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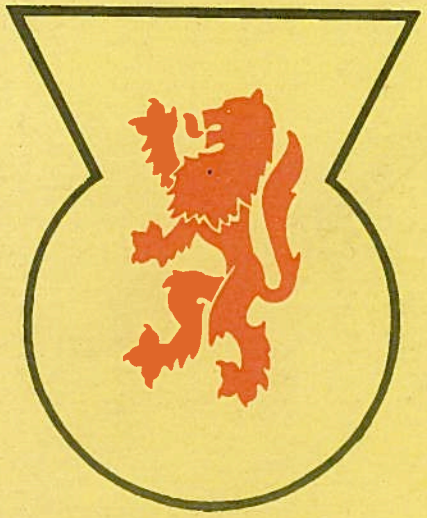

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Editor: THOMAS CRAWFORD
University of Aberdeen

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Contents

17 Wordsworth liked the last four lines of this stanza so much that he used them as the conclusion to a cento published in 1835. Beattie himself remarked that the lines were 'drawn after real nature' *(Forbes,* I, 24). For a fuller discussion of *Retirement* and *The Hermit* see my article, 'James Beattie's *Retirement* and *The Hermit:* Two Early Romantic Poems', *The South Atlantic Quarterly,* 72, No. 4 (Autumn, 1973), 574-586.

18 The strange fact is that Edwin, who had grown into the mature Wordsworth, also developed into that most un-Wordsworthian of creatures, the Byronic hero. This paradox is explained by the fact that the melancholy of *The Minstrel* drew very different responses from Wordsworth and Byron. Wordsworth learned very early to control Beattie's melancholy, scorning it in his journal and in *The Prelude,* while learning from it the need to cultivate *The Minstrel's* sense of solitude. It was Byron who made the most of Beattie's hints about poetic melancholy, transforming it in *Childe Harold* into the great confessed poem of Romantic autobiography.

Memorial University,
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Note: In this issue, word or passages intended to be within square brackets have been enclosed by vertical lines.—T.C.

LYNETTE HUNTER

J. M. Barrie: The Rejection of Fantasy

J. M. Barrie has often been accused of being a fantasist and sentimentalist,[1] yet his later novels and his plays are mainly concerned with exploring the delusions of fantasy and sentimentalism. The indictment stems from his early writing about small-town Scotland which defined him in the public eye for a long time. But between this period and the writing of the plays, for which he is primarily admired, Barrie produced four novels which show a clear transition from the popular fantasist to a subtle and complex ironist. The artistic inadequacy of the novels has led in the past to a neglect of Barrie's real and vital exploration of literary ideas and styles. But they present a man becoming increasingly aware of the pitfalls in fantasy and sentimentality;[2] and the shifting emphasis of his imagery and structure sheds a deeply cynical light on *Peter Pan* which provides the prototype for his later work. For Barrie, as *The Little Minister* shows, the mode of fantasy was initially synonymous with art. The struggle to control and change his style in the novels became a search for greater artistic responsibility in expression which he finally achieved in the written form of his plays.

In 1882 James Barrie left Scotland to try his fortune as a journalist first in Nottingham and then in London. After three years of London, he began writing the stories about his home town that first brought him public recognition. *Auld Licht Idylls* and *A Window in Thrums,* collections of these stories, established him as a sentimental writer. The tales attempt to create a quaint and picturesque view of a small Scottish town, and they were so convincing that for years to come they coloured the English public's image of what North Britain was 'really' like. Barrie was writing what they wanted to read; he was inventing a place for them to escape to. At the time Barrie himself was probably just greatly relieved that his work had begun to sell.

With these and other successes behind him, Barrie embarked on his first full-length novel. *The Little Minister* published in 1890. In plot, character and content, this book is a summary of Barrie's early development. The narrator of story, which is again set in Scotland, is the schoolmaster Gavin Ogilvie of the earlier stories. His

reconstruction of the early nineteenth century Thrums community focuses on telling the reader about the early life and marriage of his son. In doing so the narrator hopes to retain some vestiges of meaning for his own life: in his son's success he hopes to find a vindication of his own failure. The novelist allows the narrator to create a sense of absolute trust in the reader, to invent a situation in which the reader is expected to believe, and to control the reactions to this situation. In other words, the narrator is given the pre-requisites of a fantasist which depend upon the power to create one's own world and control it absolutely.[3] It is this technique that makes it possible for the author to write an escapist novel in an apparently realistic manner.

The reader is thrown immediately into the presence of the first person narrator who assumes a casual tone of familiarity with his audience, throwing out vague allusions about his life which contribute to an impression of his own solidity as a character. The most important claim he makes is that he is only a biographer.[4] The claim demands an acceptance of the material as events that actually happened, which is substantiated by the objective stance the narrator tries to take, and his reluctance to involve himself personally in the narrative. The reader is left with an impression of the narrator as a believable person, who is giving him factual material from an objective point of view.

Throughout the first half of the novel the narrator keeps himself out of the action, only occasionally reminding one of his presence with subtly interpolated explanations and descriptions. Whenever he makes a personal observation he uses constant disclaimers, yet each instance is followed by a careful presentation of what he says he cannot describe. By the time he is actually involved in the story the reader has been convinced of the narrator's honesty and objectivity. As a result the identification with his son which occurs in the second half of the novel is completely acceptable; and the vindication that arises from his son's mental anguish and final happiness is believable. But the words used to describe the reader's reactions are 'accept' and 'believe' rather than 'experience' or 'involve'; the novel is specifically searching for a passive audience that will not question the fantasy.

Barrie as the novelist, was quite aware that the ending of the novel would place the whole fantasy in perspective. He had even written two endings, the one being the successful marriage of the son, and the other being:

> tragic, the love affair ending unhappily and the minister being preached out of his church by the old minister.[5]

In choosing the successful ending Barrie was bowing to fantasy. For whatever reason, he was allowing it to exist. Robert Louis Stevenson, in a letter to Barrie written soon after reading *The Little Minister,* went to the heart of the author's feeling. He said that the novel:

> ought to have ended badly; we all know it did; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you lied about it . . . You let yourself fall in love with ... your puppets. Once you had done that your honour was commited—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them.[6]

'At the cost of truth to life' Barrie lets the narrator of the book convince his audience. However, the same thing could not be said for his next novel *Sentimental Tommy.*

During the years between *The Little Minister* and the serialisation of *Sentimental Tommy* in 1896, Barrie was exposed to several of the most important events of his life. In 1892 his sister Maggie's fiancé died after being thrown by a horse given to him by Barrie. The writer blamed himself for the death and looked after his sister until she married her fiancé's brother a year later. In 1894 Barrie was himself married, to the actress Mary Ansell. But in 1895 came the greatest change. His eldest sister Jane Ann died, to be followed quickly by his beloved mother. The emotional excess and mawkishness of *Margaret Ogilvie,* dedicated to his mother and published early in 1896, indicates an unconsidered if not rather self-indulgent attitude to these events. However, the writing of this book does exorcise much of Barrie's earlier style; never again was he to write in such a manner without a tone of bitterness and irony. *Sentimental Tommy* reflects this change in its cautious criticism of the fantasist. The novel is conscious of the process of Tommy's art, and is concerned with its effects on others. Soon after Arthur Quiller-Couch's review of the book in November 1896, Barrie wrote to him to say, 'you have found out some things about me and about the book that I thought were only known to myself'.[7] Perhaps he was referring to the following observation in the review:

> that he |Barrie| had written this book in a mood of indignant revulsion from the picture of a soul, which ... might have been his own.[8]

However, Barrie's attitude in the novel has not yet become as disapproving as the excerpt implies.

The novel follows Tommy and his sister Elspeth from their mother's death in London, to their life with their guardian in small-

town Scottish Thrums. It is almost solely concerned with Tommy's fantasies as he grows up from a child of five to a boy of fifteen. An early fantasy comments indirectly on the novelist's previous work. It occurs when Tommy is living in London. He knows of Thrums only through the memories of the adults around him; and thinks of it as 'an enchanted land' inhabited by fairies. The reader finds him and his sister dressing up as guisers to re-create the Hogmanay of Thrums for their ailing mother. As a good fantasist, Tommy has arranged everything down to the last detail, and is happy as long as his mother plays along, thinks it 'just like Thrums'. But when she breaks down in tears knowing she will soon die, Tommy 'by a supreme effort . . . shouldered reality to the door' (p. 94). When he invents a fantasy all the participants have to believe in it, and pay no attention to reality. The novelist makes one aware for the first time that despite the good intentions there is a bitter contrast with reality, which Tommy is unaware of as he acts inside his world.

More important than the now familiar technique of the fantasist is the effect of the fantasies on other people. To validate the roles that Tommy plays it is essential for others to believe in them as well. The author is careful to show that the persuasion he exercises is often positive; as, for example, when he tries to cheer his sister up after their mother's death. But Elspeth's trusting nature, being open to any persuasion, is also open to the negative effects of fantasy. Once, acting on Tommy's words, she endangers her life. When Tommy finds out, he is frantic; and he begins to realise the dangers of imposing his fantasies on others. However, this event is minor; nothing serious happens, and it is soon forgotten. Grizel is a different matter. Tommy tries to comfort her in turn, on the death of her own mother; but she cannot be persuaded by his stories of happiness. Grizel functions as the opposite pole to Tommy's fantasising. The narrator says that Tommy's individuality consisted 'in having none, while she could only be herself' (p. 174). Because she is constantly aware of reality, she is not directly open to either the positive or negative effects of Tommy's fantasies.

The central fantasy of Tommy's childhood is his reconstruction of the 1745 uprising that occupies the third quarter of the novel. He totally scripts, casts, and directs himself and his friends in this fantasy. His sister, as would be expected, carries out her roles as instructed. Grizel, on the other hand, is continually rebelling against doing things that are not in her nature. An interesting side-effect is that she learns a lot about herself in reaction to Tommy's

interpretations. When she acknowledges the fantasy as temporary, she gains a sense of who she really is by being forced to be someone else. But the effect of the fantasy is positive only if Tommy is in control; if he is not, there may be danger. For example, he inspires a rival firm of Jacobites; but having been created, they pursue their own interests. Once out of Tommy's jurisdiction they waylay and cruelly taunt Grizel as a member of another group.

The problem is that Tommy has an ambivalent relationship with his fantasy. He wants to control it so that reality does not intrude, yet he also wants to escape into it and pretend that it is real. He himself can use fantasy positively to express himself honestly to his friends, because he knows he will not have to face the reailty of his actions. Yet the fantasy sometimes masters him instead: he is often found unconsciously hacking at his hands so that they bleed. In the latter half of the novel the ambivalence of Tommy's attitude is occasionally broken by the *motif* of ironic laughter. It happens when he suddenly notices a discrepancy between the fantasy and reality, but it is a rare occurrence.

The narrator's function in the novel is to defuse the potential danger in the ambivalence. He gives an almost paternal tone to the story. In contrast with the narrator of *The Little Minister* he is never significantly present in person; yet when he is, he creates a similar trust in his judgement. The fact that is speaking of someone else's fantasies increases the sense of his objectivity. While the novelist allows him to present the two sides of Tommy's fantasies, the ambivalence of their effects is shown to be harmless. The boy's youth makes his play-acting ineffectual. When the novel ends the boy is not aware of his responsibilities towards the participators in his fantasies, because he is not aware of the extent of his own control over them. The narrator ends by saying, 'Happy Tommy! to be an artist is a great thing, but to be an artist and not know it is the most glorious plight in the world' (p. 385). The statement sums up Barrie's early attitude to art expressed in a letter of 1893, 'Blessed is the novelist who has no idea how he does it'.[10]

The sequel to *Sentimental Tommy* was *Tommy and Grizel,* published in 1900. The intervening years contained another significant event in Barrie's life: his meeting in 1898 with Sylvia Davies, whose five children he later adopted. His work became altogether more confident, and he was now able to treat the role of fantasies with greater honesty. *Tommy and Grizel* clearly points out the far more serious effects of adult fantasy, and the pain of trying to give it up.

The novel begins with an adolescent Tommy again in London, learning to write books. Within two or three years he produces a best-seller; tires of city life, and returns to Thrums. The novel concentrates on his attempts to give up his fantasies with the help of Grizel. He is now conscious that it is impossible always to control, that the dangers are real, and that the issues touching other people are major not minor. The reader sees him learning in the periods of reality between each fantasy, but he 'was still a boy ... trying sometimes, as now, to be a man, and always when he looked around he ran back to his boyhood'.[11]

The contrast between the younger and the older Tommy can be made most effectively by looking at each as they are involved in the process of fantasy. An incident in *Sentimental Tommy* presents the young boy acting the role of a child criminal in order to get into a charity dinner. The narrator comments blithely that, 'He and the saying about art for art's sake were in the streets that night, looking for each other' (p. 71). Barrie's use of the allusive phrase 'art for art's sake' equates it with fantasy. Art by itself, like fantasy, need have no connection with the actual world. Tommy proceeds to create a world of his own completely self-sufficient in itself until reality bumps into it, or in this case kicks him in the shins. However, if art need have no connection with the actual world, it is limited to itself. Any value it possesses is only in its own existence; its morality is relative. The artist creating such art has no responsibility to anything but himself, and is in danger of exerting a despotic control over the reality he describes.

The phrase 'art for art's sake' was commonly associated at the turn of the century with the aesthetes and Walter Pater. Barrie, with his critical work conducted primarily during the 1880's, would have been very much aware of the movement. The young Tommy's actions are his critical interpretation of the Paterian principle that artistic achievement lies in substituting a world of one's own for the common world around. Barrie carries the interpretation one step further in *Tommy and Grizel*. The adult Tommy's process of fantasising or 'turning into one of the other Tommies' (p. 116), explicitly imitates Paterian image-making. He begins with the visual image of a bird which dissipates into a series of impressions increasingly self-oriented. Tommy's 'focus of vitality'[12] becomes a fantasy concerning a lark dying of a burst heart. The danger in the process is that the actual image is abandoned before re-building the individual image, so that one can potentially describe the object in completely personal terms.[13] Here Tommy's sad emotion is so personal that it transfers

with ease to another object, the glove of a girl. Tommy develops a further series of impressions that end with him drowning while the girl laughs. The fantasy is so far from reality, and Tommy is so involved in it, that when a friend suddenly tells him that a boy is actually drowning in a nearby river, he leaps up and dives into the water to save him. A complication of fantasy is that the better you fantasise the more likely you are to lose yourself in it and come slap up against a brutal reality.

From the beginning of *Tommy and Grizel* there is the implication that while a child's natural medium may be fantasy, for an adult it will not always do. Grizel is the one influence helping Tommy in his attempt to face reality. But Tommy half-inadvertently brings about a situation in which she thinks he is in love with her and Grizel allows herself to be persuaded. The situation develops into the central fantasy of the novel: that Tommy is the 'perfect lover', 'the artist trying in a mad moment to be as well as to do' (p. 165). Without Grizel to help him discriminate, Tommy's fantasy gradually becomes complete. When at last Tommy is faced with the reality of marriage his fantasy dissolves. At the same time Grizel's basis for reality disappears and she goes mad. The ultimate danger of fantasy is that it will supplant reality; and when it is shown to be baseless, reality itself will appear to have no foundation. Even though Tommy accepts his wrong-doing and pursues her back to sanity, he fails to reject fantasy himself and finally it destroys him.

The novelist's judgement of Tommy's fantasies is unequivocal: the voice of the narrator condemns them. The tone of the novel is constantly cynical and ironic, and the narrator plays an active role in keeping Tommy's fantasies in perspective. Yet he says that he chose to write about Tommy although his hero failed to conquer the selfishness and egoism that led to fantasy, because at least he tried. The essential point is the conflict, and the courage it required. The narrator observes that everyone has the tendency to fantasy and that it 'may be so strong that to battle with it and be beaten is not altogether to fail' (p. 453). Barrie wishes not just to condemn, but to make clear the anguish of the continual self-questioning that he himself must have experienced in his own attempt to reject fantasy.

The first three novels of this period each contain a narrator and a main character. As Barrie becomes more aware of the dangers of fantasy, he develops an increased responsibility to his reader, demonstrated through the changing influence of the narrator. At first the narrator is ostensibly a guide, persuading the reader of his

interpretation. He then begins to point out the illusions the main character creates. Eventually he comes to consider them delusions, and control them when they get out of hand. Barrie's fourth novel, *The Little White Bird* (1902), fuses narrator and character into one. A man is portrayed continually slipping into fantasy and continually pulling back to destroy the delusion. The structure of the novels also changes. Initially they have a four part movement. They are first concerned with creating a trust in the narrator; they then present a situation that arises naturally from actual events. Once that situation is established, one is led into the central fantasy of the novel, which is usually the main character's interpretation of the events. The reader is asked not to experience but to accept it. Finally, a perspective is put on the interpretation through the narrator that either reinforces or destroys it, according to the novelist's attitude to fantasy. *The Little White Bird* has no need of this structure's persuasive technique, and uses a three part structure with the central fantasy clearly isolated in the middle.

The ironic tone of the narrator-character in *The Little White Bird* is the first sound of the voice of Barrie's mature plays. Many of the dramatic themes are crystallised here. Yet the book is definitely an ending, a shutting of the door on past work. The first part of the novel establishes the tone for the narrator's inventions. Each incident he recounts is undercut by self criticism. He himself constantly breaks down the potential control he exerts as he reassesses his position and sees it in a different light. The necessary shift in perspective is also apparent in the structure of the narrator's fantasies, of which there are two extended examples. The first begins with the courtship of a woman called Mary, which the narrator observes from the window of his club. As he follows her life into marriage and motherhood he is continually tempted into his own fantasies for her, some of which involve himself. But each time he eventually reassesses his delusion and participates in a reality that destroys it.

The second extended fantasy is that of Timothy, the fantasy of someone to love. But the narrator is again forced to supplant Timothy with a real boy and all the unknowns of a real love. The fantasy begins in the actual existence of Mary's son David, and gradually extends into the narrator's mind. Everything that David has, Timothy must also have. Yet when it becomes apparent that Mary and her husband are so poor that they can no longer afford to buy clothes for David, the fantasy is destroyed. Actual circumstances around a real life

prevail, and the narrator gets rid of Timothy in order to give his things to David.

Rather than being completely rejected, the fantasy of Timothy is transposed into the central fantasy of Peter Pan. While there is no serious attempt to convince us of the truth of Peter Pan, neither is he rejected as delusion. The vision becomes a metaphor in the narrator's mind for the natural fantasist. It is acknowledgly unreal, yet its construction delineates the positive and negative aspects of the fantasist with his wishes granted. Peter Pan is a very young child who is cut off without his realising it from the rest of the world. He is not only in the island of the park, but also his home is on a real island in the Serpentine. Within Kensington Gardens he has to construct his own world, invent his own intepretations. The objective viewer can see him as a fantasist, but he cannot be accused of conscious imposition of his own will in opposition to reality. The difference is between the amorality of a child whose values are totally his own because he does not comprehend any others, and the despotic nature of the man who chooses to say that his values are the only basis for action.

Peter is blissfully ignorant of any need to persuade outsiders of his views, yet he still needs to explain things to himself. He tries to play exactly as real children play, but keeps getting things wrong. The boy has no choice but to live in his own interpretation of the world. He has to live in fantasy, and will always be limited to himself. There is a pathetic aspect to his misguided ideas which is contrasted with the reaction to the fairies' misinterpretations. For example, when the fairy prince is tested to decide if he is in love, the doctor puts his hand on the prince's heart. Because his 'heart was on fire' for the girl he loved, the doctor burns his fingers. With the fairies, situations like this are humorous—not pathetic. Their realm is fantasy, they are complete there; for humans there will always be something missing. It is important to note that while the only continuing fantasy to survive the narrator's irony is that of Peter Pan, the conditions of his survival are isolation on an island and complete separation from human beings.

The central fantasy is immediately put into perspective by a series of incidents which emphasises the sense of loss in Peter Pan's life and the need for participation in reality. Barrie has allowed the narrator to present fantasy as inevitable, yet emphasised the constant necessity to discard it if one is to experience the reality in which value is found. Once more the attempt to shift out of a self-created world is seen to be painful, and to require courage. While Tommy failed to win this battle, the narrator of *The Little White Bird* attains at least a partial

success which is seen in his relationship with the lady, Romance. In his youth the narrator could not comprehend her form of whimsy and fantasy because he thought it was real. He was brought within the magic circle of a lady who is the image for romance 'which lives in a little hut beyond the blue haze of the pinewoods'.[14] Then he gradually slips away as the magic disappears. From this time he can distinguish between reality and fantasy, and begins to collect 'whimsicalities'. Because he is a sentimental man, like sentimental Tommy, he tries to lose himself in romance again; but this time he fails, for he has grown up and is aware of the ambivalent nature of the escape she provides.

Twenty years later the narrator's maturer eyes desire a different form for the figure of romance, and she becomes fused with the mother-image of Mary. Just as he rejects his fantasy about Mary's marriage and life, so he rejects the new form for romance. Similarly, Barrie's own twenty years of writing from 1882 to 1902 led him to put aside his own mother-image, and reject the mode of fantasy. In doing so he finally closed the door on his earlier work. The narrator says he 'shouldered his burden' (p. 77) of reality, and at the end of the novel it is Mary who leads him away from sentimentality and 'the little hut through the pine-wood haze' (p. 242).

The novel portrays a man evaluating his way of thinking and his style of writing, and trying to change both. Arising from the different controls the author exercises over the two main fantasies of *The Little White Birds,* is the foundation for the new stylistic irony of his drama. While on the one hand he has discarded complete fantasy as an irresponsible form of expression, on the other he finds the form inevitable. *The Little White Bird* attempts to stablilise the existence of fantasy either by irony that exposes it, or by structural isolation which admits its inadequacy. Through this the author prepares the way for the major issues of his dramatic work, and we can see a positive direction towards greater artistic reponsibility in the different emphases he gives to Peter Pan in the play he wrote two years later.

Peter Pan was first produced in 1904. The structure of the play never radically altered over the years, although some of the events within it did; and it was not published formally with complete stage instructions and dedication until 1928. Again one finds an ironic and critical commentator providing a perspective to the action, and again the central fantasy of Never Land is isolated between the reality of the Darlings' home. While the similarities of structure and attitude between *The Little White Bird* and the 1928 edition show how little Barrie changed after the reversal from 1890 to 1902, it is the

differences in tone and style that indicate the new direction of his thought. In the 1928 dedication Barrie talks about the concept of real change in an individual that will allow him to discard fantasy. He generally agrees that a person remains the same, but concedes that man may change 'through effort of will, which is a brave affair'.[15] With *Peter Pan* Barrie initiated a theme which was developing in his novels and that he was to expand into all his later plays: in it he examined that 'brave affair' and gave his characters the chance to change. The playwright in 1904 is not merely presenting a child on the verge of adulthood, or a person with a chance to change; but further, the artist about to accept greater responsibility and with it greater power and depth. The moment of taking up this greater responsibility is symbolised by Peter Pan, who turns away from it. It is fortunate that by 1904 Barrie had made his own decision concerning the responsibilities of an artist. His acceptance of them resulted in a symbol that has remained haunting and relevant for three-quarters of a century.

There are strong echoes of *The Little White Bird* in the 1929 dedication to *Peter Pan,* and the similarities in the basic story of Peter Pan are obvious. But the difference between the two is in the attitude of the author. The Peter Pan of the play is not a careful metaphor for a fantasist isolated in its central fantasy; he is a symbol that the reader experiences personally throughout the work. With this change comes the artist's recognition of the fragility of his self-creation. As an actual event Peter can never be believed in; and Barrie laments the 'broken fragments of immortality' (p. 502) that are left when the fantasist's attempt to be immortal and create reality are shattered. Yet Peter does exist as a symbol which by its very experiential and active nature denies the possibility of complete authorial control. The change of attitude results in a change in the character of Peter Pan. The later Peter is not a young child but a boy on the edge of adolesence. This boy is not left inadvertently in Kensington Gardens, he lives upon a self-created island. He is not magically cut off from reality but is fully aware of what he is missing. Peter Pan is no longer the amoral, natural fantasist of unconscious childhood, but the person who has consciously chosen fantasy, and is necessarily responsible for its effects.

In *Peter Pan* Barrie has created the ultimate conditions for conscious fantasy. He has provided an island where reality will not interfere; and the fantasist has free mobility between reality and fantasy whenever he wishes. Peter has completely invented the Never

Land, and its inhabitants exist to give him 'satisfaction' (p. 523). Peter not only controls the actual events but also their interpretation. Often when he returns home scratched, Wendy asks him what has happened and he tells her his version; but she is 'never quite sure .... indeed the only one who is sure about anything on the island is Peter' (p. 549). But his control is repressive, not organic. No one is allowed to question his judgement or challenge his fantasies. Behind the control is a deep-seated fear of having to experience. At one point he is quite frightened that the fantasy of his being a parent should prove real. When Wendy says that it depends on his wishes he asks '(determined to get at the facts, the only things that puzzle him), "But not really?"' (p. 550). Peter knows that facts of experience are the only things he cannot control; and he fears them.

The absence of reality means that there is always something missing. Peter is limited to his own mind to supply the aspects of his fantasy and he will never be able to include everything. The first indication of this lack is that Peter does not know what kisses are. Wendy cannot kiss him because only fairies can touch him. There is a similar comparison between Peter and the fairies as that in *The Little White Bird*. Tinkerbell has many of Peter's characteristics; she is cruel and ungrateful. Peter is just as heartless, and even forgets why he brought the boys to Never Land. But while one expects fairies to behave in an inhuman manner one does not expect Peter to do so. The result is a feeling that he lacks an essential quality that will make him human. Peter is aware of this lack and makes his differences a forbidden subject. To make up for them he constantly pretends to be real, and the commentator says that he is so good at pretending that he often believes himself. Yet when finally offered the chance to become a real boy, he rejects it passionately:

> 'No one is going to catch me, lady, and make me a man. I want always to be a little boy and to have fun'. (So perhaps he thinks, but it is only his greatest pretend.) (p. 574)

Peter is inhuman because he will not accept the responsibilities of reality that are a condition of human life. Wendy provides the contrast to this attitude. She certainly recognises that the fantasy is enjoyable to escape to, but she retains an awareness of its relative nature. Wendy's knowledge of actual facts provides a standard which inexorably records the limits of Peter's fantasy. Indeed, the temporary exposure of fantasy helps her to reinforce all the positive aspects of her real life. Because she is real, and human, she rejects fantasy and returns to life.

Barrie's own rejection of Peter Pan as a permanent force in life is the outcome of years of personal experience. He recognises in Peter the avoidance of human repsonsibility. Part of the play's strength derives from Peter's own awareness of this condition. Its subtitle is after all 'the boy who would not grow up', not the boy who did not grow up. He consciously avoids the choice of becoming real rather than merely drifting into fantasy. A further strength of the play derives from the knowledge that the avoidance is tempting. Barrie produces 'the man with the Thesaurus' as the person who desires but cannot achieve youth. The man with the Thesaurus is at different times Barrie himself, the commentator, Mr. Darling and Captain Hook. They cannot become young because they are aware of an external standard of behaviour that negates the value of personal desire. The temptation to fantasise becomes sentimentality in them, as in the whimsical narrator of *The Little White Bird*. Barrie makes his rejection of sentimentalism and fantasy clear in the final comment of the play. It refers back to Peter saying to himself when in danger 'with a drum beating in his breast as if he were a real boy at last. 'To die will be an awfully big adventure' (p. 545). The final comment echoes him with:

> If only he could get the hang of the thing his cry might become 'To live would be an awfully big adventure!' but he can never quite get the hang of it, and so no one is as gay as he. (p. 576)

In this Barrie also clarifies his new, positive direction. While it is human nature to create fantasies in which one has adventures and even dies, to be a real person one must put them aside, embrace real life and fear real death. One must be prepared to experience that 'brave affair' of change.

The years 1890 to 1902 represent a definite period of change, assessment and revaluation in James Barrie's life and art. Inconclusive in themselves, the novels generate the images and structure of the dramatic work that follows. The themes of a second chance at life between temporary fantasies, of the inevitability of moving only from delusion to delusion, of the inadequacy of human vision, and especially of that 'brave affair' of change, result from Barrie's experiences during this period and grew to maturity in his prose writing. The artist who comes to the plays comes with a far greater measure of honesty, responsibility and understanding than one who wrote the novels; but without those novels one doubts whether he would have arrived at all.

NOTES

1 For example there are L. Wilkinson in 'Sir James Barrie: Confectioner and Parlour Magician', *Dial,* 1923: or StJ. Adock, 'A Book About Barrie', *The Bookman,* LXXV, Jan. 1929;

2 Fantasy and sentimentalism were connected by many of Barrie's contemporaries, from R. L. Stevenson in 'Popular Authors', *Essays Literary and Critical* (London, 1925), p. 33; to G. K. Chesterton's 'Sentimental Literature', *The Speaker,* July 27th 1901, p. 464; and D. H. Lawrence in 'The Crown', *A Selection from Phoenix* (Harmandsworth, 1971), pp. 435, 440-1.

3 Both points are made clearly and convincingly by N. Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), and Gunnar Urang in *Shadows of Heaven* (London, 1971).

4 *The Little Minister* (London, 1913), p. 4; all quotations from Barrie's novels are from this 1913 edition.

5 The Haldane Archive, Accession 9827, p.f.80v.

6 R. L. Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London, 1911), IV, 123.

7 *Letters of J. M. Barrie,* ed. V. Meynell (London, 1942), p. 10.

8 In *The Contemporary Review,* Nov. 1896, p. 660.

9 *Sentimental Tommy,* p. 93.

10 *Letters of J. M. Barrie,* p. 5.

11 *Tommy and Grizel,* pp. 121-2.

12 Walter Pater, 'Conclusion', *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London, 1910/1967).

13 Indeed the 'Preface' to *The Renaissance* emphasises the personal, self-related importance of impression, p. viii.

14 *The Little White Bird,* p. 71.

15 *Peter Pan,* in *The Plays of J. M. Barrie* (London, 1943), p. 492; all quotations are taken from this edition.

Edinburgh.

IAN CAMPBELL

James Leslie Mitchell's *Spartacus:* a novel of rebellion

A passionate believer that modern civilisation was a blot on the world, a passing phase which had demeaned a potentially beautiful uncivilised human race into the serfdom of a postwar twentieth century, Mitchell neatly evaded the temptation to idealise the pastoral delights of cleanly country living. In *The Thirteenth Disciple* he was memorably to characterise it as '. . . a grey, grey life. Dull and grey in its routine. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, that life . . . A beastly life'. When he read of those who '. . . for some obscure reason, champion the peasant and his state as the ideal state', he admitted to being moved 'to a sardonic mirth'.[1] After all, he felt that he had a right to know better. He had grown up in a crofting family and though he had had as little as possible to do with the boring and repetitive work, he had shared the farming life even as he escaped on his bicycle or on foot to read, to dig for archaeological remains, to day-dream, to piece together a picture of life in the Mearns which he was to reproduce so vividly in *A Scots Quair.*

Yet at the same time as he loved it, he rebelled against it. He could not live in Scotland nor work its land, yet he could no more escape its spell than could the farmers in his stories (especially *Clay* and *Greenden*) hypnotised by the country, working night and day on the land as if enslaved. Mitchell's was a different attraction; in distant Welwyn he was able to analyse it coolly.

> . . .Autumn of all seasons is when I realize how very Scotch I am, how interwoven with the fibre of my body and personality is this land and its queer, scarce harvests, its hours of reeking sunshine and stifling rain, how much a stranger I am, south . . .[2]

The enslavement is to the land, not to the social structure of those who worked on it in the twentieth century. Indeed in another essay Gibbon rejoiced in the breaking up of the order his parents had worked under, which he himself had known. 'The ancient, strange whirlimagig of the generations that enslaved the Scots peasantry for centuries is broken':[3] its breaking-up is eloquently made a feature of the closing