

Suppliant Women A Tragic Reading of Politics

*By*

*Sotiris Manolopoulos*

*Psychoanalysis and Euripides' Suppliant Women* applies the "tragic" reading of politics, presented by Euripides in his play, *The Suppliant Women*, to the contemporary world.

Manolopoulos presents a psychoanalytic assessment of the key themes of the play, considering the phenomenon of hubris in public life indirectly, through its transformation in tragic poetry. *Psychoanalysis and Euripides’ Suppliant Women* goes on to consider how the foundations of the polis are linked to the integration of the work of mourning and the feminine core of existence, and how the aims of scholars who study the play correspond to psychoanalysis’ work towards understanding the psychic and social reality of politics.

This book allows for a deeper understanding of the pathological modes of mental functioning that manifest in politics. It will be of interest to psychoanalysts in practice and in training and academics and scholars of psychoanalytic studies, politics, and classical studies.

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**Sotiris Manolopoulos** is a member of the Canadian and Hellenic Psychoanalytic Societies, and is a child analyst, training analyst, former director of training and president of the Hellenic Society.

Reviews

‘This book combines psychoanalytic understanding and a deep knowledge of classical Greek drama. Sotiris Manolopoulos brings out the universal themes in Euripides’ play *The Suppliants*, as it explores the relation between past and present, inner and outer, male and female. Central to the book is its discussion, from a psychoanalytic perspective, of political issues. Manolopoulos demonstrates very valuably how *The Suppliants* illuminates the unconscious conflicts involved in maintaining a democratic society.’

**— Michael Parsons,** Training Analyst, London

‘A play on Greek society written 2,500 years ago reflecting women, mystery, tragedy, hubris and politics around a core of mourning is a necessary reading for our pandemic times, as broken politics need to be re-imagined.’

**— Dr Jonathan Sklar,** Training Analyst, London

‘In an innovative manner, and with an emphasis on the historical and interdisciplinary approach, Sotiris Manolopoulos creates the links between psychoanalytic theory and tragic poetry. In that unique but far-reaching space, the new theorization has been built: about politics as a way of integrating split-off, untranslated and denied elements of mythical acts linked to the process of mourning and the feminine core of existence. This viewpoint is especially important in a time of crisis and transformations, enabling us to learn about the alliances of community, about the connection of psychic and public life, calling for internalization and participation. Many concepts are enlightened and deepened: primary union, work of mourning, feminine core, but also the questions of war and of leadership. The very idea that the foundation of our public life is linked to the integration with the psychic work is appealing, and could be useful for the generations to come’

**— Jasminka Šuljagić,** Training Analyst, Psychoanalytical Society of Serbia; General Editor of the European Psychoanalytic Federatio

‘This is a book whose time has come. At a moment when we are witnessing the resurgence of political populism, of attacks on science and on truth, and when destructive forces appear to be gaining the upper hand, overriding even man’s instinct for self-preservation through denial of the seriousness of a world-wide pandemic and of global climate change, a psychoanalytic understanding of these phenomena of "political hubris" is much needed. We as psychoanalysts struggle to understand what appears to be a recent turn of events, but as Sotiris Manolopoulos points out through his treatise on *Psychoanalysis and Euripides' Suppliant Women*, these are but repetitions of man’s struggle to hold "deep unbridgeable contradictions" …"impossible links leading to impasses" … man’s "tragic position". This book will be of interest to psychoanalysts, psychotherapists as well as to students of history, politics and culture. It is well worth reading.’

**— Dimitris J. Jackson,** Training Analyst, Hellenic Psychoanalytical Society