



# The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle

*Aristotle*

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## **The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle** Aristotle

Aristotle's Poetics is the earliest-surviving work of dramatic theory and the first extant philosophical treatise to focus on literary theory. In it, Aristotle offers an account of what he calls "poetry" (a term which in Greek literally means "making" and in this context includes drama—comedy, tragedy, and the satyr play—as well as lyric poetry, epic poetry, and the dithyramb). He examines its "first principles" and identifies its genres and basic elements; his analysis of tragedy constitutes the core of the discussion. "Although Aristotle's Poetics is universally acknowledged in the Western critical tradition," Marvin Carlson explains, "almost every detail about his seminal work has aroused divergent opinions." The work was lost to the Western world and often misrepresented for a long time. It was available through the Middle Ages and early Renaissance only through a Latin translation of an Arabic version written by Averroes. Aristotle's Rhetoric is an ancient Greek treatise on the art of persuasion, dating from the 4th century BC. In English, its title varies: typically it is titled Rhetoric, the Art of Rhetoric, or a Treatise on Rhetoric.

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