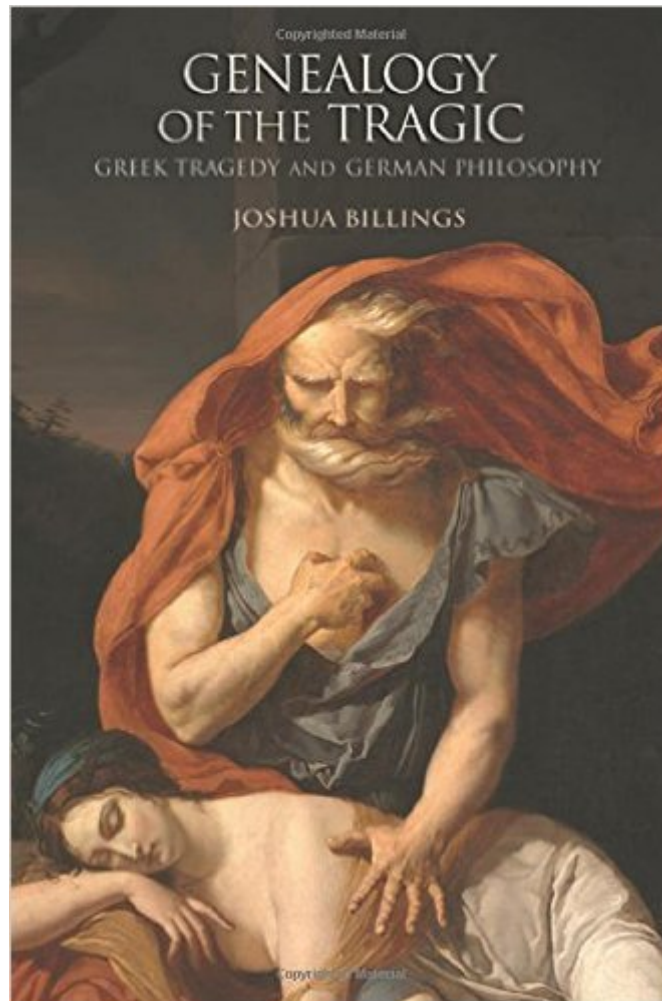


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Genealogy Of The Tragic: Greek Tragedy And German Philosophy



Synopsis

Why did Greek tragedy and "the tragic" come to be seen as essential to conceptions of modernity? And how has this belief affected modern understandings of Greek drama? In *Genealogy of the Tragic*, Joshua Billings answers these and related questions by tracing the emergence of the modern theory of the tragic, which was first developed around 1800 by thinkers associated with German Idealism. The book argues that the idea of the tragic arose in response to a new consciousness of history in the late eighteenth century, which spurred theorists to see Greek tragedy as both a unique, historically remote form and a timeless literary genre full of meaning for the present. The book offers a new interpretation of the theories of Schiller, Schelling, Hegel, Hölderlin, and others, as mediations between these historicizing and universalizing impulses, and shows the roots of their approaches in earlier discussions of Greek tragedy in Germany, France, and England. By examining eighteenth-century readings of tragedy and the interactions between idealist thinkers in detail, *Genealogy of the Tragic* offers the most comprehensive historical account of the tragic to date, as well as the fullest explanation of why and how the idea was used to make sense of modernity. The book argues that idealist theories remain fundamental to contemporary interpretations of Greek tragedy, and calls for a renewed engagement with philosophical questions in criticism of tragedy.

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