Abstract

This essay explores the history behind the story and the character of Peter Pan, who was created by the Scottish author J. M. Barrie at the beginning of the 20th century, and how they continue to entertain readers and audiences today. It demonstrates how the character of Peter Pan was formed in the mind of the author long before the story was published, due to his older brother’s death at thirteen, and his acquaintance with a family of five young boys. It further addresses how the story was not written as a children’s story originally, as the character first appeared in a short story collection for adults, and how the novel Peter and Wendy is meant to entertain children and adults alike. The existence of the story of Peter Pan in Icelandic literature is then considered through different translations and the implications of the fact that there is only one Icelandic translation in existence which presents the novel as a whole, and not as a shortened, simplified children’s book, adapted to suit very young readers through illustrations rather than text. Lastly, a translation by Sigríður Thorlacius from 1947 is examined, demonstrating how the language is antiquated, and the narration abridged in such a manner that it fails to address the adult reader, which results in my conclusion that the novel is in need of a new Icelandic translation. The essay’s appendix includes my translation of the novel’s first chapter.
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1. Introduction

Most people, or at least most people in the Western world, should be acquainted with Peter Pan. Peter Pan was first introduced by the Scottish author James Matthew Barrie at the very beginning of the 20th century, but researchers have noted that Peter’s character was probably formulated much earlier in Barrie’s life. The story of Peter Pan has followed generations for over a century now, and his story never seems to cease fascinating adults and children alike. When the subject of Peter Pan comes up, what probably comes to most people’s mind is the flying boy who never grows up, lives on a magical island and has endless adventures. This is, at least, how most children get to know Peter Pan. The story about the flying boy has been subjected to endless theatre productions, animations and even motion pictures, with immense success. His story has been published over and over again, both in its original form, and in simplified, and often illustrated, stories for children. In fact, most people probably think of Peter Pan as a childhood hero, and are not necessarily familiar with his origin or background. It seems as if he has always been there, and as if he has always been the same. This is, however, not the fact, but the history behind the character and the story makes it that much more fascinating.

As will be demonstrated in this essay, through an exploration of the character and story’s origin, Peter Pan was not written solely as a narrative for children. Peter Pan first appeared in a short story collection written for adults in 1902, entitled The Little White Bird, and is a rather unsettling character. A jollier Peter Pan, more like the one most people are familiar with nowadays, appeared in a play a few years later. Following the play’s success, the chapters in which Peter occurred in the short story collection were extracted into a separate book. It was not until a few years later that the novel about Peter Pan and Wendy was published in 1911. It has been in constant print since then and it is the novel that will be the main focus of this essay.

In this thesis I will shortly recount the biography of the author J. M. Barrie and how the events in his life sparked the idea for the great adventure of Peter Pan. Peter Pan’s story has been popular in Iceland, as in many other countries, through translations, theatre productions (Pétur Pan), Disney’s animated version and more recent motion pictures. Most interestingly, the novel itself has never been translated into Icelandic in full length, and most of the translations that exist are illustrated books meant for young audiences, in which the story has been shortened and simplified to suit the young target readership. The one exception is Sigriður Thorlacius’ translation from 1947. At first sight it seems to be the
original story in full length. The cover, however, beautifully illustrated by the famous Atli Már Árnason (Morgunblaðið), immediately indicates that the book is meant for children, exactly like the other Icelandic versions. By analyzing the language and the missing passages in Thorlacius’ translation and comparing it with Barrie’s novel, I intend to demonstrate that it is simplified, abridged and outdated. That is why I argue that the novel Peter and Wendy needs to be translated once again into the Icelandic language. That way, it can live on among Icelandic readers, both children and adults. It could be a great opportunity for adults, who likely became acquainted with Peter Pan as children, to reinvent their relationship with the character and the story. The adult reader is bound to see Peter Pan in a different light than the child, and to demonstrate the desirability of translating the original text so that it retains the appeal that it has to adults and children, the essay’s appendix includes my own translation of the novel’s first chapter. The most complete Icelandic translation of Peter and Wendy in existence is outdated and does not capture the great story as a whole, and the novel is in need of a new Icelandic translation so that it may serve its original purpose to entertain both children and adult readers.
2. J. M. Barrie’s Life and Peter Pan

James Matthew Barrie was born in Scotland in 1860. His parents were David Barrie and Margaret Ogilvy. Barrie had six older siblings, two brothers and four sisters. When Barrie was six years old, his older brother David died in a skating accident the day before his fourteenth birthday. As noted by Barrie’s biographer, Janet Dunbar, “Margaret Ogilvy had never been able to disguise the fact that David was the favourite of all her children” (8). Barrie’s mother is said to have never fully recovered from the loss of David, and some argue that his death was one of the events in Barrie’s life that sparked the idea of Peter Pan, long before he himself was aware of it. In his 1896 memoir on his mother, Margaret Ogilvy, Barrie relates the fact that since David died a child, it was as if he remained forever a child:

> When I became a man and he was still a boy of thirteen, I wrote a little paper called ‘Dead this Twenty Years,’ which was about a similar tragedy in another woman’s life, and it is the only thing I have written that she never spoke about, not even to that daughter she loved the best. (7)

While his brother was the original inspiration for the character of Peter, Mrs. Ogilvy, Barrie’s mother, was most likely the model for Wendy Darling’s character, as she often shared stories of her childhood with her son. She herself was only eight years old when her own mother died, making her the mistress of the house (8), exactly like little Wendy becomes the house mistress in Neverland.

The death of his brother seems to have laid the groundwork for the first stories Barrie was to write of Peter Pan: The Peter Pan from Kensington Gardens. Like Barrie’s late brother David, Peter does not age. It was, however, much later in his life that Barrie fully formed the more commonly known character of Peter Pan: In 1897, when Barrie was thirty-seven years old, he got acquainted with the Llewelyn Davies family, as Peter Hollindale relates in the introduction to his edition of *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy*. Barrie got very attached to the five brothers, especially the older ones, George and Jack Llewelyn Davies. He often played with the brothers and told them numerous stories. Some of the first stories Barrie told the brothers were about their little brother, Peter, while he was still an infant. Barrie told them that all children had been birds, but that they lost their wings at birth. Little Peter, however, had not lost his wings, according to Barrie, because he had not been weighed at birth. Peter Llewelin Davies therefore “thus gave his name to one of the most potent neo-mythic figures in modern literature” (Hollindale xvii). As the Llewelin Davies brothers grew older, the stories Barrie told them of Peter Pan grew with them, and his
adventures became ever more hazardous as they grew older, including, among other things, pirates and redskins (Hollindale xviii). In fact, in her The Case of Peter Pan, Jacqueline Rose states that Barrie’s adventure book, The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island, which consists of over 30 pictures of the Llewelin Davies boys and the rudiments of an adventure narrative, “… almost constitutes as a second source book for Peter Pan” (29), the first source book being The Little White Bird, the short story collection in which Peter first appeared. In his dedication of the play Peter Pan, Barrie states that he “made Peter by violently rubbing the five of you together” (“To the Five: A Dedication”). Thus was created, from the disparate sources of his brother’s memory and the five Llewelin Davies brothers, the great adventure of Peter Pan.
3. Peter Pan: From *The Little White Bird* to *Peter and Wendy*

Peter Pan’s character first appeared in Barrie’s 1902 *The Little White Bird* as a half-child, half-bird, and as stated earlier, the character as well as the name were originally inspired by Peter Llewelin Davies, although the original idea of the forever-child supposedly came from Barrie’s brother David. Peter’s character is eerie in the stories; he is described as a “tragic boy” and the reader cannot help but feel sorry for the child that flew away from its nursery, and tried to return a long while later, only to find that his mother had replaced him with another child. Peter’s role in the Kensington Gardens is to take care of the children that fall out of their perambulators, get lost in the gardens and left behind after lock-out, and bury them if they do not make it through the night. However, the narrator indicates that sometimes Peter might be a little quick to pronounce the children dead, suggesting that some of them, he accidentally buries alive.

Following the success of Barrie’s play *Peter Pan*, which premiered in 1904 and introduced a more cheerful Peter, the stories about Peter Pan from *The Little White Bird* were extracted from the short story collection in 1906 and named *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. The play, on the other hand, introducing the Peter that most of us are familiar with today, was such a great success that Barrie turned it into a novel in 1911, called *Peter and Wendy*, and ever since, the mythical narrative of Peter Pan has been a part of the lives of thousands, if not millions, of children through books, plays and animations.

The story of Peter Pan, although strongly appealing to children, was thus initially not written for child readership only, or perhaps even not at all. In his introduction to *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* and *Peter and Wendy*, editor Peter Hollindale explains:

Yet the first appearance of the Kensington Gardens stories comes in *The Little White Bird*, which was published as a novel for *adult* readers in 1902. Not until 1906 (in the wake of the older Peter Pan’s theatrical success), were the Peter Pan chapters extrapolated from *The Little White Bird* and published with minor alterations as a book for children. (xix)

Jaquelin Rose, however, in her 1984 *The Case of Peter Pan; or The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction*, argues that even *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, which is the book for which the chapters on Peter Pan in *The Little White Bird* were extracted, was never distributed as a book for children, but rather became something of an art book, or a collector’s item (27).
Further into his introduction, Hollindale states that in *Peter and Wendy*, “under the surface of the children’s book is a sharp and sometimes ferocious dialectic, exploring the collision and relation of the child and adult worlds” (xxi). Anna Margrét Björnsdóttir agrees with Hollindale on this matter, arguing that Barrie’s final version of Peter, the one in the play and the novel, speaks to both children and adults: “To a child audience he says: This is Peter Pan. He can fly and he lives on an island where pirates chase the Lost Boys and Indians chase the pirates and he fights Hook with a sword and good triumphs over evil. To an adult audience, his boys and himself he seems to say: This is what it means to be a child. Please do not forget it” (28). By the examples given, it is quite clear that those who have contemplated the matter agree that the story of Peter and Wendy is not simply a children’s story. He may have been turned into a more child-friendly character by the help of numerous editors and publishers, but that does not conceal the fact that the story of Peter Pan was primarily intended for adults.
4. Peter Pan in Iceland and Sigríður Thorlacius’ Translation

According to the Icelandic library search engine (leitir.is), at least ten different versions of the story of Peter and Wendy have been published in Icelandic. Some of them are accessible at all the major libraries, while others are more difficult to access. All of them, except for one, are elaborately illustrated children’s books, ranging from twelve to around ninety pages in length, while by comparison the Penguin Popular Classics edition of the original story, written by Barrie in 1911, is 184 pages. Furthermore, the publications I have checked usually do not have much text on each page, showing that the story of Peter Pan has been simplified to the utmost to suit young readers. Vilborg Dagbjartsdóttir’s translation from 1988 consists of all the chapters from the original novel, but in the ninety-page long book is adapted to suit young children: each chapter is much abridged and the story is told by numerous illustrations. One exception from the severely abridged and simplified versions is Sigríður Thorlacius’ translation of *Peter and Wendy*, called *Pétur Pan og Vanda*, from 1947. Hers is the least shortened version, consisting of 207 pages in large print and only a few illustrations. If closely examined, however, it comes to light that various passages and details are left out here and there. The passages left out are one of the translation’s deficiencies, and I intend to demonstrate why the novel *Peter and Wendy* needs to be translated into the Icelandic language once again.

Sigríður Thorlacius’ translation of *Peter and Wendy* was published in 1947 as a book for children; it belongs to a book series called “Bókasafn barnanna”, or “The Children’s Library”. The back of the book describes the story as suitable for all children between the ages of six to eleven. From the book cover, illustrated by Atli Már, it is already clear that it is intended for children of a young age, children who have recently learned to read. The reader still might assume that it is a complete translation of Barrie’s original story. For those familiar with the original story, however, it becomes clear in the very first page of the book that it is not the case and that the story has been altered to suit a younger readership. The first obvious indication is the fact that instead of calling the children’s parents “Mr. and Mrs. Darling”, they are simply “mamma og pabbi”, which means “mom and dad”, or perhaps even “mommy and daddy”. This clearly suggests that Thorlacius’s target audience is young children, who perhaps still do not recognize their parents by name, although that is probably not true for six-to-eleven year olds. According to Eugene Nida, translators must consider their audience’s decoding ability and interest in the material. He suggests there are at least four principal levels of decoding ability, the first being “the capacity of children, whose
vocabulary and cultural experience are limited” (128). Presumably this is Thorlacius’ target audience, since she simplifies some passages, assuming that children are not able to decode Barrie’s use of language. An example of this is where Mr. Darling exclaims “Mea culpa, mea culpa”, when the children have gone missing, and the narrator proceeds to explain what kind of education he had received. In the translation, however, Thorlacius assumes that the reader would not know what having a classical education implies, thus simply stating that Mr. Darling knew Latin:

He had had a classical education. (*Peter and Wendy* 13)

Hann kunni latinu. (*Pétur Pan og Vanda* 20)

In this case the more convenient and correct translation would simply be “Hann hafôi fengið klassíska menntun”. It is somewhat curious to expect that children down to six years old would read a book consisting of 200 pages by themselves. Presuming that the story would more often than not be read to the child by an adult, this sort of oversimplification seems unnecessary.

### 4.1. Outdated Translation

It has now been made clear that the most complete Icelandic translation is not a faithful translation of Barrie’s original novel, *Peter and Wendy*. Despite this drawback, the translation probably did make for a fine children’s book in its own right at the time. However, since it was published in 1947, it has certainly become outdated and would miss its mark entirely with Icelandic children today, quite as it was translated to miss its mark with the Icelandic adult reader.

It is only natural that a seventy-year-old translation would consist of some outdated words, sentence structure and idioms. One example of an outdated use of words is the Icelandic word “hálnhýti” (24) that Thorlacius uses for the English “tie” (16). The standard word for “tie” in Icelandic nowadays is “bindi”, or perhaps “hálsbindi”, and a different use of words for the accessory Mr. Darling needs his wife’s help with tying is scarcely heard. There is another and a rather amusing use of words worth mentioning, which is “asnakjálki” (139), when Tinker Bell calls Peter a “silly ass” (111). The word “asnakjálki” literally means “the jaw of an ass” but connotes “silly jaw”. The word can, however, be found in an Icelandic dictionary but is definitely not in common use today. As for idioms, Mr. Darling says to his daughter Wendy, when she brings six children home with her from Neverland: “you don’t do things by halves” (172). In the Icelandic translation his words are “þú nemur ekki hlutina við
neglur þér” (196), which is not a commonly used idiom nowadays and therefore the meaning is likely to get lost. One last thing worth mentioning about the archaic language of the translation is that Peter’s ability to avoid crying while Wendy sows on his shadow is equated with his manliness:

And he clenched his teeth and did not cry. *(Peter and Wendy 26)*

Svo beít hann á jaxlinn og bar sig karlmannlega… *(Pétur Pan og Vanda 40)*

Here, Thorlacius uses an Icelandic idiom, similar to “biting the bullet” in English, and states that Peter acted like a man. This is an unnecessarily gendered addition to the original text, and in today’s society it would most likely be considered undesirable.

Another thing to keep in mind when translating is whether the concept or the story itself is already known in the target culture. Today, for example, the story of Peter Pan and Wendy is well known in Iceland, and although Thorlacius made an honest attempt at giving Icelandic names to the characters and places from the adventure, not all of them have stuck in Icelandic culture. Some characters and places are more widely known under other names today, further rendering Thorlacius’ translation outdated. Neverland is most commonly known as “Hvergiland” today, instead of Thorlacius’ “Hulduland”, although the meaning is quite similar. A valid argument could be made that its correct name should be “Aldreiland”, since “Hvergiland” actually means Nowhereland but not Neverland. One of the most beloved characters from the story, Tinker Bell, who has even gained individual fame outside the world of Peter Pan, in a cartoon TV series called *Disney Fairies*, now also has a much better known name than Thorlacius’ “Gling-gló”, which is “Skellibjalla”. In my own translation I took into account the popularity of the story and used the already familiar Icelandic names for the characters, such as Jón og Mikki for John and Michael, Nanna for Nana and Vanda for Wendy. These are also the names Thorlacius uses in her translation, also used in the Icelandic dubbed version of Disney’s animation. The Darling name, however, I decided to retain, allowing the children’s parents to retain their adult identities and the story to remain a bit foreign.

4.2. Abridgements

Aside from the translation’s archaic language, which renders the story inaccessible to children today, it is also an abridged version. The passages left out, I have observed, are mainly important for the adult reader’s enjoyment and understanding of the narrative. The most striking example is perhaps the fact that Mrs. Darling’s kiss is entirely left out of the
translation, robbing her of the mysteriousness that is also presented by the tiny boxes in her mind, one within the other, which are left out as well. The absence of the kiss, as well as the description of Peter’s resemblance to that very kiss in the first chapter, and his easy capture of the kiss, which he takes with him at the end of the story, deprives the reader of the possibility of a deeper understanding and enjoyment of the story as a whole: Peter represents childhood itself, and Mrs. Darling’s kiss was preserved especially for the memory of her childhood: “If you or I or Wendy had been there we should have seen that he was very like Mrs. Darling’s kiss” (11). “He took Mrs. Darling’s kiss with him. The kiss that had been for no one else Peter took quite easily” (176). This whimsical detail almost goes so far as to prove that Mrs. Darling was once exactly like Wendy, and that Wendy’s daughter Jane will eventually take her place because the tale of Peter Pan is a tale as old as time, and a tale that presumably will go on forever. This underlying message is entirely missing from the Icelandic translation so that the story loses its sense of timelessness.

Another noteworthy difference between the original and Thorlacius’ translation is that some of the more unsettling descriptions and events are left out, which can probably be accounted for by the young target readers. The description of how very nearly real and alarming Neverland becomes “in the two minutes before you go to sleep” (7), is nowhere mentioned in the Icelandic version. Similar avoidance of anything that might disturb a child may be seen in the instance where the narrator describes how children sometimes forget to tell their parents of their strange adventures.

Children have the strangest adventures without being troubled by them. For instance, they may remember to mention a week after the event happened, that when they were in the wood they met their dead father and had a game with him. (Peter and Wendy 8) Krakkar lenda í hinum ótrúlegustu ævintýrum án þess að verða hrædd. Þau geta til dæmis gleymt að segja frá því í heila viku, að þau hafi mætt honum af að í skógi og leikið sér þar við hann. (Pétur Pan og Vanda 14)

In order to make the narrative more distant and less scary, it seems, Thorlacius replaces the dead father with a dead grandfather.

Some of the most vicious descriptions of Captain Hook are left out as well, along with some instances describing the heartless, unreliable and controlling hero, Peter Pan. Captain Hook is most certainly supposed to be a horrendous character and that is also clear in Thorlacius’ translation, but his pure wickedness us not quite as obvious as in Barrie’s original. For example, Thorlacius modifies the threatening description of the way the Jolly Roger is guarded by Captain Hook’s reputation as a heartless murderer:
No watch was kept on the ship, it being Hook’s boast that the wind of his name guarded the ship for a mile around. Now her fate would help guard it also. One more wail would go the round in that wind by night. (*Peter and Wendy* 89)

Á skipinu var aldrei haldinn vörður, því að Krókur stærði sig af því, að svo mikil ógn stafaði af nafni hans, að það væri nóg vörn. Nú myndu örlög Tigris-Liljunnar enn auka á þá ógn. (*Pétur Pan og Vanda* 112)

The fact that her wail will join the wails of others that Hook has murdered apparently has no place in a children’s book since Thorlacius leaves out the last sentence. Here is my suggestion for this same passage:

Engin gæsla var á skipinu, því Krókur gortaði sig af því að gusturinn sem stæði af nafni hans gætti skipsins í meira en kilómetra fjarlægð. Nú myndu örlög hennar líka aðstoða við gæslu skipsins. Einn eitt veinið myndi enduróma í vindinum sem þyrlaðist um skipið að nótut.

To children, Peter Pan seems like an exciting character who has many admirable qualities, such as being a child forever and an ability to fly and play as much as he likes. Adults ought to see him a bit differently; they might see in him a pathetic boy who has the need to control everything and everyone around him with great restraint. Like all children, he is very much into games of make-believe. However, as the narrator explains, the difference between him and the others is that to him pretense is the truth: “The difference between him and the other boys at such a time was that they knew it was make-believe, while to him make-believe and true were exactly the same thing” (70). The most disturbing instances occur when he has the children play make-believe that they have had their dinners (70). Peter’s character is also completely unreliable, which is probably best described when he puts the life of the Darling children in immediate danger by constantly forgetting them on their flight to the Neverland, for they neither know how to keep flying while sleeping nor do they know how to stop (40-41): “Indeed, sometimes when he returned he did not remember them” (42). These kind of qualities could probably be used to describe most, if not all, children. In fact, children are often controlling, unreliable and forgetful. The narrator in Barrie’s story repeatedly mentions how heartless children are, but Thorlacius leaves out that refrain. These passages are certainly among those where Barrie addresses the adult readers, because most of them could probably agree that children are, indeed, heartless.

*Off we skip like the most heartless things in the world, which is what children are, but so attractive; and we have an entirely selfish time; and then we have need of*
special attention we nobly return for it, confident that we shall be embraced instead of
smacked. (*Peter and Wendy* 116)

*Svona þjó tum við út í heiminn og hugsum eingöngu um okkur sjálf*, en ef við
þörfnumst hjálpar, snúum við heim aftur, fullviss um, að okkur verði tekið með
opnum örmum, en ekki með flengingu. (*Pétur Pan og Vanda* 144)

Also, when Wendy explains to her daughter Jane why she can not fly anymore, she says it is
because grown-ups are no longer “gay and innocent and heartless” (180). In Thorlacius’
version, however, it is simply because they are no longer gay and innocent. There is no
mention of the heartlessness: “þá erum við ekki lengur kát og saklaus” (204).

4.3. Challenging Recoveries of Narrative Whimsies

Thorlacius’ translation is sadly lacking in the ridiculous story-telling style in Barrie’s novel
where the narrator is alternately childlike and ironic and the story almost flows forward like a
disorganized train of thought, full of strange humour. In my own translation I decided to
retain Barrie’s writing style the best I could by making the narration flow as effortlessly as
possible, whereas Thorlacius has reduced the ridiculousness.

The most important part in the first chapter that needs to be recovered in all of its
meaningful whimsy is the description of the kiss on Mrs. Darling’s mouth that Thorlacius left
out, “… and her sweet mocking mouth had one kiss on it that Wendy could never get, though
there it was, perfectly conspicuous in the right hand corner” (1-2). I find that the description
of the kiss is essential for making the reader hesitate at the very beginning of the story and
realize that what he is about to read is perhaps not entirely rational:

Á munninum á henni, sem var sætur og hæðnislegur, var einn koss sem Vanda náði
alrei, jafnvel þó hann væri mjög greinilegur þarna í hægra munnvikinu.

Also serving to prepare for the irrational narrative is the second paragraph of the first chapter,
which starts with the narrator stating where the Darling family lives in a whimsical manner,
as if their house number were obvious. In Thorlacius’ translation it is a simple informative
statement:

Of course they lived at 14… (*Peter and Wendy* 1)

Þau áttu heima í húsínu númer 14… (*Pétur Pan og Vanda* 7)

This, I find, deprives the narrator of his characteristics and the story of its slightly ridiculous
atmosphere. My own choice for this passage is keeping Barrie’s style:

Auðvitað bjuggu þau á 14…
According to the narrator, Nana “believed to her last day in old-fashioned remedies like rhubarb leaf, and made sounds of contempt over all this new-fangled talk about germs, and so on” (4). Should the reader pause and think, he might remember that rhubarb leaf is actually toxic and that it is therefore presumably not a very good remedy. In her translation, Thorlacius does not specify what kind of old remedies Nana believed in: “gömul og góð húráð, en snússaði sig fyrirlitlega, þegar talað var um nýjabrum eins og bakteríur og þess háttar” (10). All of this absurdity Barrie’s narrator recounts as if it were absolutely normal, which sets the tone for the rest of the story, and the existing Icelandic translation is much reduced of its initial delights without it. All of this ridiculousness might not seem so absurd to the children readers, but seems to be there solely for the adult’s enjoyment. Although children might find some of these instances strange, they probably would not give them a second thought.

In some instances, Thorlacius’ omissions solve translation problems. When Mr. Darling is doing the math to decide whether they will be able to keep Wendy, which is an absurd procedure on its own, he mentions “the pound you lent to that man who came to the door” (3), suggesting that Mrs. Darling lent money to a complete stranger who knocked on their door. Thorlacius’ account of the calculation progress is abridged to a few sentences. It is quite understandable, however, since it was one of the passages encountered that was the most difficult to translate. Not only is the currency different between Iceland and the United Kingdom, but the story is also set over a century ago, which means that the pound’s value has diminished enormously. I attempted to solve this problem by the aid of a website that calculates the historical inflation of the British pound. After having the website calculate the amount, I took the current value in pounds and used an Icelandic bank website to change the amount into the Icelandic Krona.

Another problem easily solved by omission concerns medical terminology. When Mr. Darling is calculating the expenses of different diseases Wendy might catch and need treatment for, he recounts two types of measles: measles and german measles. Mr. Darling finally comes to the conclusion that they will be able to keep Wendy after he decides that the two kinds of measles will be treated as one. The Icelandic term for german measles, however, has nothing to do with measles and is called “Rauðir hundar” (“Rauðir hundar (Rubella)”), which literally translates to “red dogs”. Therefore, a direct translation of “the two kinds of measles treated as one” (3) is not quite possible in Icelandic if the right terminology is used. There were two choices in this matter: to use the Icelandic term and therefore change the paragraph’s conclusion, perhaps by saying “og mislingarnir og rauðu hundarnir voru
meðhöndladaðir saman”, or simply that the measles and the “red dogs” were treated as one. Alternatively, I decided to keep the English terminology and translate “german measles” directly into Icelandic: “þýskir mislingar”, risking that the Icelandic reader might not be familiar with such a disease. I found that the narrator’s recounting of an unknown, foreign disease would not seem so out of place, since the story-telling is already full of nonsense:

Á endanum hafði Vanda það af, eftir að hettusóttin hafði lækkð niður í 12.600 krónur og báðar gerðir mislinganna voru meðhöndlaðar sem ein.
5. Conclusion

The story of Peter Pan is such a fascinating adventure that it would be a great honour to reintroduce it to Icelandic readers, and not only in the form of a children’s story, but as one intended for both the adult’s and the child’s pleasure. This essay demonstrates why the novel *Peter and Wendy* needs to be translated into the Icelandic language once again. The only full-length translation in existence is over seventy years old, and it was published solely as a story for children, but not as the great story where the child’s and the adult’s worlds collide. By exploring J. M. Barrie’s early life, it has been implied that the idea of Peter Pan and his story were formed in the author’s mind years before the character was first introduced to readers. In fact, the short story collection in which Peter Pan first appeared was written for adults, but the chapters were later extracted into a separate book after the play which introduced the Peter most people know today proved to be immensely successful. The narrator appeals to both children and adults, but even in the least abridged Icelandic translation, by Sigríður Thorlacius, the adult reader is of little concern; through means of abridgements, antiquation and simplification, it is robbed of its potential to appeal to the adult reader. Thorlacius’ translation does not consider the adult audience, but mainly caters to the child, for example with over-simplification, and by calling Mr. and Mrs. Darling “mom and dad”. The translation is also somewhat outdated, causing it to miss its mark with children today, just as it misses its mark with adults. It also lacks important passages and Barrie’s witty narrative style, with all its random impulses and strange humour. Those passages, in which he addresses the adult reader rather than the child, along with the ominous parts, need to remain in the story so that the adult reader can learn to adore it anew. Therefore, I have argued that the novel should be translated once again, and I have attempted to demonstrate that it is in fact possible, by translating the first chapter myself. Although it was not an easy process, it was educating and certainly sparked a desire to translate the whole story some day, so that other Icelandic adults might enjoy the grand story like Barrie intended.
Works Cited


Barrie, J. M., and Peter Llewelyn Davies. The Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island: Being a Record of the Terrible Adventures of the Brothers Davies in the Summer of 1901. Published by J.M. Barrie in the Bloucester Road, 1901.


