



Socrates and Aristophanes

Leo Strauss

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In one of his last books, *Socrates and Aristophanes*, Leo Strauss's examines the confrontation between Socrates and Aristophanes in Aristophanes' comedies. Looking at eleven plays, Strauss shows that this confrontation is essentially one between poetry and philosophy, and that poetry emerges as an autonomous wisdom capable of rivaling philosophy.

"Strauss gives us an impressive addition to his life's work—the recovery of the Great Tradition in political philosophy. The problem the book proposes centers formally upon Socrates. As is typical of Strauss, he raises profound issues with great courage. . . . [He addresses] a problem that has been inherent in Western life ever since [Socrates'] execution: the tension between reason and religion. . . . Thus, we come to Aristophanes, the great comic poet, and his attack on Socrates in the play *The Clouds*. . . [Strauss] translates it into the basic problem of the relation between poetry and philosophy, and resolves this by an analysis of the function of comedy in the life of the city." —Stanley Parry, *National Review*

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