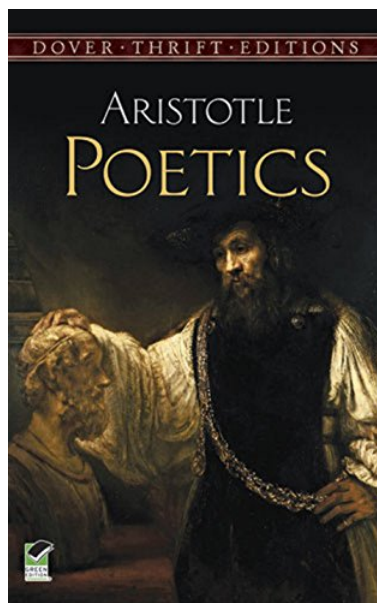


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Among the most influential books in Western civilization, Aristotle's *Poetics* is really a treatise on fine art. In it are mentioned not only epic and dithyrambic poetry, but tragedy, comedy, and flute and lyre playing. Aristotle's conception of tragedy, i.e. the depiction of a heroic action that arouses pity and fear in the spectators and brings about a catharsis of those emotions, has helped perpetuate the Greek ideal of drama to the present day. Similarly, his dictums concerning unity of time and place, the necessity for a play to have a beginning, middle, and end, the idea of the tragic flaw and other concepts have had enormous influence down through the ages. Throughout the work, Aristotle reveals not only a great intellect analyzing the nature of poetry, music, and drama, but also a down-to-earth understanding of the practical problems facing the poet and playwright. Now, in this inexpensive edition of the *Poetics*, readers can enjoy the seminal insights of one of the greatest minds in human history as he sets about laying the foundations of critical thought about the arts.

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