

ŞULE NUR DOĞAN

SUBJECTIVIZING CHILDREN...

Bilkent University 2023

SUBJECTIVIZING CHILDREN: MELANCHOLY IN
ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND
PETER AND WENDY

A Master’s Thesis

by
ŞULE NUR DOĞAN

Department of
Communication and Design
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
August 2023



To my Sunshine

SUBJECTIVIZING CHILDREN: MELANCHOLY IN
ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND
PETER AND WENDY

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

ŞULE NUR DOĞAN

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN MEDIA AND VISUAL STUDIES

THE DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

August 2023

SUBJECTIVIZING CHILDREN: MELANCHOLY IN ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN
WONDERLAND AND PETER AND WENDY

By Şule Nur Doğan

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality,
as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts (in Media and Visual Studies).

Lutz Peschke
Advisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality,
as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts (in Media and Visual Studies).

Emel Özdora Akşak
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality,
as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts (in Media and Visual Studies).

İclal Alev Değim Flannagan
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

Refet S. Gürkaynak
Director

ABSTRACT

SUBJECTIVIZING CHILDREN: MELANCHOLY IN ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND PETER AND WENDY

Doğan, Şule Nur

M.A. in Media and Visual Studies

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Lutz Peschke

August 2023

This thesis is concerned with the subjectivation of children in children's literature and film, and the melancholy caused to child characters as they are forced down a path of growing up as conceived by adults. Engaged in a close reading of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Peter and Wendy* (1911), as well as their select film adaptations *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Return to Never Land* (2002), Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), and finally *Peter Pan and Wendy* (2023), the thesis is also committed to a discourse analysis of the concepts of childhood and growing up. As the thesis is concerned with works occupying a timeframe of over a century, the shifts in Western children's literature and film, as well as their introduction into the Disney machinery is also considered. Approaching this multitude of attitudes towards how child characters relate to adulthood and growing up, the thesis connects this issue in relation to the dynamic between the Western colonizer and the

colonized subjects, as the former de-subjectivizes the latter in a similar dynamic to the one between adults and children.

Keywords: Adaptation, Children's Media, Discourse Analysis, Melancholy, Subjectivation



ÖZET

ÇOCUKLARI ÖZNELEŞTİRMEK: ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND VE PETER AND WENDY’DE MELANKOLİ

Doğan, Şule Nur

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Lutz Peschke

Ağustos 2023

Bu tez, çocuk edebiyatı ve filmlerinde çocukların özneleştirilmesi ve bununla birlikte yetişkinler tarafından belirlenen büyüme süreçlerinin sebep olduğu melankoli ile ilgilidir. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) ve *Peter and Wendy* (1911) romanları ile *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Return to Never Land* (2002), bir Tim Burton filmi olan *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), ve son olarak *Peter Pan and Wendy* (2023) film adaptasyonlarının yakın okuması yapılmaktadır. Tez aynı zamanda çocukluk ve büyüme konseptlerinin söylemsel analizini yapmaktadır. Mevzubahis tez yüzyılı aşkın bir dönemi kapsayan eserleri incelediği için, bu süreçte Batı çocuk edebiyatı ve filmlerinde yaşanan değişimler ve bu değişimlerin Disney çarkına girişi de dikkate alınmaktadır. Bu tez, çocuk karakterlerin yetişkinliğe ve büyümeye dair çeşitli yaklaşımlarını incelerken yetişkinler ve çocuklarda da benzer bir durum görüldüğü için bu meseleyi Batılı sömürgeci ve sömürgeleştirilmiş özneler arasındaki dinamik ile ilişkili bir şekilde incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Adaptasyon, Çocuk Medyası, Melankoli, Özneleştirme, Söylem Analizi



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank my advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Lutz Peschke. His feedback and help have been invaluable to get me to this stage. Answering all my questions and providing a way forward, he has been an irreplaceable part of the difficult process of writing the thesis. I am grateful for everything he has done.

I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emel Özdora Akşak and Assoc. Prof. Dr. İclal Alev Değim Flannagan for all their support, contributions and being a part of the jury.

I thank my professors from the Department of English Language and Literature, especially Assoc. Prof. Dr. Valerie June Kennedy, who authored *Edward Said: A Critical Introduction* and from whom I received the Postcolonial Literature course. Receiving her course helped me immensely in providing me with the background to write this thesis in the way it is written. I would also like to thank Lecturer Dr. Gül Kurtuluş, Prof. Dr. Stein Haugom Olsen, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Çelikkol for helping me academically throughout the years.

I would like to thank my mother Zeynep Doğan, my father Mustafa Doğan, and my brother Yunus Doğan for their endless support for my whole education and during the thesis process.

Finally, I would like to thank my cat Mısır. He would be by my side whenever I was sad or stressed. Even if he was not always cuddly, I know he always supported me in his own way.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ÖZET.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Genre and Children’s Fantasy in Literature	9
2.2 Adaptations and Disney	12
2.3 Melancholy, Time and Children	14
2.4 Representations of Gender	17
2.5 Objects of Analysis	18
<i>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</i> and Its Adaptations.....	18
<i>Peter and Wendy</i> and Its Adaptations	19
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	21
3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Melancholy and Foucault’s <i>Madness and Civilization</i>	22
3.3 Subjectivizing the Melancholic Child Protagonist.....	24
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY.....	28
4.1 Introduction	28
4.2 Methodologies Adopted by Other Studies	29
4.3 Discourse Analysis.....	30
CHAPTER 5: LONELY MELANCHOLY IN WONDERLAND	36

5.1 Subjectivizing Alice	38
Time, Space, and the Melancholy of Growing Up.....	39
The Institutions of Nonsense.....	43
5.2 Adapting Alice into Film	47
Turning Pages into Frames.....	48
A More Contemporary Alice	51
Conclusion	58
CHAPTER 6: IMMORTAL CHILDHOOD IN NEVERLAND	60
6.1 Immature Masculinity and Mature Femininity	61
6.2 Neverland as Prospero - Peter's Island	66
6.3 Film Adaptations of <i>Peter and Wendy</i>	72
Jealousy Brings Melancholy: <i>Peter Pan</i> (1953)	72
Neverland During the Blitz: <i>Return to Never Land</i> (2002).....	75
A Turn to Reality: <i>Peter Pan and Wendy</i> (2023).....	78
6.4 Conclusion.....	82
CHAPTER 7: DISCURSIVE UNITY IN NEVERLAND AND WONDERLAND ..	84
7.1 The Background to Changing Discourses.....	84
7.2 Disney as the New Shaper of the Discourse	86
7.3 The Unity of the Live-Action Adaptations of Disney.....	89
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION.....	92
REFERENCES.....	97

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

A common subject that has appeared in works of children's media for quite some time is what animated the thesis in front of you. Often working out of the premise of a conflict with the people who are not children—and they are most commonly the main character's (who sometimes give their name to the work itself) parents—the child protagonists discover and enter into an unreal realm that is in stark contrast to reality.

Within the loneliness of an unreal world and embroiled in the melancholy caused by the limitations on their self-subjectivity, the youthful protagonists work through their problems with their parents and eventually find some semblance of equilibrium between their sense of selfhood and the circumstances and the paths laid out by their parents.

With some variations, these story beats have appeared in contemporary works of children's literature, such as *Coraline* (Gaiman, 2002) and animated films produced by big studios, such as *Inside Out* (Docter, 2015).

However, these themes are also readily available in much older works of children's literature, such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carroll, 2012) and *Peter and Wendy* (Barrie, 2018), which shape the literature side of the objects of analysis for this study. Having been published as novels in 1865 and 1911 respectively, these works treat

the aforementioned themes with an emphasis on the melancholy of subjectivizing oneself. Arguing that the melancholy of the child protagonists present in these works is caused by their being robbed of the means to establish their sense of autonomous selfhood, this thesis compares the colonizer-colonized dynamic established through Fanon's works (1986), which are based on his experiences in the French colonies of Martinique and Algiers to the child-parent (or more broadly, child-society) dynamic present in the Western children's literature and media. Taking advantage of a Foucauldian discourse analysis (1988; 1997) that considers this subject through a historicity of redefined meanings of childhood and growing up, this study also considers several of the film adaptations of these works of children's literature, all of which are produced by Disney. In order to relate and depict the transformations of childhood and growing up in a temporal comparison of the media in question, I opted to focus on specific periods of Disney adaptations in reference to Leitch (2007) and his conception of adaptations, in addition to the Victorian and Edwardian settings present in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter and Wendy*, respectively. In this sense, the thesis considers *Alice in Wonderland* (Geronimi et al., 1951) and *Peter Pan* (Luske et al., 1953) from the postwar era of Disney adaptations in comparison with the more contemporary *Return to Never Land* (Budd, 2002), and the more recent live-action adaptations titled *Alice in Wonderland* (Burton, 2010) and *Peter Pan and Wendy* (Lowery, 2023). The Disney adaptations provided uniformity to the themes considered in these original stories. While reflecting the transformation of social conceptions of what it means to grow up, it also monopolizes distinct stories, even replacing the original works as the primary image that comes to mind when one thinks of these characters and stories. As a case in point, I personally read *Peter and Wendy* as a child

and watched *Return to Never Land* afterwards, which not only replaced the original story in my mind, it also prevented any further rereading of the novel without thinking in reference to the film adaptation in question. As such, the potency of the visuality and its replacement of the literature through mass commercialization and the consequently subsuming of diverse discourses is also considered in this study.

In considering these works, the study engages in a discourse analysis of childhood and growing up, as well as melancholy. It is a term that is in need of further clarification, as it is a conscious choice on the part of this study to consider melancholy instead of simply sadness. As considered by Foucault (1988), melancholy, and the concept of madness in general, is a pseudo-psychological category to which individuals were consigned before the days of modern psychiatry. In addition to this, the historicity of the term and the conceptions for its reason through the years also made it a literary device, a way to define a character's mental state without reference to cold hard science, but to an idealized version of an almost eternally sad individual. In his poem "Il Penseroso", John Milton speaks of melancholy as a divine being with its own powers: "Hail divinest Melancholy, / Whose saintly visage is too bright / To hit the sense of human sight" (Milton, 2018, p. 1463). This conception of melancholy as an idealized being and its pseudo-medical conception as a result of the presence of "black bile" (Foucault, 1988, p. 86) all feed into the sadness of the child protagonists of the works considered in this study, as their sadness is often idealized in the fantasy realms they wander into.

The works considered in this study, especially the films, have great personal relevance for me. As I watched these films as a child (with the exception of *Peter Pan and Wendy*,

which was released in 2023), it was apparent that their protagonists were struggling with similar issues of sadness and loneliness. Yet their convergence was a result of their status as children: the struggles they faced were almost always caused by their inability to grow up on their own terms. In this sense, the main cause of melancholy in these characters is their problematic relationship with the concept of self-subjection, which they are incapable of. Foucault (1997) defines subjectivation as a two-pronged process which starts out with “desubjection” (p. 76), or the removal of the “mechanisms of power that govern the individual within a certain regime of truth” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 76) and is completed with the establishment of a new kind of subjectivity as determined by only the subjects themselves. The term is utilized in this thesis in this form, in reference to the autonomous development of subjects, often in relation to children or the colonized subjects.

In considering the literature produced on the subjects of melancholy and its presence in children’s media, there appears to be a large gap in the form of melancholy in relation to contemporary children’s media. Often considered in relation to works of historical literature and medieval texts, melancholy itself is a rather disused term which finds little relevance beyond these fields. Moreover, there are not quite many studies on Disney adaptations that consider them through a lens other than fidelity or commercialization, which this study mostly sidelines in favor of considering the lack of self-subjection of child protagonists, who are likened to a colonized subject.

Based on all of these interests and avenues discussed, this thesis will be based on answering the following questions:

RQ 1: How do *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Peter and Wendy*, and their film adaptations considered in this study establish the melancholy of their main characters?

RQ 2: How is melancholy related to their inability to establish their own subjectivation?

RQ 2A: How do the discourses of colonization and childhood compare with one another with regard to subjectivation?

RQ 2B: How does gender play a role in the issues of subjectivation present in the main characters?

RQ 3: How do the animated Disney adaptations reshape the discourses present in the original novels?

In considering these questions, the thesis is divided into three primary chapters. The first two chapters are separated based on the works in question, as they separately consider—together with their adaptations—*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter and Wendy*, respectively. CHAPTER 5 is prompted by relating the concepts of a fantasy realm in the form of Wonderland with the anxieties about Alice's childhood. It is argued that Wonderland is a separate realm invented by Alice, and her struggle with the Red Queen is a child's parodying of institutions present in the real world, which in a sense, represents the struggle against her de-subjectivation as a child by the world. This is considered through the lens of colonization and the discourses of the colonized and colonizer subject as considered by Fanon (1986). In reference to Foucault (1988) and his conception of creating one's own truth through confessional practices, it is also considered that Alice's melancholy is produced through her inability to create her own truths as a child and that Wonderland is a failed attempt at doing so. The chapter also

considers the 1951 and 2010 film adaptations in comparison with one another. The focus in considering the earlier adaptation is on the visualization of the melancholic aspects of the novel and the externalization of the inner turmoil Alice goes through in the novel. As such, this film adaptation is interesting due to the innate qualities of film and animation, which inform the representations of the discourses of childhood melancholy. The latter adaptation is considered in relation to the transformation of the discourses of childhood and growing up. In representing Alice as a grown-up woman, the film equips Alice with the experience and the tools to subjectivize herself, which is manifested in Wonderland being turned into a part of the real world when it was presented as an imagination of Alice in the previous works. This illustrates Alice as an individual with the power to affect the world, as someone who has struggled against the de-subjectivation of the broader society and has come out on top.

The following chapter is structured in a similar manner, considering *Peter and Wendy* and its two film adaptations in succession. CHAPTER 6 aims to consider the process of growing up (and refusing to do so), as well as the performances of adulthood exhibited in Neverland, the fantasy realm of the stories. The transformations of these representations of growing up are also considered, which begins with the novel and ends with the 2023 adaptation. It also considers the discourses of colonization and subjectivity, which are illustrated through the representation of Neverland, the fantasy realm of the stories. Considered in relation to Fanon's (1986) discourses on colonization and Foucault's (1988) approach to the transformation of discourses through history, the chapter also compares Neverland with the island from Shakespeare's (1978) *The Tempest*, which sees Peter Pan as a figure similar to the master of the island, Prospero,

with Tinker Bell fulfilling the role of the enslaved Caliban. As such, the chapter moves on to consider the film adaptations as well, which considers the replacement of Wendy with the comparatively independent and mature Jane, who is Wendy's daughter in *Return to Never Land*. Set during World War II, Jane's father is enlisted in the army, which leaves Jane to grow up too fast for her age. Her journey to Neverland overturns the original premise of a girl who is afraid of growing up, instead turning Neverland into a healing place where Jane may live her childhood, which she could not in real life. Moving on from this film, the chapter considers the live-action aspect of the 2023 adaptation and the seemingly darker representation of the original story, which imbues Peter Pan's mortal enemy Captain Hook with a tragic past of his own. Focusing on the comparatively more realistic representation of Never Land, as well as the revisionist approach to the narrative (Leitch, 2007) present in this film, the chapter is concluded with the transformed representations of colonization. This transformation, however, still precludes including the native characters beyond their functions in the narrative, which ultimately belongs to the non-native characters.

The final chapter considers the Disney adaptations in their totality, which posits the colonialist attitudes towards childhood being transformed into the aesthetics of empowerment of children. CHAPTER 7 briefly considers colonialism itself, as it is argued that colonialism informs the attitudes towards children present in the original stories, as well as the colonized people. Referring to British colonialism and its contemporariness with the publications of the children's novels considered in the thesis, in conversation with Fanon (1986), it is argued that colonial discourses permeate the themes of these works and their later adaptations as well. In comparison with this,

Disney's monopoly over these stories through their adaptations is also discussed, which posits Disney adaptations as distilling various discourses and producing similar themes within each adaptation that replace the original discourses with its own. In this sense, it is argued that the shackling of the discourses of childhood and growing up into commercial products that are produced by a conglomerate such as Disney reproduces the problems with regard to the self-subjection of children through the child protagonists that are almost carbon copies of one another.

In this sense, this thesis is primarily concerned with the role of media in children's subjectivation and its reproduction of the obstacles towards children's autonomous development. Considering the melancholy produced in the child protagonists as the effect of these obstacles, this thesis aims to help point towards a children's media wherein children's imagination is rendered independent, and their self-subjection is prioritized.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Genre and Children's Fantasy in Literature

As it is interested in works of literature and films that are directly produced for children, in this study, perhaps inevitably, works of children's fantasy must be considered.

Children's fantasy is a genre that is so prevalent in children's media that the spotlight it has taken might even be taken for granted and perceived as the natural genre for children to consume. In their overview of children's fantasy literature, Levy and Mendelsohn (2016), as well as Zipes (2006), follow the thread of this genre back to fairy tales, which existed as generational stories initially tied with the localities they originated in and ostensibly not only for children. In line with this, according to Levy and Mendelsohn (2016), the invention of the printing press and the proliferation of the written word in the towns of Europe did not alter this trend, with children adopting texts which did not have them as their target audience, with lighthearted and mischievous *The Historie of Frier Rush* (1810), or even "romances" and "Christian allegories" such as "John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*" (Levy & Mendelsohn, 2016, p. 14) and written works such as ballads and fairy tales of the day, which included elements of fantasy. Similarly, it is noted that "the history of children's fantasy is essentially one of appropriation" (Levy & Mendelsohn, 2016, p. 11), which indicated a lack of barrier between audiences, with

children being familiar with what was considered to be lesser works of literature rather than having a dedicated library of their own.

Zipes (2006) argues that dedicated literature for children came about in late 17th century France in the form of fairy tales authored by women authors of aristocratic and bourgeois backgrounds. In addition to its importance in establishing what would later become children's literature, this was also one of the earliest points in which bourgeois women could partake in producing literature, as writing moralistic fairy tales for children was considered an extension of their role in raising children. This conception of children's literature is in line with a moral and didactic purpose, which is less pronounced in more recent works of children's fantasy literature, as noted by Hosseinpour and Moghadam (2016).

Another association children's fantasy has is with regard to its orientalism and juxtaposition of West and East, as considered by Balfe (2004). According to Levy and Mendelsohn (2016), the extensive presence of this trope is partially due to earlier works of translations from what was considered to be the Orient, such as *Arabian Nights*. Colonialism also spurred a flurry of English language works of travel literature, such as *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift, 1726), which also fed this trend, contributing to its later presence as well. Similarly, Harvey (2010) considers the "noble savage" trope prevalent among works that consider Native Americans from the point of view of the colonizers as timeless people without a history of their own.

Another strand of works that would become part of the children's fantasy genre could be found in the Brothers Grimm and their collection of German folk tales (Levy & Mendelsohn, 2016). This project was essentially part of the nationalist effort at uniting the disunited German states in the early 19th century, as "both brothers saw their work on German folklore and linguistics as patriotic, part of an effort to foster a just and united Germany" (Levy & Mendelsohn, 2016, p. 20). Although ostensibly derived from the folk tales of the peasantry, these stories were collected from the petit-bourgeois in an altered state, distinct from their origins (Zipes, 2006). The adaptations of these tales, similar to the adaptations of English language works such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter and Wendy*, were essentially based on bourgeois values against the backdrop of colonialism, nationalism, and the democratic struggles present in the 19th century. This discussion of children's fantasy before the existence of a distinct medium specifically devoted to children shows that works of literature were adopted by children with little to no alteration, which in turn inspired the growth of children's fantasy fueled by the same social and political concerns and realities that affected adults.

With regard to contemporary children's fantasy fiction, Cadden (2012) considers the prominence of epilogues and clear endings, which are commonly found and expected in clear contrast with literature aimed at adults. Earlier, Brooks (1992) similarly argued that children were instinctually Aristotelian with regard to storytelling, as the stories written for them have assumed the clear structure of a beginning, a middle, and an end. In children's fantasy, this structured nature of the works is tied to a return to reality. Gilead (1991) argues that the presence of return-to-reality endings in works such as *The Wizard of Oz* function as representations of growing up, with similar themes as many

Bildungsromane (Lazzaro-Weis, 1990). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is considered to have a repressed ending, wherein the whole experience is regarded as a dream which produces the result of a “socialization plot [conquering] escapist fantasy” (Gilead, 1991, p. 285). Gilead (1991) finally considers tragic ambiguity, in which the ending of *Peter and Wendy* is regarded as a return to normalcy that is nevertheless associated with the loss of innocence and magic rather than simply growing up.

Liminal space is considered a rather important subject in children's fantasy, as many works from Lewis Carroll's novels to Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2002) feature a separation between the fantasy realm and the real world, with a manner of gateway between them (Baker, 2016; Becher, 2016; McQuinn, 2020). Liminal spaces are what allow for character growth in many works of children's fantasy, and this separation is often associated with the difference between adults and children, with the process of growing up causing an eventual abandonment of the fantasy realm in favor of the real one. Baker (2016) notes the importance of the gateways between these separate realms, considering portals to potentially be “revealing and estranging the ideological nature of perceived reality” (p. 487). In many ways, liminality provides an opportunity for self-reflection on the part of the protagonists (McQuinn, 2020). Another important point about liminality is that it allows for establishing “a healthy relation with death” (Becher, 2016, p. 103), in contrast to how Gilead (1991) considers Peter Pan as a representation of the fear of death.

2.2 Adaptations and Disney

Bronner (1998) notes the historical roots of Disney adaptations with reference to the popularization of the Brothers Grimm in the United States by the nascent German-American community in the 19th century. As previously noted, the collection of Brothers Grimm had already been influenced by bourgeois values (Zipes, 2006), and this would be further altered in the 20th century Disney film adaptations of these 19th century works. Before considering adaptational fidelity, it is also the transformation of the audience which alters the contemporary influences of distinct versions of stories. As stated by Phillips (2001), “There was no reason to assume that, to children in the 1970s, the book would simply propagate and endorse colonialist values” (p. 144). This approach illustrates the complicated nature of adaptations of works that span centuries of remakes and revisions across media. For instance, an important concern in approaching adaptations is the inclusion of sound and music. As the film opens up different avenues for conveying a story through sound and visuality in addition to the writing, their utilization could have a different take on the original stories through these new elements. As considered by Wierzbicki (2013), many screen adaptations of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* reinterpreted the struggle of the protagonist through the soundtrack and the inclusion of music as a plot thread, as seen in the love of music the Creature has in many adaptations. Similarly, the inclusion of pirate shanties in the *Peter and Wendy* adaptations and their reinterpretation across different adaptations reflect the changing attitudes towards cinematic adaptation of children’s literature.

As noted by Nelson (1978), mid-century Disney adaptations had certain aesthetics which applied to their entire body of work, which was initially criticized as bearing little concern for respecting the themes and aesthetics of the original texts in question through

visual aesthetics. Similarly, Napolitano (2009) criticizes *Oliver and Company* (Scribner, 1988) in relation to Dickens's work: "Its [Oliver] oversimplified vision of the source material, coupled with the confusion created by the pop score, leaves little of Dickens's original vision intact and provides no incentive to investigate the literary source" (p. 97). Napolitano's (2009) approach to adaptations, although revealing of the commercialized nature of Disney adaptations, nevertheless places undue importance on fidelity to original texts. As stated by Leitch (2007), "fidelity makes sense as a criterion of value only when we can be certain that the model is more valuable than the copy" (p. 6), which is why considering fidelity as the primary criteria for evaluating adaptations falls short of considering the importance of reflections on and the reinterpretations of previous works of art.

2.3 Melancholy, Time and Children

As this study is primarily concerned with the child protagonists' ability to establish their autonomous selfhood, it would be apt to consider the limits put on children's autonomy in the first place. Among others, Cassano, Zeman, and Sanders (2014) approach the topic from the point of view of parents and their reactions towards their children's experiences of sadness, as children are conceived of as a social responsibility for the rest of society. Approaching children themselves, Steyn and Moen (2019) attempt to get children to express their sadness through drawing in order "to identify what saddens young children, in other words, pinpointing factors impacting their emotional well-being" (Steyn & Moen, 2019, p. 79). Psychological studies rarely intersect with literature on sadness and melancholy in children's media, which is a remarkable point of divergence.

From a historical perspective, McCann (2021) approaches melancholy and its secularization throughout modernity, contrasting the approaches taken by Siegfried Kracauer and Theodor Adorno. McCann (2021) extensively refers to Siegfried Kracauer's concept of visual media and its proliferation, creating a multitude of perspectives and the consequent destruction of the concept of absolute value systems (Kracauer, 1960). Contrasting this perspective with Adorno's theory of natural history (Bowie, 2022), creating an ever-present sense of decay that fuels melancholy, it approaches melancholy as a consequence of media. This approach is quite common, with Holly (2013) also approaching melancholy from the perspective of the progression of time and the march of history.

Prior to explicitly considering the literature on the representations of melancholy in children's media, it is pertinent to consider representations of melancholy in media in general. Nicholls (2004) takes on Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* (1993), identifying the specifically male-coded melancholy fueled by loss on the part of the protagonist. Noting that melancholy has often been gendered as feminine, Nicholls (2004) considers the film's representation of melancholy as something "celebrated and aestheticized" (p. 26). Nabizadeh (2014) considers the graphic novel *The Arrival* (2006), suggesting that "writing across media allows the issues surrounding texts of cultural grief to be addressed not only through diverse narratives but also within different narrative regimes (that is, the visual, as against the written)" (Nabizadeh, 2014, p. 377).

The way melancholy in children's media is conceived of is remarkably unattached from studies on children's psychology, which is an interesting point of divergence.

Melancholy is often analyzed through works that approach horror, death, and decay. Coats (2008) considers Neil Gaiman's Gothic children's literature, identifying how his brand of gothic storytelling allows for depictions of traumas in a way that is accessible to children yet serious, exploring "some of the possible traumas that produce the Gothic as a symptom, and to suggest how the Gothic may help children cope with those traumas in an indirect fashion" (Coats, 2008, p. 77). Similarly, Howarth (2014) considers *Peter and Wendy* and its approach to maturity: "For some [heroes in children's literature], maturity is a concept that pushes them closer to death; for others, it's a rite of passage that replaces simplicity with responsibility" (p. 128). Lester (2016) considers various children's horror films, such as *Frankenweenie* (2012), and examines how such a seemingly self-contradictory genre might work. Horror, much like the abundance of the theme of melancholy, is often deemed unsuitable for children's viewing. However, the article suggests that horror can be mediated in a way that is suitable for children: "[...] although the children's horror subgenre largely adopts narrative and formal strategies of horror films for adults, it can successfully mediate content that might be considered "unsuitable" for children" (Lester, 2016, p. 23). Comparatively ideological approaches to representations of melancholy are also present in many studies. Duaei (2020) considers the Pixar animated film *Inside Out* (2015) in the context of contemporary capitalism, noting the discursive practices of neoliberalism present in the film and how these are seen in representations of a child's psychology through a government of emotions that negate free will on the part of the film's protagonist. The film "essentializes happiness as the sole normal way of being for Riley, and pedagogically, for its audience" (Duaei, 2020, p. 202). Similarly, Truglio (2015) considers Italian children's literature following the Risorgimento, with children's novels such as *Cuore*

by Edmondo De Amicis (1886) attempting to propagate nationalism and self-sacrifice in the service of the nation, which begets a melancholy in the loss of individuality and value of life separate from the nation.

2.4 Representations of Gender

As considered by Nicholls (2004), representations of melancholy have often been gendered, which makes a survey of gender in children's literature pertinent. Grauerholz and Pescosolido (1989) consider the representation of gender in children's literature from the point of view of agency on the part of girl characters, which determined a slight yet visible move away from treating genders as determinants of characters' agency for its period. However, as Sigalow and Fox (2014) consider religious children's literature, this movement towards equality in representations of gender in children's literature has not occurred across the board. Coyne, Linder, Rasmussen, Nelson, and Birkbeck (2016) consider representations of gender in Disney's princess movies ranging from *Snow White* to *Frozen II*, with the findings that suggest Disney princess films, in early childhood, caused an "adherence to female gender-stereotypical behavior for both girls and boys, and for body esteem and prosocial behavior for boys only" (Coyne et al., 2016, p. 1909). Hundertmark (2021) and Khan (2021), on the other hand, considered Disney's *Maleficent*, a film that featured a feminine villain as its protagonist. This study suggests a comparatively more transgressive representation of gender, with a female character holding power that would be stereotypically male-coded in Disney princess films. As considered by Butler (1999), the construction of gender identity is achieved through performances of gender characteristics that are often socially deemed intrinsic to the gender in question.

2.5 Objects of Analysis

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Its Adaptations

Lewis Carroll's book is often linked with the anxieties of growing up. Kincaid (1973) suggests that the process of growing up, and therefore the passage of time, is the cause of melancholy present in the novel. The importance of time is quite stressed by the literature on the work, as Morton (1978) also refers to the importance of memory. In the same vein, Schatz (2015) discusses the concept of dream child; an idealized version of childhood present in Victorian society, and its influence on the creation of Alice, which leads to an association of growing up with a loss of innocence.

Considering both Peter Pan and Alice, Frenzel (2021) focuses on the othered nature of the protagonists, which potentially lends itself to non-conforming representations of gender on the part of Alice and Peter Pan as dream child characters. Baum (1977) considers the semantic potential of Carroll's work, with the degradation of existing rules of language together with the physical transformations that occur in Wonderland. Notably, Nkomo (2019) approaches the language of the text from the perspective of translation, with an analysis of the translation of Carroll's novel into the Southern Ndebele language spoken in South Africa, questioning whether the Anglo-Saxon background of the novel can be reinterpreted in the target language.

Similarly, Mandici (2022) considers the translation of the novel into Romanian, with a similar conclusion that suggests a certain loss of meaning is unavoidable in translating this particular work of Carroll's due to its storyline that often plays with language itself. This particular aspect of translations is also applicable to adaptations in general, as "over

the years adaptations have been studied as translations and transformations, as selections and specifications, as reimaginings and imitations of literature” (Leitch, 2007, p. 18). Adaptations of the work are also widely considered, with studies that consider as far as certain theater adaptations of the novel (Palmer, 2016). Notably, Fritz (2011) considers the film adaptations and the shift from Victorian audiences to more contemporary audiences and the changes present in the adaptations.

Peter and Wendy and Its Adaptations

Barrie’s work is widely analyzed, ranging from its many adaptations and translations to its psychoanalytic analyses, in addition to its function as a children’s novel. As previously noted, Frenzel (2021) focuses on the non-conforming gender characterizations of Peter Pan, which is related to Peter Pan’s status as someone who is never destined to become an adult. Hapsarani and Lutfiputri (2021) consider the 2020 screen adaptation of the novel and the reimagination of childhood as postmodern rather than an Edwardian one.

The international influence of the novel is also considered by many scholars. Blin-Rolland (2014) considers Régis Loisel’s comic-book prequel of the novel written for adult audiences, which according to Blin-Rolland (2014), utilizes the medium’s unique characteristics for non-linear reading effectively. Rose (1984) considers the character of Peter Pan, as an unrelatable character for child audiences: “*Peter Pan* offers us the child— for ever. It gives us the child, but it does not speak *to* the child” (p. 1). Her work and characterization of children’s literature as unrelatable texts have been widely discussed: “Rose is arguing—as has been widely assumed —that adults colonise,

dominate, idealise or impose an identity on children” (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2019, p. 238).

Lesnik-Oberstein (2019), as well as White (2021), adopts a psychoanalytic approach.

Both of them consider children’s literature as an adult author representing children.

According to Lesnik-Oberstein (2019), children’s literature inherently relies on memory

and the tenuous grasp the author has on what it means to be a child. White (2021)

considers the disavowal of motherhood present in Peter Pan, which is linked with the

absence and death of mother figures, suggesting a correlation between running away

from growing up and the absence of a mother.

CHAPTER 3:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

In line with the methodology of discourse analysis, this study attempts to view the subject matter, discourses of melancholy and their representation in the selected works of children's literature and film through a combination of two distinct strands of thought. Even if it may appear as an odd pairing, the ideas and theories of Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon have much to say in considering melancholy and the melancholic subjects present in the works considered in this study. It should be noted that this study is not the first to put Foucault and Fanon in dialogue. Renault (2015) considers Foucault's emphasis on confession as a ritual for accessing truth for "western societies" (Foucault, 1998, p. 58) through the lens of the decolonized subject; analyzing why Foucault restricted his statement to the West, putting Foucault's emphasis on the "production of truth" (ibid.) in dialogue with Fanon's (1986) statement that considers colonialism as a system which prevents the colonized subject from producing their own truth.

Similarly, Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018) consider the two thinkers with regard to the production of the self and subjectivizing oneself. This study aims to consider the melancholic child subjects in the works considered as colonized subjects who are forced

to define themselves in relation to the world of the adults, however it may be. Both original works present a dichotomy between the real and fantasy worlds. Alice enters Wonderland, put into conflict with her own sense of self (Carroll, 2012) and Wendy's faith in herself and the reality of the Neverland is tested constantly (Barrie, 2018). Due to the presence of these themes of struggling with establishing their own subjectivity and the melancholy produced by them, Foucault and Fanon's own ideas and concerns with regard to subjectivation becomes all too relevant for this study. In essence, this study will take the discourses of melancholy as its basis for analyzing the concept of subjectivation as it pertains to the melancholic child protagonists, taking cue from Fanon (1986) in his analysis of the Black subjectivity, or its replacement with the White subjectivity.

3.2 Melancholy and Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*

Before establishing this link, Foucault's conception of the discourses of melancholy as he considered them in *Madness and Civilization* (Foucault, 1988) provide a strong basis through which to engage with the discourses of melancholy in history. This work establishes a broad overview of the historical transformation of the discourses of madness. Starting with the association of the social exclusion faced by those with leprosy as enforced by the Church and the social abandonment of those with perceived mental disorders, Foucault (1988) works his way through the changing discourses on madness, and melancholy with them. Though the concept of melancholy is taken as a psychological or pseudo-psychological concept by Foucault, it nevertheless takes on a literary role as well, which forms an important tabula for this theoretical frame.

Considering an archetypal literary character often referred to as “the Madman, the Fool, or the Simpleton” (Foucault, 1988, p. 14), which “stands center stage as the guardian of truth” (Foucault, 1988, p. 14), Foucault tries to define madness and melancholy through its relation to the truth. Similarly, he relates the Ship of Fools trope with this relation to truth, “which embarks all men without distinction on its insane ship and binds them to the vocation of a common odyssey” (Foucault, 1988, p. 14). This conception of madness as the common state of being is treated extensively in the work of Lewis Carroll (2012):

“‘Oh, you ca'n't help that,’ said the Cat: ‘we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.’

‘How do you know I'm mad?’ said Alice. ‘You must be,’ said the Cat, or you wouldn't have come here.” (pp. 54-55). Much like most beings in the Wonderland, the cat does the opposite of what is considered normal for him; purring when angry, growling when pleased. Alice is forced to draw her own path in this land of madness, to find her own truth through it.

According to Foucault, melancholy takes on a related yet different characteristic in the 16th century in the form of allowing the melancholic to have access to previously hidden or supposedly unknowable knowledge (Foucault, 1988, p. 101). In this sense, melancholy often serves as a conduit for either having access to some deeper truth, or as meta-characters that are self-aware of their own fictitiousness on some level, bridging the gap between the audience and the story in historical literature, especially in theater. Foucault also considers the historical discussions on the innateness of melancholy in melancholic people, with some relating it to the Aristotelean concept of the “four humors” (Foucault, 1988, p. 119), or its reinterpretation in the Renaissance period in the form of a “melancholic juice” (Foucault, 1988, p. 119) which is supposedly “thick in

consistency, cold and dry in temperament” (Foucault, 1988, p. 119). While these hypotheses are outdated from a medical and psychological point of view, they nevertheless provide interesting clues as to how the range of feelings commonly called melancholy is construed in society at different points in history. As such, the literary works and their adaptations considered in this study are also influenced by the past and present discourses of melancholy. While these discourses are not always applicable to the works in question, they nevertheless provide a view of various discourses of melancholy through a psychiatric and social lens, in an attempt to place this concept in a social context.

3.3 Subjectivizing the Melancholic Child Protagonist

According to Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018), both Fanon and Foucault have a “willingness to attribute a critical and political value to the processes of ‘subjectivation’” (p. 72). This is considered to be “the very core of the practices of freedom that subjugated subjects can enact in order to resist and contest the mechanisms of power trying to impose on them a certain identity as well as a definite conduct” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 72). As subjectivation is closely related to the practices of confession and “truth-telling about oneself” (Foucault, 2014, p. 13-14) in Foucault, it is achieved through the ability and the frameworks necessary to engage in producing the said truths. Fanon’s anti-colonial point of view puts the emphasis on those who are deprived of the tools to produce their own truths, the colonized subjects; or rather, the people who are deprived of the tools to subjectivize themselves: “The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards” (Fanon, 1986, p. 18). The colonized is judged through the lens provided by the

colonizer. According to Sithole (2016), “The [White] gaze in itself is informed by the exercise of power and, as such, is asymmetrical in the sense that it is the determining factor in having to question the capacity of Blackness to exist” (p. 30). Critically, the colonized subject is forced to judge themselves through the lens of the colonizer, as their preexisting social frameworks are thoroughly destroyed or otherwise deprived of the opportunity to develop in its own fashion, all in service of the greater empire.

Crudely speaking, this is the collection of policies of the colonizers that are often summed up in one concise word: paternalism. At the height of colonialism, the liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill opposed paternalism by proclaiming the “sovereignty of the individual” (Mill, 2011, p. 93), yet this was not applicable to the colonized subject who was seen and treated as so much unlike a capable individual that a full century later, Fanon could still utter the words “the black is not a man” (Fanon, 1986, p. 10). In essence, the colonized had to view themselves through the eyes of the colonizer when interacting with them, essentially producing an outward face that is not the same as the inward face, that is, the face the colonized adopts when among other colonized subjects. Fanon aptly summarized this concept in the title of his work, “Black Skin, White Masks” (Fanon, 1986). Returning to the concept of paternalism, it is evident that the colonized subject was rendered childlike in the hierarchical relation of colonialism. Their status as full human beings were put into question, and the more “virtuous” of the colonizers adopted the role of a parent who must teach through conversion to Christianity, and other colonial practices (Foster, 2015). Consequently, the ability of the colonized subject to construe their own subjectivity is hampered.

While it is clear that there was a paternalistic aspect to the colonial project and the consequential masked subjectivation of the colonized, it is less straightforward to explain how it connects to the melancholic child protagonists. This requires a return to the initial comparison between the melancholic and the leper. Within the works considered in this study, it is often the case that the outcast child protagonist develops their own subjectivity in a conflict-ridden relation with the world of the adults. For Alice, it is the Wonderland wherein her subjectivity is questioned by a giant Caterpillar; and for Wendy, it is the belief in the magical Neverland. The melancholy caused by the ill-fitting world of the adults for these exceptional child protagonists therefore engage in a similar struggle to that of the colonized subject: do they adopt the masks fashioned by the paternalistic subjects, or do they develop their own truths and become exceptional in their own right? It is through these dialogues between Fanon and Foucault that these analyses with regard to melancholy start to take shape in this study.

In essence, the discourses of melancholy as discussed by Foucault (1988) points towards the removal of the agency to construe one's own subjectivity when it comes to those designated as melancholic. The struggle to subjectivize oneself as faced by the protagonists of the works analyzed in this study is borne out of these discourses that disavow the ability of the melancholic to establish their own sense of self. Yet through Fanon (1986) and his ideas on the Black subjectivity, we are able to suggest that those without the ability to subjectivize themselves nevertheless hold the power to do so. In Fanon's words, "the neurotic's fate remains in his own hands" (Fanon, 1986, p. 12). The narratives considered in this study therefore present melancholic children's struggle to

subjectivize themselves in conflict with the world of the adults, either avoiding or submitting to the frameworks established by the grown-ups.



CHAPTER 4:

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This comparative study of children's novels and film adaptations will adopt a combination of close reading and discourse analysis as its general methodology. This combination of methodologies could be likened to shifts in scales and points of view on the part of the analyst in order to take both a broad as well as a granular look at the objects of analysis. Discourse analysis deals with "discourse, discursive formations and their productivity", as well as "issues of power, regimes of truth, institutions and technologies" (Rose, 2016, p. 192). It can be utilized in determining common points and interrelations among distinct narratives, with both an intertextual and contextual approach that attempts to place these texts within the world while also seeking out their relevance through their implications.

Concurrently, close reading will be utilized to discover how the texts in question treat themes of melancholy. It should also be noted that the methodologies in question will be applied to both literary and visual texts. While taking into account the unique aspects of these distinct forms of medium, they will nevertheless be commonly applied across the

board. In addition to discourse analysis, close reading will be applied throughout the study in order to take a coherent view of the texts in question.

4.2 Methodologies Adopted by Other Studies

Considering other works on children's media and the methodologies they apply is potentially relevant, and also illuminating the decision to apply discourse analysis in this particular study. Duaei (2020) considers the discourses of happiness under neoliberalism as seen in the Pixar animated film *Inside Out* (2015). This is a relevant study, as it bases its argument around the concept of happiness; similar to how this study will consider discourses on melancholy. Duaei (2020) engages with the film through a discursive interrogation of its relation to neoliberal governmentality. Many studies that consider gender in children's media often do so through considering discourses of gender, as seen in Khan (2021), who approaches Disney's *Maleficent* and Coyne et al. (2016), who consider the reinforcement of gender stereotypes in Disney princess movies.

Intertextuality occupies a central point in discussions of adaptations, as it conceives of distinct texts as not only relating to each other as separate entities, but as entities directly related at the root, constructed upon each other or mutated from one text into another. As defined by Kristeva (1986), intertextuality is "a mosaic of quotations, any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 37). Consequently, it is an important point of view in children's media studies, which is often examined through adaptations and the culturally impactful characters such as Alice and Peter Pan (Blin-Rolland, 2014; Baum, 1977; Fritz, 2011). As such, these studies often rely on approaches that prioritize intertextualities, which discourse analysis does to a great extent.

Relating psychoanalytic concepts to the child main characters and their motivations is quite popular. White (2021) examines a concept called the “dead mother complex” through *Peter and Wendy*, while Lesnik-Oberstein (2019) considers psychoanalysis on the same work. Quite naturally, melancholy is also at times viewed through the lens of psychology (Steyn & Moen, 2019; Cassano et al., 2014). However, this should not obscure the fact that melancholy has also been approached from entirely literary approaches (Gilead, 1991; Brooks, 1992; Cadden, 2012), or institutional ones (Foucault, 1988).

Historical approaches that situate children’s literature in broader contexts are also quite relevant, as many works of what has become children’s literature have quite long folkloric backgrounds (Bronner, 1998), while yet others have been specifically written in the service of a nation-building process (Truglio, 2015). The methodologies utilized by these studies often take the form of an exotextual discourse analysis.

4.3 Discourse Analysis

Children’s media is a unique categorization in that it is defined through its exclusion based on the age and development of its audience rather than its subject matters or the themes it explores. Deviating from most other genres in this sense, children’s media is nevertheless subject to several conventions and common subject matters associated with processes and situations such as growing up, inexperience, and dependency.

Consequently, children’s media is often created, and also treated as, based on the discourses of childhood and what is appropriate or not in a way that other

categorizations of media are not. As such, it is critical for this study to adopt a form of discourse analysis as its method of analysis. Nead (1988) describes discourse as “a particular form of language with its own rules and conventions and the institutions within which the discourse is produced and circulated” (p. 4). In this instance, this language and its rules are bound first by the broader social institutions, and on a more limited level, by what parts of it are acceptable to convey to children through the media they consume. As a study concerned with the presence of themes of melancholy, it is similarly critical for this study to be conducted through a discourse analysis that is interested in the changes in the discourses of childhood and the transformation in the treatment of themes of melancholy, as well as the changes in its conveyance to children. Based on the works in question and their adaptations, this study aims to approach the duality of childhood and adulthood, and the shifts between them by considering the discourses of childhood, at times in reference to Victorian, Edwardian, and contemporary childhoods as separate historical discourses. Although archaically named after the reigns of British monarchs rather than the social development of Britain where these works are set in, the terms Victorian (1837-1901) and Edwardian (1901-1910) are nevertheless utilized in this study in reference to the periods where *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter and Wendy* were published, respectively. The reason for this is that, as considered by Thale (1974), these terms are literary myths, which may be useless for the purposes of studying history, but quite relevant still in considering how literary texts imagined the world they were written in, and how later adaptations viewed these periods. As such, the Victorian age is characterized by “the overpowering impression being one of tremendous changes occurring” (Timko, 1975, p. 610), while the Edwardian age was characterized by its “confidence, security, tranquility. At least for

the upper classes, possibly for everyone, the time is seen as exceptionally stable” (Thale, 1974, p. 26).

The discourse analysis utilized in this study will be mainly based on a form of critical discourse analysis, as conceived by Norman Fairclough (1995), while also considering discourses of power structures (Foucault, 2002), colonialism (Fanon, 1986) and their effects on the objects of study considered here. Adopting what is in part an endotextual (Barry et al., 2006) approach that considers the texts in question in their own right, the discourse analysis will attempt to take on melancholy, representations of gender, fantasy and its adaptations, as well as race and colonialism in the objects of study. However, as these works are also historicized through various adaptations, they will also be seen through what could be considered an intertextual approach, as well. In this sense, the discourse analysis will first attempt to consider texts in their own right, while later on establishing a dialogue between the texts in question, which would allow for an intertextuality that allows the study to consider the world-historical conditions that produced these texts.

Foucault’s (2002) conception of discourse and its history as composed of ruptures and non-linear changes that focuses on the individual moments rather than the changes between two points in history is significant in establishing this discourse analysis. As this study is deeply based on the transformation of texts across adaptations, it is pertinent to approach them with a historicity that is not simply based on the broad circumstantial view, but a historicity that focuses on the discourse and the language itself. Paying attention to the specificity of a given statement and its construction within the text gives

way to a discourse analysis that is untainted by broader notions of what constitutes a given historical moment. This endotextual approach will be utilized alongside a close reading of the texts in question, which will provide the first crucial stage of the discourse analysis of this study.

The second stage of discourse analysis is based on Teun A. van Dijk's (2009) theory of social situations based on social contexts. Beyond the discourse within the text, analyzing "the relations between context and interaction, the institutional embedding of social actors, interactions and situations" (van Dijk, 2009, p. 87) allows for the discourse analysis to take shape beyond a single text, allowing for a narrative to emerge between the adaptations, the industries and the individuals involved in creating them, as well as the broader social context. One cannot discuss the transformation of these discourses in the numerous Disney adaptations without engaging with the institutional role and the commercial concerns of Disney as a corporation. In this way, the discourse analysis relates separate texts with one another. Starting with a sociological account of the social situation, this part of the discourse analysis focuses on bringing out the treatment of melancholy and discourses of childhood across social contexts, which would help create a coherent and broad discourse analysis that is both focused on the endotextual intricacies present within each text, while also relating them with one another through the social contexts observed in the second part of the critical discourse analysis in this study.

The discourse analysis will be based on the theoretical background of Frantz Fanon and his ideas on the effect of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized (Fanon, 1986), as

well as Foucault's historicization of melancholia (Foucault, 1988). Fanon considered the colonized subject as defining themselves in relation to the colonizer, suggesting that the colonized have to engage in a struggle to establish their own independent identity that is defined in their own rights. Fanon also suggests that there is more to this definition of constructing the self on the part of the colonized: "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man" (Fanon, 1986, p. 17). This recognition of oneself, and being recognized by others has its roots in language. As Fanon (1986) puts it, "it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (p. 17). The argument of this study is that, in essence, the colonized are bound to the same subjugation of the self as children, which is seen in the works present in this study. Though the distinction between childhood and adulthood is based on differences in physical and mental development, there is also a discursive aspect that is reminiscent of the way the colonized refer to themselves through the eyes of the colonizers. Fanon (1986) argues that the colonized Black individual "becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness" (p. 18), and children grow up as they construct themselves in the guidance of the adults that surround them. Outside of physical and mental development, growing up turns into adopting the discursive practices of adulthood. The works considered in this study express this sentiment through their representation of the melancholy caused by growing up and the displacement of the reality of growing up with that of fantasy worlds wherein the mundane temporality is disturbed. The presence of fantasy could be interpreted as escapist, yet there is another remaining possibility. As stated by Fanon (1986) in relation to Nietzsche, the underlying problem here is that grown-up people were once children. Yet with respect to Charles Odier, Fanon (1986) states that "the neurotic's fate remains in his own hands" (p. 12). The presence of fantasy realities could

likewise be seen as child characters' instinctual reaction to having their minds be colonized by adulthood and the process of growing up, with escape being an attempt at shaping their own fate without reference to the world of the adults.

This discourse analysis aims to engage with this relation between the discursive similarities between the colonized as presented in the works of Fanon and the child characters present in the works of children's literature and film considered in this study. At the same time, these discourses will be analyzed through the lens of a Foucauldian discourse analysis that takes into account the relations of power and the social contexts of these works, which will illuminate the transformation of the discourses of childhood and the melancholy caused by the distress of growing up.

Consequently, the discourse analysis and close reading present in this study attempt to put the concepts of childhood and growing up in conversation with the obstacles towards autonomy and self-subjection, which is considered through the lens of colonialism while being historicized through Foucault's (1988) understanding of how discourses are produced and transformed.

CHAPTER 5:

LONELY MELANCHOLY IN WONDERLAND

This chapter will consider the texts in question in their own right, attempting to divulge how a given child protagonist's melancholy is established. As per the methodology established in the previous chapters of this study, this approach will later on be supplanted with a broader historical discourse analysis of melancholy that takes into account the findings established in this chapter; placing them in the context of the broader concept of melancholy. In this close reading and discourse analysis of the two original texts, there will be comparisons between the works, and the similarities between the melancholy experienced by each child character, as well as the worlds they inhabit and the journeys they go through.

Something both works have in common is their separation of the real world and the fantasy world, and the inevitable return to relative normalcy. According to Gilead (1991), "the return-to-reality closure asserts the conventional, ideologically mandated meanings and indeed relations between the concept pairs 'child' and 'adult,' 'fantasy' (or 'dream') and 'reality.'" (p. 288). As these works ponder the meaning of these concepts and categories, there is never an ideological break with the world as conceived, no departure from the "common sense" of their period. In J. M. Barrie's *Peter and*

Wendy, Neverland appears as the realm of those who refuse to grow up; a place free of the ever-increasing responsibilities, a perfect playground, from which Wendy must eventually retire. Carroll's Wonderland is less hospitable; the journey is unintentional for Alice, and full of countless perils, which makes Alice glad to have returned to the English countryside once again.

The subjectivation of the child protagonists are always determined in relation to a framework outside of them. They are confronted with these categories by leaving the real world physically, as Gilead (1991) suggests. The Caterpillar in Wonderland confronts Alice by striking at the heart of this matter: "Who are you?" (Carroll, 2012, p. 37). Indeed, this questioning is aimed at getting Alice to question her existence, and how she defines herself. As Foucault (2014) puts it, this is an attempt at "truth-telling about oneself" (p. 13-14). Foucault categorizes these as confessional practices, which according to Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018), are about constructing one's sense of self, subjectivizing themselves. In this sense, these other worlds function as confessional spaces where the protagonists are confronted with their subjectivity: as the traditional conceptions of what it means to be a child, a grown-up, or indeed anything else dissipates, so does their subjectivity which was predetermined for them.

As will be discussed in each of these works further, subjectivizing oneself is deeply related to issues of power. As put forward by Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018), truth-telling about oneself is conditional to the power to reflect on oneself from one's own point of view, without reference to external authorities and their institutional frameworks. Children are naturally without institutional powers of their own, which is why the

process of growing up is necessarily a process of acclimatizing oneself to the institutions and the values of the adult world. The powerlessness to determine one's subjectivity is the cause of melancholia for children, which is what this chapter of this study will consider through Alice and her struggle to subjectivize herself.

5.1 Subjectivizing Alice

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a children's novel written by Lewis Carroll and published in 1865. As a fantasy novel, it features anthropomorphized creatures, the manipulation of space and time, as well as a deep-seated process of self-reflection on the part of the protagonist of the novel. Fantasy and reality exist concurrently, Alice's shift from reality to the fantasy of Wonderland is achieved by her following the White Rabbit who is late for his appointment. Falling down the rabbit hole, Alice shifts to an unknown and alien space that makes little sense in terms of space yet still contains familiar elements such as doors and keys. As she shifts from reality and into Wonderland, Alice is reminded of her pet cat Dinah, which reminds the reader of her missing the absence of familiar elements of her own life as she enters into the unknown.

As she moves forward in Wonderland, Alice comes across various characters such as the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, and the Queen of Hearts. Always engaging with them in bizarre contexts, it is primarily these conversations that establish the novel's status as literary nonsense. Trying to maintain her sense of selfhood in relation to these bizarre situations, she eventually wakes up from Wonderland beside her sister where she began her journey. Having experienced a transformation in what is

considered normal and what is nonsense, she finds herself questioning the essence of reality.

Time, Space, and the Melancholy of Growing Up

During her time in Wonderland, Alice herself is not bereft from this transformation as she constantly shifts in size, getting little and big as she goes through this fantasy realm. This reflects her anxieties about the process of growing up, which is reflected through the Dormouse's complaint that he grows "at a more reasonable pace" (Carroll, 2012, p. 98). As stated by Kincaid (1973), this confirms the relationship between the passage of time as established through growing up from one moment to the next, which is one of the primary causes of anxiety for Alice. She physically grows and shrinks, yet it is always reversible. The fantasy lands function as playgrounds or laboratories where the protagonists learn from their experiences, and ironically experience the growth they wished to avoid in the first place. Fantasy's abandonment of the conventional semiotics (Baum, 1977) therefore takes on a pedagogical quality for the readers, which is why fantasy is often found in children's literature in the first place. The theme of growing up is also interrelated with the concepts of decay, where many correlate growing up with the loss of innocence, which is tantamount to decay, as the original Alice novels "recognize both the melancholy of the loss of Eden and the child's rude and tragic haste to leave its innocence" (Kincaid, 1973, p. 93). Kincaid considers Alice as willing to leave her childhood behind, putting her at the helm of her own subjectivation. However, it is arguable that there is a conflict between Alice's own subjectivity and one that is pushed onto her from the outside. This is most clearly seen in how Alice relates to the authority figures in Wonderland, which stands in for what is nonsensical yet laden with

authority, which is likely a reflection of what Alice feels with regard to the world of the grown-ups.

Her relationship and discussions with the antagonists and the authority figures of Wonderland, the Red Queen, and the Duchess cause anxiety for Alice. The Red Queen and the Duchess are both controlling, as well as nonsensical like the rest of Wonderland, perhaps even more so. The Duchess interrelates unrelated points in her discussions, drawing useless lessons from everything and attempting to pass them on to Alice as wisdom. This quality of Wonderland reflects the gap between Alice's conception of reality and the conception of reality presented by the Duchess. This gap between realities is utilized as a source of humor for the novel: the nonsense of Wonderland and its authority figures and their silliness helps undermine their aura of authority but also makes Alice's own conception of reality questionable, as well. Alice corrects the Duchess by stating that "mustard isn't a bird", following it up with "it's a mineral, I *think*" (Carroll, 2012, p. 78-79). This nonsense on the part of both characters helps establish a relativity of reality, which is significant as it shifts the discussion from reality versus fantasy onto the struggle between different versions of reality, wherein both conceptions are a little fantastical in their own right.

Alice protests how the authority figures of Wonderland attempt to replace her own conception of reality with their own: "I never was so ordered about before, in all my life, never!" (Carroll, 2012, p. 81). This correlates with Fanon's treatment of the Black subjectivity and how it correlates with the White subjectivation of blackness. Fanon (1986) relates this division of black reality between different subjectivations as a result

of “colonialist subjugation” (p. 17). Much like a black person’s struggle to establish their own subjectivity in a metropolitan White society, Alice’s presence in Wonderland causes anxiety due to the conflicting beliefs as to the basic conception of reality between her and Wonderland. The fact that Wonderland is represented through the Red Queen and the Duchess further establishes the hierarchy between Alice’s own subjectivation and that of Wonderland. In this sense, it is pertinent to establish a division between children’s world and adults’ world, as children and adults are divided in how they subjectivize themselves. The Red Queen, as well as the Duchess, could be likened to the adult world as conceived by children who have not yet completely internalized it and have not become subjects to the institutions and the values of the adult world. While the institutions and the values of the adult world might be internally coherent, they are not yet that for Alice, who struggles to establish her own subjectivity as she grows up. While this is a losing battle on the part of Alice, like it is for all children, it is necessarily a stage one goes through in establishing new subjectivities as adults.

This is deeply intertwined with how Fanon (1986) conceives colonized people and how they see the society of the colonizers:

The black man who arrives in France changes because to him the country represents the Tabernacle; he changes not only because it is from France that he received his knowledge of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire, but also because France gave him his physicians, his department heads, his innumerable little functionaries—from the sergeant-major “fifteen years in the service” to the policeman who was born in Panissieres. (p. 23)

In addition to turning colonized people into the subjects of the Empire, colonial institutions also shape how the colonized subjectivize themselves as human beings. In essence, there is a similarity between how the colonized are acclimated to the institutions and the values of the colonizers and how children are also acclimated to accept the values and teachings of the society established by the grown-ups.

Consequently, this is an issue related to subjectivation, as discussed by both Fanon and Foucault (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018). The conflict Alice is in with Wonderland, and with the process of growing up, is a conflict about establishing a truth. In this sense, the search for truth on the part of Alice is dependent on her subjectivation. For Fanon, as previously discussed, this subjectivation is related to the issues of power: the colonized lack the power to establish their own subjectivation, so they turn to the colonizers' framework (Fanon, 1986). In this sense, Alice also lacks the power to establish her own subjectivation relative to Wonderland, or the world of the grown-ups she is born into.

There is another aspect of subjectivation with regard to establishing one's own truth in Foucault's writings. As discussed by Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018), Foucault is deeply concerned with the concept of madness and the discourses surrounding it. This is especially relevant for Alice as she struggles with melancholy as her subjectivation is challenged by Wonderland. As her size keeps getting altered in Wonderland and she is unable to get through a much smaller door than herself, "she sat down and began to cry again" (Carroll, 2012, p.13). Melancholy is caused by a challenge to her subjectivation, which Foucault (1997) calls "de-subjection" (p. 282). This is only the first stage for establishing a subjectivity for oneself, and as Lorenzini and Tazzioli (2018) express, it

requires “a second, *creative* moment, which is, strictly speaking, the moment of subjectivation, that is, of the (relatively) autonomous invention of a different form of subjectivity” (p. 76). In this sense, it is questionable whether Alice has the capacity for this creative moment, as she is far too powerless in relation to the world of the grown-ups, as the colonized are powerless in establishing their own subjectivity in relation to the colonizers.

The Institutions of Nonsense

Wonderland is also a reflection of Alice’s conception of the real world and its institutions. As she stands trial in the court of the Red Queen, she imagines the jury as various creatures while the Red Queen herself wishes to behead her as Alice rapidly grows in size, physically dwarfing the trial as the farce it is. At this moment, she knocks over the members of the jury, which reminds her of her knocking down the aquarium of her goldfish a week before. This simultaneous presence of the real world and its reflection in Wonderland reinforces the point that this is a dream of Alice wherein her real anxieties leak into this fantasy world, with simple acts of clumsiness shaping her view of the institutions as she imagines them.

She protests about changing in size and being “ordered about” by rodents, “when I used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one!” (Carroll, 2012, p. 30). Alice draws a contrast between the real world, where this sort of thing would never happen, and fairy tales– the fantasy world. Being bored by the real world and its pictureless books at the beginning of the novel, Alice now feels overwhelmed by how not boring and unanchored everything is in

Wonderland. For instance, she quarrels with Hatter about the nature of time: “‘If you knew Time as well as I do,’ said the Hatter, ‘you wouldn’t talk about wasting *it*. It’s *him*.’” (Carroll, 2012, p. 61). This is one of the points which emphasizes how much the institutions of Wonderland diverge from the real world: not even the basic physical properties are comparable to each other, “Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter’s remark seemed to her to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English” (Carroll, 2012, p. 60). This emphasis on the absurdity of the Hatter as felt by Alice is meaningful, as it assigns him, and Wonderland with it, a stigma of madness. Foucault (1988) remarks upon the shifting attitudes towards madness as it replaces sinfulness as the cause for folly with the end of the Middle Ages:

...a long series of ‘follies’ which, stigmatizing vices and faults as in the past, no longer attribute them all to pride, to lack of charity, to neglect of Christian virtues, but to a sort of great unreason for which nothing, in fact, is exactly responsible, but which involves everyone in a kind of secret complicity. The denunciation of madness (*la folie*) becomes the general form of criticism. (p. 13)

Carroll (2012) draws upon this tradition of the denunciation of madness with Wonderland and its residents. These institutions of unreason seen in Wonderland can be regarded as a criticism of unreason in the service of the praising of normalcy, of the real-world institutions. However, there is reason to disregard this interpretation as the nonsense of Wonderland is often a reflection of reality and its institutions as conceived of by Alice. The court of the Red Queen is one such institution in Wonderland, as it serves as a mockery of the concept of monarchy. The Red Queen calls for the heads of random beings, including Alice. Her trial presents a moment in which she is reminded of reality, with her memory of breaking the aquarium of the goldfish bleeding into the

kerfuffle in the trial as she grows in size. The criticism of madness becomes a critique of real-life institutions on the part of Alice, which is a subconscious challenge to the barriers to her own subjectivity. It is stated that melancholy is “madness at the limits of its powerlessness” (Foucault, 1988, p. 122). Even though she does not pass into Wonderland with the conscious choice of entering a fantasy realm, Wonderland is nevertheless a reflection of Alice, a little girl bored with reality; bored with the barriers to her own subjectivation of herself. Therefore, Wonderland’s connection to madness is no accident; it functions as a foil. Similar to how sinfulness functioned as a foil in the Middle Ages, madness functions as the foil for a post-Enlightenment author such as Lewis Carroll.

Melancholy stands at the conjunction of Wonderland’s madness as a foil and Alice’s struggle to subjectivize herself. In other words, it is at the convergence of powerlessness and criticism. With reference to Fanon (1986) and the impossibility of the colonized to subjectivize themselves, it was previously stated that Alice is powerless to overcome the barriers to her subjectivation. While Alice produces the foil of Wonderland, she also produces the reaction to this foil as she struggles with authority figures such as the Red Queen and the Duchess. Wonderland is therefore a playground for subjectivation; a fantasy realm wherein Alice can be transformed just as she grows and shrinks at different points. Even if she cannot subjectivize herself at will, the madness of Wonderland functions as an illusion of subjectivation. She fights with the representations and parodies of real-life institutions, simply because she cannot fight them, or perhaps not even identify them in real life.

Wonderland is also a realm of passive transformation on the part of Alice. She often exhibits no conscious agency to what happens to her and is “being ordered about by mice and rabbits” (Carroll, 2012, p. 30), or sometimes growing up without having willed to do so: “‘I ca’n’t help it,’ said Alice very meekly: ‘I’m growing.’ ‘You’ve no right to grow here,’ said the Dormouse” (Carroll, 2012, p. 98). This is a reflection of Alice’s aversion to growing up, while also emphasizing her lack of agency in general: a perfect summation of a young girl who is deprived of her agency because of her gender and her status as a child. This is also reflected in her losing knowledge of real life: “Let me see: four times five is twelve, and four times six is thirteen... let’s try Geography. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris is the capital of Rome, and Rome— no, *that’s* all wrong, I’m certain!” (Carroll, 2012, p. 15). She acclimatizes herself to Wonderland and its nonsense through a loss of general knowledge: she ran away from her sister’s book reading and is punished with loss of knowledge. This is occasionally emphasized within the story by the authority figures within Wonderland. The Duchess, for instance, claims she doesn’t “know much” (Carroll, 2012, p. 51). This loss of knowledge about the world is not exclusive to the real world but is also present in Wonderland. Consequently, she is always between reality and Wonderland, not fitting in with either.

As previously discussed, this feeling of out-of-placeness is related to Alice’s struggle with self-subjection. According to an 18th century opinion about melancholia, “madness can, in the body's repose or inertia, generate and then maintain an agitation of the soul, without pause or pacification, as is the case in melancholia, where external objects do not produce the same impression on the sufferer's mind as on that of a healthy man” (Foucault, 1988, p. 92). In this sense, fantasy worlds and being out-of-touch with

reality used to be associated with madness, melancholia specifically. The impressions in the melancholic's mind do not match with what is conceived as objective reality, and the melancholic cannot subjectify themselves of their own will, much like Fanon's colonial subjects who are forced to subjectivation by the colonizers' frameworks.

The lack of knowledge on the part of Alice is, therefore, an extension of her melancholy, which itself is caused by her inability to subjectify herself as a child without reference to the adults' conception of what her life should be like. She is in Wonderland, because she cannot subjectivize herself out of her own free will; it's an unconscious rebellion to growing up as others want her to: "...There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write one – but I'm grown up now,' she added in a sorrowful tone: 'at least there's no room to grow up any more *here*.'" (Carroll, 2012, p. 30). She wishes to grow up to write about herself; a desire which correlates with her desire to subjectify herself. Yet in the end, she is glad to not physically grow up, perhaps indicating that she unconsciously knows that she cannot subjectivize herself as the child she is, and when she grows up, that opportunity will be gone as she will not be the same person.

5.2 Adapting Alice into Film

The melancholy of being unable to subjectivize oneself appears distinctly in two of the film adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, both of which are produced by Disney despite their distinctive qualities. The first among these is the 1951 animated film adaptation co-directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske, which is a loose adaptation of both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the*

Looking Glass (Carroll, 2012). Similarly, the 2010 live-action adaptation directed by Tim Burton borrows from both Alice books, seemingly weaving them into distinct narratives that are loosely based on Carroll's works. In both adaptations, there "is *adjustment*, whereby a promising earlier text is rendered more suitable for filming by one or more of a wide variety of strategies" (Leitch, 2007, p. 98), as well as an attempt at updating these texts (Leitch, 2007), which is an update in terms of their themes rather than settings, especially in Tim Burton's live-action film adaptation. There is also the issue of authorship in adaptation, which is an issue in both adaptations. The 1951 adaptation is in line with the rest of the Disney adaptations from the same era, especially in terms of their storytelling strategies and visual languages. Likewise, the Tim Burton adaptation in 2010 is quite in line with the director's other films. Considering melancholy of the inability to subjectify oneself, the adaptations can be approached in terms of how they are adjusted to represent Alice's feelings of melancholy, how the source material is updated in terms of its treatment of melancholy, as well as the experience of childhood, and finally, the issue of authorship, which permeates the reimaginings seen in these adaptations.

Turning Pages into Frames

The 1951 adaptation places quite a lot of emphasis on the initial stage where Alice isn't in Wonderland, but with her sister on a tree. The visual language of Alice sitting on a tree with her cat, and her sister sitting under the tree with a book emphasizes how free-spirited she is and unconcerned with the comings and goings of the world.

Foreshadowing the fantasy world to come, Alice talks to her cat Dinah: "In my world, you wouldn't say 'meow'. You'd say, 'Yes, Miss Alice.' You'd be just like people,

Dinah” (Geronimi et al., 1951, 0:03:16). As a lonely girl, Alice wishes her pet to be her talking companion, while also pointing towards the talking creatures she will later on wish to be rid of. This also further cements the idea that Wonderland is just a dream of Alice, giving more credence to the earlier statements with regard to her desire to not grow up which unconsciously presents itself within Wonderland.

The talking doorknob is an addition to the film adaptations which functions as an example of “an underlying ‘deep’ narrative structure akin to genetic structure” (Elliott, 2003, p. 135). Originally in the novel, Alice much less frequently experiences her cathartic moments in dialogue with other creatures in Wonderland, at least when compared to the film adaptations. As conveying inner turmoils and emotions within films is often less imaginative than externally representing them, the adaptations often insert sounding board-like characters such as the doorknob for Alice to reflect her emotions vocally. This has the side-effect of making the films less dark experiences, since Alice is less frequently found crying by herself without anyone to console her. As such, the shift in medium functions as a device to alter how melancholy is represented, with the film adaptations taking the softer route for Alice. In the novel, as Alice shrinks further and further in size, she wonders “in my going out altogether, like a candle, I wonder what I should be like then?” (Carroll, 2012, p. 10). This idea is expressed in the 1951 adaptation by the doorknob, which shares the melancholic moments of the novel between its characters such as the doorknob, whose comic-relief quality relieves the melancholic atmosphere of the original novel.

A moment within the novel is quite important with regard to the adaptational qualities present. Like a director, the Caterpillar directs Alice to recite a literary work, which goes poorly: “‘That is not said right,’ said the Caterpillar. ‘Not *quite* right, I’m afraid,’ said Alice, timidly: ‘some of the words have got altered.’ ‘It is wrong from beginning to end,’ said the Caterpillar” (Carroll, 2012, p. 42). The performance that the Caterpillar instructs Alice to recite is about a conversation between an old man and a youth, which carries on the tension between adulthood and childhood present throughout the novel. It is a meta experience, with the same themes being explored within a fictional story, but there is another facet to this meta quality in the form of the recital going poorly, which is indicative of the adaptation itself that alters this section of the novel, like it does with most parts. The film itself comments on it as Alice asks “I’ve never heard it that way before” (Geronimi et al., 1951, 00:34:35) to which Caterpillar responds “I know. I have improved it” (Geronimi et al., 1951, 00:34:37). It is as if the Caterpillar takes pride in the unfaithfulness of the adaptation to the source material. As Leitch (2007) states, “fidelity itself, even as a goal, is the exception to the norm of variously unfaithful adaptations” (p. 127). Changing circumstances such as the differences in medium, as this subsection examines, and numerous other reasons make it unnecessary, and even impossible to achieve true fidelity to a source material by the adaptation. In addition to simply reproducing the source material in a different medium making little artistic sense, attempting this would also miss the mark on the changes seen in the historical moment. As this study examines, melancholy as seen in the original novel is a product of its own time, with the social conception of melancholy defining its representation in the novel. As stated by Foucault (1988) with regard to the changing attitudes towards melancholy, “the theme of a partial delirium increasingly disappears as a major symptom of

melancholics in favor of qualitative data like sadness, bitterness, a preference for solitude, immobility” (p. 124). This suggests that how these manifestations, like sadness, are conceived are also transformed through the changes in social institutions such as madness.

There is another point in which the adulthood and childhood conflict within the novel is expressed within the film by the Red Queen: “Look up. Speak nicely. And don’t twiddle your fingers. Turn out your toes. Curtsy. Open your mouth a little wider. And always say, ‘Yes, Your Majesty’” (Geronimi et al., 1951, 01:01:51). Much like in the novel, the 1951 adaptation also plays into the tyrannical aspects of Wonderland with its authoritative figures representing aristocracy. It is worth noting that the adaptation does not replace the original novel’s setting with its own, not in its representation of reality or Wonderland. However, Alice’s sister speaks about medieval kings of England as she reads her book, which is another foreshadowing on the part of the 1951 film adaptation which relates what is on Alice’s mind at the beginning of the novel with what she experiences in Wonderland through the Red Queen, the King, and the Duchess. The 1951 adaptation therefore heavily leans into the idea that Wonderland is ‘just a dream’, while advocating for as little self-reflection on the part of Alice as possible. This is perhaps one of the most central divergences between the 1951 adaptation and the 2010 live-action adaptation, as will be clearer later on.

A More Contemporary Alice

Unlike the earlier 1951 adaptation, Tim Burton’s live-action adaptation presents Alice as an adult who is about to be married off to an aristocrat whom she does not actually want

to marry. Running off from her engagement party, Alice finds herself once again in Wonderland, wherein she faces the same creatures and finds herself in similar conflicts with the 1951 adaptation and the original novel. This alteration to the novel basically reframes the struggle between the childhood subjectivation and the adult world by positing the adult world through the window of patriarchy, with the boring history lesson of her sister in the 1951 adaptation being replaced with an unwanted marriage. In many ways, this alteration is a thematic update as well, with a relatable feminist struggle for self-subjection replacing the futile struggle of a child.

Consequently, Alice's struggle is about taking control of her body. She constantly rejects situations where her bodily autonomy is threatened: "Where is your corset? And no stockings.' 'I'm against them.' 'But you're not properly dressed.' 'Who's to say what is proper?'" (Burton, 2010, 00:03:14). This is a reframing of the many occasions where Alice grows in size and shrinks at will, similarly causing her anxiety as she has no control over those situations. However, as an independent adult woman, the live-action Alice exhibits more resilience in terms of her reactions to such attempts. Yet, the live-action film also places Alice in situations where her subjectivation is challenged. For instance, she is unaware of her engagement party as her family seeks to get her engaged with little opportunity for her to protest or outright reject the arrangement. Other than presenting to the viewer that patriarchy reigns supreme in Alice's life, it also shows that the world around Alice is aware of her resistance to it: why would a family want to hide their daughter's engagement from their daughter otherwise? This is another instance where it appears that the source material is updated to make Alice seem as if she is a contemporary woman placed in the circumstances of middle-class Victorian social

conditions. This is apparent in a comedic dialogue between Alice and her soon-to-be-mother-in-law: ““Do you know what I’ve always dreaded?” [says the mother-in-law,] ‘The decline of the aristocracy?’ [says Alice,] ‘Ugly grandchildren. But you’re lovely.’” (Burton, 2010, 00:08:20). Alice is presented as if she is aware of the historical decline of the British aristocracy, in a manner of language which makes it seem humorous to the modern viewer, making Alice seem even more like a stand-in for a contemporary young woman. In addition to this, the dialogue also reproduces the conflict between the non-existing potentially ugly child and the potential mother-in-law, who is assaulting the physical appearance of the said non-existent child, further reproducing the antagonism between the children’s self-subjectivation and the subjectivation that is forced on them.

While falling down the rabbit hole, Alice stumbles and rolls down uncomfortably, unlike the 1951 adaptation and the original novel. This change in the access to Wonderland is indicative of Alice’s status as an adult in the 2010 adaptation, which emphasizes Alice not fitting in with Wonderland constantly. Alice herself, as an adult, cannot believe that there exists a Wonderland and she is in it, which coincides with what happens in the novel and the 1951 adaptation, wherein her leaving Wonderland happens through waking up from a dream, confirming the suspicions that Wonderland is a dream place conjured up by Alice. However, the twist in the live-action adaptation is that this adaptation, unlike the original novel and the 1951 adaptation, treats Wonderland as an actually existing place, confirming this by letting Alice leave Wonderland by climbing up the same rabbit hole she fell through, and by allowing the Caterpillar to leave Wonderland as a butterfly, as well.

Alice asserts her independence and autonomy further when she falls down the rabbit hole and is confronted with all the outside influenced subjectivations of herself:

Since the moment I fell down that rabbit hole, I've been told what I must do and who I must be. I've been shrunk, stretched, scratched and stuffed into a teapot. I've been accused of being Alice and of not being Alice. But this is my dream! I'll decide where it goes from here. (Burton, 2010, 00:43:31)

In addition to asserting her autonomy, she also confronts her visit to Wonderland as a child, essentially rejecting being defined by her past visit to the place. Much like the struggle to subjectivize herself in the novel and the 1951 adaptation, Alice is presented as being able to achieve this subjectivation as an adult, essentially achieving what her child self could not. In realizing her autonomy within Wonderland, she also makes Wonderland real rather than a dream. The reality of Wonderland also speaks to her ability to subjectivize herself within the world. As an extension of herself, Wonderland is also manifested as a truly existing place within reality as she asserts herself. Alice notes this in her dialogue with the Caterpillar: "You seem so real. Sometimes I forget that this is all a dream" (Burton, 2010, 01:10:48). Alice states this in response to the Caterpillar's opinion that her issues about subjectivity are far less pronounced: "I said you were Not Hardly Alice. But you're much more her now. In fact, you're Almost Alice" (Burton, 2010, 01:10:28). This linear association between reality and Alice's subjectivation goes to prove that the 2010 adaptation is a re-imagination of the novel and the 1951 adaptation in its reframing of Alice's story from its reduction to a dream to a story that is as real as Alice is. As this is yet another Disney adaptation of the same novel, the live-action film seeks to reimagine the story itself, possibly in order to avoid simply reproducing the same story, only in live-action. Working with a prolific director

such as Tim Burton, Disney appears to have sought an adaptation which moves beyond the source material and its own previous adaptations. This results in the re-imagination of Alice as an adult woman, who seems to have moved beyond the issues of subjectivation she faced before.

Disney's revision of the story is also a visual transformation most clearly exhibited through the film's status as the first of the live-action Disney adaptations. Having done away with the popping colors and the fully animated characters, the visuality itself reflects the move towards a more realistic narrative. In many ways, it is fitting that this vanguard of Disney's live-action era is directed by Tim Burton, who is known for his Gothic themed films such as *The Corpse Bride* (Burton, 2005). Although it would be reaching to claim that *Alice in Wonderland* of Tim Burton is a Gothic reimagination, it nevertheless carries with it more serious undertones, as exemplified by Alice's status as a grown-up and the presence of Wonderland as an actually existing realm. As discussed in the literature review, Gothic children's media itself is a potentially healing genre (Coats, 2008), which allows child audiences to experience dark subject matters such as grief (seen in another Disney-Tim Burton collaboration, *Frankenweenie* (2012)) and social isolation (as seen in *Coraline* (Gaiman, 2002)). The successful applications of Gothic themes and visualities, together with the ensuing horror and fear, therefore is effective in children's films and literature precisely because of its deconstructive qualities: experiencing the representation of a fear is possibly one of the best ways to dissipate its effect. Coats (2008) argues that contemporary Gothic children's literature functions as the fairy tales of the past did, as both often represent struggles against tangible villains that represent the fears and the anxieties of children. This potentially

functions as a healing moment, wherein the fear and the anxiety dissipate together with the defeated villain. The Red Queen in the 2010 adaptation is intended to function in a similar manner, as she is far more present in this adaptation as a figure who can genuinely be a threat and induce fear in both Alice and the child audiences. Her representation of tyranny, and her eventual defeat therefore produces a moment in which the fear of being deprived of one's freedom dissipates, as would be the case in the defeat of a Gothic villain.

It should also be noted that Gothic children's fiction takes its audiences more seriously than many other lighthearted stories would. Rather than coddling children and denigrating their capacity for dealing with fear and anxiety, Gothic children's fiction instead allows for a truer representation of the social and personal issues they face. In this sense, Gothic children's fiction, and works such as Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland*, which contain such themes, have greater potential in being works of art that actually contribute to children's subjectivation of themselves.

Leaning into the struggles of growing up in a marriage of children's media and grim visuality (at least for Disney), it is apparent that Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* was influenced by how Gothic children's stories deal with children's issues, even though it is not an outright Gothic retelling of the original story. In this sense, this progenitor of the later Disney live-action adaptations clearly carries with it a gene of the Gothic children's literature and films, which is also in conflict with an ever-present commercial concern for fidelity.

The 2010 adaptation has a vision of authorship which seeks to reinvent the novel, which results in a fresh take in a novel while still including well-known scenes that viewers expected to see, which is arguably a conflicting set of attitudes towards fidelity to the original source. The aforementioned dialogue between the Caterpillar and Alice is therefore a product of this seemingly contradictory needs of a Disney adaptation, as “economic propriety long forbade adapters from tampering with speeches and characters and scenes these viewers were presumably expecting to see onscreen” (Leitch, 2007, p. 128). While including scenes such as the one with the Caterpillar, Burton still plays with the contents of the dialogue, which in reference to the original “Who are you?” section that was so prominent in the 1951 adaptation, replaces the contents in line with the more assertive Alice seen in the live-action. Instead of the Caterpillar who asks “who are you?”, the viewer gets a Caterpillar who says “you’re Almost Alice” (Burton, 2010, 01:10:28). The viewers who were aware of the original scenes get the added benefit of observing the transformation of the adult Alice in relation to the younger Alice seen in the previous iterations. Unlike the novel and the previous adaptation, Alice cries only once in the live-action film, which is when she remembers her visit to Wonderland as a child. The only moment in the film wherein she expresses her melancholy through tears is when she is reminded of her state as a child, which goes to show that her melancholy stems from her inability to subjectivize herself as a child. In this sense, the adaptation is also a sequel, as it reimagines Alice while not outright negating the original work and the earlier adaptation.

This makes the 2010 adaptation a revised version (Leitch, 2007) of the original source and the previous adaptation, rather than a simple update, as it reimagines Alice as

someone who is able to overcome the issues of subjectivation present in the earlier works. The 2010 adaptation, or rather the sequel as has been pointed out, imagines Alice as overcoming the tragedy of being a child, of overcoming the inability to subjectivize herself. While positing that, after all, Alice *has* the ability to subjectivize herself, the tragedy lies in the fact that she was unable to do so as a child. The consolation of the 2010 adaptation is that she negates the institution of marriage that is hoisted towards her, instead seeking to join in a business venture in establishing trade routes to Hong Kong with her late father's business partner, who is also the father of the man that she rejects to marry. In this colonialist turn which presents itself as a feminist reimagination of Alice, Fanon is once again proven right in the inability of the oppressed to subjectivize themselves without doing so in reference to the oppressors: "For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white" (Fanon, 1986, p. 12). And for the colonized mind of the child, the subjectivation comes in the form of establishing her autonomy whilst remaining within the colonial structure that is presented to her, rising to the top instead of rejecting the system of oppression.

5.3 Conclusion

The original novel and its two adaptations present Alice as a child whose "de-subjection" (Foucault, 1997, p. 282) of herself leads to her imagination of Wonderland, wherein she struggles to establish her own subjectivity. Yet this imagination is also filled with parodies of the existing institutions as imagined by a child. Alice's struggle against these farcical authority figures is therefore a struggle to subjectivize herself in her own terms, which plays out differently in the original work with its 1950 adaptation, and the 2010 live-action adaptation. The earlier two works consider Alice as failing at

establishing her own subjectivation as she wakes up and fails to be creative and shape reality, which is the source of her melancholy and tragedy throughout the novel.

Meanwhile, the 2010 adaptation considers Alice as an adult whose imagination of Wonderland exists in reality; as she is able to subjectivize herself so does she bring this fantasy realm into life. The Gothic themes present in this adaptation further enhances the moments of subjectivation, as the work takes its child audiences seriously in its treatment of the villains and the scaled-up stakes of the struggle faced by Alice by bringing Wonderland into reality. This seemingly emancipatory subjectivation, however, fails at being as such, since Alice grows up to become a part of her family's company; rejecting one system of oppression and joining another in which she is at the top. As considered by Fanon (1986), this is the same as a colonial subject who empowers themselves, but all the while remaining within the system of oppression and reproducing it by taking part in it. While this retelling has a darker edge in its live-action cast, and the grim visualities it presents, this conflict is not played as a twisted and dark ending as a Gothic story would: it is played straight, so to speak.

CHAPTER 6:

IMMORTAL CHILDHOOD IN NEVERLAND

The antagonism between growing up and remaining a child is even more pronounced within *Peter and Wendy* by J. M. Barrie. The novel tells a story of a boy who refuses to grow up and a young girl who has little qualms about taking on adult responsibilities. The antagonism between Peter and Wendy, respectively, manifests itself in the depiction of these two stances in the form of Neverland, and London, which is where the story begins. Having lost his shadow, Peter seeks it out in London, where he looks for it in Wendy's family house. Finding his shadow there, Peter leads Wendy and his brothers to Neverland where they encounter the orphaned Lost Boys and Captain Hook with his crew, who serve as the primary antagonists of the novel. While Peter fulfills the role of the hero, fighting with Captain Hook, Wendy is given a more responsible role in her relationship with the Lost Boys, for whom she becomes a motherly figure. In the end, Wendy and Peter diverge in their opinions about growing up, with Peter being resistant to change and Wendy embracing the possibility of growing up. Leaving Peter in Neverland, Wendy returns home along with her brothers. This story about growing up and the conflicting reactions to the idea of growing up on the part of children lends itself to considering issues of masculinity and femininity, and their respective relationship with becoming adults. Similar to the dualities between femininity and masculinity,

growing up and remaining a child; the juxtaposition of real life and fantasy also fuels the melancholy of the boy who does not want to grow up, and the girl who is forced to grow up.

6.1 Immature Masculinity and Mature Femininity

The novel takes the relationship between Peter and Wendy as its central issue. As the two often clash with each other with regard to the possibility of growing up, their relationship is often defined by their position on this matter. This is most visible in the first moments of their meeting, where Wendy finds Peter on her bedroom floor, crying because he cannot stick his shadow to himself. She takes on a more mature role as she consoles him and stitches the shadow with needle and thread, which finally consoles him and gets him to open up about himself. Peter's aversion to growing up manifests itself in his reaction towards Wendy teasing him: "She also said she would give him a kiss if he liked, but Peter did not know what she meant, and he held out his hand expectantly" (Barrie, 2018, p. 23). As the boy who does not want to grow up, Peter is depicted as disinterested in Wendy's advances. In both of these instances, Peter exhibits a degree of immaturity which coincides with his desire to always "be a little boy and to have fun" (Barrie, 2018, p. 23). This characterization of Peter is fueled by a kind of masculinity that prides itself on being immature. The absence of strict boundaries that are placed on little girls, but not little boys, compounds Peter's desire to never grow up, as it is a luxury provided to him by society.

Following this construction of masculinity, Peter always pretends as if he is responsible for the achievements of Wendy. For instance, when she stitches his shadow back on, he

insists on how clever he is (Barrie, 2018). Prior to this, despite having cried only moments ago, he declares “Oh, I sha’n’t cry”, holding onto the idea that “he had never cried in his life” (Barrie, 2018, p. 22). This absurd relationship with reality exhibited by Peter is also suggestive of his relationship with Neverland, the name of which is a similarly absurd contradiction with reality. This is further cemented in the way Peter rejects Wendy’s role in getting his shadow back, which makes his self-absorbed rejection of reality also misogynistic. “You did a little” (Barrie, 2018, p. 22) declares Peter to Wendy, taking credit for sewing his shadow back on.

This is also related to his helplessness mere moments ago. As he committed the cardinal sin of masculinity by crying, he finds it necessary to reassert himself through an exaggeration of his role in getting his shadow back, which necessitates a rejection of outside help. In many ways, the fantasy elements of this story are elements of an immature male fantasy. As stated by White (2021), “Peter Pan can be understood as James Barrie’s alter ego, an elaboration of Barrie’s unconscious fantasies and defenses” (p. 72). While Barrie’s relationship to this fantasy is not quite apparent, there are moments in which this connection manifests itself.

There are instances during which even the narrator is overtaken by this aspect of the novel, which is quite disrespectful towards Wendy, and women in general. As Peter explains the origin of fairies, the narrator states the following: “Tedious talk this, but being a stay-at-home she liked it” (Barrie, 2018, p. 24). The free-spirited Peter is contrasted with the closeted Wendy, who is supposed to be infatuated with Peter’s knowledge of the fantasy world. The presence of Tinker Bell, a fairy whose defining

characteristic is her jealousy of Peter's affection for Wendy, further reinforces the novel's uncritical approach to Peter's desire to never grow up. As Peter and Wendy kiss one another playfully, Tinker Bell is depicted as "darting about again, using offensive language" (Barrie, 2018, p. 26).

The relationship between Peter and Wendy takes a different turn as Peter attempts to persuade her to come to Neverland by appealing to her motherly instincts: "you could tuck us in at night" (Barrie, 2018, p. 28). This part of the novel is quite disturbing as Peter is characterized as manipulating Wendy into leaving, being described as "sly" and "frightfully cunning" (Barrie, 2018, p. 28). Coming from a boy who was crying just a few moments ago, this shift in attitude is quite stark. As stated by White (2021), Peter moves between a "Kleinian urge to dominate and control his objects, and a Greenian urge to shut down and move his desires to level zero" (p. 72). The shift between innocent flirtations between Peter and Wendy coupled with the almost parent-child relationship established between the two correlates with this duality within Peter, which pigeonholes Wendy into roles in relation to his needs: she is not allowed to be her own person without reference to Peter's needs. This reduces Wendy into a narrative device devoid of agency, until she leaves Neverland and Peter with it. Similar to how Alice could not subjectivize herself fully as a child, Wendy also struggles to do the same. Only this time, she is also contending with the social roles bestowed upon her by the patriarchy, either as an object of desire or a motherly figure, seemingly shifting between these roles as the boy who does not want to grow up wishes her to.

Essentially, Peter and Wendy engage in gender performances (Butler, 1999). Peter's heroism and irresponsibility construct him as a male character, and his gender identity is essentially established through his playfully characterized actions. His conflict with Captain Hook is the central point which reinforces his masculinity. Similar to Peter, Captain Hook is also described as a masculine character, who expresses this through his conflict with Peter. As they are quite similar in this regard, Peter and Hook have little more than these playful expressions of masculinity as the source of their conflict: there is little political, ethical or a conflict that is otherwise external to their masculinities.

Despite being a child who is so young as to be essentially ungendered, Peter constructs a sense of masculinity within the narrative that situates him as over-the-top: "there never was a cockier boy" (Barrie, 2018, p. 22). In this sense, it is his attitude that masculinizes him: "an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts" (Butler, 1999, p. XV). Wendy and Tinker Bell, on the other hand, also exhibit this performance of gender through their respective performances of distinct feminine-coded actions. Tinker Bell's femininity is often emphasized through her consumption habits, referring to her luxurious boudoir which consists of rare furniture. Meanwhile, Wendy's femininity is exhibited through her inclination towards feminine-coded labor: "The cooking, I can tell you, kept her nose to the pot, and even if there was nothing in it, even though there was no pot, she had to keep watching that it came aboil just the same" (Barrie, 2018, p. 64). The two primary female characters are defined through their relation to Peter, or the value they provide to him. In this sense, their subjectivation is mostly devoid of agency, as their expressions of gender are no more than just that: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is

performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler, 1999, p. 33). These expressions are without self-actualization, and they cannot exhibit the same autonomy exhibited by Alice in the 2010 adaptation.

The gender expressions of these characters are essentially an insertion on the part of the author, which often clashes with the establishment of Peter as the boy who does not want to grow up. In one instance, Peter imagines himself as the father, and Wendy as the mother of the Lost Boys: “there is nothing more pleasant of an evening for you and me when the day’s toil is over than to rest by the fire with the little ones near by” (Barrie, 2018, p. 90). A short while later, Peter also states that he considers his own relation to Wendy as that “of a devoted son” (Barrie, 2018, p. 90). They play around with distinct social roles assigned to men and women, as if they are testing whether they would fulfill these roles adequately. In this sense, both Wendy and Peter look for opportunities to grow up and fulfill these roles in actuality. While it would be expected on the part of Wendy, as she is grown up in a traditional family, it is surprising to see Peter imagine fulfilling traditional roles as he is supposed to be the one who ran away precisely from these social roles.

In many ways, the novel functions as a guide for kids deemed irresponsible, to acclimatize them to the traditional social roles through expressions of traditional masculinity and femininity, as well as presenting an example of these social roles being experimented with in a world without adults, essentially putting on the adult responsibilities on the shoulders of Wendy and Peter. Ironically, the absence of adults functions as a way for the adult mindset to seep through the minds of Peter and Wendy,

who begin to act like adults. Fanon (1986) considers the interpellation of such social constructs through the gaze of the colonizer: “I move slowly in the world, accustomed now to seek no longer for upheaval. I progress by crawling. And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am *fixed*” (p. 116). Both Wendy and Peter have the ability (or the curse) to effectively gaze at themselves, with the intention to fix the condition of childhood: to grow up. Both Peter and Wendy are the colonized subjects in relation to the adults, as they turn the gaze of the grown-ups onto themselves in the fantasy realm where they have to fulfill the role of adults. In many ways, this is the sidestepping of the confessional practice which Foucault considers critical in establishing one’s own subjectivity and autonomy: “If, in Foucault’s genealogy, the (Western) subject has to bond himself or herself to the truth he or she is required to produce about himself or herself, in the colonial context the injunction to tell the truth is disregarded from the very beginning, both by the colonizer and by the colonized” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 80). The social roles they are forced to fulfill in relation to the Lost Boys lead Peter and Wendy to a subsumption to the practices of traditional adulthood, and to fulfilling the social roles that are readily available to them.

6.2 Neverland as Prospero - Peter’s Island

In considering the psychology of the colonized subject, Mannoni (1964) produced a text titled *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, which is also referred to by Fanon (1986) quite frequently. Reading Shakespeare’s (1978) *The Tempest* in relation to colonization has been popular, as its primary setting of an island wherein an exiled noble Prospero binds the spirit Ariel and the monster-like Caliban to himself through sorcery is at least a distant reflection of the ongoing colonization efforts present

when Shakespeare wrote the play. The argument here is that Prospero's relation to Ariel and Caliban is reflected in how Peter relates to Tinker Bell, both in terms of how fantasy is utilized to depict a relationship of subjugation, as well as the de-subjection of the said enslaved subjects and the relation of colonization and the two depictions of the island where Peter and Prospero appear to dominate other inhabitants.

As the refuge of Peter's fantasies of boyhood, this aversion to the self-subjection of Wendy and Tinker Bell is most succinctly exhibited in Neverland. The island is, above all, a refuge for boyhood as Peter exhibits it. In addition to the fantastical creatures in the form of fairies and mermaids, the island also contains an antagonist to play against in the form of Captain Hook. It is essentially made for Peter, and like many other refuges, the island serves as both a hiding place and a prison. As the child who does not want to grow up, Peter is forced to remain within Neverland, having the possibility of preserving his childhood and the ability to resist the eventualities of time, he is a prisoner of his own abilities. Like the Prospero of *The Tempest* (Shakespeare, 1978), who never lets go of his rightful claim on the Duchy of Milan, Peter Pan is stuck in his ways, unwilling to abandon his childhood.

Peter is like Prospero in many more aspects, not the least of which is the master and slave dynamic between Peter and Tinker Bell. Like Caliban and Ariel, Tinker Bell is bound to Peter and his commitment to Neverland, and to never growing up. Tinker Bell's jealousy of Wendy could be seen from this front, as Peter's affinity for Wendy could be seen as his desire to grow up as Wendy does, leaving Neverland and Tinker Bell to wither. While Wendy carries the burden of being the subject of desire for Peter,

Tinker Bell suffers from the opposite, as being ignored leads her to wither and die like all fairies: “Oh, no. Children know such a lot now. Soon they don't believe in fairies, and every time a child says ‘I don't believe in fairies’ there is a fairy somewhere that falls down dead” (Barrie, 2018, p. 24). Essentially, Tinker Bell is the colonized subject whose subjectivity is subsumed under that of children such as Peter, with whom she has established a master and slave dynamic.

Yet, this dynamic is unacknowledged by the two of them, as Tinker Bell willingly submits herself to Peter, who banishes her. This is the opposite of another master-slave dynamic present in *The Tempest*, in which Ariel engages in a transactional relationship with his master Prospero, “Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains, / Let me remember thee what thou hast promised, / Which is not yet performed me” (Shakespeare, 1978, p. 38). She performs her tasks in exchange for Prospero’s assurances that she would one day be freed. Tinker Bell has no such desire, as she is more like Caliban, who seeks out a new master immediately after Prospero releases him as well as the island. In one instance, Tinker Bell faces the peril of death in order to save Peter: “‘It was poisoned, Peter,’ she told him softly; ‘and now I am going to be dead.’ ‘O Tink, did you drink it to save me?’ ‘Yes.’” (Barrie, 2018, p. 113). In this sense, Tinker Bell is the slave who could not subjectivize herself, much like Caliban. Mannoni’s (1964) claim about Caliban is also applicable to Tinker Bell, which is that “Caliban does not complain of being exploited; he complains rather of being betrayed” (p. 106). In this sense, Tinker Bell represents the colonial subject who is dependent on the colonizer to define her sense of self. On another front, Wendy is comparable to Ariel, as she takes part in Peter’s world willingly, but without subjecting her desire to grow up to Peter’s

own desires. Like Ariel, who stands apart from the Caliban and Tinker Bell as a free-spirited slave who values his freedom above all, even in servitude, Wendy also does not let go of her self-agency, which leads her to return to her family and normal life in London.

The role of Peter in this dynamic is that of the master, which is a derivation of the colonizing subject. Fanon (1986) considers this to be a futile exercise in ending boredom: “The white colonial is motivated only by his desire to put an end to a feeling of dissatisfaction, on the level of Adlerian overcompensation” (p. 84). Peter, in his inability to become a fully realized grown-up, seeks to fulfill himself in other areas such as the previously described exercises in masculinity in relation to Captain Hook and Wendy, as well as the hierarchical relationship he has formed with the residents of Neverland such as Tinker Bell and the Lost Boys. In rejecting growing up, Peter develops alternative paths for himself, which allows him to establish his dominance without growing up.

While dealing with his own subjectivation in conflict with growing up, Peter also reproduces the dominant social imaginary of the Edwardian era (1901-1910). Much like how he imagines being a father with Wendy as his wife (and mother, too), with Tinker Bell and the mermaids remaining interested in him, Peter also reproduces the external social antagonisms within Neverland. In addition to the mermaids who throw themselves at Peter; the pirates led by Captain Hook, who prove to be the main antagonist for Peter; there is also a tribe of Native American people who reside in Neverland, they are a part of Peter Pan’s fantasy world which borrows from the common imperial conception of

the world. Unlike the pirates, the natives occupy a neutral space for the most part despite their negative characterization: in line with the Edwardian affirmation of colonialism and the racist paternalism exhibited towards the non-Western societies, Peter's antagonism towards the natives takes on a subdued importance, seemingly occupying a part of the scenery in the main antagonism between the White protagonist Peter and the White antagonist Captain Hook. In this sense, the colonial imagination of the natives is represented uncritically, and is a reproduction of the basest conceptions of what remains outside the metropole.

The Tempest presents a colonized subject in the form of Caliban, who is depicted as both violent yet subservient to Prospero, while also being visibly monstrous. In terms of his violent tendencies and his visage, he is the colonized subject as the colonizers imagine them. Yet his subservience is the realization of de-subjection on the part of the colonized subject. Ariel, another character subservient to Prospero, can be contrasted with Caliban in his desire to achieve freedom. Much like the depiction of Caliban as a stand-in for this de-subjection of the colonial subject in *The Tempest*, the natives in Neverland similarly function as a comic relief outside of the main struggle of the novel. In order to justify his slavery, Caliban must be described as something other than human in the fullest sense of the word: "The language employed by colonial discourse in *The Tempest* portrays Caliban as inhuman and this makes his unjust treatment justified by the colonizer. He is repeatedly described using metaphors of earth (as Ariel is given metaphors of air)" (Avdić, 2017, p. 61). This association with the land is in contrast with the world-shaping active agency of the colonizers, which is the function fulfilled by Peter in the novel. Like a colonial, Peter views the natives antagonistically while

underestimating them at the same time: “Now remember, the Indian is cunning [...] but not intelligent. Therefore, we simply surround them and take them by surprise” (Luske et al., 1953, 0:34:43).

Peter also utilizes language in a way that dehumanizes the natives: he thinks they can be cunning, like predators in the wild; but not intelligent, a distinction usually reserved for humans. Through this exclusionary language, Peter effectively disregards the higher reasoning of the natives and treats them as part of nature, but not above it like he is.

Fanon describes the important role played by language in this process of dehumanization quite succinctly: “It is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” (Fanon, 1986, p. 17). However, in this instance, it is the speech of the colonizers which defines the colonized subject. Much like parents who define their children who do not have the capacity to form complex ideas to express themselves, so do the colonizers paternalistically engage with the colonized subjects. The way Peter engages with the natives is similar to the way he treats himself with regard to growing up. His actions indicate that he is essentially attempting to grow up without real-life responsibilities, which results in a play-imitation of having grown up on his part. The solution to this is similar to how a colonizer can construct their own subjectivity:

Therefore, the colonized subject also needs to release himself or herself from the colonizer’s gaze: in order to productively twist the effects of the interpellation of the colonizer, the colonized has to refuse and to escape objectivation by learning not to look at himself or herself through the white gaze. (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 80)

Learning to look at oneself through one's own eyes is therefore a valuable skill which allows someone to become free of the social responsibilities and frameworks constructed for them, essentially having the freedom to say "no".

6.3 Film Adaptations of Peter Pan

Jealousy Brings Melancholy: Peter Pan (1953)

The first Disney adaptation of *Peter and Wendy*, which dropped Wendy's name from the title and was called *Peter Pan*, was released in 1953, as part of the first wave of Disney animated adaptations, in similar conditions to *Alice in Wonderland*. Although the original work was novelized, this animated adaptation also referred to J. M. Barrie's original play (1928) as its source. Its fidelity to the original text is spotty, as it replaced some parts while retelling others in their entirety.

Prior to considering the internal workings of this adaptation, it would be beneficial to refer to why this adaptation matters in the first place. As part of the broader Disney adaptations, the film adaptation in this case also seeks to bring canonical children's texts into the realm of animated films. As considered by Leitch (2007), Barthes suggests that writing is an after-the-fact exercise wherein writing, whatever it may be, does not exist prior to having been written: "Writers are like the old lady in E. M. Forster's anecdote who asks, 'How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?'" (p. 13). Adaptations, on the other hand, exist as exercises in reading prior to becoming writing themselves. This distinction is quite important in considering every adaptation, as the act of reading, or even the purpose of reading can be critical in understanding adaptations and their relevance. As far as *Peter Pan* is concerned, the three adaptations considered in this

study all revise the canonical children's work within their social norms, essentially translating the original to an audience who is decidedly (and fortunately), without Edwardian sensibilities. Yet, there is also a tension between the fidelity to the original source and the revision itself, which at times manifests itself in the regurgitation of regressive social attitudes, such as the one presented with regard to the natives and straightforward colonialism in the 1953 adaptations.

Similar to how melancholy and delirium were viewed throughout history as having different sources that range from “black bile” (Foucault, 1988, p. 86) to social alienation (p. 216), the primary conflicts faced by Peter, Wendy, and Tinker Bell are also reframed in each adaptation to some extent. One of the most prominent transitions occurs in the quasi-romantic relationship between Tinker Bell and Peter Pan, as well as how Wendy is attached to this situation. The original novel considers Tinker Bell far more fairy-like than a woman, yet as the adaptations take the character on, Tinker Bell starts to become portrayed even more like “a woman scorned” (Congrave, 1797, p. 63). In the 1953 adaptation, Tinker Bell views herself in a hand mirror, admiring herself. In doing so, however, she questions the appearance of her thighs. Similarly, she is depicted as being jealous of Wendy, to the point of destroying her reflection on the water. The representation of reflections and second faces are common throughout the original novel and the film adaptations, as Peter struggles with his shadow, Tinker Bell admires herself in a mirror, and Wendy does so as well in the 2023 live-action adaptation. It is not a coincidence that Peter struggles with his shadow, an image left by his own body, while the primary female characters struggle with mirrors. Mirrors are described as “the male inscribed literary text” which “conceal[s] her dreadful and bloody link to nature”

(Gilbert & Gubar, 2000, p. 15). This general statement about mirrors has a point with regard to both Wendy and Tinker Bell, as these characters are originally channeled through the view of the male author, who appraises Wendy in terms of her motherly qualities, while for Tinker Bell, it is her physical appearance that is deemed of value. Rather than their autonomous assessments of themselves, they are evaluated according to the function they provide for men.

Unable to make her voice heard and always communicating with the outside world through Peter's translation, Tinker Bell exemplifies the importance of language and speech with regard to establishing her autonomy. As seen in the way mirrors are utilized, Tinker Bell defines herself through her appearance partly because she cannot make her voice heard: "The alienation may be expressed by patients as a sense of a disembodied self, or a selfless body, or to use R.D. Laing's term, a divided self" (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 22). The expressed self of Tinker Bell is quite divided from her subjective self especially because she cannot utilize language. As Fanon emphasized the importance of having the ability to speak for oneself in establishing one's own subjectivity, the absence of speech on the part of Tinker Bell is quite relevant due to her inability to subjectivize herself. Tinker Bell's competition with Wendy is therefore a result of her inability to express herself to anyone other than Peter: she is dependent on him for her own subjectivation; without him, she would be unable to communicate with anyone. The following line by Captain Hook from the 1953 adaptation expresses Tinker Bell's situation clearly: "The way of a man with a maid. Taking the best years of her life and then... casting her aside like an old glove!" (Luske et al., 1953, 0:53:44). Tinker Bell is characterized as a scorned lover, and objectified in her abandoned state. The

jealousy of Tinker Bell is therefore a jealousy of necessity and desperation, as her attachment to Peter is born out of her ability to communicate with him in a manner she cannot communicate with anyone else. The shared language is a prison for her, an acceptable status quo which is disturbed by Wendy. As considered by Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987), this division between the subjective self and the expressed body produces an alienation, and this relationship between Tinker Bell and Peter is a temporary fix for this alienation on the part of Tinker Bell, a momentary break from the melancholy of her inability to subjectivize herself.

Neverland During the Blitz: Return to Never Land (2002)

As a sequel to the original novel and its adaptation, *Return to Never Land* (Budd, 2002) imagines a grown-up Wendy and her children, essentially affirming her motherly representation in the original story and imagining what it would be like if her more rebellious daughter Jane were to go to Neverland with Peter. Unlike the Edwardian sense of peace in Britain, this time the story is set during World War II, in the darkest days of the Blitz. Understandably affected by the war, Jane is a far more level-headed and down-to-earth character who is quite mature, perhaps having grown up far too quickly for her own right. This is affirmed in her argument with her brother Daniel about Neverland and Peter Pan: “Daniel, please! I’ve no time for fun and games” (Budd, 2002, 0:09:21). Her journey is the opposite of Wendy’s in many ways. While Wendy is afraid of growing up, and learns to accept that she is growing up by the end of her story, Jane’s journey is about getting her to rediscover her childhood, essentially attempting to resolve the tension between growing up and enjoying life. Jane’s journey could be seen as a response to Mr. Darling, who characterizes growing up as stopping enjoying childish

games and stories in the original story and its 1953 adaptation. This sequel, on the other hand, challenges this conception of adulthood and imagines Jane as being able to enjoy her childhood and grow up without positing the two ideas against each other, attempting to resolve the dichotomy of adulthood and childhood by reimagining growing up as a soft process that does not have to negate childhood. This is quite interrelated with language, as both Mr. Darling's framing of denigrating childish games and *Return to Never Land*'s reframing of growing up has its source in linguistic expressions: "Language in Foucault's conception 'never deceives or reveals' rather as Foucault states: 'Language, it is played. The importance, therefore, of the notion of game'" (Davidson, 1997, p. 4; Peters, 2007, p. 186). In this sense, both Mr. Darling in the original story and the 2002 adaptation construct their own suppositions as to what growing up truly means. While the original story constructs it as a negation of childhood, the 2002 adaptation seeks to reconcile the two states of existence.

While the sequel somewhat negates the main ideas surrounding the process of growing up in the original story, it nevertheless repeats several aspects of the main story to the extent that the sequel could very well be mistaken for an adaptation of the 1953 adaptation. Inasmuch as Jane is the protagonist of the film, she goes through similar scenes as Wendy does, essentially replacing the protagonist without altering much of the plot. As *Neverland* is a mythical realm where old struggles go on indefinitely and nothing is learned in the normal flow of events without the intrusion of outside characters such as Wendy and Jane, it is essentially a setting opposed to the basic conception of storytelling which includes character growth and thus has to depend on its existing as a negation of the real world.

Consequently, the adaptations make use of this tension between the real world and Neverland. In line with Foucault (1972) and his conception of discourse as a process that is established on the basis of the archive, which is “*the general system of the formation and transformation of statements*” (p. 130) across history, this dichotomy plays out in the linguistic reframing of the subjects in question as what defines concepts such as childhood, growing up, or even war is transformed in the discourse. As Mr. Darling’s conception of childhood clashes with that of Wendy, who encourages her children to believe in the stories of Peter Pan and the existence of a magical reality in the form of Neverland, so does the conception of conflict and war. As the film takes place during World War II, the framing of this external conflict is one that negates hope and begets fear and destruction. Meanwhile, the perpetual conflict in Neverland as it occurs between Peter Pan and Captain Hook is depicted as a heroic adventure on the part of Peter. More importantly, conflict is the normal state of affairs in Neverland, while not being characterized as such in the real world of Wendy and Jane. In this sense, the real-world and Neverland have distinct archives (Foucault, 1972) for the various discourses present in the narrative. While it is expected in the real world for one to grow up, it is a taboo for Neverland, and while war and conflict are things that bring people down in the real world, it is not so in Neverland where the regular state of affairs and what constitutes as fun in Neverland is the physical conflict between Peter and Captain Hook.

These contradictory frames for events in the real world and Neverland are repeated across the film. For instance, Peter proclaims the following with regard to his ability to fly: “Well, of course you can’t, but I can! I guess I’m just smarter than you” (Budd,

2002, 0:33:36). Equating his flying ability with intelligence rather than the pixie dust provided to him by Tinker Bell, he exhibits his unfounded arrogance while erasing Tinker Bell's silent contributions, while also projecting Neverland's playful use of language and meaning wherein convenience and self-interest guide what constitutes as truth. In this sense, Neverland is devoid of what Foucault calls "confessional practices" (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 73) which are among the primary tools for "the production of truth" (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 71). Rather, producing truths in Neverland depends on various pretenses with the chief among them being the pretense that time does not move forward and one does not have to grow up.

A Turn to Reality: Peter Pan and Wendy (2023)

The 2023 live-action adaptation of *Peter Pan* carries with it many of the choices present in the recent flurry of Disney live-action adaptations such as *Alice in Wonderland* (Burton, 2010). Carrying with it the desire to transgress the boundaries of the original novel and the earlier adaptations, it is a film that would be classified as a revisionist adaptation. As stated by Leitch (2007), "texts remain alive only to the extent that they can be rewritten" (p. 12), which is the case for *Peter Pan and Wendy* (Lowery, 2023). The stylistic choices made for the film seek to take away the inherently juvenile aspect of the original and the earlier adaptations: the colors are muted, the pirates' shanties are serious, and Neverland is quite realistic in that they did not seek to alter the landscape beyond showing the rocky shores of islands such as the Faroes and Newfoundland. As stated by Wendy: "It's so much more real" (Lowery, 2023, 0:55:00). Similar to Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* in these respects, the adaptation takes its child audiences more seriously through its representation of darker subject matters and a villain who is

less of a cardboard cut-out of an evil person, and a more three-dimensional tragic character.

This realistic depiction of Neverland, and the fact that the main antagonism between Peter and Captain Hook has become much more personal with the history of these characters having become much more intricate, makes this adaptation fly in the face of the original story and the preceding two Disney adaptations. The conflicts and the clashing personalities are feeding on realistic contradictions of character motivations. The fact that the conflict within Neverland is not timeless, but instead has a history of its own brings the narrative in line with the realistic visual depictions brought about by the live-action shooting of the film. The conflict between Hook and Peter is rooted in Peter's aversion to growing up, which is treated as his main flaw. It is stated that Captain Hook was once one of the Lost Boys (now including kids of all genders), and Peter's best friend. Having missed his mother, he was banished from Neverland by Peter; cast out into the sea. Having been saved by Mr. Smee, the boatswain of the pirates in all versions of the story, Captain Hook grew up among the crew: "I'd have surely perished, were I not saved by this man here. There I was, rescued and raised by pirates" (Lowery, 2023, 1:04:27). In all instances of the story, Mr. Smee has been subtly depicted as being a fatherly figure for Captain Hook. In *Return to Never Land* (Budd, 2002), Captain Hook yells out "Smee! Save me!" (0:29:39) and Mr. Smee consoles him when he cries as well. This relationship is also pronounced in the live-action adaptation, wherein Captain Hook often turns to Mr. Smee for advice and help. In this sense, his status as one of the Lost Boys is quite well-established.

In many respects, Peter and Captain Hook are represented as paralleling one another. For instance, in line with the earlier installations, Peter is depicted by one of Wendy's brothers as someone who "doesn't care about time" (Lowery, 2023, 0:01:28). Similarly, and perhaps more extremely, Captain Hook hates clocks, as it is one of the rules of his ship that no clocks be allowed. In this sense, the primary antagonist of the film appears to be Peter's aversion to growing up, which is paralleled by Captain Hook's traumatic experience as a child which precludes him from growing beyond wanting to take revenge from Peter. Just as stated by Peter, Neverland is a place "where there are no rules, no schools, no bedtimes, no mothers and fathers and most of all..." as stated by Wendy, "no growing up" (Lowery, 2023, 0:14:26). For Peter, the absence of all these parts of life and the unchanging status quo is a safe haven for Peter, whereas for Hook, it is the absence of her mother and the fact that Peter hurt him is the unchanging parts of Neverland. Even though Hook has grown up, Wendy thinks that "this is what it looks like when you grow up wrong" (Lowery, 2023, 01:04:50). The tension between growing up and remaining a child present across the adaptations and the original story is given a new perspective as the binary of growing up and remaining a child is disturbed by the introduction of growing up wrong, which is the source of melancholy for Hook.

It appears that Peter's commitment to not growing up has become the primary rule in Neverland, with the seemingly anti-authoritarian escape from parents has turned into an authority on its own. This is almost like an ideological commitment to not growing up on the part of Peter, which also appears to be enforced on the rest of the Lost Boys. This is comparable to Fanon's conception of a colonized individual arriving at the metropole: "The black man who arrives in France changes because to him the country represents the

Tabernacle” (Fanon, 1986, p. 23). As Peter values Neverland to the extent that he cannot live anywhere else, it has become a taboo for him. Those wanting to leave such as Hook must be wrong, according to Peter, which leads him to establish an informal hierarchy within Neverland. As he derives his rightfulness from his desire to never grow up, he could not be wrong for leading others to Neverland and keeping them there. As Fanon states about a man boarding a ship to France from the colony, “In the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power” (Fanon, 1986, p. 23). Consequently, the conflict between Hook and Peter, as personal as it is, is also a conflict about the absence of hierarchy and its informal reconstruction. Peter, though there are no laws or fealties present, is the de facto leader of the Lost Boys, which is an informal hierarchy on its own. Such informal hierarchies are common among preschool children (Strayer & Strayer, 1976). The Lost Boys, without their parents or any other figures for guidance, gravitate towards the one who appears to be the most capable individual, which imbues in him an authority that may not even be present in the original authority of parents: “the absence of strong formal leadership may, somewhat ironically, trigger tendencies toward stronger informal hierarchical differentiation” (Oedzes et al., 2017, p. 312). The melancholy of Hook is partially a result of his inability to escape from either the formal hierarchy of parenthood or the informal hierarchy of Peter, which is also alluded by his role as a pirate captain. As some ship crews rebelled against the authority of maritime empires and established democratically run ships (Chartier, 2010), many of them nevertheless became run by violent captains. In many ways, Hook’s tyranny in running his ship is a representation of both “grow[ing] up wrong” (Lowery, 2023, 01:04:50), and the failed anti-authoritarian experiment in Neverland. The melancholy present in this adaptation is therefore caused

by the tension between the idealized freedom of Neverland and the absence of such an idyllic reality, as emphasized by the visually gritty atmosphere of the live-action adaptation.

It is not a coincidence that in one of the final shots of the film, Tiger Lily looks above at Wendy, Peter Pan, and the Lost Boys leaving Neverland, essentially leaving the island to her tribe. While Tiger Lily is quite lacking in terms of existing as a character with her own motivations, this final framing of Neverland suggests a decolonization of sorts, which leaves Neverland to the people and creatures of Neverland. This also ironically reinforces the idea that the natives of Neverland (who are unmistakably representations of Native Americans as Tiger Lily regularly uses phrases in Cree) belong to a timeless and idealized place with no relation to the modern world. As stated by Fanon with regard to an extremely derogatory representation of Black people in a French film, “to make him talk pidgin is to fasten him to the effigy of him, to snare him, to imprison him, the eternal victim of an essence, of an appearance for which he is not responsible” (Fanon, 1986, p. 35). This is also applicable to the Native American representation in *Peter Pan and Wendy* (Lowery, 2023), which, while attempting to represent decolonization, also resorts to representing Native Americans as the White people imagined them to be, replicating the noble savage trope (Harvey, 2010) of the past as imprisoning them to Neverland without a thought to also take Tiger Lily to the real world alongside all the other characters.

6.4 Conclusion

The male fantasy of J. M. Barrie (2012) has been adapted time and again, each with its own updates with regard to the gender norms, representation of colonized communities, and their own take on the concept of growing up. While the original work took a binary stance in relation to growing up, later adaptations resorted to reimagining the concept, with the 1953 adaptation replicating the original take on the subject, the 2002 adaptation reorienting the concept to represent a child in search of her childhood, and finally, the 2023 adaptation which considered growing up as an undefined process that can be as traumatic as it can be an ordinary feature of life. Above all, however, the rejection of growing up and its later acceptance is a struggle for creating one's own truth in every version of the story. Through Foucault's idea on producing one's own subjectivity (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018) applied to the concept of growing up, characters come to terms with their own reality and then gain the opportunity to establish their own subjectivity, while also being subject to the almost colonial subjugation (Fanon, 1986) of what it means to be an adult as it is hoisted on them by the world. The melancholy of characters present in the story feeds on this tension between growing up on one's own terms, and growing up on one's parents' terms.

CHAPTER 7:

DISCURSIVE UNITY IN NEVERLAND AND WONDERLAND

Both works in question have been considered through the lens of a historicized conception of childhood and growing up, which has been considered through the lens of colonialism, gender, and the melancholy caused by the tension present in these concepts. In order to consider the ramifications of these disparate analyses, it is crucial to approach them from an intertextual point of view, which engages in a critical discourse analysis through a look into the institutional background for the original texts in the form of colonialism and their later induction into commercialism by Disney.

7.1 The Background to Changing Discourses

Both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter and Wendy* were written during a period when the British Empire controlled one of the vastest stretches of colonial possessions across the world. Essentially a project through which the European powers found new markets to exploit and export their manufactured products, it was a process of enrichment of the colonial metropolises at the expense of the colonial possessions. As stated by Samuel-Mbaekwe (1986), “the European expansion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consisted of the export of surplus capital, not of surplus persons” (p. 81). This economy-motivated process predictably resulted in an intrinsic transformation

of social processes in the colonized world: “It has not only led to the domestication and predictability of social change in Africa, it has also resulted in the formation of defineable forms of social structures” (Samuel-Mbaekwe, 1986, p. 85). The colonial structures, having bases of power far away in the metropolises, would be immune to change from the colonized people, which would result in an erasure of the potential for autonomous social change, as noted by Fanon (1986). This lack of understanding on the part of the colonizers, who could not understand that the colonized people could shape their own history without outside force, led the colonial powers and the citizens of the metropole to justify their presence through paternalism.

The study of the works of fiction in question similarly tackles the issue of subjectivation and the barriers preventing it from happening on the part of children in relation to adults. In this respect, the study approaches the problem present in the subjectivation of children, and the resulting pains of growing up, in relation to colonialism, as it also produced its own institutions, social discourses, and its own culture for preventing whole nations from subjectivizing themselves.

The issue of subjectivation presents itself clearly in very similar manners in the live-action Disney adaptations *Alice in Wonderland* (Burton, 2010) and *Peter Pan and Wendy* (Lowery, 2023). As Alice argues with the Caterpillar, who keeps asking her who she is, Alice responds as such: “My name is Alice. I live in London. I have a mother named Helen and a sister named Margaret. My father was Charles Kingsley. He had a vision that stretched half-way around the world and nothing ever stopped him. I’m his daughter. I’m Alice Kingsley” (Burton, 2010, 01: 20:47). Similarly, Wendy feels the

need to state her full name, “Wendy Moira Angela Darling” (Lowery, 2023, 0:41:20) on more than one occasion. This is quite related to colonial discourses of the naming of places and individuals, wherein the colonizers can ban the language of the colonized people and replace the names of their settlements: “Since the end of the 15th century, European people have, as a result of their colonialism, transferred their placename tradition to regions with Indigenous populations” (Helander, 2014, p. 329). As such, problems with regard to self-determination and existence as a separate subject permeate all de-subjectivized groups.

7.2 Disney as the New Shaper of the Discourse

The original works from the 19th and the early 20th century considered in this study are products of a time when colonial sensibilities and the “success” of the colonial project were unchallenged. As such, the works in question were themselves ambivalent about the subject. The commonalities established between the child-parent, or child-society, relations and the paternalistic relationship established between the colonizers and the colonized persisted even as colonialism itself had begun to wane, giving way to the globalization of the economy around the world. This transformation also affected the entertainment industry, wherein Disney and its adaptations of these works became the primary image that people conceive of these works rather than the original works: “by ‘Disneyfying’ literary classics, the film company rarely encourages young people to take up the sources—Disney thus gains a monopoly on fairytales, children's books, and the imagination in general” (Napolitano, 2009, p. 80). This transformation of the stories, or rather the transformation of the image of these stories as they persist in the mind of children, is also reflected in the monopolization of the children’s film and the broader

entertainment industry: “By the end of the 20th century, the Disney Corporation had emerged as one of a handful of giant media conglomerates” (p. 433). Moreover, older Disney pictures have often been characterized as being confined to a specific visuality and storytelling method wherein most stories follow similar patterns throughout their plot. Napolitano (2009) characterizes the transformation of the original stories: “the transformation of something dark and sophisticated into something light and sentimental for marketing to a family audience” (p. 80). In many ways, the monopoly established on the adaptations of children’s literature curbs the plurality of ideas with regard to what children should watch. As discussed in the previous chapters, this monopoly tends to reflect the prevailing opinions in relation to how to grow up.

In any case, the light and family-oriented characterization of Disney’s adaptations have fallen short in explaining the most recent live-action Disney adaptations, as they aimed to diverge from this image which they created, essentially attempting to produce more mature adaptations with adult casts, essentially attempting to make darker adaptations. In many ways, there appears to be a progressively darker approach to the live-action adaptations: The 2010 *Alice in Wonderland* adaptation featured an adult cast that dealt with the shift from being a teenager to a young adult, as opposed to the growing up of a child. The film’s live-action qualities nevertheless included a fantastical representation of Wonderland despite its attempts at realism on other fronts. *Peter Pan and Wendy* adaptation in 2023, on the other hand, completely abandons the purpose of creating a magical Neverland. In line with its melancholic plot, which falls short of implying the deaths of the pirate crew and Peter Pan’s giving up on life, the visuality of the film also abandons any claims to high fantasy.

Yet, Disney's present status as a monopoly is perhaps more due to its expansions into every nook and cranny of the entertainment industry through a string of acquisitions of entertainment companies such as Lucasfilm and Marvel (Whitten, 2019), rather than a success of their live-action adaptations. This turn towards darker retellings of original stories itself could be seen as a failed attempt at rebranding of Disney in the footsteps of an already overdone trend in children's films. This is especially significant in light of the fact that *Peter Pan & Wendy* has been an exclusive content for the company's streaming platform Disney+, which has been plagued with low viewership numbers (Bailey, 2023) and has been affected by the 2023 Writers Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild strikes (Easton, 2023). In this sense, the workers who produce the films and the viewers which they are made for are not in line with the corporate entity that benefits from both, which points towards a march towards cultural irrelevancy that reinforces the mass appeal of commercialization with an addition of bureaucratic blandness of discursive unity.

In this sense, Disney's visuality is not bereft of change itself; yet as a brand with a unified image across its literary adaptations, its take on the original stories is almost always in line with one another. This unified image is a negation of the original stories and their presence in the public consciousness, as the sheer commonality of the Disney image overcomes the limited influence of the original stories. This is not a call for fidelity in adaptations, as the original works themselves had questionable value as discussed previously. However, what this does is to limit children's own conceptions of what it means to grow up, essentially producing a monolithic idea with regard to the

concept which can overcome children's own subjectivation in the same way it overcomes the influence of the original works of children's literature.

Same as the broader society's relation to growing up, this tension between Disney's take on becoming an adult and the children's subjective experiences produces a melancholic experience. As stated by Dewey (1972), "in the twentieth century psychiatrists would be likely to diagnose as depression the once elusive condition of mind and spirit which had been known since the time of Galen, and well into the Victorian era, under the name of melancholy or melancholia" (p. 253). However, unlike depression, the term melancholy carries with it a sense of stigmatization. As referred to by Foucault (1988), the medieval approach to melancholy was far from scientific and sometimes cruel. This approach to melancholy persisted into the 19th century, as Foucault (2014) describes how François Leuret forced a patient to admit to their mental illness through torture by freezing showers. This process of forcing one to recognize a truth about themselves through coercion is antithetical to Foucault's concept of finding one's own truth through confession (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018). While not in the sense of sheer physical cruelty, this is similar to what is done to children as they are molded according to a singular idea of what it means to be a grown-up, which is accomplished through the previously described works of fiction.

7.3 The Unity of the Live-Action Adaptations of Disney

Both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan and Wendy*, the live-action adaptations, feature a similar challenge towards the subjectivity of their protagonists. As Wendy arrives in Neverland, she is questioned by Tiger Lily in what is meant to be a humorous scene due

to Tiger Lily's misuse of the article: "'Are you the Wendy?' 'Well, I am a Wendy'" (Lowery, 2023, 0:25:19). And later on, the Lost Boys also approach Wendy with surprise: "The Wendy who knows the bedtime stories? 'Cause if you don't know stories then you're an imposter" (Lowery, 2023, 0:25:26). Similarly, Alice's identity is questioned as she arrives in Wonderland, yet it is not affirmed in the same way Wendy's is: "That's because she's the wrong Alice" (Burton, 2010, 0:19:13). This rejection of who Alice is turns into aggression, as the Flowers yell: "Little imposter! Pretending to be Alice! She should be ashamed!" (Burton, 2010, 0:21:57). While the reactions to Wendy are positive, Alice feels the brunt of suspicion, and her individuality is denied. Even though the reactions are distinct from one another, the similarities in the presentation of the challenge towards individuality as it is done through in reference to the names of the protagonists, this is an interesting parallel as both characters are also threatened with violence, although it is meant to be jokingly: "pinching usually does the trick" (Burton, 2010, 0:22:23). The utilization of the word imposter in both instances also points towards the discursive unity present across Disney adaptations. While reproducing similar narrative patterns, this also serves to express these patterns in similar words and include them in similar discourses, which is both a manifestation of the discursive monopoly of Disney, as well as the symptom of this unity in the form of erosion of plurality of discourses in expressing similar themes.

The most significant parallel present in the live-action adaptation is the destruction of the borders between reality and their respective fantasy realms. As Alice leaves Wonderland, she does so physically instead of waking up from a dream: "It wasn't a dream at all. It was a memory! This place is real! And so are you. And so is the Hatter"

(Burton, 2010, 01:21:48). This pattern is also reflected in the transformation of the Lost Boys, one of whom states the following in the early stages of the film: “Wait, you mean I’m in a story?” (Lowery, 2023, 0:33:56). Neverland’s status as a realm out of a storybook is acknowledged, yet this idea is abandoned at the final stages of the film, wherein all the Lost Boys leave Neverland together with Wendy and play in Wendy and her brothers’ bedroom, much to the surprise of the kids’ parents. The breaks between realities are also a sign that the films wish to ultimately abandon unchanging contrasts in the form of growing up and remaining a kid, essentially turning these concepts into processes the same as they are in real life. This contributes to the realism of these live-action adaptations, while also signifying the change of Disney adaptations altogether.

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSION

In dealing with representations of melancholy in children's literature and film adaptations, this study has always underlined one point as the primary component of these representations: the barriers put up against children's autonomy and self-subjectivation. Initially, this study sprung out of a comparison between *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and *Peter and Wendy* by J. M. Barrie. After all, both works feature distinct barriers between reality and fantasy realms in the form of Wonderland and Neverland, wherein the fantasy realm is accessed by the child protagonists Alice and Wendy, who are then forced to reconsider who they are, and who they ought to be.

Another point of comparison was the conditions under which they had been written: both had been written by British authors at the peak of the British imperial expansion, albeit separated by a few decades. As such, the study also considered the relations between children and adults in these works through the lens of colonialism, which made for a fitting choice. As considered by Fanon (1986), the effect of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized subjects was one of separation from their own potential for autonomy. As such, colonialism infantilizes the colonial subject, which is why this study

has opted to turn this equation on its own head, and instead approach children as subjects colonized by adults. Considering children as potentially free-willed individuals capable of making autonomous decisions, the study has worked towards comparing the adults' desire to shape their children in a way that would hinder the self-subjection of children's imaginations, similar to the colonized subjects.

In considering this potential for self-subjection and the barriers towards it, it is argued that the hindering of one's own autonomy is the primary cause for melancholy as reflected in the protagonists of the children's literature in question. As suggested by Foucault's (1988) treatment of madness, those who are deemed mentally unfit have historically been consigned to the margins of society, or even prisons and asylums in some cases. These individuals were also unable to subjectivize themselves fully, which in turn led this thesis to consider melancholy as a state of being that is comparable to colonialism in its rendering some members of society unable to chart the course of their lives. The similarity of these discursive practices is also present in the works of literature and film considered in the study. This, of course, is observed in this study through the characters: Peter Pan is unable to grow up due to his obsession with a childhood that is devoid of responsibility while Wendy is willing to grow up, yet this comes at the cost of subjugating herself to the patriarchal society as she is often designated as a motherly person by others. Similarly, Alice questions who she is as Wonderland functions as a punishment for her desire to chart her own course beginning with the journey through the rabbit hole.

The term melancholy is preferred over a contemporary medical condition, as it embeds the emotions and psyche of these characters within a historical frame. As considered by Foucault (1988), the treatment of the melancholic people transformed throughout history, and so did the conceptions of the subjectivity of children. Occurring concurrently with the broadening of women's rights and presence in society, as well as the process of decolonization, the depictions of children's subjectivity are also transformed.

This transformation is observed in this study through analyses of select animated Disney adaptations of these children's novels, which range from the 1950s to the present in their timespan. As considered previously, these adaptations vary in their fidelity, and relation to the original works of literature. While the 1950s adaptations of both works attempt to update the original works in the image of Disney, they nevertheless do not attempt to challenge the Victorian and Edwardian mores of the original works. This is in contrast to *Return to Never Land* (2002), *Peter Pan and Wendy* (2023), as well as *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). In all three cases, these Disney animated films attempt to accomplish what Leitch (2007) defines as the revisionist adaptation. Challenging the original assumptions with regard to what it means to be a child and what it means to grow up, these adaptations attempt to present their own take on the premise of the originals. Especially the live-action Disney adaptations attempt to present revised versions of both the original novels, as well as the previous Disney adaptations. Their inclusion of darker and sometimes Gothic themes and subject matters functions as a break from the earlier adaptations which treated children as innately innocent and emotionally fragile, which is an attitude that rejects the potential children have in

subjectivation. This break from the past, however, appears to be a reproduction of it. Similar to the earlier adaptations that carried a unified visuality no matter the source material, so do the live-action adaptations of Disney: darker and more realistic environments wherein a more mature version of a given story is conveyed. In this sense, change becomes unified, and as Disney's status as a media conglomerate is entrenched further on, the visual language, the themes and the experiences of watching these adaptations become increasingly similar experiences, in a march towards a singularity of discourse wherein the themes, subject matters, and visualities are rendered as one.

Consequently, the thesis has mainly been about the potential of children's self-subjectivation; how children imagine themselves and their futures to be. Observing these through several works of children's literature and film, this thesis argues that the way in which children are considered subject to adults prevents children's autonomous development. Through establishing the framework which a child follows in order to achieve the social role of a grown-up, the adults and the society they established clash with the self-subjectivation of children. As such, the depictions of melancholic children as observed in these works of children's literature and film are a reproduction of these impediments loaded onto children. Adaptations from each time period differ in their conceptions of what it means to grow up, and despite the persistence of the commercialized reproduction of similar approaches to storytelling, they nevertheless treat tough social and personal issues almost with a directness that acknowledges children as true autonomous subjects. While these themes and discourses are present in these works of children's literature and film, their effects on children's conceptions of themselves and how they relate to these protagonists remain nebulous still. As such, it is

the recommendation of this thesis that there ought to be further studies on child audiences and their consumption of these media.



REFERENCES

- Anonymous. (1810). *The Historie of Friar Rush*. Harding and Wright. (Original work published in 1620).
- Avdić, A. (2017). “Gabbling Like a Thing Most Brutish”: Language in the Service of Colonialism in the Tempest. *Društvene i Humanističke Studije*, 2(2), 61-80.
- Bailey, K. (2023, August 10). Disney Plus the Latest Streaming Service to Crack Down on Password Sharing Starting in 2024. *IGN*.
<https://in.ign.com/loki/190995/news/disney-plus-the-latest-streaming-service-to-crack-down-on-password-sharing-starting-in-2024>
- Baker, D. (2016). Within the Door: Portal-Quest Fantasy in Gaiman and Miéville. *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 27(3), 470–493.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26321149>
- Balfe, M. (2004). Incredible geographies? Orientalism and Genre Fantasy. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(1), 75-90. DOI: 10.1080/1464936042000181326
- Barrie, J. M. (1928). *Peter and Wendy*. Hodder & Stoughton.
- Barrie, J. M. (2018). *Peter and Wendy*. Penguin.
- Barry, D., Carroll, B., Hansen, H. (2006). To Text or Context? Endotextual, Exotextual, and Multi-textual Approaches to Narrative and Discursive Organizational Studies. *Organization Studies*, 27(8), 1091–1110.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606064568>
- Baum, A. L. (1977). Carroll’s “Alices”: The Semiotics of Paradox. *American Imago*, 34(1), pp. 86-108.
- Becher, D. (2016). Neil Gaiman’s Ghost Children. In M. Fleischhack & E. Schenkel

- (Eds.), *Ghosts - or the (Nearly) Invisible: Spectral Phenomena in Literature and the Media* (pp. 91–106). Peter Lang AG.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2t4d7f.12>
- Blin-Rolland, A. (2014). Re-inventing the Origins of the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up: Régis Loisel's Peter Pan. *Studies in Comics*, 5(2), 275–292.
https://doi.org/10.1386/stic.5.2.275_1
- Bowie, A. (2022). *Theodor W. Adorno: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198833864.003.0003>
- Bronner, S. J. (1998). The Americanization of the Brothers Grimm. In *Following Tradition* (pp. 184–236). University Press of Colorado.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt46nqtf9>
- Brooks, P. (1992). *Reading for the Plot*. Harvard University Press.
- Budd, R. (Director). (2002). *Return to Never Land* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.
- Burton, T. (Director). (2005). *Corpse Bride* [Film]. Tim Burton Productions; Laika Entertainment.
- Burton, T. (Director). (2010). *Alice in Wonderland* [Film]. Walt Disney Productions.
- Burton, T. (Director). (2012). *Frankenweenie* [Film]. Walt Disney Productions.
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge. (Original work published 1990)
- Cadden, M. (2012). All Is Well: The Epilogue in Children's Fantasy Fiction. *Narrative*, 20(3), 343–356. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23322085>
- Carroll, L. (2012). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Penguin. (Original works published in 1865 and 1871).
- Cassano, M. C., Zeman, J. L., Sanders, W. M. (2014). Responses to Children's

- Sadness: Mothers' and Fathers' Unique Contributions and Perceptions. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 60(1), 1–23.
- <https://doi.org/10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.60.1.0001>
- Chartier, G. (2010). Pirate Constitutions and Workplace Democracy. *Jahrbuch Für Recht Und Ethik / Annual Review of Law and Ethics*, 18, 449–467.
- <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43593840>
- Ciancitto, S. M. (2019). The Law of the Jungle and the Law of God: Translating Kipling's The Jungle Books into Italian. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies*, 07(02), 117–126.
- Coats, K. (2008). Between Horror, Humour, and Hope: Neil Gaiman and the Psychic Work of the Gothic. In A. Jackson, R. McGillis & K. Coats (Eds.), *The Gothic in Children's Literature: Haunting the Borders* (pp. 77-92). Routledge.
- Congrave, W. (1797). *The Mourning Bride*. British Library. (Original work published in 1703).
- Coyne, S. M., Linder, J. R., Rasmussen, E. E., Nelson, D. A., & Birkbeck, V. (2016). Pretty as a Princess: Longitudinal Effects of Engagement with Disney Princesses on Gender Stereotypes, Body Esteem, and Prosocial Behavior in Children. *Child Development*, 87(6), 1909–1925.
- Davidson, A. (1997). Structures and Strategies of Discourse: Remarks Towards a History of Foucault's Philosophy of Language. In A. Davidson (Ed.), *Foucault and His Interlocutors* (pp. 1-21). University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, N. (1972). The Masks of Melancholy. *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 46(4), 253–261. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40858434>
- Docter, P. (Director). (2015). *Inside Out* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar

Animation Studios.

Duaei, K. (2020). 'Riley needs to be happy': Inside Out and the dystopian aesthetics of neo-liberal governmentality. *European Journal of American Culture*, 39(2), 199-215. DOI: 10.1386/ejac_00023_1

Easton, A. (2023, August 9). As 2023 WGA Strike Hits 100 Days Frustration Escalates As Talks Stall. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anneeaston/2023/08/09/as-2023-wga-strike-hits-100-days-frustration-escalates-as-talks-stall/>

Eisen, S., Taggart, J., Lillard, A. S. (2022). Children Prefer Familiar Fantasy, but not Anthropomorphism, in Their Storybooks. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, DOI: 10.1080/15248372.2022.2144317

Elliott, K. (2003). *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Longman.

Fanon, F. (1986). *Black Skin, White Masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Pluto Press. (Original work published 1967)

Foster, E. A. (2015). "Theologies of Colonization": The Catholic Church and the Future of the French Empire in the 1950s. *The Journal of Modern History*, 87(2), 281–315. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681132>

Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1988). *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (R. Howard, Trans.). Random House. (Original work published 1961)

Foucault, M. (1997). The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom.

- In P. Rabinow (Ed.) *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (pp. 281-301). The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (1998). *The History of Sexuality, The Will to Knowledge* (H. Robert, Trans.). Penguin. (Original work published 1976)
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Archaeology of Knowledge* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Routledge. (Original work published 1969)
- Foucault, M. (2014). *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*. University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 2012)
- Frenzel, F. (2021). A “Fabulous Monster” and a “Wonderful Boy:” Gender and the Elusive Victorian Child in the *Alice Books* and *Peter Pan*. *Open Cultural Studies*, 5(1), 312-323. <https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2020-0141>
- Fritz, S. S. (2011). Alice Still Lives Here: The Implied Victorian Reader and Film Adaptations of Lewis Carroll’s Alice Books. In L. Weldy (Ed.), *Crossing Textual Boundaries in International Children’s Literature* (pp. 109–122). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Gaiman, N. (2002). *Coraline*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Geronimi, C, Jackson, W., Luske, H. (Directors). (1951). *Alice in Wonderland* [Film]. Walt Disney Productions.
- Gilbert, S., & Gubar, S. (2000). *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Yale University Press. (Original work published 1979)
- Gilead, S. (1991). Magic Abjured: Closure in Children’s Fantasy Fiction. *PMLA*, 106(2), 277–293. <https://doi.org/10.2307/462663>
- Gordon, A. (2020). “No Sex, please, We’re Narnians”: Turkish Delight, *Twelfth*

- Night*, and the Problem of Susan. *Mythlore*, 39(1 (137)), 51–76.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26937585>
- Grauerholz, E., & Pescosolido, B. A. (1989). Gender Representation in Children's Literature: 1900-1984. *Gender and Society*, 3(1), 113–125.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/190043>
- Hapsarani, D., & Lutfiputri, N. F. (2021). Reimagining Peter Pan: The Postmodern Childhood Portrayal in Wendy (2020). *K@ta: A Biannual Publication on the Study of Language and Literature*, 23(1), 1–9.
<https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.23.1.1-9>
- Harvey, D. A. (2010). The Noble Savage and the Savage Noble: Philosophy and Ethnography in the “Voyages” of the Baron de Lahontan. *French Colonial History*, 11, 161–191. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41938201>.
- Helander, K. R. (2014). Sámi placenames, power relations and representation. In I. D. Clark, L. Hercus, & L. Kostanski (Eds.), *Indigenous and Minority Placenames: Australian and International Perspectives* (pp. 325–350). ANU Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13www5z.21>
- Holly, M. A. (2013). *The Melancholy Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hosseinpour, S., & Moghadam, N. S. (2016). Magical Realism in Neil Gaiman's Coraline. *Prague Journal of English Studies*, 5(1), 87-101.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/pjes-2016-0005>
- Howarth, M. (2014). *Under the Bed, Creeping: Psychoanalyzing the Gothic in Children's Literature*. McFarland & Company.
- Hundertmark, S. (2021). ‘Both Hero and Villain’ – Rewriting the Tale, Revising the

- Villain, and Retelling Gender in Disney's 'Maleficent' (2014). *Limina*, 26(2), 1-13.
- Khan, A. (2021). (Re) generation and (Re) interpretation of Malevolence and Gender Roles in Walt Disney's Maleficent. *Journal of Research (Humanities)*, 57(1), 87–102.
- Kincaid, J. R. (1973). Alice's Invasion of Wonderland. *PMLA*, 88(1), 92-99.
- Kracauer, S. (1960). *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. Oxford University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1986). Word, Dialogue and Novel. In T. Moi (Ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (pp. 34-61). Columbia University Press.
- Lazzaro-Weis, C. (1990). The Female "Bildungsroman": Calling It into Question. *NWSA Journal*, 2(1), 16–34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4315991>
- Leitch, T. (2007). *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents*. The John Hopkins University Press.
- Lesnik-Oberstein, K. (2019). The Case of The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, Childhood, Animality. *Oxford Literary Review*, 41, 238-257. DOI: 10.3366/olr.2019.0281
- Lester, C. (2016). The Children's Horror Film: Characterizing an "Impossible" Subgenre. *Velvet Light Trap: A Critical Journal of Film & Television*, 78, 22-37. DOI: 10.7560/VLT7803
- Levy, M., & Mendlesohn, F. (2016). *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lorenzini, D., & Tazzioli, M. (2018). Confessional Subjects and Conducts of Non-

- Truth: Foucault, Fanon, and the Making of the Subject. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 35(1), 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416678291>.
- Lowery, D. (Director). (2023). *Peter Pan & Wendy* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.
- Luske, H., Geronimi, C, Jackson, W. (Directors). (1953). *Peter Pan* [Film]. Walt Disney Productions.
- Mandici, M. E. (2022). Translation Solutions for Dealing with Ambiguity in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai, Philologia*, 67(4), 417–436. <https://doi.org/10.24193/subbphilo.2022.4.21>
- Mannoni, O. (1964). *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (P. Powesland, Trans.). Frederick A. Praeger.
- McCann, A. (2021). Melancholy and the Masses: Siegfried Kracauer and the Media Concept. *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies*, 43(1), 150-170. DOI: 10.13110/discourse.43.1.0150
- McQuade, B. T. (1994). Peter Pan: Disney’s Adaptation of J.M. Barrie’s Original Work. *Mythlore*, 20(1 (75)), 5–9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26812818>
- McQuinn, K. (2020). Not at Home: Liminal Space and Personal Identity in *The Hobbit* and *Coraline*. *Mallorn: The Journal of the Tolkien Society*, 60, 14–18. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48614899>
- Mill, J. S. (2011). *On Liberty*. Andrews UK. (Original work published 1859)
- Milton, J. (2018). Il Penseroso. In S. Greenblatt, K. E. Maus, G. Logan (Eds.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century / The Early Seventeenth Century* (Vol. B, 10th ed.), (pp. 1463-1467). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Morton, L. (1978). Memory in the Alice Books. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33(3),

285–308. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2933016>

- Nabizadeh, G. (2014). Visual melancholy in Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*. *Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics*, 5(3), 366-379. DOI:10.1080/21504857.2014.943549
- Napolitano, M. (2009). Disneyfying Dickens: *Oliver & Company* and *The Muppet Christmas Carol* as Dickensian Musicals. *Studies in Popular Culture*, 32(1), 79–102. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23416184>
- Nead, L. (1988). *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*. Blackwell.
- Nelson, T. A. (1978). Darkness in the Disney Look. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 6(2), 94–103. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43795664>
- Nicholls, M. (2004). Male Melancholia and Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*. *Film Quarterly*, 58(1), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2004.58.1.25>
- Nkomo, D. (2019). The Translation and Adaptation of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland into isiNdebele. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 37(2), 130–141.
- Oedzes, J. J., Van der Vegt, G. S., Rink, F. A., Walter, F. (2018). On the Origins of Informal Hierarchy: The Interactive Role of Formal Leadership and Task Complexity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(3), 311-324. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2330>
- Palmer, B. (2016). Staging Alice in 2015: 150th Anniversary Adaptations of Alice in Wonderland. *Neo-Victorian Studies*, 9(1), 55–73.
- Patil, V. (2013). From Patriarchy to Intersectionality: A Transnational Feminist Assessment of How Far We've Really Come. *Signs*, 38(4), 847–867. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669560>

- Peters, M. A. (2007). Chapter 12: Educational Research: “Games of Truth” and the Ethics of Subjectivity. *Counterpoints*, 292, 181–191.
- Phillips, R. (2001). Politics of reading: decolonizing children’s geographies. *Ecumene*, 8(2), 125–150. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44243657>
- Renault, M. (2015). A Decolonizing Alethurgy: Fanon After Foucault. In S. Fuggle., Y. Lanci, M. Tazzioli (Eds.), *Foucault and the History of Our Present* (pp. 210-222). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. SAGE.
- Rose, J. (1984). *The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children’s Fiction*. The Macmillan Press.
- Samuel-Mbaekwe, I. J. (1986). Colonialism and Social Structure. *Transafrican Journal of History*, 15, 81–95. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24328608>
- Schatz, S. L. (2015). Lewis Carroll’s Dream-child and Victorian Child Psychopathology. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 76(1), 93–114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43948726>
- Scheper-Hughes, N., & Lock, M. M. (1987). The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 1(1), 6–41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/648769>
- Scribner, G. (1988). (Director). *Oliver and Company*. [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures
- Shakespeare, W. (1978). *The Tempest*. Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1623)
- Sigalow, E., & Fox, N. S. (2014). Perpetuating Stereotypes: A Study of Gender,

- Family, and Religious Life in Jewish Children's Books. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 53(2), 416–431. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24644272>
- Sithole, T. (2016). The Concept of the Black Subject in Fanon. *Journal of Black Studies*, 47(1), 24–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24572957>
- Steyn, M., & Moen, M. (2019). Drawing sadness: what are young children telling us? *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(1), 79-93.
DOI:10.1080/03004430.2017.1301936
- Strayer, F. F., & Strayer, J. (1976). An Ethological Analysis of Social Agonism and Dominance Relations among Preschool Children. *Child Development*, 47(4), 980–989. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1128434>
- Swift, J. (1726). *Gulliver's Travels*. Benjamin Motte.
- Thale, J. (1974). The Making of The Edwardian Age. *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 7(2), 25–43.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24776884>
- Timko, M. (1975). The Victorianism of Victorian Literature. *New Literary History*, 6(3), 607–627. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468468>.
- Truglio, M. (2015). Garibaldi's Shadows: Heroism and Melancholia in Italian Children's Literature. *Children's Literature*, 43(1), 51-83.
DOI:10.1353/chl.2015.0021
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2009). *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*. Cambridge University Press.
- White, R. S. (2021). Peter Pan, Wendy, and the Lost Boys: A Dead Mother Complex. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 69(1), 51-74.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0003065120988763>

Whitten, S. (2019, August 6). 14 Years, 4 Acquisitions, 1 Bob Iger: How Disney's CEO Revitalized an Iconic American Brand. *CNBC*.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/06/bob-iger-forever-changed-disney-with-4-key-acquisitions.html>

Wierzbicki, J. (2013). How Frankenstein's Monster Became a Music Lover. *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 24(2 (88)), 246–263.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24353201>

Zipes, J. (2006). *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. Routledge.