

Peter pan college essay



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I suddenly, and quite strangely, have found myself conflicted about Peter Pan. I thought I knew the story, believed I was familiar with it.

My Mother has used the term “ Peter Pan Syndrome” to describe nearly every young member of our family at one time or another. It means you never want to grow up, just like the boy in Walt Disney’s animation. Peter wants to play in Never Land forever and avoid responsibility while careening through the air amid pirates and redskins and a strange yet hopeful band of “ Lost Boys. ” It was all so much fun, and I could never figure out why Wendy and her brothers decided to return home. Obviously, it was because of their parents, but still their sudden longing for the nursery never really rang true for me. Of course, they had to go home because that was what happy endings were all about.

Yet Peter was still out there not growing up anyway, so the fun was still to be had. Never Land was not going away so they could leave it behind—leave it for Peter while they went home. I recently read Peter Pan as research for this article, telling myself that I could not properly salute Mr. Barrie’s, the author of the original Peter Pan, one hundred year-old classic without refreshing myself on the specifics.

I was not expecting to find any surprises, just maybe a few more details. I really thought I must have read it at least once when I was little; after all, hasn’t everyone read Peter Pan? A few pages into the story, perhaps when the Darlings are discussing whether or not they can afford to keep newborn Wendy, or maybe later when Tinker Bell first refers to Peter as “ you silly ass,” I realized that I had no clue what the real Peter Pan was all about.

America has changed the views of many things over its rich history. This is no objection here.

Peter Pan was first published in Britain during the early stages of the 1900's. There are big differences now in the American version of Peter Pan. In the early years everybody overseas depicted Peter Pan a girl. When brought to America, and some people being the sexiest pigs they are, it changed the perspective from female to male. We associate Peter with a boys name, and Wendy with a girl.

The book was first titled Peter Pan, but when it made its way over to America it changed from that to Peter Pan: The Boy Who Never Grows Up. America changed not only the face of this animation but also the title. There have also been many movies about Peter Pan, as well as, musicals and plays. I know the original fairy tales were largely horror stories in their initial incarnations, but Peter Pan as a story is most recently compared to other fairy tales. I never expected the popular version to be so far off the mark. Most of the stage shows have played for laughs and bravado in recent memory, without the grim overtones.

It's easy to see how I got thi far off from the original text. Here's the truth though: until you read the unabridged version of the story, you are completely missing out on what author J. M. Barrie was saying about parents and children and eternal childhood. In the end there are fifteen dead pirates, with only two surviving to swim to shore.

Captain James Hook is, of course, pushed overboard after a long fight with Peter and meets his fate in the jaws of his crocodile nemesis. Wendy does <https://assignbuster.com/peter-pan-1243-words-college-essay/>

not take part in the fight, but afterwards “ praised them all equally and shuddered delightfully when Michael showed her the place where he had killed one... ” As soon as she realizes the lateness of the hour she immediately insists that all the boys go to bed, except Peter, who struts up and down on the deck. “ He had one of his dreams that night, and cried in his sleep for a long time, and Wendy held him tight.

What the hell do you make of all this? The pirates died? I thought they swam away, I thought they just abandoned ship in a kind of way. The last time I saw Hook, he was swimming, and the crocodile was grinning right behind him. That’s an important detail. None of this is what Barrie wanted to say, though.

None of this was. Barrie was illuminating the bloodthirsty nature of children. We teach them in the playground to stand up to bullies. That is exactly what they need to do on the pirate ship. There is certain appeal of the tragedies, of the drama of orphaned boys left to the care of a man who wrote about the ultimate lost boy. In its original state, with all the blood, with parents who cannot decide if they should keep their children, with children who gleefully abandon their parents and easily forget them once out of sight and then later abandon their friend Peter just as easily, even the Lost Boys go back to the Darlings and cast Peter aside, it is not a happily ever after type of story.

All that clapping for Tinker Bell might save her at one point, but by the story’s end she has long since died and Peter does not even remember her. “ There are such a lot of them,” he said, “ I expect she is no more. This is a harsh concept, the type of writing that appropriately ends with the phrase, “

and thus it will go on, as long as children are gay and innocent and heartless.
" Because that is what Peter was, and what all of them aspired to be.

Peter Pan was different, on every possible level. The book was written more for children than adults. It steered to appeal to all aspects of their nature that we work so very hard to deny. Children probably would kill the pirates without a second glance, while adults would be trying to explain how they all had to get along.

Barrie was possibly a visionary, not simple a writer for children at all. He saw the world in all its tragic glory and wrote about what he wished would happen. The bad guys would die bloody deaths, the hero would ride off to live the life of his choice, and the girl would be good and go home again, as she was expected. Everyone would live happily ever after in a world where children disappeared through nursery windows on a whim and death is just one more great adventure. Why do we love Peter Pan? There are a thousand things we do to each other that I will never understand. Maybe this is just a story, and we are only supposed to enjoy it.

But I don't feel like laughing anymore when I think of Peter, and I don't think it is about the " freedom of spirit" that was lauded last month in Smithsonian. Maybe Anthony Lane was on the mark when he wrote that Peter, along with other characters of British children's literature, were running away, "... because there is always something, a drab existence or a dreadful past, that begs to be fled. " This ties back into the " Peter Pan Syndrome" that I mentioned earlier, because if you do not grow up things could haunt you that you do not wish to encounter.