Curtis Roche
[A note on the text: Greek was entered in the font *SPIonic;* it may not be possible to read the Greek quotations without this font.]

The Invocation of *Clouds* in Plato's *Apology*

Introduction: The Difficulty of Socrates

When reading the enormous collection of writings on Socrates, one is apt to respond as Strepsiades did to his son's defense of mother-beating. Every point seems to follow logically from the last, and the finished argument apparently stands firmly upon the given evidence— yet, like Strepsiades, we have the visceral feeling that something is seriously amiss. In the same way, modern readers meet with vastly conflicting appraisals of Socrates and his philosophy, all of which claim to approach the historical truth most closely. Any treatment of Socrates must address, at least in passing, the hurtles which a lacunose historical record sets before potential commentators.

Socrates has never been easy to understand. To non-specialists, he is a stereotypical Greek philosopher, immortalized for his eponymous teaching method. One of the few certainties about his career was his fixation upon questioning anyone and everyone. What is known today as the Socratic method, however, bears little resemblance to Socrates' style of debating. Socrates did not trade in questions and answers, as the modern practitioner of the Socratic method does. He asked questions which he could not answer, he would respond to his interlocutors with puzzling irony, and most vexing of all, he frequently denied possession of any knowledge at all. In a way, Socrates should be the last person associated with the now traditional question-answer script1 .

Properly speaking, Socrates' method was the elenchus, a dialectic exchange which reveals an interlocutor's contradictory beliefs. The elenchus can prove propositions false, but it cannot make positive assertions. Beyond the elenchus, Socrates' views on metaphysics and morality are more obscure and quite difficult to analyze. Today, Socrates is popularly conceived of as a symbol of knowledge, investigation, and philosophy in general2. It is not even clear whether Socrates should be termed as a true philosopher, as he made no complete philosophical system, and, for that matter, he left no writings at all.

The roll-call of Socrates' alumni shows just how ambiguous and open-ended his teaching must have been. Plato responded to Socrates' denial of knowledge and his inability to locate the source of virtue through his theory of the forms, which posited the existence of absolute entities. Antisthines interpreted the denial of knowledge as an ultimate lack of certainty and as a source of Cynicism. Aristippus saw the Socratic goal of a happy life as an argument towards hedonism. And, of course, the non-philosophical students of Socrates, such as Xenophon, Critias, and Alcibiades, all conducted themselves in vastly different manners. Plato's dialogs also vouch for the variety of reactions to Socrates' education; for example, Cephalus placidly declines to take part in the philosophical discussion in *Republic*. Euthyphro rejects philosophy even when shown its proof. And there were people such as Crito, who, though eager to understand Socrates, lacked the aptitude to do so.

Modern scholars still quarrel over what Socrates meant. Given our evidence, it is

hardly clear. But perhaps the very ambiguity of Socrates is what has made his legacy so enduring. His lessons provided a multifarious foundation from which countless scholars could begin their own work. The death of Socrates has become a watershed moment in history, and Western thought has long been dominated by the doctrines which stem from his teachings. The goal of understanding Socrates is not only of interest to classical scholars, but anyone concerned with the roots of the modern world.

I approach the topic of Socrates not with the aim of adding to the wealth of diverse interpretations of his life and philosophy. Rather, I intend to apply recent theoretical findings to a particularly knotty passage in the Socratic tradition, specifically, the invocation of the Aristophanes' *Clouds* in Plato's *Apology*. The two texts are closely interrelated: *Clouds* is a reading of Socrates, and the *Apology* provides a reading of *Clouds*. Although I address a very minor point in the greater field of Socratic philosophy, there are, I think, some important distinctions to be made in this particular case which illuminate the larger picture of Socratic philosophy.

In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates alleges that *Clouds* was slander (διαβολή). There are many reasons to doubt this claim. Current scholarship tends to argue either that *Clouds* indeed was a negative portrayal of Socrates, or that the cultural atmosphere of Old Comedy removed the possibility for didactic political messages in drama. The sometimes schismatic nature of criticism on this issue tends to obscure the common-ground shared by both stances. In what follows, I will argue that, although one cannot overlook the shots Aristophanes takes at Socrates, *Clouds* was something less than slander. The preponderance of evidence suggests that Aristophanic satire could not be ignored, but neither could it be taken without qualifications.

If *Clouds* was not in fact slander, Socrates must have been dissimulating by calling it such. The *Apology* is a text rife with irony, and whose interpretation remains elusive in many spots, especially when compared to other Platonic works and external historical evidence. Some of the most striking cruxes are the daimonion, the oracle, and Socrates' moral philosophy. The invocation of *Clouds*, however, is a particularly fertile grounds for analyzing Socratic irony because it can be examined through the lens of Aristophanic studies. By examining the significance of Aristophanic satire in normal contexts, we can determine the relative truthfulness of Socrates' assertions about *Clouds*. The topic of Socratic irony has, with considerably varied result, piqued the attention of numerous influential philosophers, and is a subject to large to be treated here in full. Rather, I will conclude by proposing that the invocation of the *Clouds* is part of the thematic irony in the *Apology*. By clarifying the force and purpose of the invocation, we can come closer to understanding how it resonates with other portions of the text.

I. The Claim of διαβολή in the *Apology*

In this chapter I address Socrates' assertion in the *Apology* that *Clouds* was slander (διαβολή). Socrates mentions Aristophanes at the beginning of his defense speech, and categorizes his play as the first source of ill will against him. First, he numbers Aristophanes among his long-standing detractors, who were indirectly responsible for his trial because of their unfair portrayal of him:

ὃ δὲ πάντων ἀλογώτατον, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὰ ὀνόματα οἷόν τε αὐτῶν εἰδέναι καί ἐπεῖν,

πλὴν εἴ τις κωμῳδιοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὤν· ὅσοι δὲ φθόνῳ καὶ διαβολῇ χρώμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀνέπειθον. [18c-d]
[What is most unreasonable of all is that it is impossible to know and say the names (of these accusers), except if one happens to be a certain comedian. They persuaded you using spite and slander.]

Socrates again mentions Aristophanes when pointing out the parallels between his present indictment and the actions of his namesake in *Clouds*:

Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται, ζητῶν τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν καὶ ἄλλους ταῦτα διδάσκων. τοιαύτη τίς ἐστιν· ταῦτα γὰρ ἑωρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇς Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδία, Σωκράτη τινὰ ἐκεῖ περιφερόμενον, φάσκοντά τε ἀεροβατεῖν καὶ ἄλλην πολλὴν φλυαρίαν φλυαροῦντα, ὧν ἐγὼ οὐδὲν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πέρι ἐπαΐω. (19b-c)
["Socrates commits injustice and is a busybody, investigating the things under the earth and in heaven, and making the weaker argument the stronger, and teaches these things to others." The indictment goes something like that. You yourselves saw these things in Aristophanes' comedy, in which a certain Socrates is borne aloft, claiming that he walks on air and doing a lot of other similar nonsense, of which I understand neither much nor little.]

Socrates' accusation is at least ostensibly straightforward: he claims that *Clouds* sullied his name and contributed to the public discontent which led to his indictment. But it is necessary to recognize Socrates' statement for what it is— an unsubstantiated assertion. For a philosopher who claimed to know nothing, and who questioned his neighbors' subjective beliefs whenever possible, there is reason to question the validity of such a baseless, provocative claim. Justifiably, numerous commentator have taken Socrates' words with a grain of salt.

Ancient writings on Socrates' reaction to *Clouds* are confused and confusing. Claudius Aelian's *Varia Historia* tells of a fictitious plot in which Anytus and Meletus contract Aristophanes to satirize Socrates as a test of his philosophical abstraction and indifference to mockery. Plutarch's *Education of Children* and Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Philosophers* briefly discuss Socrates' alleged disregard for *Clouds* as trifling nonsense. These writers perhaps intentionally ignore the testimony in the *Apology,* and seem more concerned with portraying Socrates as a generic sage than with examining the real puzzles of his philosophy. It is quite possible that these anecdotes were fabricated. Eunapius' short reference to Socrates in *Lives of the Sophists* essentially takes the claim of slander in the *Apology* at face-value. None of these ancient sources grapples with questions of intertextuality or the cultural milieux in which Aristophanes and Plato wrote, issues of vital importance to modern scholars. These accounts all date from late antiquity, and their separation from the actual production of *Clouds* and the trial of Socrates only diminishes their credibility3 .

Modern discussion of the topic can be divided into into two main arguments: (1) some critics vindicate Socrates' claim in the *Apology* by reading criticisms of Socratic philosophy in *Clouds*; (2) other scholars focus on the cultural atmosphere and literary tradition into which Old Comedy fit, and argue that *Clouds* cannot be considered a slanderous attack on Socrates. It is important to recognize that the versatility of

Aristophanes' art permits many varied readings of his plays, and that in order to appeal to a diverse audience, his plays operated on many levels at once. For this reason, exegesis of Aristophanic comedy is a notoriously knotty subject4 . It is not my purpose here to support any particular reading of *Clouds*, but rather to reconcile the two above propositions: it would be obtuse not to admit that *Clouds* scrutinizes Socrates and invites criticism of his philosophy; nevertheless, given the cultural and literary atmosphere of Old Comedy, it would be heavy-handed to call *Clouds* slander. In the next chapter, I will argue that Socrates intentionally misused the word διαβολή in his reference to *Clouds* in order to make a more rhetorical argument.

Before examining the conditions which, I think, absolve Aristophanes of the charge of slander, I will outline the main arguments behind position (1). A popular springboard for this line of argument is a refutation of Dover's claim that Socrates in the *Clouds* is a composite image of contemporary sophists, a caricature of the intellectual type5. A prima facie examination of Socrates in *Clouds* provides ample evidence for position (1). Scholars who favor this view argue that Aristophanes depicts not a type, but an accurate, albeit risibly embellished, portrait. Many features of the Aristophanic Socrates distinguish him from the typical sophist: his poverty reflects his refusal to charge students tuition6, he prefers dialectic over oratorical displays7 , and he is described as sickly and disheveled8 . Yet these are all superficialities; since he was writing about a public figure everyone knew, Aristophanes was obliged to depict Socrates with his familiar idiosyncrasies. But given the conjectural nature of our knowledge of the historical Socrates, and especially his intellectual development, it is much more difficult to determine whether Aristophanes was mocking Socrates' actual doctrines, rather than merely his pallor. The intellectual autobiography which Socrates delivers in *Phaedo* seems to contradict his statement in the *Apology* that he knew nothing about natural philosophy.

Although we will probably never know the truth about Socrates' early career, the miscellany of intellectual ideas tossed around in *Clouds* seems to vindicate Dover's claim that Aristophanes' Socrates was a composite, as least in regards to his teachings. It is plausible, as Vander Waert argues, that the *Clouds* offers an authentic portrait of the historical Socrates during his pre-Socratic phase, specifically, as a follower of Diogenes of Apollonia9. It is very easy, however, to point out similarities between known pre-Socratic teachings and the mess of philosophical jokes throughout *Clouds10* . It is likely that Aristophanes was throwing together a wide variety philosophical jargon as the raw material for his jokes; as, for instance, in the metaphor of the oven-sky:

ψυχῶν σοφῶν ἐστὶ φροντιστήριον.
ἐνταῦθ' ἐνοικοῦσ' ἄνδρες οἳ τὸν οὐρανὸν
λέγοντες ἀναπείθουσιν ὡς ἔστιν πνιγεύς
κἄστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς οὗτος, ἡμεῖς δ' ἄνθρακες. (94-7)
[There is a Thinkery of wise minds. There dwell men who argue and persuade that the sky is an oven-lid which is above us and that we are the coals.]

This is a comical mixture of Hippon's comparison of the firmament to an oven-lid, and Heraclitus's assertion that all matter is fire11. In reference to this passage, the scholiast mentions that Cratinus made a similar πνιγεύς related joke in his play *Panoptai*, and he concludes that *Clouds* was not written out of hostility (δὶ ἔχθραν)12. Although it is

possible that Socrates studied natural philosophy in his youth, the preponderance of assorted intellectual jokes on such diverse topics as metrics and entomological anatomy suggests that no single philosopher is being satirized, but rather erudition in general. Sommerstein notes the parallels between Socrates' discourses in *Clouds* and Diogenes' philosophies, but considers them parody.13 The audience certainly wouldn't demand an accurate representation of esoteric pre-Socratic doctrines. If there was any negativity against Socrates in *Clouds*, it was not based upon his early study of natural philosophy. A much more fertile source of evidence for criticism against Socrates in *Clouds* lies in a comparison between the Aristophanic Socrates and the Socrates from the early Platonic dialogs.

Commentators have read numerous critiques of the Socrates' teaching methods in *Clouds*; specifically, they take issue with the elenchus. As Nussbaum notes, the catastrophic conclusion of the play seems to result from the failure of Socrates' elenchus as an educational system. After disproving the old system of morality, Socrates fails to provide a replacement. Although his irony is meant to challenge students to think for themselves, it is just as likely for them to misunderstand him. The Socratic system of education, Nussbaum argues, produces irrational alumni like Pheidippides who use their skills to the detriment of society at large14. Strauss points out a similar criticism inherent in *Clouds*, which he notes is closely related to Nietzsche's examination of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*. By privileging knowledge over all else, Socrates ignores the concerns of the polis and ultimately does it harm by neglect15. Didactic poetics benefits the city more than speculative philosophy: as Aristophanes conveyed in the *Frogs*, Euripidean, and therefore Socratic, drama taught the people how to think, but Aeschylian drama, the truly poetic variety, instilled civic virtue.16 Plato himself broke with Socrates' absolute faith in the validity of the elenchus, arguing in *Meno* that virtue cannot be taught, and in *Phaedrus* and *Republic* that the soul is, at least in part, irrational and illogical.

Hegel's criticism of Socrates reiterates Plato's conclusions, while placing Socrates in a more modern paradigm of philosophy as an unfinished and ongoing project. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* Hegel characterizes Socrates as the first philosopher to self-consciously examine his own manner of thought, and to consider ideas as absolute entities. In this respect, Socrates represents a turning-point in Western philosophy. Despite the validity of his findings, however, Socrates never produced a categorical system of philosophy; and for that matter, the Socratic method cannot properly be considered a complete form of education. The subjective inwardness on which the Socratic method rests, Hegel concludes, is essentially an acceptance of emptiness17. Kierkegaard comes to a similar conclusion about Socrates in his *Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates*, in which he argues that Socrates' philosophy conceptually separates him from society. The elenchus, he says, is "infinitely negative": it can only disprove contradictory theories, and can never make substantive contributions to any science. Also, the elenchus depends on a personal sense of superiority: Socrates knows more than his interlocutors and his wisdom endows him with a sort of aristocratic elitism. Kierkegaard concludes that a poetic irony in the style of the great poets is preferable to Socratic irony18, an argument which strikingly resembles those of Nietzsche and Strauss. Nehamas defends Socrates' philosophy as valid, while making the large qualification that Socrates never really taught anything, but was never obliged to do so, since he never claimed that he could. Rather, students, such as Plato, had to

emulate Socrates' virtue through his example19.

There are numerous such ways of reconciling Socrates' philosophy. One might imagine that the success of these interpretations rests more in the skill of the commentator than in any inherent order in the system left by Socrates, though we cannot tell precisely how Socrates taught his students. If we trust Plato, his education was quite sparse indeed. At any rate, the volume of commentary on the subject of Socratic education, either positive or negative, admits the possibility for faults in Socrates' system. On the whole, later critics corroborate the first arguments made by Aristophanes in *Clouds*.

Thus, the most cogent evidence for argument (1)— that *Clouds* portrays Socrates in a negative manner— is the portrayal of the Socratic elenchus as a potential menace to civil life. Although many of Aristophanes' plays feature the mockery of prominent political and cultural figures, we ultimately cannot discern his political affiliations. His survival of two revolutions and the restoration of democracy suggests, in fact, that he had a minor role in politics, if any at all20. Supporters of argument (2)— that cultural and literary atmosphere of *Clouds* repudiates the charge of slander— generally admit the conservative leanings in Aristophanes' plays, but assert that they cannot be taken literally. Euripides may lose the agon is *Frogs,* but Aeschylus hardly gets off scot-free. And the same goes for the Good and Bad Arguments in *Clouds*. It is equally possible to consider *Clouds* as an attack on Socrates, or as an hommage, or both. In the remainder of this chapter, I will summarize the general points behind argument (2).

There are many reasons not to consider *Clouds* as a candid political attack. As is shown above, Aristophanes' criticism of Socrates is conceptual and intellectual— the scurrilous and obscene jokes are required by the genre and never really attack the heart of Socrates' philosophy. *Clouds* is certainly not invective, although its political leanings are obvious. De Ste Croix stress the importance of political commentary in Aristophanic satire, and likens Old Comedy to modern political cartoons. The genre demands humor, he argues, but the political message strongly outweighs the comedic elements21. No one questions the political nature of Aristophanic comedy, but the exact valence is very elusive. The friendly discourse between Socrates and Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* would seem impossible if the two were engaged in a vicious public dispute over ideologies. But even if they were, the theater would not be the appropriate forum for a political attack. When Socrates did acquire political enemies, they took him to court. Although the theater involved politics, a play was not equivalent to a political attack.

From a legal standpoint, Aristophanes was completely free to satirize whomever he wished in the theater. Sommerstein points out numerous textual examples in which comedy proved to be irksome to the insulted, although the practice of ad hominem mockery remained licit22. For example, orators such as Lysias or Aeschines could matter-of-factly refer to the comic theater as a forum for abuse and scorn23, while the Athenian Constitution and a note in the scholia to *Acharnians* suggest that satire was protected by the law24. Although there was free speech in Athens, it is clear that the objects of mockery sometimes took offense, and that various legal measures could be taken either for revenge or as a face-saving mechanism. A good example of this, and a case which is in many way parallel to that of Socrates, is the alleged prosecution of Aristophanes by Cleon.

An examination of the supposed dispute reveals the difficulties in reconstructing the legal atmosphere in the late 5th-century, and the ambiguities in this system which the Athenians themselves certainly felt. Our evidence for the dispute between Aristophanes and Cleon is a number of striking asides in *Acharnians*. It is twice mentioned that Cleon took legal action against Aristophanes for his play of the previous year, *Babylonians*:

αὐτός τ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ὑπὸ Κλέωνος ἄπαθον
ἐπίσταμαι διὰ τὴν περύσι κωμῳδίαν.
εἰσελκύσας γάρ μ᾽ εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον
διέβαλλε καὶ ψευδῆ κατεγλώττιζέ μου. (*Acharnians,* 377-80).
[I know what I suffered at Cleon's hands because of last year's comedy. He dragged me before the Council, slandered me, and gave me a tongue lashing of lies.]

οὐ γάρ με νῦν γε διαβαλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι
ξένων παρόντων τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω. (*Acharnians,* 503-4)
[This time, Cleon wont slander me for speaking badly about the city in the presence of foreigners.]

Years later, Cleon is again ruthlessly mocked in *Knights* and *Wasps*. Using the evidence from *Acharnians* and the scholia, Sommerstein reconstructs a possible scenario in which Cleon used various legal maneuvers to save face after being mocked in the theater25. Of course, this argument rests firmly on textual evidence, but as Rosen argues, there is no concrete evidence that any legal action actually took place26. Without entering into a detailed and tangential discussion of the case of Cleon, I find it illustrative to point out the essential parallels between his representation in Aristophanic comedy in comparison to Socrates'. And although the legal background is largely obscure, the cultural and literary atmosphere of Old Comedy makes it much more clear how Aristophanes' comedies functioned in their original setting.

Our understanding of the significance of the Greater Dionysia in the Athenian consciousness has profited greatly from 20th-century advances in anthropology and literary theory27. These new approaches hardly remove difficulties of exegesis, and in some respects problematize the issues further. Nevertheless, in the case of Aristophanic comedy, it is profitable to supplement the analytical tools of traditional philology with broader, extra-textual, cultural data. As Platter argues in his application of Bakhtinian theory, Aristophanic satire occurred in a carnivalesque setting, circumscribed by quotidian discourse28. The tendency for Old Comedy to attack public figures (ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν) fits within the framework of the *carnival matrix*, a temporary triumph of folk culture over official values. The carnival serves as a momentary release from the normal constraints of a hierarchical society, and celebrates the value of life over death by reveling in scatological and sexual taboos. The mockery of public figures fulfills the requirements of the carnival and doesn't necessarily carry a didactic message. Halliwell's discussion of Aristophanic satire largely supports this line of argument. The forerunner of Old Comedy was the κῶμος, a drunken procession endowed with carnivalesque license. Although Old Comedy had advanced to a more regular format, it remained squarely within a festival setting dedicated to Dionysus29. The placement of Aristophanic satire within the Dionysia allowed it to be critical without being malicious.

Even more ambiguities arise from the artistic nature of Old Comedy. As Socrates

noted in the *Apology*, the character in *Clouds* is only "some Socrates" (Σωκράτη τινὰ). Despite the obvious resemblance between the real man and the character, it is never clear whether the play should be considered honest and serious or fictitious and frivolous. Modern critics argue that successful art can only be didactic in the sense that it prompts the audience to contemplate the subject-matter and come to conclusions of their own. Gomme's discussion of politics in Aristophanes shows that even those characters heaped with the most ridicule nevertheless deserve sympathy. Socrates' school is burnt, Euripides is condemned to Hades, and Cleon is mercilessly lampooned, but the audience is nevertheless induced to understand their viewpoints and, to some degree, to sympathize30 . Of course Aristophanes had political beliefs, but comedy was not an appropriate medium through which to disseminate them.

Modern theories of comedy can also illuminate our understanding of *Clouds*' significance to its original audience. Although comedies mock the famous, these topical references remain subordinate to the emotional goals of dramatic art. In his cross-cultural study of Western comedy, Silk claims that the purpose of comedy is a celebration of the spirit of human survival. A broad view of Western art reveals that tragedy has aims similar to those of comedy, though where tragedy elevates the eternal and the spiritual, comedy revels in the present and the pleasure of the flesh31 . According to this definition, *Clouds* is in some ways a problem comedy, since the final condemnation of Socrates supersedes the genre's demand for a happy ending. The fiery destruction of the Thinkery ironically replaces the traditional nuptial torches, and the chaotic ending contrasts sharply with the feasts and celebrations which conclude other Aristophanic comedies. This is hardly an invitation to read literal didacticism into the play, however. The politics in *Clouds* is more prominent than in other plays, but the literary context remains unchanged.

At this point, it is clear how ambiguous Socrates' use of διαβολή really was, and how many different considerations commentators must take into account when appraising Socrates' claim. My argument that *Clouds* was negative towards Socrates but not libelous must appear weaker than a case which argues strongly in either direction. Nevertheless, this view seeks to account for the totality of available evidence, which, I believe, does not permit an unqualified answer. Although many scholars have investigated the possible negativity of *Clouds* towards Socrates, none, to my knowledge, has posed the question of whether *Clouds* was διαβολή. In fact, the technical legal term for defamation in 5th century Athens was κατηγορία (the legal charge for defamation was δίκη κατηγορίας)32 . Socrates' use of the non-official word stresses the ambiguity of his assertion. Had he actually thought he had been slandered, Socrates could have taken legal, or extra-legal measures to either get revenge or save face. But he did not; rather, the trial is the first time that Socrates ever takes issue with *Clouds*. In the following chapter, I will discuss Socrates reasons' for invoking *Clouds* at his trial. His motivations had less to do with the actual content of *Clouds* than with the political circumstances in which the trial was conducted.

2. Διαβολή as Socratic Irony

From the preceding argument in chapter 1, we can understand that *Clouds* was not

slander. In this chapter, I turn to Socrates' provocative use of the word διαβολή, which I will argue, functions as part of the thematic irony in the *Apology*. Using other evidence from the *Apology* and *Crito*, I will argue that Socrates' fundamental goal for the trial was to make an iron-clad defense of his philosophy; he was willing to sacrifice his life towards this end. Before examining Socrates' rhetoric in the *Apology* it is necessary to briefly examine the historical background of the trial. Socrates makes no mention of the political currents at the time of his trial, which were at least as damning to his cause as anything he could have possibly said in his defense speech. In fact, Socrates' oligarchical leanings, whether real of alleged, were probably the reason for his execution.

Of course, we shall never know for sure why Socrates was tried and executed; the best construction modern scholars can formulate is one based upon the totality of possible causes. The jury was aware of each argument against Socrates, and since each individual juror could have voted for a different reason, it is best to view the indictment, conviction, and execution of Socrates as an overdetermined phenomenon, resulting from no single cause but a confluence of several. And neither was the demise of Socrates a single, simple event: even during Plato's *Apology* we see each of the actors making statements and responses, proposing penalties and counter-penalties, arguments and rebuttals. Every move in the chess-game of the trial was a factor which led to Socrates' execution. In this way, the potential causes for Socrates' death abound to the point of absurdity. It is much more profitable to view the trial through the lens of intention: as I will argue, Socrates' guiding motivation was to defend his philosophy.

The simplest cause for Socrates' trial (and one reason why his philosophy needed to be defended) was the personal enmity against him. As documented in the *Apology*, Socrates began his philosophical career by declaring that the intellectual elite of Athens were self-deluding fools, totally lacking in wisdom.33 His three accusers represented the combined wrath of the professional classes: Anytus represented the artisans and politicians, Meletus the poets, and Lycon the orators. There were those of the Athenians who, unlike Socrates, cared for professional status and greatly resented his generalizations about their personal worth and aptitude. A good example of Socrates' philosophy being misinterpreted as a personal insult is found in Xenophon's *Apology*. Anytus allegedly bore a grudge against Socrates for suggesting that his son should be a philosopher rather than a tanner34. Such advise would be intolerable to a successful craftsman, especially concerning a matter such as one's son's upbringing. Socrates' well-intentioned advice was not always taken as such.

In the previous chapter I discussed modern criticism of Socrates, which focuses primarily on the alleged inadequacy of his teaching methods. There were critics of Socrates in his own time as well, whose complaints were directed against the antagonistic and hubristic nature of his teaching. Socrates' notoriously inscrutable daimonion was probably received as poorly as his disputatious debating style. As modern scholars, we are inclined to interpret the daimonion as either a flat-out lie or some kind of intellectual intuition. Xenophon presumes that some of the jury believed literally in the daimonion, and convicted Socrates out of jealousy35. Hegel comments upon this passage in Xenophon, and interprets the jury's response as yet another misunderstanding of Socratic philosophy. According to normative Greek religion, divination was possible because the observable world was suffused with signs and signals of the gods' will. Socrates' intellectualism functioned largely within this paradigm; his wisdom was akin to the truth

from oracles and divination. Since the observed medium was his own mind, however, Socrates considered the source of his knowledge to be a personal daimonion36. But Socrates provides no such explanation, and it is perfectly conceivable that some jurors disbelieved his claims. On the topic of the daimonion, Socrates is not very helpful to his audience; it is likely that he was consciously dissimulating or trying to antagonizing them.

I.F. Stone argues that Socrates deliberately sought his own conviction in order to subvert the Athenian democracy. Especially in the middle dialogs of Plato, Socrates strongly favors oligarchy over the radical democracy familiar to Athens. Whether this inclination originated with Socrates or Plato is too large a question to address here; but assuming that Socrates was opposed to democracy, the outcome of his trial would certainly have pleased him. Athens thenceforth bore the stigma of having executed one of its greatest citizens and having ruled against free speech. Stone argues that Socrates might have easily secured and acquittal if he had appealed to the tradition of free speech, but he preferred to turn his death into a spectacle celebrating the failure of the democratic system37. This argument depends on Socrates' staunch disagreement with the Athenian democratic system, which, again, is a very elusive topic. Whether or not Socrates himself opposed democracy, many of his students did, and these connections were certainly fresh in the jurymen's minds at the trial.

Because of the amnesty, the democrats were powerless to avenge themselves on The Thirty, though they were free to vent their wrath on Socrates. Although Socrates never mentions contemporary politics in his speech, the turbulent events in recent history could not have escaped the notice of the jury. After all, Socrates was brought to trial in 399, shortly after the political mayhem following the Peloponesian War. Anytus, the principal accuser of Socrates, was a member of the democratic party who openly opposed The Thirty during their rule38. After the recent political and military disasters which befell Athens, it is conceivable that some of the jury blamed Socrates for producing such characters as Critias, Charmides, and Alcibiades. Again, Socrates may or may not have openly spoken against the democracy; we have no positive evidence either way. It is clear that Socrates openly criticized leaders of the democratic government (since he criticized nearly everyone), and that he had close personal connections to some of The Thirty. For some Athenians, it may have been admissible to eliminate Socrates for these crimes, even if it was necessary to do so on trumped up charges.

Any one or several of these factors may have contributed to the jury's ultimate decision to convict Socrates. Whether or not he knew the real cause for his trial, Socrates seems more concerned with defending his philosophy than saving his life. As he states in the *Apology*, he could have easily secured an acquittal if he were willing to flatter the jury or if he abjured his philosophy39. In the *Crito*, he refuses to escape execution because it would be unjust to disobey the laws40 . Many of the jury did not wish to execute him41, and it is possible that the majority would have preferred to exile him, had he proposed such a coutner-penalty. But Socrates redefined the purpose of the trial, using it as a means to defend his philosophy. He tells the jury that an acquittal would essentially sanction his philosophy, and, since he refused exile, a conviction and execution would make him into a martyr.

Typically, defendants are expected to be humble, or at least tactful towards the people deciding their fate. But Socrates totally perverts the traditional defendants' script,

hubristically demanding free meals at the Prytaneum and claiming to be the wisest person in Greece42. Regardless of the validity of Socrates' self-praise, the trial wasn't an appropriate time to bring up such topics, since doing so would alienate and enrage the jury. Socrates would have known that a jury on the verge of exiling or executing him would not change their mind suddenly and grant him state honors. Equally incredible is his denial of rehearsing his speech beforehand43. Again and again, Socrates seems not to take the trial seriously. Of course, these postures of flippancy and arrogance are easily identified as the philosopher's trademark rhetorical device, Socratic irony.

Different scholars have treated Socratic irony in various ways. I follow Vlastos' definition of Socratic irony as a specialized rhetorical figure. According to Vlastos' system, irony can be divided into two separate species, the simple and the complex. A sentence with simple irony states the opposite of its intended message. For example, in the *Symposium*, Alcibiades recalls how Socrates once mocked him, using simple irony:

καὶ οὗτος ἀκούσας μάλα εἰρωνικῶς καὶ σφόδρα ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ εἰωθότως ἔλεχεν Ὦ φίλε Ἀλκιβιάδη, κινδυνεύεις τῷ ὄντι οὐ φαῦλος εἶναι εἴπερ ἀληθῆ τυγχάνει ὄντα ἃ λέγεις περὶ ἐμοῦ, καί τις ἔστ' ἐν ἐμοὶ δύναμις, δι' ἣς ἂν σὺ γένοιο ἀμείνων· ἀμηχανόν τοι κάλλος ὁρῴης ἂν ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τῆς παρὰ σοὶ εὐμορφίας πάμπολυ δισφέρον. εἰ δη καθορῶν αὐτο κοινώσαθαί τέ μοι επιχειρεῖς καὶ ἀλλάξασθαι κάλλος ἀντὶ κάλλος, οὐκ ὀλίγῳ μου πλεονεκτεῖν διανοῇ ἀλλ' ἀντὶ δόχης ἀληθειαν καλῶν κτᾶσθαι ἐπιχειρεῖς καὶ τῷ ὄντι χρύσεα χαλκείων διαμείβεσθαι νοεῖς. (Sym. 218d-219a)

[When (Socrates) heard this (i.e. Alcibiades' erotic overtures), he spoke in the ironic manner in which he was accustomed, "My dear Alcibiades, you may not be stupid if what you say about me is true, and I can improve you. You must see an extraordinary beauty in me, something very different from your comeliness. If, having seen this, you are trying to exchange beauty for beauty, you are indeed exploiting me, but you are trying to obtain true beauty in exchange for supposed beauty: indeed, you aim to trade brass for gold."]

As Vlastos discusses, this is an example of simple irony, because Socrates says the opposite of what he means. In truth, Alcibiades is a fool, and he readily recognizes Socrates' comment for what it is— an insult. Another example of simple irony is Strepsiades ironic comment about his "good son" (ὁ χρηστὸς οὑτοσὶ νεανίας, *Clouds,* 8)44 . Pheidippides is not a good son at all, but a disrespectful wastrel. Even an unschooled rube like Strepsiades understands and employs simple irony. In turn, the derivatives of εἰρωνεία in modern languages always signify simple irony, except when stated otherwise. Socratic irony is one such exception: though akin to simple irony, it carries a very different signification.

Vlastos defines Socratic irony as complex irony, the statement of a falsehood without intended deception, but the meaning of which is unclear45. To over-simplify, Socratic irony is an elusive response to a question or situation. An example of complex irony is the conclusion of Socrates' above conversation with Alcibiades:

ἀλλ', ὦ μακάριε, ἄμεινον σκόπει, μή σε λανθάνω οὐδὲν ὤν. ἥ τοι τῆς διανοίας

ὄψις ἄρχεται ὀξὺ βλέπειν ὅταν ἡ τῶν ὀμμάτων τῆς ἀκμῆς λήγειν ἐπιχειρῇ· σὺ δὲ τούτων ἔτι πόρρω. (Sym. 219a)
[Be more wise, and see that I'm nothing. The mind's eye begins to see well when eyesight begins to fail. But you are still far from this point.]

Here Socrates tells the obvious lie that he knows nothing. Alcibiades knows this is false; he has been wooing Socrates at length in the hope of becoming his eromenos and getting a share of his knowledge. Socrates uses his irony strategically46. In the present instance, his evasive response allows him to avoid Alcibiades' advances. But Socrates' use of complex irony always transcends the particular instance in which it is used, since it is an integral part of Socrates' worldview.

Without irony, Socrates' philosophy would not exist. As discussed above, in spite of Socrates' traditional designation as a philosopher, he never really compiled a full philosophical system. It is closer to the truth to say that Socrates discoursed about philosophical subjects and that his method of eliciting responses depended heavily on irony. Socratic philosophy consisted of the elenchus and a collection of moral aphorisms which themselves show a close affinity to the irony of the elenchus. For example, the central Socratic dictum, "I only know that I know nothing," cannot be taken literally. Ostensibly, this statement is a straightforward denial of erudition. Socrates was not a sophist like Gorgias or Protagoras, who styled themselves as supreme polymaths. But the assertion is literally contradictory: if Socrates truly did lack all a priori knowledge, he wouldn't know that he did; or, except for this single axiomatic assertion— that he is ignorant— he denies all other a priori knowledge. But these interpretations treat the Socratic dictum as if it existed in a vacuum. It is clear that Socrates did have a priori knowledge since he knew how to reason and he espoused certain moral viewpoints, such as, "an unexamined life is not worth living," and, "no one willingly commits injustice." But both of these sayings seem to follow logically from the agnosticism of the elenchus. The exhortation to examine life seems like a subjective justification of the elenchus. The denial of voluntary injustice is a corollary to the denial of all knowledge: if no one knows anything for sure, they certainly can't know what justice is. For readers of Plato, it is difficult to recognize just how sparse Socrates' own teachings were. Essentially, he used irony to elicit questions which threw into the open internal inconsistencies of his interlocutors' arguments.

Socrates defense speech, as would be expected, is replete with his characteristic irony. As mentioned above, many of his arguments in the *Apology* are consciously out of place or deliberately shocking. Instead of explaining his associations with The Thirty, Socrates fobs off the jury with a ridiculous claim that Aristophanes' *Clouds* was the ultimate source of rancor against him. With so many cogent and believable causes for the trial to mention, Socrates underscores one of the least likely possibilities, that *Clouds* was in some way libelous. It is best to interpret this claim as an instance of Socratic irony. It cannot possibly be true, and it is not immediately clear what he intends by it, but it is clear that he is obfuscating.

Critics have provided a number of possible explanations for the invocation of *Clouds* which seem to suggest an ironic reading if not stating so explicitly. Sommerstein suggests that Socrates aimed to belittle his accusers by implying that their indictment was even less of a threat than that of *Clouds*. No one would take a comedy without

qualifications, and, Socrates suggests, by the same token, none of the jury should take the present charges seriously47 . Rosen argues, along similar lines, that Socrates reproves his accusers for misinterpreting *Clouds* as though it were a true historical record of his career48. Stone's argument mentioned above— that Socrates wanted the jury to rule against free speech— similarly depends upon obfuscation on Socrates' part. The real question seems not to be whether Socrates was being ironical or equivocal, but precisely what motives he had for doing so.

We must rely on the historical record to supplement Socrates' omissions. It is abundantly clear that the recent political upheaval had something to do with the trial. The Peloponesian war had just ended, and Athens was eager to revenge themselves on any scapegoat possible. If *Clouds* had really persuaded anyone that Socrates ought to die, it seems unlikely that they would have tolerated a 24 year stay of execution. In the *Apology*, Socrates systematically refutes the trumped up charges against him, but he does not escape conviction. The prosecution was obfuscating, and through his irony Socrates answered them in kind. And in the end, he succeeded in becoming a martyr for his philosophy.

Conclusion

The assertion I made in the introduction about the perpetual difficulty of Socrates' philosophy should by now be made manifest. Socrates says *Clouds* was slander; we are tempted to believe him, and it is only through lengthy persuasion that we can be disabused of the philosopher's treachery. I firmly believe that the *Apology*'s first audience never took his words as truth. They were probably shocked by them.

But Socrates' rhetoric was hardly an empty show of oratorical power. According to Vlastos' definition, we cannot discern precisely what Socrates meant when resorting to irony; but in this case, he conveyed his message perfectly clearly, by means of the context. By pretending to overlook the political landscape, and by making no mention of it whatsoever, Socrates asserts his refusal to engage in petty political strife. His concern is philosophy, and his speech discusses philosophy only. Although Socratic irony can be defined by a certain number of characteristic qualities, its potential uses are numerous. When Socrates said, "I only know that I know nothing," he was discussing ontology and the limits of his dialectic method. When he asserted, ironically, that *Clouds* was slander, he was making a point about falsity of his accusers' arguments.

In my discussion of the *Apology*, I have largely omitted the so-called Socratic question, the possible disparity between the historical Socrates and Plato's portrayal of him. Some of the details in Plato's *Apology*, if not the greater part of the work, may have been dreamed up by Plato independently of what actually occurred at the trial. Xenophon's *Apology* makes no mention of the *Clouds* whatsoever. Although taxonomies of Plato's works traditionally place the *Apology* in his early, formative period, it is just as possible that he wrote it last. The *Apology* may be more the work of a creative philosopher than a disciple's record of his teacher's words. There is no simple way to address this quandary, but fortunately it does not directly interfere with out understanding of the *Apology* as a text. Whether the speech was first heard by a jury of 501 Athenians, or read by Plato's select circle of intellectuals, the words of this particular Socrates still resonated with the same cultural and historical significance. The *Apology* is a

recontexted version of the trial of Socrates, and can be understood separately from the more obscure historical event.

In summation, some of the more puzzling features of Socrates' philosophy disappear once viewed from the framework of a larger philosophical system. I have not presented any readings of the *Apology* which conflict with previous interpretations, but I have only illuminated a specific instance of Socratic irony in light of larger theories . By doing so, I hope not only to contribute to the scholarship on a specific passage of Plato's writings, but to set a possible example for further investigations of other cruxes in his works. Socrates' philosophy does not so much present a system of thought as it invites the audience to formulate one themselves. It is very much in the spirit of Socrates to interpret his words with the aid of later philosophers.

Endnotes

1 Nehamas, Alexander. What did Socrates Teach? *Virtues of Authenticity*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.) pg. 56; Nehamas also discusses the difficulties with terming Socrates as a "philosopher", at least in the modern sense of the word.

2 For an excellent discussion of the reception of Socrates over the course of Western History see: *The Death of Socrates*, by Emily Wilson. Especially in the 20th and 21st centuries, as Wilson explains, the popular conception of Socrates has become largely divorced from the few concrete details of his life, or even Plato's often dubious representation of him.

3 Claudius Aelian (CE 165?-230?), Plutarch (CE 50?-120?), and Eunapius (b. CE 345), though writing in antiquity, cannot have had much more reliable information than we do. Their testimonies must be treated as valuable data on the late antique interpretation of Socrates rather than actual historical facts.

4 Rosen, Ralph. *Making Mockery*: *The Poetics of Ancient Satire*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). pg. 3-42. Rosen gives an extensive background on the difficulties of interpreting ancient poetic satire and explains some of the paradigms by which modern scholars can interpret such texts.

5 Aristophanes. *Clouds*. Ed. Dover, K.. (London, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1968). pg. xxxv-xxxvi.

6 *Clouds,* 1146.
For an interpretation of Strepsiades payment as honorarium rather than compulsory payment, see: Andic, Martin. "Clouds of Irony". *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Irony*. Ed. Perkins, Robert L.. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001) pg. 165.

7 *Clouds,* 627-783. This scene records Socrates abortive attempt to educate Strepsiades using dialectic.

8 ibid. 102-4, 360-3.

9 Vander Waert. "The Socratic Movement". *Socrates in the Clouds*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994). pg. 61-63.

10 MacDowell, Douglas M. *Aristophanes and Athens*. (Oxford University Press, 1995). pg. 121. While MacDowell acknowledges the parallels between Socrates' sayings and the philosophy of Diogenes, he notes that the metaphysical importance of air, which seems to be the point at issue, was discussed at length by numerous other pre-Socratics, such as Anaximenes, Heracleitos, Anaxagoras, and Leukippos.

11 Vander Waert, 60-61.

12 Rosen, Ralph M.. *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition*. (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988). pg. 61-2.

13 Aristophanes. *Clouds*. Ed. Sommerstein, Allen. (Aris and Philips, 1982). n. 229-233.

14 Nussbaum, Martha. "Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom". *Yale Classical Stududies* Vol. 26. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980). pg. 81

15 Strauss, Leo. *Socrates and Aristophanes*. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1966). pg. 6-8

16 ibid. 311-14.

17 Hegel, Georg. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1. Trans. Haldane, E. S.and Simson,

Frances H.. (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983.) pg. 384-5; 397-400.

18 Burgess, Andrew J. "The Upbuilding in the Irony of Kierkegaards's *The Concept of Irony*". *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Irony*. Ed. Perkins, Robert L.. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001) pg. 146-48; 156-7

19 Nehamas, Alexander. "Socratic Intellectualism?" *The Virtues of Autenticity*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999) pg. 27-50.

20 Dover, xx-xxi.

21 De Ste Croix, G. E. M.. "The Political Outlook of Aristophanes." *Oxford Readings on Aristophanes*. Ed. Segal, E.. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). pg.43-45.

22 Sommerstein, Alan. "Harassing the Satirist: the Alleged Attempts to Prosecute Aristophanes." *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. ed. Sluiter I., and Rosen, R. M.. (Mnemosyne, Supp. 254. Leiden: Brill, 2004). pg. 154-58.

23 For example, Lysias fr. 53 and Aeschines 1.157.

24 At 2.18, the Old Oligarch explains that mockery of the people was frowned upon, whereas satire of prominent citizens was generally accepted because they were rich and powerful. The scholia for *Acharnians* 67 mentions the abrogation of a decree prohibiting satire in 437/6. For the general difficulties in deciphering the alleged laws against satire in this period, see: Sommerstein, "Harassing the Satirist: The Alleged Attempts to Prosecute Aristophanes*",* pg. 156-7.

25 Sommerstein, Alan. *Harassing the Satirist: The Alleged Attempts to Prosecute Aristophanes*. pg. 18-19.

26 Rosen, *Iambographic Tradition*. pg. 2-3, 63-4.
Olsen invokes and largely corroborates with Rosen on this point:
Aristophanes. *Acharnians*. Ed. Olsen, S. Douglas. (New York, New York:Oxford University Press, 2002). pg. xxix-xxxi.

27 Of course, the philological and archaeological record tells much about the cultural and religious atmosphere of the Greater Dionysia. For an extensive background on the subject, see:
Pickard-Cambridge, Arthur. *Dramatic Festivals of Athens*. (New York, New York: Clarendon Press, 1968.)

28 Platter, Charles. *Aristophanes and the Carnival of Genres*. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). pg. 2-4.

29 Halliwell, Stephen. "Aristophanic Satire*." The Yearbook of English Studies*. vol. 14, 1984. pp. 7-8.

30 Gomme, A. W. "Aristophanes and Politics." *Oxford Readings on Aristophanes*. Ed. Segal, E.. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). pg. 33-6.

31 Silk, M. S. *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). pg. 93-6

32 Todd, S.C.. *The Shape of Athenian Law*. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). pg. 259

33 Apology, 21e-22e.

34 Xenophon, *Apology* 55.

35 ibid. 24.

36 Hegel, 432-4.

37 Stone, I. F. *The Trial of Socrates*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Co., 1988) pg. 225-30.

38 ibid., 174.

39 *Apology,* 37e-38c.

40 *Crito,* 46b

41 *Ap*ology, 35 e. After Socrates' first speech, 220 of the 501 jurors initially voted for an acquittal. The majority grew by 80 votes after his second speech, which suggests that his counter-penalty of free meals at the Prytaneum angered or disappointed some members of the jury.

42 ibid*.* 36d, 21a.

43 Xenophon, *Apology*, 7-10; Plato, *Apology* 17c.

Bibliography

Andic, Martin. "Clouds of Irony." International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Irony. Ed. Perkins, Robert L.. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001.

Aristophanes. Clouds. Ed. Dover, K. J.. London, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Aristophanes. Clouds. Ed. Sommerstein, Alan. Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1981.

Aristophanes. Acharnians. Ed. Olsen, Douglas S. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Burgess, Andrew J. "The Upbuilding in the Irony of Kierkegaards's *The Concept of Irony*". International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Irony. Ed. Perkins, Robert L.. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001.

De Ste Croix, G. E. M.. "The Political Outlook of Aristophanes." Oxford Readings on Aristophanes. Ed. Segal, E.. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Gomme, A. W. "Aristophanes and Politics." Oxford Readings on Aristophanes. Ed. Segal, E.. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Halliwell, Stephen. "Aristophanic Satire." The Yearbook of English Studies. Vol. 14, 1984. pg. 6-20.

Hegel, Georg. Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Vol. 1. Trans. Haldane, E. S. and Simson, Frances H.. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983.

Kierkegaard, Søren. The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates. Trans. Capel, Lee M.. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965.

MacDowell, Douglas S. Aristophanes and Athens. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Nussbaum, Martha. "Aristophanes and Socrates on Learning Practical Wisdom." Yale Classical Studies Vol. 26. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980.

Nehamas, Alexander. The Virtues of Authenticity. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Pickard-Cambridge, Arthur. The Dramatic Festivals of Athens. New York, New York: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Platter, Charles. Aristophanes and the Carnival of Genres. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Rosen, Ralph M.. Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988.

Rosen, Ralph M.. Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Silk, M. S. Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Sommerstein, Alan H.. "Harassing the Satirist: Alleged Attempts to Prosecute Aristophanes." Free Speech in Classical Antiquity. Ed. Sluiter, Ineke and Rosen, Ralph M.. Boston Massachusetts: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Stone, I. F.. The Trial of Socrates. Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Co., 1988.

Strauss, Leo. Socrates and Aristophanes. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

Todd, S. C.. The Shape of Athenian Law. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Vander Waerdt, Paul A.. The Socratic Movement. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Vlastos, Gregory. Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press: 1991.

Wilson, Emily. The Death of Socrates. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007.