



Modern European Tragedy

Exploring Crucial Plays
Annamaria Cascetta

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Description

Modern European Tragedy examines the consciousness of Europe in the twentieth century through the art of theatre, drawing a vivid picture of how one of the most violent periods of human history dealt with the fundamental structure of the tragic.

'Cascetta offers a synoptic vision that includes many of the twentieth century's most fascinating "tragic" texts. "Modern European Tragedy" should provoke new conversations on old and important topics.' —Alan Ackerman, Professor of English, University of Toronto

The idea of the tragic has permeated Western culture for millennia, being closely bound with the concept of the limit of inescapable necessity that has been embodied in and expressed through theatre since the time of the ancient Greeks. This book addresses the question of how the twentieth century – one of the most violent periods of human history – dealt with the fundamental structure that is the tragic. Examining the consciousness of the era through an in-depth analysis of some of the twentieth century's most outstanding texts – including works by Ibsen, Claudel, O'Neill, Brecht, Camus, Beckett, Pasolini, Grotowski, Delcuvelierie and Josse De Pauw – **Modern European Tragedy** draws a vivid picture of the development that tragedy experienced during this time. Along the way, the book engages with some of the prominent currents of twentieth-century thought and philosophy that can still be found in the varied map of contemporary thought today: the ideas of modern Christianity, psychoanalysis, the theory of the Absurd, nihilism, Marxism and the acceptance of the limit. Together, analyses of these currents serve to support the book's key avenues of investigation: its explorations of what inspired these key authors to engage with the idea of the tragic; and its explanation of why the contemporary tragic no longer bears the form of classic tragedy.

Readership: This book is well suited to university students and teachers, scholars in the humanities and readers with an interest in theatre, literature, philosophy and twentieth-century intellectual history.

Contents

Introduction: The Tragic, Tragedy and the Idea of the Limit; Chapter 1: Hubris and Guilt: 'Genganere' ('Ghosts') by Henrik Ibsen; Chapter 2: Eve Becomes Mary: 'L'Annonce faite à Marie' ('The Tidings Brought to Mary') by Paul Claudel; Chapter 3: The School of Hatred: 'Mourning Becomes Electra' by Eugene O'Neill; Chapter 4: The Destiny of Man is Man: 'Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder' ('Mother Courage and her Children') by Bertolt Brecht; Chapter 5: The Tragic and the Absurd: 'Caligula' by Albert Camus; Chapter 6: Dianoetic Laughter in Tragedy: Accepting Finitude: 'Endgame' by Samuel Beckett; Chapter 7: The Arrogance of Reason and the 'Disappearance of the Fireflies': 'Pilade' ('Pylades') by Pier Paolo Pasolini; Chapter 8: The Apocalypse of a Civilization: From 'Akropolis' to 'Apocalypsis cum figuris' by Jerzy Grotowski; A Provisional Epilogue: Between the Experience and the Representation of the Tragic: Towards a Performative Theatre; Appendix: Chronology of Productions; Notes; Index

About the Author

Annamaria Cascetta is a professor of theatre history and the former director of the Department of Communication and Performing Arts at the Catholic University of Milan.

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