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includes afterword p 349 393 by the author dionysus and the bacchae in the light of recent scholarship

in his play bacchae euripides chooses as his central figure the god who crosses the

boundaries among god man and beast between reality and imagination and between art and madness in so doing he explores what in tragedy is able to reach beyond the social ritual and historical context from which tragedy itself rises charles segal's reading of euripides bacchae builds gradually from concrete details of cult setting and imagery to the work's implications for the nature of myth language and theater this volume presents the argument that the dionysiac poetics of the play characterize a world view and an art form that can admit logical contradictions and hold them in suspension

where is the pleasure in tragedy this question how suffering and sorrow become the stuff of aesthetic delight is at the center of charles segal's new book which collects and expands his recent explorations of euripides art alcestis hippolytus and hecuba the three early plays interpreted here are linked by common themes of violence death lamentation and mourning and by their implicit definitions of male and female roles segal shows how these plays draw on ancient traditions of poetic and ritual commemoration particularly epic song and at the same time refashion these traditions into new forms in place of the epic muse of martial glory euripides segal argues evokes a muse of sorrows who transforms the suffering of individuals into a common grief for all the citizens a community of shared feeling in the theater like his predecessors in tragedy euripides believes death more than any other event exposes the deepest truth of human nature segal examines the revealing final moments in alcestis hippolytus and hecuba and discusses the playwright's use of these deaths especially those of women to question traditional values and the familiar definitions of male heroism focusing on gender the affective dimension of tragedy and ritual mourning and commemoration segal develops and extends his earlier work on greek drama the result deepens our understanding of euripides art and of tragedy itself

branded by critics from aristophanes to nietzsche as sophistic iconoclastic and sensationalistic euripides has long been held responsible for the demise of greek tragedy despite this reputation his drama has a fundamentally conservative character it conveys nostalgia for an idealized age that still respected the gods and traditional codes of conduct using deconstructionist and feminist theory this book investigates the theme of the lost voice of truth and justice in four euripidean tragedies the plays unstable mix of longing for a transcendent voice of truth and skeptical analysis not only epitomizes the discursive practice of euripides era but also speaks to our postmodern condition the book sheds light on the source of the playwright's tragic power and enduring appeal revealing the surprising relevance of his works for our own day

ritual irony is a critical study of four problematic later plays of euripides the iphigenia in aulis the phoenissae the heracles and the bacchae examining euripides representation of sacrificial ritual against the background of late fifth century athens helene p foley shows that each of these plays confronts directly the difficulty of making an archaic poetic

tradition relevant to a democratic society she explores the important mediating role played by choral poetry and ritual in the plays asserting that euripides sacrificial metaphors and ritual performances link an anachronistic mythic ideal with a world dominated by chance or an incomprehensible divinity foley utilizes the ideas and methodology of contemporary literary theory and symbolic anthropology addressing issues central to the emerging dialogue between the two fields her conclusions have important implications for the study of greek tragedy as a whole and for our understanding of euripides tragic irony his conception of religion and the role of his choral odes assuming no specialized knowledge ritual irony is aimed at all readers of euripidean tragedy it will prove particularly valuable to students and scholars of classics comparative literature and symbolic anthropology

this generous selection of published essays by the distinguished classicist charles segal represents over twenty years of critical inquiry into the questions of what greek tragedy is and what it means for modern day readers taken together the essays reflect profound changes in the study of greek tragedy in the united states during this period in particular the increasing emphasis on myth psychoanalytic interpretation structuralism and semiotics

this comprehensive chronological anthology includes 58 essays on poetry by 53 poets starting with james weldon johnson and robert frost the book offers diverse and often conflicting accounts of the nature and function of poetry the collection includes rarely anthologized essays by jack spicer rhina espaillat anne stevenson and ron silliman as well as work by some of the finest younger critics in america including william logan alice fulton and christian wiman

no marketing blurb

combining several critical approaches narrative theory genre study and rhetorical analysis this lucid and sophisticated study develops a synthetic view of the messenger of greek tragedy showing how this role illuminates some of the genre s most persistent concerns especially those relating to language knowledge and the workings of tragic theater itself

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