

Abstracts

- 634 **Simon Goldhill, The Ends of Tragedy: Schelling, Hegel, and Oedipus**
 This article compares and contrasts how the texts of Greek tragedy thematize ending and how German idealism, especially Hegel and Schelling, constructed a theory of ending in relation to Greek tragedy. In particular, through Hegel's and Schelling's paradigmatic readings of Oedipus, the article demonstrates a deep-seated commitment to a Protestant Christian teleology that continues, unrecognized, to influence modern readings of Greek tragedy. (SG)
- 649 **Donald Hedrick, Distracting Othello: Tragedy and the Rise of Magic**
 Accompanying Keith Thomas's account of its defeat by scientific rationality, supernatural magic, which I designate magic₁, receives scholarly attention denied the stigmatized magic₂—stage magic and the “gulling” practices popularized by London's con artists and pickpockets, who exploited distraction through sleights of hand, body, language, and thought. As *Othello*'s paratheatrical “entertainment unconscious,” competing and collaborating with theater, magic₂ informs the play's sensationalism, gull's gallery, source-tale revisions, and transformation of much traditional tragedy into a genre less about epistemology than about perception. Practicing early modern magicians' fundamentals—conveyance (legerdemain, misdirection) and confederacy—and exposing his own tricks, the entertainer-villain Iago's tactics and handkerchief prop illuminate phenomena such as “inattentive blindness,” important for cognitive psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, and performance. His “helpmeet” wife and apprentice Emilia emulates his misdirecting visual and conversational skills, until their team, echoing a celebrity magician-and-animal partnership, finally implodes. Situated between Montaigne's and Adorno's views on distraction, *Othello* transforms wonder from tragic affect into the capitalist distraction pleasure of a discursive entertainment revolution. Its hero-dupe himself adopts magic₂ technology for a spectacular suicide—arguably the suicide of tragedy's tradition. (DH)
- 672 **Linda Gregerson, Milton and the Tragedy of Nations**
 Milton's one venture into the genre of tragedy, *Samson Agonistes*, has prompted a notoriously divided reception among modern critics, not least because it revives the topos of exemplary violence, which the poet had conspicuously rejected in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. I propose we consider the underlying Samson plot not simply as the triumph or tragedy of a chosen nation and its representative hero but as the tragic collision between a universalizing faith and a nation's claims to exceptionality. Even after the devastating collapse of England's republican experiment, Milton never wavered in his commitment to the communal as well as the private manifestations of faith. The nation, or a nation equivalent, was an indispensable vehicle for continuing Reform, but the conceptual parameters of that nation, its relation to geographic place, and its rights in relation to other nations and to faiths other than its own posed a foundational dilemma for Milton's dramatic poem. (LG)

688 **Felicity A. Nussbaum, The Unaccountable Pleasure of Eighteenth-Century Tragedy**

Scholars have been quick to dismiss Georgian tragedy as mere rant and have thus failed to examine why tragic plays were regularly staged in the eighteenth century. This essay explores the “unaccountable pleasure,” in David Hume’s words, that spectators of the genre experienced. Hume compared the feeling of witnessing a tragedy to the sweet misery of watching high-stakes gamblers risk their fortunes. Part of the attraction derived from star actresses who performed the mixed genre of tragedy topped off with a comic epilogue in plays such as Edward Moore’s *The Gamester*, George Lillo’s *The London Merchant*, and David Garrick’s *The Fatal Marriage*. This essay argues that eighteenth-century tragedies portray the struggles of a genre caught between a world ruled by poetic justice and one flung about by uncontrollable economic powers. Further, in its democratization of grievable subjects and its metatheatrical relation to the tragic, Georgian tragedy anticipates modern developments of the genre. (FAN)

708 **Peter Lancelot Mallios, Tragic Constitution: United States Democracy and Its Discontents**

Tragedy is a recurrent subject in recent constitutional law scholarship. But this scholarship theorizes tragedy through a single narrow model, generally applies it to a limited conception of the domain of constitutional law, and ultimately conceives tragedy only as a liability rather than as a positive potentiality of constitutional practice. This essay critiques one theoretical understanding of tragedy and introduces three more, to argue for an open-ended praxis of pluralist tragic engagement with the United States Constitution that is necessary for the sober, mature, demystified, and deliberative functionality of the constitutional system. Each of these four models of tragedy is paired with a domain of constitutional law: Aristotle’s model with interpretation, Hegel’s with structure and institutions, the radical Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal’s with performance and public effects, and Nietzsche’s with cultural and educational accessibility. (PLM)

727 **David Kornhaber, Kushner at Colonus: Tragedy, Politics, and Citizenship**

The epilogue of Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* is often criticized as modeling a political capitulation, allowing vague spiritual promise to eclipse real political difference. This article reads Kushner’s epilogue in dialogue with Sophocles’s *Oedipus at Colonus* as a negotiation with the tragic condition that intertwines the political and the spiritual, set in a ritual space of utopian transformation. The plays’ tragic subjects, persisting past their expected demise and defined by their continued exclusion from the *polis*, demand citizenship as an act of reincorporation and an amelioration of suffering, offering transformative benefits to the state in turn. For Kushner, following Sophocles, the demand for citizenship is a demand for personal and political subjecthood, a precondition to all other politics and always a spiritual transfiguration. (DK)