

Tragedy and the absurd communion in the theatre

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Abstrak

As a starting point I consider it necessary to stress that the ensuing discussion pertains first and foremost to Western civilization. I do not mean to make generalizations on universal human nature, unless otherwise stated. Whatever inferences may be drawn from this which may bear on other cultures must be reconsidered in light of the history and social circumstances of the particular culture in consideration. Tragedy and the Theatre of the Absurd seem to be two contradictory terms apparently irreconcilable, or at most an attempt can be made to label absurd drama with a compromise term such as *tragicomedy*. On the surface, indeed, the two dramatic forms appear to be at opposing poles. Traditional tragedy calls to mind a glorious struggle of man against an overpowering force which leads him ultimately to inevitable disaster, suffering of such dignity and stature that the spectators, ordinary citizens that they are, are left in awe in face of the magnificence, and in the process undergo katharsis, the purging of conflicting emotions, that only great drama is supposed to achieve.