



Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation

Leonard Shengold

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To abuse or neglect a child, to deprive the child of his or her own identity and ability to experience joy in life, is to commit soul murder. Soul murder is the perpetration of brutal or subtle acts against children that result in their emotional bondage to the abuser and, finally, in their psychic and spiritual annihilation. In this compelling, disturbing, and superbly readable book, Dr. Leonard Shengold, clinical professor of psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine, explores the devastating psychological effects of this trauma inflicted on a shocking number of children.

Drawing on a lifetime of clinical experience and wide-ranging reading in world literature, Dr. Shengold examines the ravages of soul murder in the adult lives of his patients as well as in the lives and works of such seminal writers as George Orwell, Dickens, Chekhov, and Kipling. One hopeful note in this saga of pain is that a terrible childhood can, if survived, be a source of strength, as Dr. Shengold finds in the cases of Dickens and Orwell.

Provocatively original in its approach to literature and psychology, unsettling in its vivid portrayal of the darker side of human nature, far-reaching in its conclusions, Soul Murder will stand alongside such works as Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child* as one of the most important studies of the psyche to appear in decades.

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