

Peter Pan and The Mermaid's Lagoon: Representations of Mermaids throughout the Cinematic Lifetime of Peter Pan

Peter Pan is one of the most recognizable children in the entire literary world. An eternal youth and a forever adventurer, Peter spends the majority of his in the world of Neverland, a world surrounded by water, only accessible through its gate keeper Peter. In a multitude of ways, Peter is a unique child but for the purposes of this paper, I will be examining Peter and his ability to navigate and infiltrate spaces controlled by water and water dwellers, in particular the Mermaid's Lagoon. Neverland is host to an entire lagoon full of mysterious mermaids who are only friendly to Peter, are playful amongst themselves, and transform into something "haunting" at moonlight. This lagoon is frequently a place of violence for those who enter, regardless of the beauty its hostesses hold.

Since the beginning of Peter Pan's existence in text form, his story has been told in a variety of platforms, particularly theatre and film. While the majority of the characters in Peter's world are represented in a similar way in most of its iterations, the mermaids take a different form in almost every film version of Peter Pan. Looking closely at the 1924, 1953, 1991, and 2003 film versions of the story of Peter Pan I intend to examine how these mermaids are represented and to consider what these different representations reveal about the historical and cultural moments that they were created in, in relation to J.M. Barrie's original descriptions; and how these representations influence an audiences' understanding of the texts. As well as explore the historical and cultural history of mermaids, particularly in the British-sphere that Barrie grew up in.