



1940

Aristophanes and the Sophists

Joseph O. Schell
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

Schell, Joseph O., "Aristophanes and the Sophists" (1940). *Master's Theses*. Paper 359.
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/359

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).
Copyright © 1940 Joseph O. Schell

Aristophanes and the Sophists

Joseph O. Schell, S. J.

August 1940

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Loyola
University.

Vita Auctoris

Joseph Otis Schell, S. J., was born in Port Huron, Michigan on May 30, 1914. He attended elementary school at St. James in Lakewood, Ohio. Graduated from Lakewood High School in 1931, he entered Milford Novitiate of the Society of Jesus in the same year. In 1935 he transferred to West Baden College of Loyola University where he received his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1936. He attended the University of Toronto during the year 1938-39, and during the years, 1939-41, he taught at Saint Ignatius High School in Chicago.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Title	Page
Chapter I	Aristophanes' Criticism of the Sophists.	1-23
Chapter II	Brief History of the Sophist Movement	24-41
Chapter III	Ancient Testimony Concerning the Sophists	42-72
Chapter IV	Conclusion	73-81
	Bibliography	82-84

CHAPTER I

Aristophanes' Criticism of the Sophists

The history of Athens during the epoch which began with the final defeat of the Persians and ended at the close of the Peloponnesian war has justly inspired many to eloquence in recording it. It was a period comparable in its brilliance with the Age of Louis XIV and in the quality and quantity of its artistic production inferior to no epoch of similar length. During that time Athens arose from an obscure Greek city to a recognized imperial power, enjoying political sway and prestige greater than it had previously known or would regain; while in its home government the city achieved what has been called "the first and most complete democracy the world has ever seen." However, even more impressive than the results achieved during this Age is the rapidity with which they occurred. In a comparatively brief span of years this small city accomplished more in various fields of endeavor than ordinarily results from the labor and experience of a nation through centuries. The dominant note of the age, at least until the Peloponnesian War checked its progress, was rapid growth.

Consequently the Athens of a decade after the Persian wars was greatly different from the city which had fought the Marathon; and the living conditions to which the citizen of this later day had to adapt himself were in many respects entirely new and still rapidly changing the political security of the city, -

the fertile soil in which a strong imperial-mindedness was growing, - its wealth, its power, and the consequences of these, were circumstances in sharp contrast to those in which the citizen of older Athens had lived. The man who formerly had been hard pressed to earn his living and protect his land now found leisure time to spend at the court, the assembly, or the theatre. Vocations hitherto unthought of were now opened to him. Trade on a vastly increased scale sent the adventurous to far away ports and brought the world to the door of the Athenian who stayed at home.

It is hardly remarkable that in this growing Athens there should arise an imperative need for a change in education. The old ~~unsystematic~~ course in γυμναστική, γραμματική, and μουσική, which had prepared the youth for the simpler life of older Athens, was not sufficient to equip him for the complex life of the modern city. A new education was demanded, which would be more practical, would embrace a wider field of knowledge, and above all would give the student that skill in speech and argument now so necessary for successful participation in the life of Athens.

Out of these needs of the time and others to be considered later grew a new education represented by the educators generally referred to as the Sophists. Because these Sophists offered a training which did at least partially fulfill the requirements of the age, and because they were, many of them,

unquestionably capable men, they quickly gained favor in Athens and soon took almost complete possession of the educational field.

Yet although they enjoyed great popularity in Athens, they also met with intense and often bitter opposition. For there were those who, feeling that the Sophists' education was a predominantly evil influence, took what means they could to check its spread. Sometimes they managed to have the writings of the Sophists burned and their authors exiled. More often, however, they contented themselves with attacking the new education in books and speeches. Plato and later Aristotle wrote against the exponents of the new learning, while Isocrates used his eloquence as a weapon against them. Aristophanes, the leading poet comic of the day, made the new culture the butt of his satire and ridicule.

An appalling amount of literature has been written about the Sophists, the bulk of which for a long time was decidedly antagonistic. In recent times, however, Grote included in his History of Greece an impressive defence of these men, which has been very influential in turning the tide of criticism in their favor. At present there is a bewildering disparity of opinion among those who would appraise the education offered by the Sophists; and in the great mass of what may be called controversial writing on the subject can be found an astonishing variety of ingenious defenses, attacks, and attempts at compromise.

In the course of the controversy the defenders of the Sophists have called into question the validity of much of the testimony of contemporaries and near contemporaries of these educators. In general, they have argued either that the author of the testimony was prejudiced, or that he misinterpreted the teachings of the Sophists, or that he himself has been misinterpreted, or that he was insincere. These arguments seem to have particular force when applied to the testimony against the Sophists found in Aristophanes' Clouds. For if it is possible to question the impartiality of Aristotle or Isocrates, or to doubt about the interpretation or sincerity of Plato, what can be said of Aristophanes, - a comic poet, forced by the nature of his art to present his characters in a humorous garb, and compelled by the tradition of Greek comedy to write as a conservative? Consequently, it has become fairly common to reject Aristophanes' testimony entirely and to consider him either as an insincere comedian or as a prejudiced and incompetent critic.

Thoroughly to investigate the justice and sincerity of Aristophanes' attack in the Clouds upon the new education is the task of a discourse of greater pretensions than this; while to arrive at an assured decision about the matter is probably an impossible aim in any treatise. However progress in the investigation can be made, and the probabilities of the case can to some extent be indicated even in such a small work as this. To achieve these results within the limits of such a discussion, it will be necessary to restrict the material considered for the

most part to Aristophanes' own works, particularly the Clouds, and to the writings of contemporaries and near contemporaries of the Sophists in as much as these contain fragments of the Sophists' teachings, interpretations of these, or other pertinent testimony about the Sophists and their education. Other literature on the Sophists and Aristophanes will be treated only in so far as it is necessary for a fair discussion of the proper material of this dissertation.

In order that procedure may be clear, it will be useful to state at the beginning certain principle which have been assumed as the starting points for the investigation of the justice of Aristophanes' criticism of the new learning. Firstly, when there is general agreement among ancient authors in their testimony regarding the Sophists, the testimony must be accepted as at least probably true. To prove such testimony false or even improbable seems hardly possible, since the only material on which this proof could be based- actual writings of the Sophists contradicting this testimony- is not to be had. Secondly, even the testimony of one ancient author which is not contradicted in other ancient literature is to be accepted as probable, unless there is a very good reason to suspect the author's prejudice or incompetence. Thirdly, as a rule the testimony of an author is to be interpreted in the most evident and generally accepted sense. Of course, passages in which the meaning is obscure and evidently open to dispute will not be used as proof. Lastly, therefore, if the bulk of ancient testimony concerning the

Sophists and their education corroborates for the most part Aristophanes' testimony, and if, of course, the comic poet's censure is of truly blameworthy qualities, then the attack on the new learning made in the Clouds must be held at least probably to be just.

The procedure in broad outline, then, will be as follows: first an analysis will be made of Aristophanes' attack on the new learning; secondly, this attack will be controlled as far as possible by the testimony of other contemporaries of the Sophists; thirdly, reasons will be given, drawn for the most part from the nature of Aristophanes' other plays and from the knowledge of the character of the author which these plays afford us, for the belief that Aristophanes' was sincere in his criticism. In the treatment of Aristophanes' sincerity the question of the blameworthiness of the qualities censured will be considered in so far as this is necessary. For the most part, however, it will be immediately evident from the mere analysis of his criticism that the new education, if it was as he painted it, was certainly worthy of censure.

Let us begin, then, with an analysis of the attack on the new learning which Aristophanes makes in the Clouds.²⁾ As everyone knows the comic situation of the play arises from the ludicrous representation of the effects of the new education upon its disciples. Socrates³⁾ is chosen as the chief Sophist on representative of the new culture. He runs a $\phi\rho\nu\nu\tau\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$

or thinking house, where men can learn mostly anything but chiefly how to defend with persuasive speech the unjust cause. Strepsiades, to learn this art, which will enable him to cheat his son's creditors, as a last resort, applies for instruction at the thinking house. After a few futile efforts to learn, Strepsiades realizes that he is too old and determines to force his son, Phidippides, to undergo the training in his stead. The boy, though an unwilling pupil at first, is finally turned out a true Sophist. His father is over-joyed, and, armed with a sophism or two from Phidippides and with a few of his own making, he succeeds in sending his son's creditors away empty-handed. However, his joy is short-lived, and he soon makes some unpleasant discoveries about the true effects of sophistic education. His son can now beat him and then prove the justice of his act by clever sophistic arguments. Worse than this, the boy declares himself ready to prove that it is right for him to beat his mother, too. This is too much for Strepsiades, whose eyes have been opened at last. He repents of his desertion of traditional beliefs and begins his reform by burning the thinking house of the Sophists.

Aristophanes fills in the skeleton of this simple plot with humorous incidents, satirical verse, and high poetry, most of which is directed against the new learning. An analysis shows that it is a criticism of several qualities of this culture and its representatives. First of all there is some humorous

description of the dress, appearance, and mode of life of the Sophists, which hardly seems to be of much importance, but which in fairness we must consider, since it could possibly be used as an argument against the sincerity and justice of Aristophanes' criticism. Of grave importance, however, is the criticism of the ethics of the new learning, which represents it as inculcating a contempt for law, justice, and morality, and divorcing these from nature. Closely allied with this criticism is the censure of two features of the education which are frequent targets for the stinging darts of the poet's satire,- the sophistic art of disputation and the sophistic rhetoric. Religious skepticism, too, is represented as an undesirable quality inherent in the new culture. The representatives of the new learning are ridiculed for professing a kind of polymathy and for charging fees for their instruction. Lastly, we may consider as a separate criticism- though it is really an aspect of the criticism of the above mentioned qualities of the sophistic education- Aristophanes' insistence upon the pernicious eventual effects of this new culture. Let us consider these criticisms more in detail.

With regard to Aristophanes' humorous description of the Sophists' appearance and mode of life we may be brief. According to the poet's picture the exponents of the new learning are hardly a handsome lot, nor does the training improve the appearance of the subjected to it. The professors are:

"Pale-faced wretches and bare-footed fellows" 4)

of whom

"Though frugality none ever shaved or annointed himself or went to a bath to wash himself." 5)

Phidippides fears to submit to their training, lest he

"Should not dare to look upon the knights, having lost all my colour;" 6)

and when Socrates assures Strepsiades that the boy will come out of the training a true and clever Sophist, the youth remarks that he'll rather come out "A ghastly and miserable creature." 7) Finally in the debate the Just Logic, closing his defense of the traditional education, assures Phidippes that if he gives himself to the modern training, he will have "A pallid complexion, small shoulders, a narrow chest." 8) For the present this will suffice for our consideration of this type of humorous description. We shall have occasion to return to it again briefly at the end of the chapter, when dealing with Aristophanes' representation of the effects of the new learning.

The new education is represented in the Clouds as embracing a most noxious ethics; and if the picture is painted with clever wit and humour, it is drawn none the less with clearness and precision. The new educators have a complete contempt for law, justice, and morality, which they hold to be entirely divorced from the supreme guide, nature. The Unjust Logic, representing the new culture in the debate between the traditional and innovating education, does not hesitate to state that "There is no justice at all;" 9) and he brags: "For I have been called among

the deep thinkers the worse cause, on this very account that I first contrived to speak against both law and justice." 10)

That Aristophanes' Sophists considered this law and justice to be mere convention and quite divorced from nature is clear. Thus, when Strepsiades, wishing to escape an imminent beating from his son, exclaims, "It is nowhere ordained by law that a father should suffer this," the boy's answer is:

Was it not then a man like you and me who first proposed this law, and by speaking persuaded the ancients? Why then is it less lawful for me also in turn to propose henceforth a new law for the sons, that they should beat their fathers in turn? 11)

Then he strengthens his argument by an appeal to nature, showing that nature and this law at variance are:

Observe the cocks and these other animals, how they punish their fathers; and yet, in what do they differ from us, except that they do not write decrees. 12)

We may pause here to note Strepsiades' surprisingly clever rejoinder, though it is not particularly pertinent to our present discussion,

Why then, since you imitate the cock in all things, do you not both eat dung and sleep on a perch?

To which Phidippides answers weakly, "It is not the same thing, my friend, nor would it seem so to Socrates."

Again, in the debate we find the Unjust Logic boldly representing what he calls τῆς φύσεως ἀνέγκας as in conflict with accepted morality:

Well, I will pass from thence to the necessities of our nature. You have gone astray, you have fallen in love, you have been guilty of some adultery, and then you have been caught. 12)

Clearly, for him adultery, though a sin against the traditional moral code, is quite according to the nature of man.

We may use the passage last quoted, together with the next few sentences of the Unjust Logic, to show the intimate connection between the false ethics of Aristophanes' Sophists and that feature of their education which we have now to consider- their art of disputation. The Unjust Logic goes on to say 13) that a youth caught in adultery, for example, is indeed in a sorry plight, if his only education has been in the school of the Just Logic: "You are lost, for you are unable to speak." While on the contrary, if the boy has been trained in the discipline of the new learning, he will be well prepared for such a situation:

But if you associate with me, indulge your nature, dance, laugh, consider nothing shameful. If you happen to be taken as an adulterer, you will answer him thus, that you have done him no wrong; then refer him to Zeus, saying that even he is overcome by love of women; and yet how could you, being a mortal, be more powerful than a god.

To be able to argue so cleverly is the guaranteed result of training in the sophistic art of disputation,- an art to be used as an effective and necessary weapon by the young Sophist who, having learned to contemn law and morality, wishes to indulge his nature with impunity. It is an art whose purpose is not to bring objective truth to light, but to conquer the opponent,

regardless of what he defends. It is for those who, as Strepsiades puts it, wish "to conquer in speaking, right or wrong." 14)

It is possible to cite passage after passage in which Aristophanes describes, exemplifies, and ridicules this sophistic art. He calls it "λόγων ἰκριβῶν σκίψαλαγοί" 15)

He has Strepsiades tell his son that among the Sophists

are both the causes, the better, whichever that is, and the worse. And one of these two causes, the worse, speaking unjust things, prevails. 16)

And the old man begs that the boy may learn from the Sophists

These two causes, the better, whatever it may be, and the worse, which by maintaining what is unjust overturns the better. If not both, at any rate the unjust one by all means. 17)

In the debate the Just Logic says of the Unjust Logic:

And he will persuade you to consider everything that is base to be honorable and what is honorable to be base. 18)

It is particularly in the many examples he gives of this art in operation that Aristophanes shows the means it employs to gain victory,- the quibbles and refined subtleties to which he refers so often. 19) Thus, we find Socrates demonstrating his ability to trip up an opponent in a discussion about the gender of ἀλεκτρούων or Κάρδοπος; 20) and we hear the newly made Sophist, Phidippides, teach his father a neat sophism about the old and new day, with which Strepsiades may evade his creditors. 21) Then there are the sophistic arguments by which Phidippides proves that it is right for a son to beat his

father, 22) or the clever quibbles and sophistries of the debate where the unjust logic answers the charges brought against him and shows that warm baths are not enervating (since the Herculean baths are warm, and surely no man is superior in strength to Hercules!), that living in the market place is good for youths, that boys should exercise their tongues, that purity is no virtue but a vice. 23) The method here, as generally in the Clouds, is to ridicule the feature of sophistic education by reducing it to an absurdity.

It is difficult in analysing Aristophanes' criticism of the new education to distinguish between his censure of the sophistic art of disputation and his criticism of the rhetoric of the Sophists. However, it is sufficiently clear that he does ridicule the Sophists for emphasizing a rhetoric, which, while it may be closely allied to and employed by the art of disputation, is something different from it. It is an over-emphasis on the externals of speech, resulting in a kind of delight in speaking merely for the sake of speaking. It is because of this over-emphasis of empty rhetorical form that Aristophanes' Sophists are accused of teaching boys to exercise their tongues too much and to chatter idly in the market place, and are represented as worshipping "This Chaos and the Clouds and the Tongue." 24) It is these Clouds who supply the Sophists with "Circumlocution and bamboozling and over-mastering;" 25) while the Sophists in turn celebrate the Clouds in verse, writing in elegant but

rather empty style of

The on-rushin' might o' the light-stoppin'
rain-droppin' Cloud.
And the thousand black curls which the
Tempest lord whirls. 26)

To be trained in such rhetoric would be dangerous for a boy; so the Just Logic warns Phidippides that he must reject the new culture if he is to be saved at all and "Not merely practice loquacity." 27)

Very much of the decidedly uncomplimentary epithets hurled at the Sophists in the Clouds refer to the false ethics of sophistic education or to the art of disputation and empty rhetoric which it emphasized. We are told, for instance, that a disciple of the new learning can become "In oratory a tricky knave, a thorough rattle, a subtle speaker." 28) By giving himself to the new education Strepsiades hopes

To appear to men to be bold,
glib of tongue, audacious, impudent,
a fabrication of lies, a practised knave
in law-suits, a law-tablet, a thorough
rattle, a fox, etc. 29)

Examples of this could be multiplied, for Aristophanes was remarkably ingenious in coining epithets and apparently took delight in exercising his talent. Those given, however, are representative and sufficient.

There is no lack of definiteness in Aristophanes' description of the attitude of his Sophists toward religion. They are clearly skeptics in religious matters and quite out of sympathy with the traditional belief. Socrates "Looks down upon the gods

from his basket;" 30) and he is careful to explain to Strepsiades that the "Gods are not a current coin with us." 31) For the Clouds, the source from which the Sophists receive their subtle learning, "Alone are goddesses; and all the rest is nonsense." 32)

We may recall the passage in which Socrates, with clever, sophistical arguments, dethrones Zeus and proves that Vortex reigns. 33) Finally he convinces Strepsiades that the only real gods are Chaos, the Clouds, and the Tongue, and so completely does he win over his pupil that the old man declares his apostasy with enthusiasm and vehemence:

I would not even converse with the others (the traditional gods), not even if I met them; nor would I sacrifice to them, nor make libations, nor offer frankincense. 34)

Later, after his brief sojourn among the Sophists, Strepsiades can tell his son, "How good a thing is learning. There is no Juppiter," 35) and inform his creditors that "Juppiter, sworn by, is ridiculous to knowing ones." 36) However, he learns to repent of his apostasy; and when at the end of the play, he is beginning his reformation by burning the thinking house, he calls out:

Chase, pelt, smite them; for many reasons, but especially because you know that they offended against the gods. 37)

It is evident, then, that the Sophists of the Clouds are as skeptical about traditional religion as they are about traditional morality; and that they have as little reverence

for the gods as they have for law and justice.

The precise point of Aristophanes' ridicule of the scientific trend of his Sophists' education is not entirely clear. From the general spirit of the passages concerned with the science of the new learning, one might judge that Aristophanes is representing his Sophists as quacks or pseudo-scientists, and he does speak of them as $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\omega\rho\phi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\kappa\epsilon\varsigma$ 38) However, the point is obscure and difficult to prove. It is more clear, it seems to me, that he is satirizing the Sophistic education for embracing a ridiculously large field of knowledge. Besides the art of rhetoric and of disputation which the new educators teach (and these arts, it may be added, include a knowledge of scientific grammar and of versification, 39)) a startling number of sciences may be learned from them. In fact, one can learn from them, "Whatever wisdom is amongst men."

40) These men "investigate the courses of the moon and her revolutions" 41) and are "in search of things below the earth." 42) They "grope about under Tartarus," 43) while their "rump is taught astronomy alone by itself." 44) Nothing is too trifling to be worthy of their consideration - not even a flea and the question of how many feet of its own it jumped, 45) or a gnat and the difficult problem of how it buzzes. 46) Perhaps the point to be made is not established with sufficient clearness by these isolated quotations. However from the context in which they occur and from the general spirit of Aristophanes' representation of the science taught by

the new educators it is evident that these Sophists pride themselves on possessing and teaching an absurdly vast amount of scientific knowledge, and this knowledge, when examined, proves to be of a doubtful character.

Only twice does Aristophanes refer to the fact that his Sophists charge for their instruction; but his rare thrusts at this foible are quick and deft and neatly humorous. Strep-siades, praising the Sophists to his son, says that "These men teach," and before completing his sentence, hastens to add the parenthetical remark, "If one gives them money." 47) The second reference occurs when Socrates first meets Phidippides and, finding him an uncouth boy, wonders how such a pupil can ever learn the art of sophistry. He immediately reflects that there is some hope, since "Hyperbolus learnt this at the cost of a talent." 48) These two references, though they stand alone, are clear in this meaning; and they will help us to identify Aristophanes' Sophists.

In concluding this analysis of Aristophanes' criticism of the Sophists in the Clouds, it should be remarked that the poet is chiefly concerned in the play with a representation of the effects of sophistic education. He ridicules the theories and methods of his Sophists by reducing their logical consequences to an absurdity. Of course, at least a partial explanation of this emphasis of effects is to be found in the necessity of concrete representation which Aristophanes' pro-

profession of comic poet imposed upon him. Satirization and ridicule of methods and theories in the abstract is hardly the stuff of which good comedies are made; while by means of an imaginative and concrete representation of the effects of these the purpose of comedy can be well achieved. Yet the insistence in the Clouds upon the evil effects of sophistic training is so great that one might reasonably suspect Aristophanes of making a deliberate effort to awaken people to a realization of the dangers of this education. Such a suspicion, of course, must rest upon the assumption that Aristophanes is sincere in his criticism in the Clouds - an assumption the validity of which we shall not undertake to discuss until a later chapter.

However, regardless of what its complete explanation may be, the fact remains that much stress is laid upon the evil consequences of the new learning. This, I think, is already clear, both from the brief summary of the plot of the play and from the analysis of the criticism of the new learning. Aristophanes seems at particular pains to show what use the ordinary man will inevitably put such a dangerous instrument as the sophistic art of disputation. Strepsiades has but one reason for wanting to learn to the art, - that he may not have to pay "to anyone not even an obolus of these debts;" 49) and no sooner has he learned a few of the tricks of the art from Phidippides than he immediately uses them to cheat his creditors. That the common run of men will want to use the art for similar purposes, the Clouds

assure Strepsiades:

Many will be seated at your gates, (if you have learned this art) wishing to communicate with you, to consult you as to actions and affidavits of many talents as is worthy of your abilities. 50)

The logical effect of the ethical teaching of the new educators is exemplified in the newly-made Sophist, Phidippides, who, having learned that traditional morality is an empty convention, divorced from nature, loses even such a fundamental virtue as respect for parents. 51) Then the new education is represented as having a weakening and softening effect on the youths, since it causes them to spend their time in idle chatter in the market place rather than in physical exercise and games. 52) Another effect of the new education is the fostering of indecency in youths. 54) In the debate the Just Logic paints an attractive picture of the youths trained in the old school, who were modest even to the extent of covering their thigh in the school of the gymnastic-master; while by contrast he says that the youths of the present day, trained by the new educators, are quite without a sense of modesty but have a great lewdness. The Unjust Logic makes no attempt to deny that this is so but rather undertakes to prove that boys should not be pure. 55) Likewise, Phidippides, when he has learned sophistry, no longer cares for Simonides or Aeschylus, but prefers a shady passage from Euripides. 56)

It is evident from all this that Aristophanes, whether

sincerely or not, represents the new learning as a corrupting influence which has already caused much harm in Athens and which is likely to cause more in the future. For it is the dominant education of the day. That is why the Unjust Logic appears in the luxurious robes of the prosperous citizen, though in the olden days he was a beggar, and the formerly popular Just Logic is a shamefully squalid outcast. 57) And the Just Logic complains bitterly of the madness of Athens, "Which supports you (the Unjust Logic) who ruin her youths." 58) He seems to find his only solace in the thought that the Unjust Logic "Will be found out some time or other by the Athenians, what sort of doctrines you teach the simple-minded." 59)

Such, then, is Aristophanes' criticism of the new education. It is a criticism of an education characterized by an attitude of thorough-going skepticism and tending to sanction complete self-expression. By destroying faith in moral law the new learning sows the seeds of the pernicious doctrine that the only sin is to resist an impulse of the great god nature. Whether this criticism is corroborated by the testimony of other ancient authors, and whether Aristophanes is a sincere critic, it is the work of the succeeding chapters to investigate.

Notes to Chapter I

1. Lord, Louis E., Aristophanes p. 23
2. The Clouds is not the first nor the only play in which Aristophanes attacked the new learning. The Daiteles, a lost play which was the author's first work, ridiculed the new education by contrasting it with the better education of the old days. In other plays Aristophanes occasionally pokes fun at some feature or representative of the new culture.
3. In the chapter on the sincerity of Aristophanes something will be said about this peculiar choice of Socrates as the leading representative of the sophistic education.
4. Clouds l. 103
5. Clouds ll. 835-37
6. Clouds ll. 119-20
7. Clouds l. 1112 (Translated by W. W. Merry in a note to his edition of Clouds.)
8. Clouds ll. 1016-17
9. Clouds l. 902 (My translation)
10. Clouds ll. 1038-40
11. Clouds ll. 1420-32
12. Clouds ll. 1075-76
13. Clouds ll. 1077-82 (My translation)
14. Clouds ll. 98-99
15. Clouds l. 130
16. Clouds ll. 112-15 (My translation)
17. Clouds ll. 882-85
18. Clouds ll. 1019-21
19. e.g.: "On this account, therefore, my soul, having heard their voice, flutters and already seeks to discourse subtilely, and to quibble about smoke, and having pricked a maxim with a little notion, to refute the opposite argument."
(Clouds ll. 319-21)

"Who while learning some little petty quibbles" (l. 630)

"And I am acquainted with subtle thoughts, and arguments, and speculations." (l. 104)

20. Clouds ll. 658 sq.
21. Clouds ll. 1178 sq.
22. Clouds 1405 sq.
23. Clouds ll. 1045 sq.
24. l. 424 Clouds
25. Clouds l.318 (Translated by W. W. Merry in note to his edition of the Clouds.)
26. Clouds ll. 335-36 (Translated by B. B. Rogers. His translation of these lines is not literal but captures the spirit.)
27. Clouds l. 931
28. Clouds l.260
29. Clouds ~~114-444-51~~
30. Clouds l. 226
31. Clouds ll. 247-8
32. Clouds l. 365
33. Clouds ll. 366 sq.
34. Clouds ll. 425-6
35. Clouds ll. 826-7
36. Clouds l. 1241
37. Clouds ll. 1508-9
38. Clouds l. 333
39. Cf. the discourse on gender already referred to (ll. 658 sq.) line 638 "about measures, rythms, or verses."
40. Clouds l. 841

41. Clouds l. 171
42. Clouds l. 188
43. Clouds l. 192
44. Clouds l. 194
45. Clouds ll. 144 sq.
46. Clouds ll. 156 sq.
47. Clouds l. 98
48. Clouds l. 876
49. Clouds l. 116
50. Clouds l. 466
51. Cf. note 11
52. Cf. notes 6, 7, 8.
53. Clouds ll. 1002-5
54. I think there is no evidence that Aristophanes intended to extend the charge of this type of immorality to the Sophists themselves.
55. Clouds ll. 961 sq.
56. Clouds ll. 1361 sq.
57. Clouds ll. 920 sq.
58. Clouds ll. 926-7
59. Clouds ll. 918-19

Note: Unless otherwise indicated the translation of the above passages has been taken from W. J. Hickie's translation of the Clouds in Bohn's Classical Library.

CHAPTER II

Brief History of the Sophist Movement

Before proceeding to a consideration of other ancient testimony concerning the new education and its representatives, it will be necessary to make some study of the origin, development, and nature of this education as we know it from impartial history. Without such a study it would be impossible clearly to show that Aristophanes' criticism and the evidence given by other writers refer to the same culture. Furthermore, in this historical discussion we may find confirmation of part of the comic poet's attack.

Since this new learning is commonly referred to as sophistic education and its exponents are usually called the Sophists, we must begin with an explanation of the various uses of the word σοφιστής or Sophist. The term as it is used today has all of the unsavory connotation of quack or fraud; yet originally the name had anything but an opprobrious signification. In its first meaning σοφιστής signifies simply an expert, whether it be in science, art, or craft. This is the sense in which Cratinus 1) applies the name to Homer and Hesiod, Androtion to the Seven Sages, 2) and Herodotus 3) to the founders of the cult of Dionysius. In Liddell and Scott we find that in this primary meaning the name was often used with modal such as τῶν ἐπεῶν μελῶν ἢ τῆν ἐπιτείων to designate adepts of very diverse character. According to this usage the

Sophist is but one or another kind of wise man. However, after a time the name acquired a meaning very different from its original signification and one much more restricted. In this second sense the title of the Sophist was given to those who accepted as their profession the imparting of wisdom for money. The name as it was used with this signification quickly acquired many connotations of a distinctly uncomplimentary character, of which we shall have more to say presently. The precise time at which the word began to be used in its more specific sense can hardly be determined. It is customary to hold Plato responsible for its introduction and popularization; 4) and whether the responsibility is truly his or not, it is certain that from his time on the title was more commonly used and understood in its restricted meaning.

It is evident, then, that in general ancient writers used the word Sophist in two quite different senses. Unfortunately, these authors did not feel a very strict obligation to adopt a consistent usage of the term, or to inform the reader of the meaning they intended to have in any particular passage. 5) However, this does not cause much difficulty, as it is usually sufficiently easy to ascertain in which of the two general meanings an author is using the word. Neither does much confusion arise from the rather large extension of the term in its first meaning. The greatest source of difficulty is found in the looseness with which the name is applied in its second and restricted sense.

For even when we are sure that an author is speaking of the Sophists in the more specific sense, it is often somewhat hard to know certainly the precise meaning he wished to convey by the word and consequently exactly whom he intends to designate by it. 6)

On the other hand, however, we must not exaggerate the looseness of usage, nor believe it impossible to determine the meaning intended by an ancient author speaking of the Sophists. Ordinarily, the meaning can be ascertained with a fair degree of precision; but evidently for this a certain amount of carefulness is required.

For our own purposes, while some accuracy in determining the meaning and application of the word as used by a given author is absolutely necessary, too great precision in this regard is not required. For we are interested in the Sophists only in so far as they are the men whom Aristophanes attacked in the Clouds; and we are concerned with ancient testimony about the Sophists only in as much as this testimony is useful in increasing our knowledge of these men and their education.

Now while we can be quite certain, I think, about the class of men in general with whom the Clouds is concerned, we can not hope to know definitely and completely what individuals Aristophanes meant to include in that class. He himself uses the word Sophist in the Clouds only once; 7) and it would be hard in this case to say certainly what meaning he is giving the

term. On the other hand, it is evident that he is criticizing in general the exponents of a new education which had come into vogue in the Athens of his day. That such a new education did come into favor in fifth century Athens is generally admitted, though modern authors dispute about the precise points in which this education was distinct from the old. It is likewise commonly conceded that the exponents of this new culture were in general those ordinarily designated in ancient literature by the name Sophist used in its more specific sense. Consequently, although in a given instance we may not be able to determine all the individuals an author means to include under the name Sophist and precisely what signification he is giving the word, still his testimony may be useful to us in verifying Aristophanes' criticism, provided we can be sure at least that it refers in general to these professors of the new learning.

Now from our point of vantage today we can see with some clarity that those responsible for the introduction and popularization of a new education in Periclean Athens were the same Sophists about whom Plato writes. They were Protagoras, Gorgias, Hippias, Prodicus, Euthydemus, Thrasymachus, Antiphon, Critias, and their pupils and successors. Are these the men to whom Aristophanes is referring in the Clouds? Certainly, in as much as he is attacking the culture for which they are chiefly responsible, he is attacking them. How many of them he wished to include explicitly in his attack, it seems impossible to know. He

refers to Proditus in the Clouds, when the Chorus says: "For we would not hearken to any other of the present meteorological Sophists, except to Proditus;" 8) and in the Birds he speaks of Gorgias, saying:

There is a knavish race who live by their tongues, who reap, and sow, and gather in the vintage, and pluck ripe grapes with their tongues; and they are barbarians in race, Gorgiases and Philippi. 9)

As a ~~practitioner~~, however, he does not speak explicitly of individual exponents of the new learning. 10)

Again, we can not know whether he meant to include men whom we do not today reckon among the representatives of sophistic culture. We must transmit for the time the discussion of his apparent inclusion of Socrates among the Sophists. For the rest, it is entirely possible that he himself was not quite clear in his own mind as to precisely what individuals he meant to attack. He did not have to be. In general he knew and made it clear that he was chiefly criticizing the new culture and those paid professors who were the exponents of it.

In comparing, then, Aristophanes' testimony with that of other ancient writers, we shall look in these writers for evidence concerning the new learning in Athens and its exponents. It is safe, in general, to accept the Platonic sophists as the champions of this new education.

The question may now be asked, did these sophists, whom we are to consider as the chief objects of Aristophanes' attack,

and for evidence about whom we are to search in ancient literature, constitute a school or sect with common unifying doctrines recognized by all? This problem has been much discussed in modern times. Grote is firm in his stand against all attempts to attribute strong bonds of unity to the so-called Sophistic School. He says:

It is impossible, therefore, to predicate anything concerning doctrines, methods, or tendencies common and peculiar to all sophists. There were none such; nor has the abstract word "Die Sophistik" any real meaning, except such qualities, whatever they may be, as are inseparable from the profession or occupation of public teaching. 11)

Many modern critics have followed Grote's lead in the regard. Thus Theodor Gomperz says:

We may be asked, what was the genuine common factor in the several sophists? And to that question we can but reply that it consisted merely of their teaching profession and the conditions of its practise imposed by the age in which they lived. For the rest, they were united, as other people were united, too, by the part they took in the intellectual movements of their times. It is illegitimate, if not absurd, to speak of a sophistic mind, sophistic morality, sophistic skepticism, and so forth. 12)

Certainly, it is no longer possible, in the face of the evidence given by such men, to speak of the sophists as a tightly knit intellectual and educational group, consciously holding common doctrines and adopting uniform methods. Nor is the acceptance of such an opinion at all necessary for the

purpose of this inquiry. On the contrary, we may almost accept Grote's position, and need only be careful to avoid extreme conclusions which might be deduced from it. For it does not follow from what Grote has said that there was no culture, no general spirit in education in fifth century Athens for which the Sophists, though not consciously acting as a school and most certainly characterized by strong individual differences in doctrines and methods, were responsible. Impartial history certainly teaches us that there was such a culture and spirit. Zeller states this position definitely:

Although the men whom we are accustomed to reckon as Sophists are not united by any common doctrines recognized by them all, there is a certain similarity of character among them which is unmistakable, and this peculiarity shows itself not merely in their coming forth as teachers, but in their whole attitude towards the science of their epoch, in their repudiation of physical, and generally speaking, in all merely theoretical enquiry, in the Skepticism explicitly avowed by the majority, and the most important of the Sophists; in the art of disputation, which most of them are said to have taught and practised, in the formal, technical treatment of rhetoric, in the free criticism and naturalistic explanation of the belief in gods, in the opinions concerning right and custom, the seeds of which were sown by the skepticism of Protagoras and Gorgias, though these opinions only appear in a definite form at a subsequent period. Though all these traits may not be discoverable in all the Sophists, yet some of them are to be found in each case; and they all

lie so much in one direction, that while we cannot overlook the individual differences among these men, we are nevertheless justified in regarding them collectively as the representatives of the same form of culture. 13)

It is the culture and its representatives whom Aristophanes attacks in the Clouds. 14)

Before filling in the details of the picture from ancient testimony, it will be well to draw from impartial history the rough outline of the origin and development of the so-called sophistic movement. This may seem to prejudge the case, since from this very history, I believe, much of Aristophanes' criticism will be corroborated. Yet such an outline is necessary for the sake of clarity; and if only such history as is generally agreed upon by reasonably impartial historians is used, the danger of prejudice is small.

Broadly speaking there were two causes of the origin of the Sophist movement: the need, brought about by the political and economic changes in fifth century Athens, of a new type of education; and the crisis which philosophy had reached at the time.

This first cause was discussed briefly at the beginning of the first chapter, and it was shown there that during the half century immediately succeeding the Persian wars the most characteristic note of Athens was rapid growth. The city was extending its political jurisdiction and quickly becoming an empire. It was developing into the world's center of art and

letters. Its economic life was growing daily more complex. The courts and assembly were frequented. Wealth came to the city in abundance. Coupled with all this was the transformation of the forms of government. Traditional institutions withered, while new ideas of equality bloomed, and democracy was in flower. In other spheres, too, the validity of traditional conventions and laws was called into question. The Athenian was growing sophisticated, and it was a part of his sophistication to look with skeptical eye upon rules and customs observed by the common herd. Needless to say, ~~the religion~~ did not escape the skeptical quizzings of the new sophisticates. 15)

But perhaps the most important result of this abnormally rapid change was the transformation of the intellectual outlook of the Athenian. Previously interested primarily in the cosmos and in the direction and preservation of the state, he now turned his inquiries inward to himself. He became ego-centric, interested in self-development, inquisitive about the nature and validity of his own faculties, curious of ethical matters. Moreover, he began to apply to his own conduct the principles underlying the policy of aggrandizement which the State was pursuing.

From this change of intellectual attitude we may take our start in the consideration of the second cause of the origin of the Sophists - the philosophical crisis. Men whose thought was becoming egocentric were naturally dissatisfied with a philosophy engaged chiefly in trying to solve the riddles of the universe. Philosophy, if it was to be saved at all, had to begin to study

man and moral relations. Furthermore, philosophy at the time was in a blind alley and filled with those contradictions so apt to create skepticism. Confused thought, as always, brought contempt of thought. The general tendency was to go one step farther in the direction of the Eleatics and Heraclitus and inquire into the nature and validity not only of the sense faculty but of the intellect as well. And the suspicion was harbored that the results of this inquiry would ultimately prove fatal to metaphysics. It was not too hard, after the tangle into which philosophy had involved itself, to doubt the possibility of acquiring any ~~attitude~~.

From this we see something of what the character of any successful education at such a time would have to be. Whereas the old education had been somewhat haphazard, leaving most of the advanced instruction to home and chance, the new training would have to provide a systematic higher education. It would have to provide knowledge about a vast number of practical sciences. It would be likely to stress civic virtue and to teach men how to live successfully rather than to know for the sake of knowing. In other words it would have to give youths a systematic preparation for successful participation in the complex life of the Athens of the day. And this preparation would have to be conditioned by the ideals prevalent at the time. In so far as the education had any underlying philosophy, this philosophy would have to be, in tendency at least, sub-

jective and ultimately skeptical.

The outline which impartial historians draw of the Sophist movement, shows the movement to be the legitimate educational offspring of its age. In drawing this outline, I shall use chiefly Henry Jackson's account of the Sophists in the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Jackson aptly distinguishes four principal types of Sophistries, a division which seems to be based on Plato's several definitions of the term Sophist in his dialogue of that name. The four varieties are: that of culture, of rhetoric, of politics, and of eristic. He says further:

Each of these predominated in its turn, though not to the exclusion of the others, the sophistry of culture beginning about 447 and leading to the sophistry of eristic, and the sophistry of rhetoric taking root in central Greece about 427 and merging into the sophistry of politics. (6)

Protagoras was the leading representative of the sophistry of culture. Relinquishing the search for knowledge, he professed rather to teach virtue and to impart a kind of civic excellence. Plato has him say:

Τὸ δὲ μάθημά ἐστιν εὐβουλία περὶ
τῶν οἰκείων, ὅπως ἂν ἄριστα
τὴν αὐτοῦ οἰκίαν διοικῶσι, καὶ περὶ
τῶν τῆς πόλεως δυνατώτατος ἂν
εἴη καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν.

And he agrees when Socrates says:

δοκεῖς γάρ μοι λέγειν τὴν πολιτικὴν
τέχνην καὶ ὑπιοχνεῖσθαι πολεῖν ἂνδρας
ἀγαθοὺς πολίτας. (17)

Protagoras' education was a literary education, and his chief instruction grammar, style, poetry, and oratory. Prodicus also taught the sophistry of culture, much after the manner of Protagoras except that he emphasized ethics more.

The field of learning dealt with by Protagoras and Prodicus was gradually extended until the polymath Hippias claimed all knowledge as domain. From him sprang the eristic Sophists, who professed not to know or communicate all branches of learning but, as Jackson says, to provide "An aptitude for dealing with all subjects which would make the knowledge of any subject superfluous." This aptitude was skill in disputation. Now there can be no doubt that this eristic sophistry quickly fell into the abuse to which it is so liable - the abuse of stressing skill in debate and success in argument with little or no regard for truth.

Meanwhile Gorgias, who called himself a ^ερήτωρ introduced that sophistry of rhetoric which was to teach men to speak eloquently and therefore to meet the need for accomplishment in this art, which, as we have seen, the popularity of the law court and assembly created in Athens. This sophistry led to that of politics, which taught the Athenian youth to understand the now rather complicated Athenian Constitution, to discuss constitutional principles, and to consider questions of policy.

Such in brief outline is the history of the Sophist movement in Athens. It is unnecessary to point out that from this

very outline some of Aristophanes' criticism is corroborated. In the succeeding chapter the details of the picture will be filled in from contemporary and ~~near~~-contemporary testimony.

Notes on Chapter II

1. Ap. Diog. I, 12. Cf. Zeller, History of Greek Philosophy. P. 430 N.1.
2. Ap. Aristid. 46. Cf. Diels, Fragmente, Section C, Altere Sophistik, 79. οὐκ ἀνεροτικῶν τοὺς ἑπτα σοφιστὰς προσέλεψε, λέγω δὴ τοὺς σοφοὺς.
3. II, 49. Cf. Zeller, History of Greek Philosophy. P.430 N.1.
4. There is not universal agreement regarding Plato's responsibility in this matter. Grote holds that it was Plato's genius which stamped the term with its bad sense:

Now though the appearance of a man so very original as Socrates was a new fact of unspeakable importance, the appearance of the Sophists was no new fact; what was new was the peculiar use of an old word, which Plato took out of its usual meaning and fastened upon the eminent paid teachers of the Socratic age.

- History of Greece. Vol. 8, Ch. 67, P.355

Bury takes a middle position:

As applied to the teachers who educated the youths who were able to pay, the name acquired a slightly unfavorable colour - partly owing to the distrust felt by the masses toward men who know too much, partly to the prejudice which in Greece always existed more or less against those who gave their services for pay... But this haze of contempt which hung about the sophistic profession, did not imply the idea that the professors were impostors, who deliberately tried to hoodwink the public by arguments in which they did not believe themselves. That suggestion - which has determined the modern meaning of "sophist" and "sophistry" - was first made by the philosopher Plato and is entirely unhistorical. -

- History of Greece. P. 387

Jowett, contending chiefly against Grote, arrives at an opinion somewhat like Bury's:

The use of the term "Sophist" in the dialogues of Plato also shows that the bad sense was not affixed by his genius, but already current. When Protagoras says, "I confess that I am a Sophist," he implies that he professes an art denoted by an abnoxious term; or when the young Hippocrates, with a blush upon his face which is just seen by the light of dawn, admits that he is going to be made a "Sophist," these words would lose their point unless the term had been already discredited. There is nothing surprising in the Sophists' having an evil name; that whether deserved or not was the natural consequence of their vocation. That they were foreigners, that they taught novelties, that they excited the minds of youths are quite sufficient reasons to account for the approbrium which attached to them. The genius of Plato could not have stamped the word anew, or have imparted the associations which occur in contemporary writers, such as Xenophan and Isocrates. Changes in meanings of words can only be made with great difficulty and not unless they are supported by a strong current of popular feeling. There is nothing improbable in supposing that Plato may have extended and envenomed the meaning, or that he may have done the Sophists the same kind of disservice with posterity which Pascal did to the Jesuits. But the bad sense of the word is not and could not have been invented by him, and is found in the early dialogues, - e.g. the Protagoras, - as well as in the later.

- Dialogues of Plato, V.3.

Introduction to the Sophist, P. 428

We can not settle this matter here. This much is certain. The name Sophist, probably accepted by Protagoras to designate his profession, was used in a restricted and unpleasant sense at least from Plato's time on.

5. Cf. Republic, 596D, Cf. also the Symposium, 208 C. Even in Plato the producer of all things is called a wonderful Sophist.
6. There is an interesting passage in Aristides in which he remarks the general looseness with which the word was used. (Aristid. 46 (II 407 Dind.) - Cf. Diels, Fragmente, Sect. C., Altere Sophistik, 79.

7. "Clouds," l. 331
8. Clouds, l. 361 (Bohn Translation) Cf. also Birds l.692.
9. Birds, ll. 1694-1701 (Bohn Translation) Philippus was apparently a disciple of Gorgias. In Wasps 421 we hear of a Philippus who is called δ Γοργίου Hickie (Bohn) translates this "the son of Gorgias," but Merry thinks it most likely means "the disciple of Gorgias."
10. This whole question is not without its difficulties. However, I think that what we have positively stated is pretty generally admitted. To assert more than this would involve us in many difficulties and would probably mean opposing formidable authorities. One holding, for example, that Aristophanes meant to attack all the Platonic Sophists and only these, besides having to wrestle with the problem of Socrates' presence in the Clouds, might find some difficulty in explaining ll. 96-7 of the Clouds, where Strepsiades attributes to the exponents of the new learning a doctrine probably belonging to the Ionic philosophers. Moreover, he would have an adversary in Grote, who insists on the vagueness of the concept of sophist as it existed in the mind of the fifth century Athenian. Jowett, however, opposes Grote in this (cf. his introduction to the Sophist).

We must note here, too, that Grote (cf. P.355 of the History of Greece, Vol. 8, Chapter 67.) insists: "The appearance of the sophists was no new fact." I feel certain, however, from a study of the explanation he gives of this opinion that he would admit sufficient newness in the appearance of the Sophists to justify our identification of them in general with Aristophanes' representatives of the new learning. For he certainly admits that these men were distinguished from the educators in older Athens by their charging fees for instruction and by their extension of the range of instruction imparted. It should be added that other authorities, such as Zeller, differ from Grote in this matter.

However, one passage in Grote offers particular difficulty. In his first footnote on p. 363 (op. cit., Vol. 8., ch. 67) he says:

Ritter (p.582) and Brandis (p.521) quote very unfairly the evidence of the Clouds of Aristophanes as establishing this charge (of making the worse appear the better reason), and that of corrupt teaching generally, against the sophists as a body. If Aristophanes is a

witness against anyone, he is a witness against Socrates, who is the person singled out for attack in the Clouds. But these men, not admitting Aristophanes as evidence against Socrates whom he does attack, nevertheless quote him as evidence against men like Protagoras and Gorgias, whom he does not attack.

Leaving the question of Socrates for the time, what can be said of Grote's statement that Aristophanes does not attack Protagoras and Gorgias? I do not see how it can be admitted, and Grote gives no proof for it. Aristophanes makes it clear that he is attacking paid professors who are the exponents of the popular new learning of the Athens of his day. The only men who answer this description are the Platonic Sophists. Moreover, in the Birds, as we have mentioned, Aristophanes speaks explicitly of Gorgias as one of the knavish race who live by their tongues. It is certainly evident that he is criticizing in the Clouds this very knavish race of rhetoricians and eristic sophists. That for the most part ancient testimony represents the Platonic sophists as answering Aristophanes' description of the new professors in other respects will be shown in the third chapter of this discussion. Therefore, while it is difficult to show that Aristophanes meant to include this or that individual Sophist in his censure, or that he did not include others not sophists, it seems impossible to show that Gorgias or any other of the Platonic Sophists was excluded.

11. Grote, History of Greece, Vol. 8, ch. 67, p. 371.
12. Greek Thinkers, Vol. I, p. 415.
13. Zeller's History of Greek Philosophy, p. 497
14. James Adams (The Religious Teachers of Greece, p. 284) summarizes the points of agreement of the sophists as follows:

It may be safely affirmed, I think, that the sophists agreed for the most part in refusing blindly to acquiesce in the traditional principles of Greek morality, politics, and religion. A certain degree of rationalism is characteristic of them all. In the sphere of religion, it manifests itself sometimes as agnosticism, sometimes, as in the case of Prodicus, for example, as virtual Atheism; in the sphere

of politics and ethics, it appears either in the shape of an individualism so extreme as to strike at the foundations of society, or in the form of the not less anti-social doctrine that Might is Right, or else it involuntarily tends to substitute for the old conception of the city-state the dream not merely of a Panhellenic but of a universal commonwealth.

Rev. W. Lucas Collins (Aristophanes, p. 76) has this to say:

The term 'Sophist,' though in its wider sense it was applied to professors of philosophy generally, had come to mean in the popular language of Athens, those who, for pay, undertook to teach a method of rhetoric and argument by which a man might prove anything whatever. It is against these popular lecturers, who either taught or were commonly believed to teach this perversion of the great science of dialectics, that Aristophanes brings the whole weight of his biting humor to bear in the *Clouds*.

15. One might note here that while the way had been paved for religious skepticism by Xenophanes and by the materialism of many physical philosophers, it had not enjoyed much popular favor before.
16. "The Sophists" (Article by Henry Jackson in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 20, 14th Edition 1929)
17. Protagoras, 318 E.

CHAPTER III

Ancient Testimony Concerning the Sophists

A word or two of explanation must preface this chapter on ancient testimony concerning the Sophists. Not all of the testimony is from contemporaries of Aristophanes, but the evidence of later ancient authors is considered valuable here when these writers lived near the time of the Sophist movement and drew their information from the Sophists' contemporaries. Again some of the testimony deals with Sophists who lived after Aristophanes' day; but this is important because these later Sophists were a part of the movement and carried on, at least to a large extent, in the spirit in which the movement was begun. Indeed, they often reduced Sophistic principles to the logical and ruinous conclusions from which the early leaders had shrunk and which Aristophanes appears to have feared so greatly. Finally the witness of these authors sometimes deals with a single Sophist, and the ideals and practise of this individual Sophist may be found to be contradicted in another. Yet if this individual was an important unit in the movement, the testimony concerning him is of importance, for his teachings had great influence in forming that elusive and often self-contradicting spirit of the new learning.

Plato's testimony will, of course, be the most frequently used, for his criticism of the Sophists was most complete. How impartial and objective that criticism was, it is not the

business of this inquiry to investigate. This much is certain: Plato was the enemy of the Sophists because he felt they were superficial, teaching merely externals based on no adequate metaphysics.

In reviewing the testimony of the ancients, this discussion will treat in order those points which, as we saw in the first chapter, formed the substance of Aristophanes' attack; - namely, humorous description, ethics, eristic, rhetoric, religious skepticism, polymathy, the charging of fees for instruction. Further treatment of the effects of sophistic education will be left to a later chapter, for in this particular matter the point of interest is not whether Aristophanes' belief that sophistry would work ill in Athens was shared by his contemporaries but whether the education did actually do harm.

With regard to Aristophanes' humorous description one can scarcely expect to find much to corroborate his testimony in the works of contemporaries. Much of this description of "pale-faced vagabonds," bare-footed and frugal-living knaves, etc., is evidently used to evoke a laugh and with little intention of precise picturization. Much of it is applicable perhaps to Socrates, the principal character of the play. Indeed, the dialogue between Antiphon and Socrates, found in Xenophon, indicates that to Antiphon, at least, Aristophanes' description of the Sophists as frugal and ascetic hardly

applies. For Antiphon criticizes Socrates for living so frugally, while Socrates replies: "ἔοικας, ὦ Ἀντιφῶν, τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν οἴωμένω τροφὴν καὶ πολυτέλειαν εἶναι." 1)

However, in as much as Aristophanes describes his Sophists as a rather pompous lot, there is corroboration of his testimony in Plato, who throughout uses his pleasantly satirical humor to paint the vanity of the Sophists. Thus he makes Socrates say:

As I suspected that he (Protagoras) would like to have a little display and glory in the presence of Prodius and Hippias. 2)

This is most evident, too, in his well known characterization of Thrasymachus in the Republic. The point is not sufficiently important to warrant further treatment and quotations.

It has been shown that Aristophanes condemned the Sophist ethics because of their contempt for justice and their separation of law from nature. There is little difficulty in corroborating this criticism by the testimony of ancient authors. However, it must be remembered in this consideration that these ethical principles which Aristophanes reprehended were often ~~not~~ taught explicitly by the greater Sophists, but these Sophists did teach doctrines which, when reduced to their logical conclusions by lesser Sophists and the common people, became such ethics. It is also to be remembered - and Jackson suggests that Grote may not have adverted sufficiently to

this 3) - that one may sponsor revolting ethical doctrines and yet live an apparently irreproachable life. Further, it must be noted that the existence of a sophistic Spirit which embraced such unconventional ethics is not destroyed by the fact that one or two individual Sophists taught conventional morals.

It will be useful both for the study of Sophistic ethics and of sophistic eristic to consider what epistemological principles were embraced by the Sophists, for these principles were a base on which the rest was built, if not always by the Sophists who popularized the epistemology, at least with unflinching logic by their disciples.

Of paramount importance in this matter is the testimony of the ancients, particularly Plato, concerning Protagoras' theory of knowledge. Diogenes Laertius 4) tells us that Protagoras "used to say that nothing else was soul except the senses...and that everything was true." He refers to Plato's Theaetetus as his authority - though possibly incorrectly with regard to the first part. 5) We need not enter upon a complete discussion of Plato's development of Protagoras' subjective and relativistic theory of cognition given in the Theaetetus. Suffice it to say that he began, according to Plato, from the Heracleitan principle that "all is flux," and proceeding to the proposition that all knowledge is sense perception, he concluded that things are for each man as they

appear to him. This is the sense in which Plato understood Protagoras' famous dictum:

Man is the measure of all things, of the existence of things that they are, and of the non-existence of things that they are not. 6)

Plato's interpretation of this dictum as meaning, as he says in the Cratylus, 385 E and 386, that "οἷον εἰς τὴν σοφίαν ἐκαστῶν τοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀρετήν"

was, to the best of my knowledge, the one commonly accepted among the ancients, and I see no reason for doubting it. 7)

Whether Protagoras ever reduced his epistemology to its logical conclusions in ethics is difficult to learn. The statement which Plato puts in his mouth, that:

Whatever appears to be just and fair to a state, while sanctioned by a state, is just and fair to it; but the teacher of wisdom causes the good to take the place of evil both in appearance and reality, 8)

is hard to interpret and may be an exaggeration. On the other hand this Sophist is represented in the Protagoras as holding some ethical principles which would delight the most rigid of conventional moralists. He says that virtue is the most beautiful of all things and professes himself to be a teacher of it. 9) The famous myth which Plato puts in the mouth of Protagoras, 10) represents Zeus as giving to all men, through Hermes, a share in σοφίαν and εὐσέβειαν since unless all, or the majority, possessed these, no city could be formed. Just what

relation Protagoras believed to exist between law and nature. I find it difficult to determine from ancient testimony, but Plato clearly represents him as holding that civic virtue, of which justice is a part, is of paramount importance for man. Of very suspicious character, however, is Protagoras' boast that he can make the weaker argument appear the stronger. But this must be considered more in detail when the sophistic eristic is treated. 11)

Whatever may have been the distance to which Protagoras followed his epistemological premises to their conclusions in the field of ethics, and however irreproachable may have been his own private morals, judged in the light of conventional standards, it is surely clear that such an epistemology must be logically destructive of ethics. If there is no objective and universally valid truth, neither can there be any objective and universal moral standard, and right and wrong, as well as all other things, must be measured subjectively by man. Hence, justice becomes purely subjective and any absolute and universally binding law is contrary to nature. We shall see that, according to ancient testimony, these conclusions were drawn by some Sophists.

Similar to the case of Protagoras is that of Gorgias. One would surely hesitate to impute a bad personal morality to this Sophist. On the contrary he seems to have had a reputation for temperance and is quoted as attributing his long life to

the fact that he had "never done anything for the sake of pleasure." 12) True, Plutarch attributes a principle to him which is, to say the least, of suspicious character:

ὁ μὲν γὰρ φίλος οὐκ ὡς περ
 ἀπεφάνετο γ. αὐτῶν μὲν ἀξιώσει
 τὰ δίκαια τὸν φίλον ὑπουργεῖν,
 ἐκείνῳ δ' αὐτὸς ὑπηρετήσει πολλά,
 καὶ τῶν μὴ δίκαιων. 13]

However, the picture of him painted by Plato in the Gorgias shows him to hold generally good ethical doctrines.

From the Meno it is learned that Gorgias, unlike Protagoras, never professed to teach virtue:

ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταγελάσας,
 ὅταν ἀκούσῃ ὑποχνομένων
 ἀλλὰ λέγειν ὅλεται δεῖν πολεῖν
 δεινούς. 14)

Yet though it cannot be shown that Gorgias' own ethics were base, it must be admitted that his epistemological tenets, as we know them through the ancients, were destructive of morals. While Protagoras was a relativist holding that all things are relatively true, Gorgias was a nihilist and taught that nothing is true. In his treatise on the Nature of the Non-existent he is said to have enunciated three propositions: 1) that nothing is; 2) if anything is, it is unknowable to man, 3) if anything is knowable, the knowledge of it cannot be communicated to another. 15) This position is also attributed to Gorgias in the Pseudo-Aristotle's De Gorgia, chapter 5, and the same doctrine is obviously referred to by Isocrates when

he says:

πῶς γὰρ εἴν τις ὑπερβάλλοιτο
 Γοργίαν τὸν πολμήσαντα λέγειν
 ὡς οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἐστίν. 16)

The ethical implications of such a nihilism are no less clear than those of Protagoras' subjectivism. Once truth is destroyed, justice, morality, natural law must also vanish.

What is known, from ancient writers, of the epistemological doctrines of other Sophists is sufficient to show, at least, that the general tendency of these men was toward a skepticism, which would, if logically developed, result in the destruction of morals. Sextus describes Xenias thus:

πάντ' εἰπῶν ψευδῆ καὶ πᾶσαν φαντασίαν
 καὶ δόξαν ψεύδεσθαι καὶ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ
 ὄντος πᾶν τὸ γινόμενον γίνεσθαι καὶ
 εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν πᾶν τὸ φθειρόμενον
 φθειρέσθαι. 17)

Euthydemus, according to Plato, held that: "πᾶσι πάντα ὁμοίως εἶναι ἄμα καὶ ἀεί. 18)

This same Euthydemus, in the dialogue bearing his name, is represented as holding that it is possible neither to speak nor think falsely, since one cannot say or think what is not. 19)
 Cratylus, in the dialogue of his name, also accepts this doctrine, that no one can speak a falsehood, which Plato says/
 many held both of old and at his time. 20) To the Sophist in general Plato ascribes the same tenet:

ἔξαρτον δὲ γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν
 μήδ' εἶναι ψεύδους· τὸ γὰρ μή ὄν
 οὔτε σιδηροῦσθαι τίνα οὔτε λέγειν·
 οὐσίας γὰρ οὔδ' οὐδαμῆ τὸ μή
 ὄν μετέχειν. 21]

A consideration of contemporary and near contemporary testimony regarding the actual ethical teachings of many Sophists will represent these Sophists as drawing the logical conclusions from the sophistic epistemological principles and will, I believe, confirm Aristophanes' criticism. Some Sophists, of course, rather inconsistently, accepted many fine ethical principles. We have seen that this was true of Protagoras and Gorgias, and Prodicus may be added to the list. In his "Choice of Heracles " 22) this Sophist upholds the traditional morality, praises happiness and virtue, and places these in sharp contrast to a life given over to pleasure. The picture drawn of other Sophists is considerably different.

Aristophanes, as we saw, criticized the Sophists for divorcing law and justice from nature. In considering quotations from ancient authors in this regard, caution must be observed. In speaking of law a Sophist may, of course, be referring to positive law, and such legislation can, obviously, be separated from and contrary to nature. Now Antiphon did actually distinguish between law which is mere convention and that which is according to nature. 23) However, even when this distinction between natural and positive law was made, I doubt that it was clearly understood, and I think very few laws

were considered natural. Thus, Hippias admitted divine unwritten laws, but only those which are everywhere observed. 24)

Further, it seems that there was little realization of the foundation for positive law in the natural law. Thus, Antiphon held it a sin to transgress the law which is according to nature, but thought it no evil to transgress the law which was convention unless one was caught, because to sin against the former was to sin against truth, but to transgress the latter was a sin against opinion. 25)

Consequently, Hippias statement is at least suspicious:

ὁ δὲ νόμος, τύραννος ὢν τῶν
ἀνθρώπων πολλά παρὰ τὴν φύσιν
βιάζεται. 26)

Xenophon represents this same Hippias as asking:

νόμους, πῶς ἂν τις ἠγάσαιο σπουδαῖον
πρᾶγμα εἶναι ἢ τὸ πείθεσθαι αὐτοῖς,
οὓς γε πολλάκις αὐτὰ οἱ θεέμενοι
ἀποδοκιμάσαντες μετατίθενται; 27)

Plato's picture of the followers of Protagoras is clear enough:

But in the other case, I mean when they speak of justice and injustice, piety and impiety, they are confident that these have no natural or essential basis. The truth is that which is agreed upon at the time of agreement and as long as the agreement lasts.

He adds: "And this is the philosophy of many who do not altogether go along with Protagoras." 28)

Aristotle's statement indicates that the tendency to

separate justice from nature was prevalent:

ΠΛΕΙΣΤΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΟΠΟΣ ἔστί τοῦ ποιεῖν
 παράδοξα λέγειν ὡς περ καὶ ὁ
 Κάλκας ἐν τῷ Γοργία γέγραπται·
 λέγων καὶ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι δὲ πάντες
 ὄντο συμβαίνειν, παρὰ τὸ κατὰ φύσιν
 καὶ κατὰ νόμον, καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην
 κατὰ νόμον μὲν εἶναι καλόν, κατὰ
 φύσιν δὲ οὐ καλόν. 29)

Then there is an extremely important section in Plato's Laws, which is surely to be understood as an exposition of Sophist doctrine. 30) The section reads:

Ath: And they say that politics cooperate with nature, but in a less degree, and have more of art; also that legislation is entirely a work of art; and is based on assumptions which are not true.

Cle: How do you mean?

Ath: In the first place my dear friend, they would say that the gods exist neither by nature or by art, but only by the laws of states, which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them; and that the honorable is one thing by nature and another thing by law, and that the principles of justice have no existence at all in nature, but that mankind are always disputing about them and altering them; and that the alterations which are made by art and by law have no basis in nature, but are of authority for the moment and at the time at which they are made. 31]

The light in which Plato represents Sophistic ethics in the Gorgias is well known. To be sure, Gorgias himself is not shown to hold bad moral principles, but Polus, who takes up the argument where Gorgias leaves off, boldly enuntiates more questionable doctrines. He does not hesitate to maintain that Archilaus, unjust usurper of Macedonia's throne, is among the happiest of men. 32) Callicles, final opponent of Socrates, fearlessly insists that it is better to do wrong than to suffer. 33) He continues to say that "for the most part custom (νόμος) and nature are generally at variance with one another," 34) since, for example,

By the rule of nature that only is more disgraceful which is the greater evil-as, for example, to suffer in-justice; but by the rule of custom, to do evil is the more disgraceful. 35)

In the same passage he affirms:

ἢ δὲ γε οἶμαι φύσις αὐτὴ ἀποφαίνει
αὐτό, ὅτι δίκαιόν ἐστιν τὸν
ἀμείνω τῶν χειρόνων πλεόν ἔχειν
καὶ τὸν δυνατώτερον τοῦ
ἀδυνατώτερου. 36)

His reference to the common practise among animals with regard this matter is reminiscent of the passage in the Clouds, in which Pheidippides, about to beat his father, defends his action by an appeal to the common practise among cocks. Apparently not all the ethical vagaries of modern evolutionists are original with them.

Finally, reference must be made, in connection with sophistic ethics, to the teaching of ~~Thrasymachus~~ as we know it from the Republic. This Sophist openly states that:

For injustice is censured because the censurers are afraid of suffering, and not from any fear they have of doing injustice.

(and further)

Justice is the interest of the stronger whereas injustice is a man's own profit and interest. 37)

Such is the picture, by ancient writers, of the ethical principles embodied in sophistic culture. It is surely evident that this picture is nearly a perfect replica of Aristophanes' painting.

As has been shown, Aristophanes found fault with the Sophists because of their eristic which emphasized victory in argument to the detriment of truth, and even boasted of making the wrong side appear right. There is little difficulty in verifying this criticism in the testimony of the ancients.

For the most part, it is true this eristic was taught and practised by lesser Sophists, though not all the greater men of this group were above it. Certainly the foundation on which it was built was in the teaching of the greater Sophists. For when the existence of objective truth has been denied, there is little reason to concern oneself with right and wrong in a debate, and it is but logical to use every device to give the appearance of truth to whatever one wishes to prove.

From Diogenes Laertius we learn that Protagoras did apply his theory of knowledge to the principles of debate:

He was the first person who asserted in every question there were two sides to the argument exactly opposite to one another. 38)

In the same work Diogenes corroborate's in Protagoras' case Aristophanes' charge of "quibbler" against the Sophists.

He was also the first person who gave a precise definition of the parts of time; and who explained the value of opportunity, and who instituted contests of argument, and who armed the disputants with the weapon of sophism. He it was, too, who first left facts out of consideration, and fastened his arguments on words, and who was the parent of the present superficial and futile kinds of discussion. On which account Timon says of Him:-

Protagoras, that slippery arguer, in disputations contests fully skilled. 39)

Diogenes says also of Protagoras:

He first employed the reasonings of Aristophanes, which attempt to establish the point that they cannot be contradicted; as Plato tells us in the Eutydemus. 40)

Likewise Clement of Alexandria, in the Stromata, tells us:

Ἕλληνές φασὶν Πρωταγόρου
Προκατάρξαντος παντὶ λόγῳ λόγῳ
ἀντικεισθαί. 41)

Seneca says:

Protagoras ait de omni re in utramque partem disputari posse ex aequo et de hac ipsa, an omnis res in utramque partem disputabilis sit. 42)

Finally, Aristotle speaks with some disgust of Protagoras:

This sort of argument illustrates what is meant by making the worse argument appear the better. Hence, people were right in rejecting the training Protagoras undertook to give them. It was a fraud; the probability it handled was not genuine but spurious, and has a place in no art except rhetoric and eristic. 43)

Plato, speaking of the Sophist in general, 44) says that "he is a disputer" and a "teacher of the art of disputation to others," and he adds that the art of disputation is the art of disputing about all things. Plato then shows that since the Sophist can not really know all things, he must have only apparent knowledge of them.

Isocrates is evidently referring to the eristic Sophists when he says:

Indeed, who can fail to abhor, yes, to contemn those teachers in the first place who devote themselves to disputation, since they pretend to search for truth, but straightway at the beginning of their professions attempt to deceive us with lies. 45)

And in the same speech he refers to these disputers as "expounding captious theories." 46)

In his Euthydemus Plato subjects the eristic of the Sophists to a riotous satire, using, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as the chief representatives of this kind of disputation. Dionysodorus boasts that "all our questions are inevitable." 47) He and Euthydemus delight in tying Cleinas

in knots. They ask him a question -e.g., "Are those who learn the wise or the ignorant?" 48) - and then, taking the opposite side from that which Cleinas defends, use clever arguments to trip him up, to the great glee and admiration of their followers.

Likewise, the works of Aristotle, De Sophisticis Elenchis, describes the practises of the eristic Sophists. It shows at length the many devices used by these Sophists to ensnare their opponents in debate, and the method leaves no doubt that victory and not the disclosure of truth is their object. One trick, to which Aristophanes refers to in the De Sophisticis Elenchis, is that of availing oneself of the ambiguity of language . 49) Equivocal words were used as middle terms as middle terms in syllogisms; for example:

Τὸ κενὸν ἄγαθόν. τὸ γὰρ δεῖνται ἄγαθόν,
τὸ δὲ κενὸν δεῖνται. 50]

Thus, Aristotle says in his Rhetoric:

Words of ambiguous meaning are chiefly useful to enable the Sophist to mislead his hearers. 51)

Ancient writers thus describe the Sophist eristic, a method of debate scarcely reconcilable with a regard for objective truth, and a practise likely to work serious moral harm.

Closely allied to the eristic of the Sophists was the rhetoric which their education included. Now there is no difficulty in producing ancient testimony to verify Aristophanes' representation of the Sophists as rhetoricians. I suppose no

one denies that they were such and that they emphasized rhetoric in their training. It is more important to determine whether or not in the eyes of other ancient authors this rhetoric was reprehensible. For Aristophanes apparently felt that the sophistic rhetoric was worthy of ridicule, since it was an overemphasis of external form to the detriment of content, perhaps but another means of achieving the same end as eristic. Let us consider what the ancients had to say of this rhetoric.

The most eminent rhetorician among the Sophists was undoubtedly Gorgias, and the influence he exercised on future rhetoric, especially through his pupil Isocrates, is well known, yet if ancient testimony is to be believed, he did overemphasize external form in speech.

In the Gorgias (456 A sq.) Plato has this Sophist give an encomium of rhetoric and admit as true Socrates' ironic remark that the greatness of rhetoric seems to be something supernatural. Similarly, in the Philebus Protagoras says:

I often heard Gorgias maintain that the art of persuasion far surpassed everything else to this all things submit not by compulsion but by their own free will. 52)

Plato also suggests that Gorgias was not too concerned about the content of speeches, since this Sophist and Tisias:

Are not ignorant that probability is superior to truth, and who by force of argument make the little appear great and the great little, and the new old and the old new, and have discovered universal forms, either short or going on to infinity. 53)

The ancients likewise remarked his attention to the external forms of speech. Aristotle says:

Ποιητικὴ πρώτη ἐγένετο
ἢ λέξις οἷον ἢ Γοργίου. 54)

And Diony. refers to:

Θουκυδίδου καὶ Γοργίου τὴν
μεγαλοπρεπείαν καὶ
σεμνότητα, καὶ Καλλιλογίαν. 55)

Diodorus (ap. Diels Fragmente, Sect. P. 82 A₄) tells us that Gorgias, when he came to Athens, startled the people with his speech because of its symmetry, antithesis, in general, its form. Finally, for an example of excessive use of the adornments of language, one might refer to Agathon's speech (Plato's Symposium 194, E) which Socrates says (198 C) reminds him very much of Gorgias.

Plato gives an imitation of Protagoras' rhetoric in the famous myth of the Protagoras (320 C sq.). The reader had best judge this for himself.

In the case of the imitation given by Plato (Protagoras 337 C) of Hippias speech, there can be little room for a doubtful judgement. It is a rambling speech, without much thought, and full of unnecessary words.

Thrasymachus appears to have laid considerable stress on form. Dionysius says of him:

Θρασύμαχος δὲ καθαρὸς μὲν καὶ
λεπτός καὶ σεμνὸς εὐρεῖν τε καὶ
εἰπεῖν στρογγύλως καὶ περλιτῶς
δὲ βούλεται. 56)

According to Plato:

For the 'sorrows of a poor old man', or any other pathetic case, no one is better than the Chalcedonian giant; he can put a whole company of people into a passion and out of one again by his mighty magic, and is first rate at inventing or disposing of any sort of calumny on any grounds or none. 57)

Evidently, he gave rules for oratorical form, for Suidas says of him:

ὅς πρῶτος περίοδον καὶ κῶλον
κατέβηλε καὶ τὸ νῦν τῆς
ῥητορικῆς τρόπον - εἰσηγήσατο. 58)

Critias also laid down rhetorical precepts. Phrynichus

says of him:

εἰλικρινούς δὲ καὶ καθαροῦ καὶ
ἄττικου λόγου κανόνας καὶ
στάθμους καὶ παράδειγμα φησὶν
ἄριστον. 59)

In the Phaedrus Plato, after his ironic praise of various Sophist rhetoricians (267 a sq.) - e.g. of "Evenus who invented correct allusion and indirect praises," of Gorgias, of Prodicus who "said that he alone had discovered the art of proper speech, that discourses should be neither long nor short, but of reasonable length," of Hippias, of Polus "and his shrines of learned speech such as disputation and figurativeness," of Protagoras and Thrasymachus, - after this irony he censures these men for emphasizing merely the outer form of rhetoric. Socrates says:

And if Adrastus the mellifluous or Pericles heard of these wonderful arts, brachylogies and eikonologies and all the hard names which we have been endeavoring to draw into the light of day, what would they say? Instead of losing temper and applying uncomplimentary epithets, as you and I have been doing to the authors of such imaginary art, their superior wisdom would rather censure us, as well as them. Have a little patience, Phaedrus and Socrates, they would say, and don't be angry with those who from some want of dialectical skill are unable to define the nature of rhetoric, and consequently suppose that they have found the art in the preliminary conditions of the art, and when they have taught these to others, fancy that they have been teaching the whole art of rhetoric; but as to persuasion in detail and unity of composition, that they regard as an easy thing with which their disciples may supply themselves. 60)

Plato makes another remark which is of interest to this discussion. After stating in the Phaedrus (269 D) that "the art of rhetoric does not lie in the direction of Lysias and Thrasymachus," he says a little later (271 A) that Thrasymachus or any other who seriously teaches the art of rhetoric must base his teaching on a sound psychology.

Isocrates' criticisms of the old Sophists in his Antidosis and of the later in his Contra Sophistas are well known. He has no use for the Sophists who profess to teach political discourse, for "they have no interest in truth," and further:

They do not attribute any of this power either to the practical experience or the native ability of the student, but they undertake to transmit the science of discourse as simply as they would teach the letters of the alphabet, not having taken the trouble to examine into the nature of

each kind of knowledge, but thinking that because of the extravagance of their promises they themselves will command admiration and the teaching of discourse will be held in higher esteem - oblivious to the fact that the arts are made great not by those who are without scruple in boasting about them, but by those who are able to discover all the resources which each art affords. 61)

From this discussion of ancient testimony about the rhetoric of the Sophist, it is clear that Aristophanes' representation and criticism of the Sophists in this regard was corroborated. The other ancients, also, considered the Sophists as rhetoricians who made too much of external show and persuasion and thought too little of content and truth.

Among the criticisms of the Sophists which Aristophanes apparently considered serious was his censure of their skepticism about traditional religion and their general tendency to agnosticism or atheism. Again, it must be noted that the skeptical epistemology of the Sophists would naturally tend to produce a religious skepticism. There are specific texts in the ancient writers which indicate that such skepticism did actually result.

Of course, the classic text in this matter is the fragment from Protagoras' treatise 'On the Gods, a fragment often quoted and referred to in ancient writings:

Concerning the gods I am not able to know to a certainty whether they exist or whether they do not. For there are many things which prevent one from knowing, especially the obscurity of the subject

and the shortness of the life of man. 62)

Certainly this is an open profession of agnosticism.

It is obvious that Gorgias' nihilism, logically followed out, would annihilate the gods. If its milder hypotheses were accepted, it, too, would result in agnosticism.

To Critias, Sextus (Adv. Math. IX, 54 ap. Diels Fragmente, Sect. C. 88 B 25) attributes the doctrine that the gods were invented to provide protection against secret wrongdoing. Prodicus' teaching (Sext. Math. IX, 18, and Cic. De Nat. Deorum 1, 37, 1-18; and 15, 38, - ap. Diels op. cit. B 5) that the ancients accepted useful things, - e.g. the moon and sun, - as gods has a suspicious ring. Hermias (Z. Plat. Phaed. p. 239, 21, ap. Diels op. cit. 85 B 8.) says ~~Thrasymachus~~ held that:

οἱ θεοὶ οὐχ ὁρῶσι τὰ ἐνθρώπων
οὐ γὰρ ἐν τῷ μέγιστον τῶν ἐν
ἐνθρώποις ἄγαθῶν παρῆσαν τὴν
δικαιοσύνην ὁρῶμεν γὰρ τοὺς
ἐνθρώπους ταύτη μὴ χρῶμενους.

This last, of course, is not atheism or agnosticism, but is of the stuff of skepticism. Then the passage in Plato's Laws quoted above, (Ch. 3, p. 13) is worth quoting in part here. As was noted previously, the passage is certainly meant to express Sophist teaching:

The gods exist neither by nature or by art, but only by the laws of states, which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them. 63)

Finally, it should be remarked that not only sophistic epistemology but also sophistic ethics demanded a break with religion. Just as no sound ethics can be built independently of religion, so no unsound ethics, or lack of morals, can brook religion.

Aristophanes' next and last two criticisms of the Sophist do not seem so important to us as the others. I refer to his censure of the polymathy which the Sophists professed and to his ridicule of their charging for instruction.

Of course, the most famous for the vast knowledge to which he laid claim is the Sophist Hippias. Philostratus says of him:

ἔσθ' ἔγχετο δ' ἔς τὰς διαλέξεις
 χρωματρίαν, ἄστρονομίαν, μουσικήν,
 ῥυθμούς. διελέγετο δ' ἐκὰς περὶ
 ὑψηφίας καὶ περὶ ἀγαλλματο-
 πούσας. 64)

Plato represents him as boasting that at the Olympian festivals he always offered "to perform any of the exhibitions which I had prepared and to answer any questions which anyone had to ask." 65) and further: "I have never found anyone who was my superior in anything." 66) In the Hippias Major (285 b sq.) Socrates runs through a rather formidable list of subjects on which Hippias can speak. In the Lesser Hippias Socrates says that Hippias is "in most arts the wisest of men" 67) and this by his own boast. Socrates also remembers how Hippias

bragged that when he went to Olympia, everything on his person was his own work. 68) Xenophon has Socrates remark to Hippias (Mem. IV, 4, 6):

οὐδ' ἴσως δὲ τὸ πολυμαθῆς
εἶναι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν
οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ λέγεις.

Now I do not believe that the other great Sophists professed such a polymathy as Hippias, but I think it true that they did embrace a rather large number of subjects in their education. According to Plato, indeed, Protagoras explicitly denies teaching some of the subjects which Hippias taught, but at the same time he says that the ordinary Sophists did teach these subjects:

If Hippocrates comes to me, he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils, who, when they have just escaped from the arts, are taken back and driven into them by these teachers, and made to learn calculation, and astronomy, and geometry, and music (he gave a look at Hippias as he said this); but if he comes to me, he will learn that which he comes to learn. And this is prudence in affairs private as well as public; he will learn to order his house in the best manner, and he will be best able to speak and act in the affairs of the state. 69)

Diogenes Laertius provides us with a list of the writings of Protagoras extant at his time, and the list surely includes an amazing variety of subjects:

A treatise on the Art of Contention; one on Wrestling; one on Mathematics; one on a

Republic; one on Ambition; one on Virtues; one on the Original Condition of man; one on those in the Shades Below; one on the Things which are not done properly by Men; one volume of Precepts; one essay entitled Justice in Pleading for Hire, two books of Contradictions. 70)

Of Gorgias Plato, through Socrates says:

And he has taught you the habit of answering questions in a grand and bold style, which becomes those who know, and is the style in which he himself answers all comers; and any Hellene who likes may ask him anything. 71)

The same idea is found in the Gorgias 447 C.

Cicero, speaking of Prodicus, says: Plurimum temporibus illis etiam de natura rerum et disserat et scripsit. 72)

I think it can be safely agreed that sophistic education was much larger in scope than the older education whose place it took. It should be remembered, too, that sophistic rhetoric and eristic was intended to equip the youth to deal with practically any subject, even though he might not have much knowledge of the matter.

With regard to the fact of the Sophists' teaching for pay, - Aristophanes' last criticism, - there is such agreement among all that it seems hardly necessary to cite authors in the matter. Protagoras is said to have introduced the practise, - a novel one to the Athenians and apparently a considerable shock to some, - and the Sophists in general adopted it. In the notes I shall give several references where one can read, if he wishes, the ancient testimony on the subject. 73)

In the course of this discussion no effort has been made to examine the possibilities of prejudice in the authors whose testimony has been used. To do so is beyond the scope of this inquiry. 74) Obviously, however, so long as the possibility of prejudice has not been excluded, the value of the testimony is considerably lessened. Of course, as the number of authors in agreement on a matter is larger the likelihood of prejudice and error is diminished, though not excluded. From this chapter, however, I believe it is clear that the testimony of contemporary and near-contemporary ancient writers corroborates Aristophanes' criticism of the Sophists.

Notes on Chapter III

1. Memorabilia I, 6, 10.
2. Protagoras 317 c.
3. Henry Jackson, Article on Sophists, Encyclopaedia Brit., 14th Edition.
4. Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers, Diogenes Laertius, IX, 51 C. D. Yonge's translation.
5. In the Theaetetus 151 E and 160 D the doctrine "οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἐστὶ ἐπιστήμη ἢ νόσθσις" is ascribed to Protagoras. Confer the note in Zeller, Hist. of Greek Phil. page 450.
In Theaetetus 160 D the teaching "οὐδεὶς ψευδὴ σοφίσει" is attributed to Protagoras.
6. Theaetetus 152 A. This dictum is often quoted and referred to. Cf. Theaetetus 160 C.; Crotylus 385 E; Aristotle's Metaphysics, X, 1 (1053 A 35) and XI, 6.; Sext. Math. VII, 60; etc.
7. Aristotle, I believe, interpreted the dictum as Plato did. Cf. Metaphysics XI, 1062 b. 13 sq. and IV, 1007 b 19 sq. However, I'm not sure that Metaphysics X, 1053 a 36 sq. does not state a different view. For other interpretations similar to Plato's confer: Sext. Pyrrh. h. I 216 ff. (ap. Diels, Fragmente, Section C, 74 A 14) (cf. also Diels, op. cit., 74 A 19), and Democritus in Plutarch Adv. Col. 1108 f. sq. (ap. Burnet, Greek Philosophy, Part I, p. 116)
8. Theaetetus 167 c.
9. Protagoras 349 E.
10. Protagoras 320 c sq.
11. It might be noted here, as a point of interest, that Protagoras in the dialogue of his name, 324 B, seems to know merely the preventive function of punishment. However this is not perfectly clear, and it is doubtful whether Plato's own notion of punishment was complete.
12. Athen. XII 548 C D (ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 82 A., My translation.)

13. Plutarch, De Adul. et Am. 23 p. 64 C. (Ap. Diels, op. cit, Sect. C, 82 B 20)
14. Meno, 95 C. Note, however, that Meno, who professed to share Gorgias' opinions, is represented (Meno 71 E) as speaking on virtue. He distinguished between the virtue of man and that of woman.
15. Sextus, Adv. Math. VII 65 Sq. (ap. Diels op. cit., Sect C., 82 B₃) Sextus also gives Gorgias' proof for his position, but this is not pertinent here.
16. Isocrates 10, 3 (Ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 82 B.)
17. Sext. Adv. Math. VII, 53. (Ap. Diels op. cit., Sect. C, 81,) cf. also Antiphon Op. Diels. ap. cit., Sect. C, 87 B.
18. Cratylus 386 D.
19. Euthydemus 283 E sq., 286 C, etc.
20. Cratylus 429 D.
21. Sophist 260 D.
22. Xen. Memorabilia II, 21-34
23. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 87 B 44
24. Xen. Mem. 4, 19.
25. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 87 B 44.
26. Protagoras 337 D.
27. Xen. Mem. IV, 4, 14.
28. Theaetetus 172 B.
29. Aristotle De Soph. El. C. 12, 173 a⁷
30. So Zeller (Hist. of Greek Phil. p. 479 n. 1) and Burnet (Greek Phil. Part I, p. 122) understand it.
31. Laws X, 889 D & E.
32. Gorgias, 470 D sq. Zeller (op. cit., p. 477 n. 1) correctly observes that whether or not Callicles was a Sophist in the narrower sense is unimportant, for Plato surely means us to regard him as a representative of sophistic culture.

33. Gorgias 482 E
34. " 482 E
35. " 483 a
36. " 483 c, d.
37. Republic 344 C. Jowett
38. Diogenes Laertius "Protagoras" From Lives and Opinions of. Eminent Philosophers, translated by C. B. Yonge.
39. Ibidem.
40. " . If Diog. is referring to Euthydemus, 286 C, it should be noted that what is said there is attributed to the followers of Protagoras.
41. Clem. Strom. VI, 65 (ap. Diels op. cit., Sect. C. 80 A 20)
42. Seneca ap. 88, 43 (ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 80 A 20)
43. Aristotle Rhet. B 24 1402 A 23.
44. Sophist 232 b, sq.
45. Isocrates, Contra Soph. (291) 18 (Norlin's translation)
46. Ibid. (295) 204
47. Euthydemus 276 E
48. Ibid. 275 D
49. De Soph. El., C. 1. 165 a 4 — "εἰς τὸπος εὐφρεστάτος ἔστι καὶ σημανώτατος ὁ δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων!"
50. De Soph. El., 4, 165 B 34
51. Rhetoric, 1404 b.
52. Philebus, 58 A & B
53. Phaedrus 267 A & B
54. Rhetoric III, 1 1404 a 25
55. Diony. De Vic Dic. Dem. 963 (ap. Zeller, Hist. of Gk. Phil. p. 493 n. 1)

56. Isae. 20 (ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C, 85 A 13)
57. Phaedrus 267 C.
58. Luidas (asp. Diels op. cit., Sect. C., 85 A 1) Aristotle's Rhet. III, 1, 1409 a
59. Phrynich. Praepar. Soph. (ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 88 A 20)
60. Phaedrus 269 A sq.
61. Contaa Soph. 9 sq. (Norlin's translation)
62. Diog. Laert., "Protagoras" from Lives of Eminent Philosophers IX, 51 (Yonge's Translation)
63. Laws, X 889 E.
64. Phil. V, Soph., I, 11, 1 sq. (ap. Diels, op. cit., Sect. C., 86 A 2.)
65. Hipp. Min. 363 C. & D.
66. Hipp. Min. 364 A
67. Hipp. Min. 368 B
68. Ibid.
69. Protagoras 318 D sq. Jowett
70. Diog. Laert. op. cit., loc. cit.
71. Meno 70 B
72. Cic. De Orat. III, 32, 128. ap. Diels, op. cit., 84 B 3
73. Diog. IX 52, ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A₁; Philostr. V. soph. I 104. ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A 2; Hesych. Onamatol. bei Schol Plat. de Rep. 600 C, ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A 3; Apul. Flor. 18 P., ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A 4; Plato Protagoras 349 A, ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A 5; Plato Meno 91 D, ap. Diels, op. cit., 80 A 8; Diod. XII 53, 2 ap. Diels, op. cit., 82 A 4; Xenoph. An. II 6, 16, ap. Diels, op. cit., 82 A 5; Plato Hipp. Mai. 282 C, ap. Diels, op. cit., 84 A 3; Philostrat, V. Soph. I 11, 5, ap. Diels, op. cit., 86 A 2; Plato Hippias mai. 281 A, ap. Diels, op. cit., 86 A 7; Xenoph. Mem. I 6, 1 sq., ap. Diels, op. cit., 87 A 3.
74. It is only fair to refer to Grote's position in the matter,

for he rejects much of the ancient testimony on the Sophists. In the famous 67th chapter of his History of Greece, he says, referring to this testimony:

The libels of Aristophanes, the sneers of Plato and Xenophon, even the interested generalities of a plaintiff or defendant before a dikastery are received with little cross-examination as authentic materials for history.

Zeller differs with Grote in many instances and Sedgwick and Jackson qualify his statements.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated the translation of Plato's works which I have used is that of Benjamin Jowett, and the translation of Aristotles' works is that edited by W. D. Ross.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

In this conclusion it will be necessary to treat briefly of three points: the effects of the sophistic education, the intrinsic good or evil of the features of that education which Aristophanes censured, and the sincerity of Aristophanes. I have grouped these three together in a final chapter partly because there is, perhaps, some relation between the three topics, and partly because, since it is impossible to treat any of the three satisfactorily in this thesis, I may as well handle all the unsatisfactory matter at once.

In the first chapter of this discussion it was shown that Aristophanes himself seemed to fear the effects of Sophistic education, and he contrasted the splendid youth developed by the old education with the effeminate and corrupt product of the new. Moreover, he warned Athens that she would regret nursing the Sophists who would turn out to be a brood of vipers.

Now it seems to me undeniable that Sophist education, if it really was as Aristophanes and other ancients portrayed it, must have had a distinctly deleterious effect wherever it flourished. To deny the objective validity of knowledge is surely to admit that might is right,- 1) to name but one logical deduction from that denial. The Sophist position on law would necessarily tend to destroy respect for authority, and on this respect the effectiveness of government depends. 2) The

son of Strepsiades, as he became learned in Sophistry, outgrew filial virtue. It is at least likely that the Athenian, as he became richer in the qualities of the Sophist, would grow poorer in those of the citizen. Likewise it is obvious that such ethics as the Sophists are represented as teaching must destroy the morals of those who accept them. 3) The Clouds is, perhaps, the saddest of comedies for it shows the ruinous results of the Frankenstein monster, false education. This sad comedy has but too often been enacted on the stage of the world with history for its setting.

As I say, it seems that Sophist education, if it was as represented, must have wrought ill in Athens. If, however, we approach the question from the other side and ask whether according to history, bad effects actually resulted from Sophist education, the answer is not so easy. First of all, one is faced with the question of whether the Athens of the Sophists was more corrupt than that of Marathon days, and what were its peculiar evils. This in itself is hard enough. Supposing that one established the fact that there was a fund of corruption in the Athens of the Sophist, he still would have to show a causal relationship between Sophistic education and the evil. 4) Throughout he would find himself opposed by Grote, an adversary not apt to encourage one to open disagreement.

Here I wish merely to indicate the direction of my opinion, without making any effort to prove it. That this opinion

is supported, at least in part, by such men as Burnet, Zeller, and Taylor, lends me courage. I believe that the Athens of the Sophists had a peculiar corruption of its own (whether greater or less than that of earlier time is not so important here), the nature of which was such as Sophistic education, if it was as the ancients represented it, would naturally produce. I think that the plays of Euripides, the Melian dialogue in Thucydides, and in general the history of the Peloponnesian war as found in Thucydides are evidence of this. Further, I think that the decadence of the Hellenic era can with some probability be shown to have roots in the Sophistic education of an earlier day. As partial corroboration of what I have said, I wish to quote Taylor:

In the bounding strength that Athens felt after throwing off Persia, development was quickened. Her decades were as centuries.... Some of the causes which made her decline as rapid as her growth are not far to seek. She broke her power in the Peloponnesian war, her citizens grew loquacious; their spirit of devotion to their city waned with the period of faulty action; they were engrossed with pleasure, with their individual interests and thoughts. And when afterwards Thebes had roused herself for a mighty fling at the Spartan's throat, and then sunk back into Boeotian lethargy, and there was no one but Athens to take the lead against Macedon, she had no capacity for such continuous self-denial and exertion as were needed to uphold her freedom and that of her rancorous neighbors against the untiring king. 5)

Sophist education, if it was as Aristophanes represented it, could well have been partially responsible for such a condition in Athens.

There is also considerable difficulty in treating the actual blameworthiness of the features of Sophist education which Aristophanes criticized. Here one is inevitably determined by his own philosophy, and the extent of possible discussion is so vast as to discourage beginning in a paper of limited proportions. Suffice it to point out the obvious - - that if one believes at all in the possibility of a complete and systematic metaphysics and ethics, he can not but shun the principles of the Sophists. Further, if my opinion of the effects of sophist education is correct, one must surely suspect intrinsic evil in the cause of those effects.

It is hard to see on what grounds the eristic and rhetoric of the Sophists could merit unqualified defense, if it was as represented by the ancients. As to their religious skepticism, however, argument could easily arise. I believe that it was a serious defect because it substituted a greater evil for a lesser. Pagan theology, I think, is better than no theology.

The tendency of the Sophists to polymathy is obviously reprehensible only in so far as it resulted in superficiality.

Finally, it is hard to see in what sense the charging of fees for instruction can be intrinsically evil. The people of

Aristophanes' time, nurtured in the opposite tradition, found the novelty a shock to their sense of what is fitting - and who can say whether they were hypersensitive or we are callous? Today we are thoroughly accustomed to the practise.

Though in my opinion - and I think this would be the common belief - the qualities for which Aristophanes answered the Sophist education were in the main (at least the ethics, eristic, rhetoric, and religious skepticism) ~~very~~ great evils, I do not think that the education performed no good in Athens. It met a real need for an education of larger scope. It had a salutary effect, though rather accidentally, in kicking over the muddled traces of a lost philosophy, so that thought could begin anew in the direction given it by Socrates. Moreover, the great sophists contributed in a real way to the knowledge of rhetoric, grammar, and language. I'm not at all sure that these true merits of the Sophists were recognized by their ancient critics.

Finally, we arrive at the last difficult problem - that of the sincerity of Aristophanes. Unfortunately, this question must remain forever undecided, and the best that can be hoped for is a well-founded opinion. It is hard enough to determine the actual convictions of the author of any satire; but when that satire happens to come to us in the form of a Greek comedy written about a subject as elusive as the Sophists, and that over two thousand years ago, the difficulty assumes alarming proportions.

First of all, Greek comedy was by its tradition compelled

to be conservative, so that if Aristophanes wanted to write about the Sophists, he had to appear to oppose them. How can one be sure that he was not really sympathetic with the movement and ridiculing it with his tongue in his cheek?

One who wishes to accept this view does not have to look far for arguments to support it. To begin with, Aristophanes makes much in the Clouds of the religious skepticism of the Sophists; yet a consideration of his other plays - e.g., the Plutus - might lead one to question whether he himself was a particularly reverent and devout believer. Then there is the impossible difficulty which arises from his having apparently identified Socrates with the Sophists in the Clouds. Of what value, it might be asked, is the criticism of a man who simply for comic effect, classes among his Sophists one so opposite to them as Socrates? Without intention of answering the question, I should like to suggest that it may not have been so difficult to mistake Socrates, as he was at the time the Clouds was written, for a Sophist.

These difficulties and the general tendency of the elusive Aristophanes to hide behind the comic mask have caused one school of critics to conclude that this man was simply a comedian and had but one purpose, to raise a laugh. Diametrically opposed to this school are those critics who see in Aristophanes a deep thinking and earnest moral reformer, using his comedy merely as a means to rescue his fellow men from the evils of the day. There is a classic expression of this view in

Browning's Aristophanes' Apology.

As always there is a group seeking to steer a middle course. Gilbert Murray and other critics see in Aristophanes a man who was first and foremost a comic poet, but who had nevertheless a serious moral purpose. This view seems to me most likely. I think it difficult to deny that Aristophanes was greatly concerned, as a comic poet should be, to amuse his audience. Perhaps he sometimes sacrificed truth and accuracy to this end. However, I think it equally hard to deny that he was generally expressing his own sincere and keenly felt convictions. This I believe to be the case in the criticism of the Sophists in the Clouds, for reasons I shall now present.

First of all Aristophanes' plays show him to be certainly a man of keen intellectual perception. Now it seems to me improbable, though by no means impossible, that such a man could write a searching satire on a subject of so great importance at his time as the Sophistic education, and not mean it. It becomes more improbable when we consider that this criticism found in this satire tallies almost perfectly with the other contemporary criticism.

Then we know that Aristophanes was prosecuted by Cleon and made to suffer for an attack made in an early play on this demagogue. Later, in the Knights, he risked a second fierce attack on Cleon. This is not the conduct of a man who holds his convictions lightly.

Also, I believe a passage in the Frogs is noteworthy in

in this connection. There Aeschylus says to Euripides;

Ἀπόκριναι μολ, τί νος οὐνεκα
 χρὴ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα ποιητήν;

Euripides answers:

δεξιότητος καὶ νοουθεσίας, ὅτι
 βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν τοὺς
 ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν. 6)

Now I think it likely that Aristophanes was voicing there his own opinion of the function of the poet. It is surely unlikely that a man with such a lofty concept of the poet's function would in his own poetry express other than his sincere convictions.

These arguments, I confess, are at best persuasive.

Stronger than all of them, I believe, is the very spirit of the Clouds. It seems to me evident from the mere reading that the play is serious. But such a thing is not demonstrable.

Finis

Notes on Chapter IV

1. This conclusion is surely obvious. Subjective truth is no better than opinion. If all knowledge is mere opinion then, accepting human nature as it is, it is but natural that the opinion of the stronger should prevail.
2. This is a part of the thesis of Guglielmo Ferrero's book: The Ruin of Ancient Civilization and the Triumph of Christianity.
3. This ethics was the more dangerous when coupled with skill in rhetoric and eristic. Cf. Medea, (ll. 579 sq.):

Truly, I am in many respects different from most mortals, for in my opinion whatever man being unjust, is naturally clever at speaking; ~~and~~ he deserves the greatest punishment. - (my translation)

4. Here, too, one would have to treat the difficult question of whether the Sophists produced the times or the times the Sophists. In this connection one recalls Plato's statement:

The 'Sophists' only teach the views of the majority, just as one might study the nature of a great fierce beast, and put his observations in the form of art.

(Rep. - Quoted by Starkie, Clouds of Ar. p. XVIII, n. 4.)

5. Henry Osborn Taylor, Ancient Ideals, p. 344.
6. Frogs, ll. 1008-1010

Bibliography

- Adam, James The Religious Teachers of Greece
Edinburgh: M. & T. Clark, 1923
- Aristophanes The comedies of Aristophanes Vol. I & II.
Translated by William James Hickie
London: George Bell & Sons, 1901
- Aristophanes The Clouds
Edited by W. W. Merry
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879
- Aristophanes The Frogs
Edited by W. W. Merry
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879
- Aristophanes Plays
Translated by Benjamin Bickley Rogers
Loeb Classical Library
London: William Heineman Ltd., 1924
- Aristophanes The Clouds
Edited with translation and introduction by
W. J. M. Starkie.
London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1911
- Aristotle Opera Omnia
Vol. I, Rhetorica, De Sophisticis Elenchis;
Vol. III, De Gorgia
Editoribus Firmin-Didot et Sociis
Parisiis: Institute Francisci Typographis, 1848
- Aristotle The Works of Aristotle
Vol. XI Rhetorica
Translated by W. Rhys Roberts
Edited by W. D. Ross
Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1924
- Burnett, John Greek Philosophy
Part I, Thales to Plato
London: Macmillan & Co., 1924
- Bury, J.B. A History of Greece
London: Macmillan & Co., 1914
- Collins, Rev.
W. Lucas Aristophanes a Study
Edinburgh & London
Wm. Blackwoods & Sons., 1872

- Diels, Hermann Die Fragments Der Vorsokratiker
Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1934
- Diogenes Laertius The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers
Translated by P. D. Yonge
Bohn's Classical Library
London: George Bell & Sons, 1901
- Euripides Fabulae Vol. I
Medea
Edited by Gilbert Murray
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901
- Ferrero, Guglielmo The Ruin of Ancient Civilization and the Triumph of Christianity
G. P. Putnam's
- Gomperz, Theodor Greek Thinkers Vol. I
London: Jno. Murray, 1888
- Grote, George History of Greece Vol. VIII.
New York: Peter Fenelon Collier & Son, 1900
- Isocrates Contra Sophistas
Edited and translated by George Norlin
Loeb Classical Library
London: William Heineman Ltd.
New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929
- Jackson, Henry The Sophists
Article in Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 20
14th Edition 1929
- Lord, Louis E. Aristophanes, His Plays and His Influence
New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1927
- Murray, Gilbert Aristophanes, A Study
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933
- Plato Opera Omnia
Dialogues Referred to: Cratylus, Euthydemus,
Gorgias, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, Laws,
Meno, Phaedrus, Philebus, Protagoras, Republic,
Sophist, Symposium, Theaetetus.
Edited by John Burnet
Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Plato The Dialogues of Plato
Translated by B. Jowett.
Dialogues referred to: as above
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899

Taylor, Henry Osborn

Ancient Ideals Vol. I
New York: Macmillan & Co., 1921

Thucydides

History of Greece
Edited by Henry Stuart Jones
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898

Xenophon

Memorabilia of Socrates
Edited by Charles Anthen
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848

Zeller

A History of Greek Philosophy
Translated by S. F. Alleyne
London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1881

The thesis, "Aristophanes and the Sophists", written by Joseph Otis Schell, S.J., has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Rev. Alfred G. Brickel, S.J., Ph.D. November 3, 1940

Rev. Edgar R. Smothers, S.J., Ph.D. November 1, 1940