



Poetics (Penguin Classics)

Aristotle

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Essential reading for all students of Greek theatre and literature, and equally stimulating for anyone interested in literature

In the *Poetics*, his near-contemporary account of classical Greek tragedy, Aristotle examines the dramatic elements of plot, character, language and spectacle that combine to produce pity and fear in the audience, and asks why we derive pleasure from this apparently painful process. Taking examples from the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, the *Poetics* introduced into literary criticism such central concepts as mimesis ('imitation'), hamartia ('error') and katharsis, which have informed serious thinking about drama ever since. Aristotle explains how the most effective tragedies rely on complication and resolution, recognition and reversals, while centring on characters of heroic stature, idealised yet true to life. One of the most perceptive and influential works of criticism in Western literary history, the *Poetics* has informed serious thinking about drama ever since.

Malcolm Heath's lucid translation makes the *Poetics* fully accessible to the modern reader. In this edition it is accompanied by an extended introduction, which discusses the key concepts in detail, and includes suggestions for further reading.

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