



Freud and Oedipus (Psychoanalysis & Culture)

By Peter L. Rudnytsky

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"Freud and Oedipus" reassesses Freud's central concept of the Oedipus complex from the interlocking perceptives of biography, intellectual history, and Greek tragedy. Drawing on a wealth of primary and secondary materials, Peter Rudnytsky establishes how Freud reached his epochal formulation through his own self-analysis and clinical work. He then places Freud's discoveries in the context of nineteenth-century German intellectual and literary history. Finally, he demonstrates how many of Freud's insights are foreshadowed in Sophocles' "Oedipus the King" and discusses the psychoanalytic and structuralist interpretation of Sophocles' Oedipus cycle as a whole.

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Editorial Review

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Rudnytsky first focuses on Freud's biography, particularly the expanded Fliess correspondence, to elucidate the centrality of the Oedipus myth in Freud's understanding of himself and development of his theories. He then examines the myth as a vehicle for intense self-exploration in 19th-century German literature and idealistic philosophy, and finally closes with a literary-psychoanalytical discussion of the Oedipus cycle and a brief appendix that dismisses various opponents of Freud's Oedipal theories. The biographical section is the strongest and most engaging; afterwards, interest wanes. Unfortunately, Rudnytsky, professor of literature at Columbia, has not been able to make his deep and wide-ranging knowledge live: this is dogged, not exhilarating, scholarship. Richard Kuczkowski, Dir., Continuing Education, Dominican Coll., Blauvelt, N.Y.

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About the Author

Peter Rudnytsky

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