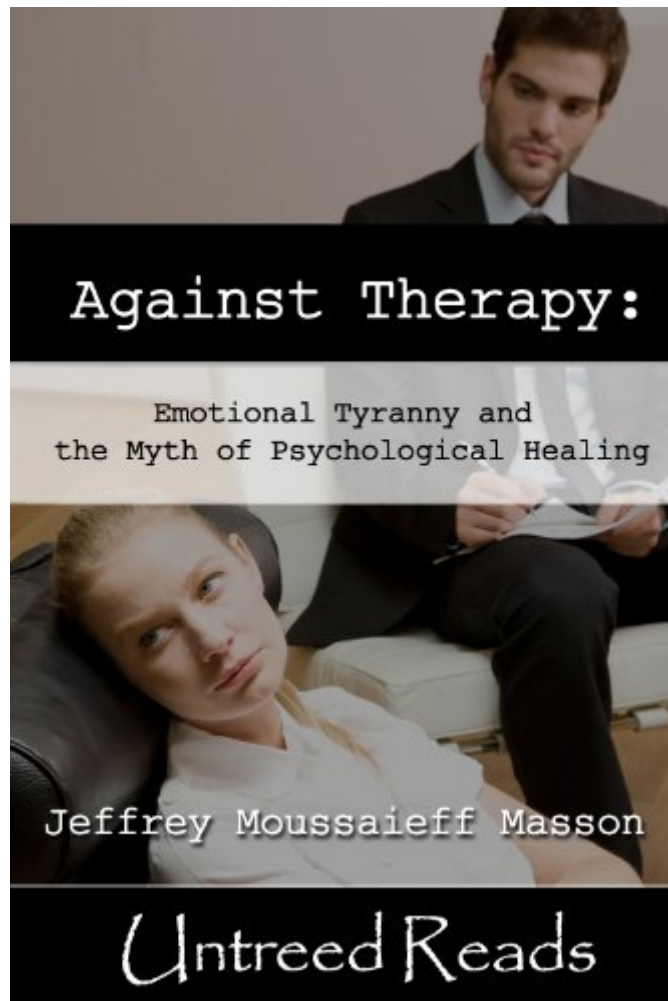


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Against Therapy: Emotional Tyranny And The Myth Of Psychological Healing



Synopsis

In this ground-breaking and highly controversial book, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson attacks the very foundations of modern psychotherapy from Freud to Jung, from Fritz Perls to Carl Rodgers. With passion and clarity, *Against Therapy* addresses the profession's core weaknesses, contending that, since therapy's aim is to change people, and this is achieved according to therapist's own notions and prejudices, the psychological process is necessarily corrupt. With a foreword by the eminent British psychologist Dorothy Rowe, this cogent and convincing book has shattering implications.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Against Therapy is an elaborate critique of the concept and practice of "therapy." The greatest praise, in my view, goes to the fact that Masson has in this book, along with others that he's written, denounced several very serious issues with therapeutic practices, specially the harm and abuse that are carried out against defenseless human beings in many cases to a lethal point or one that condemns a human being to a life of sanctioned torture. Using very poignant historical examples, Masson clearly shows how terrible but sanctioned diagnoses and therapeutic practices have been

used to torture people into submissive roles society ascribes to them, or to make their mental health seriously deteriorate as a result of their so-called "treatment." His examples are especially focused on how a patriarchal society uses a variety of violent techniques to punish, torture, and/or make women submissive. While all his examples and points are well taken, he elaborates more on the male/female power war to the exclusion of others. Another point of praise, is that Masson has also given a big focus to the issue of sexual abuse of children and its gross denial in society. But while he does give examples of children that were grossly mistreated, he does not elaborate on how similar structural forms of oppression that women have faced from a patriarchal society are present in society's structure regarding adults v. children. He also highlights much more male abuse of female children and ignores other forms of sexual abuse, a format that does a disservice to other victims by continuing the silence about it. We know today that the number of male children abused is immense and has been continuously overlooked.

When an author puts forth the claim that all psychotherapy should be abandoned on the grounds that the entire field is inherently corrupt, one is tempted to dismiss him as a crackpot. But Dr. Masson is no crackpot. He is the former director of the Sigmund Freud Archives and a psychotherapist himself. Given those qualifications Dr. Masson's ideas are worthy of consideration--however radical they may appear. By the time you finish this book, with its well researched history of psychotherapy, you will be convinced. The abuses of patients at the hands of psychotherapists and psychoanalysts over the past century and a half are so horrifying as to make some chapters almost impossible to read. But Masson's object is not to shock us with the details of the sexual, emotional and physical abuse that psychiatric patients have suffered, but to demonstrate that the entire field rests upon a false assumption which basically guarantees that patients will be mistreated. The assumption is that therapists know what sanity is. They do not--for the simple reason that nobody does. The only thing that therapists can know is how their society defines sanity. (Even that is a stretch. Unlike anthropologists, psychologists are not trained to analyze social norms and mores.) As has been amply demonstrated, the notion of sanity changes substantially from one era to the next. A woman in the 19th century could be incarcerated for life in a mental asylum for "incurable pride" or for "moral insanity", terms which we find quaint nowadays, but, as they were taken seriously at the time, destroyed countless lives. And if we find these terms quaint, just imagine how such culturally specific concepts as "neurosis" will be viewed in the future.

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