This book is a comprehensive survey of the philosophy of tragedy from antiquity to the present. From Plato to Žižek the focal question has been: Why, in spite of its distressing content, do we value tragic drama? What is the nature of the ‘tragic effect’? Some philosophers point to a certain kind of pleasure that results from tragedy. Others, while not excluding pleasure, emphasize the knowledge we gain from tragedy – of psychology, ethics, freedom or immortality. The author engages critically with these and other philosophers, and concludes by suggesting answers to the questions of what it is that constitutes tragedy, and what it is that constitutes tragedy ‘in its highest vocation’. This book will be of equal interest to students of philosophy and of literature.

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The Philosophy of Tragedy

From Plato to Žižek

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For

Peter Loptson
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Abbreviations of frequently cited works are as follows. Bibliographical details are given in the Bibliography at the end of the book.

Benjamin
GT  *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*

Camus
CA  ‘Caligula’ and Three Other Plays
FT  ‘On the Future of Tragedy’

Hegel
A  *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*
PS  *Phenomenology of Spirit* (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)

Heidegger
B&T  *Being and Time* (numerals refer to the pagination of the seventh German edition of *Sein und Zeit* given in the margins)
GA  *Gesamtausgabe* (numerals refer to volume numbers)
HE  ‘Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry’
I  *Hölderlin’s Hymn ‘The Ister’*
IM  *Introduction to Metaphysics*
N  *Nietzsche* (4 vols.)
PLT  *Poetry Language Thought*
QCT  *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*
Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Works

Hölderlin
FH  Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory

Hume
OT  ‘On Tragedy’

Kant
CJ  Critique of Judgment (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
CPR  Critique of Pure Reason

Kierkegaard
K  Either/Or, vol. I

Nietzsche
BGE  Beyond Good and Evil (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
BT  The Birth of Tragedy (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
D  Daybreak (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
GM  On the Genealogy of Morals (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
GS  The Gay Science (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
HH I and II  Human, All-Too-Human, vols. I and II (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
KSA  Kritische Studienausgabe (15 vols.)
TI  Twilight of the Idols (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)
Z  Thus Spoke Zarathustra (numerals refer to sections rather than pages)

Schelling
PA  The Philosophy of Art

Schmitt
S  Hamlet or Hecuba: The Intrusion of Time into the Play

Schopenhauer
WR I, WR II  The World as Will and Representation, vols. I and II

Žižek
PV  The Parallax View
V  ‘Plea for Ethical Violence’