



Voltaire's Tormented Soul: A Psychobiographic Inquiry

By Alexander J. NEMETH.

Lehigh University Press, 2008. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. 1st Edition. 360pp Illustrated. [In stock in Australia, for immediate delivery] The historic giant of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, has attracted the attention of literary critics, historians, and philosophers for over two centuries. The products of his brilliant mind, collected in over 70 volumes, have been scrutinised in a plethora of literary essays, while his extraordinarily eventful life has become the subject of a score of biographies. But the roots of perplexing inconsistencies - both in behavioural conduct and in some of his writings - run deeper than the ground generally ploughed by literary critics or historians. Constructs for understanding the layered mechanisms of personality (and the methods appropriate for their investigation as developed in the social/behavioural sciences) became necessary. Fortunately, ample material for such an enquiry is available: the poet's vast, emotion-laden correspondence; observations of behavioural peculiarities by friends and chroniclers of the time (cross-verifiable, due to multiple sources); the highly expressive imagery of his poetry and prose - the contes in particular; and his Memoirs. The findings, in essence, reveal a person of dual identity, with unconscious forces playing a prominent role and holding the key to Voltaire's paradoxical...



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