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Ten Plays By Euripides



Synopsis

The first playwright of democracy, Euripides wrote with enduring insight and biting satire about social and political problems of Athenian life. In contrast to his contemporaries, he brought an exciting--and, to the Greeks, a stunning--realism to the "pure and noble form" of tragedy. For the first time in history, heroes and heroines on the stage were not idealized: as Sophocles himself said, Euripides shows people not as they ought to be, but as they actually are.

Book Information

Mass Market Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Bantam Classics; unknown edition (February 1, 1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0553213636

ISBN-13: 978-0553213638

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.9 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Euripides was the youngest and the least successful of the great triad of Greek tragic poets. Criticized by the conservatives of his time for introducing shabby heroes and immoral women into his plays, his plays were ridiculed by Aristophanes in "The Frogs." His plays exhibited his iconoclastic, rationalizing attitude toward the ancient myths that were the subject matter for Greek drama. For Euripides the gods were irrational and petulant, while heroes had flawed natures and uncontrolled passions that made them ultimately responsible for their tragic fates. Ultimately, your standard Euripides tragedy offers meaningless suffering upon which the gods look with complete indifference (until they show up at the end as the *deus ex machina*). However, today Euripides is considered the most popular of the Greek playwrights and is considered by many to be the father of modern European drama. This volume does not include all of the extant plays of Euripides (we believe he authored 92 plays, 19 of which have survived), but what are arguably the ten most important: "Alcestris," "Medea," "Hippolytus," "Andromache," "Ion," "Trojan Women," "Electra," "Iphigenia Among the Taurians," "The Bacchantes," and "Iphigenia at Aulis." The translations by

Moses Hadas and John McLean are not as literate as you will find elsewhere, but they are eminently functional and make this volume one of the most cost-effective ways of providing students an opportunity to study the work of a great dramatist. After reading several Euripides tragedies several things emerge in our understanding of his work. First, he has a unique structure for his plays decidedly different from those of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

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