

The Boy Who Lived: From Carroll's Alice and Barrie's Peter Pan to Rowling's Harry Potter

Amy Billone

Who is today's most beloved child character? In the midst of J. K. Rowling's triumphs on the literary market, we would have difficulty giving any answer other than Harry Potter. Rowling's fifth novel in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, broke records with its first print run of 6.8 million copies and a second print run of 1.7 million copies. Rowling has become an international celebrity; she is now the richest woman in England, wealthier than the Queen herself, and she has even been named an Officer of the British Empire. However, five years before the publication of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, James Kincaid boldly declared that "no children have ever been more desirable" than Lewis Carroll's Alice and J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan (275).

In this essay I will argue that Harry Potter competes with Alice and Peter Pan by combining both of them inside himself. He experiences Peter's ecstasy when he gracefully flies, Peter's superhuman aptness when he battles deadly foes, and Peter's effortless capacity to make dreams come alive. At the same time, like Alice, Harry struggles to understand the difference between what appears to be true and what is true. In Book 1, he must work his way along a chessboard by playing with and against violently destructive chess pieces; by the end of Book 5 he has suffered betrayal by nearly everyone he knows.¹ Moreover, as Harry matures, he becomes angrier and angrier at the chaos surrounding him. In the fourth and fifth books, he longs to leave Hogwarts forever. Just as Alice, who is about to be decapitated by the Queen of Hearts, finally shouts out, "Who cares for you? . . . You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (97), Harry discovers that his dreams have deceived him—consequently, he has led all of his friends to their probable deaths and allowed his godfather to be murdered.

For Alice and Harry, the knowledge that dreams and reality do not coincide accompanies their growth out of childhood. In Alice's case, childhood may have evaporated before her discovery of Wonderland (when she is only seven years old); the lovely Edenic garden that she

glimpses after she tumbles down the rabbit hole turns out to be an illusion. Her resulting rage, which augments throughout the book, causes her physically to grow out of her nightmare. Harry Potter experiences a similar kind of fury throughout Book 5 (when he is nearly sixteen years old); this anger interferes with the truthfulness of his dreamscape and finally forces him to realize the discrepancy between fantasy and reality. In the first parts of this paper I will investigate why Peter Pan's gender allows him to remain in Neverland (to control it, in fact) while Alice's gender causes her fantasy universe to distort into a nightmarish mirror reflection. If we take Kincaid's words seriously (and I do), that as of 1992 no two children had ever been more desirable to us than Alice and Peter Pan, we must arrive at the conclusion that until very recently childhood has been an unsettlingly masculine space.

By comparing Harry Potter to Alice and Peter Pan, I want to question whether now, in the twenty-first century, we have expanded our conception of childhood so that girls participate as comfortably in fantasylands as boys do. In particular, I am interested in the notion of the dreamchild. While many people (including J. K. Rowling herself) may prefer Hermione to Harry, it is Harry and not Hermione who experiences an intense and increasingly unstable relationship with dreams and nightmares. Hermione surprisingly seems to have no dreams at all.

As I will demonstrate in this paper, gender may *still* prohibit girls from traveling to childhood dreamscapes, where fantasy and reality completely reverse roles, and from feeling at home there. True, although Harry is a boy, he does have some conventionally feminine traits (he is definitely more compassionate than Alice is). He has his mother's eyes, her gentleness, her sensitivity, her carefulness not to hurt other people's feelings. Significantly, however, Harry Potter is a boy, and in every respect (with the exception of his eyes) he remarkably resembles his father. Therefore, even though Harry's personality contains both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities, masculinity still surpasses femininity in his makeup, forcing him not only to take on the literal shape of a boy, but also grounding him in a universe dominated by men. There might be as many girls as boys at Hogwarts, but women have little power in Harry's world, and the two most frightening, nearly omnipotent wizards—the evil Voldemort and the benevolent Dumbledore—give us the impression (especially when we compare them to female characters in the series) that they could

be nothing other than men. Even after we recognize this gender imbalance, it may be impossible for us to imagine any alternative narrative structure because J. K. Rowling plainly has given the majority of contemporary readers the object of their dreams.

I.

Dreamchildren are not only imaginary child characters who dream; they also tend to be fantasized *about* by the authors of the stories in which they appear. Lewis Carroll opens and closes the Alice books with melancholy poems about his beloved Alice Liddell; Barrie prefaces his first publication of the play *Peter Pan* (1928) with a long mournful dedication “To the Five,” addressing the five Llewelyn Davies boys whom he passionately adored and eventually adopted. Within their texts, Carroll and Barrie make us aware that the characters who haunt them “phantomwise” correspond to real children. They inscribe the tragedy of these children’s departures so intimately and so painfully into their narratives (in spite of or perhaps because of the tonal levity with which the stories are written) that we as readers long for the children, too, grieve for their dissolution, too, even though we never are sure who the real children were or how and why they disappeared.

Karoline Leach has asserted that the entire Carroll phenomenon “manifests the psychology of iconicism in its most bizarre and subliminal form” (10). According to Leach, Lewis Carroll “never confused Alice [Liddell] with ‘Alice’ as we do. She was never his ‘dream-child’, and he never pretended that she was” (174). Leach persuasively argues that if Carroll had been in love with anyone in the Liddell family it was not with the child Alice but with her mother, Lorina. How do we make sense, then, of the closing poem in *Through the Looking-Glass* which contains at its center the lines, “Still she haunts me, phantomwise/Alice moving under skies/Never seen by waking eyes,” considering that the initial letters of each line in the poem, read downward, spell “Alice Pleasance Liddell”? (Carroll 209). Who is the real Alice if not Alice Liddell?

Carroll’s obsessive references to the elusive “Alice” might remind us of the glare of letters that spell “nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small” and which start from the dark “as vivid as spectres” until “the air swarm[s] with Catherines,” producing Lockwood’s terrifying (and uncannily truthful) nightmare in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (15). In Lockwood’s dream he hears per-

sistent knocking against his window pane; when he opens it up, he discovers a ghost child (named Catherine), who grabs hold of him and will not let go, begging him to let her inside.² Heathcliff has kept Catherine's spirit alive, and if Alice and Peter survive as dreamchildren they may do so because, as Jacqueline Rose says of *Peter Pan*, their stories fit within "a realm of literature which stares unblinkingly at the truth, which strides over flaws and inconsistencies, over the intellectual and social forces of our time, straight into the collective mind of its audience" (111–12).

Whatever love Carroll and Barrie may have felt for real children, these writers ultimately confront the distressing evaporation of innocence brought about by temporality itself.³ Karoline Leach contends that if Charles Dodgson was having an affair with a married adult woman (perhaps with Mrs. Liddell), then he turned his attention to children not because he was sexually attracted to them, but because he wanted to regain his own sense of lost spiritual purity. I would suggest that Carroll/Dodgson chose a girl instead of a boy as his protagonist because, like him, Alice unsuccessfully struggles to enter an idyllic landscape where sin is left behind. In Barrie's Dedication to the published play version of *Peter Pan* he explains to the Llewelyn Davies brothers (whom he refers to not by name but by code numbers) why he has "no recollection" of having written the story (75).⁴ He supposes that if he made Peter he must have done so "by rubbing the five of you violently together, as savages with two sticks produce a flame. That is all he is, the spark I got from you" (76, 75). But Barrie wrote this Dedication at the earliest in 1920; George Llewelyn Davies (No. 1) was killed in the First World War in 1915, and Michael (No. 4) was drowned (a possible suicide) in 1921, so that at least one and probably two of Barrie's real-life addressees were already dead at the time he composed it.

Barrie seems aware in his Dedication that he is, and always has been, talking to and about dead or nonexistent children. "There is Peter still," he writes, "but to me he lies sunk in the gay Black Lake" (*Peter Pan* 77). He goes on to explain his belief that people remain the same throughout their lives, "merely passing, as it were, in these lapses of time from one room to another, but all in the same house" (78). He speaks as though his childhood self is alive now, and he will not let go of his conviction that "a little something in us which is no larger than a mote in the eye . . . dances in front of us beguiling us all our days. I cannot cut the hair by which it hangs" (79). Rather than correspond-

ing to the real-life object of Carroll's sexual desire, the little girl Alice (simply because she is a girl and not a boy) may at once represent Carroll's lost innocence and his inability to possess that innocence again. Likewise, rather than taking the place of any of the Llewelyn Davies boys or serving as a reincarnation of Barrie's brother who died as a child, Peter Pan may embody the storyteller's own childhood self—lost because Barrie has grown up, but also alive, still, playfully (albeit tragically) hidden inside a distant room.

II.

Of all child characters, Neverland's Peter Pan and Wonderland's Alice may have been for so long the most desirable to us because as dreamchildren they do not materialize quite the way we want them to. In Kincaid's opinion, these two children are so tremendously appealing because no "figures are more insistently Other, more adept at resisting satisfaction, blocking fulfillment, keeping the chase and desire alive" (276). However, in spite of their common unavailability to us, Peter and Alice could not be more dissimilar. According to Kincaid, "Peter, the child, is lodged in the world of play and the adult is stuck in the world of power; Alice, the apparent child (actually the adult) is firmly in the world of power and the apparent adult (actually the child) is in the world of play" (276). In other words, even in the dreamworld of Neverland, Peter is a child; but Alice is what Kincaid calls a "false child" who wants only to resist the nonsensical world of Wonderland into which she accidentally falls (289).

On one level, Kincaid's analysis of these tales rings regrettably true. In *Alice in Wonderland*, we find ourselves hurled into what Knoepfelmacher calls a "childland," yet sadly we find no child there. Kincaid observes, "We find only Alice, the false child, resisting the play, telling us coldly at every turn in the game that we are being silly, that we must wake up, grow up" (289). What is maddeningly desirable to us about Alice is that she has vacated the position of the true child, betrayed us by growing up almost as soon as her life begins.

If Peter's inability to age and to return Wendy's romantic love gives her anguish (while her ability to mature does not), we might ask what Alice's emotions are (the real Alice, the fictional Alice, the dream Alice) about her own eroticized nonexistent childhood. Kincaid insists:

But Alice is not at home with play. She is at home with the bees—with logic, accounts, work, death, and sentimentality: the rewards

that come to those willing to grow up. The Otherness represented by Alice is even more elusive than Peter's, more subtle and indistinct, more a photograph we can set in the past and tell stories about, more a memory her sister can dream when Alice runs off, more a child who never was. (289)

Where I differ from Kincaid is in my sympathy for Alice the "false child" who appears to be "not at home with play." On the boat trip to Godstow when Dodgson first narrated the fictional Alice's dream journey in 1862, the ten-year-old real-life Alice allegedly hoped, "There will be nonsense in it!" (Carroll 3). The waking seven-year-old fictional Alice gets tired sitting by her older sister on the bank; once or twice she looks into her sister's book and wonders what the use is of a book "without pictures or conversations" (7). Alice wants to experience a universe consisting of pictures or playing cards or chess pieces come to life and nonsensical conversations. But what happens when Carroll allows her to enter this dreamland? The nonsense world torments and rejects her, pigeons scream that she is a serpent, cooks throw everything within reach at duchesses who violently beat their babies, furious queens try to decapitate her and everyone around them, and the sympathetic Cheshire Cat says that not only is everyone in Wonderland mad, but Alice herself must have been mad to come there in the first place.⁵

In a book so full of puns that a story or "tale" appears visually in the shape of a winding mouse's "tail;" the word "mad" obviously has two meanings. Carroll radically altered the mouse's tale from *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, which began, "We lived beneath the mat/warm and snug and fat/But one woe, & that/Was the cat!" In the extended, revised *Alice in Wonderland*, the tale begins, "Fury said to/ a mouse . . . 'Let/us both go/to law: I/will prose-/cute you—" (25). Unlike the all-male Neverland where pirates and redskins and Lost Boys pursue each other in an endless dance around the island, Wonderland is driven from start to finish by women's fury. When the White Rabbit exclaims, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" he does so out of terror that the Duchess will have him executed (7). In Alice's first meeting with the Mouse she horrifies him by mentioning her *female* cat Dinah, who is "such a capital one for catching mice" (18). It is the repulsively ugly *female* Duchess who violently beats her baby and the revolting *female* cook who throws everything in the room at both of them. Finally, the Queen of Hearts might be characterized almost exclusively by her seemingly unjustified rage and its consequences.

She turns “crimson with fury” during Alice’s first encounter with her, moves “angrily away” from the gentle King (65), and while playing croquet stamps “in a furious passion” (67). The Queen speaks “in a shrill, loud voice” (65); she screams, roars, shouts “in a voice of thunder” (66). Yet none of her actions has any effect in the end, for the smiling, timid King pardons everyone she sentences to execution, as he always does.

Like the Queen, Alice experiences increasing anger throughout the book. In the scene with the disagreeable Caterpillar, Alice “swallow[s] down her anger as well as she could” (36). Because “she [has] never been so much contradicted in all her life before,” she feels that she is “losing her temper” (41). At the “mad tea-party,” her anger heightens beyond any earlier point in the story. She speaks to the creatures “indignantly,” “angrily,” “with some severity,” and “in an offended tone” (54–59). This scene prepares Alice for her meeting with the Queen of Hearts; as the Queen screams, “Off with her head!” Alice interrupts: “Nonsense! . . . and the Queen [is] silent” (64). At last, during the trial scene, the Queen demands the sentence first and the verdict afterwards. Alice, having grown inexplicably much taller, loudly retorts, “‘Stuff and nonsense!’”; this infuriates the Queen, who, turning purple, shouts “‘Off with her head!’” (97). Now Alice’s own anger, which corresponds to her physical growth, explodes the entire dreamworld: “‘Who cares for *you?*’ said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time). ‘You’re nothing but a pack of cards!’” (97). When the whole pack rises into the air and comes flying down upon her, she gives “a little scream, half of fright and half of anger,” tries “to beat them off” and instead wakes up with her head in the lap of her older sister, who is herself brushing away dead leaves from Alice’s face (97–98).

Alice cannot survive in the Wonderland of magic and nonsense for which she longs, not because she responds as a cold adult to the games we want to play with her, as Kincaid suggests, but because her dream of “the beautiful garden” full of “bright flower-beds” and “cool fountains” turns out to be an illusion (61). Alice’s desperate efforts to make her body the right size to fit into the lovely garden and even her final success in entering the garden, once she finds out what it really is, leave her stranded in a false paradise.⁶

In Barrie’s tales about Peter Pan, as in the Alice books, gender prohibits female characters from entering childland. Shirley Foster and Judy Simons argue that Barrie’s “fantasy of permanent childhood”

privileges male experience, recreating “the strict gendered division of Edwardian England; the boys go hunting and fight pirates while Wendy becomes a surrogate mother figure who stays at home and cares for her ‘children’” (175). Even though Barrie tells us that “[a]ll the characters, whether grown-ups or babes, must wear a child’s outlook on life as their only important adornment,” he nevertheless closes the doors of childhood to little girls (*Peter Pan* 88). According to Claudia Nelson, the difficulty we have in figuring out where child leaves off and adult begins “makes possible the greater, if more subtle, opposition in the novel—that between female and male” (170). The text ultimately shows how “even female children are to some extent adult and dangerous, even adult males childlike and endangered” (170).

It seems that if womanhood automatically partakes of childhood, then girls would differ from women only through their absence of maternal feelings along with their unreadiness to enter the sexual relationships that maternity demands. Yet Wendy, we are told, “was every inch a woman, though there were not very many inches” (*Peter and Wendy* 91). Everyone wants Wendy for a mother, the pirates as well as the Lost Boys, and she wants more than anything to be one. When the Lost Boys first speak with her in the play, they all simultaneously shout, “Wendy lady, be our mother!” (*Peter Pan* 116). Wendy at first doubts the appropriateness of this request, or at least pretends to (so as “not to make herself too cheap”): “Ought I? Of course it is frightfully fascinating; but you see I am only a little girl; I have no real experience” (116). But the Lost Boys are not at all discouraged: “That doesn’t matter. What we need is just a nice motherly person” (116). And Wendy cannot escape this characterization: “Oh dear,” she says, “I feel that is just exactly what I am” (116).⁷

It is difficult not to relate Barrie’s description of Wendy to that of his own mother, about whom he writes in *Margaret Ogilvy*:

She was eight when her mother’s death made her mistress of the house and mother to her little brother, and from that time she scrubbed and mended and baked and sewed . . . and had her washing days and her ironings and a stocking always on the wire for odd moments, and gossiped like a matron with the other women, and humoured the men with a tolerant smile. (241–42)

In his introduction to *Peter and Wendy* in the Oxford edition, Peter Hollindale offers one reason why biographical interpretations of Barrie’s work remain so attractive: namely, that Barrie himself drew

attention to the close interaction between his life and work “not only privately, for his own uses, in his notebooks, but publicly and openly, in novels, autobiography, and speeches” (vii). Barrie encourages us to relate Wendy to his mother when, in *Margaret Ogilvy*, he devotes a chapter to “my heroine,” claiming that his mother is the most important female character in all of his books because she is the only woman he ever truly knew. It is not coincidental, then, that the name “Wendy” was Barrie’s own invention, deriving, ironically, from that of a little girl (dead at the age of five) with his mother’s own name, *Margaret*, who had told him that he was her “fwendy” (“friendly”) and she was his “wendy.”

Wendy lacks none of Mrs. Darling’s maternal impulses; nor is she a stranger to romantic desire. She “artfully” tries to kiss Peter during their first meeting (*Peter and Wendy* 101), continually inquires what his “exact feelings” are for her (130, 162), fiercely agrees with Tinker Bell that in his sexual ignorance he is a “silly ass” (130), demands at the end whether he would like to say anything to her parents “‘about a very sweet subject’” (151) and one year later (at this point unable to fly without a broomstick) cries out “‘Oh, Peter, how I wish I could take you up and squdge you!’” (153).⁸ In his Dedication, Barrie recognizes the threat that Wendy poses. He refers to her as a “disturbing element,” speculating that she may never initially have been wanted by Peter in Neverland at all (*Peter Pan* 84). Speaking of one of the earliest versions of the play (*The Boy Castaways: The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island*, a book composed entirely of a preface and captioned photographs), which evolved from his games with the young Davies boys during a summer holiday in 1901, Barrie says, “Wendy has not yet appeared . . .” (*Peter Pan* 84). However, he hypothesizes that she might have “bored her way in at last whether we wanted her or not. It may be that even Peter did not really bring her to the Never Land of his free will, but merely pretended to do so because she would not stay away” (84).

Kincaid wholeheartedly concurs that Wendy acts as the most frightening source of evil in the book. He even goes so far as to say that Wendy enters the story as “an intruder, a disturber of the peace and play, sets up a school, and is last seen on a broomstick, where she should have been all along” (285). As Kincaid sees it, Wendy, just like Alice, “wants so badly to grow up, she more or less is grown-up now, probably was born grown-up” (288). It is almost as though, opposite to Wendy, who cannot be anything other than an adult, Captain Hook

is really a child playing the part of a grownup. Kincaid suggests that “the one adult [Peter] does, more or less, manage to kill does not seem to be an enemy at all but a bellowing, funny parody, a player who, like Peter, does not *know*, a child who has agreed to play Daddy and is having a fine old time of it” (284). Hook understands the world of Neverland, and would never choose to leave it. If, in Kincaid’s words, “Hook is the entry adults have into the itch that is Peter,” then the adults who want to destroy Neverland, children’s real enemies, seem to “wear skirts instead of hooks, come in the form of women who threaten to disrupt the pederastic unity being forged” (285).

I agree with Kincaid that while giving every appearance to the contrary, Wendy doubles as a wicked witch in *Peter Pan*. What I see omitted from his discussion, however, is the extent to which Wendy’s gender forces her into this role. Kincaid likes Peter best “when he can be seen napping, leg arched and hand thrown over the edge of the bed like a serpentine Cleopatra in drag . . . But not really in drag, being so genderless. One of the things he does not *know* is gender, or maybe it is one of the things we are allowed for a moment not to know” (282). No matter how compelling this argument may be, I think it is impossible not to know gender when we read Barrie’s text. True, male and female relationships collide in *Peter Pan* much as do relations between children and adults. We constantly find people playing all the wrong parts. Barrie explains in his dedication that Nana was originally (and biographically) a *male* dog and that s/he first belonged not to the Darlings but to Captain Hook. This piece of historical information serves as one more example of the shifting roles between good and evil characters in the story; it also provides an instance of gender fluidity that Barrie does not let us forget. At the beginning of the play, Barrie places emphasis on Nana’s still ambiguous gender. He says that the “first moment in the play is tremendously important, for if the *actor* playing Nana does not spring properly we are undone. She will probably be played by a boy, if one clever enough can be found” (*Peter Pan* 88; emphasis added). Barrie uses Nana’s sex change as one of the few pieces of evidence that he in fact did write the play himself.⁹

Nana’s gender ambiguity most definitely applies to representations of the boy Peter Pan. As a play produced in 1904, *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn’t Grow Up* followed the model of nineteenth-century English pantomimes—holiday treats for children, which included music, humor, harlequin clowns, magic, flying, and fantastic effects. In these performances, the most important boy characters were gener-

ally played by women rather than male children, in part because adults could better handle the many lines and because women (more easily than men) could successfully masquerade as little boys.¹⁰ Making use of the same sort of cross-dressing that characterized British pantomimes, *Peter Pan* was introduced in London at the Duke of York's Theatre on December 27, 1904, with 37-year-old Nina Boucicault in the role of Peter. This performance set the standard around the world for the next 50 years. In America, the play first featured Maude Adams in the leading role. Some of the most famous Peters were Pauline Chase, who played the part for eight revivals, and Jean Forbes-Robertson, who played it for nine. Intriguingly, the same actresses often played different parts at different times. Jane Baxter has been a Redskin, Mrs. Darling, and Peter Pan, while four actresses have played both Wendy and Peter: Lila Maravan, Dinah Sheridan, Joan Greenwood and Julia Lockwood.¹¹

The disguising of actresses (often *grown-up* women) as eternal boy-children continued throughout the twentieth century: we might think of the famous 1954 musical production of *Peter Pan*, which starred Mary Martin in tights (filmed for television and broadcast seven times between 1955 and 1973) or the two major Broadway revivals starring Sandy Duncan in the late 1970s and Cathy Rigby several times in the 1990s. At last, a 1952 German production used a male Peter and in America, Disney's animated 1953 version did the same, but it wasn't until 1982, when Trevor Nunn and John Caird produced their version of *Peter Pan* at the Barbican Theatre in London, that a male lead was cast in the role of Peter Pan in England.

If boys and men interchange roles in *Peter Pan* while neither Mrs. Darling nor Wendy can be anything other than mature women, we might want to ask whether these female characters could transform into children simply by disguising themselves as little boys. Like Nana, who changes his moral system as well as his gender, Peter, too (beyond the question of who plays his part), enjoys altering positions in these categories. In Act 3, Peter pretends to be Hook and all the pirates unknowingly take orders from him. Even Hook grips "the stave for support" when he hears Peter talk in his own voice (*Peter Pan* 121). In response to Hook's question, "'Who are you, stranger, speak,'" Peter, "who can imitate the captain's voice so perfectly that even the author has a dizzy feeling that at times he was really Hook," answers, "'I am Jas Hook, Captain of the *Jolly Roger*,'" and Hook turns "white to the gills" (120–21). Finally, after Hook "prostrates himself into the

water, where the crocodile is waiting for him open-mouthed,” the curtain “must not rise again lest we see [Peter] on the poop in Hook’s hat and cigars, and with a small iron claw” (146).

Peter’s convincing ability to impersonate his worst enemy mimics his gift for posing as the opposite gender. In Act 3, “Tiger Lily slides between [the pirates’] legs into the lagoon, forgetting in her haste to utter her war-cry, but Peter utters it for her, so naturally that even the lost boys are deceived” (120). To mask Wendy’s dismayed exclamation that Smee doesn’t know what a mother is, Peter “makes the splash of a mermaid’s tail” and the pirates think no more of it (121). At the most suspenseful moment leading up to the final battle, Peter folds Wendy’s cloak around himself “with awful grimness” and “takes her place by the mast” (144). The pirates decide the ship is “bewitched” by someone—in fact, by “a man with a hook”—but Hook shifts the blame to “the girl” and tells them to throw her overboard (144). Mullins jeers, “There is none can save you now, missy,” and “Wendy” answers, “There is one . . . Peter Pan, the avenger!” at which point Peter proudly casts off the cloak and “continues standing there to let the effect sink in” (144).

Consequently, we watch an adult woman disguised as a boy hero pretend to be a little girl and then reveal herself to be a little boy after all, who goes on to give the play’s author the “dizzy feeling” that s/he is actually not a child hero in the first place but an adult male villain. To sort through these difficulties, I think we need to step back and ask ourselves one simple question: Who is Peter Pan? First of all, he is a child whom other children see only in their dreams; as they grow older he is completely forgotten and ceases to be visible. Thus it “disturbs” Wendy that one year after her first visit to Never-Never Land, she “does not see him quite so clearly . . . as she used to do” (153). However, there are two things that this dreamchild does know (Kincaid’s speculations notwithstanding): 1) that he is a child rather than a grownup and 2) that he is a boy rather than a girl. It is for this reason that viewers often feel uncomfortable watching grown women play his part. Patrick Braybrooke wrote as early as 1924 in an “Author’s Note” to a book on Barrie that Peter Pan should never again be played by a woman: “There is no character of Barrie’s so essentially masculine as ‘PETER PAN,’ yet the part is played by actresses who are in every sense horribly and inevitably grown up” (5).

People may doubt the reality of Peter, but no one wonders whether he might be in truth an adult woman. Whatever he is, Peter Pan is a

child. In the scene where Peter faultlessly imitates Captain Hook, Tiger Lily, and a mermaid, he plays a guessing game with Hook to solve the riddle of his identity. Peter knows he is not a vegetable, a mineral, a man or an ordinary boy. But when Hook asks, “Wonderful boy?” Peter shouts (much to Wendy’s distress), “Yes!” (*Peter Pan* 122). At the end of this scene, Peter and Wendy nearly drown together, but although she wants to “draw lots” to see which one of them should fly away with a kite and which one should stay behind, he answers, “And you a lady, never!” (124). Peter obviously *knows* gender and he delights in his own little-boyishness, singing “Wendy, look, look; oh the cleverness of me!” and “I’m sweet, oh, I am sweet!” (*Peter Pan* 99, 103). Part of the effect of using sexually mature women to play the part of Peter Pan is further to eroticize him, as the whole drama centers around this issue. Female characters think of Peter almost as though he is the ghost of a heart-stoppingly gorgeous man who died as a child; he is supposed to be sexually grown up but he isn’t, even though he still has erotic appeal, and this tragic fact causes Tinker Bell (the would-be Cinderella) to pull Wendy’s hair and nearly to murder her, then to take her own life out of unfulfillable love for him. Because grown women may have physical attractiveness without possessing the sexual potency of manhood, their impersonations of Peter Pan help us to see precisely what it is that he lacks. Clearly, however, Peter’s allure is not comparable to the seductiveness of girls and women. Wendy and Mrs. Darling own this kind of appeal and, erotically, they neither compete with Peter nor entice him, nor bring him to an understanding of what sexual temptation is. For a girl or a woman to pretend to be Peter Pan she must at every moment realize that she is only playing a part.

III.

If Alice suffers from the agony of never being able to enter the beautiful place she envisions (the loveliest garden you ever saw, full of bright flowers and cool fountains), and Peter Pan orchestrates all adventures in a paradisiacal Neverland where he can always be a little boy and have fun, how does Harry Potter interact with fantasylands? In this part of my analysis I will defend two claims. First, because Harry Potter is growing up at the turn from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, he fuses Peter Pan’s and Alice’s roles, participating in a dreamworld that is at once the product of his greatest joys and his

most awful fears. His integration of masculine and feminine characteristics encourages all readers to identify with him (unlike Peter and Alice he is the figment of a woman writer's imagination). This means that the Harry Potter books do not problematize femininity the way that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century texts do. Second (and this point contradicts my first), when we compare Harry Potter's dreams with those of the male and female characters in his world we find ourselves in exactly the same situation we were in before—girls still cannot confidently make the voyage to dreamland and back again; this power seems to be the privilege of male characters alone.

Due to "the riddle of his being," Peter Pan remains the paragon of childhood innocence, and "no one is as gay as he" (*Peter Pan* 153–54). For Barrie, children have principally three skills that adults do not have: 1) they can enter their own dreams and make these dreams come true; 2) they can play fantasy games in which the imaginary world takes the place of concrete reality; 3) they can fly (with the help of Pixie Dust and happy thoughts). Harry Potter makes his own journey to Neverland when he finds out about Hogwarts and travels there. The morning after Hagrid has suddenly shown up on Harry's eleventh birthday, Harry is afraid to open his eyes: "It was a dream," he told himself firmly. "I dreamed a giant called Hagrid came to tell me I was going to a school for wizards. When I open my eyes I'll be at home in my cupboard." . . . It had been such a good dream" (*Sorcerer's Stone* 76). However, Harry's "good dream" comes true for him. When Harry reaches the Great Hall at Hogwarts he realizes he has "never even imagined such a strange and splendid place" (145). In this dreamworld all that is make-believe takes on physical reality. Just as Peter Pan never knows whether or not he has eaten because he is capable of living in a fantasy game, Harry, who has never been given enough to eat at home, wishes for food on his first night at Hogwarts, and food magically appears: "He had never seen so many things he liked to eat on one table" (153). Once he has eaten as much as he can, "the remains of the food" vanish "from the plates, leaving them sparkling clean as before" (155). A moment later the desserts materialize: "Blocks of ice cream in every flavor you could think of, apple pies, treacle tarts, chocolate éclairs and jam doughnuts, trifle, strawberries, Jell-O, rice pudding . . ." (155).¹² Rowling's long, exaggerated descriptions of delicious foods underscore the equation between Harry's dreams and what he discovers to be true.

Harry Potter's initial response to Hogwarts differs from other characters' reactions; he is quite literally entering a fantasy world. Ron, on

the other hand, has always lived in such a world, as both his parents are practicing wizards, and Hermione (whose parents are only “Muggles”) has read everything she can find about Hogwarts and has taught herself spells at home. Nor does Harry’s discovery of his ability to fly bear any resemblance to that of the other characters. Here, we find some of the most striking similarities between Harry and Peter Pan. Harry’s gifts when he is flying remain unrivaled by anyone else his age.¹³ During his first flying lesson (unlike Peter, these characters all mature and here they all must use brooms), “Harry’s broom jumped into his hand at once, but it was one of the few that did. Hermione Granger’s had simply rolled over on the ground” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 181). Harry ignores Hermione’s warning and breaks all the rules—“up, up, he soared; air rushed through his hair . . . in a rush of fierce joy he realized he’d found something he could do without being taught—this was easy, this was *wonderful*. He pulled his broomstick up a little to take it even higher, and heard screams and gasps of girls back on the ground . . .” (182–83).

As in *Peter Pan*, where the male children forget about reality and want to make Neverland their home, Harry believes his dreamworld feels “more like home than Privet Drive ever had” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 211).¹⁴ However, just like girls, every boy except for Peter Pan must eventually leave make-believe behind. Even if Harry Potter will have more power than women in real life (as men in his world certainly seem to have), his journey parallels Alice’s; like Alice, Harry undergoes magnifying rage and fury as his dreams betray him and stop functioning as true—he, too, must grow up.

Harry’s dreams increase not only in quantity but in severity as the series progresses. Like Alice, he moves gradually into a nightmare universe. Rowling calls our attention to five kinds of dreams in the Harry Potter series: *normal* dreams (which she fills with delightfully Freudian implications), *retrospective* dreams (which simply replay scenes from the past), *prophetic* dreams (which show us what will happen in the future), *factual* dreams (which mirror what is simultaneously happening in real life) and *implanted* dreams (which give every appearance of being *factual* but have actually been inserted in the mind by someone else). Harry is the only character who experiences all five types of dream; further, he seems to be the only character who undergoes *retrospective* dreams, *factual* dreams and *implanted* dreams. Harry appears to dream much more frequently than anyone he knows. His dreams are not only numerous but recurrent, so that by the fifth book,

whenever he closes his eyes, it is “as though a film in his head had been waiting to start” (*Phoenix* 496).

When he is still a child, Harry’s dreamscapes resemble Neverland more than Wonderland. At the start of the first book (when he is still ten years old), Harry is waking up, trying to remember a dream he had just had: “It had been a good one. There had been a flying motorcycle in it. He had a funny feeling he’d had the same dream before” (*Sorcerer’s Stone* 23). Unlike Harry, we know that this dream is *retrospective*—when Harry was a baby, Hagrid carried him to the Dursleys’ house on a flying motorcycle; it is not, therefore, as Harry thinks, “only a dream” (31). When Harry’s other “good dream” comes true and he is taken to Hogwarts, his dreamlife begins to complicate (76). On his first night there, he has “a very strange dream” (162). This one turns out to be a disturbingly *prophetic* nightmare; he thinks he is wearing Professor Quirrell’s turban, which keeps telling him he must transfer to Slytherin while Draco Malfoy laughs and Snape turns into Voldemort. Harry will find out at the end of the book that Voldemort really does live beneath Quirrell’s turban; eventually he will realize he contains a part of Voldemort within himself (just as Alice eventually makes the connection between herself, the Duchess, and the Queen of Hearts); moreover, Snape is a former (and perhaps a future?) Death-Eater. However, Harry’s reaction to the nightmare is to roll over and fall asleep again; when he wakes the next day, he doesn’t remember the dream at all.

Later on in the first novel, Harry discovers his dead parents alive in a looking-glass reflection; Dumbledore takes the mirror away, telling Harry that the mirror “will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible . . . It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that” (265). But after Harry has encountered the mirror and to some extent walked inside it (much as Alice does in *Through the Looking Glass*), he begins to have nightmares (this time, *retrospective* ones) and to remember them when awake: “Over and over again he dreamed about his parents disappearing in a flash of green light, while a high voice cackled with laughter” (267). After he has almost been murdered by Voldemort (a masked figure drinking unicorn blood) in the Forbidden Forest, he starts having difficulty sleeping: “Harry kept being woken by his old nightmare, except that it was now worse than ever because there was a hooded figure dripping blood in it” (327). These

dreams consequently give Harry more and more information about forgotten traumas from his past.

As a result of multiple encounters with the Dementors in Book 3, Harry impossibly remembers all of the details of his parents' deaths, including their last words (even though this event happened when Harry was only a baby, too young to speak). Now, when he sleeps, he sinks "into dreams full of clammy, rotted hands and petrified pleading, jerking awake to dwell again on his mother's voice" (*Azkaban* 184). At the start of Book 4 (as he is turning fourteen), Harry has his first *factual* dream—a detailed nightmare about what Voldemort is in the process of doing. Although he is not sure if the dream is true, it seems "so real" (*Goblet of Fire* 17). When his dream/fantasy that he can compete in the Triwizard Tournament comes horrifyingly true (an evil wizard makes him a finalist so as to facilitate Voldemort's plan to murder him), Ron stops being his friend, and "for the first time ever" (just as Alice comes to feel about Wonderland) Harry seriously considers "running away from Hogwarts" (339). After Harry has another amazingly *factual* dream about Voldemort, he confusedly asks Dumbledore, "So you think . . . that dream . . . did it really happen?" (601). Dumbledore confirms Harry's suspicions: "It is possible . . . I would say—probable, Harry" (601). At the end of the novel, Harry's life takes on all the nightmarish qualities of Wonderland: the rules of the game he is playing (the Triwizard Tournament) deceive him; the competition becomes no longer recreational but dangerously real; he must observe (and help to bring about) his friend's death; he nearly gets murdered; and he finds out he has been betrayed by an evil impersonator who took on the form of a trustworthy wizard (Alastor Moody).

Because of the gruesome nightmare he has endured, Harry is furious from the beginning of Book 5 (at which point he turns fifteen), and his anger grows throughout the novel. His voyage to the headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix (accompanied by a group of flying guardians) initially resembles the Darlings' first night voyage with Peter Pan: "Harry kicked off hard from the ground. The cool night air rushed through his hair . . . He felt as though his heart was going to explode with pleasure" (*Phoenix* 55–56). Harry loses track of time on this voyage just as the Darling children do on their way to Neverland: "He wondered how long they had been flying; it felt like an hour at least" (57). But completely unlike Peter Pan, and also unlike himself in earlier books, Harry takes progressively less pleasure in

the flight. He grows so chilled his body freezes to his broom, and he yearns to land, thinking “longingly for a moment of the snug, dry interiors of the cars streaming along below” (55–57).

As Book 5 advances, Harry’s nights grow “restless” and “disturbed” (9); it seems he no longer has any good dreams at all. He believes he is being attacked by many-legged creatures with cannons for heads (a *normal* dream); he repeatedly thinks he is wandering down a windowless corridor and facing a locked door which he longs to enter (due to his own misjudgment these dreams will become *prophetic*); Hermione tells him to give Cho his Firebolt broomstick, which he can’t do because the evil professor, Dolores Umbridge, has locked it up (a *normal*—and psychoanalytically fertile—dream); he turns into a snake who bites and nearly murders Ron Weasley’s father (this dream is *factual*, although Voldemort was technically in the snake’s body, not Harry); he has a long conversation, speaking in Voldemort’s voice, and when he looks in the mirror he sees Voldemort rather than himself (another *factual* dream); he has a version of an epileptic seizure, and hears (even utters) Voldemort’s maniacal laughter (again, a *factual* dream); he suffers from a terrible nightmare/seizure during an exam, brought on by his lack of sleep and his inability to remember names and dates from the real world—in this *implanted* dream, he once again has merged with Voldemort and is in the process of torturing Sirius Black (Harry’s own godfather).

The way in which Harry changes into a dreadful male adult figure in his fantasy life, translates the implications of these dreams into reality, and ultimately must abandon his faith in make-believe (as part of the process of growing up), strikingly resembles Alice’s journey through Wonderland. Harry’s inability to distinguish *implanted* from *factual* dreams derives in part from his childishness. The Death Eater, Bellatrix Lestrange (Sirius’s murderer), cruelly mocks him: “*The little baby woke up frightened and fort what it dweamed was twoo*” (*Phoenix* 782). In order to protect himself from this mistake, Harry was supposed to have learned Occlumency: the magical defense of the mind against external penetration. Snape has repeatedly told him that in order to become good at Occlumency Harry must rid his mind of all emotion—“empty it, make it blank and calm, you understand?” (538). Strangely, Harry appears to have no skill at Occlumency—he cannot defend his mind against influence from the outside, and loses all ability to distinguish his fantasy life from the truth.

So far in Rowling’s series, Harry’s voyages to and from dreamworld have been imitated solely by male characters. Voldemort inserts him-

self into Harry's dreams; Snape enters Harry's mind on multiple occasions (like Voldemort he is skilled at the art of Legilimency); Dumbledore seems to have this ability as well. Men's power (both in its best and worst possible form) derives from this expertise—it is what enables Voldemort to take over Harry's mind in Book 5 and what repeatedly brings Dumbledore to Harry's aid. Harry's male friends such as Ron and Neville have *normal* dreams—Ron tends to forget his, although once he remembers he dreamt he was playing Quidditch, which is easy to understand since in real life he is secretly practicing to try out for the team; Neville embarks on “a long-winded explanation of a nightmare involving a pair of giant scissors wearing his grandmother's best hat” (*Phoenix* 237–38).

Unlike the male characters, girls and women have difficulty moving from real life to dreamworlds and back again. Instead, they seem to divide into two categories in the Harry Potter books. On the one hand, characters like Hermione Granger, Minerva McGonagall and Dolores Umbridge are bound to the real world (however magical this world may be)—they appear to have no dreams at night, they dismiss divination, they scrupulously follow the laws of reason, they do not/cannot play games (McGonagall may love to watch Quidditch, but she herself does not play, and Hermione appears to have little interest in the sport; nor can Hermione play chess). On the other hand, the “loony” girl who gives “off an aura of distinct dottiness,” Luna Lovegood, with her “wide, silvery eyes,” and the Divination teacher, Sibyll Trelawney, exist in dreamland; they never make any voyage there (*Phoenix* 183, 199).¹⁵ These latter characters might be compared with the Duchess, the Cook, the Queen of Hearts, Tinker Bell, and Tiger Lily; they do not fall to Wonderland or fly to Neverland—they cannot distinguish between dreams and reality; they do not follow the rules of logic; they live only in fanciful realms.

While many people may feel that Rowling is giving them exactly what they want with respect to gender, perhaps these readers—just like Rowling's protagonists—will discover that no matter how well-intentioned they were, they have accidentally misunderstood reality, betrayed themselves into believing what turns out not to be true. By phrasing the problem this way, I do not mean to imply that Rowling herself might be a traitor in the fashion of the “make-believe” Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, Alastor Moody, who reveals himself to be a servant of the Dark Lord in the fourth book. Nor do I mean that, like Sirius Black, Rowling may give us every reason to as-

sume she is a maniacal mass murderer and then turn out to be the loving and protective “godmother” we never knew we had, even though all evidence points to the contrary. (The fifth book suggests that if we attach ourselves to this metaphor, we will eventually bring Rowling to her death due to our desperate efforts to protect her from torture and blame.) But I do not mean for us to forget these analogies either. Rather, I think we need to keep both constantly in mind, neither to accept one or the other, and to pay close attention to how Rowling’s books thematize our struggle to make sense of what they seem to say.

Feminist critics split into two opposing groups—those who find Rowling’s work empowering for female characters and those who see it as misogynistic. In keeping with my Sirius Black analogy, Ximena Gallardo-C. and C. Jason Smith offer a proactive feminist interpretation of Rowling’s work. They maintain that while “the novels do not actively critique gender stereotyping, the narrative does challenge standard constructions of gender and gender roles” (“Cinderfella” 191). Rowling achieves this effect by feminizing Harry through his association with Cinderella, through his symbolic actions (such as flying on a broom—an object associated with women, who use brooms to clean kitchens), and through the series’ growing obsession with understanding “otherness.” In her article, “Hermione Granger and the Heritage of Gender,” Eliza T. Dresang proposes a postmodern feminist interpretation of Rowling’s work. She points out that Hermione is immediately chosen for Gryffindor House, and even though her agency might be developing slowly, she is playing more and more of “a decisive role” in Harry’s adventures and adventures of her own (“Hermione Granger” 227). Furthermore, McGonagall seems to be “a strong, ethical woman . . . an empowered female” (235).

On the other hand, in keeping with my Alastor Moody impersonator analogy, many dismiss Rowling’s work as dangerous, false, and misleading. In her article, “Harry Potter’s Girl Trouble,” Christine Schoefer concludes that the “world of everyone’s favorite kid wizard” is “a place where boys come first.” Jack Zipes does not consider the Harry Potter texts to be “books of quality” precisely because (as “phenomenal” books) they are “driven by commodity consumption that at the same time sets the parameters of reading and aesthetic taste” (187, 172). Consequently, Zipes finds the Harry Potter books extremely “formulaic and sexist” (171). As Farah Mendlesohn argues in her essay, “Crowning the King: Harry Potter and the Construction of Authority,” the one “heroine” of these books, Hermione, “will never be per-

mitted to be anything other than a second in command”; the only time Hermione achieves separation from Harry (as late as the fourth book) she receives attention first through “the magical equivalent of plastic surgery” and second through her attractiveness to the only figure presented as more “exciting” than Harry Potter—Viktor Krum, the world-famous Quidditch player (174–75).

Do the Harry Potter books ultimately eliminate gender stereotypes, or radically reinforce them? I believe that Rowling inscribes this question within her stories themselves. Her self-aware narrative strategy becomes clear at the start of the first book as soon as McGonagall tells Dumbledore that Harry Potter will “be famous—a legend . . . there will be books written about Harry—every child in our world will know his name!” (17). When Rita Skeeter appears in Book 4 and sets out to ruin Harry’s life in order to further her career as a reporter, Rowling encourages readers to laugh at the absurd real-life association between critical articles and the Harry Potter series. Later, Rowling makes the unusual point of stressing Harry’s inability to master Occlumency—his powerlessness when it comes to keeping control of his fantasy life. In so doing, Rowling may be acknowledging that like Harry, she cannot block her own fantasies from outside intrusion.

In the book, *Kids’ Letters to Harry Potter*, girls say they identify with Hermione; that they “look, act and think” like her; that they dressed up as Hermione for Halloween, or wanted to play her role in the Harry Potter movies; that they wish they had Harry for a boyfriend; that they think about him all the time, love him and miss him and wish he knew who they were; that they (like Hermione) are not as “noble and brave” as he is.¹⁶ Children seem to believe in the Harry Potter series as much as Harry believes in his own dreams; one fifteen-year-old girl from the Philippines admits to Harry, “When I was a kid, I used to believe in fairies. Now that I’m older, I believe in you” (12). Like Harry, Rowling may inadvertently be leading us on a rescue mission to save the very person whose death we are helping her to bring about. Unintentionally, perhaps, we must now witness and facilitate the murder of the female dreamchild—the girl who could someday become as powerful as Dumbledore, Voldemort or Harry Potter himself.

How should readers handle their simultaneous adoration and fear of Harry Potter? I keep picturing Dumbledore’s words of comfort to Harry after he has brought about the murder of the one person he would have given his life to rescue: “In the end, it mattered not that you could not close your mind. It was your heart that saved you” (*Phoe-*

nix 844). Regardless of how dangerous her/our fantasy life turns out to be, it matters as little for J. K. Rowling as it does for her male hero that she has allowed her dreams to be penetrated by forces from the outside. The Harry Potter books are so full of love they burn us when we touch them; it is in their very skin.

Notes

¹Philip Nel draws connections between Rowling's vision of education and Lewis Carroll's. Like Alice, Rowling's characters "learn only when they put their knowledge to use"; furthermore, "joy in learning finds expression through games with words, numbers, and ideas" (30–31). Nel uses such examples as the logical puzzle at the end of Book 1, the anagram "Tom Marvolo Riddle" in Book 2, the Sphinx's riddle in the Third Task of Book 4, and the chess sets with living pieces.

²In the play version of Barrie's work (which I will from now on term *Peter Pan*, as opposed to the novel, which I will call *Peter and Wendy*), Mrs. Darling is "startled to see a strange little face outside the window and a hand groping as if it wanted to come in"; she anxiously asks, "Who are you?" (*Peter Pan* 89). Barrie alludes in this scene to Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, where Lockwood sees "obscurely, a child's face looking through the window"; the little girl ghost's hand clings to his as she cries "Let me in—let me in!" (20). For evidence of Barrie's admiration for Emily Brontë, see *M'Connachie and J. M. B. Speeches by J. M. Barrie*, where, in one lecture, Barrie claims that he has only one fault to find in Thomas Hardy, which is that out of fear the book would be "too depressing," Hardy never read *Wuthering Heights*, a novel written by our "greatest woman" (149). The difference between Catherine and Peter Pan is that the girl reaches sexual maturity while the boy does not. Although Catherine returns to childhood at the end of her life, she does not tell Lockwood her name is "Catherine Earnshaw," as it *was* when she was a child, but "Catherine Linton," which is her name only after childhood has been lost due to marriage. The significance of this difference will become more apparent as my argument progresses.

³U. C. Knoepfelmacher makes a similar claim about how Lewis Carroll uses Alice to gain access to an imaginative part of himself: "By 'eternizing' the child and converting her into an ever-youthful figure, Carroll's artistic reconstructions can offer him and her a perennial field of dreams open to other players similarly eager for renovation" (157).

⁴The story of Peter Pan was first published in 1904, when it was included as part of Barrie's novel *The Little White Bird*. That same year, the Peter Pan tale was converted into a play entitled *Peter Pan, or the Boy who wouldn't grow up*. The Peter Pan section as it appeared in *The Little White Bird* was republished in 1906 as the novel *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. In 1911, *Peter Pan, or the Boy who wouldn't grow up* was turned into the novel *Peter and Wendy*, which is the version commonly read today. (Please note that whenever I cite *Peter and Wendy*, I am referring to the Oxford University Press edition, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy*, first published in 1991.) The name *Peter and Wendy*, however, was changed in 1921 to *Peter Pan and Wendy*. That title was later shortened to *Peter Pan*. In 1928 Barrie changed the script again, creating the first published version of the play (to which he attached his famous dedication).

⁵In his interpretation of *Through the Looking Glass*, Roderick McGillis reads the White Knight's character sympathetically. Alice mistakenly wants to be Queen, while he alone sees the importance of invention and play: "For Alice, the desire to be Queen has something to do with her sense of herself as a person of position and power, but the Knight knows just how meaningless the designation 'Queen' really is" (117). I am arguing here that regardless of whatever the White Knight or the Cheshire Cat may know, Alice has

no alternative but to become Queen, however dreadful (and “meaningless”) this prospect may be.

⁶Alice is called a “serpent” by the Pigeon in the same way that Eve is called a serpent by Adam, who, lamenting his fall, repels her in Book X of *Paradise Lost*: “Out of my sight, thou serpent, that name best/Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false/And hateful . . . But for thee/I had persisted happy . . .” (PL X:867–74). Milton’s sensual description of the unfallen Eve might mean that she is in effect already fallen from the moment of her creation.

⁷The association between girlhood and maternity is not limited to Barrie’s work. In her discussion of Francis Hodgson Burnett’s *A Little Princess*, Elisabeth Gruner stresses the importance of Sara’s maternal instinct: “But Sara, though she is only eleven, is repeatedly characterized as maternal; as if to suggest that the all-female setting requires a mother, as if to suggest that to mother is the ultimate expression of a girl’s, if not a princess’s, duties” (176).

⁸According to David Holbrook’s psychoanalytic reading, Wendy “cannot fly as she once did” because she “is growing up to adult sexuality, and the broomstick represents a penis. This growth to adult sensuality divides her forever from Peter, who died as a child and must remain a child” (77).

⁹See Barrie’s Dedication to *Peter Pan* (78).

¹⁰Historically, the pantomime originated in Italy, where it developed into a stylized form called the harlequinade. The first of these Italian performances came to Britain in the early eighteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century the form of entertainment had been adopted by the famous clown family, the Grimaldis, and by the end of the nineteenth century, pantomimes were generally based on fairy stories such as Cinderella. For more reasons than simply practical ones, cross-dressing contributed to the topsyturvy format both of Italian harlequinades and British pantomimes. Not only did grown women play the parts of boy protagonists in nineteenth-century England, but men also played the parts of Cinderella’s stepsisters.

¹¹Consult Roger Lancelyn Green’s *J. M. Barrie* for the performance history of *Peter Pan* (41–44).

¹²Harry Potter’s first night at Hogwarts differs drastically from Alice’s experience at the Mad Tea Party, a scene which begins with the March Hare offering her some wine, although there isn’t any in sight.

¹³Girls pose no challenge to Harry on the Quidditch field. When he first plays against Cho Chang, the Ravenclaw Seeker (and the only girl on the team) he is told she is “pretty good”; nevertheless, she only rides a Comet Two-Sixty, which does end up looking “like a joke next to the Firebolt [Harry’s new broom]” (*Azkaban* 254). Sure enough, Harry has no trouble beating Cho with his incredible skill and on his super-broom, even given the presence of three pseudo-Dementors. On the other hand, he does lose to Cedric (Cho’s boyfriend), the Hufflepuff Seeker (true, he is distracted by some real Dementors during the game). When Harry is replaced by Ginny Weasley as Seeker in Book 5 (because he has gotten into a fistfight in front of all the teachers), the team captain tells Harry that while Ginny is ““pretty good,”” she is “[n]othing on you, of course”” (*Phoenix* 453).

¹⁴Unlike the boys, Wendy Darling does not/cannot forget the real world that she has left behind. It is Wendy’s fault that her brothers and the Lost Boys find their way out of the fantasy realm (and hence grow up). Alice also worries about home during her adventures in Wonderland, and at last both physically and mentally grows out of her dream universe so that she can rejoin her older sister on the bank. And in L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Dorothy spends her entire dream journey trying to go back to bleak, gray Kansas, a desire that makes no sense to the Scarecrow (the most intelligent character in the book).

¹⁵Rowling takes Trelawney’s name from *Treasure Island*—there, Squire Trelawney brings possible ruin to all his friends by dreamily failing to notice that he is in the process of

hiring as shipmates the most dangerous pirates alive. Although Rowling's female Trelawney does in a sense make two voyages to and from dreamworld when she formulates her authentic prophecies, she has no memory of ever having made them. In this sense, she can be aligned with Ginny Weasley, who (unlike Harry) loses all recollection each time she is possessed by Voldemort.

¹⁶See, for example, pages 8, 12, 20, 25, 27, 29, 46, 49, 54, 66, 84, 130, 143, 176, 189, and 194.

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