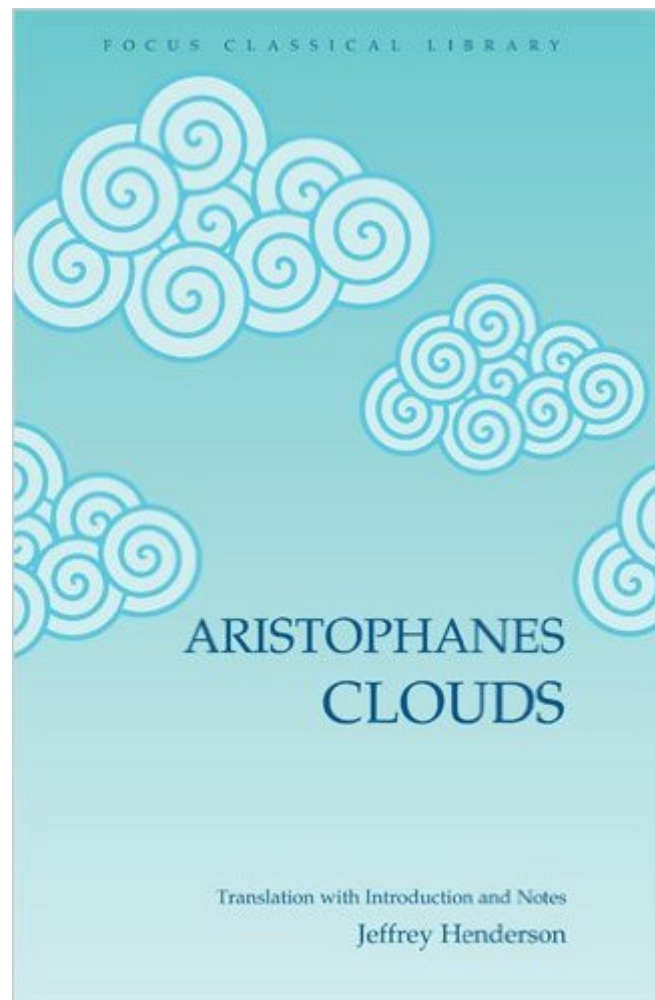


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Aristophanes' Clouds



Synopsis

This is an English translation of Aristophanes' famous comedy, *Clouds*, noted for its critique of philosophy, society and education. It includes essays on Old Comedy and the Theater of Dionysus, suggestions for further reading, notes on production, and a map. Focus Classical Library provides close translations with notes and essays to provide access to understanding Greek culture.

Book Information

Paperback: 97 pages

Publisher: Focus Information Group; 1 edition (November 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0941051242

ISBN-13: 978-0941051248

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #209,508 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Comedy](#) #127 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Ancient & Classical](#) #1471 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods](#)

Customer Reviews

The legend is that when Aristophanes' comedy "The Clouds" was first performed in Athens in 423 B.C., his target, Socrates, stood throughout the performance so that everyone in the audience was aware that he was there and hearing what was said of him. The portrait of Socrates clearly satirical and most critics consider it to be inaccurate. But Aristophanes is making fun of Athens' renowned "Think-tank" the "Phrontisterion," the school where the rich young men of Athens were taught the fine art of rhetoric. Instead of anything lofty the comic poet suggests the primary purpose of such an education is to be clever and out-reason greedy creditors. This is an especially good translation of the play, which includes insightful notes and essays on both Old Comedy and the Theater of Dionysus that helps readers understand the conventions of staged comedy at the time of Aristophanes. In this comedy Socrates is consulted by an old rogue, Strepsiades (sometimes translated as "Twisterson"), who is upset with the mountain of debts his playboy son Phidippides, who loves fast horses and fast living. Phidippides agrees to go to Socrates' school of logic where he can learn to make a wrong argument sound right. After graduation is able to use the system of

"unjust logic" to outwit his father and kick him out of the family home. The Chorus of Clouds comments on the proceedings and in the end the Phrontisterion is burned to the ground by Strepsiades. The flaw of the play is Aristophanes is trying to satirize the Sophists, who were popularizing a new philosophy that denied the possibility of ever reaching objective truth, he picked the wrong target. The Sophists were mostly teachers who were not native to Athens, such as Isocartes and Gorgias.

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