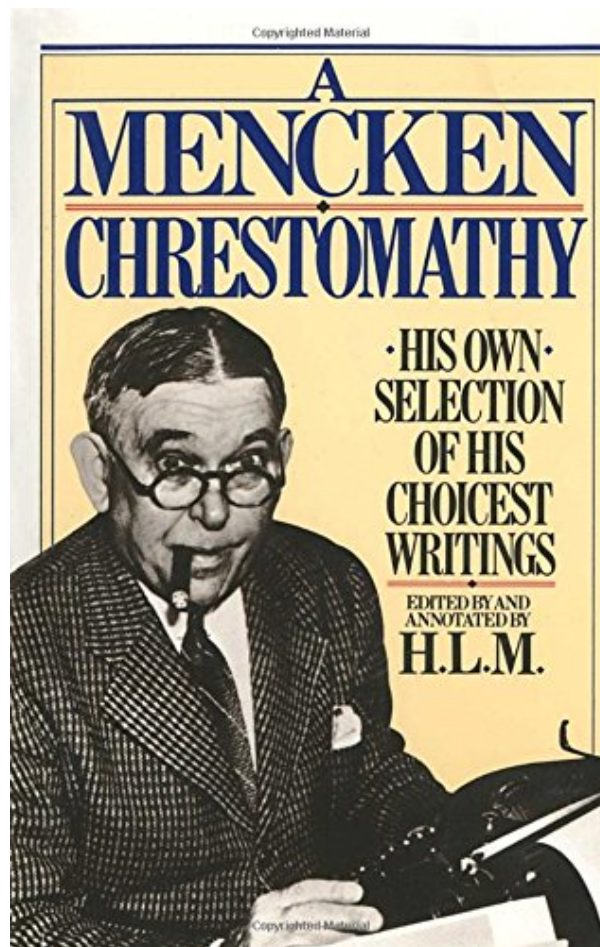


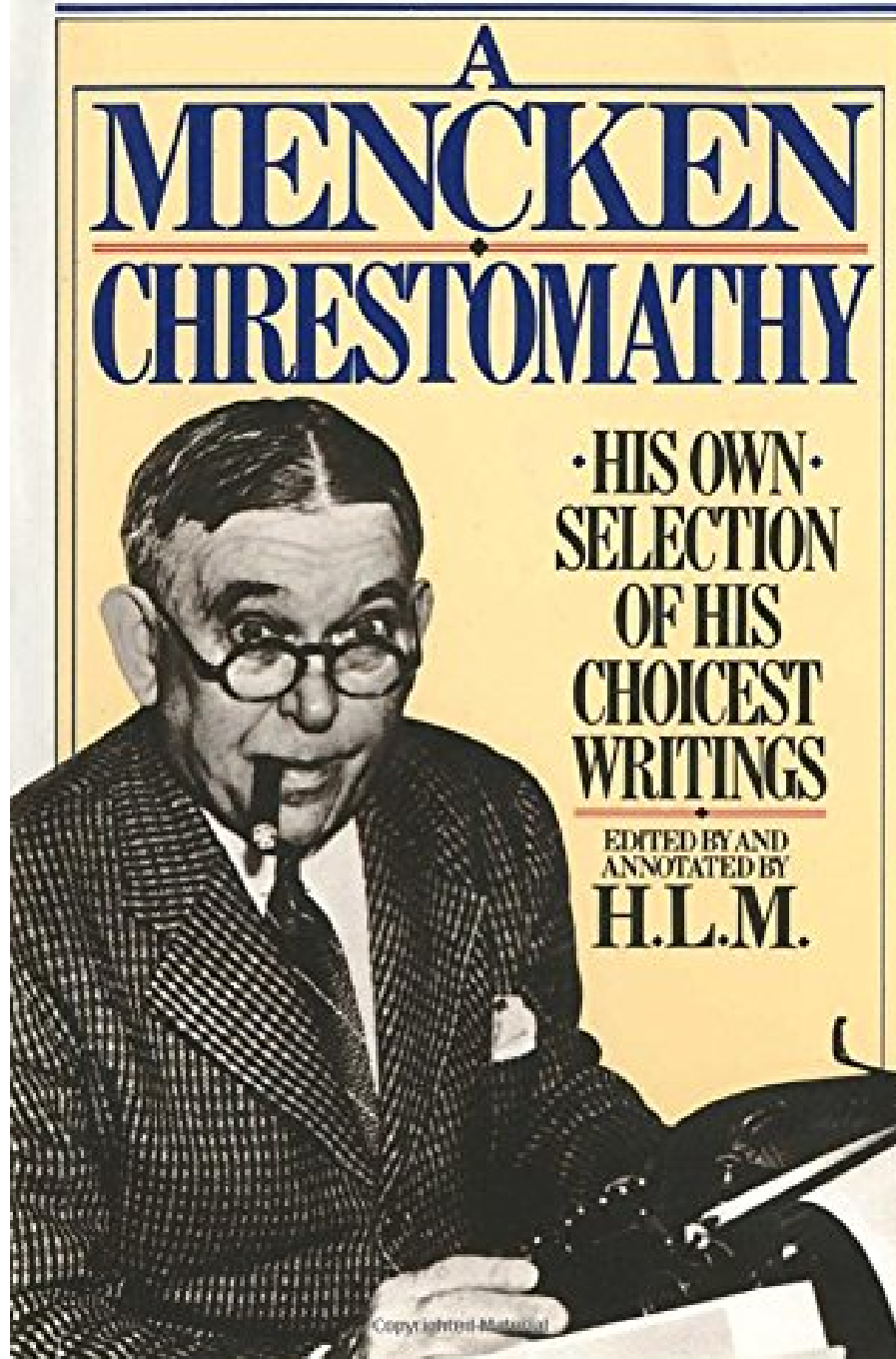
**A MENCKEN CHRESTOMATHY: HIS OWN
SELECTION OF HIS CHOICEST WRITING
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Amazon.com Review

A choice selection of H.L. Mencken's previously out-of-print writings. Highly recommended!

From the Back Cover

In my title I revive the word chrestomathy in its true sense of 'a collection of choice passages from an author or authors, ' and ignore the late edition of 'especially one compiled to assist in the acquirement of a language.' In the latter significance the term is often used by linguists, and some of the chrestomathies issued by them in recent years.

About the Author

Henry L. Mencken was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1880 and died there in 1956. He began his long career as a journalist, critic, and philologist on the Baltimore Morning Herald in 1899. In 1906 he joined the staff of the Baltimore Sun, thus beginning an association which lasted until a few years before his death. He was co-editor of the Smart Set with George Jean Nathan from 1908 to 1923, and with Nathan he founded The American Mercury, of which he was sole editor from 1925 to 1933. He was the author of many books, most notably *The American Language*, *Prejudices*, *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, *Heathen Days*, and *Minority Report*.

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Edited and annotated by H.L.M., this is a selection from his out-of-print writings. They come mostly from books—the six installments of the Prejudices series, *A Book of Burlesques*, *In Defense of Women*, *Notes on Democracy*, *Making a President*, *A Book of Calumny*, *Treatise on Right and Wrong*—but there are also magazine and newspaper pieces that never got between covers (from the *American Mercury*, the *Smart Set*, and the *Baltimore Evening Sun*) and some notes that were never previously published at all.

Readers will find edification and amusement in his estimates of a variety of Americans—Woodrow Wilson, Aimee Semple McPherson, Roosevelt I and Roosevelt II, James Gibbons Huneker, Rudolph Valentino, Calvin Coolidge, Ring Lardner, Theodore Dreiser, and Walt Whitman. Those musically inclined will enjoy his pieces on Beethoven, Schubert, and Wagner, and there is material for a hundred controversies in his selections on Joseph Conrad, Thorstein Veblen, Nietzsche, and Madame Blavatsky.

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most notably *The American Language*, *Prejudices*, *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, *Heathen Days*, and *Minority Report*.

Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

No author has made me feel dumber about myself

By Richmond

When you read this book you can't help but think how much smarter Mencken was than you. He was also a very hard worker and took his writing seriously. I had to look up vocabulary words from this book more than any other before or since. I've also never read anything so cynical and biting. Mencken frequently brings things up you'd have never thought about, such as the quality of a man who writes histories, how cowardly mankind is, and how weird William Jennings Bryan was, among many other things. Almost every essay is very short, but no word is wasted. Can't recommend this book enough, it would also make a great gift for precocious teenagers and college students.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

H.L. Mencken - Tells it Like it Is. Truth will always be truth, regardless of lack of understanding, disbelief or ignorance.

By Matthew Jackson

"It's not that we don't have enough scoundrels to curse; it's that we don't have enough good men to curse them."

-G.K. Chesterton

Mr. Mencken in his polemical style has no qualms about cursing scoundrels in this book... Some have viewed him as a disdainful misanthropic sourpuss, but this is not the case. He exposes the world as it really is and knew that the existing social order is a swindle and its cherished beliefs mostly delusions. I rate this book at 3 stars because Mencken never ventures beyond the mundane and merely offers up numerous real-life proofs that confirm what George Santayana stated years ago :

The world is a perpetual caricature of itself; at every moment it is the mockery and the contradiction of what it is pretending to be.

-George Santayana

Nonetheless, Mencken provides a fresh breathe of air to those of us who've been smothered by political correctness, governmental propaganda, and the manufactured ideas of the ruling class.

14 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Once Upon a Time, There was Freedom of the Press

By antistatist

I was first introduced to H.L. Mencken by a Jewish friend when I was in my 20's. I've been hooked ever since. Times have changed a lot since then and the Republic is no more. But even so, there once was a time in this country when the press wasn't controlled and paid to spit out propaganda. For one brief shining moment it published freely, unfettered by dictate from government or the mob.

This man lived on the edge of that time. His wit, his intellectual ability to think outside the box of events, the people and their culture, taking place around him then, would by today's intellectually fascist standard, fuzzily defined as political correctness by Bill Clinton back in 1990, will not be welcome by those of the strictly herd mentality of today. some of which sit, sadly to say, at Amazon today deleting reviews and comments from like-minded individuals, who will call a spade a spade rather than lie or gloss over their own

opinions. I take no pleasure in saying that. In fact, it vexes me deeply, but it is an opinion that has become quite apparent to me when reading book reviews and their comment threads. And it smacks of the dictatorship behind political correctness. I would much rather read what someone actually thought, than what any apparatchik anywhere thinks anyone should say, imply or convey. And no, I'm not talking about name calling. But with the loss of freedom of press, it only follows that those who value it, lose our freedom of speech as well.

If you're someone who also appreciates hearing someone's unvarnished opinion, has a sense of humour towards your culture, yourself, religion, and doesn't think the government and politicians are the greatest thing since sliced bread, you will find reading this book to be a breath of much needed fresh air from today's stifling, politically correct pollution that passes for informative commentary and opinion.

These are the most valuable, interesting and refreshing aspects of reading H.L. Mencken IMHO and why I give this book 5 stars. He spoke his unvarnished opinion, as did many others of his time. It's what made people real and news and events informative, not glossed over. And they were allowed to have different opinions. They didn't have to tow the line of opinion of the editor or the owner of the newspaper to keep their job.

This is a keeper.

See all 59 customer reviews...

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