

PETER PAN, THE LOST CHILD

Kathleen Kelley-Lainé



PHOENIX
PUBLISHING HOUSE
firing the mind

First published in 1992 in French as *Peter Pan ou l'enfant triste* by Calmann-Lévy

First published in English in 1997 as *Peter Pan: The Story of Lost Childhood*
by Element Books

New English translation published in 2023 by
Phoenix Publishing House Ltd
62 Bucknell Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire OX26 2DS

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-1-91269-130-2

Typeset by vPrompt eServices Pvt Ltd, India



www.firingthemind.com

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Author's note

This book has been written using the story of Peter Pan (*Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* and *Peter Pan*) as its framework. The text consists of material either directly quoted or reworded from J. M. Barrie's classic work, and as such each instance is not individually cited. In the chapters concerning the life of J. M. Barrie, a number of direct quotes are taken from his *Collected Works* and additional material is drawn from Andrew Birkin's biography. Discussions of Freud's life and work are taken from two sources. These are all listed in the Bibliography.

About the author

Kathleen Kelley-Lainé is a trilingual psychoanalyst working in private practice in Paris (in English, French, and Hungarian). She is an active member of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, the European Psychoanalytical Federation, the International Psychoanalytical Association, and the International Sándor Ferenczi Society. She is internationally known for her many conferences and published articles in psychoanalytical journals and books. Her most well-known book published in French, *Peter Pan ou l'enfant triste*, was translated into English, Hungarian, and Greek and has been in circulation since 1992.

She was born in Budapest, Hungary. Shortly after the war, she and her family fled the Stalinist Regime along with hundreds of post-war refugees. They settled in Toronto, Canada, where Kathleen grew up and was educated in the Ontario Public School System, and continued her studies at the University of Toronto in Sociology, obtaining a master's degree. She began her professional career as lecturer in Sociology at Bishop's University, Quebec, then continued for a number of years in Geneva, Switzerland, for the Geneva Department of Education, participating in the design and creation of a Research and Development Centre for Educational Television. A major part of

her career as a sociologist was with the OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in Paris.

She trained as a psychoanalyst with the Paris Psychoanalytical Society (Société Psychanalytique de Paris). Among her mentors were Drs André Green, Serge Lebovici, René Diatkine, and Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel. As a Member of the Society she was on the Editorial Board of the *Review Française de Psychanalyse*, the Admissions Committee for new candidates. In 2001, she organised the International Psychoanalytical Conference on Immigration and the Loss of the Mother Tongue: UNESCO 'Une Mère, Une Terre, Une Langue' (articles published in *Lost Childhood and the Language of Exile*, Phoenix, 2022).

Foreword

Jonathan Sklar

This is a marvellous book! The author's deconstruction of the personage 'Peter Pan' reveals not only the adventures but also the profound trials and tribulations of a child-adult who has chosen to live in Neverland rather than confront the limits of reality. Three stories intermingle, versions of Peter Pan, the biography of James Matthew Barrie, and extracts from the life of the author-psychoanalyst. Through the interlacing of these story lines, one is gradually led from the 'great adventure' of the 'young, innocent and heartless boy' smiling with his baby teeth, to the vortex of childhood trauma.

The reader is buffeted by intense yearning, wells of desire, and pain, discovering the emotional consequences of life lived in the shadows of tragedy. At times the simple prose reminds us of the hidden flair of Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*. As 'little wisdoms' emerge, we, the reader, are surprised to encounter our own children, our own parents, and even ourselves as children with the tribulations of 'growing up'.

Time is that of the psyche, of free association moving backwards and forwards. The story of Peter Pan intermingles with vignettes from the author's psychoanalytic practice as well as from her own wounded childhood. This is a brave book to write, as it is to read. The light innocent story, full of adventures through the eyes of Peter Pan,

darkens as we discover the hidden secrets of James Matthew Barrie and how he is condemned to search for his lost childhood through the children of others. Is he at times Captain Hook, capturing innocent babes with his iron hand and crooked smile? The crocodile is always close, ticking away with a clock inside, just as death is ever-present in reality but denied in the fantasy of Neverland where no one ever grows up, and all inhabitants move unceasingly in the same direction.

This psychoanalytic book is a profound meditation on the use of stories to explore the hidden phantasy structures as metaphors for understanding the psychological processes of growing up. It also illustrates how traumatic this process of maturation can be when impacted by tragedies not only personal but historical. Wars, plagues, and natural disasters have had enormous influence on the individual and social psyche and its evolution through time. What will be the effects of COVID-19 on a generation of children today, given its isolation and destructiveness throughout families and society, together with the existential threats of global warming?

The original book, *Peter Pan ou l'enfant triste*, was published in France by Calmann-Lévy in 1992. A second edition came out in 2005 with continuous sales today. Kathleen Kelley-Lainé has written a tour de force and its publication in English by Phoenix is to be congratulated.