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.
- Leitch, Thomas. "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory." *Criticism*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2003, p. 161. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23126342. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.
- Pace, Patricia. "Robert Bly Does Peter Pan: The Inner Child as Father to the Man in Spielberg's *Hook*." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1996, pp. 113–20. *Project MUSE*, <http://doi.org/10.1353/uni.1996.0001>. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.
- Sharf, Zack. "'Schindler's List': Steven Spielberg Relied on Robin Williams to Survive Filming, Hated Working on 'Jurassic Park' At the Same Time." *IndieWire*, 27 Apr. 2018. <https://www.indiewire.com/2018/04/schindlers-list-steven-spielberg-robin-williams-jurassic-park-1201957958/>. Last Accessed 25 June 2020.

Other sources:

Hook. Directed by Steven Spielberg, performances by Dustin Hoffman and Robin Williams and, TriStar Pictures, 1991.

Peter Pan. Directed by P. J. Hogan, performances by Jason Isaacs and Jeremy Sumpter, Universal Pictures, 2003.

Peter Pan. Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske, performances by Hans Conried and Bobby Driscoll, Walt Disney Productions, 1953.

Scent of a Woman. Directed by Martin Brest, performance by Al Pacino, Universal Pictures, 1992.