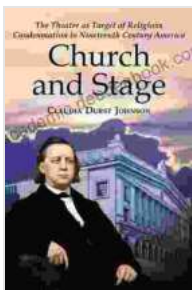


The Theatre as Target of Religious Condemnation in Nineteenth-Century America

The theatre has often been a target of religious condemnation, and this was especially true in nineteenth-century America. This condemnation was based on a number of factors, including the theatre's association with immorality, its perceived threat to religious authority, and its role in promoting social change.



Church and Stage: The Theatre as Target of Religious Condemnation in Nineteenth Century America

by Claudia Durst Johnson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 7314 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 222 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



The Theatre's Association with Immorality

One of the main reasons why the theatre was condemned by religious leaders in the nineteenth century was its association with immorality. Theatre was often seen as a place where people went to indulge in sinful activities, such as gambling, drinking, and prostitution. This perception was reinforced by the fact that many theatres were located in disreputable areas

of town, and by the fact that many actors and actresses were known for their loose morals.

Religious leaders also condemned the theatre because of its portrayal of women. In many plays, women were depicted as being weak, submissive, and dependent on men. This was seen as a threat to traditional gender roles, and it led many religious leaders to believe that the theatre was a dangerous influence on women.

The Theatre's Perceived Threat to Religious Authority

Another reason why the theatre was condemned by religious leaders in the nineteenth century was its perceived threat to religious authority. Religious leaders believed that the theatre was a rival source of entertainment and that it could lead people away from the church. They also worried that the theatre's portrayal of religious figures and institutions could undermine their authority.

This fear was particularly strong among Protestant denominations, which had a long tradition of opposing theatrical performances. Protestants believed that the theatre was a worldly institution that had no place in a Christian society.

The Theatre's Role in Promoting Social Change

Finally, the theatre was also condemned by religious leaders in the nineteenth century because of its role in promoting social change. The theatre was often used to advocate for social reforms, such as the abolition of slavery and the rights of women. This made it a target for those who opposed these changes.

Religious leaders were particularly concerned about the theatre's role in promoting the abolition of slavery. They believed that the theatre was a dangerous influence on slaves, and that it could lead them to revolt. They also worried that the theatre's portrayal of slavery could undermine their own authority over their slaves.

The Impact of Religious Condemnation on the Development of American Theatre

The religious condemnation of the theatre had a significant impact on the development of American theatre. In the early nineteenth century, theatre was a thriving industry, with new theatres opening in cities and towns across the country. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the theatre industry had begun to decline. This decline was due in part to the religious condemnation of the theatre, which made it difficult for theatres to find funding and audiences.

The religious condemnation of the theatre also led to the development of a new type of theatre, known as the "legitimate" theatre. Legitimate theatres were seen as being more respectable than traditional theatres, and they were often associated with the upper classes. Legitimate theatres typically produced plays that were more serious and didactic in nature, and they avoided the sensationalism that was common in traditional theatres.

The religious condemnation of the theatre in nineteenth-century America was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It was based on a number of factors, including the theatre's association with immorality, its perceived threat to religious authority, and its role in promoting social change. The religious condemnation of the theatre had a significant impact on the

development of American theatre, and it helped to shape the way that theatre is viewed in American society today.

****Long Descriptive Alt Attributes:****

* ****Image of a nineteenth-century theatre:**** A grand theatre with a large stage, ornate balconies, and a chandelier hanging from the ceiling. *

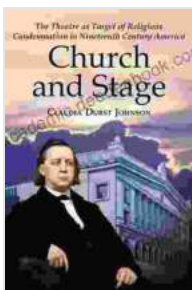
****Image of a religious leader preaching against the theatre:**** A stern-looking religious leader stands in a pulpit, pointing his finger at a theatre marquee. *

****Image of a play being performed on a nineteenth-century stage:**** Actors and actresses perform on a stage, while audience members watch from the balconies. *

****Image of a poster advertising a legitimate theatre production:**** A poster for a play that is being performed at a legitimate theatre.

****Long Tail Title:****

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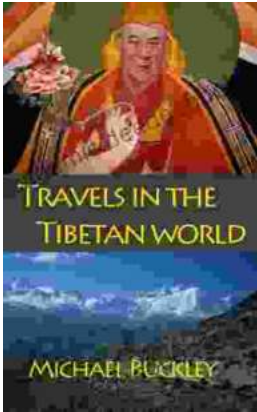
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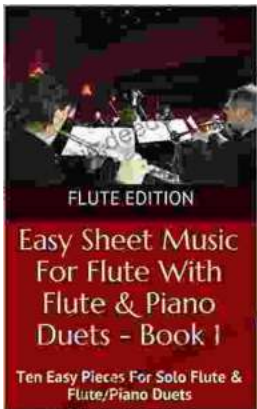
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