



# Euripides, Freud, and the Romance of Belonging

*Victoria Pedrick*

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Freud's interpretation of the ancient legend of Oedipus—as formulated in Sophocles' tragic drama—is among the most widely known concepts of psychoanalysis. Euripides' *Ion*, however, presents a more complex version of the development of personal identity. Here, the discovery of family origins is a process in which parent and child both take part as distinct agents driven by their own impulses of violence and desire.

*Euripides, Freud, and the Romance of Belonging* studies the construction of identity and the origins of the primal trauma in two texts, the *Ion* and Freud's case history of the Wolf Man. Victoria Pedrick challenges the conventional psychoanalytic theory of the development of the individual within the family, presenting instead a richer and more complex economy of exchange between the parent and the child. She provides a new perspective on Freud's appropriation of ancient texts and moves beyond the familiar reunion in Oedipus to the more nuanced scene of abandonment present in *Ion*. Her parallel investigation of these texts suggests that contemporary culture remains preoccupied by the problems of the past in the determination of identity.

Pedrick's fresh perspectives on both texts as well as on their relationship to each other shed new light on two foundational moments in the intellectual development of the West: Greek tragedy and Freudian psychoanalysis.

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