

Girls of the Empire : Wendy, Tinker Bell, and the Mermaids

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Abstract

In J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911), Wendy Moira Angela Darling, a pubescent girl, is expected to become a good wife and wise mother—in other words, the “angel in the house”—in order to support the British Empire of the early twentieth century and its female archetypes. In contrast to her, however, the other girls—Liza, the mermaids, and especially Tinker Bell—cause the imperial crisis and disrupt the Empire; they are the girls unfit for motherhood. This paper argues that Wendy is a “good” girl, and the other girls are “bad” girls or “lost girls” in early twentieth century British society.

1

The Robinson Crusoe Story (1990), a literary archetype analysis by Martin Green, examines historical touchstone stories, including *Peter Pan*, by J. M. Barrie (1904 ; 1911) (my focus here), that have progressed downward to today from the Crusoe myth. He delineates the cultural impact of the Robinson Crusoe novel (Daniel Defoe, 1719) and its amazing propagation of stories similar to itself over time. Green further suggests that adventure stories of similar genre, such as *Peter Pan*, are all closely linked with the British Empire, primarily via male characters. Green argues that “[w]e citizens of the white countries wanted to hear the story told over and over again, because it fed an appetite deep in us” and that “[i]t was the mythic fuel of our cultural engine” (3). Green's reading focuses upon boys as key characters while making key links to British culture and norms. For Green, *Peter Pan* simply is the adventure story “for boys.”

While I agree with Green that Barrie's *Peter Pan* is “combined with a sustained faith in real-life adventurers and with the empire they were still building” (155), Green's analysis remains functionally insufficient to fully explain the ideological workings of the imperial system, largely due to an omission of an entire gender. While the ideology of imperialism in *Peter Pan* is shown by Green as impacting boys while assisting them to become good citizens or subjects of the Empire, girls in the story are not considered. In point of fact, this ideology also had an impact on girls. The literature of this type cannot be fully understood without considering and including very key female figures, such as those presented in *Peter Pan*.

Author of *Peter Pan*, J. M. Barrie, made a speech to Wallasey High School for Girls at Wallasey Town Hall on February 26 in 1924. He closed the speech with the following words :

I should like to give you a motto—something to strive for—I should like to see it blazoned over the entrance to Wallasey High School—the words : ‘That every child born into the British Empire should get an equal chance.’ That will need some doing.

(Barrie, *M'Connachie and J. M. B.* 67)

Barrie's closing words imply that there is a close connection between all children and the British Empire. Historically, however, the Empire was regarded as a woman. The homeland, namely the center of the Empire, was considered to be the motherland or the mother country. Its colonies, which were filled with sexual desire and romantic atmosphere, were considered to be the womanized lands. Indeed, the Empire was given the image of mother during the reign of Queen Victoria.¹ Barrie's speech and the imperial image of mother show the importance of girls within British culture. *Peter Pan*, where there are Wendy, Liza, mermaids, and Tinker Bell, surely should not be viewed as an exception. In fact, these female characters are quite important, both to early twentieth century British culture and in their own right within the story.

In this paper, the female characters (Wendy, Liza, mermaids, Tinker Bell) in *Peter Pan* are explained in their full importance. I will show those girls' deeds to be closely connected to the British imperial ideology. In *Peter Pan*, Wendy is represented as a "good" girl, while the other girls are depicted as "bad" girls or "lost girls." *Peter Pan* encourages Edwardian girls like Wendy to support the British Empire, to reach out from their traditional "rooms" and their traditional maternal safety to become more engaged in life.

2

Wendy, whose full name is Wendy Moira Angela Darling, is a significant character as a good mother for the future. Wendy can go to Neverland because she is the girl selected by Peter. She is expected to act positively and confidently as the good and wise mother of lost boys :

There was an enormous fire-place which was in almost any part of the room where you cared to light it, and across this Wendy stretched strings, made of fibre, from which she suspended her washing. . . .

I suppose it was all especially entrancing to Wendy, because those rampageous boys of hers gave her so much to do. Really there were whole weeks when, except perhaps with a stocking in the evening, she was never above ground. The cooking, I can tell you, kept her nose to the pot. (134-35)²

Such activities, washing and cooking, cause her to form good character and habits. For her, the washing woman is suggestive of the following illustration (Fig. 1). Her duty and mission in her life is to become the good mother of the boys.³

Under the compulsory educational system of those times in Britain, home economics was considered a key



Fig. 1. The washing woman from *Illustrated London News* (May 3, 1902) 661.

subject for girls. Cooking, washing, and sewing were adopted as required contents for this subject.⁴ According to “Domestic Economy Teaching in England” in the Education Department’s *Special Reports on Educational Subjects* (1897), in 1885-86 “there were 12,438 girls from 634 schools” and in 1895-96 “there were 134,930 girls from 2,729 schools” involved in cooking classes (159). Similarly, regarding laundry classes, in 1891-92 “there were 632 girls from 27 schools” and in 1895-96 “there were 11,720 girls from 400 schools” (167). Needlework, too, was considered to be an essential part of any girl’s education. Despite the popularization of the sewing machine, the needlework remained an important position in the education. The girls’ direct and sensible approaches to the needle were seen as evidence of the formations of female gentleness and its charm. In “Suggestions for the Teaching of Needlework” in the Board of Education’s *Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools* (1909), it is written that the needlework appealed “directly to the natural instincts of girls” (3).

Wendy takes to sewing needles at any time as if she has a natural aptitude for sewing :

Wendy’ favorite time for sewing and darning was after they had all gone to bed. Then, as she expressed it, she had a breathing time for herself ; and she occupied it in making new things for them, and putting double pieces on the knees, for they were all most frightfully hard on their knees.

When she sat down to a basketful of their stockings, every heel with a hole in it, she would fling up her arms and exclaim, ‘Oh dear, I am sure I sometimes think spinsters are to be envied.’

Her face beamed when she exclaimed this. (135)

In this scene, sewing is importantly a symbol of motherhood. Even though Wendy is liberated from much typical housework, she is sewing stockings. For her, the sewing time is the time to relax and to rest. It seems as if she is obsessed with the idea that women always must do something for people, and that women are often most happy in doing housework.⁵

Wendy also appears to be a member of Girl Guides—those patriotic persons intended to become good and wise mothers. (Girl Guides in Britain are the American equivalent of Girl Scouts.) She learns social customs not only through the elementary schools but also through Girl Guides. When Wendy and the boys are taken captive and nearly executed by pirates, Wendy behaves in this way :

At this moment Wendy was grand. ‘These are my last words, dear boys,’ she said firmly. ‘I feel that I have a message to you from your real mothers, and it is this : “We hope our sons will die like English gentlemen.”’ (192)

Even in this difficult situation, Wendy can always behave with dignity and decency. Importantly, at almost the same time when girls were forced to learn home economics at the elementary schools, Girl Guides was established as a group in order to stress maternal characteristics. Agnes Baden-Powell, a younger sister to Robert Baden-Powell, was installed as the chair of Girl Guides in 1910 (Fig. 2 and 3).⁶

The keystone of the Girl Guides' establishment was naturally different from that of Boy Scouts. The organization for girls was planning to provide those girls with ability to become good mothers and to guide the future generation, as was described in "The Scheme for 'Girls Guides'" (in the November 1909 issue of *Boy Scouts' Headquarters' Gazette*⁷) as follows :

The training laid down by Boy Scouts, though it applies pretty generally to all boys, whether from Eton or from East Ham, does not apply equally to all girls, even when altered in details to suit the sex.

With girls it has to be administered with great discrimination ; you do not want to make tomboys of refined girls, yet you want to attract, and thus raise, the slum girl from the gutter. The main object is to give them *all* the ability to be better mothers and Guides to the next generation. (12 ; italics in original)

The substance of teaching under Girl Guides was housework, including cooking, washing, sewing, and the care of children. The housework was to be selected to promote girls' necessary skills in cultivating their maternal aspects. Girl Guides' opinions about the contents of girl's education are similarly mentioned in "The Scheme for 'Girls Guides'" :

This scheme might be started either independently, or possibly as a cadet branch, or feeder to the Territorial Organisation of Voluntary Aid. By this method every girl, of whatever class, might be instructed (a) *materially*—in hospital nursing, cooking, home nursing, ambulance work ; and (b) *morally*—in chivalry, patriotism, courage, Christianity, and so on, by means which really appeal to her, without necessarily making her a rough tomboy. (12 ; italics in original)⁸

The Girl's Own Paper (GOP), too, was intended for use in the education of girls in Britain. (GOP was the weekly magazine from 1880 to 1956.) GOP obliged girls to cultivate



Fig. 2. The Girl Guide from Agnes Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*. (London : Girl Guides Association, 2003) ii.

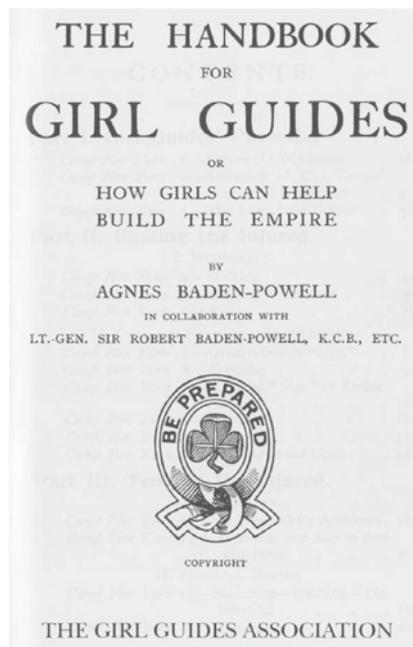


Fig. 3. The title page from Agnes Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*. (London : Girl Guides Association, 2003) iii.

their maternal characteristics.⁹ In fact, many articles in GOP were useful for them in becoming good mothers for the future. For example, there is an article about housewifery entitled “The Battersea Polytechnic,” by Lily Watson, where we can see that girls grapple with cooking, washing, and sewing (Fig. 4, 5, and 6). They are struggling to cook a meal, to launder clothes, and to do needlework. The cooking, laundering, and needlework were regarded as the necessary accomplishments of wise mothers. As noted, Wendy in *Peter Pan* is frequently cooking, washing, and needling. Actually, before leaving for the Neverland, she sews Peter’s shadow and says that “Perhaps I should have ironed it” (Barrie 91).

Not just Girl Guides and schools but various organizations, the government itself, and *Girl’s Own Paper* placed emphasis upon home economic or home management at the same time as *Peter Pan* became popular, all mutually related to the Edwardian socio-cultural contexts. For instance, as stated in *Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* (1904), the Committee members compelled the Board of Education to work out “some great scheme of social education” that would aim “to raise the standard of domestic competence” (57). In response to their demand, the Board of Education published *Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools* (1905) that prompted elementary school teachers to educate girls “to set a high value on the housewife’s position, and to understand that the work of women in their homes may do much to make a nation strong and prosperous” (78). In particular, the bitter experience of the Boer War intensified the importance of nurturing the future generation of workers and soldiers, in other words, maternal love.¹⁰



Fig. 4. Cookery from “The Battersea Polytechnic” (July 2, 1904) 628.



Fig. 5. Laundry and Ironing “The Battersea Polytechnic” (July 2, 1904) 628.



Fig. 6. Needlework from “The Battersea Polytechnic” (July 2, 1904) 629.

A serious social problem, in fact, affected a greater part of Britain. The immediate problem, one demanding solution, was “hooligan” impacts or “hooliganism.”¹¹ For example, the terrible news about hooligans and hooliganism (in the wake of a turbulent August Bank Holiday celebration in London in 1898) were published with big headlines : “‘Boot ’em at Waterloo,’ ‘They Play Football with a Man’ and ‘Kick a Man like a Football’” (Pearson 76). On the other hand, the British society in those days urgently needed working-class children in order to embark on the postwar reconstruction of Britain. A dominant group of the middle classes strove to prevent the children from becoming the members of hooligan groups. Interestingly, they targeted working-class parents, especially “mother.” The following address to the National Union of Teachers was made in 1901 :

My first plea is for the child, the neglected child, whose present condition deserves public attention, because there are not wanting indications that the welfare of society and of the nation are seriously menaced by the lawlessness which springs from defective control, mainly owing to the unwillingness or inability of parents to carry out the duties of their position.

The hooligan, or street blackguard, is not a sudden growth ; he is the product of street education. . . .

The thoughtful student of modern life sees nothing sadder than the crowds of boys and girls in the streets late at night, exposed to many and serious dangers, acquiring evil habits, and generally laying the foundation of a life of idleness, vice, or crime. . . . The boisterous, rude behaviour, the vulgar and coarse language, and the inculcation of positively sinful deeds are facts which must be faced and fought. There is no parental influence here. . . . And there are mothers! When we think of “mother,” what endearing and noble images arises in the mind. Yet there are mothers so degraded, so utterly unworthy of their name, so lost to all sense of their duties and privileges. . . .¹²

The hooligan problem is closely related to the absence of the lost boys’ mothers in *Peter Pan*.¹³ In fact, Wendy nurtures lost boys who seem to live under bad conditions. She is particularly careful about their bedtime. After they have finished the fight against pirates, Wendy is surprised to look at a clock in the pirate ship :

[S]he [Wendy] took them [lost boys] into Hook’s cabin and pointed to his watch which was hanging on a nail. It said, ‘half past one’!

The lateness of the hour was almost the biggest thing of all. She got them to bed in the pirates’ bunks pretty quickly. . . . (Barrie 205)

Similarly, the opening scene of Wendy’s encounter with Peter is suggestive of hooliganism :

Peter rose and kicked John out of bed, blankets and all ; one kick. This seemed to Wendy rather forward for a first meeting, and she told him with sprit that he was not captain in her house. (95)¹⁴

What is important for this scene is that Wendy reacts against kicking a person. Wendy is able to reform hooligans, because she has a middle-class thought that “[w]oman is nature’s supreme instrument of the future” (Saleeby xiv).¹⁵ The following words in *Peter Pan* are equivalent to this thought : “Wendy, one girl is more use than twenty boys” (Barrie 91).

Wendy also acts as if she were a “health visitor” or a “female social investigator.”¹⁶ In the final two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, social investigation was conducted by women. Women’s visits to poor homes originally were among the accepted duties of middle-class women, gradually becoming an integral part of charity. The home-visit care was mainly organized by the Charity Organization Society (COS). The COS’s systematic and regular visit to working-class home gave visitors opportunities to record lower-class bad living conditions and to proffer good advice about improving their lifestyle to them. In *Peter Pan*, Mrs. Darling, Wendy’s mother, has a household accounts book and is entering daily expenditure in it : “[S]he kept the books perfectly, almost gleefully, as if it were a game, not so much as a Brussels sprout was missing . . .” (70). Wendy has such a mother who maintains hygiene in her family.¹⁷ Wendy’s acts in Neverland, therefore, run parallel to social reform (as if a respectable woman visits and investigates a poor condition of life in a slum area). Her behavior obliges the promising lost boys to understand the significance of health. She deals with not only the hooligan problem but also other problems, specifically, a falling birthrate and a high rate of infant mortality.¹⁸ In that way, *Peter Pan* in particular emphasized the pleasant home environment. She is to be tasked with reforming the poor living conditions of the underground dwelling in Neverland where lost boys live.¹⁹

Wendy eventually determines to return from Neverland to London. Her determination unmistakably reflects the idea of eugenic marriage.²⁰ As she has cultivated her motherhood by living together with the boys in the Neverland, Wendy trusts that she does not need Peter for her future herself. She is to understand the significance of his background full of obscurity. And moreover, she is to catch the meaning of his aspiration to be an eternal boy :

When people in our set are introduced, it is customary for them to ask each other’s age, and so Wendy, who always liked to do the correct thing, asked Peter how old he was. . . . ‘I don’t know,’ he replied uneasily, ‘but I am quite young.’ He really knew nothing about it ; he had merely suspicious, but he said at a venture, ‘Wendy, I ran away the day I was born.’ . . . ‘I want always to be a little boy and to have fun. So I ran away to Kensington Gardens and lived a long time among the fairies.’ (92)

The Science of Eugenics and Sex Life, Love, Marriage, Maternity : The Regeneration of The Human Race (edited by Robert L. Leslie) says, on the ideal marriage, as follows :

The eugenic marriage, when it comes, WILL BE BASED UPON THE PRINCIPLES AND KNOWLEDGE OF HEREDITY. When a young man and a young woman, offering themselves for marriage, can produce certified records of their ancestry back for three or four generations, showing that their progenitors have been entirely, or largely, free from nervous prostration, sick

headaches, hysteria, melancholia, St Vitus' dance, epilepsy, syphilis, alcoholism, pauperism, criminality, prostitution and insanity—when they can further show that their ancestors have been free from all other inheritable forms of nervous disorders, including certain forms of deafness, colour blindness and other indications of defectiveness and degeneracy, then it may truly be said that such a union may be correctly styled a EUGENIC MARRIAGE. (v ; caps in original)

Not surprisingly, the eugenicist radical views on marriage are expressed in the above-mentioned passage. What is important on this point is that at that time people generally considered the eugenic marriage to be natural and right.²¹ Wendy too finds that Peter lacks the ability to be a good match. She is to brand him as an unfit boy/man, a viewpoint which would be caused by the workings of eugenics in society at the time.

There are many scenes of sewing in *Peter Pan*, where its scenes are repeated fragmentarily, though piquantly and impressively. As mentioned above, Wendy sews at Neverland. She also is sewing after her homecoming from there : “Wendy was sitting on the floor, very close to the fire, so as to see to darn, for there was no other light in the nursery ; and while she sat darning she heard a crow” (Barrie 223). She, however, has already sewn at London before departing for Neverland : “I shall sew it on for you, my little man,’ she said, though he was as tall as herself ; and she got out her housewife, and sewed the shadow on to Peter’s foot” (90). This is a very important and suggestive scene, because it is at this time that she meets Peter for the first time. She behaves herself like a motherly person. The scenes of sewing in *Peter Pan* again seem to clearly suggest the aura of motherhood.

The Edwardians did appreciate the deeper significance of the mother in the mother’s relationship to national anxieties over physical and mental deteriorations (which mothers might prevent), high infant mortality, and low birth rates. In point of fact, educators, patriotic persons, religious leaders, and eugenicists strongly pressed social reforms. One of the reforms was the completion of home economics in elementary schools. Another was the introduction of the domestic training via Girl Guides and the thoughts expressed in *Girl’s Own Paper*, and a third was the soundness of home environment—and the impacts mothers might have on environment—in poor areas. Thus, the Edwardian girl Wendy is closely concerned with the British Empire by virtue of its ideology at the time and its reflection throughout Barrie’s *Peter Pan*.

3

On the other hand, in *Peter Pan*, there are the girls who appear to be marginal representational figures of the British Empire : Liza, the mermaids, and Tinker Bell. They are the “bad girls,” as compared with the “good girl!” Wendy, in the Edwardian era when almost all the girls were entrusted with the future of the Empire and were forced to become the wise mothers of the Empire. This other group of girls can be called the “lost girls.”

Liza is notable as the girl that is inside a house. She lives as a domestic servant of the Darlings. She, who is almost the same age as Wendy, seems to lead a pleasant life there :

Lovely dances followed, in which the only other servant, Liza, was sometimes allowed to join. Such a midget she looked in her long skirt and maid's cap, though she had sworn, when engaged, that she would never see ten again. (72)

She actually is disdained by Mr. and Mrs. Darling, as seen here :

‘George,’ Mrs. Darling entreated him, ‘not so loud; the servants will hear you.’ Somehow they had got into the way of calling Liza the servants. ‘Let them!’ he answered recklessly. (85)

Liza is described as an object of contempt. Nevertheless, she also despises Mr. Darling :

He gave his hat to Liza, who took it scornfully; for she had no imagination, and was quite incapable of understanding the motives of such a man. (210)

In effect, however, she is not assayed by not only Mr. and Mrs. Darling but also the narrator of this text. (These imply she is not selected by Peter and cannot go to the Neverland.) As stated in “The Scheme for ‘Girl Guides,’” “[g]ood servants are hard to get, homes are badly kept, children are badly brought up” (12) in consequence of the degeneracy of modern women, especially young girls. Liza is regarded as a useless girl.

The mermaids, also, are considered as the outsiders. They are haunted by the strong image of the women full of sexual desire, which represents them as the degenerates. The reason why they look to be the bad girls is that they are frolicking on the water-side. “[O]n Marooner’s Rock,” they “loved to bask, combing out their hair in a lazy way” (140). Interestingly, their behavior “quite irritated” Wendy (140). They were not “on friendly terms with” her and never did give her “a civil word” (140). “[T]hey



Fig. 7. The seaside girl from *Illustrated London News* (July 23, 1887) 123.



Fig. 8. The seaside girls from *Illustrated London News* (Dec. 10, 1887) 689.

saw her and dived, probably splashing her with their tails, not by accident, but intentionally” (140).

The mermaids’ actions on the lagoon suggest the “seaside girls” that are filled with sexual desire.²² In 1880’s and 1890’s Britain, M. Beetham and Son (solo makers, chemists) repeatedly used a figure of the seaside girl in its advertisements in order to market its pharmaceutical products (ointments, lotions, and so on) (Fig. 7 and 8). “The ‘seaside girl’ was a catch phrase popularized by a hit song in the late nineteenth century” (Richards 226). The song was frequently sung in music halls. Equally importantly, the “girlie” figure was related to the further extension of urban life (by the rapid development of railways); that is to say, the emergence of the seaside resort. “The seaside resort was a site of fantasy and a primary locus of Victorian sexual politics.” It “not only promoted the diversification of sexual practices such as nude bathing, but it also refined the forms that sexual desire and gratification took” (Richards 227). “The space of leisure had been sexualized” (228). There were the numerous advertisements featuring this girl on the British market (Fig. 9 and 10). When relating this to *Peter Pan*, the mermaids’ doings on the lagoon (especially, their attitudes toward Wendy) and their images as seaside girls can easily be seen as suggestive of sexualized girls, in other words, the bad girls.

Similarly, in order to consider the implication of Tinker Bell as a lost girl, it is significant that she is almost killed by drugs. She takes drugs in place of Peter Pan, who was targeted for killing by James Hook :

The red in his [Hook’s] eye had caught sight of Peter’s medicine standing on a ledge within easy reach. . . .

Lest he should be taken alive, Hook always carried about his person a dreadful drug, blended by himself of all the death-dealing rings that had come into his possession. . . .



Fig. 9. The little girl in a cheesecake pose from Diana Hindley and Geoffrey Hindley, *Advertising in Victorian England 1837-1901* (London: Wayland, 1972) 179.

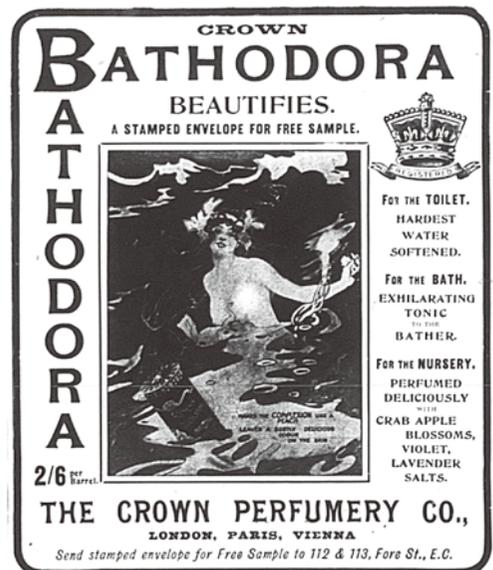


Fig. 10. The naked girl from *Illustrated London News* (April 12, 1902) 550.

Five drops of this he now added to Peter's cup. . . .

He [Peter] raised the cup. No time for words now ; time for deeds ; and with one of her lighting movements Tink got between his lips and the draught, and drained it to the dregs. (182-84)

After this scene, Peter requests audiences to applaud Tinker Bell for saving Peter from murder by poisoning, which is an immensely famous and important scene in *Peter Pan*.

Tinker Bell's act of taking the drug is suggestive of both the "modern nymph" (Fig. 11) and Billie Carleton, a famous figure of the time who had died by drugs (Fig. 12). The death of Billie Carleton, an actress and a chorus girl aged 22, from a drug cocktail in 1918. It was one of the highest profile cases in Britain. A few months after her death, her case was used in *Dope: A Novel of Chinatown and the Drug Trade* (1919) by Sax Rohmer (who was known as the author of *The Mystery of Dr Fu Manchu* [1913]) (Kohn 7, 67, 78, 82). It created a great scandal. A nightclub dancer, Freda Kempton born in 1899, was similarly killed by drugs in Britain in 1922. Her scandal was the cause of the production of a film titled *Cocaine* (1922) (Kohn 7, 71, 123-24, 134). Moreover, her dramatic death generated an archetypal white slave story, for example as depicted in David Garnett's *Dope-Darling* (1919), where an innocent young woman, Claire Plowman, is lured by an agent to drugs, and is raped while in a stupor. She eventually became a prostitute (Kohn 31).²³

It may be difficult to know whether the contemporary problem of drugs and the new publicity surrounding women and drugs influenced *Peter Pan* and Barrie's depiction of Tinker Bell, but there certainly can be found some traces of anxiety about them in the literary text. As mentioned above, the word "drug" in the narrative version (1911) is used at the place where Tinker Bell is nearly killed, whereas in the theatrical version (1928) the "drug" was deleted, perhaps intention-



Fig. 11. The modern nymph from Marek Kohn, *Dope Girls* (London : Granta, 2001) 121.



Fig. 12. Billie Carleton from Marek Kohn, *Dope Girls* (London : Granta, 2001) 70.

ally in an act of censorship :

(. . . *He, [Hook] however, sees the medicine shell within easy reach, and to Wendy's draught he adds from a bottle five drops of poison distilled when he was weeping from the red in his eye. . . .*)

PETER. . . . (. . . *Tink alights near the shell, and rings out a warning cry*) Oh, that is just my medicine. Poisoned? Who could have poisoned it? . . . (*Tink, who sees its red colour and remembers the red in the pirate's eye, nobly swallows the draught as Peter's hand is reaching for it*) Why, Tink, you have drunk my medicine! (Barrie, *Peter Pan and Other Plays* 136 ; italics in original)

Tinker Bell, who is to take drugs and also can fly freely everywhere, stands for the “bad girl,” much like Billie Carleton or Freda Kempton represented her in real life of the time.²⁴

Thus, Liza, mermaids, and Tinker Bell all can be seen to represent the “lost girls” who are condemned harshly in the British imperial society. Contemporary thought compelled women, especially girls, to keep themselves neat and tidy, which was difficult for poor or “lost” girls to consistently accomplish. If they were idle, they were viewed as dirty persons. To be more precise, cleanliness was synonymous with morality.²⁵ The imperial girls (Liza, mermaids, and Tinker Bell) are leading a free and happy life, and therefore they are women to be targeted as the ringleaders of a national crisis of decline by imperialists, eugenicists, and social hygienists, who labeled them as the “bad girls.” *Peter Pan's* characterization of them implies the following menace : “[M]arriages of the middle and better classes were now so sterile that quite an undue and dangerous proportion of the rising generation was recruited from the lower, the more ignorant, the more vicious, and semi-criminal population” (Taylor 427). And later, this opinion was also to be presented in a pamphlet on the declining birth-rate, published as a Fabian tract (1907), by Sidney Webb.²⁶

4

In *Peter Pan*, Wendy, Liza, mermaids, and Tinker Bell, who are literary archetype girls of the British Empire, are contained by its ideology of imperialism, because “the children belong not merely to the parents but to the community as a whole” (Cadbury 229). “The health” of these young people “is the principal asset of the nation” (Church 229), and “the future of the country and the empire depends” upon them (Church 231). Wendy is destined to become a quality female citizen or subject of the Empire, in other words, an imperial good mother. On the other hand, Liza, the mermaids, and Tinker Bell are certain not to be needed in this society, as clearly depicted by Barrie in leaving their futures ambiguous as compared to Wendy.

Notes

- 1 Elizabeth Langland, for example, delineates the close relation between Queen Victoria and the “angel in the house” (62-79). For more about the relation between colonies and the erotized lands, see, for example, Hulme.
- 2 In this paper, the narrative version of *Peter Pan, Peter and Wendy* (1911), is mainly used in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*

works. The standard text is *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy* (Oxford UP).

- 3 Penelope Schott Starkey observes that *Peter Pan* is “a training manual for mothers,” and that it “has little to say to boys” (2).
- 4 For further information about home economics in the elementary schools in England in those days, see Dyhouse, especially Chapter 3.
- 5 Interestingly, Mrs. Darling also sews at home in London. Martin Green regards Mrs. Darling as the Virgin Mother. Wendy’s motherliness, he conceives, is inferior in quality to Mrs. Darling’s (158–59). For him, Mrs. Darling is a typical Victorian “lady” who was called the “angel in the house,” and while Wendy is inferior to Mrs. Darling in maternity aspects, she is ranked genealogically as the “angel in the house.”
- 6 About Girl Guides, see, for example, Kerr.
- 7 The first number of *Boy Scouts’ Headquarters’ Gazette*, the monthly journal for Scoutmasters, appeared in July, 1909.
- 8 In the foreword of *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*, published three years later in 1912, Agnes Baden-Powell, in collaboration with her brother Robert, observed about the scheme for Girl Guides :

“The Girl Guide” is an organization for character training. . . .

Its aim is to get girls to learn how to be women—self-helpful, happy, prosperous, and capable of keeping good homes and of bringing up good children. . . .

Already this training has been found attractive to all class, but more especially to those by whom it is so vitally needed—the girls of the factories and of the alleys of our great cities, who, after they leave school, get no kind of restraining influence, and who, nevertheless, may be the mothers, and should be the character trainers of the future men of our nation. (vii ; italics in original)

Jane Mackay and Pat Thane point out that Girl Guides educated not only working-class girls but also middle-class girls to be the supporters of the Empire (214).

- 9 On the relation between maternity and GOP, see Drotner, and also Gorham. They each state that GOP is effective for the Victorian and Edwardian girls in becoming the “angle in the house.” About GOP, see also Doughty.
- 10 For details, see Dyhouse, 91–95.
- 11 About hooligan and hooliganism, see, for example, Pearson. According to his book, “the word ‘hooligan’ made an abrupt entrance into common English usage, as a term to describe gangs of rowdy youths, during the hot summer of 1898” (74).
- 12 Mr. J. F. Blacker’s Presidential Address to the National Union of Teachers’ Annual Conference of 1901, in *Schoolmaster : The Organ of the National Union of Teachers*, 13 April 1901, 666. See also Humphries, Chapter 1.
- 13 Jack Zipe states Peter Pan, the captain of lost boys, is “a rebel who consciously rejects the role of adulthood in conventional society” (xxv).
- 14 In *Peter Pan*, the last scene of James Hook, who is kicked by Peter, also is important for hooliganism : “He [Hook] had one last triumph. . . . [H]e invited him [Peter] with a gesture to use his foot. It made Peter kick instead of stab. At last Hook had got the boon for which he craved. ‘Bad form,’ he cried jeeringly, and went content to the crocodile” (204).
- 15 About the middle-class maternity, see Davin, 28–29.
- 16 About the female social investigator, see Nord, especially Chapter 7.
- 17 Martin Green states that Wendy inherits maternity from Mrs. Darling, whereas Wendy’s maternity is inferior to Mrs. Darling’s, as mentioned in Notes 5. On the other hand, Jackie Wullschläger observes that “Wendy is left a Virgin Mother ; with Mrs Darling, she joins a group of idealized but sexually unthreatening mother-figures who appear in English fiction for the next two decades. . . . Wendy is the most innocent of them . . .” (132).

- 18 Wendy, John, and Michael probably drank much milk in their infancy, and consequently they will be in good health. Mr. Darling seems to be complaining about their high expenses for milk (Barrie 71).
- 19 Wendy, who behaves as a female health-visitor and social-investigator, is concerned in not only maternalism but colonialism as well. Nead, for example, observes “in the same way that geographical exploration became a strategy of British colonialism, so social exploration pursued its anthropological task to colonize the working classes, to describe, to categorize, to analyze and to regulate various deviant groups” (150-51).
- 20 About the eugenicist motherhood, see Davin, 19-22.
- 21 Saleeby, also, observes that “[t]he eugenist is therefore deeply concerned with her [woman’s] education, her psychology, the conditions which permit her to exercise her great natural function of choosing the fathers of the future, the age at which she should marry . . .” (xiv).
- 22 About the seaside girls, see Richards, Chapter 5.
- 23 According to Kohn, the then existing laws at the Victorian and Edwardian eras gradually prohibited Britons from using drugs, especially opium, cocaine, and other narcotics. The laws, however, were scarcely effective. The Victorians and Edwardians were able to get drugs easily despite the fact that the drug problem (including, for example, opium dens) were acute in London. In Britain, the laws against drugs were tightened earnestly after the First World War. The reason for this was that the British soldiers made use of drugs (especially marijuana) throughout the war and during its aftermath (31). For imperialists in those days, soldier-doping was the important social problem, because the soldier’s fall in his moral and physical conditions, they believed, was closely connected with the degeneration of the Empire. For further information about the drug issue, see Berridge, and also Bicker, who both discuss opium usage at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century in England. (Incidentally, a British stage actress married J. M. Barrie in 1894. Her name was Mary Ansell. She divorced him in 1909. For details, see Birkin.)
- 24 Dan Kiley, who published *The Peter Pan Syndrome : Men Who Have Never Grown Up* (1983), states in *The Wendy Dilemma : When Women Stop Mothering Their Men*, that it is good for women to become Tinker Bell in order that they live happy lives. Interestingly, in *Peter Pan*, the Redskins, whose chief daughter is Tiger Lily, are also smoking pipes as if to take drugs in broad daylight : “Even by day they hung about, smoking the pipe of peace, and looking almost as if they wanted tit-bits to eat” (157).
- 25 About the meaning of morality in early twentieth century, see, for example, Silver, who shows the importance of Brian Gilbert’s film *Tom and Viv* (1994), which examines T. S. Eliot’s marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood from 1915, based on the 1984 play by Michael Hastings. According to that film, Vivienne was diagnosed with “moral insanity” by doctors. She had been segregated in a mental asylum for eleven years. Her behavior (for example, loudly vulgar talking and wild mood swings) was defined as antisocial and inappropriate, despite the fact that her erratic behavior may well have been related to the medicines prescribed in those times for a hormonal imbalance (which caused severe headaches, stomach pains, and incessant menstrual bleeding). Later, her “madness” was correctly diagnosed as post-menopause by an American psychologist. She had been perfectly “sane” until her death at the asylum in 1947 (174-77).
- 26 For all the specific details, see Davin, 19-22.

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