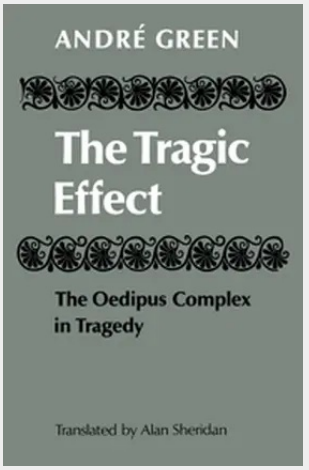
Green

The Tragic Effect

The Oedipus Complex in Tragedy

In this stimulating and wide-ranging 1979 study, André Green, the eminent French psychoanalyst, demonstrates the relevance of psychoanalysis to literary criticism. He interprets the Freudian theory of the Oedipus complex - in its 'negative' aspect of male hostility towards the female - in several of the great European tragedies, including Aeschlyus' Oresteia (where the son kills the mother), Shakespeare's Othello (where the husband kills the wife) and Racine's Iphigégenie à Aulis (where the father kills the daughter), as well as Sophocles' Oedipodeia. Green sheds light on such important literary and psychoanalytic questions as the stage's kinship with phantasy, glorified in Artaud's theatre; those devices through which the spectator's unconscious may be affected; the family's privileged position at the centre of the 'tragic space'; the points at which modern structuralist thought fails; and the different perspectives exploring the Oedipus myth and Freud's interpretation of it. This will interest psychologists, anthropologists, and readers of literary debate.



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