

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910462964503321
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Titolo	The philosophy of tragedy : from Plato to Zizek / / Julian Young, Wake Forest University, North Carolina [[electronic resource]]
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2013
ISBN	1-316-08999-1 1-107-06519-4 1-107-25554-6 1-107-05787-6 1-107-05566-0 1-139-17723-0 1-107-05913-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xiv, 279 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Disciplina	809/.9162
Soggetti	Tragic, The Tragedy
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Sommario/riassunto	This book is a full survey of the philosophy of tragedy from antiquity to the present. From Aristotle to Zizek 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. Through a critical engagement with these and other philosophers, the book concludes by suggesting an answer to the question of what it is that constitutes tragedy 'in its highest vocation'. This book will be of equal interest to students of philosophy and of literature.