



New Studies of Old Villains: A Radical Reconsideration of the Oedipus Complex

Paul Verhaeghe

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Freud's discovery of the Oedipus complex has had a tumultuous fate in the field of psychology in the United States. At first considered the kernel of psychoanalysis it progressively lost its luster because of its patriarchal underpinnings—today Freud is barely studied in psychology departments. His theory of the unconscious born of the notion that the child represses his love for his mother for fear of incurring his father's wrath is now obsolete and replaced by various theories focused mainly on the mother-child relationship where the burning question of the child's sexual development is conveniently set aside. In this revolutionary book Paul Verhaeghe, an expert Lacanian psychoanalyst and psychologist and award-winning author, explains why the Oedipus complex is not what it appears to be. Freud's theory can be read as a defensive myth that patients themselves invent in order to avoid confronting a forbidden enjoyment. Lacan's theory sheds a new light on this need for a defense.

Seen from that angle the whole history of psychoanalysis, its twists and turns, is revisited, revealing connections with recent discoveries in attachment theory. *New Studies on Old Villains* will be of great interest to psychologists, therapists, and departments of psychology.

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