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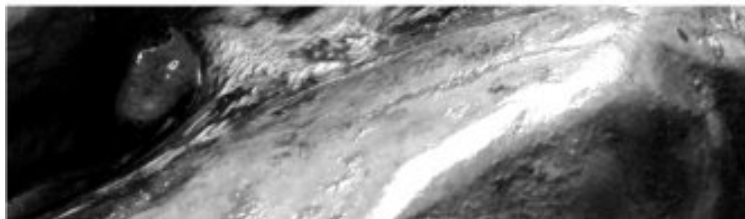
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# Orestes

Euripides



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**Euripides : Orestes** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Orestes:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good translationBy an avid readerThis is a very good translation of Orestes. The story, tragic as it is, moves along as a riveting story with unique characters. It is short enough to be an easy read, but long enough to tell the tale. Very good work.

The play begins with a soliloquy that outlines the basic plot and events that have led up to this point from Electra, who

stands next to a sleeping Orestes. Shortly after, Helen comes out of the palace under the pretext that she wishes to make an offering at her sister Clytemnestra's grave. As in most of the plays of Classical Greece, Helen is portrayed as a vacuous floozy. Some commentators criticize Euripides as being a misogynist; however his dialogue is often very ironic. Consequently, one reading of the play, especially from a patriarchal mindset, would have Euripides place blame for the Trojan War and the fall of the House of Atreus at Helen's feet. In fact, Euripides may arguably use Helen as a device through which to discuss several larger themes such as freewill, fate, and the role of the gods in the cosmos. For example, Helen is unable to take personal responsibility for allowing herself to be abducted to Troy, and blames Apollo for the problems in the House of Atreus. After Helen leaves, a chorus of Argive women enters to help advance the plot. Then Orestes, still maddened by the Furies, awakes. Menelaus arrives at the palace and he and Orestes discuss the murder and the resulting madness. Tyndareus, Orestes' grandfather and Menelaus' father-in-law comes onto the scene and roundly chastises Orestes, leading to a conversation with the three men on the role of humans in dispensing divine justice and natural law. As Tyndareus leaves, he warns Menelaus that he will need the old man as an ally. Orestes, in supplication before Menelaus, hopes to gain the compassion that Tyndareus would not grant in an attempt to get him to speak before the assembly of Argive men. However, Menelaus ultimately shuns his nephew, choosing not to compromise his tenuous power among the Greeks, who blame him and his wife for the Trojan War. Pylades, Orestes' best friend and his accomplice in Clytemnestra's murder, arrives after Menelaus has exited. He and Orestes begin to formulate a plan, in the process indicting partisan politics and leaders who manipulate the masses for results contrary to the best interest of the state, perhaps a veiled criticism of contemporary Athenian factions. Orestes and Pylades then exit so that they may state their case before the town assembly in an effort to save Orestes and Electra from execution, which proves unsuccessful. Their execution certain, Orestes, Electra, and Pylades formulate a plan of revenge against Menelaus for turning his back on them. To inflict the greatest suffering, they plan to kill Helen and their daughter, Hermione. However, when they go to kill Helen, she vanishes. In attempting to execute their plan, a Phrygian slave of Helen's escapes the palace. Orestes asks the slave why he should spare his life and the slave supplicates himself before Orestes. Orestes is won over by the Phrygian's argument that, like free men, slaves prefer the light of day to death, resulting in the first act of compassion in the play. Menelaus then enters leading to a standoff between him and Orestes, Electra, and Pylades, who have successfully captured Hermione. Just as more bloodshed is to occur, Apollo arrives on stage *Deus ex machina*. He sets everything back in order, explaining that Helen has been placed among the stars and that Menelaus must go back to Sparta. He tells Orestes to go to Athens to the Areopagus, the Athenian court, in order to stand judgment, where he will later be acquitted. Also, Orestes is to marry Hermione, while Pylades will marry Electra. Finally, Apollo tells the mortals to go and rejoice in Peace, most honored and favored of the gods.

From Library Journal Drawing on the material of the Orestia, Euripides's Orestes is a strange and disturbing play, condemning all of its heroes for their violence and criminality and culminating in one of the most wildly absurd *deus ex machinas* in Greek tragedy. The new translation by Jungian analyst Peck and Nisetich (Pindar Homer, Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1989) renders the play in a modern English version that attempts to capture the variety and intensity of the original verse while preserving the power of its poetry. Their efforts are a worthy successor to the earlier translation of the late William Arrowsmith. Part of a new series of translations of Greek tragedy, this volume includes an introduction, textual commentary, and glossary of mythical and geographical references. A valuable contribution for both the student and the general reader. T.L. Cooksey, Armstrong State Coll., Savannah, Ga. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Willink's edition fills a clear need and does so with distinction. His no-nonsense approach to exegesis has produced a fulsome and lucid commentary that should remain a standard for many years to come....The commentary is chock full of information on meaning and dramatic interpretation which will with effort be useful to Greek readers at all levels....A must for all libraries serving classical studies."--Choice "Willink's splendid edition of the Greek text [is] a culmination of the labours of a lifetime...Its chief contribution is the commentary, which pursues or rather attacks problems of text, metre and grammar in the accustomed fashion...and is also alert to the play's rhetoric and dramaturgy."--Times Literary Supplement Language Notes Text: English Original Language: Greek