MASTER'S THESIS

The Child in the Book. A comparative analysis of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*

Therese Segadal Fluge

Master's in Children´s and Young Adult Literature
Department of Language, Literature, Mathematics and Interpreting

Supervisor: Jena Lee Habegger-Conti

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Acknowledgments

During my time as a master student of children´s and young adult literature, I have obtained a new relationship to literature. My appreciation and affection for children´s literature has flourished, and I have learned to acknowledge the literary genre for what it truly is – a piece of culture designed for the child.

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This thesis will forever be a part of me, and I am grateful for the challenges it presented me. Finally, I am ready to disseminate children´s literature to its rightful audience.

Sammendrag

I hver barnebok eksisterer det et barn. Det kan enten være i tilretteleggingen av implisert barneleser, sentrale tematikker i det litterære verket, eller konkrete fremstillinger av barndom konstruert i en litterær karakter. Denne masteroppgaven setter lys på fremstillingen av barndom i to anerkjente barnebøker: *Peter Pan* av J.M. Barrie og J.K. Rowling sin *Harry Potter og de vises stein,* den første boken i den populære serien om Harry Potter. Utvalget består av to barnebøker konstruert i to forskjellige samfunn og historie perioder. Til tross for flere likhetstrekk mellom bøkene, er det gjennomgående og fundamentale forskjeller mellom Barrie og Rowling sine bøker i deres fremstilling av barndom.

Formålet med denne oppgaven er å avdekke likheter og forskjeller i bøkenes framstilling av barndom, og danne en forståelse over hvordan bokens samtidssamfunn har en tilstedeværelse i forfatterens historie. For å kunne oppfatte hvordan barndom er implisert i historiene til Barrie og Rowling ble det gjennomført en litterær analyse som tok utgangspunkt i tre narrative strategier: 1) Fortelleren, 2) setting, og 3) hovedkarakter. Ved å utforske disse aspektene ved *Peter Pan* og *Harry Potte og de Vises Stein,* er det mulig å forstå hvordan den voksne fortelleren henviser seg til barneleseren, hvilke betydning den fantastiske verden har for barnet i boken, og til slutt hvordan hovedkarakteren er en refleksjon av forfatterens syn på barndom.

Diskusjonen av fremstillingen av barndom i bøkene tar utgangspunkt i hva andre forskere har uttalt seg om perspektiver på barndom fra de aktuelle historiske periodene: det Edvardianske samfunnet for *Peter Pan* og samtiden som er aktuell for *Harry Potter og de Vises Stein.* Diskusjonen av funnene fra analysene viser at det er en tilstedeværelse av samfunnet i bøkene. Begge bøkene inneholder blant annet et idealisert barn. I *Peter Pan*, relatert til samfunnet i England fra tidlig 1900-tallet, er barnet fremstilt et barn med perfekte kvaliteter til en fremtidig voksen. Oppgaven viser også at i Rowling sin historie er barnet fremstilt som et unikt vesen, som bare ved å være seg selv skiller seg ut fra mengden. Dette er en typisk fremstilling av barnet i samtidsbarnebøker. Slike fremstillinger er tyder på at forfatterne har innlemmet deres samtidssamfunns verdier og perspektiver i deres barnebøker.

Abstract

In every children´s book, there is a portrayal of childhood. It may be presented in the implied reader, through the presentation of cultural topics, or childhood may be demonstrated through the construction of a child character. This thesis examines the portrayal of childhood in two prominent children´s books: J.M. Barrie´s children´s book classic *Peter Pan,* and the first book in the popular book series about Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling., *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* The books were constructed in two distinctive societies and historical periods, and this is evident within the narratives. Even though there are several similarities between the selected children´s books, there are specific and indisputable differences concerning Barrie´s and Rowling´s portrayal of childhood.

The purpose with this master thesis is discussing the similarities and differences concerning the portrayals of childhood and understanding how the books´ contemporary society is present in the narrative. To get a comprehensive understanding of this aspect of the selected children´s books, a literary analysis was conducted. The analysis focuses on three narrative strategies: 1) The narrator, 2) setting, and 3) the protagonist. An examination of these elements within the narrative discloses how the adult narrator communicates with the child reader, how the implementation of a fantasy world affects the child in the book, and lastly, how the protagonist is a reflection of the authors´ perception of childhood.

The discussion of the research questions is grounded in what other scholars and prior research convey regarding the perspectives of childhood relevant for the historical periods: The Edwardian society related to *Peter Pan* and the contemporary society in connection with *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* The discussion reveals a presence of the books´ contemporary society. The books display their contemporary society´s version of an idealized child; either a child with the qualities of a future mother, or a child so unique that only by being true to himself he separates himself from all other characters, regardless what world he stays in. These portrayals of childhood disclose how the authors have incorporated the contemporary society´s beliefs and values in his/her narrative.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The background for the thesis

We encourage children to read because we believe it is a healthy activity, and that it is vital for the child to become a sufficient reader: "our culture acknowledges that reading is almost as vital as the well-being of a child as nurturing and nutrition" (Tartar, 2009, p. 28). This perception of reading is established in the western civilization of the modern world, and it is a reflection of the fortunate circumstances of the western child. The ability to read allows the child to travel to another dimension:

> It provides the child with an opportunity to experience the world of fiction in both intellectual and somatic terms. It allows children to cross thresholds and to breathe air of story world. (Tartar, 2009, p. 20)

The child partakes a journey into the literary world constructed by an author, and during this journey the child encounter elements within the narrative. There is an engagement between the child reader and the narrative elements, and the child must comprehend the totality of the book. This thesis wishes to examine the construction of an imaginative world that the child reader is allowed to enter. The literary world contains elements that establishes a foundation to discuss manners concerning the author´s contemporary society. A book contains more than sentences combined to convey an utterance from an author. It is a cultural product that reflects the book´s contemporary society. By looking further into the author´s construction of a narrative, it is possible to understand the content in different manners; there is evidence within the narrative that establishes a foundation for discussing and understanding the social and historical context of the book.

According to Walsh (2007), the fictional aspects of a book have the potential to communicate circumstantial representations of the book´s contemporary society: "Fiction is usually understood to have a second-order relation to the real world, via the mimetic logic of fictional representation: it represents events, or imitates discourses, that we assimilate through nonfictional modes of narrative understanding" (p. 13). In other words, a book can be a device to understand a society. It is an intricate device as several compounds within the narrative

establish the entirety of the author´s story. The material for this thesis consists of two fictional children´s books, *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* by J.K. Rowling. As the material consist of two children´s books, there is an additional aspect that must be taken into consideration: the adult creator of the narrative.

It is a difficult task to define *children´s book* (Gubar, 2011). However, it seems appropriate to demand that the books are written with a child reader as its implied reader. The author of published children´s books is predominantly, if not always, an adult. This creates a complexity of children´s literature displayed in several scholarly works. The fact that adults write children´s books creates an intriguing aspect of the literary genre. How can an adult write a book intended for a child? Is there an authenticity for the children reading the children´s books? Or are the books mainly an utterance of the adult authors written in a format acceptable for both a child - and an adult audience?

The discussion of the authenticity of children´s literature and the task of defining a children´s books is greatly founded in problem of an adult author.

> Jaqueline Rose´s seminal study *The Case of Peter Pan; or, the Impossibility of Children´s Literature* (1984) remains the foundational statement of this paradox, arguing that children´s literature has nothing much to do with the real children and their reading experience, but everything to do (at any rate in the twentieth century) with how adults view childhood. (Maybin & Watson, 2009, p. 3)

This thesis wishes to exploit this aspect of a children´s book as the author is the key element of how a book is a reflection of its contemporary society. The adult author is a product of its society. By conducting an analysis that focuses on the book´s portrayals of childhood, this thesis intends to understand how the selected children´s books display "how adults view childhood" (Maybin & Watson, 2009, p. 3).

It is possible to retrieve nuanced features of the authors´ construction of a narrative by looking further into specific aspects of the book. For instance, a common trend in contemporary children´s literature research is to focus on complex relationships in children´s books. Different approaches such as ecocriticism or a gender-oriented perspective establishes a foundation to understand what children´s books convey regarding different manners of literary criticism (Nikolajeva, 2016). Another possible relevant perspective is the socio-

historical perspective. This implies an analysis of the narrative in relation to social and historical context. This thesis aims to use two prominent children´s books as a foundation to apprehend how the child in the book is presented in literature from distinctive historical and social contexts.

1.2 The intention of the thesis and the research questions

To understand this thesis´ examination of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, it is necessary to present the hypothesis that founded this thesis: A children´s book is a reflection of the book´s contemporary society. Therefore, conducting a literary analysis allows the possibility of retrieving information about the book´s contemporary society. Children´s books are usually written by an adult who lived and developed as an individual in a society. This implies that the author, as a socialized human being, has imprinted the society´s values, beliefs, and culture in his/her narrative. One may understand aspects of narrative as a reflection of the author´s values, beliefs, and culture (Montgomery &Watson, 2009). Ergo, a children´s book contains reflections of the author´s contemporary society.

When applying this to the portrayals of childhood in a narrative, it is possible to create an understanding of how different societies relevant for the selected children´s books perceived childhood. "Children´s literature has always been implicitly or explicitly ideological, presenting and promoting particular ideas about childhood and encourages children to either uphold or challenge particular values" (Montgomery & Watson, 2009, p. 7). As Montgomery and Watson specify, there is potential to understand different perceptions of childhood founded in children´s books. It is necessary to examine the narrative to apprehend the book´s potential to disclose the society´s presence. This thesis intends to examine the portrayals of childhood by analyzing a selection of narrative strategies.

In order to establish a perspective to understand the outcome of the analysis thoroughly, I have selected a comparative and analytic approach for the thesis. The books were chosen due to their popularity and the reception the book in their contemporary society when first published. Even though Rowling´s book was constructed in 1997, it is still read by children in

2020 as it is one of the most popular children´s books at Norwegian libraries according to Bergen Folkebibliotek (2020). The foundation for the comparative analysis and the discussion of the research questions is *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie and J.K. Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. The thesis wishes to compare the selected children´s books in light of their portrayals of childhood. Therefore, the main research question for this thesis is:

> *What are the similarities and differences regarding the portrayals of children between* Peter Pan *and* Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*?*

As an addition to the main research question, there are two minor questions that this thesis will answer:

> 1) How do *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* cohere and differ regarding the selection of narrative strategies?

> 2) How may the differing narrative strategies in these books reflect different cultural/historical perspectives on childhood?

The first minor question is the foundation for the analysis, and it composes a feasible analysis for this thesis as it narrows the elements for the discussion of the main research question. Further on, the second minor research question is intended to contextualize the outcome of the analysis. This is an imperative factor when conducting a comparative analysis as it will reveal aspects of the examination of the narrative that may have been neglected if it were not discussed in such a manner.

A hypothesis for the result of the analysis is that the authors have implemented a construction of an idealized child in their narratives. It is, therefore, intriguing to analyze the differences between the portrayals of children because this can reveal how society perceived children as their future adults. This is supported by a statement retrieved from Beauvais´ discussion in *The Mighty Child* (2015)*,* that focuses on the aspects of time and power in children´s literature.

> Child characters, for instance, are said to be only illusorily free, just like the bird looks free only if one momentarily ignores the solid frame of the canvas around it; they remain constructions, representations. **The child for whom these representations are**

> **made – the implied reader- is said to be already addressed as the future adult it is expected to become**. (Beauvais, 2015, pp. 2, emphasis added)

The connection between the portrayals of childhood and the communication with an implied reader is essential in the discussion of the research questions. This thesis intends to examine a selection of three narrative strategies: (1) the narrator, (2) the setting, and (3) the protagonist. The consolidation of these narrative strategies will establish a foundation to discuss how the child in the book is presented in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.*

The books selected for this thesis are ones of prominent status from their contemporary societies. The response from both scholars and average readers can be a validation of the books´ content, and it is recognizable and relevant for that period. *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* establish a foundation to discuss the portrayal of the romantic child and the contemporary child. To understand the necessity of examining the portrayals of childhood, it is necessary to describe the prior research conducted on the relevant fields within children´s literature for this thesis.

1.3 Prior research

Using children´s literature as material for research institutes an abundance of possible approaches for the research. To have a feasible project, I defined the relevant research areas for this thesis as (1) research on the different perspectives on childhood, (2) research on the presence of childhood/children in children´s literature, and (3) research focusing on the selected children´s books. This thesis belongs to an established research approach to children´s literature research field. "Until relatively recently, children´s literature research was predominantly inspired by cultural theory, viewing the child and childhood as a social construction rather than a material body existing in a material world" (Nikolajeva, 2016, p. 1). The cultural perspective is an imperative aspect of this thesis, and the decision behind this selected perspective is greatly founded in statements like Lerer´s (2009a):

> The study of children´s literature *is* cultural studies, not just in that it draws on literary, sociohistorical, and economic methods of analysis, but that it may serve as a test case for the syntheses of current cultural criticism. (Lerer, 2009a, p. 9)

According to Lerer (2009a), the potential of studying children´s literature is substantial when viewing it in a cultural perspective. Concerning the thesis´ intention, the traditional approach is the suitable manner to examining and analyzing the portrayals of childhood in the selected children´s books.

There is a quantity of research focusing on the presence of childhood in children´s literature. It is a social construction; however, childhood is also a component of a society that has always been present in a community.

> Childhood was not invented by the moderns – whether we associate them with John Locke, the Puritans, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Romantics, or the Victorians – but is a shifting category that has meaning in relationship to other stages of personal development and family life. (Lerer, 2009a, p. 2)

This thesis understands the portrayals of children as a reflection of the societies' perspective of childhood. The romantic perspective of childhood relevant for Barrie´s *Peter Pan* is an established perspective, discussed by several scholars (Gubar, 2009; Lerer, 2009b; Reynolds, 2012; Rose, 1984; Sánchez-Eppler, 2011; Sorby, 2011; Thacker, 2012b). This thesis uses the established romantic perspective of childhood to discuss the contemporary perspective that is developing simultaneously with contemporary society. The discussion of the contemporary portrayal of childhood is present in the research field of children´s literature, and several scholars have presented their understanding of the portrayal of the contemporary child (Lerer, 2009c; Montgomery & Watson, 2009; O´Reilly, 2005; Thacker, 2012a). This thesis wishes to apply further evidence of the contemporary child´s portrayal in its comparison of the children´s book classic, *Peter Pan,* and a contemporary children´s book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. In addition to the research on the different perspectives on childhood, several scholars have dedicated their work to focus on how the child element is presented in the literary genre.

The child is a common element implemented in a children´s book, and several scholars have studied this element in different manners, such as Clémentine Beauvais (2015) that committed

her doctoral thesis to examine the different aspects of the narrative involving the child. Her work has influenced this thesis´ understanding of the child in a narrative. Beauvais (2015) displays the importance of a child character in a narrative in her doctoral thesis, and she uncovered a new perspective of this element in my understanding of the potential of children´s literature. Furthermore, other scholarly works formed the comprehension of the portrayals of childhood in children´s literature (Gleason, 2010; Higonnet, 1998; Key, 1909; O´Reilly, 2005; Sánchez-Eppler, 2011). Their discussions concerned the portrayal of children and its significance in a narrative without the socio-historical perspective that is applied when discussing the perspectives on childhood. There are, additionally, certain scholars who narrowed their research to focus on communication with the child reader. These are Golden (1990), Wall (1991), and Rose (1984), and their focus on the narrative communication between an adult author and a child reader has played an imperative role in the discussion of the research questions. Furthermore, *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children´s Fiction,* by Jacquelin Rose (1984) is an example of how the selected children´s books have been the foundation for extensive research of children´s literature.

The selected children´s books have prominent status in their contemporary society, as well as *Peter Pan* surviving generations of children readers and is considered to be a classic of children´s literature. *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* function as a foundation to discuss several aspects of the literary genre. The scholarly works relevant for this thesis are Montgomery and Watson´s (2009) *Children´s Literature: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends,* which dedicates a chapter to discuss both books in light of their importance in the children´s literature genre. Furthermore, Korhonen (2016) has discussed Rowling´s book in her doctoral thesis, *Racism and Multiculturalism in J.K. Rowling´s Harry Potter Novels.* She analyzed the material in light of how it contains evidence of the contemporary society's disruptions and concerns. As mentioned, Rose (1984) *The Case of Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children´s Fiction,* has disclosed intriguing aspects of Barrie´s book concerning the portrayals of childhood. Lastly, O´Reilly´s (2005) doctoral thesis, *The Child and the Adult in Contemporary Literature: Roald Dahl; Anne Fine, Diana Wynne Jones; K.K. Rowling,* has inspired this thesis. O´Reilly examined several contemporary children´s books, among them *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* and she disclosed relevant aspects of the narrative for this thesis. The review of the literature mentioned in this section established a foundation for the thesis´ intention.

The books selected for this thesis have been substantially studied prior to this project. However, this thesis provides new information and evidence from the narratives and discusses them in light of the socio-historical perspective. To understand the complexity of this project, it is necessary to explain the disposition of the thesis and present the validation of each chapter.

1.4 The organization of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters. The following chapter is dedicated to presenting the material for the thesis and providing the reasoning for comparing *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* Additionally, the chapter includes an analysis aiming to find the protagonists in the books as this is an imperative aspect for the predominant analysis in this thesis. Succeeding the presentation of the material is the theory and method chapter. The analysis and discussion of the research questions must have an established theoretical background. The theory chapter presents a composition of theory revolving (1) the different perspectives on childhood and (2) narratology. Furthermore, the method used to retrieve the necessary information is presented in this chapter, and it presents a section explaining the selection of narrative strategies.

With the theory, method, and explanation of the material established, the thesis continues with the core elements: the analysis and discussion of the narrative strategies. Given that each narrative strategy required a substantial analysis, the thesis´ core components are divided into three separate chapters. Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the narrator, followed by chapter five that focuses on the setting, and lastly, chapter six is the analysis and discussion regarding the protagonist. The findings from the analyses and discussions will then be summarized in the last chapter, "The portrayals of childhood," which is the conclusion of the master thesis.

2. The presentation of the material

The thesis intends to examine how two children´s books from different eras may accommodate distinctive understandings and perspectives of childhood. By looking further into a selection of narrative strategies, it is possible to retrieve the necessary information to comprehend how the authors have portrayed childhood in their narratives. These portrayals of children function as an indication of how society perceived children in different periods. An important aspect in the selection of material is the historical period of the children´s books. Firstly, it is essential to include a contemporary children´s book in the material because there is a limited amount of research conducted regarding the perspective of childhood in today´s society. Secondly, in order to have a foundation for the discussion, there is a requirement of selecting a historical period that has been thoroughly researched within the field of children´s literature. Therefore, the thesis incorporated *Peter Pan* as this is a well-researched children´s books and its contemporary society, the Edwardian society, is comprehensibly studies regarding its perspective on childhood. This section of the thesis is dedicated to validating the decisions made regarding the material for the analysis.

2.1 The synopsis of the selected children´s books

J.M. Barrie´s *Peter Pan*

The children´s book classic, *Peter Pan,* is a story about youth and innocence. Set in the 19th century, in London City, the story begins with Wendy Angela Moira Darling and her mother, Mrs. Darling. Wendy is loved by her mother and father, and likewise are her brothers, John and Michael Darling. They are a traditional family that live in an ordinary, middle-class home. The children are well cared for by their nurse Nana, who happens to be a Newfoundland dog. The Darling children live happy days in their nursery, being able to let their imagination run free in their play and games. One night, Wendy´s sleep is disturbed by a strange boy, a boy that did not want to grow up, who has the ability to fly and speak with fairies. The boy, named Peter Pan, searches for his shadow. This is not the first time Peter visits the nursery to the Darling children. He has, on several occasions, hid behind the nursery

window listening to Wendy´s stories. Wendy is good at telling stories, and she looks after her brothers and parents. She has every quality of a future mother.

The first meeting between Wendy and Peter consists of Wendy helping Peter with attaching his shadow to its rightful place, as Peter´s shadow – mimicking his every move. Wendy is fascinated by Peter Pan, so fascinated that she is persuaded to leave the nursery along with her brothers to Neverland, Peter´s home. By a little help from the fairy Tinker Bell, the children are able to fly and begin their travel to the magical land of Neverland.

"Second star, and straight on till the morning" (Barrie, 2015, p. 34), Peter instructs the Darling children, and so away they leave their parents and their home. The travel is long and tiring; after several nights of flying, the children arrive on an island with a mermaid´s lagoon and a pirate ship at sea. It all seems familiar to the Darling children as if they have visited this island before in their dreams.

In Neverland, the children are able to do whatever pleases them, with no adult supervision. The Darling children and Peter are, however, not the only children on this island. The Lost Boys, a group of six young boys, live with Peter in Neverland. These are boys that had fallen out of the perambulators "when the nurse is looking the other way", and these children can never be girls because girls are too clever to ever fall out of the pram (Barrie, 2015, p. 27). Peter is the leader of the Lost Boys. On the island along Peter Pan and the boys lives a group of adult men, the pirates, that has one aim – to kill Peter Pan. The leader of the pirates is Captain James Hook. The feud between Hook and Pan is caused by Peter once feeding a crocodile the captain´s right hand, and since then, the crocodile is longing for the rest of Hook´s remains. Wendy and her brothers witness this feud on several occasions during their stay in Neverland. They are even captured by the pirates and must be saved by Peter Pan before they are ready to travel home to their parents in London.

In the end, Wendy and her brothers return home. Their parents, especially Mrs. Darling, are thrilled to have their children home again. Peter visits their nursery occasionally after the adventure in Neverland. However, as the years go by, Peter´s visits begin to fade. It is not until Wendy herself has grown up and mothered her daughter that Peter once again visit the nursery. This time it is not Wendy that will experience an adventure; it is instead her descendants who travels with Peter Pan to Neverland.

<u>*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling</u>

Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone is the first book in J.K. Rowling´s prominent book series about the renowned wizard Harry Potter. The story begins in a village outside London City with the Dursleys, a trivial British family that has some unfortunate features – there is nothing extraordinary about these Muggles (meaning non-magic people). The Dursleys are, however, granted with a significant task. Due to a grand battle between good and evil, their nephew lost his parents. The Dursleys are, therefore, assigned to look after their nephew, who happens to be known in the Wizarding world as "the Boy Who Lived". Becoming an orphan as a little boy, Harry Potter was destined to live an unhappy life with the Dursleys. However, at the age of eleven, Harry Potter receives a letter that changes his life as he discovers that he is a wizard.

In the ordinary world, Harry Potter is nothing but a family relation to the Dursleys. However, with guidance from a magical creature named Hagrid, who reveals Harry´s true destiny and value is in the Wizarrding world. Harry is in certain ways connected with the most vicious wizard to ever exist, Lord Voldemort. The night when Harry lost his parents, he obtained a scar on his forehead. This scar was given to him by Voldemort, or you-know-who as he is referred to by the common wizard tongue. Voldemort used to ravage the Wizarding world. It was not until Harry Potter survived his attack that Voldemort lost his powers. Because of this night, Harry Potter is renowned as a legend in the Wizarding world. At the age of eleven, Harry returns to the Wizarding world to begin his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry under headmaster Dumbledore, the greatest wizard of all time according to Hagrid.

On Harry´s travel to Hogwarts, he meets two classmates that becomes his best friends, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. They are two children that support Harry in his development as an individual and as a wizard, in addition to aiding Harry in his feud against Voldemort. During their first year at Hogwarts, the three friends experience an abundance of adventures; they successfully fight a troll, learn how to fly on a broomstick and expand their repertoire of magical spells. Surrounded by experienced teachers and other children, Harry is allowed to develop as both an individual and a wizard. There is, however, something that disturbs Harry throughout the year – something does not feel right. At several occasions Harry feels a pain in his scar, which is an indication of evil luring in his presence.

One of Hogwarts professors happens to be around every time Harry´s scar aches. This is professor Quirrell who teaches defense against dark magic. Quirrell became one of Voldemort´s followers and has given his master the opportunity to live by allowing Voldemort to physically connect to his head and leech of Quirrell´s life force. In order for Voldemort to become a complete wizard, he requires the Philosopher´s stone, complied by headmaster Dumbledore and his friend Nicolas Flamel.

The Philosopher´s stone allows the wizard possessing it to live an eternal life. By using Quirrell, Voldemort searches for this stone. In the climax of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* when Harry meet both Quirrell and Voldemort, he finds the stone in his pocket. As Dumbledore explains, the stone only appears for those "who wanted to find the Stone – find it, not use it – would be able to get it" (Rowling, 2017, p. 323). With the Philosopher´s Stone, Harry overthrows Quirrell and forces Voldemort to find a new sycophant to depend on. Harry defeats Voldemort once again and can safely return to Hogwarts for his second year. Sadly, he has to spend his summer vacation with the Dursley´s. Even though he is surrounded by dangers in the magical world, Harry has found this world as his rightful place – Hogwarts is his rightful home.

2.2 The foundation for comparing the selected children´s books

There are several similarities between *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* The books are considered to be two of the most popular/famous children´s books in contemporary society. *Peter Pan* is renowned for being one of the classics of children´s literature, and it has been discussed in an abundance of scholarly works within the field of children´s literature. As Montgomery and Watson (2009) explain in their introduction; *Peter Pan* is a unique children´s literary work: "A seminal work of children´s literature, it has played an important, even definite, role in the history of twentieth-century ideas about childhood" (p. 5). With statements like this, it is appealing to use *Peter Pan* in a comparison of contemporary children´s books. As previously mentioned, I decided to compare *Peter Pan* with the first book of the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling.

> The popular phenomenon of Harry Potter has been so extraordinary that it would be impossible not to include the book in any discussion of children´s literature in the twenty-first century, if only because it has arguably brought children´s literature into greater public prominence than ever before… (Montgomery & Watson, 2009, p. 7)

As Montgomery and Watson (2009) state, when discussing contemporary children´s literature, it seems appropriate to include Rowling´s work due to the substantial acknowledgment it has received. They further state that her literary work, along with other popular contemporary children´s books, has "presented a new, epic vision of childhood" (Montgomery & Watson, 2009, p. 7).

Given this thesis´ purpose, it is beneficial to include Rowling´s book when discussing the portrayals of childhood. In addition to what other scholars have argued regarding the selected children´s books, there are specific aspects of the narratives that call for a suitable foundation for discussing the research questions.

Both books may be categorized as a bildungsroman, and this is a similarity that allows a comparison of narrative strategies. As Abrams and Harpham states, the bildungsroman may be described as a book where:

> The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist´s mind and character, in the passage from childhood through varied experiences – and often through a spiritual crisis – into maturity; this process usually involves recognition of one´s identity and role in the world. (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 255)

An essential aspect of the narrative of a bildungsroman, is the protagonist. This thesis considers the protagonists to be Harry Potter in J.K. Rowling´s book and Wendy in *Peter Pan*. The following section is dedicated to an analysis based on Nikolajeva´s requirements to a protagonist from *The Rhetoric of Character in Children´s Literature* (2003) to disclose why the characters are the protagonists of Rowling´s and Barrie´s narrative.

The question of the protagonist in the selected children´s books

It is common to define the protagonist as the leading character in the narrative (Abrams & Harpham, 2012; Nikolajeva, 2003). When the book is categorized as a bildungsroman, it implies that the protagonist develops as an individual and as a character (Daley-Carey, 2018). In her book *The Rhetoric of Character in Children´s Literature* (2003), Nikolajeva presents a list of criteria she believes are necessary to find the protagonist in a narrative. She states that the criteria must be considered comprehensively when identifying the protagonist. By this, Nikolajeva implies that some criteria are not adequate alone (Nikolajeva, 2003). Given that it is more apparent who the protagonist in J.K. Rowling´s book is in the selection of children´s books for this thesis, the criteria will be presented and exemplified with content from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Subsequently, the criteria will be the foundation to discuss the protagonist in *Peter Pan*.

The criteria for the protagonist: Harry Potter

The first criterion connects to the title of the book. If the children´s book has a name in its title, it is an indication of which character is the protagonist (Nikolajeva, 2003). In J.K. Rowling´s book series about Harry Potter, the title in the seven books consists of the name "Harry Potter" and a central object or image of the story (Nikolajeva, 2003). This displays the importance of the character Harry Potter. It indicates that Harry Potter is the protagonist in the narrative of the book series. However, this argument is not adequate alone; it needs to be supported by other criteria featured in Nikolajeva´s list (2003).

The following, criteria "In order of appearance…" focuses on the order of presentation of essential characters in the narrative. A common aspect in children´s books are the mentioning of the protagonist at the beginning of the narrative. "We tend to assume that the person first introduced in a story is its protagonist" (Nikolajeva, 2003). The first chapter in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* (2017) is dedicated to present the Dursleys and also create a setting that is based in the real world and then suggests that there is something magical that is untraceable for the non-magical people:

> It was on the corner of the street that he noticed the first sight of something peculiar – a cat reading a map. For a second, Mr Dursley didn´t realise what he had seen – then he

jerked his head around to look again. There was a tabby cat standing on the corner of Privet Drive, but there wasn´t a map in sight. What could he have been thinking of? It must have been a trick of the light. (Rowling, 2017)

The character Harry Potter is however, present in the title of the first chapter: "The Boy Who Lived," and he is mentioned throughout the chapter. Even though Harry Potter is not the first character the reader meets in the narrative, there is still evidence that Harry Potter is the most important character in the story based on the information the author gives the reader. For instance, Rowling first characterized Harry as "a child like that" (Rowling, 2017). Additionally, she ends the chapter with a description that is foreshadowing the importance of the character:

> He couldn´t know that at this very moment, people meeting in secret all over the country were holding up their glasses and saying in hushed voices: ´To Harry Potter – the boy who lived. (Rowling, 2017)

Combined with the first criterion, it provides a substantial argument of who the protagonist is in J.K. Rowling´s book. It is, however, necessary to use the following criteria to examine if they cohere with this statement. Nikolajeva (2003) lists frequency or constant presence in the narrative as a distinctive feature of a protagonist: "A further criterion might be that the protagonist is the character who appears in most episodes or on most pages in the book, although it cannot be a definite measure" (Nikolajeva, 2003). Harry Potter is present in the narrative throughout the book. Other than the first chapter, the remaining pages are focused on Harry Potter. He is focalized in the book, which is one of the criteria for Nikolajeva (2003). Focalization is the narrative strategy that concentrates on which character is the focal point in the narrative and it establishes the reader´s perspective of the story.

> When a character is focalized, the text follows this person and cannot follow other characters. Focalization implies manipulation of the narrator´s, character´s and reader´s point of view, resulting in our perceiving the narrative "as if" it were told by the focalizing character. (Nikolajeva, 2003)

With Harry being the character that is mainly focalized, expect the first chapter, it seems that this aspect of the narrative supports the statement that Harry Potter is the protagonist. One

criterion that, however, does not apply to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* (2017) is the "First-person perspective."

If the narrative is told from a first-person perspective, it is reasonable to believe that the narrator is the protagonist. However, J.K. Rowling´s book is told in a third-person perspective by an omniscient, overt narrator. This implies that the narrator does not participate in the story, however, s/he has total control over the characters´ minds. For instance, as Harry is the focalized character, the reader receives information about his inner thoughts on several occasions in the narrative. "In the years to come, Harry would never quite remember how he had managed to get through his exams when he half expected Voldemort to come bursting through the door at any moment" (Rowling, 2017, p. 281). Even though the narrative is not told in a first-person perspective, the fact that the author has decided to use a third-person perspective implies that one must use the remaining criteria to identify the protagonist. The last criterion Nikolajeva states is an essential aspect of the protagonist, is the *evolution* of the protagonist.

According to Nikolajeva (2003), the criterion focusing on the development of the protagonist is the most essential and certain of those she features in *The Rhetoric of Character in Children´s Literature.* "…to define the protagonist we must also see who in the story undergoes a change; who gains a fortune, some knowledge, an insight; who matures physically or spiritually" (Nikolajeva, 2003). The narrative in J.K. Rowling´s book is founded in Harry Potter, developing from an unimportant relative of the Dursleys to becoming a famous wizard that wins a combat against the most gruesome wizard to exist. There is a substantial development in character in the first book. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Harry Potter is the protagonist in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* (2017), given sufficient evidence from the analysis.

The criteria and Wendy

To present Wendy Darling as the protagonist in *Peter Pan* may be a bold statement as some automatically believe that the character Peter Pan is the obvious choice as the leading character in Barrie´s story. However, by conducting an analysis founded in Nikolajeva´s criteria (2003), it is possible to state that Wendy is the protagonist in Barrie´s book. Firstly, a

significant indication of the protagonist is the title of the book. The title *Peter Pan* is not the original title of Barrie´s story. The story of the boy who would not grow up and Wendy Darling began as a play in 1904. It was later written as ´the book of the play´ under the title *Peter and Wendy.* It is, however, more commonly known as *Peter Pan* (Barrie, 2015, p. VII; Rose, 1984, p. 75). However, the character Wendy was originally included in the title in the book version to Barrie´s story.

The following criteria that Nikolajeva included in her search for the protagonist is that the protagonist is often the first character introduced to the reader. There are some ambiguous arguments when deciding which character is introduced first: Peter Pan or Wendy Darling. The first sentence in the narrative: "All children, except one, grow up" (Barrie, 2015, p. 1), is about Peter Pan. A reader with knowledge of the story understands this. However, there is no further introduction of the character until later in that chapter when Peter Pan is described as an object that disturbs an ordinary middle-class family: "There never was a simpler happier family until the coming of Peter Pan" (Barrie, 2015, p. 4). Wendy, on the other hand, is introduced in the second sentence of the narrative. "They soon know they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this" (Barrie, 2015, p. 1). Wendy may be categorized as the first character introduced by name in the narrative. Furthermore, the element of *evolution* is essential when identifying the protagonist in *Peter Pan.*

When discussing whether it is Peter Pan or Wendy Darling that is the leading character in Barrie´s story, it is necessary to examine how the characters develops throughout the narrative, according to Nikolajeva (2003). A quote from the last chapter: "When Wendy Grew Up," reveals the development of both characters: "He was exactly the same as ever, and Wendy saw at once that he still had all his first teeth. He was a little boy, and she was grown up." (Barrie, 2015, p. 156). Peter Pan, the boy who would not grow up, remains as he is – a boy. His role in Neverland may have changed, as he defeated Captain Hook and replaced his role as the Captain of the pirate ship. However, Peter Pan as a character and the majority of this characteristics, especially the internal characteristics concerning the maturity of character, remains. It is Wendy that has changed and developed from a naïve girl to a grown woman – a mother. With this in mind, it is possible to identify the protagonist of *Peter Pan* as Wendy Darling. It is the development of character that changes the foundation for discussion and establish a solid conclusion to who the protagonist is in Barrie´s story.

The books as bildungsromans

There are specific aspects of a bildungsroman that separates it from other subgenres of children´s literature. One of these is that the protagonist is required to mature throughout the narrative (Abrams & Harpham, 2012; Daley-Carey, 2018). In addition to maturing, the protagonist must also achieve a recognition of its identity and role in society:

> Linear, unitary, and essentialist, the Bildungsroman is a fundamentally humanist model of maturation. Development is premised on the assumption that individuals can both achieve subjective agency and be harmoniously accommodated within society. (Daley-Carey, 2018, p. 468)

By determining important aspects of the genre and identifying the protagonists in the selected children´s books, it is appropriate to categorize *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as a bildungsroman. The last criteria by Nikolajeva (2003), feature *evolution* of the character as an imperative factor in the process of identifying the protagonist. In the arguments for both narratives, it was established that both Harry Potter and Wendy Darling develops as characters. This is noticeable in *Peter Pan,* as Wendy starts as a young girl in the narrative and ends up as a mother who is not allowed to travel to Neverland. Similar to Wendy, Harry Potter prospers as a protagonist. However, due to the fact that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is the first in a book series it applies for a different foundation to discuss the characters passage from childhood to maturity.

The book series about Harry Potter follows the character through his years at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The series may therefore be categorized as a bildungsroman because the reader follows Harry Potter from the age of eleven till eighteen, in his last year at Hogwarts. The first book must therefore be considered as the first segment of the bildungsroman. The intention with the first book is to establish Harry Potter as a character, and as the hero in the narrative. The important aspect of the narrative is the development of the protagonist, which is evident in both *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* and in *Peter Pan.* It is, therefore, possible to categorize both books as a bildungsroman, with support from the definitions of the term retrieved from Abram and Harpham (2012) and Daley-Carey (2018).

3. Theory and Method

In order to discuss how the portrayals of children may cohere or contradict one another in the selected children´s books, it is necessary to create a theoretical foundation for the discussion. The following chapter, therefore, presents the theory concentrating on the relevant perspectives on childhood for *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. Furthermore, this chapter includes a section focusing on narratology and explains the importance on different narrative strategies relevant for this thesis. Lastly, the research method and narrowing of the material is presented as this is an imperative element of the thesis.

3.1 Perspectives of childhood

It has been stated in this thesis that the portrayals of children in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* reflects how specific societies perceived children. This thesis suggests that a book, as a cultural product, contains evidence of the author´s perspective of childhood. In order to understand such evidence, it is necessary to discuss the different societies and how they perceived childhood. This section presents the different perspectives to the periods: The fin de siècle in relation to *Peter Pan* and the postmodern era when *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* was written and published. The ideas of childhood that are the focal point in this thesis are generalizations: This implies that it does not necessarily reflect the reality of children in the specific historical periods. However, it is centered around the idea of what childhood should be: "childhoods are not homogenous, and children experience them differently according to their age, their gender, their ethnicity, or whether or not they are disabled" (Montgomery & Watson, 2009, p. 4). The portrayals of childhood present in the selected children´s books must, therefore, be considered as examples from their contemporary society.

This thesis considers the portrayals of childhood as a reflection of the books´ contemporary society. It is important to state that it is impossible to explicitly understand the societies comprehensively through an examination of a book constructed in different periods.

However, one approach to understanding the society and its historical context is to discuss certain tendencies within *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* and examine how they are a product of their contemporary society.

The different perspectives of childhood will be discussed in light of what other scholars´ have disclosed in their discussions of the different societies and their perspectives on childhood. Firstly, the romantic perspective of childhood will be presented and discussed in light of the fin de siècle. Subsequently, the section will include a presentation of the contemporary society and its perspective of childhood.

The Romantic Perspective of Childhood

The historical period that Barrie constructed and published his *Peter Pan* is renowned as the first Golden Age of Children´s Literature. The term "Golden Age" refers to "a designation of generic excellence" (Sorby, 2011, p. 96), and the Golden Age of Children´s Literature began with Lewis Carroll´s *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865 and ended with A.A. Milne´s *Winnie-the-Pooh* in 1926 (Lerer, 2009b; Sorby, 2011). According to Thacker (2012b), this period should be acknowledged as a distinctive literary period due to its cultural and aesthetic aspects. Given that the Golden Age of Children Literature extended over a longer period, it is relevant to specify the society relevant for Barrie´s *Peter Pan,* first published as a children´s book in 1911. Barrie constructed his book in the Edwardian era (1901-1910). However, Reynold (2012) states that to understand the Golden Age authors, "it is necessary to look back to the middle of the century, to the time when those who were parents in the 1890´s were themselves children," (p. 2). What Reynold indicates in this statement is that one´s perception of childhood is substantially influenced by one´s own experience as a child, and Barrie developed from child to adult in the Victorian society. This implies that to understand the portrayals of children in Barrie´s *Peter Pan,* one must reflect on the society that Barrie himself matured from childhood to adulthood, which was the Victorian society.

Several scholars agree that the Edwardian society, and its perspective of childhood is greatly influenced of the Victorian society´s perception of children (Gubar, 2009; Lerer, 2009b; Reynolds, 2012; Rose, 1984; Thacker, 2012b). The Victorian perspective on childhood is described as a romantic, this perception was inspired by Jean Jacque Rousseau´s *Emile*

(1762), which proclaimed that children should be viewed as an "untouched Other" (Gubar, 2009, p. 4). Such perception of the child can be categorized as a Victorian perspective of childhood.

> The idea that childhood is characterized by its difference from maturity in being a uniquely ´innocent´ phase which must be preserved, prolonged, and protected, is very much a product of the Victorian period. (Reynolds, 2012, p. 4)

This idea of childhood is according to Lerer (2009b) present in Barrie´s narrative: "*Peter Pan* opens in the nostalgic Victorian world: the house, the room, the clock, the toys – all evoke that comfortable clutter that scores of surviving photographs have revealed as the safe space of domestic childhood,"(Lerer, 2009b, p. 259). Another common strategy used by Victorian and Edwardian authors was to separate the child characters and the adult characters, allowing the children to be free of influence (Gubar, 2009). According to Sánchez-Eppler (2011) these creation of magical lands devoted for children displayed the Edwardian society´s perception of childhood. It was recognized a separate sphere, where children naturally inhabited the accommodations of an isolated island, such as Neverland in *Peter Pan* (Sorby, 2011).The nostalgia and innocent influenced by the Romantic perspective of children were, however, not only evident in Barrie´s work. This seems to be a common aspect in several Golden Age authors´ narratives.

The Romantic idea of childhood is depicted in different authors´ portrayals of children in their literary work. Given that there are only a distinctive amount of children´s books from the Edwardian society that is the foundation for these statements, it is important to note that this is only a selection of children´s books and that there may have been other portrayals of children that do not concur with perception of childhood discussed in this thesis. However, such perception of childhood was evident in several of the children´s books from the first Golden Age of children´s literature:

> Particularly during the Golden Age of children´s literature, a host of critics agree, political, social, and religious crisis led Victorian and Edwardian authors to construct childhood itself as a golden age, a refuge from the painful complexities of modern life. (Gubar, 2009, p. 4)

It seems that the need to portray children as innocent could be a result of the turbulence in the Edwardian society. According to Thacker(2012b), this period was affected by "disruptions and conflicts that had been building up throughout the late nineteenth century" (p. 73). She further states that these disruptions created "a society in turmoil" (p. 74). This may be an explanation for the complexity of portrayals of children that were constructed in this historical period.

There is a substantial amount of evidence of contradicting features in children´s books from the Edwardian society. Even though the authors shared a romantic perspective of childhood, it is also evident that "Golden Age authors often represent child characters as fully socialized subjects" (Gubar, 2009, p. 6). This contradicts the romantic notion to perceive children as the "untouched Others". It seems that this contradicting aspect regarding portrayals of children is especially relevant among the authors who are claimed to belong to *the cult of the child.* Certain Edwardian and Victorian authors agreed that the child should be free from adult supervision, and they, therefore, wrote children´s books that presented such a child.

The authors that are renowned for subscribing to the beliefs of the cult of the child are among others: Carroll, who wrote *Alice in Wonderland;* Burnett, the author of *The Secret Garden;* and one of the authors that are featured in this thesis, J.M. Barrie. It is possible to state that these were Edwardians who looked back to the Romantic perspective of childhood, yet they were not able to construct child characters that were uncivilized, a child of nature: "they never managed to extricate themselves from the formative effects of their upbringing," (Gubar, 2009, p. 5). This resulted in their distinctive approach when constructing children in their narrative, for instance, in Barrie´s *Peter Pan*:

> when the Darling children follow Peter Pan to Never Land, they immediately
> reconstruct and reenact the domestic routine they have just left behind, revealing in the
> process their thorough acceptance of the bourgeois mores and conventional gender
> roles embraced by their parents. (Gubar, 2009, p. 6)

The example from Gubar´s discussion is an example of how Barrie and his fellow members of the cult of the child constructed "*competing* conceptions of childhood" (2009, p. 9) which reflects the Edwardian society and its disruptions and conflicts (Thacker, 2012b). The portrayals of children present in Barrie´s narrative is a representation of the society in turmoil, and as Lerer (2009) states:

the Edwardian embodies something about childhood itself. All children live on such a cusp: between the memories of their comfortable youth and the fears of the future; between machines that work as playful toys and those that morph into weapons; between a natural world through which they romp and demarcations of that world by the fences, walls, rails, roads, and bridges of adult administrations…(Lerer, 2009b, p. 273)

There is a complexity in the Edwardian perspective of childhood; inspired by Romantic thinking originated from the Victorian society, yet an uneasiness about the future. It is this complexity of celebration and fear that connects the Edwardians´ perception of childhood to the contemporary society´s attitude and portrayals of children in contemporary children´s books.

The Contemporary Perspective of Childhood

J.K. Rowling wrote *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* at the beginning of the 1990s, in other words the book was constructed in the postmodern era. There are elements within the narrative that reflects this period. For instance, the Dursleys´ home is based on reality rather than fantasy compared to the Wizarding world. This implies that aspects of the home can be understood as a reflection the contemporary society. In the third chapter, " The Letter From No One," Dudley playing with his new, modern toys: a remote-control airplane and a racing bike (Rowling, 2017, p. 33). This displays evidence in the narrative that reflects Rowling´s society. There are, furthermore, other implicit aspects of the narrative that indicates tendencies present in the postmodern era. In correlation with the statement about the necessity to look at redeciding societies to understand the complexity of a society from Reynolds (2012), it is essential to understand how this present in the contemporary society. There are certain aspects of the postmodern culture that was established in prior historical periods that has been transferred to the current society due to its manifestation in prior societies. One of these aspects is the attitude towards childhood.

Gleason (2010) presents in her article "In Search of History´s Child", the process of establishing a modern child and its place in society. With this, she explains how the attitude towards childhood changed significantly in the twentieth century; "the century of the child"

(Gleason, 2010, p. 126; Key, 1909), mainly in Western societies. The child´s status in society changed from individuals that should and needed to provide labor to being individuals that were allowed to be free of responsibility; they were allowed to be children (Gleason, 2010). There are connections between this attitude towards childhood with the Victorians´ and the Edwardians´ perception of childhood. The Romantic perspective is relevant in contemporary society´s perspective of childhood. This is, according to Thacker (2012a), evident in contemporary children´s literature. However, other aspects reveal distinctive features of the contemporary children´s book. One reason for this may be the changes and challenges the society had to endure in the latter decades.

According to Thacker (2012a): "It is possible to claim that postmodernity derives from the historical situation of late capitalism and the multicultural epoch" (p. 142). She continues by connecting the modern society´s presence in certain contemporary children´s books: "Fundamental uncertainty about the nature of the physical world and the dislocation of a moral order threatens the kind of message expected in the stories we offer children," (p. 142).

There is a tendency within children´s literature constructed in the contemporary society that several contemporary children´s books contain a serious aspect in their narrative that presents challenges the society can be threatened by. This statement is supported by Watson and Montgomery (2009): "The new millennium is a time of great social concern about children and it is not surprising that his is reflected in literature written for them" (p. 8). They go to the greater extent to even characterize a trend within contemporary children´s literature to be "dangerous and anxiety-provoking" (p. 8). O´Reilly presents in her doctoral thesis a discussion of the portrayal of the child and the adult in a selection of contemporary children´s literature, and she uses Egoff´s *Thursday's Child: trends & patterns in contemporary children's literature,* to accentuate this trend of contemporary children´s literature. "Egoff believes that other types of children´s books, including fantasy, have been influenced by modern concerns and by the developing social realism" (O´Reilly, 2005, p. 5). This is present in the series about Harry Potter as it is portraying the concern of racism and multiculturalism that is unmistakable present in today´s society (Korhonen, 2016). This implementation of social concerns is evident in the maturation process present in contemporary children´s books:

> `the children in children's books nowadays face real dangers and childhood is no longer synonymous with "the happy time". A second corollary is a fascination with "growing up". Growing up now tends to be visualized as a testing of soul and spirit, to

be worked out through emotional "rites of passage"... ' (Egoff, 1981, p. 41, referred to in O´Reilly, 2005, p. 210).

Contemporary children´s literature is exposing the uneasiness that the society must endure in stories for children. However, it is important to state that this does not imply that all children´s books constructed in the postmodern era are considered to be centered around crisis and catastrophes in society. It is, rather, a tendency within the literature for children published in the latter years.

> The inequity of the relationship between the 'adult, knowing' author and the 'innocent, receptive' child, and the uneasy assumption that stories can be repositories of universal truths, are all involved in the discourses which surround art, culture and politics in this postmodern epoch. (Thacker, 2012a, p. 139)

This tendency is apparent in several of books considered to be contemporary, and Montgomery and Watson (2009) feature this in their discussion of trends within this genre of children´s books. Two authors and their work that are emphasized in this discussion: Philip Pullman and his *Dark Material Trilogy* and J.K. Rowling with her Harry Potter-series.

> presented a new, epic vision of childhood. Children in these novels do not simply have magical powers or go on adventures, as in previous works of fiction, but set about saving the world from catastrophe. Adults, in these books, may be morally ambiguous, as in Pullman, or sharply divided into good or bad characters, as in Rowling, but they always lack the powers that children have to protect and save the world from the sins of the past. The child hero or heroine of these stories is not just an adventurer but also a redeemer. (Montgomery & Watson, 2009, p. 8)

There are aspects of contemporary children´s literature that aims, seemingly, to prepare the child for disruptions and conflicts. By presenting the child hero or heroine as the "last hope" in a battle, it creates a narrative that is dependent on the child character. Contemporary children´s book seems to have active child characters, their actions and their characterization is essential of the narrative. For the book to have a "happy" ending, the child characters must succeed. There seems that *responsibility* is a distinctive and important feature of specific child characters, especially child protagonists, in several contemporary children´s books. Harry

Potter, in Rowling´s book, may perhaps be a symbol for this aspect in modern children´s literature.

Throughout the first chapter of the book, "The Boy Who Lived", Harry is characterized as a unique boy, and it seems that he is destined to do great things. "He´ll be famous – a legend…" (Rowling, 2017, p. 14). It seems that such a portrayal of children is a distinctive aspect of contemporary children´s literature, and this may reflect the contemporary society´s perspective of childhood. It may be possible to state that the modern perspective is influenced by fear for the future and that contemporary children´s books authors are presenting *active* children in their narrative in order to inspire the child reader. It seems that certain contemporary children´s books aim to prepare the child for conflict it may experience in the future. As Higonnet (1998) states in her work *Picture of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood,* the notion of the innocence of childhood is no longer relevant. It should rather be replaced with the reference of a "knowing child" as the contemporary child has the knowledge and awareness of the intimidations and challenges the world must take into consideration.

The presentation of the different perspective of childhood relevant for the selection of children´s books, displays the complexity of the portrayals of childhood within a narrativeThe thesis wishes to further discuss how the portrayals of childhood can reflect the books´ contemporary society. However, to thoroughly comprehend the portrayals of childhood in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* one must understand the use of the narrative devices. The following section aims to describe the complexity of a narrative and define the essential components that an author includes when s/he constructs a book.

3.2 Narrative strategies

An examination of specific aspects of the narrative can provide the thesis with information and evidence displaying indications of how children are portrayed in the selected children´s books. Looking further into a specific selection of narrative strategies can be a possible approach to find out how the authors have portrayed children in their books. To decide what

strategies should be included in the thesis´ selection, it is necessary to define the term narrative strategy, and then explain what the different strategies imply regarding a literary analysis.

The term "narrative strategy" is commonly used within the research field of children´s literature. It is subordinate to the term *narrative*, which is "…both the story (what readers make of it) and the discourse (how it is narrated)" (Reynolds, 2011, p. 138). This thesis examines the narrative regarding how it functions as a discourse. Furthermore, it is necessary to specify that "all narrative, fictional and nonfictional, is artifice. Narratives are constructs, and their meanings are internal to the system of narrative" (Walsh, 2007, p. 14). This implies that an author´s narrative must be considered as a structure that aims to convey a story. To make this a feasible task, the author implements narrative strategies that accommodates the transmission of his/her story. According to Tjupa (2014), it is possible to describe narrative strategies as the use of narrative techniques and practices that the author uses to communicate his/her intended aim for the narrative.

The use of narrative strategies is the author´s communication with the reader, and this is an essential aspect of the book. The author has created a narrative that appeals to his/her audience. The narrative must, therefore, be understood as "an utterance and thus a communicative act" (Tjupa, 2014). The complexity of the narrative requires a comprehensive description of how its components, and it is, therefore, necessary to explain the different between the external and internal aspects of a narrative. A narrative has two distinctive dimensions. First being the internal that are elements within the narrative that functions as necessary components to convey a story. The second dimension is established in the external aspects, (Golden, 1990, p. 3). This thesis considers both dimensions of the narrative in the examination of how the books portray childhood. To understand how the different dimensions can display the portrayal, the thesis presents a description of the external and the internal aspects of a narrative.

The external and the internal aspects of a narrative

The difference between the external and internal aspect of a narrative is displayed in Figure 1: External and internal aspects of narrative strategies. I created this figure to understand the

dimensions of a narrative and, additionally, the figure displays how narrative strategies can communicate different manners established in the author´s socialization in a specific society, such as the portrayal of childhood. The figure is influenced by Golden´s diagram disclosing how the narrative may be present outside and inside the text (1990, p. 4). The figure displays my understanding of the relations between external and internal aspects of a narrative.

By illustrating the division of dimensions through a Venn diagram, it is possible to demonstrate the distinctiveness and the association between the different aspects. The internal and the external aspects are intertwined, and they must be perceived in relation to each other to understand the narrative as an utterance. The "narrative strategies" are divided into two categories: the external and internal aspects of the narrative. These categories are based on the placement of the different aspects regarding the author´s texts. The external aspects are those outside the text, such as the author and the reader. These elements of the narrative are the foundation for its communication because the author is the one whom constructs the utterance, and the reader define how the utterance is understood. This allows a narrative to be understood in different manners, as each reader transfer his/her opinions to the reading of any given narrative. The opponent to external aspects, the internal components of a narrative, can be categorized as literary devices that are retrievable from the text. These aspects are devices that the author can use to enhance the intended utterance in the narrative, and the different literary devices have an individual impact on the narrative (Bal, 2017; Golden, 1990).
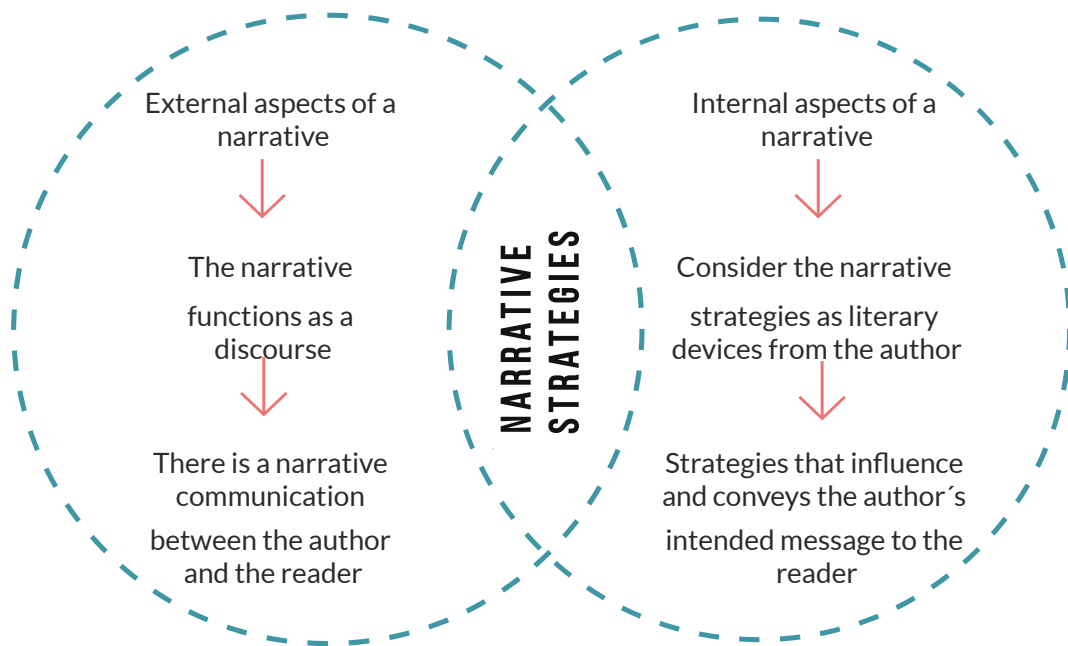
Figure 1: External and internal aspects of narrative strategies.

The external aspects are the foundation for examining how the narrative can be understood as a discourse: "The author in one context constructs a string of symbols which reflect narrative conventions. The reader in another context, guided by the author's symbols and his/her prior knowledge and experience, constructs the narrative during the reading process" (Golden, 1990, p. 2). Simultaneously, the author´s work communicates a narrative that is only possible to retrieve from the internal aspects: The literary text. By looking closely at the relations between the aspects within the literary text, it is possible to analyze how the author has communicated a narrative by using techniques, such as characters and settings, to the reader.

As both dimensions of a narrative are significant for the analysis of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* the thesis subsequently presents a comprehensive explanation of the narrative communication and the literary devices relevant for understanding how the books portray childhood.

Narrative communication: An external aspect

This thesis considered the external aspects of a narrative to be an essential component of an author´s conveyance of his/her story. However, there is a substantial discussion concerning the necessity of this element of a narrative. Richard Walsh (2007) has contributed greatly to this discussion with his book *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction,* where he dedicates a chapter to solemnly focus on the narrative communication. He states that:

> The ultimate objective is not, of course—cannot be—to instate a superior model of an object of study (narrative), but to characterize the parameters of the communicative process of narrative creation and reception, or more particularly the fictive aspect of it. (Walsh, 2007, p. 4)

Furthermore, Walsh deliberates the different component of narrative communication which is visually presented in Figure 2 constructed by Seymour Chatman (1980). The six-part model of narrative communication, presented in Figure 2, explains how authors communicate with their real readers consciously and unconsciously. The disagreement between Chatman and Walsh remains in the discussion of the author´s presence in the narrative established in the component: The implied author and the narrator. As Chatman (1980) believes that the author´s presence is implemented in the narrative through the narrator, Walsh (2007) contradicts this opinion by stating that "the implied author (being implied) cannot actually be the narrator" (p. 82).

Even though Walsh (2007) feature contemplative arguments, such as: "To repudiate the narrator as a distinct narrative agent intrinsic to the structure of fiction is to repudiate the idea of a closed border between the products of representation and the real-world discourse of the author" (Walsh, 2007, p. 84). This thesis endorses Chatman´s comprehension of narrative communication. The sectioning in Figure 2 displays the complexity of narrative communication. "The narrative text – indicated by the box in the middle – is the message transmitted from the *real author* to the *real reader,* from the one who physically wrote the text of the book to the one who actually reads it" (O'Sullivan, 2011). Figure 2 reveals a process of communication, where the real author constructs a message in the implied author and narrator, by addressing both the narratee and implied reader in the text. These are not explicitly revealed in the text, but rather implemented in the internal narrative strategies.

NARRATIVE TEXT

real →
author

implied →
author

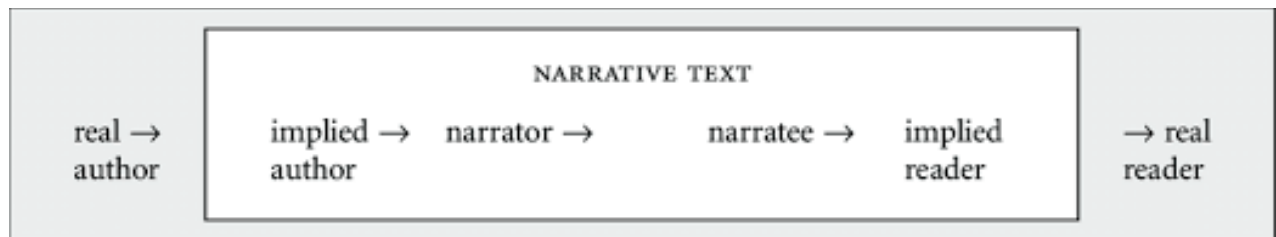narrator →

narratee →

implied
reader

→ real
reader

Figure 2. Narrative Communication (Chatman, 1980)

Considering the external aspects of narrative strategies as a process enables the possibility of dividing the model into two separate stages of communication. Firstly, the communication begins with the addresser, which in this model is present in the real author´s construction of the implied author and the narrator. These narrative techniques are communicating with the narratee and implied reader that are present in the text, and therefore communicating with the real reader (the addressee) (Chatman, 1980, p. 28). In other words, the first stage functions as the transmitter of an utterance, and the finale stage is when the reader is the receiver of that utterance.

 In this transmission of an utterance, different elements must be considered in order to understand the content of the communication. It is the transmitter of the utterance that is relevant for this thesis as this contains the potential to retrieve the reflection of the society in narrative. The presence of the author, a socialized individual, is an imperative aspect of examining the books portrayals of childhood. Thus, the thesis contributes an explanation of the terms included in the transmission of an utterance from the author.

When examining an utterance from the author, it is essential to focus on two aspects of the transmission, which is the implied author and the narrator. According to Chatman (1980) the components are connected to each other. The implied author is a distinctive term that has been defined by several scholars (Bal, 2017; Chatman, 1980; Golden, 1990; Walsh, 2007), and it should not solemnly be understood as the real author´s presence in the narrative text:

> […] the implied author, although related to the actual author, is nonetheless
> part of the total fiction, whom the author gradually brings into being in the

course of his composition, and who plays an important role in the overall effect

of a work on the reader. (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 288)

The discussion of the implied author, exemplified in the contradiction between Chatman´s (1980) and Walsh´s (2007) comprehension of the term, displays the intricacy of narrative communication. As this thesis operates with Chatman´s understanding, the implied author contains the potential to retrieve the reflection of the contemporary society. In order to retrieve this evidence, it is necessary to examine the narrator. According to the model of narrative communication, the implied author communicates through the narrator to convey the intended utterance to the real reader. The narrator is "…the (linguistic, visual, cinematic) subject, a function and not a person, which expresses itself in the language or images that constitute the text" (Bal, 2017, p. 11). It is, furthermore, described as a literary device used by the author to convey his/her story. Created by the author, the narrator conveys the author´s intended utterance to the reader. This connects with Chatman´s model of narrative communication (figure 2). The narrator addresses the real reader through the text, and it is through the narrator that the real author´s utterance is told.

By examining how the real author communicates with the real reader established through the presence of the author in the narrative, it is possible to retrieve the message of how the author tries to convey his/her story. Also, it is possible to state how this message is influenced by elements that are internal in the text and by looking at relevant internal strategies.

The literary devices: Internal strategies

The author´s literary text contains several components that orchestrates the narrative. Each of these components have distinctive features, and they are the devices used by the author to compose his/her utterance to the reader. These internal narrative strategies are essential elements in a narrative, and the analysis of the portrayals of childhood is substantially founded in these aspects of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* To understand their potential to disclose the portrayal of childhood in a book, it is necessary to present the different internal narrative strategies relevant for this thesis and explain their function in a narrative.

The narrator is relevant for both the external and the internal dimension of a narrative. However, as the narrator was described in light of the narrative communication, the thesis will present an element of the narrative that is connected to the narrator in this section, which is *focalization*. The literary device is "the relation between the vision and what is seen, perceived" (Bal, 2017, p. 133). It, furthermore, refers to "a selection or restriction of narrative information in relation to the experience and knowledge of the narrator" (Niederhoff, 2011). There are three types of focalization; zero, internal and external (Genette, 1980, referred to in Niederhoff, 2011). This thesis operates with internal and external focalization, and the difference between these remains in the information given to the reader about the core element of the narrative. It has to do with the narrative´s focus. This is often either centered around one core component, being the internal focalization, or the narrator does not rely on one core element and rather implement several object in the narrative as its focal point, being the external focalization (Niederhoff, 2011). The selected children´s books are distinctive concerning what is focalized in the narratives. In *Peter Pan* the narrative is focalized through the narrator, meaning that in Barrie´s narrative the reader sees what the narrator wishes him/her to experience whereas in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* the narrator focalizes through Harry Potter. This implies that the reader sees what Harry Potter sees in the narrative. As the core element in a narrative is often centered in a leading character, it is appropriate to explain the necessity of a character.

According to Abrams and Harpham (2012), an essential aspect of the narrative is the involvement of characters and what the characters say and do in the story (p. 233). Characters are "…the anthropomorphic figures provided with specifying features the narrator tells us about" (Bal, 2017, p. 104). By implementing characters in the narrative, it is possible to analyze the author´s image of different characters in the society, such as children: "The character is not a human being, but it resembles one." (Bal, 2017, p. 105). It is common to separate the characters in a narrative by labeling them. For example, the protagonist is the character the plot revolves around. It is often the leading character and it may be the core element in a narrative. Another important character in a narrative is the antagonist, that functions as the opponent to the protagonist and often challenges the leading character so that s/he prospers as an individual. In addition to categorizing the different characters, it is also possible to focus on how they are being portrayed in the text by analyzing the *characterization* of the characters.

Characterization is the process of presenting a character. According to Jannidis (2012), it is "a dynamic process, just as is the process of creating characters in the reader´s mind". It involves portraying the characters by either *telling*, where the author can describe the characters for the reader to understand its qualities, or by *showing,* which involves the character taking action by talking and/or acting and it allows the reader to evaluate the character based on their personal opinion (Abrams & Harpham, 2012, p. 47). As Bal (2017) states "characters differ from one another. In that sense, they are individual. On the basis of the characteristics they have been allotted, each of the functions in a different way with respect to the reader" (p.105). The characteristics of the figures in a narrative are presented through the characterization, and it is these characters along with other literary devices that are facilitating for the author´s story. These components have the potential to understand how the author has portrayed childhood in his/her book. Another technique the author uses to convey his/her story is the setting.

Abrams and Harpham (2012) states in their encyclopedia that setting is the locale, time, and circumstances of the storyline in a narrative (p. 363). It is a fundamental element in the establishment of a narrative. In *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* the setting is placed in a similar location: The real world is set in London, and the protagonists are travelling to a fantasy world that can be described to be in another dimension than London. This connects to Bal´s definition of the term *spatial oppositions:*

> When several places, ordered in groups, can be related to psychological, ideological, and moral oppositions, location may function as an important principle of structure. For instance, high–low, related to favourable– unfavourable, fortunate–unfortunate, is an opposition that Western literature has inherited from the late biblical vision of heaven and hell, and also from Latin and Greek mythology. Far–near, open–closed, and finite–infinite, together with familiar–strange, safe–unsafe, and accessible– inaccessible are oppositions often encountered. (Bal, 2017, p. 184)

Spatial oppositions convey which location is the favorable or safe for the protagonist. An analysis of the setting as a component of a constructed narrative involves an examination of different elements in connection with the setting. This thesis explicitly focuses on the relation between the two different worlds in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* When the narrative contains two distinctive worlds, or settings, there is potential to analyse the narrative in light of how the different settings are in comparison of each other.

Furthermore, this thesis wishes to compare two children´s books with similar construction of settings in the narrative and understand how this may reflect the books´ contemporary society. Another imperative similarity between the books is the element of fantasy.

In children´s literature there is a long tradition to implement fantastical elements in the narrative to convey the intended story. Book with such features belongs to the genre *fantasy*. There are several understandings of the term fantasy, and according to Baker (2011), it is a challenging task to define it. One of the contemporary definitions of the term, by Nikolajeva (2000), displays different understandings of how fantasy is received. "It has been treated as a genre, a style or a narrative technique, and it is sometimes regarded as a purely formulaic fiction". Furthermore, it is possible to understand the use of fantastical elements as more than merely a strategy from the author.

Fantasy and the fantastical elements in a narrative display expressions of the author´s comprehension of reality (Le Guin, 1973/1979, referred to in Baker, 2011; Lloyd Alexander, 1985, referred to in Baker, 2011). This statement is further supported by Hunt (2005): "Fantasy cannot have nothing to do with reality: it must relate to our world, or it would be nothing but nonsense" (p. 170). However, it is necessary to point out that the fictional world must not be understood as a comprehensive reflection of reality.

> There are always going to be gaps and indeterminacies in the interpretative construction of fictional worlds, which is a significant divergence from the philosophical model of possible worlds upon which fictional worlds theory is based, since it is axiomatic that possible worlds are logically complete. (Walsh, 2007, p. 16)

Walsh (2007) states that the fictional world will always contain "gaps and indeterminacies in the interpretative construction of fictional world" (p. 16). Both books in the selected material for this thesis, have elements of fantasy that reflects the books´ contemporary historical context. In the context of examining similar aspects between the selected children´s books, there is a pattern in the narrative that is relevant concerning the portrayals of childhood: Both protagonist leaves the realistic world to enter the fantasy world, and then they return to the realistic world in the end of the narrative.

The pattern of "home-away-home" may be interpreted as a voyage from reality to fantasy, and then returning to reality in *Peter Pan* (2015) and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s*

Stone (2017). According to Reimer (2011) this structure of the narrative is a "central organizing principle of the genre of children´s literature" (p. 107). It symbolizes a beginning and end of the storyline, which is relevant for both children´s books selected for this thesis. Given that the placement of "home" is relevant in both children´s books, it seems beneficial for the thesis to acknowledge this term.

As the placement of home is an apparent aspect of children´s literature, and it is, therefore, compelling to present a profound description of the term. The meaning of home is possible to interpret in several manners. In his chapter in *Keywords for Children´s Literature* (2011), Reimer has conferred the different understandings of the term. He states that:

> The primary meaning in contemporary usages of the word is "the seat of domestic life and interest." In this sense, the word is close to the Latin *domus*, from which the adjective "domestic" is derived. As well as referring to a building or place, however, "home" also refers to the quality of feelings associated with that place, so that home is, as the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* notes, "the place of one´s dwelling or nurturing," which can include members of a family or household, "which can conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it." (Reimer, 2011, p. 106)

Based on Reimer´s description, it is possible to state that the term has different dimensions to it. The initial understanding of the term is, as Reimer states, connected to a placement of a household. When finding synonyms for the term, it is usually words connected to this understanding that is the alternative. For instance, words equivalent to *home* are dwelling, village and homestead (Reimer, 2011, p. 106). Simultaneously, there is another comprehension of the term that has a psychological dimension to it. Home may be a reference to the feeling of being nurtured and safe; a sense of belonging. Given that both books operate with a meaning of home, it is intriguing to examine these aspects and compare the understandings of home constructed in Rowling´s and Barrie´s narrative.

The literary devices and the explanation of narrative communication presented in this section display the complexity of the thesis´ analysis of narrative strategies. The thesis´ approach to investigating the portrayals of childhood is literary analysis. A comprehensive description of the research method will therefore be presented in the following section.

3.3 Literary analysis

The research method for this thesis is literary analysis. This implies that the selected children´s books will be examined by conducting a close reading of the books. The books are examined by focusing on specific aspects within the narrative. Such approach towards literature "…can reveal the tensions and contradictions in a text, and it can illuminate moments of experience by placing them in the context of other cultural, artistic or social practices" (Nicholson, 2017, p. 184). A close reading can, therefore, contribute greatly to the discussion of the research question. However, the approach requires a substantially established foundation to discuss the different aspects of the narrative. If not, the analysis will be too subjective, and the findings concerning the portrayals of childhood may not be verifiable. It is, therefore, imperative that the literary analysis is conducted in light of the thesis established theoretical background and considering what other scholars have proclaimed about the selected children´s book prior to this thesis. According to Gaasland (1999), verifiability is an essential aspect of a scholarly work as this founds an opportunity for dialog and consensus of the scholarly discoveries (p. 15). The literary analysis is, therefore, solemnly founded in the theoretical background concerning the different perspective on childhood and the narrative strategies presented prior to this section.

As the material consists of two children´s books, it intuitively calls for a comparative study of the books. As there are similarities between *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* regarding the selected narrative strategies, which is explained in the following section, the foundation for comparing the books is based on a "horizontal connection". This implies that the foundation for comparison is a hypothesis, as presented in the introductory chapter, which must be acknowledged in the discussion of the research questions (Gaasland, 1999, p. 137). A comparative approach towards children´s literature has potential to reveal intriguing aspects of the literary genre, according to O´Sullivan (2011):

> ´Doing´ comparative literature is traditionally about researching phenomena
> that transcends boundaries, primarily linguistic, cultural and national, but
> sometimes also between time periods, **genres**, literature and other arts (music,
> dance, the visual arts, film, etc.) or between disciplines such as literature and
> psychology, literature and science, literature and architecture, or literature and
> any other subject area. (O'Sullivan, 2011, p. 142)

The comparative analysis allows the thesis to understand the utterances from Rowling and Barrie more comprehensively, and it creates a foundation to discuss the similarities and differences between the books´ portrayals of childhood. However, the material must be narrowed to a selection of narrative strategies in order to conduct a feasible analysis. It is this selection that will further on be presented and explained in light of the research questions.

3.4 Narrowing the material for the analysis

Given that this thesis focuses on two children´s books, it emerges into a substantial amount of material for analysis. It is, therefore, necessary to define what the analysis will concentrate on and how the process of obtaining information will be in order to provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions. With narratology and a description of the contemporary historical context of both books as the theoretical background, it is possible to conduct an analysis restricted to three narrative strategies: (1) the narrator, (2) the setting and (3) the protagonist.

The decision of narrative strategies beneficial for this thesis is founded in two imperative factors; prior research and a close reading of the books founded on the theoretical background for this research. In order to understand what this implies, the selection of narrative strategies in light of prior research will now be presented. In regard to narratology, there are specific strategies that are profoundly researched in the field of children´s literature. One of these strategies is *the narrator*.

The presence of the narrator is an aspect within Barrie´s *Peter Pan* that has been discussed by scholars. Arguably, one of the more applied scholarly books on this area of children´s literature is Jaqueline Rose´s *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The impossibility of children´s fiction* (1984), which is dedicated to elaborately discuss imperative aspects of Barrie´s work with the famous children´s book, *Peter Pan*. By using the children´s book as a foundation, Rose endures on substantial discussions on what children´s fiction may convey to its readers. In the chapter "Peter Pan and Literature for the Child" (1984), she explicitly focuses on the narrator in *Peter Pan*. She reveals intriguing aspects of narrative strategy and has, therefore, inspired

this thesis to complete a comparison of this narrative strategy with *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. Additionally, the close reading of the selected children´s books contributed with other aspects of the narrative strategy that are compelling to examine concerning the portrayals of childhood.

The close reading of the books disclosed several differences between the books that are relevant for this thesis. One significant indication for how the books contradict each other is the presence of the narrator in the narrative. Furthermore, the relation between the two separate worlds in *Peter Pan* and in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* calls for an examination as it contains the potential to discuss how the books reflect their contemporary society. It is, therefore, compelling to analyze this aspect in light of the theoretical background to understand what this reveal regarding the research questions. Another imperative component for this thesis is to examine is the difference regarding the protagonist´s perception of "home" in the narrative.

The third narrative strategy that will be the foundation for the discussion of the research question is *the protagonist.* The intention with this thesis is to retrieve the portrayals of childhood, and an important aspect is to examine the child characters in the books. In both cases, the leading character is a child. An analysis of the protagonist will, therefore, give an accurate indication of how children are portrayed in the books. Several scholars have proclaimed that a character is a representation of the author´s interpretation of human beings (Bal, 2017; Beauvais, 2015). Furthermore, the discussion of the importance of the protagonist in children´s books have been thoroughly discussed by scholars. For instance, Maria Nikolajeva´s *The Rhetoric of Characters in Children´s Literature* (2003), displays the potential of analyzing characters as a narrative strategy. The thesis benefits of conducting an analysis of the protagonist to expose how childhood is portrayed in the selected children´s books.

An examination of (1) the narrator, (2) the setting, and (3) the protagonist creates an appealing foundation for the discussion of the research questions. By using prior research and conducting a close reading of the books, it presented opportunities to understand how children are portrayed in the selected children´s books. Further on, this thesis will present the findings from the analysis and discuss them in light of the research questions. As the discussion is substantially founded in the established theoretical background, specific terms are retrieved from the theory chapter. The findings from the analyses are examined in light of how they

may be a reflection of the book´s contemporary society. The term "romantic" is drawn from the description of the different perspective of childhood, and it refers to the literary period in which *Peter Pan* was constructed and published.

4. An analysis of the narrator

The narrator´s position in a narrative is fundamental when examining how a book may convey distinctive portrayals of childhood. Rose (1984) disclosed that the narrator is an essential aspect of children´s books as this narrative strategy establishes a foundation to discuss the presence of the adult author. This thesis builds on this statement. In order to answer the research question, the thesis will examine the narrator as a component of *narrative communication* (figure 2). This implies that the analysis focuses on the presence of the narrators in the narratives. Additionally, the thesis examines the possible interpretations of different utterances from the narrator regarding how they may expose aspects of the portrayals of childhood in Barrie´s *Peter Pan* and Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.*

The narrator is the central mode of communication between the author and the reader, s/he has the potential to convey specific opinions and beliefs on the portrayals of childhood. Given that the selected books are categorized as children´s books, the implied reader of the books is a child. The communication between the narrator and the narratee can, therefore, be applied to be the communication between the adult author and the child reader. The analysis of the narrators will be founded in quotes from the selected children´s books, and they will be discussed in light of the established theoretical background for this thesis.

<u>The narrator as a narrative strategy</u>

An aspect that is highly relevant for the analysis is that both books have an omniscient narrator. This implies that the reader receives information about every aspect of the narrative that the author believes to be relevant. There are, however, particular differences in the authors´ narrators that may disclose distinctive attitudes towards childhood. These will be presented in the following section in the presentations of the different narrators.

Several scholars agreee that the historical context *Peter Pan* was constructed in operated with an explicitly present narrator (Rose, 1984; Wall, 1991). There is, therefore, potential to discuss how the narrator and the author´s use of the narrative strategy may reflect the contemporary societies of the books. The narrative strategy in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter*

and the Philosopher´s Stone can be examined in order to understand the similarities and differences of their narrator.

4.1 The omniscient narrator

Superior knowledge and awareness over the narrative

The reader of the selected children´s books has a similar approach to the narrative because both books feature an omniscient storyteller. This establishes a foundation to compare the narrative strategy concerning how the narrator is providing the reader with the necessary information to understand the narrative. By examining different quotes from the children´s books, one may understand how the storyteller presents essential information to the reader, and this exposes what knowledge and awareness the narrator has of the story. For instance, there is an indication in Rowling´s narrative that the narrator has complete knowledge of the story:

> One small hand closed on the letter beside him and he slept on, not knowing he was special, not knowing he was famous, not knowing he would be woken in a few hours´ time by Mrs Dursley´s scream as she opened the front door to put out the milk bottles, nor that he would spend the next few weeks being prodded and pinched by his cousin Dudley… He couldn´t know that at this very moment, people meeting in secret all over the country were holding up their glasses and saying in hushed voices: ´To Harry Potter – the boy who lived! ´. (Rowling, 2017, p. 18)

As the quote from the first chapter, "The Boy Who Lived," reveals, the narrator knows what is presented in the plot as well as actions that are happening outside the plot. The storyteller is foreshadowing the importance of the character Harry Potter, the protagonist of Rowling´s story. This implies that the narrator provides the reader with specific information about the protagonist that is proven to be an important characteristic later in the narrative. The ability to foreshadow confirms the narrator's awareness of the narrative. Furthermore, the quote displays the unlimited access the narrator has concerning the characters´ minds and actions. The narrator is all-knowing as s/he is capable of describing the scene, as well as informing the

reader that the protagonist is lacking knowledge regarding his prophecy. These aspects of the storyteller are common with the use of an omniscient narrator. Furthermore, it presents a foundation to compare the narrator in *Peter Pan* constructed by Barrie in light of what has been disclosed concerning Rowling´s narrator.

In *Peter Pan,* the narrator presents the reader with information about the plot, setting, and characters so that it possible to understand the narrative. However, the narrator is not as superior as the storyteller in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* In the quote cited from the chapter "Do You Believe in Fairies?", an utterance from the narrator displays his/her nonchalant relation to the child characters in an episode where they are in danger by an antagonist, Captain Hook, when he captures them: "**I don´t know** whether any of the children were crying; if so, the singing drowned the sound," (Barrie, 2015, p. 113, emphasis added). This quote discloses that the narrator does not have the complete awareness of every aspect of the story. As the creator of the narrative, the author has the total awareness of the story. In the construction of *Peter Pan,* Barrie has decided to not implement a storyteller that has the knowledge of every aspect. This implies that the author has restricted an imperative narrative strategy that functions as the source of information to the child reader. Furthermore, the utterance from the storyteller presents an intriguing aspect of the narrative strategy created by Barrie.

As the quote from an episode in the narrative that involved several characters, it is important to comment that the narrator in *Peter Pan* does not necessarily focus on the child characters. The episode involves the protagonist as she is captured by an antagonist, Captain Hook. In this episode, the narrator is seemingly confused when several characters and actions are happening in the narrative. The decision to not focus on the child characters reveals a specific aspect of the narrator´s relationship to these characters. Focusing on the children is not the narrator´s priority, which may align with the narrator´s perception on childhood. The episode involves children being at risk, and it concerns the leading child character of Barrie´s story. It is, therefore, compelling to find evidence in the narrative that discloses the lack of interest from the narrator regarding elements of such importance for the remaining story. This relationship between the narrator and the child characters functions as an argument to discuss the portrayals of childhood in the book.

Another difference between the narrative strategy in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is the element that functions as the reader´s perspective of the narrative.

A reason for this difference is the use of another narrative strategy that is connected with the narrator. The authors have used different approaches in their narratives concerning what element is focalized in the narrative.

Focalization

When the author decides to have a point of view centered in a specific element in the narrative, it signifies the importance of that element. Generally, it is common to refer the omniscient narrator as the *focalizer* because it is the storyteller who decides the perspective of the narrative (Herman & Vervaeck, 2019, p. 84). However, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* there is a dispute with this narrative tradition. Rowling has created a narrative that is mainly focalized through the protagonist, meaning that Harry Potter is the eyes which the readers sees through. For instance, the narrator enters the protagonist´s mind: "Something very painful was going on in Harry´s mind" (Rowling, 2017, p. 60). This quote displays the emphasis on Harry Potter in the narrative. From the chapter "The Keeper of Keys," ´the quote describes Harry´s reaction to hearing the truth about what happened to his parents and Voldemort for the first time. The narrator has the total knowledge and awareness of what is happening with the protagonist. The child reader has access to a child´s perspective in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* while in *Peter Pan* the plot is only viewed from the adult narrator´s perspective. The difference regarding perspective is evident between the selected children´s books.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* there are examples of the narrator explaining other character´s thoughts and perceptions of actions in the plot. Such as, in the first chapter, before the protagonist is introduced, the narrator follows the uncle, Mr. Dursley. "He had a funny feeling he´d had the same dream before" (Rowling, 2017, p. 20). The narrator is able to inform the reader about another character´s thoughts than the protagonist. It is important to state, however, that when Harry Potter is explicitly present in the narrative, the narrator focuses on the protagonist. As the author has created a narrative that is centered around Harry Potter, it displays the importance of the child protagonist in the narrative. This aspect of the narrative is an imperative factor to take into consideration when discussing the research questions guiding this thesis.

When the narrator functions as the focalizer, it creates an opportunity for the author to have a different presence of the narrative strategy compared to Rowling´s book. In *Peter Pan*, the narrator is, seemingly, like a character standing outside the plot functioning as the storyteller. It is an opinionated narrator that includes himself/herself in the story. Throughout the narrative, some utterances from the narrator discloses a personal aspect of the narrative strategy. S/he is seemingly characterized by the author. One approach to finding the presence of the narrator is by examining the utterances with the use of "I".

The use of first-singular personal pronoun

When the narrator is including himself/herself in the narrative by using the first-singular personal pronoun, it establishes a substantial foundation to examine the narrative strategy. Several utterances from the narrator where s/he is implementing himself/herself in the narrative discloses the awareness the narrator has of the story in *Peter Pan.* For instance, a quote from the chapter "The Never Bird," exposes the storyteller as a narrator: "I wish for the moment I could pretend that this were such a story, and say that Peter replied intelligently to the Never bird; but truth is best, and I want to tell you only what really happened" (Barrie, 2015, p. 86).

In the quote from "The Never Bird," Barrie has portrayed a narrator that has a superior knowledge of the story. This contradicts the utterance from the narrator where s/he explicitly states that s/he does not have the complete awareness of the narrative (Barrie, 2015, p. 113). There are ambiguous indications of the narrator in *Peter Pan* when examining the knowledge and awareness s/he has of the story. Other utterances from the storyteller signifies that the omniscient narrator in Barrie´s book has seemingly total control of the narrative:

> Will they reach the nursery in time? If so, how delightful for them, and we shall all breathe a sigh of relief, but there will be no story. On the other hand, if they are not in time, I solemnly promise that it will all come right in the end. (Barrie, 2015, p.33)

The narrator is communicating with the narratee and s/he is playing with the possibility that the story would not take place. The quote displays the power of the narrator, how s/he can control what is happening in the plot. When Barrie constructs a storyteller with such power over the narrative, and that this storyteller is an adult, it signifies the power of the adult

influence in Barrie´s narrative. When discussing how the narrator may disclose of the portrayals of childhood in the selected children´s books, it is essential to consider this aspect of the narrative strategy.

The narrator´s power over the story is related to the power of being the focalizer in the narrative, which discloses the difference between the storyteller in *Peter Pan* and the storyteller in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.* When comparing the narrators, it is evident that the authors have different approaches concerning the amount of attention the narrator is given in the narrative. Barrie has created a character standing outside the plot and is narrating the story to the narratee, he has allowed the adult storyteller to impact the narrative while Rowling has given the leading child character the main attention of the narrative. This contradicting aspect of the children´s books is imperative to discuss in light of the research questions.

4.2 The connection between the author and the child reader

As this thesis examines aspects that may expose the unique characteristics of the narrators in Rowling´s children´s book and the children´s literary classic by Barrie, an interesting element to consider is the narrative communication. By examining the communication between the narrator and the narratee, it is possible to understand how the author is communicating with the reader. With an understanding of narrative communication established in Chatman´s model (figure 2), this thesis concentrates on how this functions as an approach from the author to communicate with the reader of the book; it is a connection between the adult author and a child reader. In the analyses of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* several quotes contained such communication. By examining these, it reveals that the narrator includes the narratee by using various approaches.

Interaction with the narratee

The connection between the narrator and the narratee by the use of "*you*" is apparent in both children´s books. There is, however, a difference regarding how it is used by the authors to communicate with reader. The reason for this difference may be the different historical contexts in which the books were constructed, and the periods´ different traditions in styles of narrative. It seems that this presence of the narrator, as an indication of the presence of the author, is a distinctive feature that is more evident in Barrie´s *Peter Pan* compared to Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.*

While Rowling has created a narrative that is mainly centered around the protagonist and concentrates mainly on actions revolving that character, an element of Barrie´s narrative that is frequently in focus is the narrator´s voice. There are several examples of the narrator expressing personal thoughts throughout the narrative in *Peter Pan.* For instance, the storyteller is occasionally directly communicating with the narratee by referring to the second-singular pronoun: You. "If you could keep awake (but of course you can´t) you would see your own mother doing this, and you would find it very interesting to watch her" (Barrie, 2015, p. 5). The narrator is interacting with the narratee in this quote by referring to incidents that are relevant for the implied reader. In this quote from the first chapter, "Peter breaks through," the narrator explains how mothers are tidying up their children´s minds after they have gone to bed. The narrator refers to the implied reader as a child who is cared for by his/her mother.

An interpretation of the utterance from the storyteller is that the narrator has a prejudice towards children from the segment based on this quote, that s/he believes that children are fragile human beings that are not capable of doing what they might want do due to their lack of maturity and growth, and that children need to be supervised by a significant adult, the mother. The storyteller believes that the implied reader is a specific child that is not capable of staying awake after a specific time and would find it compelling to experience if it could keep awake. These are not necessarily negative prejudices. However, it may disclose that the narrator belittles the general child regarding their capabilities due to their biological development.

Even though Rowling has mainly focalized the narrative through the protagonist, the first chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* does not. Therefore, the chapter allows

the narrator to have a more explicit presence in the narrative. The presence of the narrator is present in the use of different pronouns, such as the possessive pronoun "our":

> When Mr. and Mrs. Dursely woke up in the dull, grey Tuesday our story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening all over the country. (Rowling, 2017, p.2)

The chapter "The Boy Who Lived," provides a foundation to discuss the selected children´s books as this is more similar to Barrie´s implementation of a storyteller. By examining utterances from this chapter, the narrator is present in the narrative without the protagonist; s/he is allowed a presence as the leading child character is not present to the same extent as the remaining narrative. Throughout the first pages of the book, the narrator seems to be including the implied reader in the narrative.

The introduction of the extended family of Harry Potter contains a reference to the narratee: "They were the last people **you´d** expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious…" (Rowling, 2017, p. 1, emphasis added). This is one of the first utterances from the narrator that the reader meets when reading Rowling´s narrative. The use of the second-singular personal pronoun may be an approach to develop communication between the narrator and the narratee. The narrator is referring to a specific "you", and there is no further indication that the narrator is insinuating communication with anyone other than the person reading the book.

Creating an alliance with the reader

The narrator also includes the reader in the narrative in the following quote from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*: "When Mr and Mrs Dursley woke up in the dull, grey Tuesday **our** story starts, there was nothing about the cloudy sky outside to suggest that strange and mysterious things would soon be happening all over the country" (Rowling, 2017, p. 2, emphasis added). The use of the possessive pronoun "our", functions as a direct address from the author to further establish a relationship between the narrator and the narratee. This commitment to creating a relationship with the narratee, who in this case is the real reader of the book, is intriguing to discuss regarding the research question because the implied reader of the book is a child.

As *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is an acknowledged children´s book, it is possible to state that the book is intended for a child reader and that the narrator is purposely communicating with a child in the narrative. There is evidence of a narrative communication in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, and when comparing the selected children´s books it is evident that the narrative communication in *Peter Pan* is more effortless to retrieve from the narrative. The storyteller of Barrie is at several occasions creating an alliance with the narratee.

For instance, the use of first-plural personal pronoun *we,* is implying a unison between the narrator and the narratee.

> Even now we venture into that familiar nursery only because its lawful occupants are on their way home; we are merely hurrying on in advance of them to see that their beds are properly aired, and that Mr and Mrs Darling do not go out for the evening. We are no more than servants. (Barrie, 2015, p. 140)

In the quote from the chapter "The Return Home," the narrator and reader are moving away from the child characters in their return home from Neverland. The reader is allowed to enter the narrative by joining the narrator. There is a unison between the narrator and the reader, and they are, according to the narrator, partaking in the plot as the narrator is describing the motion to travel to a new setting before the characters arrive back to the reality world from their voyage.

As the Darling children arrive, the narrator is expressing his/her attitude towards the Darling child and the welcome they will meet in their nursery room: "Why on earth should their beds be properly aired, seeing that they left them in such a thankless hurry?" (Barrie, 2015, p. 140). The narrator, in unison with the reader, is questioning the Darling children´s entitlement to have a warm welcome home from their parents. This exposes an apprehension towards the Darling children, which includes the protagonist of the story, Wendy Darling. The narrator in *Peter Pan* is an opinionated storyteller. Barrie has referred to the narrator as the author in one utterance from the chapter "The Return Home," "One thing I should like to do immensely, and this is to tell her, in the way authors do, that the children are coming back, that indeed they will be here on Thursday week," (Barrie, 2015, pp. 140-141).

The difference between the narrator in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* and *Peter Pan* is greatly established in the difference regarding their presence in the narrative and founded in the narrative communication in the books. The books have distinctive storytellers as Rowling has implemented an implicit presence of the narrator while Barrie has an explicitly present storyteller in his narrative.

4.3 An explicit storyteller versus an implicit narrator

As has been previously mentioned, children´s literature constructed in the Edwardian era often had an explicitly present narrator (Rose, 1984; Wall, 1991). This is evident in Barrie´s *Peter Pan.* Several aspects presented in the analyses of narrators disclose how the they differ concerning this characteristic of the narrative strategy. Additionally, there are certain elements that are essential to present further regarding the narrators in the selected children´s books. For instance, it is relevant to include utterances from the narrator in *Peter Pan* where the author has decided to implement the narrator as a character.

<u>The unambiguous narrator</u>

The narrator in *Peter Pan* is portrayed as a character that is outside the plot. There are, however, specific segments in the narrative where the storyteller is portrayed as a character similar to other characters in *Peter Pan.* For instance, in the chapter "The Return Home," in a dialog between the narrator and one of the characters, Mrs. Darling:

> "But, my dear madam, it is ten days till Thursday week; so that by telling you what´s what, we can save you ten days of unhappiness."

> "Yes, but at what cost! By depriving the children of ten minutes of delight."

> "Oh, if you look at it in that way!"

> "What other way is there in which to look at it?" (Barrie, 2015, p. 141)

Barrie has decidedly utilized the narrative strategy to express what may be the author´s opinions about the specific character. The narrator plays with the idea of informing Mrs. Darling about the children´s return from Neverland, and it is presumed that the mother would find this upsetting as she wants her children to enjoy the element of surprise by their return. The narrator continues in the narrative with the idea of spoiling the Darling children´s arrival:

> How delicious to spoil it all by breaking the news in advance; so that when they enter grandly Mrs. Darling may not even offer Wendy her mouth, and Mr. Darling may exclaim pettishly, "Dash it all, here are those boys again. However, we should het no thanks for this." (Barrie, 2015, p. 141)

The quote from the chapter "The Return Home" reveals the explicit presence of the narrator. This quote does not display anything specific related to the plot; it is merely an utterance from the narrator that discloses the complexity of the narrative strategy. This is a distinctive element of Barrie´s storyteller, that is incomparable to Rowling´s narrator. The narrator in *Peter Pan* is characterized with complexity, and there is a certain indication that the narrator is, in fact, the author of the book. The findings from the analysis display the narrator as a character that is outside the plot, and s/he is allowed to enter on certain occasions. For example, the narrator, expresses an ambiguous opinion about one specific character, Mrs. Darling:

> Now we look at her closely and remember the gaiety of her in the old days, all gone now just because she had lost her babes, I find I won´t be able to say nasty thing about her after all…Some like Peter best, and some like Wendy best, but I like her best. Suppose to make her happy, we whisper to her in her sleep that the brats are coming back…It is a pity we did it, for now she has started up, calling their names; and there is no one in the room but Nana. (Barrie, 2015, p. 143)

In this quote, the narrator is declaring his/her adoration towards the character. Yet, there are utterances from the narrator that exposes his/her unfavorable opinions of the same character. "You see, the woman had no proper spirit. I had meant to say extraordinarily nice things about her; but I despise her" (Barrie, 2015, p. 141). This is retrieved from the same chapter, it is, however, when the narrator plays with the idea of spoiling the children´s experience with returning home.

> You see, the woman had no proper spirit. I had meant to say extraordinarily nice things about her; but I despise her, and not one of them will I say now…For all the use we are to her, we might as well go back to the ship. However, as we are here now we may as well stay and look on. **That is all that we are, lookers-on.** Nobody really wants us. So let us watch and say jaggy-things, in the hope that some of them will hurt. (Barrie, 2015, p. 141, emphasis added)

Certain aspects of the quote expose intriguing and personal aspects of the narrator. It seems as if the narrator is offended by the lack of attention from the mother character: "Nobody really wants us" (Barrie, 2015, p. 141). This utterance from the narrator displays a complexity of the narrative strategy. Barrie has created a storyteller that connects with the child reader. There are several indications that the storyteller is an adult (Rose, 1984). Yet, s/he establishes a unison with the reader by using the plural objective pronoun *us.* The unison between the narrator and the child reader can be an approach from the author to entice the reader to continue reading the story. Regardless the motivation to implement such an utterance, the reference from the narrator displays an element in the narrator´s presence in the narrative. Further on, the narrator expresses a desire for the children to have an unpleasant return home. Additionally, other quotes display the narrator´s distinctive thoughts on children. It seems that several of the child characters are characterized as ignorant and cold by the narrator: "They took it for granted that if they went he would also go, but really they scarcely cared. Thus children are every ready, when novelty knocks, to desert their dearest ones" (Barrie, 2015, p. 102). The use of *children* may connect the segments with the narrator´s opinion about childhood, as it is a collective term that is not specified in any of the characters. It seems that the narrator, or the author, finds children to be egocentric and that they hurt their dearest ones without knowledge and awareness.

Barrie has created an opinionated narrator that is present throughout the narrative. There are, however, indications of an apparent presence of the narrator when the plot is set in the real world, specifically in the nursery of the Darling children. This division is likewise present in Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* which may reveal that the author is restricting herself from the remaining chapters and is solemnly focusing of the child protagonist.

The implicit narrator

As the narrator in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is not explicitly present as a character in the book, further analysis is needed to understand how the narrator may be in Rowling´s book. In particular parts of the first chapter, there seems to be a presence of the narrator that is implemented in the description of the plot. Rowling has, therefore, created a storyteller that is implicitly included in the narrative. "He yawned and turned over. It couldn´t affect *them*…**How very wrong he was."** (Rowling, 2017, p. 8, emphasis added). This quote from the part where Mr. and Mrs. Dursley are discussing some unusual happenings in relation to Mrs. Dursley´s sister, that is Harry Potter´s mother, and how this may be connected. The ellipses connecting the description of the plot and the utterance from the narrator establishes an informal aspect of narrative communication. Other examples of ellipses suggest that the narrator is knowingly communicating with the reader: "But then it struck Mr Dursley that this was probably some silly stunt – these people were obviously collecting for something…**yes, that would be it**" (Rowling, 2017, p. 3, emphasis added).

In Rowling´s book, as in Barrie´s, the narrator seeks communication with the child reader. Furthermore, the narrator uses a relatively informal approach: "Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, **thank you very much"** (Rowling, 2017, p. 1, emphasis added). The narrator refers to an implied reader in this segment with a direct address. It may be challenging to understand what the narrator intends with such a manner of communicating. One possible approach to understand this aspect of the narrator is that s/he is trying to initiate a friendly relationship with the narratee. Nevertheless, the informal communication exposes a presence of the narrator in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* which is relevant to discuss regarding the portrayals of childhood in Rowling´s book. Additional utterances disclose specific opinions from the narrator.

For example, in regard to Professor Dumbledore´s watch, the narrator states: "**It was a very odd watch.** It had twelve hands but no numbers; instead, little planets were moving around the edge" (Rowling, 2017, p. 12, emphasis added). There are, also, indications of the narrator´s personal opinion in the description of another vital character, Hagrid: "He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so *wild* – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face…" (Rowling, 2017, p. 13). This is a personal assumption of the narrator, and it reflects a subjective opinion from the narrator which will influence the reader´s perception of the character s/he refers to. When Rowling implements such utterances from the narrator,

she demonstrates the power of the storyteller concerning the regulation or coloring of the child reader´s interpretation of the narrative.

The narrator is implicitly present as Rowling has included a chapter that is not focalized through the protagonist. By including the first chapter without the focalization through Harry Potter, the author has the opportunity to incorporate utterances from the narrator that may disclose specific characteristics of the storyteller. As it has been stated prior in this analysis, it seems possible to state that the storyteller in Rowling´s book is an omniscient narrator with superior knowledge of all aspects of the narrative. Simultaneously, there are aspects of the utterances that display communication between the narrator and the implied reader.

Rowling has created a narrator that has an informal approach when communicating with the reader. This communication in an informal manner may expose intriguing aspects of the portrayals of childhood as the implied reader is presumably a child. For example, that the narrator and the child are equal as the narrator is communicating with the child reader in a friendly manner and that there are no indications of a superiority in the narrators approach towards the narratee in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, which is an imperative aspect regarding the portrayals of childhood. Additionally, Rowling allows the narrator to expose his/her personal opinion regarding two meaningful characters for the protagonist: Professor Dumbledore and Hagrid.

There is a personal aspect of the narrator that is present in the narrative. Rather than revealing specific characteristics, the opinion discloses the importance of two characters that the protagonist develops a close relation to in the wizarding world. Nevertheless, the narrator in Rowling´s book is encouraging the reader to partake in the narrative by communicating directly with the reader with the use of different personal and possessive pronouns. S/he is allowing the implied reader to experience the narrative in an unproblematic manner. Furthermore, the narrator in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is communicating in a specific manner that establishes a friendly relation with the reader. This discloses an essential aspect of the narrative strategy as it is arguably an indication of the author´s presence in the narrative. The narrator exposes Rowling´s attitude towards children as she has created an adult storyteller that is loyal and attentive towards the narratee, and therefore the child reader.

4.4 The Storytellers and the portrayals of childhood

There are three aspects of the narrative strategy that are relevant to include in the discussion of the books´ portrayal of childhood. The elements that are imperative to accentuate are: 1) The focal point in the narrative, 2) the presence of the storyteller, and 3) the communication with the child reader.

The distinctiveness regarding the focal point in the narratives in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* discloses an aspect of the portrayals of childhood. This exemplifies the differing elements´ importance in the narrative. Being that Rowling has centered her narrative around the leading child character, and she has, therefore, expressed the significance of children in her book. This is a contradicting aspect of the narrative strategy between the selected children´s books. In *Peter Pan* there is no specific focalized element in the narrative. There is, however, an utterance from the narrator that display the preference of elements in the narrative. S/he unequivocally expresses that the child characters, including the protagonist, is not the priority of the storyteller. Rowling and Barrie have portrayed the importance of the child characters in two different manners. This distinctive approach in the narrative reveals the relationship between the narrator and the child characters, and a reason for this distinctiveness is the narrative style that belongs to the books´ contemporary society.

Barrie has constructed a narrative where the child characters are merely internal strategies used to convey a story, while Rowling has created a narrative with a child as its core element. A tendency that is apparent in contemporary children´s books is the importance of a child character. The child protagonist is essential to the narrative and has an active role in the plot (Montgomery & Watson, 2009). This is prominent in Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, as Harry Potter is the foundation for the book series. When comparing the focal point of the narratives, it is evident that Rowling has aimed more attention towards the child character compared to Barrie. For he has chosen to covey a story about the voyage to Neverland that is greatly founded in utterances from the storyteller.

The storyteller in *Peter Pan* is, to a greater extent, present in the narrative compared to the narrator in Rowling´s book. As Wall (1991) stated, it is a common aspect from the Golden Age of Children´s literature period to have an exclusively visual narrator in the story. This visual presence establishes a foundation analyze in order to understand who the narrator may be in these books. For instance, Rose (1984) discussed the narrator´s complexity in Barrie´s

book due to its presence. She considers the narrator´s characterization, and states that it is possible to assume that the narrator is an adult. "An adult – clearly – since the speaker has the hindsight of one who is no longer a child, who can qualify ´children´ with the ´all´ of a total wisdom" (Rose, 1984, p. 67). The storyteller in Barrie´s book has been allowed attention to the extent that s/he may be categorized as a character outside the plot. Given that the narrator is present to such extent, and with a foundation in Rose´s (1984) statement, one can argue that it is an adult functioning as one of the core elements in Barrie´s work.

There is a contradiction between the selected children´s books concerning the core element of the narratives. Rowling has emphasized the child in her book with her focalization on the protagonist, while Barrie has decided to have a substantial presence of an adult throughout his narrative. This contradiction is a result of the different historical context the books were constructed in, and it displays how the books reflect their society, the fin de siècle- and the contemporary era. Furthermore, there is a uniqueness in the books regarding how the narrator communicates with the narratee.

The communication between the narrator and the narratee can be understood as the authors´ approach to communicating with the child reader (Chatman, 1980; O'Sullivan, 2011). An examination of this communication can, therefore, be applied to the portrayals of childhood as it is a "conversation" that involves a child. The narrative communication analysis, based on the utterances from the narrator, displays two distinctive approaches to the child reader. Barrie has created a narrator that is patronizing the child, where s/he belittles the child and creates a disproportion between the adult narrator and the child narratee. This is in divergence with the narrative communication in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* Rowling has implemented friendly and informal communication between her narrator and the narratee. It is, therefore, appropriate to claim Rowling is trying to connect with the child reader to a greater extent compared to Barrie, who is patronizing the general child.

The analysis of the narrator discloses that the narrative strategy contains evidence of how the narrative may reflect the contemporary society of the book. Three aspects of the storyteller is displayed in this thesis, and it is evident that an examination of the narrative strategy has the potential to indicate the portrayals of childhood in the selected children´s books. However, it is necessary to conduct further analysis to establish a more significant foundation to discuss the research questions. A narrative strategy that has will enrich this foundation is the setting, and an analysis will be presented subsequently.

5. An analysis of the setting

This thesis will examine the setting as an indication of the authors´ interpretation of childhood. By examining the narrative strategy in light of how it may reveal aspects of the authors´ perception of childhood, it may function as a specific approach to discussing the selected books concerning the research questions guiding this thesis.

<u>Setting as a narrative strategy</u>

The selected children´s books for this thesis use similar approaches regarding the narrative strategy. Both books operate with two separate settings: one based in the real world and one based in a fantasy world. As the analysis of the setting is substantially founded in the relation between the realistic world and the fantasy world, it seems necessary to declare what this implies regarding Barrie´s and Rowling´s narratives. The distinctiveness between these settings is based on Todorov´s (1975) explanation of the fundamental aspects of fantasy, as the fantastical elements provokes an *uncertainty* with the reader (p. 25). The fantasy world is, therefore, the setting that provokes the reader´s imagination, and the realistic setting is the location that has similar features to the "real world" – meaning the contemporary societies of the books. The separation of two worlds in the narrative, where one is based on realistic components and the other world contains fantastical elements, it establishes a two-dimensional world to which the protagonist must relate.

By analyzing the correlation between the separate locations in light of Bal´s (2017) use of the term *spatial opposition,* it is possible to examine the structure of Barrie´s and Rowling´s narratives in how they oppose the realistic location with the fantasy world. The relation between the separate worlds are contradicting in the selected children´s books, as Barrie has constructed two distinctive worlds in his narrative while Rowling has created a two-dimensional relation where the worlds sometimes intertwine. By examining the settings based on Bal´s (2017) theory, it is possible to understand "the principle of structure. For instance, high- low, related to favourable – unfavourable, fortunate – unfortunate" (p. 184). This discloses aspects of the narrative that are essential to examine, as the books use a child protagonist that must travel from the 'real' world to the fantasy world in the beginning of the narratives.

Looking further into how the protagonist relates to the fantasy world and examining the understanding of home in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, may expose aspects of the portrayals of childhood. Reimer (2011) explains the importance of examining the understanding of home in his chapter in *Keyword of Children´s Literature,* by proclaiming that there are several understandings of the term used in children´s literature. To understand how the authors have interpreted *home* in their narratives, it is necessary to analyze the segments describing the real world and the fantasy world. This will create a foundation to discuss the relationship between the real world and the fantasy world, which may also give information about how the protagonists relate to the different settings. Furthermore, this will facilitate a discussion of the leading child characters´ perception of home in the different children´s books.

5.1 The Two-Dimensional Worlds

Given that both books operate within a realistic setting and a fantastical world, it is imperative to compare this aspect in regard to answering the research questions:

(1) How do *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* cohere and differ regarding the selection of narrative strategies?

(2) How may the differing narrative strategies in these books reflect different cultural/historical perspectives on childhood?

An analysis of the relationship between the two distinctive worlds and an examination of the elements of fantasy for how they reflect reality, will reveal imperative findings concerning the discussion of the main research question: *What are the similarities and differences regarding the portrayals of children between* Peter Pan *and* Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*?* It is possible to analyze the fantastical elements in a narrative as a reflection of the author´s reality (Le Guin, 1973/1979, referred to in Baker, 2011; Lloyd Alexander, 1985, referred to in Baker, 2011; Hunt, 2005). There are apparent similarities between the books as they both incorporate two worlds in the narrative and the protagonist goes through a voyage that begins and ends in the realistic setting. However, there are specific characteristics of the fantastical

setting that reveal the uniqueness of each book. These characteristics will be presented in the following section. One difference concerning the setting is how the author has introduced the fantasy world in his/her narrative. Given that the author decided to transport his/her protagonist to the fantasy world, it is appropriate to understand the complexity of the fantastical setting concerning what it may convey regarding the portrayals of childhood. One approach to understanding the author´s intention with implementing a fantasy world is to examine the introduction and description of the world the protagonist travels to and where s/he matures as a character.

The introduction and description of the fantasy world

It has been stated prior in the analysis of the narrator that the first chapter in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is dedicated to establishing the foundation for the story of Harry Potter, and Rowling does not introduce the protagonist before the end of that chapter. The focus at the beginning of Rowling´s narrative is devoted to disclosing the relationship between the realistic world, set in London City and a village close to the capital, and the Wizarding world. Rowling indicates the presence of fantastical elements when the protagonist´s uncle commutes to work.

> It was a few seconds before Mr Dursley realised that the man was wearing a violet cloak. He didn´t seem at all upset at being almost knocked to the ground. On the contrary, his face split into a wide smile and he said in a squeaky voice that made passers-by stare: ´Don't be sorry, my dear sir, for nothing could upset med today! Rejoice, for You-Know-Who has gone at last! Even Muggles like yourself should be celebrating, this happy, happy day! (Rowling, 2017, p. 5)

The quote displays how the two distinctive worlds are occasionally intertwined. In the description of Mr. Dursley´s commute to work, there seems to be references to the Wizarding world that may not be apparent for the reader. Specific terms derived from the fantasy world, such as Muggles, are not explained for the reader until later in the narrative. A Muggle is the label of the non-magical creatures in the Wizarding World (Rowling, 2017). Another element from the fantasy world is the reference to You-Know-Who, which is clarified in the chapter "The Keeper of Keys" when Hagrid retrieved Harry Potter to travel to the Wizarding World.

Mr. Dursley's ignorance that the man in the purple cloak is a wizard signifies that the Muggles are a group of creatures lacking knowledge and awareness of the totality of their universe. When Rowling creates this division between the people from the distinctive worlds, she signifies that the non-magical people are unfortunate compared to the magical creatures. This connected with Bal´s (2017) theory on spatial opposition can signify that Rowling intends the fantasy world as a more favorable setting.

The Wizarding world is where most of the plot takes place, and there are indications that the protagonist prefers the Wizarding world over the realistic setting. This will, however, be made clear when examining the meaning of home. There is a two-dimensionality in Rowling´s narrative. She constructs a literary world easily recognizable for the implied reader, for instance that the narrative begins in a realistic setting familiar to Rowling´s contemporary society. What Rowling has not included in her narrative is, however, an explicit description of the Wizarding world, similar to Barrie´s expressive characterization of Neverland. It seems as the authors have different intentions behind their creation of fantasy worlds.

While Rowling had implemented the description and indication of another dimension to her story, Barrie has chosen to include an innovative introduction of the fantasy world. It is the storyteller´s task to describe the fantasy world in *Peter Pan.* The description has original features that display the absurdity of the magical island:

> for the Neverland is always more or less an island, with astonishing splashes of color here and there, and coral reefs and rakish looking craft in the offing, and savages and lonely lairs, and gnomes who are mostly tailors, and caves through which a river runs, and princes with six elder brothers, and a hut fast going to decay, and one very small lady with a hooked nose. (Barrie, 2015, pp. 5-6)

As the narrator illustrates Neverland in *Peter Pan,* it is evident that this is an imaginative world. It is established that it is an island that seems compelling for a child to visit. There are fantastical elements on this island, and there is an aspect of nonsense in the description of the fantastical setting. The characterization of the island creates a separation between the nursery and the magical land the Darling children visit with help from Peter Pan. It is apparent in Barrie´s narrative that there is no close relation between the two worlds. Neverland is rather characterized as a separate sphere. It was common in children´s literature from the Victorian and Edwardian era to separate the children, allowing them to live without adult influence

(Gubar, 2009; Sorby, 2011). Barrie has created a fantasy world that is an *island,* displaying a similar distance from ordinary life that Victorian and Edwardian children would have incurred. Furthermore, the description of the island with its absurdity, confirms that this is a place for children where they are allowed to act like children. Neverland is portrayed as an island that has features similar to fairy tales, and as these are commonly intended for children, one may argue that the island is designed to be tempting for children.

The authors have different approaches portraying the fantasy world in their narratives: Rowling has portrayed a two-dimensional world in close relation, while Barrie has explicitly described a magical island separate from the realistic setting. Such findings are relevant concerning the research questions guiding this thesis, as the child protagonist must relate to this. Further analysis discloses what this relation to the two separate worlds conveys about the portrayals of childhood in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* Given that both books contain a voyage between the different settings, it is essential to analyze the protagonists´ journey from reality to fantasy.

The travel from London to the fantasy world

As stated, elements from the fantasy world are allowed entrance into the realistic world in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. The fact that Mr. Dursley, a Muggle, does not understand that the man that he meets is a magical creature discloses the spatial opposition in the narrative. The wizards are superior to the non-magical creatures as they know and understand the totality of their universe. In Barrie´s narrative there are only two individuals, Peter Pan and Tinkerbell, who have the ability to wander between the two distinctive worlds. It is Peter Pan that decides who is allowed to travel to the magical island. The element of travel between the different worlds, meaning the description of the journey, has the potential to disclose features of the narrative strategy relevant to how they cohere and differ.

Barrie has dedicated the chapter "The Flight," to describing the journey from the nursery to Neverland. To partake in this travel, one must have the ability to fly. According to Peter Pan, one can fly by thinking happy thoughts, and with help from a sprinkle of fairy dust. The necessity of fairy dust explains the appearance of Tinkerbell in the realistic setting. An essential element of Barrie´s narrative is Peter Pan. "Second to the right, and straight on till

morning" (Barrie, 2015, p. 34) in the direction Peter and the Darling children undertake the challenging journey to Neverland.

> They recalled with contempt that not so long ago they had thought themselves fine fellows for being able to fly around a room. Not long ago. But how long ago? They were flying over the sea before this thought began to disturb Wendy seriously. John though it was their second sea and their third night. (Barrie, 2015, p. 34)

The length of the travel from the nursery to the island is unclear, as the Darling children are unaware of how long they had flown. It is a dangerous journey; the Darling children are tired and have not been able to sleep for the entire travel. Michael, the youngest of the Darling children, is near drowning at one point and must be saved by Peter (Barrie, 2015, p. 35). The characterization of the journey indicates that the two settings are very much separate, signifying the intention of Peter Pan retrieving the children. The Darling children must travel a long distance to be relieved from the necessities of ordinary life and adult influence. This aspect of the narrative is unique in the comparison of the selected children´s books. The authors have, seemingly, different intentions with transferring their child protagonist to a fantasy world.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* wizards are allowed to enter the realistic setting, while the "Muggles" are unaware of the fantasy world. Rowling constructs a special relationship between the two worlds in her narrative by signifying that elements from the fantasy world are allowed to be present in the realistic world. With the knowledge and awareness that the Wizards have, it is possible to navigate between the worlds. When Hagrid embarks on the task of preparing Harry Potter for his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the close relationship between the worlds is apparent.

> They passed book shops and music stories, hamburger bars and cinemas, but nowhere that looked as if it could sell you a magic wand. This was just an ordinary street full of ordinary people. Could there really be piles of wizard gold buried miles beneath them? Were there really shops that sold spell books and broomsticks? Might this not all be some huge joke that Dursleys had no sense of humour, he might have though so; yet somehow, even though everything Hagrid had told him so far was unbelievable, Harry couldn´t help trusting him. (Rowling, 2017, p. 73)

The narrator reveals Harry´s inner thoughts as he follows Hagrid to the portal accessing the Wizarding world. The element of focalization is evident in the quote, specifically in the utterance from the narrator: "Could there really be piles of wizard gold buried miles beneath them?" (Rowling, 2017, p. 73). The reader is allowed access to Harry´s thoughts, and it is the narrator who presents this to the reader. Furthermore, Harry realizes that there is another dimension to the universe he knows. This is problematic for the child protagonist to comprehend, as he describes the experience as *unbelievable* which correlates with Todorov´s (1975) comprehension of the creation of a fantasy world. Hagrid takes Harry to the Leaky Cauldron, a pub located in London City. The method of travel Rowling uses in her narrative is *portals*. Harry uses several portals to leave the realistic setting: the first portal is in the backyard of the Leaky Cauldron, and another portal is platform 9 ¾ located at King´s Cross Station, the portals located in London City (Rowling, 2017). The difference concerning the travel between the two worlds in the selected children´s books is greatly founded in the relation between the worlds. Rowling has created a close relationship by using portals that the child wizards are allowed to use on their own, while Barrie has constructed a fantasy world that restrains the children as they need help to leave the island.

An utterance from the narrator discloses an interesting aspect of the portal at the Leaky Cauldron: "In fact, Harry had the most peculiar feeling that only he and Hagrid could see it" (Rowling, 2017, p. 73). As Harry discovers one of the portals to the Wizarding world, it discloses an essential aspect of the character: Harry is a magical creature that has the ability and is allowed to enter the fantasy world. Rowling has constructed a universe that operates with two distinct races: the non-magical and the magical; the Muggles and the Wizards. It is only one of the races, the Wizards, that is allowed entrance to the fantasy world. There is a similar division in *Peter Pan* concerning which characters are allowed the opportunity to visit Neverland. Both books operate with a distinctive group of characters that are allowed entrance in the fantasy world. The similarity and difference regarding the selection of characters allowed to travel to the fantasy setting have the potential to reveal how the narrative strategy reflects the books´ historical context.

5.2 Who is allowed to enter the fantasy world?

The selection of characters allowed entrance to the fantasy world is an aspect of both authors´ narratives that is relevant for the main research question: *What are the similarities and differences regarding the portrayals of children between* Peter Pan *and* Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone? By examining this and applying the findings regarding the travel to the fantasy world, it is possible to understand the intention of implementing a fantasy world in the narratives. This will be discussed in light of the theoretical background of this thesis. Given that elements of the fantasy genre have the potential to disclose the authors´ interpretation of their reality in how they have constructed the fantasy world (Le Guin, 1973/1979, referred to in Baker, 2011; Lloyd Alexander, 1985, referred to in Baker, 2011; Hunt, 2005), it is imperative to attempt to understand why the authors have selected their specific characters and what they may reveal regarding the reflection of the contemporary societies and their portrayals of childhood.

The fantastic setting is arguably the favorable setting in coherence with the understanding of spatial oppositions (Bal, 2017). The purpose of the realistic setting is to establish a foundation for the narrative. For instance, the introduction of the protagonist and the main antagonist (Peter Pan in *Peter Pan* and Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*) happens in the realistic setting. However, given that a specific selection of characters is allowed to enter the eminent location it displays their importance in the narrative. It, therefore, calls for further analysis of which characters as allowed to enter the fantasy world in order to understand its complexity.

<u>The selected ones: Children and wizards</u>

The fact that the child protagonist is allowed entrance into the fantasy world in both books, indicates that this element of the narrative has the potential to reveal their portrayal of childhood. A correlation between the two books remains: The author selects the characters who journey to the fantasy world in different manners and for their different characteristics. As stated previously in the analysis of setting, in Barrie´s narrative, there is one character that has the authority to decide who can visit Neverland.

According to the narrator, it is Peter who persuades the Darling children to follow him to Neverland, and he does this by luring them (Barrie, 2015, p. 28). It was initially Peter´s intention only to retrieve Wendy, however, she would not partake on the journey without her brothers. It is evident in Barrie´s narrative that it is only the children who join Peter in the flight to the magical island, as seen in the last chapter of the narrative, "When Wendy Grew Up":

> And then one night came the tragedy. It was the spring of the year, and the story had been told for the night, and Jane was asleep in her bed. 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 nursary; and while she sat darning she heard a crow. Then the window blew open as of old, and Peter dropped on the floor. (Barrie, 2015, p. 156)

The narrator refers to a tragedy, and s/he is narrating the story of when Wendy and Peter must acknowledge that Wendy is no longer suitable for the journey to Neverland. It is instead Jane, Wendy´s child, who accompanies Peter on his return to the island. This aspect of the narrative displays the separation of children from the adults that was common in Victorian and Edwardian children´s literature (Gubar, 2009; Sorby, 2011).

It is only the children that Peter Pan selects who may enter Neverland. This discloses an imperative aspect of the child characters in Barrie´s narrative: They have a uniqueness that permits them to travel to the fantasy world constructed by the author. Barrie is separating the "Untouched Other," meaning that he is removing the child that is not yet socialized away from the society that will harness the innocence of childhood and transporting them to an island where they can live an unaltered life (Gubar, 2009). This is an imperative finding concerning how specific elements of the narrative strategy reflect their contemporary society, and how it displays distinctive aspects of how childhood is portrayed in *Peter Pan.* When comparing this aspect of the setting in the selected children´s books, it is apparent that the selection of characters allowed to enter the Wizarding world in Rowling´s narrative exposes specific aspects of the narrative strategy that may reflect her contemporary society.

In the chapter "Diagon Alley," the main focus in the narrative is to characterize the relationship between the realistic setting and the fantasy world. Additionally, it reveals that the only characters allowed entrance are the magical creatures. Harry learns and comprehends that he is indeed a wizard. It is evident in Rowling´s narrative that wizards are the selected

group of characters that can enter the fantasy world. This group of characters is unique, and they have special powers and an awareness of the universe that distinguishes them from the non-magical creatures, the Muggles. For example, Hagrid can open a portal in the backyard of the Leaky Cauldron that leads to the prominent street in the Wizarding world: Diagon Alley:

> ´Three up … two across … ´ he muttered. ´Right, stand back, Harry. ´ He tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella. The brick he had touched quivered – it wriggled – in the middle, a small hole appeared – it grew wider and wider – a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight. ´Welcome, ´ said Hagrid, ´ to Diagon Alley. ´ (Rowling, 2017, p. 76)

There is a separation of distinctive groups of characters in Rowling´s narrative, where one group is portrayed as superior to the other. It is, therefore, essential to examine this division of the two races in Rowling´s narrative as it is an imperative aspect of the fantastical setting. The magical creatures are the selected characters, and the narrator, seemingly, finds them more preferable than the non-magical creatures which displays a spatial opposition in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. Rowling has constructed a universe that consists of two races, the Wizards and the Muggles. The fact that one is superior to the other may be a reflection of Rowling´s contemporary society in that she has implemented a restriction between two races, the Muggles and the wizards, which calls to mind 20th century discussion of racial distinction. Later in the book series Rowling has constructed a battle in the Wizarding world that portrays this aspect of racism in her narrative. Voldemort believed that the Wizarding world belongs to the pure-blood, and he intends to remove the wizards that does not correspond with his ideology (Rowling, 2007).

Contemporary children´s literature tends to expose the child reader to the social concerns the modern society endures (Montgomery & Watson, 2009; Thacker, 2012a) This is evident in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, as it has been stated that Rowling has included the conflict of racism in her narrative (Korhonen, 2016). Although the first book of the Harry Potter series may contain substantial evidence of such social concern, it is relevant to include the entirety of Rowling´s work when discussing how the book may reflect its contemporary historical context. Korhonen (2016) has featured Hagrid´s utterance which displays the conflict between the magical and the non-magical creatures. When retrieving Harry from the Dursleys, Hagrid expresses his opinion of the non-magical creatures: "I´d like ter see a great

Muggle like you stop him," (Rowling, 2017, p. 57). There seems to be uneasiness in how Hagrid perceives the non-magical creatures. Rowling has implemented the matter of social conflict in her narrative. This functions as a reflection of the society Rowling constructed her story in, and it displays how elements of fantasy can expose the author´s interpretation of reality.

The analysis of the setting discloses the importance of the narrative strategy in the discussion of how society is reflected in the narrative and how the books portray childhood. The authors have constructed two unique fantasy worlds, and the analysis focusing on setting discloses the characteristics of these worlds in connection with the characters that are allowed to enter the fantastical setting. Subsequently, there is another element that must be taken into consideration, as it is a prominent aspect of children´s literature (Reimer, 2011). Both protagonists return to the realistic setting; it is essential to compare how the authors have implemented the meaning of home in their narrative.

5.3 Reality versus fantasy

Both protagonists return to the realistic setting at the end of the narratives, which is a "central organizing principle of genre of children´s literature" (Reimer, 2011, p. 107). Both voyages begin at *home*: The protagonist leaves a familiar setting and partakes in a journey that allows the character to develop as an individual. The voyage ends in the same location as the beginning; the child protagonist returns to the place referred to as *home*. The structure of the narrative in the selected children´s books is similar; the intention and significance of the realistic setting diverge in Rowling´s and Barrie´s stories. The narratives reveal different understandings of the term 'home'. While Rowling has created a narrative where the understanding of home is greatly founded in the protagonist´s close relations, it is evident in *Peter Pan* that home is anchored in a domestic place, which is the reference of *the nursery* in Barrie´s narrative.

The nursery room has a significant meaning in Barrie´s narrative. It is, arguably, a representation of the biological phase *childhood* and how the Edwardian society perceived it.

The nursery is a room that belongs to children, and it is apparent in *Peter Pan* that this room allows the children to be childlike. The majority of the plot set in the realistic setting takes place in the nursery, and it is through the nursery window that the Darling children both leave their parents and return to after their journey to Neverland. One of the parents or the nurse Nana, the Newfoundland dog, is nearly always present in the nursery, which illustrates the continuous appearance of adult influence, or an escort. As a result, the Darling children must acknowledge their position as the inferior individuals to the supervisors of the nursery. Barrie decides to transport the Darling children away from the domination of an overseer, and with this he challenges their understanding of home. There are specific parts of the narrative that display the Darling children´s relation to *home* when they are on the magical island.

> As time wore on did she think much about the beloved parents she had left behind her?...But I am afraid that Wendy did not really worry about her father and mother; she was absolutely confident that they would always keep the window open for her to fly back by, and this gave her complete ease of mind. What did disturb her at times was that John remembered his parents vaguely only, as people he had once known, while Michael was quite willing to believe that she was really his mother. These things scared her a little, and nobly anxious to her duty, she tried to fix the old life in their minds by setting them examinations papers on it, as like as possible to thee ones she used to do at school." (Barrie, 2015 p. 68)

Several segments from this quote from the chapter "The Home Under the Ground" disclose the understanding of home in *Peter Pan.* Firstly, the relationship between a child and its parents is represented in this quote. "Wendy did not really worry about her father and mother, she was absolutely confident that they would always keep the window open for her to fly back by, and this gave her complete ease of mind" (Barrie, 2015, p. 68). The trust in parents is an essential aspect of Wendy´s understanding of home. She acknowledges that she is away from home; however, Wendy is aware that she and her brothers will be welcomed when they return to their home. She is capable of thinking this way because she knows that her parents are waiting in the nursery for their return.

The Darling home is a safe home for the children due to loving parents, which is an essential aspect of the understanding of home in Barrie´s book. This apprehension of home connected with Bal´s (2017) theory of spatial oppositions establishes a foundation to conclude that the realistic setting has a higher status. In the description of the term, adjectives such as

"familiar–strange, safe–unsafe, and accessible–inaccessible are oppositions often encountered" (Bal, 2017, p. 184) are used to explain the diversity of different settings. The realistic setting in *Peter Pan* is considered the safest and most familiar setting for the protagonist. This correlates with the understanding of home.

Such evidence from the narrative reveals that the portrayal of childhood in *Peter Pan* is greatly founded in the traditional perception of home (Reimer, 2011). The child may be taken away from the socialization by traveling to Neverland. However, there is an expectation that the children will return, and that the parents, from whom they have been deprived by Peter Pan, are faithfully lingering by the window for their children to return to their rightful place. Even though Barrie has transported the child away, he also returns the child to its home at the end of the narrative. By following a traditional narrative structure, where the protagonist is traveling throughout the narrative and returning home, Barrie emphasizes the traditional meaning of home as the child´s rightful place (Reimer, 2011). By examining the quote from "The Home Under the Ground," furthermore, it is evident that there are additional indications of the perception of the home, which separates Wendy from her brothers.

An essential aspect of the quote is that Wendy´s brothers forget their true home during their visit to Neverland. It is Wendy, who is perceived as the mother on the island, trying to help her brothers remember their parents by providing them questions about their home in London City. By using methods that she has learned herself, Wendy is testing her brothers´ memory of their true home. The narrator then informs the reader about Wendy´s relation to home during her stay on the island: "By the way, the questions were written in the past tense. What was the colour of Mother´s eyes, and so on. Wendy, you see, had been forgetting, too" (Barrie, 2015, p. 69). This displays how the fantastical setting affects the Darling children´s perception of the home.

The protagonist tries to remember her parents, and it is the location that challenges her efforts to commemorate *home*. It is the nursery and the parent´s presence that is perceived as 'home' in Wendy´s perspective. This correlates with Reimer´s (2011) definition of the term, in that Wendy associates home with members of her family, as well as the placement of the nursery. This is located in the realistic setting in Barrie´s narrative, and it displays Wendy´s travel to Neverland as a journey where she matures as a character. Furthermore, it is the protagonist that convinces her brothers and the Lost boys to return home, or to the realistic setting, when she tells the story of their mother waiting for them in the nursery (Barrie, 2015, pp. 97-99).

This displays the importance of a motherly figure in the comprehension of home in Barrie´s narrative. The Darling children, along with the Lost boys, return to their waiting family, and it is a happy occasion for the children. The protagonist in Rowling´s book experiences the opposite when returning to the realistic setting.

There is a difference in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* concerning what role and identity the protagonist has in different settings. In the realistic setting, Harry Potter is merely a relative of the Dursley family, and he is perceived as an outsider by the non-magical creatures. The quote from the chapter "The Man with the Two Faces," reveals the contradicting perceptions of the character in the different settings:

> ´I´ll need something to look forward to.´ People jostled them as they moved forward towards the gateway back to the Muggle world. Some of them called:
>
> ´Bye Harry!´
>
> ´See you, Potter.´
>
> ´Still famous,´ said Ron, grinning at him.
>
> ´Not where I´m going, I promise you´ said Harry. (Rowling, 2017, p. 331)

The non-magical creatures perceive Harry Potter as *strange.* The distance between Harry Potter and his extended family throughout the narrative is arguably greater after Harry discovers that he is a wizard. The relationship creates a miserable environment for Harry Potter, and it is evident that the protagonist prefers the magical setting over the realistic setting where he must live with a family that does not understand him. This contradict the relationship between Wendy Darling and her parents, which creates a safe refuge for her and her brothers in the nursery. Barrie and Rowling have implemented two counter relationships between their protagonist and their family relations. O´Reilly (2005) accentuates the relationship between Harry Potter and the extended family, connects this with the two-dimensional structure in the narrative:

> The possibility of the magical world, and Harry´s contact with it, therefore, makes his uncle and aunt feel out of control – they fear being invaded by something they do not understand and cannot restrain. This again suggest that the magical world may represent the world of childhood itself. (O´Reilly, 2005, p. 165)

The difference between the two settings, and Harry´s relation to these worlds is displayed in the last chapter of Rowling´s book. When Harry Potter must return to the realistic setting, as Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is closed for the summer vacation, it is apparent that the protagonist returns to an undesirable environment.

> It was Uncle Vernon, still purple-faced, still moustached, still looking furious at the nerve of Harry, carrying an owl in a cage in a station full of ordinary people. Behind him stood Aunt Petunia and Dudley, looking terrified at the very sight of Harry. (Rowling, 2017, p. 332)

The perception of the protagonist in the realistic setting contradicts the identity of Harry Potter in the Wizarding world. An essential aspect of the protagonist is that he had seemingly demolished the evil wizard that had dominated the Wizarding world when he was a baby, and he was, therefore, renowned as the Boy Who Lived by all wizards. Harry Potter is famous in the Wizarding world, and most of the magical creatures admire the protagonist. Harry establishes friendships in the fantasy setting. Additionally, he learns that Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is where his parents were educated and where they met. Throughout the narrative, Harry gains a sense a belonging at Hogwarts as he is acknowledged and admired by the other wizards. Hogwarts is perceived as Harry´s true home, as he is accepted for what he truly is; a wizard with great potential.

The selected children´s books cohere concerning how the protagonists perceive homes, as both determine home as a place where they are surrounded by people with whom they have a close relation. However, there is a difference regarding who the protagonists regard as close relations. In *Peter Pan,* it seems that the mother, representing family, is a vital element of *home*. Even though Wendy tries to fulfill this role in Neverland, her effort is not adequate. She, along with her brothers and the Lost boys, must return to the real mother waiting in the nursery. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* the circumstances are different, as Harry Potter is an orphan. He does not perceive the extended family as a fundamental aspect of home, it is rather the sense of belonging and a feeling of acceptance that establishes Harry´s understanding of home. This is in the fantastical setting, so the structure "home-away-home" does not necessarily apply in Rowling´s book as it does in Barrie´s narrative. The analysis of the setting and the perception of home discloses that even though there is a similar pattern concerning the protagonists' journeys in the narrative, the books contain contradicting comprehensions of the term *home*.

As the protagonists are children, the placement of home discloses compelling aspects of the childhood portrayal. As the books have distinctive placements of home in different settings; *Peter Pan* in the realistic setting and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* in the fantasy world, is displays how the books reflects two distinctive societies. This examination of the comprehension of home in the selected children´s books creates a foundation to discuss the portrayal of childhood in correlation with the different settings in the narrative.

5.4 The child in the fantasy world

The ways in which the fantasy world is constructed can offer a window into how the authors view both childhood and, therefore, reflect the authors´ contemporary society perception of childhood (Le Guin, 1973/1979, referred to in Baker, 2011; Lloyd Alexander, 1985, referred to in Baker, 2011; Hunt, 2005). The discussion of the research question is substantially founded in the child´s relation to the fantasy world as this has potential to reveal the portrayals of childhood. The elements that establish this discussion are: 1) The setting as a reflection of the books´ contemporary society and 2) the intention behind implementing a fantasy world in the narrative.

The division between the realistic and fantasy world differs between Barrie´s and Rowling´s book, and the travel between the worlds is imperative to feature in this discussion. In *Peter Pan,* there is a long journey the Darling children must travel to arrive at the island, and Peter Pan must escort them. This corresponds with the established romantic perspective of childhood that is associated with Barrie´s contemporary society. Barrie has constructed a world where the children are allowed to act without adult regulation, and this world is far away from the realistic world. The child has the opportunity to remain unsocialized on the island; it is allowed to persist as the "Untouched" individual cherished from the romantic perspective of childhood (Gubar, 2009). This contradicts the relation between the two settings that Rowling has implemented in her narrative.

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* there is a two-dimensional world accessible only for magical creatures. The closeness between the worlds may be an essential aspect of

the contemporary perspective of childhood, as Rowling has created a world accessible for the *selected* child, and there is no need for an escort. Compared to *Peter Pan*, the child is more active; the child is independent. Furthermore, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* it is the magical powers that are the characteristics that allow entrance to the fantasy world, while in Barrie´s book, one must be a child to follow Peter Pan to the island Neverland. This demonstrates the importance of childhood in Barrie´s narrative.

The characteristic of being a child is more significant in *Peter Pan* than in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* and this coheres with the perspectives of childhood presented in this thesis. The romantic perspective relevant for Barrie´s narrative maintains a strict separation between adult and child, while the contemporary perspective present in Rowling´s narrative is centered around preparing the child for social concerns. Therefore, it is appropriate to claim that the element of childhood has distinctive meanings in the children´s books. In *Peter Pan* the characteristic of being a child is more significant compared to being a child in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* where the magical characteristic is the substantial feature that allows entrance to the fantastical setting. Additionally, it is necessary to discuss the potential intentions with implementing a fantasy world in the narratives in order to understand the authors´ portrayals of childhood. It is, therefore, necessary to take into consideration the spatial opposition in the selected children´s books.

The correlation between the perception of home and the spatial opposition reveals an intriguing aspect of the narrative strategy. The setting with the highest status can be considered to be the most familiar to the protagonist, and this is placed in the world the protagonist perceives as his/her rightful home. In Barrie´s work this is the realistic setting, while in Rowling´s book is the fantastic setting that is perceived as the protagonist´s true home. The intention of implementing a fantastical setting in the narrative may, therefore, be unparalleled in the selected children´s books. Barrie is transporting the child away from the familiar and safe setting, while Rowling creates an opportunity for the protagonist to find his true identity in the fantastical setting.

In *Peter Pan,* the narrative has the organizing principle of "home-away-home," and the fantasy world is the location for the voyage of the protagonist. This is a common aspect of children´s literature and the genre bildungsroman, where the protagonist partakes a journey that provides the opportunity to grow and prosper as an individual. It is evident that Wendy is challenged in the fantastical setting to remain devoted to her family and home. Wendy thrives

in her motherly role in Neverland. The intention with the fantastical setting is to establish an arena for the protagonist to develop as a character; a separate sphere the children are traveling to allows them to cultivate as an individual (Gubar, 2009; Sorby, 2011). This contradicts the use of a fantasy world in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* where Rowling has established that the Wizarding World is the rightful home of the protagonist.

Rowling challenges the traditional organizing principle of "home-away-home," as Harry Potter does not believe that his home is with the Dursleys where he must return at the end of the narrative. Given that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is the first book in the Harry Potter series, it is essential to state that the protagonist settles in the Wizarding world at the end of the series (Rowling, 2007). She has, therefore, constructed the understanding of home to the placement with the most intimate relations. The protagonist does, however, go through a journey where he is challenged and he, therefore, matures. This corresponds with the definition of the bildungsroman. The fantasy world is an arena for the protagonist to prosper as an individual and, simultaneously it is the placement of the home in Rowling´s narrative. Concerning the portrayals of childhood, this establishes a distinctiveness in the selected children´s books.

The analysis of the setting displays that there are certain similarities between the children´s books. However, when examining the narrative strategy closely, there are aspects of the setting that disclose how the books differ. The analysis reveals how books are a reflection of their contemporary society in how the fantastical setting has contradicting aspects when comparing *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. The relation between the two worlds in both books is the reflection of their contemporary society: Barrie has deprived the Darling children from their parents and placed them on a magical island with no connection to the realistic setting. The children were separated from the representation of the real world which is established in Barrie´s portrayal of the nursery. On the other hand, Rowling has constructed a two-dimensional world where the child is active and independent. This is a reflection of how the contemporary society perceives children. Furthermore, as both books operate with a child protagonist, it is essential to examine this narrative strategy in light of how it may contain elements of the portrayals of childhood in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*.

6. An analysis of the protagonist

The main characters in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* are Wendy Darling and Harry Potter, as established through Nikolajeva´s (2003) criteria for the protagonist. Both of these characters are children, and the potential of the narrative strategy to disclose aspects regarding the authors´ portrayals of childhood is, therefore, considerable.

Several scholars have pointed to the importance of characters in a narrative; for instance, Bal (2017) proclaims that characters resemble human beings. It is, therefore, possible to state that understanding how the author has portrayed their child protagonist may resemble their perception of the general child. This statement is further supported by Beauvais (2015), who states that child characters are a product of the authors´ interpretations of childhood, that "they remain, constructions, representations" (p. 2). It seems, therefore, appropriate to claim that the characterization of the protagonist provides a reliable indication of how these may act as reflections of the authors´ perceptions of childhood. As the authors are socialized in a society, a historical context, it is, additionally, possible to consider how the protagonists may reflect their contemporary societies.

<u>The protagonist as a narrative strategy</u>

The final narrative strategy included in this thesis is *the protagonist* and given that both books have a child protagonist indicates that the analysis will reveal important elements in how the authors may have perceived childhood and, therefore, displayed their interpretation of children in their books. According to Bal (2017) it is essential to comprehend each character as an *individual*, as the characters are provided specific characteristics through the literary device *characterization*. It is, therefore, possible to state that the analysis of the protagonists will disclose the similarities and differences between Wendy and Harry Potter. Such comparison of the narrative strategy´s presence in a narrative will function as a foundation to discuss how the books may reflect their contemporary society and, additionally, attempt to understand how the authors have portrayed childhood in their narratives.

To understand how the protagonist may display such indications, it is necessary to focus on different aspects of the main character. Firstly, it is relevant to examine how the author

chooses to introduce the protagonist for the implied reader. Furthermore, it is essential to analyze the characterization of the child protagonist as this may disclose the complexities of the child protagonists. Another aspect of the narrative strategy that has the potential to expose the portrayals of childhood in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, is how the character develops throughout the narrative. Earlier in this thesis it has been stated that both books belong to the genre bildungsroman, and an essential aspect of this genre is the development of the protagonist. This implies a biological development, that is mostly relevant in Barrie´s *Peter Pan,* and a maturation process caused by the protagonist going through a passage with challenges in order to develop as an individual. It seems that both authors have created a protagonist that is intended to go through such development. Barrie and Rowling have, however, implemented different predictions for their protagonist: Wendy plays out her destiny as a mother on Neverland and Harry has a prophecy concerning his role in the Wizarding world.

6.1 A prophecy and a destiny

The authors have different approaches regarding the introduction of the protagonist, which displays how the characters have divergent purposes in the narratives. A coherence between Wendy and Harry Potter is that they are both perceived as individuals who are intended for specific roles in their futures. This aspect of the characters is displayed in the introduction of the protagonist. The authors have chosen to present their leading child character in the first chapter of the books, as this is a common strategy to exemplify the importance of the narrative strategy (Nikolajeva, 2003).

The first sentences in *Peter Pan* have been researched and discussed by scholars such as Jaqueline Rose (1984), as the sentences expose the book´s intention and the importance of childhood in Barrie´s narrative. "All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this" (Barrie, 2015, p. 1). This quote displays a central element of the protagonist: Wendy is a child who grows up.

When Barrie begins his narrative with such revelations about the protagonist, it establishes a foundation for the remaining narrative. The reader is aware that Wendy will mature, and it is, therefore, possible to assume that the story of the Darling children and Neverland is a story

about growth, the inevitable development from childhood to adulthood. Barrie presents a description of the episode when Wendy, a three-year-old girl, acknowledges that she will someday become a woman. However, this thesis considers the entirety of Barrie´s narrative to relate to the first sentences of the book, and that *Peter Pan* conveys a story of when Wendy discovers her motherly instincts and acknowledges her destiny as a future mother. It is, therefore, possible to state that *Peter Pan* is a story about Wendy, *the Girl Who Grew Up.*

The protagonist is not comprehensively described by the narrator, as there are few utterances from the storyteller that refer to a description of Wendy. There is, however, one explicit characterization of the protagonist in the first chapter, "Peter Breaks Through": "She was a tidy child" (Barrie, 2015, p. 7). That Barrie has chosen not to describe the protagonist in detail, exposes an aspect of the narrative that is intriguing: The reader does not need to have comprehensive information about the leading child character in *Peter Pan*. According to the narrator, it is sufficient to describe the protagonist as a compelling child. This aspect of the narrative discloses a substantial difference between Barrie´s and Rowling´s narrative, as Rowling has included a thorough description and characterized her protagonist immensely in her narrative.

Even though Rowling´s narrative does not necessarily present the protagonist at the beginning of her book, it is important to state that the title of the first chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is "The Boy Who Lived." The title indicated that the chapter would disclose essential characteristics of the protagonist in specific manners. The first description of Harry Potter displays the perception of the protagonist in the realistic setting. Mrs. Dursley described the protagonist as "a child like that" (Rowling, 2017, p. 2). The word "that" exposes a distance between the Dursleys and Harry Potter, in that his extended family does not understand him because he is not a Muggle. Rowling has, furthermore, included a conversation between two wizards: Professor McGonagall and Professor Dumbledore, that delivers Harry Potter to his extended family, and this conversation reflects the perception of the protagonist in the Wizarding world.

> These people will never understand him! He´ll be famous – a legend – I wouldn´t be surprised if today was known as Harry Potter Day in future – there will be books written about Harry – every child in our world will know his name! (Rowling, 2017, p. 14)

In the utterance from Professor McGonagall from the conversation, it is apparent that the boy they are delivering and placing in the non-magical world is unique. Harry is characterized as a wizard that is different from other wizards because he defeated Voldemort as a baby. Harry Potter is, therefore, characterized as *the Boy Who Lived.* The distinction between the protagonist in the selected children´s books is imperative for the discussion of the research questions. Barrie has in his portrayal of Wendy Darling, *the Girl Who Grew Up,* presented a protagonist that is a representation of the ordinary child: To grow up is an inevitable biological development a child must endure. Rowling, however, portrays her protagonist as the child *who lived.* Harry survived the evil wizard as a wizard incompetent of magical abilities. He is unique, an individual that is unmatchable to other characters in Rowling´s narrative. He is the Boy Who Lived, and the reason for his survival is his mother´s love (Rowling, 2007; Rowling, 2017):

> Your mother died to save you. If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign... to have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection forever. It is in your very own skin. Quirrel, full of hatred, greed, and ambition, sharing his soul with Voldemort, could not touch you for this reason. It was agony to touch a person marked by something so good. (Rowling, 2017, pp. 321-322)

The approach Rowling has applied in her narrative as the introduction of the protagonist displays the importance of character in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.* A fundamental aspect of the protagonist in the Wizarding world, is that Harry is characterized as a hero before he is aware of it himself. The narrator prophesizes that Harry Potter is expected to do great things. Such comprehension of the protagonist is, however, merely relevant in the fantasy world.

> Harry had a thin face, knobbly knees, black hair and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Sellotape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning. (Rowling, 2017, p. 21)

The description of the protagonist in the following chapter "The Vanishing Glass," describes Harry Potter as not unique compared to other children in the realistic setting, except for his scar on his forehead.

The beginning of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* contains an abundance of information about the protagonist. To comprehend Rowling´s narrative about Harry Potter, the reader needs to recognize the different aspects of the character. The different approaches regarding how the authors introduce the protagonist in their narrative is a vital aspect of the narrative strategy in light of the research questions: (1) How do *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* cohere and differ regarding the selection of narrative strategies? and (2) How may the differing narrative strategies in these books reflect different cultural/historical perspectives on childhood? There is a difference regarding how important the protagonist is in Barrie´s and Rowling´s narrative, and this discloses relevant elements of the authors' portrayals of childhood. In order to comprehend how the protagonist is an indication of such a portrayal, it is necessary to examine the further characterization of the leading child characters in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.*

Characterization of the protagonist

The protagonists´ different characteristics disclose the authors' portrayals of childhood as it displays the complexity of their child characters. Barrie has presented his protagonist to the reader predominately through what Jannidis (2012) describes as the mode of telling. This implies that the author has implemented a description of Wendy when she is present in the narrative. Such an approach deprives the reader of the opportunity to construct a personal assessment of the character, as the narrator has presented these in his/her description (Jannidis, 2012). Additionally, this approach displays the author´s opinion of the character. Therefore, it is possible to examine different quotes from the narrator and interpret them as an indication of Barrie´s thoughts of Wendy. For instance, an episode from the chapter "The Happy Home," displays Wendy as a child capable of restricting herself to avoid conflicts, which is a common characteristic of a housewife, according to the narrator. "Secretly Wendy sympathies with them a little, but she was far too loyal a housewife to listen to any complaints against father. ´Father knows best,´ she always said, whatever her private opinion must be" (Barrie, 2015, p. 90).

The quote from "The Happy Home" portrays Wendy as a socialized and mature girl who functions as the housewife/mother in the home to Peter Pan, the Lost boys, and the Darling children in Neverland. Additionally, the quote reveals that the reader is not presented with Wendy´s thoughts. This indicates that there is a distance between the protagonist and the reader, that the reader is not capable of understanding all aspects of the character because it is not the narrator´s interest to present these. Another utterance from the narrator about the protagonist is retrieved from the segment in *Peter Pan* that involves the battle against the pirates, Peter Pan and the majority of the children on the island. "Wendy, of course, had stood by taking no part in the fight, though watching Peter with glistening eyes; but now that all was over she became prominent again" (Barrie, 2015, p. 137).

Barrie has excluded the protagonist in an essential scene of conflict in the narrative. Wendy is not allowed to partake in the battle, and the utterance from the narrator displays how the protagonist may disclose the portrayal of childhood in *Peter Pan,* which will be presented in the discussion of the research questions. Analyzing the protagonist as a narrative strategy and its potential to portray childhood requires an examination of specific segments from the narrative that uncovers the characterization of the child character. In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* a segment from the chapter "The Sorting Hat," discloses a complexity of Rowling´s protagonist.

When Harry begins his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, several characteristics of the protagonist are exposed. One specific episode discloses some unique aspects of Harry Potter. Before Harry can begin his education, he must be placed in one of the four houses at Hogwarts: (1) Gryffindor, (2) Hufflepuff, (3) Ravenclaw, and (4) Slytherin (Rowling, 2017). Each student must be sorted into one of the houses by the Sorting Hat, a magical creature that can enter the student´s minds and place them in the house appropriate for them. Each house has distinctive features established from the wizards that belong to the distinctive houses. Rowling use lyrics to reveal the qualities that are necessary for the different houses.

In this analysis, it is Gryffindor and Slytherin that are relevant to examine. Therefore, the quote contains only the verses that consider these houses:

There´s nothing in your head

The Sorting Hat can´t see

So try me on and I will tell you

Where you ought to be.

You might belong to Gryffindor,

Where dwell the brave of heart,

Their daring, nerve and chivalry,

Set Gryffindor apart,

[…]

Or perhaps in Slytherin,

You´ll make your real friends

Those cunning folks use any means

To achieve their ends. (Rowling, 2017, p.126)

The lyrics contain the characteristics required for a wizard to be placed in the different houses. For Gryffindor the wizard must be *brave, daring,* and these characteristics must be a part of the wizard´s instinct. The other house, Slytherin, is suitable for the wizards who are determined to achieve their ambitions regardless of any obstacles. When it is Harry´s turn to be placed in one of the houses, the complexity of his character challenges the Sorting Hat.

> ´Humm, said a small voice in his ear. ´Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There´s talent, oh my goodness, yes – and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that´s interesting…So where shall I put you? (Rowling, 2017, p. 129).

According to the Sorting Hat, Harry Potter is suitable for both Gryffindor and Slytherin. The magical creature presents a characterization of the protagonist that reveals his actual characteristics, which makes him appropriate for the two houses. The protagonist, however, persuades the Sorting Hat by repeating "Not Slytherin" (Rowling, 2017, p. 130), and he is

placed in Gryffindor. The struggle of placing Harry in the appropriate house displays the complexity of his character.

Rowling has created a child protagonist that is difficult to define. The author has chosen to characterize her protagonist by mostly using the approach *showing* in her narrative, as Harry Potter is constantly taking action in the narrative without comments from the narrator (Jannidis, 2012). Therefore, the reader can construct their perceptions of the character. Rowling supports this decision by portraying the protagonist as a hero, or by placing him in Gryffindor rather than Slytherin, renowned for being Voldemort´s house when he was a student at Hogwarts. A substantial aspect of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is establishing the hero in the narrative. The reader getting acquainted with the protagonist of her book series is an imperative aspect to Rowling´s book, it may be a reason for Rowling´s narrative to contain more characterization than Barrie´s portrayal of Wendy.

Prior to this, the analysis has exclusively focused on the presentation of the character in light of how the authors have presented and characterized them throughout the narrative. There are additional aspects of the narrative that are relevant to examine to comprehend the complexities of the protagonists in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*. A possible approach is to look at how the protagonist is perceived by other characters, as this may disclose further indications of how the protagonist may display the authors´ portrayals of childhood.

6.2 The perceptions of the leading child character

It is relevant for this thesis to look at the author´s use of other narrative strategies, such as other characters to understand the entirety of the protagonist. How other characters perceive the leading child character exposes specific characteristics of the protagonist. This benefits the analysis of the protagonist as it provides further indications of how the authors have implemented their portrayals of childhood in their protagonists. It is apparent in Barrie´s and Rowling´s narrative that other characters are opinionated about the protagonist.

<u>The mother on the island</u>

Other characters perceive Wendy according to the traditional gender roles for the Edwardian society. Given that the protagonist is the only girl on the island that the other children have a close relationship with, it is apparent that Wendy is a substitute for the other children´s longing for a motherly figure.

> Then all went down on their knees, and holding out their arms cried, "O Wendy lady, be out mother!" "Ought I?" Wendy said, all shining. "Of course it´s frightfully fascinating, but you see **I am only a little girl**. I have no real experience." "That doesn´t matter," said Peter, as if he were the only person present who knew all about it, though he was really the one who knew least. **"What we need is just a nice motherly person." "Oh dear!" Wendy said, "you see, I feel that is exactly what I am.** (Barrie, 2015, p. 63, emphasis added)

As the quote reveals, Wendy is unsure if it is appropriate to accept the mother´s role as she is "only a little girl" (Barrie, 2015, p. 63). However, the desire for a mother is strong enough to persuade Wendy. The intuitive need to function as a mother is an interesting characteristic of the protagonist. This is present in a quote that displays Wendy as the mother on Neverland: "´Silence,´ cried Wendy when for the twentieth time she had told them that they were not all to speak at once. ´Is your mug empty, Slightly darling?´ ´Not quite empty, mummy,´ Slightly said, after looking into an imaginary mug" (Barrie, 2015, p. 90). Even though the children play 'pretend family', Wendy takes her role as the mother seriously. This is a reference to how Wendy portrays her destiny in her appearance on the magical island.

Barrie has constructed a protagonist that is adequate for the motherly role on Neverland. Utterances from other characters expose their perception of Wendy Darling, and this discloses characteristics of the protagonist relevant for this thesis. Furthermore, these findings are indications of how the author perceived childhood. There is a strict division of the boys and girls on Neverland, as portrayed in the quote from the segment above with the battle against the pirates. There seems to be certain prejudice against the female gender. There is, however, one utterance from Peter Pan that exposes an opposite preconception of females, that girls are valuable: "Wendy," he continued, in a voice that no woman has ever yet been able to resist, "Wendy, one girl is more use than twenty boys" (Barrie, 2015, p. 24). Regardless of the

preconception, there is a strict division of the male and the female gender in Barrie´s narrative.

The characterization of Wendy is significantly grounded in her gender; she is perceived as a future mother even as a young girl. Wendy is fulfilling her destiny and preparing herself for this inevitable future on her journey to the magical island. There are apparent differences between the protagonist regarding characterization. However, there is a specific similarity in Barrie´s and Rowling´s narrative. The authors have constructed protagonists perceived by other characters in coherence with the protagonists´ purpose in the narrative. Wendy is the mother, which is her destiny, and Harry Potter is a wizard with great potential, which supports the prophecy of the Boy Who Lived implemented in Rowling´s narrative.

A hero in the Wizarding world

Harry Potter is characterized as an individual that has some characteristics that are not necessarily positive. Rowling has constructed an intricate character with her protagonist. This characterization displays a reflection of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone´s* contemporary society. This section establishes how the protagonist may be characterized in a specific manner that portray the leading child character as a hero, Rowling´s contemporary society´s version of an idealized child.

The perception of Harry Potter is distinctive in the different settings in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s´ Stone.* In the realistic setting, the non-magical people, represented by the Dursley family, express their opinion of the protagonist on several occasions in the narrative. For instance, a quote from the chapter "The Vanishing Glass," displays the apprehension toward the protagonist in the realistic setting: "The Dursleys often spoke about Harry like this, as though he wasn´t there – or rather, as though **he was something very nasty that couldn´t understand them**, like a slug" (Rowling, 2017, p. 24, emphasis added). Harry Potter is described as an object that is incomprehensible for the Muggles. When combining this with the uncertainty from the Sorting Hat, it establishes a foundation for the reader to have an ambivalent attitude towards the protagonist.

Rowling allows the reader to establish personal opinions about the protagonist because she presents Harry Potter as a misfit in the realistic setting and a hero in the fantasy world. How

the reader perceives the protagonist is more open in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* than in *Peter Pan.* While Rowling has portrayed the protagonist as an outsider with the Dursley family, there is a contradicting characterization of Harry Potter in the Wizarding world. This is apparent when examining what the magical creatures think of the protagonist. Hagrid, the magical creature who retrieved the protagonist from the realistic setting and delivered Harry Potter as a baby to the Dursley family at the beginning of the narrative, is opinionated about the protagonist which is display in an utterance from chapter four "Keeper of the Keys":

> ´Harry, yer a wizard. ´ There was silence inside the hut. Only the sea and the whistling wind could be heard. ´I´m a *what?* ´ gasped Harry. ´A wizard, o´course, ´ said Hagrid, sitting back down on the sofa, which groaned and sank even lower, **´an´ a thumpin´ good´un,** I´d say, once yeh´ve been trained up a bit. With a mum an´ dad like yours, what else would yeh be? An´ I reckon it´s about time yeh read yer letter. ´" (Rowling, 2017, p. 55, emphasis added)

There is an expectation of Harry before he is aware of his qualities as a wizard. Hagrid states explicitly that education is required in order for Harry to be "a thumpin´ good´un," (Rowling, 2017, p. 55), yet there is an assumption about the protagonist´s talents solemnly established in the episode where Voldemort lost his powers because of Harry Potter. The prediction of Harry being a great wizard is established in Hagrid´s relationship and knowledge of Harry´s parents.

The prediction that Harry Potter will become a great wizard before he enters the Wizarding world for the first time is proven correct in the chapter "Through the Trapdoor," when Harry must reacquaint with the main antagonist in Rowling´s narrative: Voldemort.

> ´Harry – you´re a great wizard, you know´ ´I´m not as good as you´, said Harry, very embarrassed, as she let go of him. ´Me!´ said Hermione. ´Books! And cleverness! There are more important things – friendship and bravery and – oh Harry – be *careful*! (Rowling, 2017, p. 308)

During his time at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry has proven to be a good wizard, which confirms Hagrid´s prediction. One of the close relationships Harry makes during his first year at Hogwarts, the friendship with Hermione Granger, discloses an

imperative aspect of the protagonist, displayed in the quote from "Through the Trapdoor." Hermione is convinced that Harry is a great wizard due to his bravery and companionship. This connects with his ability as a leader. The protagonist has encountered several obstacles during his first year at Hogwarts, such as defeating a troll along with another friend, Ron Weasley (Rowling, 2017). Harry Potter is continuously characterized as a leader and a hero in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.*

An apparent aspect of the authors´ characterization of their leading child character is that the characters are given a specific identity, and they are perceived by other characters in coherence with the identity. This establishes a foundation to discuss how the protagonists may be a reflection of the different historical contexts: Wendy and Harry Potter may be their contemporary societies' version of an idealized child.

6.3 The idealized child

The selected children´s books are constructed in two different historical contexts, and the presence of each of their contemporary societies is evident in the narratives. *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* are considered bildungsroman, and a vital aspect of this subgenre is the development of the protagonist (Abrams & Harpham, 2012; Daley-Carey, 2018). The evolution of the protagonists reveals how the narrative strategy may reflect the historical context. One can understand the development of the protagonist as an impression of the different historical contexts.

It has been stated in the analysis of the protagonist that the authors have implemented a reference to the future identity of the protagonist in their introduction of the protagonist and through the characterization. This reference is mentioned in the closure of the narratives. It is the correlation between the opening and the closure of the story of the protagonist that will function as an indication of the society's presence in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.*

The Girl Who Grew Up

The introduction of Barrie´s protagonist is present at the beginning of the narrative: "All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this" (Barrie, 2015, p. 1). As stated in the analysis of the protagonist, there are aspects of *Peter Pan* that establish a foundation for stating that the book is about growing up. Barrie uses his female protagonist Wendy to portray this development from childhood to adulthood. A quote from the chapter "When Wendy Grew Up," shows the protagonist's opinion on this inevitable biological process:

> That was the last time the girl Wendy ever saw him. For a little longer she tried for his sake not to have growing pains; and she felt she was untrue to him when she got a prize for general knowledge. But the years came and went without bringing the careless boy; and when they met again Wendy was a married woman, and Peter was no more to her than a little dust in the box in which she had kept her toys. Wendy was grown up. You need not feel spry for her. Wendy was the kind that likes to grow up. In the end she grew up of her own free will a day quicker than other girls. (Barrie, 2015, p. 151)

It is apparent in the description of Wendy´s development from girl to woman that this was not problematic for her, and that she "grew up of her own free will a day quicker than other girls," (Barrie, 2015, p. 151). The protagonist displays the desire of children to grow up and become sufficient citizens of their contemporary society. The antagonistic attitude to this development is present with Peter Pan, the boy who did not grow up, as mentioned in the first sentence of the narrative. However, the protagonist´s lack of apprehension displays a crucial aspect of the perception of growth in *Peter Pan*. Wendy wants to grow up, and Peter Pan is alone in his perception of despising the thought of growing up. Indications such as these enhance the discussion of how the narrative strategy may disclose the portrayals of childhood in the selected children´s books. When examining the correlation between the characterization of Harry Potter at the beginning and the end of the narrative in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone*, it is noticeable that Rowling has presented a specific perspective of childhood in her protagonist.

<u>The Boy Who Lived</u>

An essential aspect of the protagonist in Rowling´s book is that he is *unique*, both in the realistic setting and the fantasy world. Rowling discloses the importance of individuality and acceptance of uniqueness in her characterization of the protagonist. The purpose of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is to establish Harry Potter as the hero and the leading character in the book series. In order to establish such a perception of the protagonist, Rowling has constructed a narrative that centers around the characterization of Harry Potter. Among the non-magical creatures, Harry is incomprehensible for the Muggles, but in the Wizarding world, the protagonist is acknowledged as a wizard who has special characteristics. A prophecy of Harry Potter as a great wizard is presented in the introduction of the protagonist.

Throughout the narrative, the protagonist proves himself worthy of the perception that the common wizard has of him. When Harry must reacquaint with Voldemort at the end of the narrative, it depicts the climax of the story. In this episode with the main antagonist, Harry proves he is what was expected from him. When Harry returns to his fellow students after the episode with Voldemort, it is apparent that he had fulfilled the expectations established when he was a baby:

> When Harry walked inn there was a sudden hush and then everybody started talking loudly at once. He slipped into a seat between Ron and Hermione at the Gryffindor table and tried to ignore the fact that people were standing up to look at him.
> (Rowling, 2017, p. 327)

The protagonist in Rowling´s narrative is a humble character who acts on his instincts and is true to himself. He is not a character who is liked by all, as there are several indications of apprehension towards the character in specific segments of the narrative. Rowling presents a child in her protagonist that is loyal towards his friends and companions, and Harry Potter is competent even though he has not been thoroughly educated as a wizard. These characteristics are seemingly inherited from his parents, who fought against the main antagonist, which resulted in Voldemort killing them. The protagonist in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is a mature child, and such portrayals of children are common in contemporary children´s literature. O´Reilly (2005) underlines an essential aspect of Rowling´s protagonist: Harry Potter is more mature and has more knowledge than the

ordinary adult (p. 200). When comparing this aspect of Rowling´s protagonist with Barrie´s Wendy Darling, it is evident that both authors portrayed a mature leading child character. However, Rowling has portrayed a child character that is predominant in her narrative while Barrie has constructed a protagonist that is "only" more mature than the other child characters in *Peter Pan*. In other words, Wendy qualifies for the expected future role of a young girl while Harry Potter is portrayed as an exceptional individual in the Wizarding world.

The analysis of several aspects of the protagonist reveals the complexities of the leading child character in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* The findings from the analysis will function as a foundation to discuss how the societies are reflected in the narrative strategy, and it is thereby possible to consider the distinctive portrayals of childhood constructed by Barrie and Rowling.

6.4 The embodiment of childhood

The construction of a character can be interpreted as a resemblance of a human being (Bal, 2017; Beauvais, 2015). Therefore, the analysis of the leading child character provides solid indications of how the authors have portrayed childhood in their narratives. The findings from the analysis will be discussed in light of the research questions to understand how the narrative strategy contains such evidence. It is 1) the authors´ different approaches in the protagonists´ introduction and characterization, and 2) the identities of the protagonists that establish this discussion.

The authors have distinctive approaches in the presentation of their protagonists to the child reader. Barrie´s selection of the method of telling in his introduction and characterization of Wendy, reveals his opinion of the character in his narrative (Jannidis, 2012). This is a reflection of Barrie´s contemporary society and the environment to which he belonged, one which held firm beliefs that the child should be segregated from the adults and the adult supervision. According to Gubar (2009), the authors who fit this description had a habit of implementing themselves in the narrative. Barrie has restrained the child reader from constructing his/her opinion of Wendy Darling as it is explicitly stated in the narrative who

she is and how other character´s perceive her. The presentation and characterization of the protagonist in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* contradict *Peter Pan* in this manner.

Rowling has characterized the leading child character by *showing,* which allows the child reader to interpret the character (Jannidis, 2012). Harry Potter is a complex character, and the different opinions of the character challenge the child reader to establish his/her opinion of the protagonist. For example, the Sorting Hat believes Harry Potter qualifies for Slytherin, and as this was the house of Voldemort, it exposes some troubling characteristics of the protagonist. The connection between the protagonist and the main antagonist is explained in the last book of the series (Rowling, 2007). Yet, Rowling has implemented this ambiguous characterization of Harry Potter in the first book without explanation for the child reader. This aspect of the narrative displays how Rowling challenges the child reader compared to Barrie, who provides the necessary information to understand the complexity of his protagonist. The difference concerning the authors´ method to introduce and characterize their leading child character holds potential to discuss the authors´ perception of childhood.

Harry Potter and Wendy Darling are the embodiment of their authors´ perception of childhood. By applying Bal (2017) and Beauvais (2015), who explains the importance of character, and further support in Hunt´s (2005) statement that fantasy is a reflection of the reality, the thesis considers the aspects of the protagonist disclosed in the analysis as indications of the authors´ perspective on childhood, and, therefore, their contemporary society's perspective on childhood. To comprehend how the perception of childhood is present in the protagonist, it is essential to concentrate on the identity the authors gave the protagonist.

The leading child character in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* was accorded a specific identity before he was able to walk. Harry Potter is *the Boy Who Lived*, and he is characterized as a unique boy and other characters in the Wizarding world, has high expectations for his future as a wizard. The expectations are validated throughout the narrative. Rowling has characterized Harry Potter as a mature child that is aware of this responsibility towards his friends and acts out of bravery (O´Reilly, 2005). The protagonist represents a perspective of childhood that is romantic and ambivalent. Rowling has constructed a child that suffers horrible living conditions in the realistic world, and she creates a fantasy world where the protagonist thrives and finds happiness. She has implemented an alternative world that signifies childhood (O´Reilly, 2005). This displays the romantic aspect

of her perception of childhood (Thacker, 2012a). However, Rowling has simultaneously created a conflict in which Harry Potter is a vital component and must endure this struggle throughout the narrative. It is, therefore, an ambivalent perspective in that the child is not innocent and must sustain those challenges the author presented him (Higonnet, 1998). The protagonist is an active component in the narrative, and this is a contradicting element between the selected children´s books.

Wendy Darling is also characterized as a mature child. However, the reason for this maturity is not similar to Rowling´s protagonist. Barrie created a character in his protagonist as a girl preparing for womanhood. Wendy Darling, *the Girl Who Grew Up,* is an adult in a child´s body. This characterization must be understood in light of the established perspective of childhood from the Edwardian society which is a romantic perspective. The aspect of growth is complex in *Peter Pan.* The author deprives the Darling children of the socialization of the urban society in London, and he creates a world where they are allowed to be children free from adult supervision. However, his protagonist realizes that she must return to the realistic world, and she accepts the inevitable evolution from child to adult. It is, therefore, a complex perspective of childhood that is present in *Peter Pan.* At first glance, Barrie has presented a romantic perspective in his portrayals of childhood. However, he then implements a realistic perspective when his protagonist decides to leave Neverland. Wendy Darling is not an active character in that she does not partake in specific episodes in the narrative, as disclosed in the analysis. However, Wendy takes action in one imperative element of *Peter Pan:* She convinces her brothers and the Lost boys that they must return to the realistic setting and grow up. Wendy Darling is the embodiment of the child who understands that she must grow up.

When discussing the findings concerning the protagonist in light of the minor research questions guiding this thesis, there are specific elements disclosed that are imperative in the discussion of the books´ portrayals of childhood. Aspects of the narrative strategy are evidence of how the book is a reflection of its contemporary society. The examination of the protagonist establishes a foundation to discuss the authors´ perception of childhood. The result from the discussion of the protagonist will further be presented in connection with the results from the analysis and discussion of the narrator and the setting. The consolidation of the narrator, the setting and the protagonist displays the books´ portrayal of childhood.

7. The Portrayals of Childhood

7.1 The Child in the Book

The examination of the selected narrative strategies provided this thesis with evidence of how childhood is portrayed in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone.* The portrayals are distinctive, yet there are correlations in how the child is presented in Barrie´s and Rowling´s narratives. The components for the discussion of the research questions; 1) the narrator, 2) the setting, and 3) the protagonist, have apparent similarities. However, a close reading and the analyses focusing on the specific narrative strategies disclosed a uniqueness in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* regarding their portrayals of childhood.

Both authors have presented a distinctive perspective on childhood. Barrie and Rowling constructed books that are aimed at a child reader, and aspects of the narratives reflect this. The majority of the plots in *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is dedicated to the journey the protagonist partakes to mature as an individual. The development of the protagonist is an essential aspect of both books. Featured in the discussion of the research questions, the protagonists´ maturity displays a distinctiveness between the selected children´s books. Wendy represents the ordinary maturation of a child, as she eventually acknowledges and accepts the fact that she must grow up. On the other hand, Harry Potter´s journey to the Wizarding world symbolizes a different growth.

As Rowling characterize Harry Potter as more mature and knowledgeable as the ordinary adult, she challenges the comprehension of a child´s growth and maturity (O´Reilly, 2005, p. 200). The maturity process in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone* is not established in acquiring of knowledge and skills, it is rather grounded in accepting of the need of others, such as friendship and family, to endure the life´s challenges. The child in Rowling´s narrative is portrayed as superior and lonesome. However, the author surrounds the child with supportive and aiding characters. There is an attentive attitude towards children in Rowling´s portrayal of childhood as she constructs a world where Harry Potter is beloved. This tender aspect remains in the necessity of others for the child to develop; the child is still a child and friends and family must support it. The core element in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s*

Stone is the development of the leading child character, and this a seminal example of how the books differ regarding the portrayals of childhood.

The core element of *Peter Pan* is not necessarily the maturation of Wendy Darling. Although the narrative contains a story about *the Girl Who Grew Up,* the fundamental component of the narrative is the placement of the maturation: The island Neverland. The narrator himself/herself proclaims that the story of Peter Pan and Neverland continues even though Wendy grows up; the adventure continues "as long as children are gay, innocent and heartless" (Barrie, 2015, p. 159). This exposes an imperative aspect concerning the portrayals of childhood as it displays childhood as a restricted phase of life for humans. Barrie acknowledges the prosperities of childhood in that they are allowed to travel to the fantasy island. Regardless of his protagonist growing up, the adventure proceeds with Wendy Darling´s descendants. Ergo, Barrie portrays childhood as a unique chapter and grants the child with unprecedented features and abilities, such as the allowed entrance to Neverland. In *Peter Pan,* the portrayal of childhood is greatly established in a romantic perspective in viewing childhood as an unparalleled phase in life that must be protected. Nevertheless, Barrie implements the unavoidable fate; "All children, except one, must grow up" (Barrie, 2015, p. 1), and they must leave Neverland.

Both authors have implemented a fantasy world that signifies childhood. As the books are bildungsroman, the narrative needs to have a placement for the maturity process that allows the leading child character to prosper. By placing the protagonist in a foreign world, Harry Potter and Wendy Darling are compelled to mature as individuals. The analyses of the narrative strategies in the bildungsromans reveals the potential to discuss manners such as the portrayals of childhood. This thesis displays how one may examine different aspects of the narrative and use these indications as a foundation to discuss how the narrative reflects its contemporary society. It is possible to understand a book as more than merely a combination of sentences. An utterance from the author should be acknowledged as a cultural product.

As we encourage children to read children´s books, we must be aware of the books´ content and what they convey to the child reader. This thesis has examined two prominent children´s books regarding their portrayal of childhood. When the child reader partakes the journey into the literary world of Barrie´s *Peter Pan* and Rowling´s *Harry Potter and the Philosopher´s Stone,* s/he is presented with the ideas and beliefs of the authors. The child reader encounters the author´s contemporary society in their reading experience. Even though the reflection of

the society is not explicitly present in all children´s books, one must recognize the potential of a children´s book to influence the child reader. The book is an intricate device that should and must be read by its intended reader, and this thesis displays the presence of the books´ contemporary society. The reflection of the society is an aspect of children´s books that should be taken into consideration as we, the adults, encourage children to read.

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