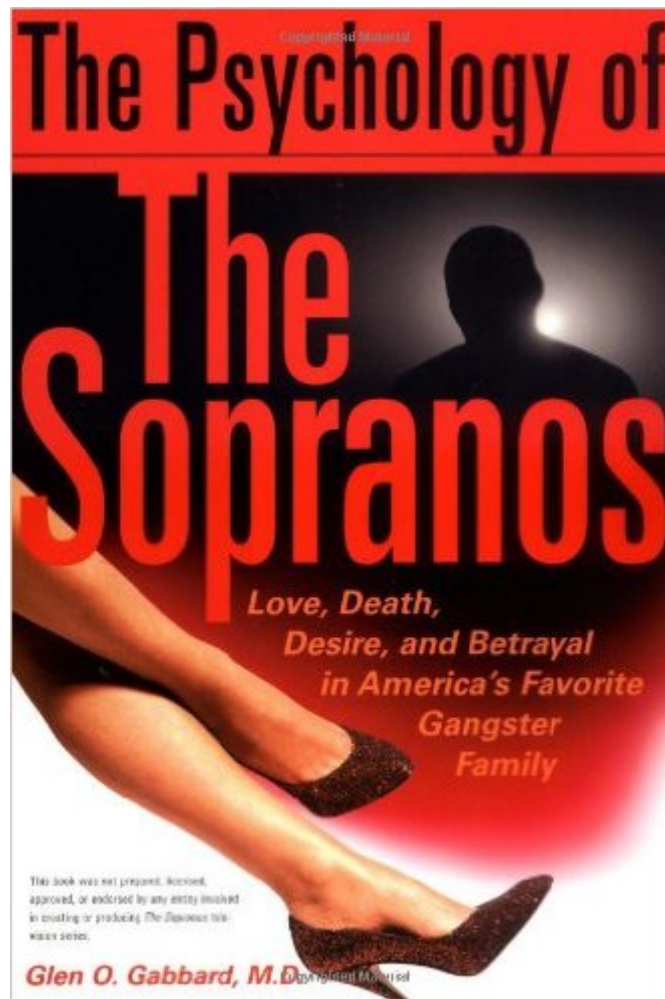


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The Psychology Of The Sopranos Love, Death,, Desire And Betrayal In America's Favorite Gangster Family



Synopsis

Some have called it "The Sopranos Effect"--the quiet that descends just before a new episode of the hit TV series is aired. Stores are deserted, restaurants quiet--and for patients of distinguished psychoanalyst and author Glen Gabbard, desperate calls for help go unreturned. Why, Dr. Gabbard wondered, have the misadventures of a middle-aged thug won the largest audience in HBO history? What is it about the characters and their relationships that draws us in so completely? What can we learn about ourselves from going inside the heads of these outlaws from New Jersey? In *The Psychology of the Sopranos* Dr. Gabbard draws on his vast professional experience (and his near-obsessive preoccupation with Tony's two "families") to delve into the psychology of the characters, the show's depiction of therapy, and how "The Sopranos" dramatically showcases the psychological ambiguities and conflicts in our own lives. Indeed, part of the show's popularity, he argues, is the spotlight it throws on viewers' psychological issues--from panic attacks and existential angst to codes of honor and moral indiscretions. With his tongue planted only lightly in his cheek, Gabbard poses the questions so many of us have pondered on Monday mornings: Is Tony's therapy working? And how is it possible for him and his "families" to reconcile the mundane and the monstrous? His answers will surprise and delight loyal fans. This book was not prepared, licensed, approved, or endorsed by any entity involved in creating or producing the "Sopranos" television series. Mafia don Tony Soprano, his family, his work "associates," and his therapist, Dr. Jennifer Melfi, have captured the imagination (and the fanatical devotion) of more than 11 million viewers. The show has garnered rave reviews for its writing and acting and has won a loyal following of educated viewers, who appreciate the sharp wit, the Machiavellian plot turns, and the Shakespearean character development of this extraordinarily well-crafted drama. Find the answers in *The Psychology of the Sopranos*: Is Tony a psychopath--or is he an American everyman putting bread on the table in the best way he knows how? Is Livia a modern-day Medea or a victim caught in mob mentality? Is Carmella an accomplice or an innocent? Who's more corrupt, Tony Soprano or Father Phil? Is Tony doomed to desire women who make him feel as bad as Mom did? Can a man who commits bad acts still teach his children to be good?

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Customer Reviews

This entertaining book actually enhanced my viewing experience. I watch the Sopranos on videotape -- gulping down three episodes at a time -- and I gone back to Season 1 with the help of this book. Gabbard picks up nuances that eluded me on first viewing. Most interesting is Gabbard's portrayal of the therapist, Jennifer Melfi. Not surprisingly, he is pro-therapy. While acknowledging Jennifer's mistakes -- especially her problems with boundaries -- Gabbard insists that Melfi does, after all, recover from those mistakes. And I'm glad he, too, found some of Jennifer's scenes "improbable," such as her visit to her own therapist with her ex-husband and son. He shed some light on the mystery of Carmela's therapist, the man referred by Dr. Melfi who told Carmela to take the kids and leave. Apparently this therapeutic style is based on input from a real therapist who informally consults with the show. I'm a little puzzled by Gabbard's references to A.J., Anthony Junior, who appears to be in middle school. On the one hand, Gabbard seems a little too forgiving of the psychologist in A.J.'s school, a man who has trouble communicating with laypeople. Telling the parents that A.J. has "five out of nine" symptoms of ADD doesn't help anyone. And I think Gabbard misinterprets a scene where big sister Meadow, from her infinite wisdom as a college student, helps A.J. interpret Frost's famous poem, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening. Gabbard says the scene highlights the difference in their academic levels, but I've met few straight teenaged boys who were moved by poetry. If they understand symbolism, they're not willing to admit it. Gabbard also picks up the verbal cruelty Tony inflicts on his young son: "If this is my male heir -- you want me to have a vasectomy?"

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