

Tragedy, Recognition, Conversion

A Workshop at Duke University, October 20 - 21, 2017



A collaboration between the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University and the Early Modern Conversions Project, headquartered at McGill University.

There has been a substantial body of work on the philosophy, as opposed to the poetics, of tragedy (to invoke Peter Szondi's distinction). An interest in understanding the relationships of tragedy and modernity has underscored a particular

grand narrative about “The Death of Tragedy” (Steiner); and other grand narratives about modernity underwrite theories of tragedy.

Among the issues that necessarily emerge in this context are questions of recognition, whether understood in the terms of Aristotle, Hegel, or Stanley Cavell.

Yet there is an absence of any discussion about conversion or the relations between tragedy and conversion, whether understood in a Christian sense (questions of grace and repentance), or the transformations made possible by virtue of recognition (secular, psychoanalytic, political and social).

This workshop will focus on the most strikingly missing piece in these conversations: conversions.

Over the two days of the workshop, a group of invited presenters and their interlocutors will gather at Duke University for a series of thirty- to forty-minute presentations, critical engagement with the presenters, and discussion of the key questions. The workshop will also feature a number of shorter presentations by Graduate Student Associates and Research Affiliates with the Conversions Project.



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