



# Masterpieces of Classic Greek Drama (Greenwood Introduces Literary Masterpieces)

*Helaine Smith*

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Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Oedipus* plays, Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae*, and Aristophanes' *Birds* and *Lysistrata* are discussed in this lively and scholarly volume. The author's experience teaching these plays to gifted high school students makes this volume particularly useful. The drama festivals, the adaptations of myth, the relevance of Aristotelian criteria, and the political and cultural background of each play are described fully, and the nature of tragedy and comedy, plot construction, stagecraft, theme, character, imagery and individual odes and speeches are analyzed in depth.

The 5th century BC witnessed the flourishing of Athenian culture and was one of the most influential periods in history. The achievements of the Greeks at that time forever shaped our political and legal institutions and provided the foundation for Western civilization. At the same time, the world of the Greeks is distant and exotic to contemporary students. The values and beliefs of the Greeks are best represented in the plays that were crafted at that time, and these works continue to be widely read and studied. This book is a valuable introduction to ancient Greek drama.

Designed for high school students, undergraduates, and their teachers, this work describes the origins and physical aspects of ancient Greek theatre, discusses Aristotle's *Poetics*, and analyzes, in ten separate chapters, ten frequently studied Greek plays: Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Euripides' *Medea* and *Bacchae* and Aristophanes' *Birds* and *Lysistrata*. For each there is cultural, political and mythological background, plot synopsis, and analysis of overall structure and important scenes, speeches and odes. The Aristophanes chapters explore comic method and all chapters discuss theme and stagecraft in depth.

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