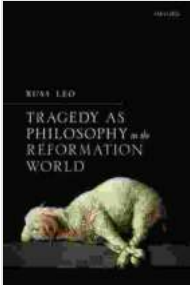


# Tragedy As Philosophy In The Reformation World: An Investigative Approach to the Theatrical Renaissance and its Influence on the Human Psyche



## Tragedy as Philosophy in the Reformation World

by Margo K. Apostolos

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The Reformation, a period of religious and social upheaval in Europe from the early 16th century to the mid-17th century, was a time of profound change that saw the rise of Protestantism and the decline of the Catholic Church. It was also a time of great intellectual and cultural ferment, as the Renaissance humanism and the rediscovery of classical learning led to a new era of exploration, science, and art. One area of particular interest during this time was the theater, which experienced a revival of interest in classical tragedy and the development of new forms of dramatic expression.

In this article, we will explore the concept of tragedy as philosophy in the Reformation world. We will examine the ways in which theatrical

performances and literary works of the time reflected and shaped the religious, social, and political upheavals of the era. We will also discuss the role of tragedy in exploring themes of sin, redemption, and the human condition, and the impact of these performances on the development of Western thought and culture.

## **The Rise of Tragedy in the Reformation World**

The revival of interest in classical tragedy during the Reformation was due in part to the influence of humanism, which emphasized the study of classical literature and philosophy. Humanists believed that the study of the classics could help to improve one's moral character and to understand the human condition. As a result, they encouraged the performance of classical tragedies in schools and universities.

Another factor that contributed to the rise of tragedy in the Reformation world was the religious upheavals of the time. The Protestant Reformation led to a decline in the power of the Catholic Church and the rise of new Protestant denominations. This religious turmoil created a sense of uncertainty and anxiety among many people, and tragedy provided a way to explore these feelings.

## **Themes of Tragedy in the Reformation World**

The tragedies of the Reformation world often explored themes of sin, redemption, and the human condition. These themes were relevant to the religious and social upheavals of the time, and they provided a way for audiences to grapple with their own fears and uncertainties.

One of the most common themes in Reformation tragedies is the theme of sin. Many of these plays explore the consequences of sin and the difficulty

of redemption. For example, in Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus," the protagonist sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. However, he eventually comes to regret his decision and tries to repent, but it is too late.

Another common theme in Reformation tragedies is the theme of redemption. Many of these plays offer hope for redemption, even in the face of great sin. For example, in William Shakespeare's play "Hamlet," the protagonist is haunted by the ghost of his murdered father and seeks revenge. However, he eventually realizes that revenge is not the answer and that he must forgive his father's killer.

Finally, many Reformation tragedies explore the theme of the human condition. These plays examine the nature of human existence and the challenges that we all face. For example, in John Milton's play "Paradise Lost," the protagonist is Adam, who is tempted by Satan and falls from grace. The play explores the consequences of Adam's sin and the nature of human suffering.

### **The Impact of Tragedy in the Reformation World**

The tragedies of the Reformation world had a profound impact on the development of Western thought and culture. These plays helped to shape our understanding of the human condition and the challenges that we face. They also helped to develop new forms of dramatic expression and to lay the foundation for the modern theater.

The tragedies of the Reformation world continue to be performed today, and they continue to resonate with audiences around the world. These plays offer us a glimpse into the past and a way to understand the present.

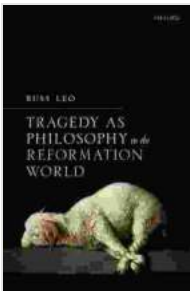
They also provide us with a source of hope and inspiration, reminding us that even in the face of great adversity, we can find redemption and meaning in our lives.

Tragedy was a powerful force in the Reformation world. It provided a way to explore the religious, social, and political upheavals of the time, and it helped to shape our understanding of the human condition. The tragedies of the Reformation world continue to be performed today, and they continue to resonate with audiences around the world. These plays offer us a glimpse into the past and a way to understand the present. They also provide us with a source of hope and inspiration, reminding us that even in the face of great adversity, we can find redemption and meaning in our lives.

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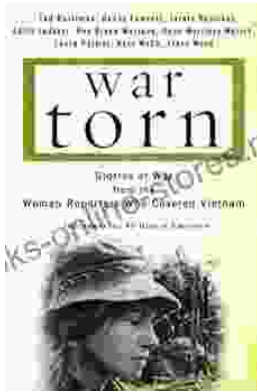
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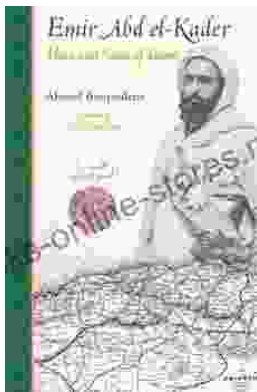
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