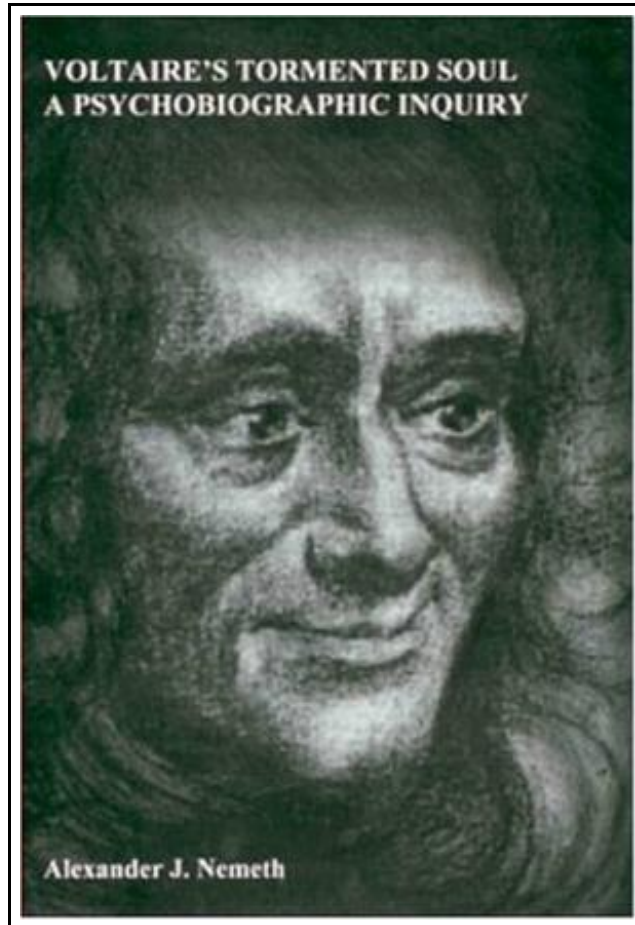


## Voltaire's Tormented Soul: A Psychobiographic Inquiry



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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 - thecontes in particular; and hisMemoirs. 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 character. His conscious, rational, and cognitively astute self - the standard-bearer of thephilosophes in their epochal struggle for freedom - was also responsible for sealing off the subconscious portion of the self associated with traumatic experiences. The elaborate characterological structure erected to ward off consciously unacceptable impulses and, simultaneously, to obtain satisfaction of frustrated needs, is the subject of this study. The price he had to pay for the drastic disconnect between the two selves was formidable. In this volume, much attention is devoted to the unconventional ways and phantasmal stratagems adopted for dealing with the internal pressure of repressed...



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