



# **The Pope and the Heretic: The True Story of Giordano Bruno, the Man Who Dared to Defy the Roman Inquisition**

*Michael White*

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Giordano Bruno challenged everything in his pursuit of an all-embracing system of thought. This not only brought him patronage from powerful figures of the day but also put him in direct conflict with the Catholic Church. Arrested by the Inquisition and tried as a heretic, Bruno was imprisoned, tortured, and, after eight years, burned at the stake in 1600. The Vatican "regrets" the burning yet refuses to clear him of heresy.

But Bruno's philosophy spread: Galileo, Isaac Newton, Christiaan Huygens, and Gottfried Leibniz all built upon his ideas; his thought experiments predate the work of such twentieth-century luminaries as Karl Popper; his religious thinking inspired such radicals as Baruch Spinoza; and his work on the art of memory had a profound effect on William Shakespeare.

Chronicling a genius whose musings helped bring about the modern world, Michael White pieces together the final years -- the capture, trial, and the threat the Catholic Church felt -- that made Bruno a martyr of free thought.

## **The Pope and the Heretic: The True Story of Giordano Bruno, the Man Who Dared to Defy the Roman Inquisition Details**

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# **From Reader Review *The Pope and the Heretic: The True Story of Giordano Bruno, the Man Who Dared to Defy the Roman Inquisition* for online ebook**

## **Oscar says**

Really liked this writer. One, he is well read and studied, and two, he puts it into words concisely with pith. He covered the subject well, and to me it read like a novel; which is unusual for fiction.

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## **Ana says**

When I bought this book I was kind of curious about the character. I remembered his name from the history lessons when I was young, but little more. Now I'm more than impressed about Bruno, his work - which I trully hope can find translated to portuguese or english - his intellect, his courage, his life, his contemporaries and their own work. It's a pity so much was lost and it was shamefull what he was put through but it brings a smile to my lips knowing that, despite all the efforts to make him disapear into oblivion, his word as survived and even thrived. Now I have a new goal: return to Rome and visit Campo dei Fiori.

Thank you Bruno, and thank you all that dared (and dare!) to think and speak different throughout the ages. Your efforts freed us from ignorance, thought us to think for ourselves and keep guinding us to new levels of knowledge.

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## **Daniel Gauss says**

This book is too easy. Nothing about what Bruno really believed. Just a very light and breezy account of Bruno's life and very basic explanations of his ideas. You can dig deeper into Bruno through other books. I wouldn't recommend this one.

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## **Labijose says**

Me hizo interesarme por uno de los personajes más fascinantes de la historia.

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## **Richard says**

Just finished this book. I liked it a lot more than i thought I would. While this text was not as intellectual as Yates' "*Giordano Buno and the Hermetic Tradition*", Couliano's "*Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*" or Walker's "*Spiritual and Demonic Magic*" it filled in the whole back story and it kind of explained the state of Europe in the late 1600.

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**Zebardast Zebardast says**

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**Cory says**

When I started, I had only heard bits and pieces about Bruno. This book was the first one about Bruno that I read. It has wetted my appetite to read more, not just about Bruno, buy others from that time. Anyone that wants to learn about Bruno, this book is a good place to start.

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**Pejman Norouzi says**

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**LJ says**

This was an incredibly interesting account about the later years of Giordano Bruno, a brilliant man who needs more recognition than he gets.  
This was fascinating and at times moving when it explains what Bruno may have faced during his years in prison. White tells the narrative at points as if it is a story, adding atmosphere and movements to the dialogue and moments in time.  
I was especially interested in the ending explaining how Bruno influenced Shakespeare.

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**D.L. Morrese says**

Whereas this does not go into much about detail on Bruno's writings, I found it an informative (and disturbing) account of what the Inquisition did to those who doubted Church dogma. It is an account of his life, not his philosophy. Despite some surprisingly modern sounding ideas, Bruno was not a scientist. He was a philosopher, but, as this biography demonstrates, he was a man of remarkable intelligence and courage. He dared to challenge violently enforced concepts that did not make sense, he did not back down, and he paid for it in 1600 with an ugly death. I recommend this one, in part because it is a well written book, but also

because Giordano Bruno was a man history must not forget.

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### **Paulomonic says**

The author seems to be incapable of hiding a profound dislike for the Catholic Church as a whole, without circumscribing his dislike to the wrongs this institution did within the context of the topic at hand. Kind of disliking mustaches, due to the Hitlers of this world. Other than that, not much more could have been said about Bruno, but more could have been said about his ideas.

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### **Kathy says**

Bruno was a visionary and philosopher who challenged everything, including the Catholic Church. Arrested and tortured by the inquisition, he ultimately was burned at the stake as a heretic. His influence was not diminished by his death. His view of the world, the universe as heliocentric paralleled that of Galileo.

While aware of the brutality of the Inquisition, the perverse nature of their ways was astonishing to me. Two priests were allowed to witness torture so that they could absolve one another of the brutal and inhumane treatment of prisoners.

This is a clear and honest portrayal of a brilliant intellect, man of science, strong in conviction right up to the moment of his death.

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### **Aaron Meyer says**

I really enjoyed this book. The focus is mainly on his imprisonment and trial with the Inquisition. I would of liked to have had more information on his life before this period as well as a more indepth delving into his philosophy, but what can one say.

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### **Mohammad Mirzaali says**

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### **Edward says**

I have mixed feelings about this short biography of Giordano Bruno who was burned at the stake in 1600 by

the Roman Inquisition for heretical views. On the one hand, there are unknown gaps in his life, so there may not be that much to say, accounting in part for the relative shortness of the book (183 pages). But for such an influential thinker as White makes Bruno out to be, specifics seem lacking.

Bruno was born in 1548 near Naples and went into a Dominican monastery at the age of 15 to become a priest and was there for roughly eleven years. He read widely, according to White, and began to have doubts about many facets of church teaching, particularly its reliance on Aristotelian thinking and the doctrine of the Trinity. He also became interested in the writings of mystics and alchemists and left the priesthood.

He studied the doctrines of Calvin and Luther but decided that they were as lacking in wholeness as much as Catholicism. He was scrutinized by church officials for his unorthodox views, and beginning to feel threatened, he traveled north to Geneva, and later spent time in France, and at the court of Elizabeth I of England where he became good friends with Sir Philip Sidney. He continued to travel widely across Europe and while in Germany he accepted an invitation from a Venetian nobleman, Mocenigo, to return to Venice.

Mocenigo turned on him and compiled a long list of transgressions against Church doctrine, leading to a heresy trial in Venice. The trial was transferred to Roman jurisdiction and Bruno spent six years, an unusually long time, in a wretched Roman prison, awaiting his new trial. He defended himself at his trial, his chief defense being that his inquiries were purely philosophical and that he had no desire to dispute divine authority, but not as interpreted by the church. He had hoped to meet with the pope, Clement VIII, to plead his case personally, but that meeting never took place.

All of this is told in a straightforward way. The details of what Bruno was accused of consisted of a long list of "errors and heresies" most of which have limited interest 400 years later. I was frustrated by a general vagueness with regard to what he actually said in his many writings.

White does mention in a general way that Bruno was a pantheist and had as his goal a "presca sapientia", a truth that would unite all knowledge which he links to present attempts to find a "grand unified theory" such as Stephen Hawking is pursuing. He emphasizes Bruno's work with memory as of crucial importance, and above all, Bruno's commitment to freedom of thought, wherever it might take an individual.

To his credit, White does contrast Bruno's intuitive approach to thinking with Galileo's empirical and mathematically-driven work which a few years later would also land Galileo before an Inquisition trial I just didn't get much of a sense, though, of Bruno's specific intellectual accomplishment, but perhaps I was asking too much of a short work.

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