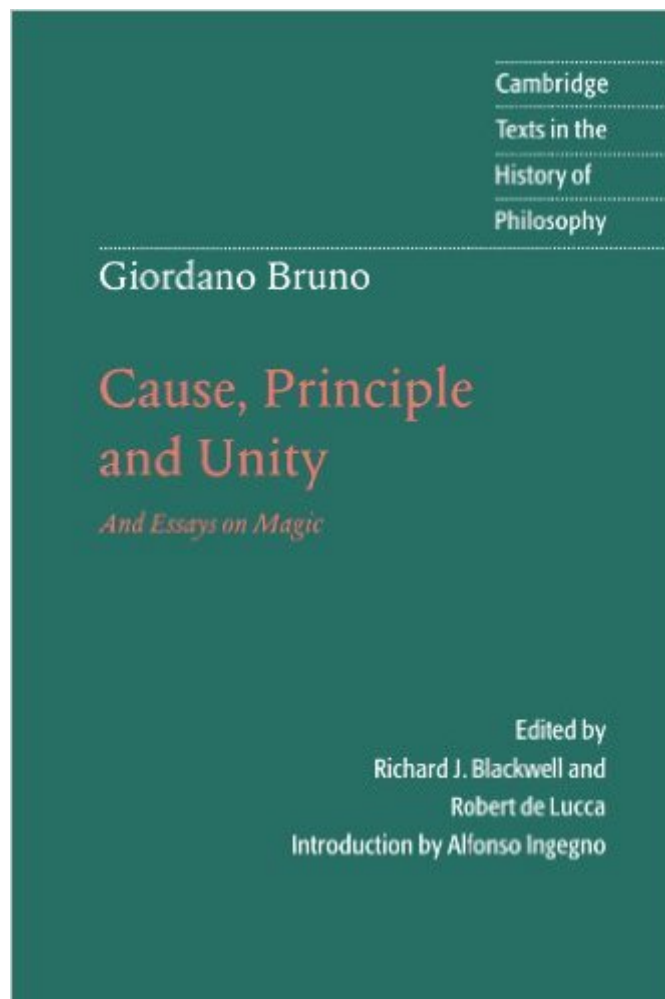


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Giordano Bruno: Cause, Principle And Unity: And Essays On Magic (Cambridge Texts In The History Of Philosophy)



Synopsis

Giordano Bruno's notorious public death in 1600, at the hands of the Inquisition in Rome, marked the transition from Renaissance philosophy to the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. This volume presents new translations of *Cause, Principle and Unity*, in which he challenges Aristotelian accounts of causality and spells out the implications of Copernicanism for a new theory of an infinite universe, as well as two essays on magic, in which he interprets earlier theories about magical events in the light of the unusual powers of natural phenomena.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the series of Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, published with the aim of expanding the range, variety and quality of texts available in English in the history of philosophy. This is a worthy aim and amply carried out by this elegant collaborative translation from Italian of one of Giordano Bruno's principal works. Since Frances Yates's groundbreaking work at the Warburg Institute in the 1960s (1), there has been an upsurge of interest in Bruno which increased as we entered the '90s and includes Morton Yanow's novel 'The Nolan' (2). As we enter the postmodernist 21st century, individualists like Bruno have a fascination and appeal. A renegade Dominican who was burned alive at the stake in Rome in the Campo dei Fiori, his prefatory epistle to *Cause, Principle and Unity* has a certain precognitive poignancy. O mount, though the Earth bounds you, holding you by the deep roots on which you repose, at the summit you can stretch to heaven. O mind, a sister mind from the high summit of the world calls you, to be the boundary

between heaven and hell. Do not lose your rights here below, and do not touch the black waters of Acheron, falling to the bottom and becoming caught in it. Rather, investigate the sublime recesses of nature, since, if God moves you, you will become ardent fire. In 'Cause, Principle and Unity', Bruno expounds a world view with elements of Neoplatonism, monism and pantheism that were roundly condemned in his own day, but which would be unexceptional in our own "other than for some lack of intellectual coherence.

Learning about a first cause after Kant became a philosophy homeboy in Germany for his Critique of Pure Reason (1781) demonstrating the antinomies that had been competing to determine the instant at which a universe was created by some transcendental ego is typical of the kind of education which gives students in modernity a series of errors leading to a complete lack of understanding. Combining a tremendous history of differing knowledge from different civilizations with a knowledge of the nature of scientific revolutions involving paradigm shifts produced by generational communities with different objectives, frequently motivated by the hatred of old men in societies that engage in prolonged warfare, it should be easy for comedy to proclaim: No person has ever been as brilliant as I have the right to be. There are some bright spots in Cause, Principle and Unity And Essays on Magic (1998) by Giordano Bruno, who wrote the main set of dialogues in England in 1584-5, but he went to Venice in 1591 and Bruno was denounced there in 1592. In 1593 the Roman Inquisition obtained a transfer of the trial from the Venetian Senate. In 1600 he was condemned for "the infinity of the world, the eternity of the universe, the allegation that Moses and Christ were magicians and impostors, and belief in pre-adamites." (p. xxxiii). The hatred of old men who have been born with a brain was so common that the church felt death would be far more effective than monetary extraction in protecting people who derived some comfort from belief in a first cause from the terrible thoughts that would be possible if some "internal artificer" (p. 38) had a more confusing way of shaping reality.

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