

# Rhetorical and Philosophical *Paideia* in Lucian

**Matthew Keil**

*Queens College, City University of New York*

Email: [matthew.keil@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:matthew.keil@qc.cuny.edu)

## Abstract

The Greek author Lucian of Samosata (120 – 192 AD) has long remained an enigmatic figure for scholars of the Second Sophistic. This is due, in no small part, to his conflicting, satirical treatment of the two main cultural institutions of his day, the art of rhetoric and the practice of philosophy. Yet though he satirizes both of these in equal measure, upon more careful scrutiny it becomes clear that the underlying motivation for his critique of each stems from different emotional centers. It is the contention of the present paper that while Lucian's critique of rhetoric is best understood as based on a deep respect and reverence for eloquence, combined with a concomitant disgust for unworthy, contemporary representatives of it, on the other hand, his motivation for satirizing philosophy appears to be simply the fact that Lucian cared little for, and thought little of the subject (despite his objections to the contrary), and that he preferred instead the uncomplicated principles of common sense and practical virtue.

**Keywords:** Lucian, Second Sophistic, Paideia, Rhetoric, Philosophy

## Introduction

Nearly thirty years ago, American scholar Bracht Branham observed that second century AD sophist Lucian of Samosata “remains one of the most curiously elusive of ancient authors, and his standing in the classical canon uncertain” (Branham, 1989, p. 11). Despite the passage of time, a marked increase in interest regarding the Second Sophistic in general, and the publishing of a great many valuable studies on Lucian in particular, this assessment is still essentially true, and it remains so in large part because of certain, central paradoxes within Lucian's own corpus. Chief among these is his conflicting, satirical treatment of two of the main cultural institutions of his day, the art of rhetoric and the practice of philosophy. Within his satires against these two pillars of Greek *paideia*, that impossible to translate word signifying culture, eloquence, learning, values, and tastes (Marrou, 1956, pp. 95-101; Bompaigne, 1958, p. 124) lie a vast tangle of seeming contradictions. In some texts, Lucian quite happily scoffs at religious beliefs or magic by making philosophy their defender and representative, while in other texts he attacks individual philosophers for their impiety (Whitmarsh, 2015, p. 222). Likewise, whenever ridiculing the vices of venality, or,

especially, hypocrisy, he usually depicts their embodiment in the philosophers themselves (Baldwin, 1961, pp. 199-203; Baldwin, 1973, p. 32; Jones, 1986, p. 24). The same is true for the flummery of rhetoricians, whose extravagance and chicanery disillusioned him so much that he decided, or at least professed in multiple dialogues, to abandon the practice of rhetoric altogether — though, ironically enough, so as to devote himself more wholly to the pursuit of philosophy (*Bis Acc.* 32-4; *Pisc.* 19, 25-7; *Herm.* 13; Clay, 1992, p.3408).

Yet in analyzing the critique which Lucian made of contemporary rhetorical and philosophical *paideia*, a clear distinction becomes apparent. This is not to repeat the well-worn and simplistic view that Lucian merely followed the Second Sophistic trend of subordinating philosophy to rhetoric (Schlapbach, 2010, p. 250). Nor is it a distinction between the ways in which he executes his satire of these two institutions. Rather, it is a distinction between the stimulus which appears to underlie his critique of each. On the one hand, his mordant wit and merciless caricaturing of individual types are dealt in equal measure to both sophists and philosophers alike, but, on the other hand, upon more careful scrutiny, and when viewing this subject throughout the totality of his corpus, one can see that the *motivation* for these two, different targets of satire derive from two emotionally opposite sources. In the case of rhetoric, Lucian's satire appears to be based on deep respect and reverence for eloquence, combined with a concomitant disgust for unworthy, contemporary representatives of it. Conversely, his motivation for satirizing philosophy appears to be simply the fact that Lucian, for all intents and purposes, cared little for, and thought little of, the subject in general, despite his objections to the contrary, as we shall see, and that instead he preferred the uncomplicated principles of common sense and practical virtue.

### **Rhetorical *Paideia***

Beginning first with rhetoric, we see that Lucian's love of the oratorical art, and the exaltation in which he held it, are clearly illustrated in the *Somnium*. This is a piece most probably delivered upon his return to Samosata in 164 AD after touring the greater part of the Roman Empire for many years and reaping the benefits of his successful career in rhetoric. Here, he makes use of a favored metaphor of his for describing achievement in rhetoric, that of being high up, above others. For with *Paideia* as his companion, he ascended over the common people and nations, "was carried up into the heights and went from the East unto the uttermost West, surveying cities and nations and peoples, disseminating something like Triptolemus over the earth" (*Somn.* 15). Among the gifts of *Paideia*, Lucian states that he was shown the many works of men of old, was told their wondrous words and deeds, was made conversant with almost all knowledge, and was adorned in soul with what concerned him most. This last are the many noble attributes of temperance, justice, piety, kindness, reasonableness, understanding, steadfastness, love of all that is beautiful, and ardor towards all that is sublime. In short, it is a knowledge of all things human and divine (*Somn.* 10). This is high praise indeed, especially since it comes in a work that is ostensibly autobiographical. To be sure, the larger narrative framework of the piece, based upon a revelation in a dream and a conversion of his life path, is unlikely

to be *literally* true (Hopkinson, 2008, p. 1).<sup>1</sup> The work, rather, is “true in a deeper sense, as providing an aetiological myth for the rhetorical success and social prestige of its narrator, who presents himself as a Heracles or Socrates for the modern age, a devotee of culture and higher education in spite of difficult odds, [and] a rhetorical performer who has carved for himself a prominent niche in the pantheon of contemporary intellectuals” (Hopkinson, 2008, p. 95).

We get a similar intimation of the high value Lucian placed on rhetoric in the dialogue *Bis Accusatus*, written after Lucian's professed conversion from rhetoric to philosophy, wherein Lady Rhetoric sues Lucian for abandoning her. Here his relationship with rhetoric is described as being a once happy and faithful marriage. Lady Rhetoric says in her speech, for instance:

ἐγὼ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, τουτονὶ κοιμιδῆ μειράκιον ὄντα, βάρβαρον ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν καὶ μονονουχὶ κἀνδυν ἐνδεδουκότα εἰς τὸν Ἀσσύριον τρόπον, περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν εὐροῦσα πλαζόμενον ἔτι καὶ ὃ τι χρήσαιτο ἑαυτῷ οὐκ εἰδότα παραλαβοῦσα ἐπαίδευσά. καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἐδόκει μοι εὐμαθὴς εἶναι καὶ ἀτενὲς ὄραν εἰς ἐμὲ — ὑπέπτησε γὰρ τότε καὶ ἐθεράπευεν. καὶ μόνην ἐθαύμαζεν, ἀπολιποῦσα τοὺς ἄλλους ὁπόσοι ἐμνήστευόν με πλούσιοι καὶ καλοὶ καὶ λαμπροὶ τὰ προγονικά, τῷ ἀχαρίστῳ τούτῳ ἑμαυτὴν ἐνεγγύησα πένητι καὶ ἀφανεῖ καὶ νέφ προῖκα οὐ μικρὰν ἐπενεγκαμένη πολλοὺς καὶ θαυμασίους λόγους, εἶτα ἀγαθοῦσα αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς φυλέτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς παρενέγραψα καὶ αὐτὸν ἀπέφηνα, ὥστε τοὺς διαμαρτόντας τῆς ἐγγύης ἀποπνίγεσθαι. δόξαν δὲ αὐτῷ περινοστεῖν ἐπιδειξομένῳ τοῦ γάμου τὴν εὐποτιμίαν, οὐδὲ τότε ἀπελείφθην, ἀλλὰ πανταχοῦ ἐπομένη ἄνωκαὶ κάτω περιηγόμην: καὶ κλεινὸν αὐτὸν καὶ αἰοιδίμον ἐποίουν κατακοσμοῦσα καὶ περιστέλλουσα. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ τῆς Ἰωνίας μέτρια, εἰς δὲ τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἀποδημησαι θελήσαντι αὐτῷ τὸν Ἴόνιον συνδιέπλευσα καὶ τὰ τελευταῖα μέχρι τῆς Κελτικῆς συναπάρασα, εὐπορεῖσθαι ἐποίησα. (*Bis Acc.* 27)

*When this man, O Judges, was yet a teenager, still speaking with a foreign accent, and as it were still wearing a long middle-eastern robe, I came upon him traipsing around Ionia, not knowing what to do with himself; so I took hold of him and educated him. Since he seemed to me to be a good student, and meditated upon me with incessant care (for he was obedient to me then, attending upon me, and admiring none except me alone), I abandoned all others, as many as were suing for my hand, rich, handsome, and of noble birth though they were, and I betrothed myself to this ungrateful man, though he was poor, insignificant, and young, and I brought him no small dowry of many wonderful speeches. After I married him, I got him enrolled outside of usual custom among my own people, and made him a citizen, with the result that those had failed in their suit to marry me choked with jealousy. When it seemed like a good idea to him to go travelling so as to show off the good fortune of his marriage, I did not desert him then, but I followed him up and down after him, being led everywhere, and I made him renowned and famous, adorning him and decking him out. In Greece and Ionia, we had moderate*

*success; but when he desired to travel to Italy, I sailed across the Ionian sea with him, and ultimately went even as far as Gaul, where I made him to abound with prosperity.*<sup>2</sup>

The choice of metaphor is critical in understanding the emotional connection which Lucian has for the art of rhetoric. Behind the humorous mood of the work lies something serious, in Lucian's essential mode of operating with σπουδαιογέλιον, “serio-comicalness.” In the tenderness and plaintiveness of Lady Rhetoric's speech, we cannot but sense an earnest undertone of something we can only refer to as “love” for the art that formed the basis of Lucian's own identity and sense of self-worth (Dubel, 1994, pp. 20-25; níMheallaigh, 2014, pp.175-176). Indicative, however, of both Lucian's veneration for true rhetoric, and also his critique of the sophists of his day, is the ensuing section of the same dialogue. After acknowledging his debt to rhetoric for educating him and “enrolling him outside of usual custom” among the Greeks, “the Syrian” then describes how he left Lady Rhetoric because she had lost the comeliness of her pristine era, such as when Demosthenes lived, and, now, unfortunately, decks herself out like a prostitute, being courted by many arrogant and flattering lovers with whom she has adulterous affairs:

ἐγὼ γὰρ ὄρων ταύτην οὐκέτι σωφρονοῦσαν οὐδὲ μένουσαν ἐπὶ τοῦ κοσμίου σχήματος οἷον ποτε ἐσηματισμένην αὐτὴν ὁ Παιανιεὺς ἐκεῖνος ἠγάγετο, κοσμουμένην δὲ καὶ τὰς τρίχας εὐθετίζουσαν εἰς τὸ ἐταιρικὸν καὶ φυκίον ἐντριβομένην καὶ τὼφθαλμῶ ὑπογραφομένην, ὑπόπτειον εὐθύς καὶ παρεφύλαττον ὅποι τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν φέρει. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ἔῶ: καθ' ἑκάστην δὲ τὴν νύκτα ὁ μὲν στεναποδὸς ἡμῶν ἐνεπίμπλατο μεθύοντων ἔραστῶν κωμαζόντων ἐπ' αὐτὴν καὶ κοπτόντων τὴν θύραν, ἐνίων δὲ καὶ εἰσβιάζεσθαι σὺν οὐδενὶ κόσμῳ τολμώντων. αὐτὴ δὲ ἐγέλα καὶ ἤδετο τοῖς δρωμένοις καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ἢ παρέκλυπεν ἀπὸ τοῦ. τέγους ἀδόντων ἀκούουσα τραχεῖα τῇ φωνῇ ῥῥῆδας τινὰς ἔρωτικὰς ἢ καὶ παρανοίγουσα τὰς θυρίδας ἐμὲ οἰομένη λανθάνειν ἠσέλγαινε καὶ ἐμοιχεύετο πρὸς αὐτῶν. (*Bis Acc.* 31)

*Seeing her no longer modest nor remaining in her pristine vesture, such as she was once arrayed in when Demosthenes took her to wife, but rather decking herself out and arranging hair like a prostitute, putting on make-up, and darkening her eyes underneath, I immediately became suspicious and guardedly observed where she directed her glances. I let the other things go, but every night our street was filled with drunken lovers coming to her, banging on the door, and at times even having the effrontery to force their way in stripped of all decency. She herself laughed and took pleasure in these antics, often either peeping over the edge of the roof when she heard them singing odes in a rough voice, or else even furtively opening the windows, thinking to escape my notice, until at last she committed wanton adultery with them.*

Without over-stating the case, this seems to be a very accurate illustration of Lucian's feelings towards many of the sophists of his day. They had violated the dear place which rhetorical art had obtained in his heart. But what, we may ask, is the precise

meaning of his metaphor here? That is, what does it mean for one to be a flatterer and an adulterer of rhetoric? In answer to this, there are three satires that are perhaps most illustrative of precisely what Lucian has in mind here, namely the *Rhetorum Praeceptor*, the *Pseudologista*, and the *Pseudosophista*.

In the first of these, we are presented with a caricature of a sophist (agreed by many to be Julius Pollux of Naucraxis, the tutor of the future emperor Commodus), posing as a sophist in what can be properly called a “mock-protreptic” discourse, parodying genuine protreptic treatises which were designed to encourage young men to follow philosophy and virtue. On the contrary, this “trainer of orators” is portrayed as shameless, effeminate (indeed, a passive homosexual [*Rh. Pr.* 24], the primary and long conventional insult utilised in literary invectives), and one wholly devoted merely to posing as an orator without having any real culture or intellectual substance. The third century sophist Philostratus, interestingly, even characterized Julius as one ἀπαίδευτος-παιδευμένος—“a sophist with no sophistication” (*VS* 592). He is the spokesman for the shortcut and easy road to eloquence, which can be traversed without all the difficulty of the conventional, rigorous training in rhetoric. Historically speaking, there does indeed seem to be truth behind this allegation that sophists of Lucian’s day promoted an abbreviated form of rhetorical education (Cribiore, 2007, p. 83). “Simply pepper your speeches with fifteen or so Attic phrases,” says this Guide for the Easy Road to Eloquence, like “μῶν, λῶστε, and τᾶττα” (*Rh. Pr.* 16) and when you want to say something simple like “scraping-off” (ἀποξύσασθαι) use instead “destrigillation” (ἀποστλεγγίζεσθαι) (*Rh. Pr.* 17). Effrontery, ignorance, and temerity will be a solid foundation for your moral behavior, combined with total shamelessness. Wear dainty clothes, and intone your speeches in an almost sing-song fashion. “Just make sure to always carry a book with you. This is sufficient for you to appear eloquent, and I will make you an orator before the sun sets” (*Rh. Pr.* 15). Obviously, Lucian was disgusted at this sort of corruption and degeneracy of the lofty art of rhetoric, and such orators, we are to assume, were living examples of what he metaphorically referred to in the *Bis Accusatus* as the “flatterers” and “adulterers” of Lady Rhetoric.

But in speaking of the specific issue of scattering one’s speeches with Attic phrases, another issue arises which Lucian satirizes in two different directions. On the one hand, the use of barbarisms and solecisms, and on the other, the phenomenon sometimes referred to as “hyper-Atticism,” wherein the artificial use of words that had long since dropped out of use was employed by would-be orators with an almost fanatical tenacity. In regard to the first of these, it must be noted that language purism arose as a reaction against the so-called *koine* dialect of Greek that had become, by the time of the Second Sophistic, a sign of “intellectual inadequacy” (Swain, 1996, p. 19), and Greek elites eschewed it as a way of differentiating themselves from the common people. Atticism gained momentum in the second and third centuries AD as *koine* Greek changed (partly through the influence of other languages in the culturally diffuse Roman empire) and became even more simplified (losing in time, for instance, the distinction between long and short vowels, the dual forms of nouns and verbs, as well as, ultimately, the dative case and the optative mood). In this context, Lucian,

was a product of the conservative educational system that was the medium for maintaining Atticism and the cultural superiority which it represented. He pilloried, in works like *Pseudologista* and *Pseudosophista*, the use of barbarisms and solecisms that he hears used by unworthy sophists. In the first of these works, for instance, we are presented with a long and vicious list of such verbal infelicities made by a sophist undeserving of the name, which Lucian concludes by saying:

εἶτα ἐν τοιούτοις ὄντι σοι ὀνομάτων μέλει καὶ γελᾷς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταπτύεις, εἰκότως; οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἅπαντες ὁμοιά σοι λέγειν δυναίμεθα. πόθεν; τίς οὕτως ἐν λόγοις μεγαλότολμος, ὡς ἐπὶ μὲν τοὺς τρεῖς μοιχοὺς ἀντι ξίφους τρίαῖναν αἰτεῖν; τὸν δὲ Θεόπομπον ἐπὶ τῷ Τρικαρανῶ κρίνοντα φάναι τριγλῶχινι λόγῳ καθηρηκέναι αὐτὸν τὰς προϋχούσας πόλεις; καὶ πάλιν, ἐκτριαίνῳσαι αὐτὸν τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ εἶναι Κέρβερον ἐντοῖς λόγοις; πρῶην γὰρ καὶ λύχον ἄσας ἐξήτεις ἀδελφόν τινα, οἶμαι, ἀπολωλότα: καὶ ἄλλα μυρία, ὧν οὐδὲ μεμνήσθαι ἄξιον, ἢ μόνου ἐκείνου, ὅπερ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἀπεμνημόνευον. πλούσιός τις, οἶμαι, καὶ δύο πένητες ἦσαν ἐχθροί: εἶτα μεταξύ περὶ τοῦ πλουσίου λέγων, ‘ἀπέκτεινεν,’ ἔφη, ‘θάτερον τῶν πενήτων.’ γελασάντων δέ, ὡς τὸ εἰκόσ, τῶν παρόντων, πανορθούμενος δὴ σὺ καὶ ἀνατιθέμενος τὸ διημαρτημένον, ‘οὐμὲν οὖν,’ ἔφη, ‘ἀλλὰ ἄτερον αὐτῶν ἀπέκτεινεν.’ ἐὼ τὰ ἀρχαῖα, τὸ τριῶν μηνῶν καὶ τὸ ἀνηνεμία καὶ τὸ πέταμαι καὶ ἐκχύνειν καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα καλὰ τοῖς σοῖς λόγοις ἐπανθεῖ. (*Pseudol.* 29)

*But there are countless other examples, which there is no point in even bringing up, except for that one which those that heard it had mentioned. Some wealthy individual, I gather, and two poor men were enemies. Then in the middle of the story, speaking about the wealthy individual, you said that, “he killed one of the two poor men” (using the incorrect form θάτερον instead of the proper τὸν ἕτερον); and because those present were rightly laughing, you tried to fix it and undo your error by saying, “No, rather, he killed ἄτερον!” (another incorrect form for the proper Attic τὸν ἕτερον). I’ll pass over your other old howlers, such as your use of the dual when talking about three months, or your coinages like ἀνηνεμία (instead of νηνεμία for “lack of wind”), πέταμαι (instead of ππέτομαι for “I fly”), ἐκχύνειν (instead of ἐκχεῖν for “pouring out”), and all the many other beautiful things with which you embroider your speeches.<sup>3</sup>*

Lucian, however, was also aware that hyper-Atticism was likewise without virtue (Baldwin, 1973, pp. 41-59), and in his work *Lexiphanes*, he derides an orator who uses obsolete and recondite words simply because they are capable of being found buried in some classic author.

ζητῶ οὖν πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν ὀπόθεν τὰ τοσαῦτα κακὰ συνελέξω καὶ ἐν ὀπόσῳ χρόνῳ καὶ ὅπου κατακλείσας εἶχες τοσοῦτον ἐσμὸν ἀτόπων καὶ διαστρόφων ὀνομάτων, ὧν τὰ μὲν αὐτὸς ἐποίησας, τὰ δὲ κατορωρυγμένα ποθὲν ἀνασπῶν. (*Lex.* 17)

*I have been musing over from where, and for how long a span of time you must have been collecting so much awful material, and wondering where you have locked up and kept such a hoard of absurd and distorted words, some of which you invented yourself, and others you dug-up from somewhere after they had been long buried.*

Lucian seems rather to have felt that a true orator should imitate Attic models only insofar as they were compatible with clarity of diction and modern usage, shunning obsolete words that were no longer readily understandable (indeed, not doing so was one of the canards thrown at the *Rhetorum Praeceptor*). This is not to say, of course, that Lucian's common-sense nature did not have misgivings about the overly-pedantic elements of the old-fashioned model of rhetorical education either. In the same dialogue, for instance, the guide to the traditional path to eloquence tells students to follow in the footsteps of only a few classical authors “like a tight-rope walker” (*Rh. Pr.* 9), swerving not even a little lest he fall off the road and not “enter into a lawful marriage with Lady Rhetoric.” We are to understand Lucian, ever the pragmatist, finding the same fault here that he did with the hyper-Atticists, and denouncing anything that is too rigidly attached to superficial models, devoid of poignancy (Criore, 2007, p. 86).

Similarly, with regard to subject matter, if we recall the fact that despite his love for the classical tradition, Lucian nevertheless composed a large portion of his corpus in a *novel* genre, the serio-comic philosophical dialogue, we can say that for him, originality and imitation of the ancients were absolutely compatible (Branham, 1985, p. 239; Fowler, 2017, p.570). In this way, Lucian distinguishes himself as a writer with both stylistic taste and artistic judgment—characteristics of an author who took his rhetorical vocation seriously, and seems, in most respects, only to have satirized those orators whom he felt had disgraced the institution he held in such high regard.

On a subtler level, however, we can also discern the great reverence which Lucian had for eloquence and for the rhetorical education he received by examining the modes of composition which he used in his works. We can see this by the fact that his entire output is, to a greater or lesser extent, comprised of different components of the *progymnasmata* (Anderson, 1982, p. 61), that standard curriculum of rhetorical exercises ascending from the composition of a fable to a full-fledged declamation. These exercises provided not only the linguistic and literary content for the vast reservoir of images, phrases, and motifs that Lucian used, but also endowed him with conceptual frameworks for viewing topics and elaborating upon them.

We see this immediately, for instance, with the second *progymnastic* exercise, the *diegesis*, or narration, which focused students' attention on recounting events in sequence with an emphasis on the elements of circumstance (the “who,” “what,” “where,” “why,” “when,” and “how”). Such narrations form the nucleus of many of Lucian's works, as varied in content as the *Tyrranica*, the *Symposium*, and the *Vera Historia*. The *diegesis* also frequently appears as the major element in Lucian's *prolaliae*, or introductory speeches given before main orations. Such for instance, is the *Prometheus Es* with its narrative of Ptolemy bringing back an all-black camel and

a two-colored man (*Prom. Es* 4). Likewise the *Herodotus* offers an extended, self-contained narrative about how Herodotus first won his fame by reading his histories at the Olympian Games. The *Zeuxis*, too, provides a full account of Antiochus' unexpected victory with elephants over the Galatians. Furthermore, these last two pieces also exhibit the further *progymnastic* exercise of *ekphrasis*, or detailed description of a work of art, as Lucian consciously attempts to "bring his subject into sight through words" (Ael. Theon *Progymnasmata* 118:7-8), vibrantly portraying the images he describes (Zeitlin, 2013).

Additionally, the *progymnastic* exercise of *encomium* makes many appearances in Lucian's corpus. In his *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus*, Lucian, praising the beauty and moral character of Emperor Lucius Verus' courtesan, elaborates upon the nature of praise in contradistinction to flattery (*κολακεία*). He states that the difference lies in the fact that a flatterer simply lies, whereas one praising uses amplification (*αὐξησις*) of positive qualities. This is a mode of thought that would have been engendered in Lucian's rhetorical training.

A variation of the *encomion* that the rhetorical schools conventionally had students practice was the exercise known as *adoxography*, or praise of something or someone viewed as bad, or silly. Lucian accordingly furnishes us with examples of this, such as his *Praise of the Fly*. And the opposite type of *progymnastic* exercise to the *encomium*, the *psogos*, or invective, is clearly apparent in Lucian's work throughout his moral critique of the philosophers and sham-orators of his day. Sometimes a distinct way in which he uses invective is by combining it with yet another *progymnastic* exercise, the *synkrisis*, or comparison. The *Rhetorum Praeceptoris* a perfect example of this. All the typical categories of invective (like exposition of an individual's moral vice and bad character traits) are employed against a sham-sophist, but they are done so in dramatic contrast to the old, toilsome way of rhetorical education that Lucian himself had followed. Similarly, Lucian's *Piscator* also functions on this level of *synkrisis*, between philosophy as a pristine ideal, and the unworthy, contemporary representatives of it (though we shall see it is important not to take such assertions by Lucian at face value).

In further discussing philosophy, one may also note the *progymnastic* exercise of the *chreia*, or exercise on a memorable statement, action, or combination of statement and action. With this rhetorical model in mind, Lucian wrote his life of the Cynically-inclined philosopher *Demonax* almost entirely out of such *chreiai*. We see here a perfectly apt marriage of content and style in that Cynic rhetoric tended to be characterized by short, pithy expressions, as the Cynic lifestyle was also, at least ideally, one of unadornment and austerity (Bosman, 2012). Lucian's training in the schools thus helped facilitate this literary/philosophical composition by endowing him with a ready and accessible literary medium, as well as a category of thought lying behind such a medium, which he could then employ and adapt to the purpose of succinctly portraying his subject.

In sum, then, it would not be wrong to assert that there is no single work of Lucian's that does not bear the stamp of his rhetorical training. This can be seen through the



distinctive voices of the various speakers in his dialogues, the oratorical or mock-oratorical delivery of his forensic pieces, the tone of vivid engagement with his subject which he employs in his descriptive works, or the carefully studied, relaxed attitude of a raconteur in his autobiographical moments (Hopkinson, 2008, p. 2). His literary-rhetorical training functioned as a means of providing channels of thought and expression which a skilled orator like him could then rearrange, conflate, and turn into new entities to suit his purposes and to express himself individually. In connection with everything stated at the outset, Lucian so thoroughly possessed his training as a sophist, and valued it so highly, that he was motivated to direct his naturally keen wit against all those who would make a sham out of the single most fundamental thing upon which he based his whole sense of artistic identity and achievement.

### **Philosophical *Paideia***

Turning though to his critique of philosophy, a different picture emerges, and it must be stated at once that critique of the philosophers was not just limited to Lucian, but is widely found in the literature of his time. However, in Lucian's works we see a complex picture, which, at first appearance may tempt one to deduce that, at the very least, by devoting so much attention to satirizing philosophy, Lucian must have taken its pursuit with enough seriousness so as to devote so much energy to mocking it. But this would be misconceived, for such tremendous attention on Lucian's part can also be explained in another way. Unlike in the era of a writer such as Aristophanes, who clearly demonstrated a pronounced influence on Lucian, the position of the philosopher in the second century AD was very different. Not only was a smattering of philosophical culture helpful in promoting one's status in society at this time, but, moreover, philosophy could be extremely lucrative, as philosophers were professional teachers that vied with each other and among sects to recruit (paying) students. Even the Emperor Marcus Aurelius himself endowed chairs of philosophy at Athens with official positions and enormous salaries. Philosophers were thus conspicuous members of society, and subsequently, to satirize them was not to mock marginal or enigmatic figures like Socrates, as Aristophanes had done, but it was rather to critique often bombastic professionals. They held positions in society that were as public as politicians, and made livings out of parading their daytime virtue while, as Lucian observed, often indulging in, and hiding, their nighttime vice. In a delightful passage of Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, the Moon describes precisely this phenomenon.

καίτοι πόσα ἐγὼ συνεπίσταμαι αὐτοῖς ἃ πράττουσι τῶν νυκτῶν αἰσχρὰ καὶ κατὰ πτυστα οἱ μεθ' ἡμέραν σκυθρωποὶ καὶ ἀνδρώδεις τὸ βλέμμα καὶ τὸ σχῆμα σεμνοὶ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἀποβλεπόμενοι· κἀγὼ μὲν ταῦτα ὄρωσα ὁμῶς σιωπῶ: οὐ γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι πρέπειν ἀποκαλύψαι καὶ διαφωτίσαι τὰς νυκτερινὰς ἐκεῖνας διατριβὰς καὶ τὸν ὑπὸ σκιῆς ἐκάστου βίον ἀλλὰ κἄν τινα ἐκάστου βίον, ἴδω αὐτῶν μοιχεύοντα ἢ κλέπτοντα ἢ ἄλλο τι τολμῶντα νυκτερινώτατον, εὐθὺς ἐπισπασαμένη τὸ νέφος ἐνεκαλυψάμην, ἵνα μὴ δεῖξω τοῖς πολλοῖς γέροντας ἀνδρας βαθεῖ πάγωνι καὶ ἀρετῇ ἐνασχημονοῦντας. (*Icar.* 21)

*Am I not privy to all the shameful and abominable things they do by night, who by day, with affected gravity, and manly look, are majestic in appearance, and the center of attention for the general public? Even though I see these things, I hold my peace, for I do not consider it meet to uncover and bring to light those nocturnal pastimes, and the life of each behind the scenes. Rather, if I see anyone of them committing adultery, or stealing, or daring to do anything else in the dead of night, straight way I hide myself by pulling over a mass of clouds, so that I may not show to the common people aged men bringing shame on their long beards and on virtue.*

So, too, in Lucian's *Symposium*, a selection of all the schools of philosophy are each shown to be absurd parodies of their schools' teachings. There, an honor-loving Stoic steals food from the table and demonstrates irascible anger; an Epicurean, though disavowing that the gods hear prayers or exercise providence over the earth, nevertheless holds a public priesthood; a Cynic, supposedly devoted to austerity and the simple life, gorges himself with food and drink; and a Platonist, after beginning to describe Plato's critique of monogamy in support of common wives, proclaims pederasty to be more virtuous than marriage (and this at a wedding feast!). Thus is represented one of the major themes of Lucian's satire against the philosophers: hypocrisy, and the failure of philosophers to live up to the teachings of their doctrines.

But to view Lucian's critique of philosophical culture only in this way would be to suggest that Lucian esteemed philosophy in principle, yet mocked its unworthy proponents. This at first glance would seem to be analogous to how he critiqued rhetoricians out of implicit respect for the dignity of eloquence. Indeed, this is the argument that he, through the mask of Parresiades, makes before the resurrected philosophers in his work the *Piscator*:

κάπειδῃ μόνον παρέκυσα εἰς τὰ ὑμέτερα, σὲ μὲν, ὥσπερ ἀναγκαῖον ἦν, καὶ τούσδε ἅπαντας ἐθαύμαζον ἀρίστου βίου νομοθέτας ὄντας καὶ τοῖς ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπειγομένοις χεῖρα ὀρέγοντας, τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ συμφορώτατα παραινοῦντας, εἴ τις μὴ παραβαῖνοι αὐτὰ μηδὲ διολισθάνοι, ἀλλ' ἀτενὲς ἀποβλέπων εἰς τοὺς κανόνας οὓς προτεθείκατε, πρὸς τούτους ῥυθμίζοι καὶ ἀπευθύνοι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ βίον, ὅπερ νῆ Δία καὶ τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς ὀλίγοι ποιοῦσιν. ὁρῶν δὲ πολλοὺς οὐκ ἔρωτι φιλοσοφίας ἔχομένους ἀλλὰ δόξης μόνον τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἐφιεμένους, καὶ τὰ μὲν πρόχειρα ταῦτα καὶ δημόσια καὶ ὅποσα παντίμμεῖσθαι ῥάδιον εὖ μάλα εὐκότας ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι, τὸ γένειον λέγω καὶ τὸ βάδισμα καὶ τὴν ἀναβολήν, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀντιφθεγγομένους τῷ σχήματι καὶ τάναντία ὑμῖν ἐπιτηδεύοντας καὶ διαφθείροντας τὸ ἀξίωμα τῆς ὑποσχέσεως, ἡγανάκτου. (*Pisc.* 30-31)

*For when I glimpsed your (Philosophy's) principles, I marveled, as it was necessary, and also at such men being law-givers of the best life, stretching out a hand to those pushing onwards this goal. But then, seeing many not with a love of philosophy, but only of the honor coming from appearances, seeming like good men in respect to the convenient and public things, such as are easy for all to imitate (I mean a beard, and gait, and mantle), but denying*

*them in the pattern of their lives and deeds, both pursuing their opposites and corrupting the worthiness of their vow, I became angry.*

Such is Lucian's defense: I honor philosophy, and respect "all these men" (meaning Socrates, and Plato, and Diogenes, and all the rest of the great philosophers), but I was vexed at their unworthy followers. The problem, however, with such a defense is that it totally ignores the actual evidence in the *Vitarum Auctio*, which precipitated the *Piscator* and for which the *Piscator* is an *apologia*. There, the very philosophers themselves are named in the headings and are held up for ridicule. Even if one suspects these headings as possibly being a later addition, the point still stands, since the characters are often unambiguously identified with the actual philosophers—Diogenes is "the dirty one from the Black Sea," Heraclitus is "the man from Ephesus who cries," and so on. Moreover, there is, as Hall (1981) has pointed out, not one mention of the worthiness of the original philosophers, or even of philosophy itself, in contradistinction to contemporary hypocritical disciples (p. 156). Indeed, most of the major philosophies from antiquity, from Aristotelianism, to Cynicism, Pythagoreanism, Stoicism, Skepticism, and many other individual philosophers are all held up to be in and of themselves silly, esoteric, and ultimately totally unnecessary (Bragues, 2004, p. 227; Pinheiro, 2015, pp. 74-79).

Therefore, we can gain a better picture of the distinct lack of credence which Lucian had in philosophy *qua* philosophy, even aside from its pretensions and hypocrisy, by looking at two particular works: the *Necyomantia*, and the *Hermotimus*. In the first, Menippus asks the blind prophet Tiresias what is the best sort of life for mortals:

‘Ὡ τέκνον,’ φησί, ‘τήν μὲν αἰτίαν οἶδά σοι τῆς ἀπορίας ὅτι παρὰ τῶν σοφῶν ἐγένετο οὐ ταῦτα γινωσκόντων ἑαυτοῖς...ὁ τῶν ιδιωτῶν ἄριστος βίος, καὶ σωφρονέστερος παυσάμενος τοῦ μετεωρολογεῖν καὶ τέλη καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐπισκοπεῖν καὶ καταπτύσας τῶν σοφῶν τούτων συλλογισμῶν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα λῆρον ἠγησάμενος τοῦτο μόνον ἐξ ἅπαντος θηράσῃ, ὅπως τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέμενος παραδράμῃς γελῶν τὰ πολλὰ καὶ περὶ μηδὲν ἐσπουδακώς.’ (*Nec.* 21)

*He said: My son, I know the reason for your perplexity; it came from the wise men who are not consistent with themselves...But the life of the common sort is best, and you will act more wisely if you cease from the mindlessness of discussing high things, and looking into final and first causes. But having spit upon the syllogisms of these wise men, and considering such things nonsense, may you pursue this alone from everything: that being well-disposed to your circumstance, you run through life laughing at many things, and being serious about nothing.*

A stronger indictment not just of philosophers, but of philosophy itself could scarcely be imagined, since it has been by philosophy that Menippus is here confused and lost, perplexed as to what the greatest good for man is — the primary question, that is, of all philosophical ethics. Only by spitting one's scorn on such pursuits does the answer to life's *summum bonum* appear.

Similarly, in the *Hermotimus*, the longest, and one of the most serious in tone of all Lucian's works, we are presented with one reason after another for why a person should not bother studying philosophy, frittering away precious time, not in practicing virtue, but merely splitting hairs in logic and wrangling over insoluble problems. "But you have not realized this, I suppose," Lucian says, through his favorite mask of Lycinus, "that virtue is in deeds, to do the sort of things as are just, and wise, and courageous" (*Hermot.* 79). It is true that throughout the course of the *Hermotimus* (and in other works too, such as the *Vitarum Auctio*), Lucian clearly shows a familiarity with the doctrines of the different schools. Nevertheless, this alone is not sufficient evidence for us to believe that he made a "long search" for philosophy (as we have already seen those sections of the *Piscator* in which he said he did cannot be taken at face value). Rather, it would be striking if an educated Greek of the second century, who had gone through all three stages of rhetorical training (and no doubt something beyond that), did *not* have some knowledge of the different philosophical schools.

Ultimately, therefore, Lucian's philosophical position seems to be one of practicality, as exemplified both by these lines from the *Hermotimus*, and perhaps most vividly by one of the few philosophical figures whom he does not in the least ridicule, Demonax. As an historical figure Demonax remains obscure, though there has been recent work on non-Lucianic sources for his life and thought, along with a collection of some new fragments (Searby, 2008, pp. 120-147). Nevertheless, one thing which comes across strikingly from Lucian's account, and which Lucian himself emphasizes, is that Demonax eschewed direct affiliation with any philosophical sect. At times, he seems to have the most in common with the Cynic school ("resembling in his dress the man from Sinope," as Lucian states (*Demon.* 5), by which of course he means Diogenes the founder of Cynic philosophy). But even here it is clear that he was no doctrinaire adherent to any one particular philosophical code (*Demon.* 62), but rather was in general an enemy to any dogma (Whitmarsh, 2015, p. 221). In the final analysis, what Lucian found most impressive about him was that he spent his almost one hundred years of life in simplicity, cheerfulness, and kindness. It was his deeds, and not any speculative fussing about that made him admirable.

With this, it is fitting to close with a passage from *The Downward Journey*. In it, the (presumably) fictitious Cynic philosopher Cynicus is about to be carried across the river Styx, but must first present his bare soul for judgment (for, as he is told, whatever of evil has been done in life appears as a branding on the soul). Yet he is found to be altogether clean, except for three or four marks that are dim, although there are many indications of brandings that have been removed. To this he says, "for a long time, being an evil man through lack of education (*δι'ἀπαιδευσίαν*), and having earned many brandings on account of this, I at once began to practice philosophy, and in a little while, I cleansed all these defilements from my soul" (*Cat.* 24). Thus with these words Lucian, though often satirizing even the very ideals of philosophy, nevertheless gives great insight into them, and, as ever, he returns to the practical: it is in this regard only that philosophy can have any possible value at all, if it makes a person genuinely better.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, all of what we have said regarding Lucian's perspective on philosophy seems to have been most succinctly put long ago, in the ninth century by Patriarch Photius of Constantinople, whose *Bibliotheca* has proven to be such a treasure trove for philologists. He observed that, “although mocking and making fun of others' opinions, Lucian does not lay down what he himself believes, except perhaps if someone were to say that his system of belief is to have no system of belief” (Henry, 1967, codex 128, Vol. 2, p. 102: τὰς γὰρ ἄλλων κωμῶδων καὶ διαπαίζων δόξας, αὐτὸς ἦν θειάζει οὐ τίθησι, πλὴν εἴ τις αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐρεῖ τὸ μηδὲν δοξάζειν). Living virtuously without hypocrisy, abiding by the dictates of common sense, and, most of all, feeling the joy of laughter, were, in his view, the most important things for a human being. Such a mixture of serious and comical elements might have seemed most germane to the Cynic approach towards philosophy, in the style of the school's founder Diogenes. It is because of this overlap that a few exemptions from his general mockery directed towards the other schools are granted to particular Cynics. But even here he is not consistent, nor are all his works marked by a Cynic tone. In the *Vitarum Auctio* he describes Cynic philosophy with words reminiscent of those with which he characterized the fraudulent *Rhetorum Praeceptor*, as a “short cut” (ἐπίτομος ὁδός) for uneducated and shameless people towards fame (*Vit. Auct.* 11). One must also recall the scathing attacks Lucian makes against such individual Cynics as Peregrinus, and many others. Thus Lucian was no thorough-going member of the Cynic, or any other school (Bosman, 2012, pp.787-793). Rather, the one truly consistent element of all his works lies in the imprint of his rhetorical training and his urbane Attic style, deployed in the various types of writing and expression which he learned in his education through the *progymnasmata*. It is this rhetorical art which in his heart of hearts he held most dear, the key to his life's success, the chariot by which he outsoared his contemporaries, and the one thing which he treated with unalloyed seriousness.

## Notes

1. Richter (2017, p. 328) goes too far, however, in categorically rejecting any overlap at all between the speaking personae of Lucian's texts and the author himself.
2. All translations from the Greek here and throughout are mine.
3. I am indebted to A.M. Harmon [1936 vol. 5, p. 409] for the explanation of these rather easy to miss, linguistic jokes.

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