

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON FREUD'S SEDUCTION THEORY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Revisiting Masson's 'The Assault on Truth'

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Foreword by John Briere PhD

ROUTLEDGE

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CRITICS REVIEWS

Psychoanalytic theory was built upon a foundation that dismissed patients' reports of childhood sexual abuse as a fantasy based on desire. This egregious error dominated psychiatry for the better part of a century. Forty years ago, from deep within the inner sanctum of the Freudian cult, Jeffrey Masson blew the whistle and suffered the whistleblower's fate. He was reviled and banished, not because he was wrong, but because he was right. The many voices in this volume offer a long-delayed and well-deserved tribute and vindication.

Judith Lewis Herman, MD is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and the author of *Father Daughter Incest* (1981), *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), and *Truth and Repair* (2023).

"All art is at once surface and symbol," wrote Oscar Wilde. "Those who go beneath the surface do so at their own peril." Wilde's statement on art is equally applicable to Freud's psychoanalytic thought. In *The Assault on Truth*, Jeffrey Masson had the courage to disinter one of Freud's major lies: He abandoned his early seduction theory and relegated it to mere fantasy. In doing so Freud impeded therapists from addressing the reality of child sexual abuse for decades, and it has had a deleterious impact on millions of lives.

Nick Bryant, investigative journalist, and author of *The Franklin Scandal: A Story of Powerbrokers, Child Abuse, and Betrayal*.

In 1984, psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson published his research showing that Freud had placed a veil over his original discovery of the prevalence of sexual abuse in the backgrounds of many of his patients. It remains deeply troubling that psychoanalysis, in many of its forms and localities, continued to foreclose from its discourse and theories the reality of sexual abuse and its effects. This splendid book explores and explains how and why this active blindness occurred.

Phil Mollon PhD, Psychoanalyst (British Psychoanalytical Society). Co-Author of the BPS Report on Recovered Memories (British Psychological Society, 1995). Author of *Remembering Trauma: A Psychotherapist's Guide to Memory and Illusion* (1998 & 2002).

This collection of essays is a thought-provoking *tour de force*, befitting the significance of Jeffrey Masson's *The Assault on Truth*. This powerful anthology unites diverse voices around the problem of sexual abuse and its denial, and the challenges of therapy. The book raises important questions and gives Masson's groundbreaking work the recognition it richly deserves.

Ross E. Cheit is professor of Political Science emeritus at Brown University, author of *The Witch-hunt Narrative: Politics, Psychology, and the Sexual Abuse of Children* (2014) and creator of the archive at recoveredmemory.org.