Revealing Antiquity

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G. W. Bowersock, General Editor

Unruly Eloquence ❧

Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions

R. BRACHT BRANHAM

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Humor ist keine Stimmung, sondern eine Weltanschauung.
—Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (1948)

The text of Lucian is cited from *Luciani Opera*, ed. M. D. MacLeod, vols. 1–4 (Oxford 1972–1987). In translating Lucian I have freely used (and sometimes modified) the existing versions, particularly those of H. W. and F. G. Fowler (Oxford 1905).

Introduction

FROM the time of the Latin translations by Erasmus and More, Lucian's writings were among the most influential in Renaissance Europe and continued to be avidly read and imitated into the nineteenth century; yet in spite of their intrinsic interest and historical importance, the reasons for Lucian's appeal to his own or later times have yet to be convincingly analyzed. Moreover, of the work that has been done on Lucian, the most significant contributions disagree fundamentally about the nature of his literary methods and their relation to his cultural context. Should he be read primarily against the background of the manifold literary traditions he draws on, as a shrewd stylist in an aging rhetorical culture who turned out clever variations on the inherited formulae of classical literature? Or is he, on the contrary, essentially a topical satirist whose work can be properly understood only with constant reference to the second-century controversies and cultural trends that inspired it?[1] The choice is of course a false one, but the terms of the dichotomy accurately reflect the preoccupations of much of the scholarship on Lucian. The competition between these rival approaches has produced an increasingly complex image of an author who successfully resists assimilation to either model. That Lucian is saturated in multifarious traditions that he receives and shapes in an unmistakably contemporary frame of reference has now been well documented, but to approach the texts in these terms privileges one set of issues over all others.[2] As long as Lucian's work is used to demonstrate his acuity of observation or dependence on tradition, much of what makes him worth reading will escape the terms of the discussion.

This book starts from the assumption that what has made

Lucian of interest to such varied audiences over the centuries is not his sources or contexts, whether "traditional" or "topical," but his modes of transforming them. If we concentrate too narrowly on contextual analysis or literary origins, we are apt to neglect the obvious fact that Lucian's texts were written with the immediate aim of engaging an audience of second-century traditionalists. The critical questions are how he did so and to what ends. If he spoke to contemporary concerns, to his audience's ideals and anxieties, and to their own specific sense of the congruous and incongruous, how is this reflected in a distinctive set of literary procedures? Can we make sense of Lucian as a writer who used the literary language of a specific phase of Greek culture or do so without reducing him to a figure of historicist interest only?

Lucian was writing in a time when much of Greek literature and art reflected a cultural atavism marked by a deep and pervasive fascination with the pre-Roman past stretching back over nine hundred years to Homer. This fascination expressed itself both in a variety of fictional genres and in a proliferation of historical works concerned not with Greek life in the empire, but with almost every aspect of classical Hellenic culture from language to ritual.[3] Thus the very period that shows a relative scarcity of nonfictional literature concentrating on the more recent Greek past under Roman rule witnesses the conspicuous emergence of a histrionic sophistic literature that frequently draws both its style and thematic focus from the classical past. Indeed, this "emphasis on the classical period down to Alexander and neglect of the period of Roman dominion that can be paralleled in the preferred topics of the sophists"[4] and historians are just two important literary manifestations of a wider tendency in Greek society favoring cultural pursuits that focused attention on a now legendary past and its persistence in the present. In view of the essentially subordinate political role of Greeks in the empire, the contrast with earlier times must have been starkly felt, particularly by

the old ruling classes, in spite of their present prosperity and comfortable acquiescence in Roman rule.[5] Indeed, the very cultural artifacts they cherished carried an ambivalent message. As images of lost glories and power they provided the Greeks with an unquestioned sense of cultural superiority and as such excited feelings of nostalgia and veneration; but their very legendary status could serve as a reminder of the gap between the lackluster present and that exalted world, so familiar from the literature of the classical and archaic periods, that formed the backdrop to traditional education and contemporary culture.[6]

This strong and peculiarly imperial sense of the past can be seen in that strangely theatrical form of oratory that achieved such remarkable popularity in Lucian's time and was enshrined by one of its progeny, Philostratus, as the Second Sophistic. Its practitioners, appropriately characterized as "concert orators," toured the great cities on the rim of the eastern Mediterranean from Athens to Alexandria, giving a variety of extremely elaborate and painstakingly contrived rhetorical performances.[7] They frequently depended for their success not only on the mastery of traditional techniques and themes, but also on an affective appeal to the audience's sense of its cultural identity.[8] A sophist's act, as described by Philostratus, would typically involve reminiscence, by impersonation or evocative description, of legendary figures, places, or events and was acutely conscious of itself as theater, complete with dramatic entrances, flamboyant dress, interpretative gesturing, careful modulation of the voice, and, of course, a shrewd sense for the audience's expectations.

The centrality of dramatic impersonation to sophistic performance is reflected in the acid remark made by the sophist Polemo upon discovering a fellow sophist buying some cheap food for his dinner: "My good sir, one could not convincingly enact the spirit [*phronēma kalōs hupokrinasthai*] of Darius and Xerxes who dines on this!"[9] Polemo assumes what has often

been inferred: the preference of sophistic orators for themes with dramatic possibilities and legendary settings.[10] While the nature and purpose of sophistic rhetorical performance actually varied greatly, from the plain style and simple diction of Dio Chrysostom's Cynic homilies to the Demosthenic orotundities of an Aelius Aristides, the sophists do share a tendency to utilize traditional motifs, styles, and rhetorical stances as a way of conjuring up their own literary personae and characteristic appeal.[11] These qualities are most easily seen in authors whose self-conscious cultivation of classical Attic syntax and diction, known as "Atticism," is accompanied by an Attic thematic focus. Thus we find the *éminence grise*, Aelius Aristides, elaborating an Isocratean critique of the positions Plato had first formulated five hundred years before (*On Rhetoric*, *On the Four*) or glorifying the Athenian past in a baroque version of classical epideictic oratory (*Panathenaicus*). While Aristides is an egregious example, and such cultural nostalgia or archaizing is only one strain in the complex literary culture of the empire, it is a recurring and highly significant one. In a different and more profound form it surfaces in works as generically distinct as Longus' dreamlike depiction of a pagan Eden in *Daphnis and Chloe* and Alciphron's droll epistolary exchanges between rustic Attic farmers of Demosthenes' day in his *Peasants' Letters*.

But whether it pertains to language, to rhetorical or thematic structures, or to atmosphere and setting, the appeal to nostalgia is a sure sign of the distance felt to separate the present from the past and the difference which made the past as alien as it was venerable. With a breadth of perspective difficult to parallel in ancient literature, Lucian attempts to engage his audience in a momentary bridging of the gap between its historical present and cultural past through a parodic revival of a whole array of paradigmatic types and cultural ideals preserved by diverse traditions from the classical past. Where New Comic or classical tragic poets appear to have

constructed their plays from the plot up, Lucian's procedure is just the opposite: he begins by selecting a recognizable voice or set of voices and then projects them into a provocative situation, whether in Hades, on Olympus, or in ancient Athens. Here his rhetorical training in imitating the masters serves him well. In fact, Lucian's protean ability for imitation and parody brings him into contact with every major genre from Homer through Theocritus.[12] Even in works in the first person the speaker is deliberately associated with a traditional stance or viewpoint and often with a specific figure.

Entering into a gallery of roles from Achilles to Alexander, from Solon to Menippus, Lucian offers a series of rhetorical experiments in the contemporary significance—or comic inappropriateness—of the cultural types and codes evolved by the Greeks over many generations to evoke and define their most characteristic qualities. Whether the masks are mythological or of legendary figures of the classical period, they share a capacity to excite feelings of historical distance and anachronism as well as cultural authority, and therein resides their complex appeal for the satirist. For their very traditionality makes them equally effective as targets for comic deflation and parodic scrutiny (as in *Dialogues of the Gods*, *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*, and *Philosophers for Sale!*) or, alternatively, as rhetorical masks whose cultural prestige sanctions the satirist's castigation of deviance from "sensible," traditional forms of behavior (as in *Alexander or the False Prophet*, *The Professor of Rhetoric*, and *On the Death of Peregrinus*).

Thus, the images the Greeks had projected of themselves over the centuries become in Lucian's hands the medium for reflecting on their cultural identity in its problematic relation to the historical present. But whether tradition provides the authorial focus, as in satire, or is itself made the subject of comic imitation, Lucian's ambiguous presentation and ironic tone make his work a parodic response to the staider forms of contemporary traditionalism, not simply a satire on it, but a

parodic reflection of its values and techniques. In this respect his work offers a subtle, critical response to the logic of contemporary Hellenism and the intricate and obsessive ties of Greek society to its own cultural origins.

I approach Lucian's oeuvre, therefore, as a surprisingly successful attempt to realize the possibilities of an increasingly anachronistic literary inheritance for an audience whose sense of itself and its world had always been mediated by a network of "classical" traditions. My method in the following pages is to analyze the complex resources of literary humor[13] as they emerge in the rhetorical strategies of specific texts. As central as it obviously is to his whole enterprise, the dynamic role of humor in Lucian's comic refashioning of tradition has never been assessed with any precision. This omission may in part reflect the "pleasurable nature" of humor as one critic describes it, "the tendency to ward off serious treatment, to fight shy of interpretation and consequently to defy analysis."[14] My aim is not to deny this tendency but to bring it to account along with others by developing a hermeneutic, a rhetoric of laughter, sensitive to the slippery roles that humor plays in Lucian and to the specific cultural context in which he defined himself as a writer. Using an eclectic approach indebted to a long line of theorists from Plato to Mary Douglas, I will explain both why humor is the dominant literary feature of Lucian's work (Chapter 1) and exactly how his literary methods are determined by it (Chapters 2–4).[15] Because all humor is culturally conditioned, this focus ensures that the discussion will take place within a relevant historical frame. Men may always have "laughed in the same way,"[16] as Dr. Johnson observed matter-of-factly, but not at the same things or for the same reasons. What makes a text funny and how the humor works rhetorically are among the most sensitive measures we have of the texture of a particular world, its sense of what is fitting and what is not.[17]

Instead of offering a general survey of Lucian's large,

diverse, and singular corpus, I will examine the distinctive ambivalences of his comic classicizing in a selection of texts that exemplify the principal forms he developed. This means concentrating on the dialogues, which compose almost half his work (thirty-six of seventy-three prose pieces),[18] and accounting for the important distinctions in kind among them (for example, "Platonic" versus "mythological"; Chapters 2–3) and between them and the monologic narratives and essays (Chapter 4). A recurring focus of my analysis of Lucian's rhetoric is its seriocomic tenor. The epithet "seriocomic" is used both to suggest the paradoxical nature of an art that moves unpredictably between earnest emulation and parodic exploitation of tradition and to emphasize that my account of Lucian is squarely based on his own conception of his work as an unexampled amalgam of qualities from the divergent traditions represented by Aristophanes, Plato, and Menippus the Cynic (Chapter 1). For the complexity of effect that Lucian achieves by selectively evoking the styles and perspectives of disparate traditions creates his oxymoronic appeal as a literary performer: a seriocomic sophist who engages his audience in a playful reappraisal of the contemporary value of its celebrated cultural past, a reappraisal made necessary by the simple historical fact that the significance of ancient Hellenic traditions and institutions for an audience of the second century A.D. could no longer be that of the classical and archaic periods in which the cultural matrix took on its original shape. Indeed, this ongoing process of selective imitation and reinterpretation is the surest sign that authentic continuity with the past was still possible.

If all this sounds a bit too serious for a literary jester like Lucian, it is because the cultural and intellectual significance of his work is invariably the by-product of a wry and nimble sense of humor that seems to resist seeing anything in precisely the accepted fashion. There is no serious Lucian who merely uses humor incidentally or who simply happens to

amuse an audience in addition to doing something serious. As a public performer, a *sophist*,[19] his serious task was entertaining a sophisticated audience of men "whose ideal was the ability to recall large chunks of precise and exquisitely shaped material, internalized by memory at an early age" and who "knew only too well what it was like to rummage in a silt of memories for the perfect citation, for the correct word, for the telling rhetorical structure."[20] The following pages offer an analysis of how and why he deserved to succeed.

Chapter One ❧

Detail from the Bacchic Sarcophagus, Vatican. "Zeuxis' famous painting [of a family of hippocentaurs] had long been lost in a shipwreck, but at least one copy existed which Lucian described [in Zeuxis*], and now six hundred or more years later its subject matter was revived and became a part of a composition designed for Sarcophagi"; P. H. von Blanckenhagen, "Easy Monsters," in* Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds *(Mainz am Rhein 1987) 89–90.*

The Rhetoric of Laughter

Few men, I believe, do more admire works of those great Masters who have sent their Satire (if I may use the Expression) laughing into the World. Such are that great Triumvirate, Lucian, Cervantes, and Swift. These authors I shall ever hold in the highest Degree of Esteem; not indeed for that Wit and Humour alone which they all so eminently possess, but because they all endeavored, with the utmost Force of their Wit and Humour to expose and extirpate those Follies and Vices which chiefly prevailed in their Countries.
—Henry Fielding, Covent Garden Journal, *1752*

As Horace wrote, the author who combines pleasure with utility has achieved true perfection. In my opinion, if anyone has accomplished this, it is our Lucian.
—Erasmus, preface to his translation of Lucian's Cock

Lucian from Samosata was serious—about raising a laugh.
—Eunapius, Lives of the Sophists

IN SPITE of a recent revival of interest in Lucian, including some excellent attempts to place him in specific social or cultural frames, the Syrian remains one of the most curiously elusive of ancient authors and his standing in the classical canon uncertain. While his place among the inventors of satire would seem secure, he is more noted for the influence he once exerted than for the intrinsic interest of his own work. Unlike Aristophanes or Petronius, Lucian has simply not received the form of critical attention accorded other classics. This was not always so: for the acknowledged masters of the comic genres between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries Lucian was of fundamental importance, and they repeatedly attest to his impact on their work and their delight in his.[1] Erasmus and

Thomas More expressed their admiration for Lucian not only with explicit tributes and translations, but also through creative imitation in their most ambitious works. Henry Fielding owned nine editions of the complete works of Lucian,[2] and the Lucianic humor of his great comic novels is often unmistakable. Thwackum and Square are the direct descendants of Lucian's prating philosophers and licentious tutors, *Jonathan Wild* an eighteenth-century version of Lucian's *Alexander or the False Prophet*. Yet strangely, despite his diverse and far-reaching influence not only on Erasmus, More, and Fielding but also on other major writers as different as Rabelais and Diderot or Jonson and Swift, Lucian himself is more often cited as evidence than read for pleasure. My aim here is not to return to a Renaissance or eighteenth-century appreciation of Lucian, which is no more desirable than it is possible, but to develop a contemporary form of attention that does justice to those distinctive features of his work that earlier readers have so consistently acknowledged—and enjoyed.

Lucian's comparatively poor reception in the twentieth century may be explained in part by the fact that he had the misfortune of living in the second century A.D., which has too often been regarded as bearing much the same relation to classical and archaic culture as postnatal depression does to birth. The relative paucity of critical literature on the period seems too easily to corroborate Gibbon's dubious assertion that "if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition."[3] But with Lucian the problem is not simply one of neglect. The criticism he does attract often seems to hold him at arm's length when it comes to evaluating his literary qualities—as if any acceptable criterion defied formulation. Even the confident Gilbert Highet, who in his *Anatomy of Satire* breezily dismisses Lucian as a satirist, seems puzzled when he concedes in *The Classical Tradition*: "His work is

unlike nearly everything that survives from Graeco-Roman literature."[4]

As the epigraphs of this chapter suggest, this difficulty in characterizing Lucian's art and its achievements is reflected in fundamental disagreements about his generic intentions. In sharp contrast to the views of writers such as Erasmus and Fielding, if there is a consensus among modern scholars, it is that Lucian is too frivolous to be taken seriously as a satirist; Eunapius' epigram ("serious—about raising a laugh") is sometimes taken to suggest that this assessment was accepted in the ancient world as well. *Nihilistic* is a term used to describe him more often than any other ancient writer—as if this were evidence of a lack of seriousness.[5] It is not simply that Lucian worked in a bewildering variety of forms and styles, some of which confound traditional generic distinctions. That in itself need cause no problem. It is rather the difficulty of deciding how to gauge the tone of whole works and the emphasis of crucial passages. Are they seriously satiric, anarchically comic, or frivolously epideictic? Or has Lucian left us with a collection of cultural dinosaurs that have outlived any suitable audience?[6]

The source of these critical quandaries is most immediately evident in the antic qualities of those authorial surrogates through whom Lucian typically addresses his audience. While the size and diversity of a repertoire of over 170 characters,[7] including Lucian's own creations as well as numerous figures drawn from literature and history, resist any simple characterization, recurring qualities of humor and perspective link those authorial voices who seem to personify the particular comic ambience of Lucian's work: figures adapted from tradition such as Timon the Misanthrope, the Cynics Diogenes and Menippus, and Anacharsis the wise barbarian, resemble Lucian's own Lycinus and the first-person narrators of his biting biographical essays, *Alexander or the False Prophet* and *On the Death of Peregrinus*, in ways that are more than coincidental.

Menippus stands out among this crowd of detached observers, inquisitive outsiders, and blustering misanthropes as perhaps the most succinct embodiment of those qualities that distinguish Lucian the writer. While few scholars are any longer persuaded by the view so systematically advanced by Rudolf Helm,[8] that Lucian literally appropriated some lost classics of Menippus in "writing" his own Menippean narratives, Lucian's Menippus pieces remain peculiarly expressive of his own ambiguous relationship to tradition and the kind of humor it yields. Given the prima facie affinity of these pieces to Old Comedy, it will be useful to broach the kind of interpretative questions they raise by analogy with Old Comic structures.

Resurrecting Menippus

Historically Menippus was a Cynic polemicist and parodist (third century B.C.) whose lost works bear intriguing titles such as *The Descent to Hades* and *Exquisite Letters from the Gods.*[9] In Lucian, however, Menippus appears not as a historical figure, the author, but as a parodic elaboration of the literary stereotype his works helped to create: the unruly Cynic jester who inhabits an Aristophanic world of manic wishes and mythical machinations. The plots of both works in which Menippus figures as the jocular narrator of his own quasi-mythical exploits, *Icaromenippus or Beyond the Clouds* and *Menippus or a Necromantic Experiment*, are comparable in plot to Aristophanic plays in which the hero seeks release from some insoluble mess by mounting a fantastic journey to Olympus (*Peace*) or Hades (*Frogs*). Both Lucian and Aristophanes are eager to exploit the parodic potential of familiar mythological traditions that recount heroic confrontations with the gods or visits to the dead, but a comparison of their treatments reveals differences symptomatic of Lucian's distinctive generic aims as well as his continuity with Aristophanic traditions.

Lucian departs from Old Comic procedure most obviously in his use of narrative framed by dialogue. This mixed arrangement, common in Lucian, combines advantages of both dramatic and narrative forms. It enables Menippus, as narrator, to control our attention more exclusively than an Aristophanic hero would, while the dialogue provides him with the license of a fictional setting and addressee. These purely formal differences facilitate thematically significant changes in the motives and consequences of the fabulous deeds on which both authors center their plots. Whereas Aristophanes' disenchanted heroes are typically provoked by concrete topical complaints arising from actual events, such as the Peloponnesian War or the death of Euripides, Menippus appears in a timeless "classical Athens," and his motive is accordingly more universal and less dependent on the concerns of a particular audience or occasion. His is a philosophical quest spurred by long-standing puzzles and conundrums of Greek culture: the evident conflict between the traditions of myth and law on issues of deportment (*Menippus*), or the mutually contradictory accounts of the natural order offered by competing philosophical schools (*Icaromenippus*). These cosmic perturbations plunge Menippus into a state of philosophical perplexity (*aporia: Icaromenippus* 10, *Menippus* 4) and, what is worse, into the hands of those whose business it is to dispel perplexity for a price.

Menippus' exposure to the welter of conflicting opinions issuing from the philosophical schools succeeds in converting his initial puzzlement into Cynic derision of the pretense to knowledge on the part of professional thinkers. He presents their endless arguments over such questions as the number of worlds and the nature of the stars as as arbitrary and as futile as those between the Small- and Big-Endians in Lilliput (*Icaromenippus* 6, *Menippus* 4–6). This skeptical response to the quarrels of the philosophers echoes the thought of contemporary Pyrrhonists, who, surveying the battle of beliefs and the relativity of perceptions, doubted the very possibility of

knowledge, arguing that nothing "is any more this than that" (Diogenes Laertius 9.61, 75). Like them, Menippus assumes that the contradictory opinions of traditional authorities on basic questions of moral and natural philosophy imply ignorance of the truth and reveal the imposture (*alazoneia*) of those claiming to know. Unlike the Pyrrhonists, Menippus persists in his desire to find something that truly can be taken seriously (*tōn alēthōs spoudaiōn: Icaromenippus* 4) and refuses to rest content with the contradictory picture he has found.[10]

As in Aristophanes, the failure of the hero to solve his problem within the confines of the familiar world of common sense drives him beyond its borders. Instead of adopting the Pyrrhonian tack of suspending judgment (*epokhē*) in the face of his epistemic cul-de-sac, Menippus opts for consulting still higher authorities, Zeus (*Icaromenippus*) and Teiresias (*Menippus*) in the hope of finding the best kind of life (*ho aristos bios: Menippus* 6; cf. *Icaromenippus* 10). The hero's disregard for ordinary limits, his willingness to make the Aristophanic leap from the plausible to the absurd, is a parodic recreation of the powers of such mythical prototypes as Odysseus, Orpheus, or Heracles, in whose heroic trappings Menippus is costumed (felt cap, lyre, lion's skin: *Menippus* 1). As strength and cunning make their epic adventures possible, so Menippus' imaginative capacity for the absurd gives him access to the extraordinary comic perspectives he discovers on his journey. Thus the Cynic single-mindedly seeks out his mythical destinations by transforming himself into a primitive flying machine (*Icaromenippus* 10–11) or engaging in a necromantic experiment on the banks of the Euphrates (*Menippus* 6–7). The magical quest rapidly becomes the pretext for a literary *jeu d'esprit*. When it begins, the ordinary requirements of reason are suspended in favor of parodic fantasy, satiric conceits, and the mock logic of the mobile jester. The stage is set for a world that really is "no more this than that" as the hero becomes what he pretends to be, a tragic hero returning from Hades or a second Icarus.

But just as the motives of the comic fantasy differ significantly in Lucian and Aristophanes, so does its thematic function. Aristophanes' plays typically follow a pattern of wish fulfillment in which the "strange and mighty deed" of the comic hero "inverts reality"[11] by, for example, replacing war with peace or bringing a tragic poet back from the dead. In this respect Aristophanes stays closer to the structure of traditional heroic narratives in which the hero's exertions are commensurate with their effect. No such triumphant inversions of reality are achieved by Menippus' mad sojourns. The fantasy of order restored, which is at the very heart of Old Comedy, remains a mere fantasy or wish in Lucian in spite of the mythical setting. If the upshot of the Cynic's quest does not finally fit the Aristophanic premise of the plot, the childlike notion "that desire can reshape the world,"[12] it does serve to produce a dramatic change of perspective, and it is this which constitutes its end.

How we construe the significance of any change in Menippus' point of view depends, however, on subtler matters of tone and technique from which the theatrical productions of Old Comedy may seem distant. Menippus' journeys are essentially a progression through a series of dramatized attitudes from the most to the least familiar, as he moves from perplexity with traditional beliefs and disenchantment with philosophers in Athens to comic misadventures in Homeric settings; the humor of his tales, however, is generated by overlapping perspectives, as we come to see one tradition by means of another in a kind of generic pun: thus Lucian uses the theme of the quest as a device for presenting the familiar machinery of the old myths through the alien lens of Cynic discourse. It is this generic distance between Menippus the Cynic and his legendary setting that creates the possibility for humor. By transporting the wry Cynic into the *terra abscondita* of mythology, Lucian accentuates a conflict between naturally divergent traditions and endows the tales with a knowing sense of their

own absurdity. This characteristic ambiguity in tone has led to criticisms of Lucian's "sham seriousness" and failure to define an effective satiric stance.[13] But these charges against Lucian's seriousness as a satirist betray a failure to appreciate the kind of performance his texts represent and the relations they seek to create between the author, his characters, and his audience.

In spite of the fact that Lucian clearly wrote much of his work for public recitation, as is obvious from his prologues (*prolaliai*) and as scholarship has confirmed by analyzing the meticulous dramatic technique of his dialogues, his texts are rarely considered as intended for performance. Yet Lucian's sense for his immediate audience and for his relationship to them, on the one hand, and to his characters, on the other, is always present and forms an integral part of his work, as it would have for even less agile sophists. While we cannot know exactly how these pieces were presented—whether one or more speakers took part or whether masks might have been used for gods or other known types—Philostratus' picture of more traditional rhetorical performers makes clear the importance of the theatrical possibilities of the text.[14]

The best guide in these matters is Lucian himself and any cues in his texts that indicate the reception they sought. Significantly, in his discussion of dramatic impersonation in *The Dance*, Lucian directly equates the dramatic skills (*hupokrisis*) of the performing rhetorician with those of the dancer interpreting myth (65) and, while paying tribute to traditional notions of empathy and catharsis (74–81), insists on the necessity of controlled involvement for a performance to achieve an appropriate effect. To illustrate the dangers of identifying too completely with a part, he recounts in full the comic mishap of an actor who got so caught up in his portrayal of Ajax's madness that he snatched a flute from one of the musicians onstage and cracked Odysseus over the head as he exulted in his victory. The crowd went mad over the authenticity of the performance

until Ajax began to threaten two consuls in the front row: "The spectators were divided between wonder and laughter; some suspected that [the actor's] ultra-realism had culminated in reality" (83 Fowlers). This performance is contrasted with that of a rival who acted his madness "discreetly and sanely," staying within the bounds of his art (84). Moreover, Lucian correlates the relationship of the actor to his role with the audience's reception of the performance in a surprisingly Brechtian contrast between those spectators who simply empathized with the crazy Ajax (*surphetodeis*) and those who maintained the requisite distance for contemplating and judging a performance (*asteioteroi*). Lucian's use of the comic anecdote to conclude the dialogue suggests the importance he attached to the distinctions it illustrates as well as his acute awareness of a performer's ability to modulate his audience's response.

The controlled evocation of a role is in fact a conscious part of Lucian's technique; it is clearly reflected in his method of distancing his audience from his characters by emphasizing their comically theatrical or artificial qualities and by using inside jokes shared by the author with his audience but inaccessible to the character "onstage" or inappropriate to his role. Both devices are at work in *Menippus*. For example, at the outset of the narrative portion of the dialogue the interlocutor makes a point of calling Menippus *philokalos*, "a lover of beauty," and attributing his anticipated virtues as a narrator to this unexpected quality (*Menippus* 3). While *philokalos* is an apt epithet for the sophisticated stylist who is in fact impersonating Menippus as he narrates his tale, it is scarcely appropriate to the rough-and-tumble Cynic himself, standing there before us (or our mind's eye) attired in Heracles' lion's skin![15] Similarly, in Menippus' description of the court of Minos in Hades, we hear much in a Cynic vein about punishments given the rich and powerful, but the only case singled out for any detail is the acquittal of the infamous Dionysius of Syracuse, who is spared because of his generosity as a patron to "men of

letters" (*pepaideumenoi*)—a playful allusion to the values of a *pepaideumenos* such as Lucian, who, as an old hand at the pursuit of patronage, surely relished the justice of this particular case (*Menippus* 13). Jokes of this kind serve to detach us momentarily from the fictional world of the text (or performance) and invite us to respond to it as a kind of literary game rather than to enter into it as an illusion. We find ourselves responding, at one moment, to the author's assumption of the role of Menippus, at another to the role itself; or, as Rohde shrewdly observed, "we frequently detect Lucian behind his masks."[16]

The theatrical qualities of Lucianic dialogue (or narrative) are thus akin to the nonillusory theater of convention as we see it in such ancient forms as Aristophanic comedy: although it operates within narrower limits, in that a character never steps completely outside his role, it makes comparable demands on an audience. Thus, the text is less an attempt to create convincing illusions than to engage the audience in an "occasion for imaginative activity" unlimited by plausibility in plot or character portrayal.[17] As J. J. Winkler argues, "Lucian and his roles form an asymmetric pair whose performances are simultaneous and indissolubly linked—the speaker [that is, the character] and his silent partner [the author]. In listening to a single voice we hear both persons talking."[18] But if Lucian's characters are not meant to be credible, it is because the air of exaggerated theatricality is instrumental to the performance: the stylized character that typifies his work is a means to an end, a flexible pretense that serves to provoke, joke, speculate, amuse. To play out the pretense makes certain kinds of perception possible.

Thus when Menippus comes onstage, all the elements of his role, his absurd attire (felt cap, lyre, and lion's skin) and his penchant for speaking in tags of Euripidean verse, are comically reflected in the astonished reactions of his friend:

Menippus: All hail, my roof, my doors, my hearth and home!
How sweet again to see the light and thee! . . .

Philonides: Man, you must be mad; or why string verses [*tragōidōn*] like a tragic actor instead of talking like one friend to another?

Menippus: My dear fellow, you need not be so surprised. I have just been in Euripides' and Homer's company. I suppose I am full to the throat with verse, and the numbers come as soon as I open my mouth. But how are things going up here? What is Athens about?

Philonides: Oh, nothing new; extortion, perjury, forty per-cent, face-grinding. (1–2 after Fowlers)

While the flamboyant entrance serves to identify Menippus by his habit of mixing verse and prose and to place him in a fictional context, it also overtly emphasizes the idea of role-playing, central to Menippus' narrative, by ostentatiously evincing the author's delight in presenting the ludicrous Cynic, himself as old as legend by Lucian's time, in the act of aping in verse a series of tragic heroes just returned from the dead.[19] Indeed, much of Lucian's appeal as a literary entertainer springs from just this sense of play shared by the author with an audience highly conscious of tradition: we know the kinds of difficulty involved in impersonating Menippus on still another journey to Hades—a theme treated countless times since Homer[20] —and want to see how Lucian will utilize the resources of tradition in a witty and pointed re-creation. At the beginning of *A True Story*, the author actually challenges the audience to disbelieve the narrator and to spot the point of his literary allusions. Authorial distance is as much a part of this kind of entertainment as the cultural and historical distance that separates the audience from the world of the main characters and shapes the nature of the performance.

Clearly a performance of this type has its own order of seriousness. If we consider the shape and tone of the Me-

nippus pieces as a whole, for example, we can construe them either as circular and essentially jocular or as dramatizing a change or significant discovery. In the first case the plot works rather like a shaggy-dog story. The hero's elaborate preparations and fabulous feats are comically inconsequential in their results: the journey seems only to confirm the soundness of Menippus' original Cynic aversions to the most egregious examples of false-seriousness (*alazoneia*) and self-delusion (*tuphos*) by revealing that the gods share his distaste for philosophers (*Icaromenippus*) and the rich (*Menippus*). Menippus' journey thus serves to parody the quest for knowledge that even when facilitated by magic and fantasy can only return us to our starting points. The surprising coincidence of the Cynic point of view with that of such mythical authority figures as Zeus or Minos is, on any reading, the comic mainspring of the plot. But this is only part of the story: the journey is also offered as a process of discovery, a comic quest, leading to recognition of the basic perceptions that authenticate Menippus' satiric stance, as when he peers down from the moon and imagines men as ants scampering around their tiny polities (*Icaromenippus* 19) or inspects the skeletal remains of the heroic past on the Acherusian plain (*Menippus* 15). At such moments Menippus' jocular tales take on a glancing seriousness: which element carries the emphasis, the satiric perceptions or the comic vehicle?[21]

If the Menippus pieces are especially Lucianic, it is precisely because they raise questions of this kind. The point is not that Lucian is ambiguously serious, but that the serious qualities of his texts are the product of a subtle style of impersonation that wavers between wry caricature and authoritative evocation of a given role or mental attitude, the humor of which serves as a means of making foreign, fanciful, and subversive points of view accessible: a task to which Menippus is ideally suited. If we follow him on his visit to the dead, we see that the journey does more than simply sanction the values

of the traditional Cynic role (*bios*) or lampoon his conventional antitypes, the professional philosopher and the plutocrat.

While Menippus' visit to the court of Minos and his meditation on the Acherusian plain may not solve his original epistemic dilemma, it does prepare him for the climactic encounter with Teiresias. First, he finds that justice in the underworld pursues a comic logic of role reversal and ego deflation. The gravest offense in the court of Minos is the Cynic sin of false-seriousness; the most conspicuous malefactors are "those puffed up [*tetuphomenoi*] with wealth and power," who must face implacable witnesses for the prosecution—their own shadows. Menippus gleefully reports that Minos reserves a special dislike for their "ephemeral presumption [*oligokhronios alazoneia*] and arrogance, their failure to remember that they were mortals" (*Menippus* 12). Second, there is a thematic progression from the comic comeuppance distributed by Minos, qualified as it is by leniency for the poor and for patrons of the arts, to a more general consideration of mortal ends on the Acherusian plain. Comparing the skulls of the ugly Thersites and the beautiful Nireus, Menippus is struck by the illusory nature of all distinctions between men, not just the transgressions of those *alazones* at the top of society: "With all those anatomies piled together as like as could be, eyes glaring ghastly and vacant, teeth gleaming bare, I know not how to tell Thersites from Nireus the beauty, beggar Irus from the Phaeacian king, or cook Pyrrhias from Agamemnon's self. Their ancient marks were gone, and their bones alike—uncertain, unlabelled, indistinguishable" (*Menippus* 15 Fowlers).

The search for a privileged perspective, or, as one critic put it, the desire "to get out in order to look in,"[22] is a central preoccupation of Lucian's work. His affinity for fantastic journeys and authorial figures who stand on the edge of society or above it, its critics and observers, manifests this tendency. The perspective achieved is usually enabled by humor and

expressed metaphorically. Menippus thus seeks to convey the disillusioning perspective discovered in Hades with one of Lucian's favorite devices for imagining a point of view that combines at once participation and detachment, a theatrical simile:[23]

> When I saw all this, the life of man came before me under the likeness of a great pageant, arranged and marshaled by Chance, who distributed infinitely varied costumes to the performers. She would take one and attire him royally, with a tiara on his head, bodyguards by his side and diadem on his brows, but on another she put the costume of a slave. One she made beautiful, another ludicrously ugly. For the spectacle must be varied . . . For a few moments she lets them wear their new clothes, but when the time for the pageant has passed, each player gives back his props and sheds his costume with his body becoming what he was before birth, no different from his neighbor. But out of ignorance some are angry and indignant when Chance demands the return of her trappings, as if they were being deprived of their own property instead of giving back something loaned temporarily. (*Menippus* 16 after Fowlers)

Thus the error of self-delusion is seen to be the universal theme in Chance's pageant. Through an illusion of perspective all the mortal players are seduced by the reality of their own roles; but Chance, like a cosmic ironist, sooner or later unmasks time's fools, leaving them like actors out of work, "sans everything": "The play over, each of them throws off his gold-spangled robe and his mask, descends from the buskin's height, and moves a mean ordinary creature . . . Such is the condition of mankind, or so that sight presented it to me" (*Menippus* 16 Fowlers).

Menippus' theatrical metaphor provides the perspective assumed by Teiresias' advice in the climactic scene of the

quest: taking the wandering Cynic aside, the Theban prophet urges him to ignore those peculiarly Hellenic avatars of self-seriousness, philosophers, and to go on his way "laughing a great deal and taking nothing seriously" (*gelōn ta polla kai peri mēden espoudakōs:* 22). While Teiresias' advice has sometimes been dismissed as an example of "nihilism" or erroneously conflated with "late Cynicism,"[24] it is in fact covertly traditional, echoing a famous line of the archaic poet Simonides (sixth century B.C.),[25] cleverly adapted to its thematic context, and quintessentially Lucianic. For if we are all actors in Chance's pageant, dressed in our little brief authorities,[26] then a suspension of seriousness, a festive detachment from our own role in the play, is the best antidote to *alazoneia*, or delusion.[27] To confuse oneself with one's role is to be like the crazy Ajax in *The Dance* or those who quarrel with Chance when she demands that her costumes be returned (*Menippus* 16). The ironic distance from experience that Teiresias commends—to take nothing seriously—is an appropriately self-denying form of wisdom: "if *sub specie aeternitatis* there is no reason to believe that anything matters, then that does not matter either."[28] Hence, the best sort of life is that least sought after by the world, that of the *idiōtēs*,[29] the "improvising amateur" unencumbered by illusory notions of the seriousness of his role. Liberated from the contradictions of those who presume to know what is to be taken seriously, Menippus returns eager to inform the powers that be of the reversals that await them. The fantastic journey serves to convert the puzzled Cynic to a Lucianic perspective; indeed, Teiresias' dictum is so expressive of the mock-serious tone of this narrative, which, like so much Lucian, seems to stop short of taking anything quite seriously, including itself, that it is tempting to see it as an oblique reflection on the author's own *modus operandi* as a touring sophist playing an astonishing number of traditional roles, all unseriously, with the calculated detachment of the comic performer.

Thus are serious questions woven into texts as thoroughly ludicrous as Menippus' quests undoubtedly are. In its unexpected collapse of satiric and comic *topoi* into a parodic celebration of role-playing as the only game in town, *Menippus* exemplifies some of the salient qualities of Lucian's art. If writers such as Erasmus and Fielding found much that they valued in Lucian, it is precisely because of the kind of complexity of comic effect that we have seen in *Menippus*. They regarded Lucian as a model of the satiric perspective presented in a pointedly comic manner, a master of what can most aptly be called the seriocomic style, which, in Fielding's phrase, sends satire "laughing into the world." Erasmus points to just such a quality when, in the preface to his translation of Lucian's *Cock* (quoted as an epigraph to this chapter), he characterizes Lucian's achievements in specifically Horatian terms as at once serious (*utile*) and comically diverting (*dulce*).[30] But can we specify more precisely how these divergent functions are related in Lucian? If laughter provokes thought, its sources and implications are, after all, integral to the work's meaning and an index of its significance for an audience. While Fielding and Erasmus may well have exaggerated Lucian's didactic intent, they were nevertheless right to see as the distinguishing characteristic of his art its curious and studied blend of serious and ludic qualities, an accomplishment that can scarcely be described as frivolous or nihilistic, nor understood without a careful analysis of his varied comic procedures and the multiple purposes they serve.

My account of the seriocomic art, the craft of the "serious jester" (*spoudogeloios*), is an attempt to provide a generic niche that fits the forms of humorous writing developed by Lucian that seem at odds with more familiar categories of comic, satiric, or rhetorical literature. The English adjective "seriocomic" retains the sense of deliberate paradox conveyed by the Greek *spoudogeloios* (from *spoudaios* = serious, earnest, morally good; and *geloios* = comic, amusing, ludicrous) and connects Lucian with a variety of classical and Hellenistic traditions

that prefigure some of his own literary strategies.[31] Although the use of the term *spoudogeloios* in antiquity is poorly documented, it is clear that it was a coinage meant to yoke qualities naturally contrasted as opposites and served to point to a paradoxical quality in the seriocomic figure himself, who, while comic and amusing on the surface, frequently emerges as, in some sense, earnest, with a claim to our serious attention. The serious use of humor was often associated with Cynic literature, and Strabo refers specifically to Menippus as *spoudogeloios* (16.2.29, C759).[32] Highet suggests that Strabo's use of *spoudogeloios* means simply "the joker about serious things." Of course a *spoudogeloios* may well joke about serious things as part of a satiric strategy that works by comic means, as does Crates the Cynic (fourth century B.C.), for example, when in his *Diary* (*Ephēmeris*) he gives a satiric impersonation of a rich man allocating his resources: "for the whore: nine hundred dollars; for the philosopher: ninety cents" (D.L. 6.86). Clearly, the term *spoudogeloios* could be used to call attention to the contrast between the means and ends of such authors as easily as that between their matter and manner.[33] Thus Eunapius seems to apply the seriocomic idea, or at least its components, to Lucian, when he contrasts the seriousness of the professional writer (*anēr spoudaios:* "a serious man") with the levity of his characteristic turns (*es to gelasthēnai:* "about raising a laugh").[34] In short, the word was probably invented for authors such as the Cynics, in whose works the tension between serious and comic qualities was intentionally heightened, and was later applied to any professional wit or jester (as distinct from clowns, *gelotopoioi*). This seems to be the sense of Diogenes Laertius' reference to a musician who became a serious jester (*spoudogeloios*), which he designates as an *eidos*, that is, a type or genre of performance.[35]

Fortunately, our concern is not with the word but with the literary practices that may have given rise to a term distinguishing seriocomic artists from other kinds of writers and

performers. My aim is to use the concept of seriocomic art as a heuristic device for analyzing the principles at work in Lucian's comic style:[36] How does the presence of the one quality (*geloios*) affect our reception of the other (*spoudaios*)? Certainly the idea of an anomalous or paradoxical combination, as suggested by the term *seriocomic*, is central to Lucian's art as he represents it: analogous images of strange or monstrous mixtures and grotesque creatures occur whenever he writes about his own work. He consistently presents it as a bizarre union of contrary qualities and antagonistic traditions, a kind of suspect hybrid or literary mongrel. Hence it will be useful to examine the terms in which Lucian represents himself as a writer and to outline the relevant attributes of those figures in antiquity who may serve as illuminating analogues to this self-presentation and some of the voices that typify his work.

Lucian on Himself

In his short autobiographical piece, *The Dream*, Lucian clearly enjoys contrasting his present success with his humble origins in the process of presenting himself as the very model of a modern rhetor—an impoverished provincial (11) who rose to wealth and fame through the mastery of rhetorical skills and cultural traditions (*paideia*).[37] His comic failure as a sculptor's apprentice and the prophetic dream it inspired are recalled as the turning points in his incipient career. His consequent decision to pursue the liberal arts of eloquence is offered ostensibly as an edifying example of the powers of *paideia* (18), but this praise of "culture" coincides rhetorically with an artful celebration of the speaker's own powers as self-praise becomes the vehicle for demonstrating the special mastery the speaker's reputation implies. Thus the dream Lucian "remembers" is a comic transfiguration of the famous Choice of Heracles as reported by Xenophon:[38] the edifying allegorical contest between Virtue and Vice vying for the young hero's allegiance is

now reimagined as a tug-of-war (6) over the diffident young Lucian between grubby Tekhne (Craft) and elegant Paideia (Culture); the dream ends with Paideia wafting the sophist-to-be aloft in her chariot as he scatters he knows not what over fields of praise, thus recalling still another hero, Triptolemos the sower (15). Lucian thus endows his choice retrospectively with a comically heroic dimension as personal experience is recast in cultural patterns that are at once rhetorically effective and wryly distanced: "What a long-winded dream this is!" Lucian imagines someone in the audience exclaiming. "Does he take us for dream interpreters?" (17).

More typically, Lucian's self-presentations take the form of tactical retreats into conveniently unassailable poses: he appears variously as the indignant guardian of true classical culture (*The Ignorant Book Collector*, *The Professor of Rhetoric*), the misunderstood literary innovator (*The Double Indictment*, *Zeuxis*), and the traditional poet of blame (*The Would-be Critic*,[39] *The Resurrected, or the Fisherman*); and, indeed, he is practiced at all these roles. Whether or not he actually needed to defend himself as expansively as he does in *The Fisherman*, *The Double Indictment*, and certain prologues, he was aware of the value of appearing controversial and skilled at using the pretense of self-defense as an occasion for self-definition. The apologetic technique varies with the opportunities a given theme offers but always serves to highlight a central feature of his oeuvre while carefully grounding it in a legitimating tradition: its frankness and license (*parrhēsia: The Fisherman*, *The Would-be Critic*), its subtlety and novelty (*kainotēs: The Double Indictment*, *Zeuxis*), and, most important, the seriousness bobbing beneath its facetious surface (*Dionysus*).

At his most acerbic, Lucian deploys the stance and linguistic freedom of the archaic poet of blame and seeks to pulverize his opponent rhetorically by hammering him with multiple forms of abuse, using Archilochus as the "classical" warrant for this verbal outrage. Because righteous indignation

was conventionally held to justify the rhetoric of abuse, the very vehemence of the attack, its sheer rhetorical ferocity, becomes its guarantor of truth. Fairness and balance would merely dilute the effect by suggesting that no very serious transgression had occurred. And as Theodor Adorno rightly observes, "He who has laughter on his side has no need of proof."[40] Hence the only criterion of success is the disgrace of the target, and the means of achieving it are limited only by the author's powers of rhetorical invention.

It is ominous for the addressee, therefore, when Lucian introduces himself in *The Would-be Critic* by invoking Archilochus as emblematic of his own position, a man completely free and outspoken (*parrhēsia:* 1), "who did not hesitate at all to use insulting language no matter how much pain he would cause with his biting iambics" (1). In the pages that follow the author shows no hesitation to make good on his threat to humiliate the hapless sophist who had the temerity to laugh at his "barbarous" (1) use of an archaic Attic word. Who laughs last laughs best, as Homer knew. A challenge to a sophist's command of Attic must be not merely refuted but avenged: thus is the defense of a verbal slip converted into a display (*epideixis*) of rhetorical invention and agility. The attack is an exuberant medley of the literary forms of abuse and defamation drawing on many genres; it includes such ludicrous devices as the personification of the Critic's tongue, which scolds its owner roundly for using it like a hand and envies the fate of Philomela's tongue, and a satiric narrative of the origin of the hostilities delivered by a prologue figure from Menander, "Exposure [*Elegkhos*] a god devoted to Truth and Frankness" (4). The trouble began when our author, "a man of irrepressible laughter" (*akratēs gelōtos:* 7) sang out "in melodious cachinnations" at the sound of his Critic performing as a sophist—"an ass trying to play the lyre" (7). When the Critic later returns the favor, his insulting laughter gives rise to *The Would-be Critic* (8–9).[41]

If Lucian's response to the offending party seems excessive, it is because more is at stake than personal embarrassment or grammatical niceties. The disparity between the stimulus (a single act of ridicule) and the response (fifteen pages of unmerciful tongue-lashing) is both the funniest and rhetorically the most revealing feature of *The Would-be Critic*. As W. H. Auden observes, "playful anger is intrinsically comic because of all emotions anger is the least compatible with play."[42] By activating the humorous incongruity inherent in "playful anger," the element of bluff, exaggeration, and fantasy in the speaker's Archilochean threats and absurd personifications makes his attack an effectively comic performance, as does generally the friction "between the insulting nature of what is said . . . and the calculated skill of verbal invention which indicates that the [speaker is] not thinking about [his Critic] but about language and [his] pleasure in employing it inventively."[43] While the humor acts as rhetorical cover, disarming the audience as it displays the speaker's ingenuity, the image it produces of his opponent is no less degrading. In performances of this kind Lucian is carefully constructing a public literary identity by means of comic self-dramatizations: his aim is legitimacy as a writer, and the high-handed claim to Archilochean credentials is central to his strategy. The use of tradition is of course the linchpin in Lucian's claim to literary status and consequently serves to place him in relation to the mainstream literary culture. As Marilyn Butler argues in her excellent critique of ahistorical conceptions of literary tradition: "An acute concern to establish one's legitimacy implies some threat to it, that the [author's] status or his group's status is dubious in someone's eyes . . . inventing a tradition maintains your legitimacy and someone else's lack of it; your mythical past is your defensive strategy in a real present."[44] In apologetic works such as *The Would-be Critic* we see a would-be writer effectively appropriating available traditions, both as a way of defining his own

rhetorical stance and as a way of authorizing it in the eyes of his audience. It is self-advertisement posing as self-defense.

We do not need to engage in biographical speculation to surmise the reason for Lucian's defensive maneuvers. As one who had made the long journey from the cultural hinterlands of Samosata, where the vernacular was Syriac, to the center of an antique and intensely discriminating literary culture in Athens, Lucian was perfectly aware of his status as an outsider, a "barbarian" performing for Hellenes, and refers self-consciously to his un-Greek origins in his principal apologetic dialogues (*The Fisherman* 19; *The Double Indictment* 14, 27, 34). While consistently demonstrating that peculiar view of the inside that only an outsider can have, Lucian seeks to convert the fact of his dubious origins to rhetorical advantage; thus, he consistently associates himself with esteemed outsiders such as the legendary "barbarians" Anacharsis and Toxaris, or "resident aliens" such as the Cynics Diogenes and Menippus, while simultaneously embedding his literary values in a cluster of respected traditions stemming from such accredited classical authors as Plato, Aristophanes, and Archilochus.[45]

In his most concentrated reflections on his literary self, *The Fisherman* and *The Double Indictment*, Lucian uses agonistic and forensic structures from Old Comedy to present his alien or "barbaric" qualities, his generic peculiarities, and his calculated disrespect for certain forms of contemporary classicism as themselves the products of tradition. Both works are brilliant acts of comic self-dramatization that display the distinctive intermixture of literate "buffoonery and speculative fantasy"[46] that became Lucian's hallmark. Both are of central importance for assessing Lucian's carefully nuanced self-concept as an author, according to which he is more truly "classical" than his detractors acknowledge, precisely because of the liberties he takes in making traditions his own.

In *The Fisherman* Lucian seeks to legitimate the satiric function of his art, which apparently came under attack after

the founding fathers of Greek philosophy from Pythagoras to Diogenes were auctioned off as slaves in his hilarious caricature *Philosophers for Sale!* Instead of merely invoking a tradition *in propria persona*, as in *The Would-be Critic*, Lucian takes his self-presentation a step further by casting himself as the personification of verbal license, Parrhesiades ("Free-speaker"), "son of Truthful, grandson of Exposure" (*tou Elegxikleous:* 19), thus evoking a value long associated with Athenian democracy, Aristophanic comedy, and the old Cynics.[47] Parrhesiades is used both to signal Lucian's generic link with Old Comedy and to suggest his underlying affinity with the angry sages who have risen from their graves to stone him to death for his affront to philosophy. In choosing this mask Lucian counters his critics from two traditional angles by implying that he is not really antiphilosophical, since *parrhēsia* is a celebrated Cynic value, and that he is authorized to attack fakes anyway as the heir apparent of Old Comedy. This implicit claim is reflected explicitly both in Parrhesiades' protests of solidarity with his assailants and, more important, in the Old Comic structure of the plot: from the attack with stones to Parrhesiades' vindication, *The Fisherman* is patterned after the famous confrontation between Dicaeopolis and the angry patriots in *Acharnians* (204–571) who, like the sages, are initially outraged at the hero's treasonous conduct but are later persuaded of his loyalty to their cause.

Like most Old Comedy, *The Fisherman* is allegorical and agonistic. It progresses rapidly through a sequence of wildly contrasting parodic structures, moving from a paratragic suppliant scene, in which Parrhesiades begs for his life by quoting bits of Euripides, to a trial scene played out before Philosophy and Truth, "the shadowy creature with the indefinite complexion" (16 Fowlers). In his formal defense Lucian/Parrhesiades defines his dialogues as closer to the pursuit of truth than contemporary philosophy (33). Insofar as Parrhesiades is willing to speak his mind in the old style, to censure the fakery

of professional thinkers, he is reasserting the truth-teller's role, which is the point of having Diogenes, the most free-speaking philosopher, prosecute him unsuccessfully. Parrhesiades' acquittal by a jury of fabled sages designates Lucianic dialogue as the vehicle for unflattering exposure (*elegkhos*) that Socratic dialogue, Old Comedy, and Cynic diatribe once were. This claim is given Aristophanic confirmation in the closing scene, in which Parrhesiades fishes for fake philosophers off the side of the Acropolis—using gold and figs for bait. As always in Lucian, the explicit argument is less important than its formal articulation. By resurrecting the burlesque seriousness of an Aristophanic contest (*agōn*) with himself as the redoubtable comic hero, Lucian has authorized his claim to be the rightful heir to the satiric privilege (*parrhēsia*) once accorded the Old Comic poets under the auspices of Dionysus.

If his was an age of pious classicism, Lucian's fractured brand of traditionalism threatened to make him the odd man out. *The Double Indictment* is his most ambitious attempt at using the idiosyncratic form of dialogue he had developed as itself the means of projecting a respectable literary pedigree; but he does so, typically, by placing his work precisely at a point where known traditions diverge. He appears in *The Double Indictment* as a nameless foreigner, "the Syrian," who in the course of a wayward literary career has managed to offend both lady Rhetoric and the old man Dialogue, son of Philosophy, rival bastions of ancient letters, by treating neither in the traditional fashion. His literary torts have landed him in court once again, charged by his former paramours with "ill-treatment" (*kakōsis*) and "mental cruelty" (*hubris*). Parodic fantasy in a forensic setting and cartoonlike allegory in the Old Comic vein are given another twist: the Olympians summon Justice to the Areopagus to judge a backlog of cases brought against men by "the Arts, Professions, and Philosophies" (13). When the case of Lucian is announced, Justice wonders comically, "Who is this Syrian?" The trial is Lucian's means of

answering her seriocomically and in the process disarming any would-be critics of his tampering with traditional forms.

In a generic gesture Rhetoric seeks to impress the jury by opening her speech with a pastiche of famous bits of Demosthenes. She then accuses the defendant not only of desertion but inversion: she found him, a "barbarian" in speech and dress, and civilized, that is, Hellenized, him by turning him into a famous rhetorician and a Greek citizen. But after he had learned all the tricks of her trade the ingrate became supercilious, fell in love with the old man Dialogue, and moved in with him. As a consequence, he took to clipping her leisurely sentences down to size and sought pensive nods and smiles of approval from his audience instead of real applause (26–29). In his defense, the Syrian concedes the many benefits conferred by his estranged spouse, but reverses the charge of infidelity: it was in fact the meretricious habits Rhetoric had acquired, openly receiving crowds of admirers at the house and listening from the roof to erotic ditties, that drove him to live with his decorous neighbor Dialogue. In spite of her Demosthenic posturing, contemporary Rhetoric is branded as a licentious vamp, happily vulgarized to fit the fashions of the time. Besides, adds the Syrian, at his age a Platonic relationship with Dialogue in the groves of Academe has more to offer than the trials of sophistic declamation. In ridiculing the intellectually limited, if popular, practice of forensic and epideictic rhetoric, Lucian could hardly distinguish himself more emphatically from the mainstream of sophistic performers as we see them in Philostratus.

No sooner is the Syrian acquitted of the charges brought by Rhetoric than Dialogue states his case using a rhetorical strategy that contrasts him neatly with his traditional rival. While she has borrowed her opening lines from Demosthenes' most famous prooemia (*On the Crown*, *Third Olynthiac*), Dialogue imitates Socrates in the *Apology* by dispensing with a florid exordium and denying that he has any rhetorical skills whatsoever (*atekhnos*). His performance of course belies his

disavowal as he proceeds to appropriate some of the most high-flown imagery in Plato (*Phaedrus* 246e) to describe the contemplative heights he inhabited "on the rim of heaven" before the Syrian demoted him so rudely to the level of hoi polloi. While Rhetoric is represented as prostituted to popular approval, Dialogue is just the reverse: he disdains the common crowd. Much to his disgust he has been fenced in with a ribald gang of Cynics, blame poets (*iamboi*), and Old Comic playwrights such as Eupolis and Aristophanes, who "mock all that is holy" (33). The Syrian even let into the pen an ill-tempered old bulldog, Menippus, who bites unexpectedly even as he wags his tail (*gelōn hama edaknen:* 33). To add insult to injury Dialogue is given nothing to go out in but comic roles, absurd plots, and a motley patchwork of styles: "I am a ridiculous cross between prose and verse; a monster of incongruity; a literary Centaur" (33 Fowlers).[48]

Thus Lucian uses comic personifications of the arts of contemporary rhetoric and Platonic dialogue to define his literary practice as an attempt to avoid both the meretricious diversions (*dulce*) of fashionable Rhetoric and the arid pedantry (*utile*) of disputatious old Dialogue. The trial is a comic dramatization of aesthetic choices in which Lucian claims a link with tradition that consists of crossdressing alien genres. This is made clear by the Syrian's defense (34). He is astonished that Dialogue, of all people, should file a complaint against him. Just as Socrates is said to have brought philosophy down to earth from heaven, so the Syrian claims to have taught Dialogue how to walk on the ground like a human being. He has shifted his gaze from Plato's ideas to what lies at his feet. What is more, he gave the old man a bath, taught him to smile, and, with Comedy's help, even found him a willing audience. If Dialogue is unhappy, it is because he can no longer "scratch where it itches": endless refutations and metaphysical speculations are supplanted by a comic logic. Humor is the means of reconceptualizing Dialogue's generic perspective. In freeing

the old man of logic-chopping arguments (*leptologōn:* 34) he has restored him to the earthly reality of common understanding. He frankly admits that the result has an unfamiliar look, woven as it is from antagonistic traditions, but that is precisely its virtue: more engaging than philosophy and more truthful than rhetoric.[49] He may be a "barbarian" (*barbaros autos einai:* 34), but, insists the Syrian, his outlandish dialogues are clothed in native Greek attire.

Dialogue's accusations in *The Double Indictment* suggest how odd Lucian's innovations must have appeared to a second-century audience accustomed to the relatively well-defined and easily recognizable genres of ancient verse and prose. "Laughable," "strange," "monstrous," "satyric" (*geloion*, *xenon*, *phasma*, *saturikon:* 34) are the terms that Dialogue uses to denounce the absurd condition to which the Syrian has reduced him from the grandeur of Plato's *Phaedrus:* narrative and dialogue, verse and prose, sublimity and burlesque are freely combined. There is in fact no definitive model for his condition, but there are important precedents, as we shall see.

Thus in these two forensic fantasies Lucian defines and defends his relation to tradition in broad generic terms. In *The Fisherman* Lucian presents himself as reviving the satiric liberties of an Old Comic poet or Cynic jester and in *The Double Indictment* as the suspect inventor of weird new forms of comic literature. These self-dramatizations are extremely valuable in that they specify the literary terms in which Lucian himself conceived his adaptation of classical traditions and through which he sought to sanction those adaptations. While these dialogues provide the most significant general reflections of Lucian on his own generic orientation as a writer, the prologues (*prolaliai*) explore the defining features of some of his principal literary strategies and the puzzles they posed for contemporary audiences. These texts give further credence to the approach outlined so far, with some interesting complications.

Hippocentaurs and Hippocamps

In a well-known passage of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle observes that the most essential function of a prologue is to formulate the *telos* (end or function) of the discourse that follows (1415a22–24). Although scholars have carefully classified the basic compositional schemes of Lucian's prologues, their rhetorical and literary functions have been ignored.[50] Yet the prologues are interesting not only as excellent examples of a kind of rhetorical performance that typifies the Second Sophistic,[51] but also for what they reveal of the *telos* of Lucian's art in miniature. Recognizable rhetorical elements such as the short anecdotal narrative (*muthos*, *diēgēma*) or ekphrastic description are certainly typical of the prologues, but how are they used? And what do they reflect of Lucian's intentions in the longer performances that they served to introduce?

From three of the prologues, *Zeuxis*, *A Literary Prometheus*, and *Dionysus*, a remarkable picture emerges of Lucian at work on his audience persuasively defining the conceptions of comedy and novelty that inform his dialogues.[52] A characteristic feature of these pieces is the way Lucian stages an improvisational opening to signal an informal rapport with his auditors: he interrupts himself in the middle of his first sentence to address them directly (*Dionysus* 1, *Zeuxis* 1). In both cases the interjection is a casual invitation to hear a story: "There's no reason not to tell a Bacchic tale, I suppose" (*koleuei gar ouden oimai: Dionysus* 1). This offhand manner of introduction lends the performance an air of studied informality. The *oimai*, "I suppose," following the anacoluthic opening suggests a face-to-face relationship between a storyteller and his audience. Lucian tries to make his listeners properly receptive to his performance by consistently characterizing them as discerning judges—artists, sophists, jurors, historians, and, most important, friends (*Herodotus* 8, *The Hall* 2–3, *Hercules* 7, *Zeuxis* 1, 12). For it is the role of the prologue not only to cultivate a favor-

able response from the prospective auditors by putting them at their ease and whetting their appetite for the kind of entertainment that follows, but also to sketch for them the form of judgment appropriate to performances of this particular type. Such preparations are essential to a successful performance. If the audience come expecting the broad humor of the mimes, erudite philosophy, or florid panegyric, they will necessarily be disappointed and the performance will fail (*Electrum* 6).

The prologue, then, must work in two directions, carefully defining both the performer and the kind of audience he seeks. That Lucian gained a reputation for being different from other sophists is shown by the fact that he must continually use his prologues to define more precisely the nature of that difference. Accordingly, in the *Zeuxis* Lucian offers an elaborate ekphrasis of Zeuxis' legendary painting of a family of hippocentaurs in which the mother is shown happily nursing twin hippocentaur babies, from both human and equine breasts, while their "utterly savage" (*agrion*) father looks on, laughing and dandling a lion's cub before the frightened nurslings. The innovation that enabled Zeuxis' remarkable juxtaposition of wildness and domesticity—the female hippocentaur—is used to illustrate how bizarre subjects still require expert execution lest the use of incongruity amount to mere bluff designed to delude the audience with inconsequent oddities. Lucian particularly admires the subtlety with which Zeuxis joins (*mixis*, *harmogē*: 6) the two poles of the composition in the biform body of the centauress. The failure of Zeuxis' original audience to appreciate this feat—to value painterly effects over novelty of subject—led him to withdraw his painting from public view in a fit of anger (7). Lucian may be famous for his own oddities, but no more than Zeuxis does he want an audience primarily interested in literary curiosities or "the shock of the new"—as if his work were some "Halloween mask" (*mormolukeia*) or magic act (2, 12). For if he wins his reputation this way, he would be little different from

Antiochus, who, as he describes in a brief anecdote, used the startling appearance (*to kainon*) of elephants to bluff his way to victory over the Galatians (8–11). Lucian wants his audience not only to be aware that his innovations are out of the ordinary (*xenizon:* 2), but also that, as in Zeuxis' painting, they are executed with a formal control and sense of tradition (*ton arkhaion kanona:* 2) that would please an audience of artists (*graphikoi:* 12). Such an audience consists of *pepaideumenoi* (educated men) whose literary background is deep enough to distinguish mere sleight of hand from formal invention, or adaptation from theft.[53] Thus Lucian juxtaposes positive and negative examples (ekphrasis and anecdote, respectively) of the use of novelty (*kainotēs*) to invite a receptive but critical response from his audience by illustrating the difference between the artist's use of exotica and the exploitation of it by Antiochus for the purpose of creating mere shock and surprise. All this expresses Lucian's sense of himself as extraordinary enough to require an explanatory introduction if he is not to be misunderstood. He asks to be taken seriously, but in accordance with the proper criteria.

Significantly, *A Literary Prometheus* is also concerned with the proper role of novelty and invention (*to kainourgon:* 3) but approaches its theme by way of skeptically interpreting a remark offered as a compliment to the author. Lucian opens the work sparring rhetorically with the forensic orator: "So you say I am a Prometheus?" (1). Lucian is keenly aware that this kind of hyperbolic comparison could easily mask a biting irony. In fact the comic metaphor (or simile), the description of X as Y when Y would seem categorically inappropriate, was a much-cultivated form of joke in antiquity.[54] The likening of Socrates to Marsyas the satyr and the presentation of Cleon as a Paphlagonian slave are famous examples of the type. Indeed, Lucian admits his fear that this "compliment" is just such an Attic *skōmma* (joke) and quotes a line from the Old Comic poet Eupolis, in which Cleon is comically likened to Prometheus (2).[55] *A Literary Prometheus* systematically pursues the

many ways in which this Promethean metaphor might be construed—as a satiric *skōmma* or extravagant compliment—without actually affirming any of them.

First, the speaker considers the compliment as ironically intended: Prometheus may be the very image of the creator, but, after all, his medium was lowly clay and in Athens the local potters were called "Prometheuses" (1–2). In a rare bout of modesty, edged perhaps with irony, Lucian contrasts himself as a mere popular entertainer (*hoi es ta plēthē pariontes:* 2) with those whose works live and breathe in courtroom battles, like the creatures of Prometheus. His own works, on the other hand, offer nothing but delight (*terpsis:* 2) and play (*paidia:* 2) and are as fragile as little pots. When he turns to consider the possibility that the comparison was actually a tribute to his originality (3), Lucian's language insists emphatically on the idea of novelty as fundamental to his work (*kainourgon*, *kainopoiein*, *kainotēs:* 3) even as he professes concern lest that novelty be misconceived; originality does not preclude classical ancestry (*arkhaioteron ti . . . apogonon:* 3) or attention to form (*kharien* vs. *amorphon:* 3). Indeed, he would deserve "to be ravaged by sixteen vultures" if he did not know that novelty alone only makes inept work worse (*amorphotera:* 3).

This aesthetic precept is illustrated in the comic tale of Ptolemy's vain attempt to impress the Egyptians with a show of novelties (*kaina:* 4); assembling his audience in the theater, he offered as the finale to a long series of spectacles a pair of freakish combinations: a black camel decked out in jewelry and a two-toned man, "half jet black and half bright white." The Egyptians' response ranged from laughter to disgust. Lucian then proceeds in Socratic fashion to disparage his own most notorious novelty, the comic-philosophic dialogue, by likening it to these unnatural unions; Lucianic dialogue, he suggests, has more in common with Ptolemy's overdressed camel or even that unruly (*hubristotaton:* 5) half-breed the hippocentaur, than with a potable blend of compatible ingredients that actually enhance one another, like wine and honey (5). In lan-

guage that pointedly recalls Aristophanes' *Clouds* the speaker stresses the improbability of any intercourse (*koinōnia:* 6) between Comedy and Dialogue: while Dialogue is quiet, aloof, and elitist, preferring to stay at home or to mingle quietly with a few reticent friends, Comedy is footloose, theatrical, and Dionysian; the two do not even like each other. Comedy mocks the self-seriousness of the philosophers and would drench them in Dionysian liberties, while Dialogue insists on taking his own conversations with the utmost seriousness (6).

This antithesis is of course similar to that drawn in *The Double Indictment*, with its emphasis on the notion of democratizing the esoterica of philosophy; however, since the speaker is responding to a compliment, he feigns reservation about the wisdom of his concoction instead of defending it aggressively as the Syrian does in *The Double Indictment*. And while he concedes that the combination of comedy and philosophy may recall a Promethean offering—bones wrapped in fat—he nevertheless vigorously denies that it is a case of Promethean theft: where, he asks, could he have stolen the literary equivalent of a hippocamp (7)? He will rest content with his literary amphibians, such as they are, lest by changing his mind now he be more reasonably likened to Epimetheus ("Afterthought") than to Prometheus ("Forethought").

A Literary Prometheus is an ironic apology for Lucian's principal literary innovation, the comic dialogue, and it is interesting in that it makes so explicit the author's claim to originality in an age not known for it and confirms the characterization of this form of dialogue, also found in *The Double Indictment*, as an incongruous combination of inherently divergent genres.[56] Although these works are written to defend the aesthetic assumptions of Lucian's hybrid of comedy and philosophical dialogue, and hence are, of course, tendentious, they nevertheless point to a set of qualities found in many of Lucian's works: the curious amalgam of serious and comic tendencies, the salient incongruity that he repeatedly compares to those "decorative monsters" of myth in which two species

combine their forms—the hippocentaur, hippocamp, or goat-stag (*tragelaphos*: *Zeuxis* 7).[57] These recurrent images of biform creatures found nowhere in nature are a deliberate caricature of the classical conception of literary unity as a reflection of natural unity such as that Plato develops in the *Phaedrus* using a living creature (*zōion:* 264c) as the model for the unity of written speech (cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica* 1–23).

Thus are the prologues used to mediate between the author and his audience by highlighting distinctive features of his performance and defending them against potential criticism and misunderstanding. In *A Literary Prometheus* and *Zeuxis*, the case for the defense is made through playful personifications of Lucian's art and its literary forefathers, comedy and philosophical dialogue, and through the aesthetic the speaker articulates by means of pointed ekphrases and humorous anecdotes. The most important device used in the prologues, however, is the illustrative story about a famous figure in some way analogous to the performer, such as the painter Zeuxis (*Zeuxis*), the eloquent old Celtic Heracles (*Hercules*), or Anacharsis, the sage from Scythia (*Scytha*). These short narratives often seem at first to be unrelated to the immediate occasion and to be recounted only for their intrinsic interest, especially given the apparently casual manner in which they are introduced. But they are always followed by an *applicatio*, that is, an interpretation of the story, or of an artifact in the story, that shows the relevance of the narrative to the immediate occasion by drawing a parallel between the speaker and the subject of the anecdote. In the process they become demonstrations of the very kind of critical appreciation that the main performance calls for.

Dionysus is a subtle elaboration of the form of sophistic prologue. It is not unusual for the prologist to characterize himself with a wry, self-deprecating metaphor, as when the speaker compares his novel works to the elephants of Antiochus (*Zeuxis* 12) or, still more remarkable, compares himself as an aging sophist to a Celtic portrait of an old, bald Heracles

whose followers are attached to him by delicate chains through his tongue—and their ears (*Hercules* 1–3). *Dionysus* is the only prologue, however, in which Lucian uses the narrative (*muthos*) to reflect on the specifically comic dimension of his work. The speaker begins by reminding his audience of the disdainful and contemptuous reception that greeted Dionysus' invasion of India and invites them to imagine the kind of description that the Indian messengers must have given of this unusual army: the ranks consist of raving women, wreathed in ivy, covered with fawn skins, carrying headless spears and shields that sound like tambourines (because they are). The speaker delights in the bizarre incongruity the legend offers of bacchants, normally associated with reveling, manning a military expedition. He heightens the incongruity latent in the legend to the point of comedy by imagining the mythical invasion as if it were an actual event seen through the eyes of one innocent of Dionysus, stripped of the preconceptions and background that make the story merely an old and familiar tale to a Greek audience. What would these messengers report of the general himself? He rides in a car behind a team of panthers, is quite beardless, has horns, wears a garland of grape clusters with a ribbon in his hair, and is dressed in a purple gown and golden slippers. A couple of rather odd-looking characters, Silenus and Pan, are his lieutenants. The Indians roar with laughter when they hear of this crazy army of women chasing animals and tearing them limb from limb. The speaker describes the whole scene in minute, absurd detail in order to make the sight as new and as strange to his audience as it appeared to the overconfident Indians. His method is to transfer the object to a new sphere of perception by recoding myth as history.

This is of course the method of estrangement so brilliantly analyzed by Victor Shklovskij, who uses Tolstoy to illustrate how familiar objects and events are "made strange," or "defamiliarized," by being described as if they had just been seen for the first time. The author "refuses to recognize" what

everyone knows. The effect is often subtly comic, as when Tolstoy in describing "the scene of the mass in *The Resurrection* uses the prosaic expression 'small pieces of bread' "[58] to refer to the host. Because estrangement works by selectively eliding conventions, it is used with maximal effect of cultural artifacts or events whose reception is governed by tacit conventions built up over many years, as is a performance of the mass or as classical literary traditions were in the age of the sophists.[59] What Shklovskij asserts of his own day pinpoints the predicament of writers who, like Lucian, come at the end of a tradition: "Classical [traditions] have for us become covered with the glassy armour of familiarity, we remember them too well, we have heard them from childhood, we have read them in books, thrown out quotations from them in conversation, and now we have callouses on our souls—we no longer sense them."[60] Lucian's response was to master the estranging uses of language as a means of putting his audience in living possession of cultural traditions whose distinctive qualities centuries of repeated exposure—in school, in court, in formal competitions—had rendered all but "imperceptible." Whether or not estrangement is the defining feature of literary prose as such, as the Russian Formalists argued, it is the most characteristic of Lucian's textual strategies. While particular effects will necessarily vary greatly as a function of context, the self-referential use of comic estrangement in *Dionysus* makes it a minor model of Lucian's literary practice.

But to return to the story: Those ridiculous (*geloios:* 3) soldiers proceed to set fire to the country until the Indians are forced to meet their despised invaders in battle. The Indians approach with their elephants. Dionysus holds the middle with his officers, Silenus and Pan, on either side. The watchword is *Euoi!* With tambourines and cymbals beating, a satyr signals the beginning of battle with his horn, and Silenus' jackass chimes in with something appropriately martial (4). But when the maenads reveal the steel on their thyrsus-points,

the Indians and their elephants flee in disorder and are captured. They learn by experience not to despise those who appear ludicrous and strange (4).

The *applicatio* is obvious. The speaker applies the story to himself and his audience: like Dionysus in India, he may appear satyrlike and comic (*geloios:* 5), but his thyrsus too has a point. If his prospective listeners will get down off their elephants and, instead of despising his satyrs and Sileni, drink their fill at his bowl, they will know the Bacchic frenzy once again and join in shouting *Euoi!* Thus Lucian uses the story to admonish his audience against dismissing him as "merely comic" (5). The tale of Dionysus' invasion is the perfect vehicle for this admonition, for in telling and interpreting it the speaker gives a demonstration of his seriocomic art on a small scale. The comic narrative is made to apply directly to his literary strategies and their reception by a contemporary audience. Furthermore, the story does not instruct in addition to being comic, but by means of being comic. For the work to perform its rhetorical function, the audience must be made to envisage the maenads first as comic (*geloios*) and only afterward as something to be taken seriously, as effective warriors. *Dionysus* is thus a paradigm of Lucian's seriocomic practice and shows it to be thoroughly integrated: the relationship between the serious and comic elements is not to be conceived externally as one of message to decoration, as the Horatian dictum on mixing the *utile* with the *dulce* might suggest (*Ars Poetica* 341–344). Instead the means constitute the end, for the comic form of the tale is essential to its meaning as the speaker interprets it. Thus Lucian uses his prologues to warn his audience against simplistic notions of comedy that would dissociate laughter from its sources and implications.[61]

Comedy and Philosophy

Any search for literary origins is likely to end up like a dog chasing its own tail: the genre's origin is defined by its

exemplary instances, which are selected according to our preconceptions of the genre. This is notoriously true of relatively well-defined genres, let alone of a concept that depends on generic combinations and is, in principle, hostile to classical notions of decorum and conventionality. As Mikhail Bakhtin observes in his brilliantly suggestive, if sometimes woolly, survey of "the realm of the serio-comical," precise and stable boundaries "are almost impossible for us to distinguish."[62] It is worthwhile, however, to map the contours of previous forays into the seriocomic that Lucian was free to adapt and exploit, if we keep in mind that "map is not territory." What important precedents were there for the kind of literary experiment that Lucian claims as his own?

While defending the questionable traditionality of his dialogues as "originality," Lucian invokes a heterogeneous list of comic and philosophic authors as, in some sense, his predecessors. However proud he is of his novelty (*kainotēs*), he is equally aware of significant continuities with literary traditions of classical and even archaic origin. Although Lucian's literary debts are manifold, ranging from the fantastic quality of Aristophanic plot structures to the naturalistic dramatization of philosophical conversation in the style of Plato, his most fertile link with tradition is arguably the conception of the seriocomic character and mode of writing. He is not reduplicating a recognizable generic type so much as renovating one that existed in diverse forms, such as Old Comedy, Socratic dialogue, and the varied satiric squibs of Cynics and Skeptics. In so doing he is reinventing a way of writing that strove for the precarious complexity of tone and effect produced by superimposing generic repertoires conventionally kept distinct and reformulating their key elements. As Bompaire observes, this idea finds an echo in a passage in Hermogenes (second century A.D.) where several forms, including the diatribe, dialogue, comedy, and Socratic symposia are said to work by a double method (*dia tinos diplēs methodou*) that pro-

duces an alternation of tension (*tasis*) and release (*anesis*): "The examples given by Hermogenes show that the Cynics have no monopoly on the seriocomic, but rather that it is a general principle permitting renewal of a genre from the interior or by crossing it with other genres."[63] It is this "general principle" of renewal permitting varied applications rather than specific allusions or borrowings that is most important for gauging the relation between Lucian's literary practice and that of earlier comic or philosophic literature.

Although the comments of Plato and Aristotle on comedy are largely critical and of course they develop no theory of seriocomic art as such, there are some interesting foreshadowings of a richer conception. Plato's explicit theory is that the value of the comic is limited to providing the relaxation necessary for serious pursuits and to ridiculing certain undesirable forms of behavior.[64] In his most probing discussion of the comic (*to geloion*: *Philebus* 48–50) he argues that the principal emotional effect evoked by comedy (laughter) is inextricably tied to the *Schadenfreude* (*phthonos*) felt at the exposure of another's failure to achieve self-knowledge. Hence, the essential quality of the comic character (*to geloion*) is a form of "vice" (*ponēria* or *kakia*), namely, self-ignorance in one impotent to avenge himself when laughed at. Because comedy (*to geloion*) provokes a pleasure (laughter) mixed with pain (*phthonos*), Plato argues that it is undesirable. He does, however, allow it in the well-ordered state described in the *Laws* (816), but only to be performed by slaves and "foreigners" (*xenoi*) for the purpose of showing citizens how not to conduct themselves. It is in this sense alone that comedy has something worthwhile to offer. Citizens should not give it serious attention (*spoudē;* cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1336b20–30).

Aristotle follows Plato in defining the comic as a specific form of "vice" (*kakia*) that results in a kind of failure or shortcoming (*hamartēma*) but emphasizes that what is comically defective or inappropriate (*aiskhos*) causes no more pain than do

the facial contortions of a comic mask (*Poetics* 1449a32–37). After dividing literary discourse into two fundamental categories distinguished by the objects imitated in each, he assigns epic and tragedy to the category in which men are represented as better than they are, and comedy and iambic poetry to that in which men are represented as worse than they are (1448a1–18). The former category is serious and was cultivated by serious, respectable men (*hoi semnoteroi*), while the latter was pursued by a less noble breed (*hoi eutelesteroi*). Comic literature, therefore, focuses on less worthy objects and is produced by less worthy men (1448b24–49a6). It is consistently contrasted with "serious" literature. There seems to be no possibility for the art of a *spoudogeloios*. In fact even "serious" literature is accorded only a carefully circumscribed value.

Within the category containing comedy, however, Aristotle does make an interesting and important distinction between two kinds of comic literature when he commends Homer for showing the proper form (*skhēma*) of comedy in his *Margites* by dramatizing ludicrous rather than satiric material (*ou psogon alla to geloion*). Aristotle undoubtedly prefers *to geloion* because in his view it is less particular and more typical than *psogos* (lampoon/invective) and hence more conducive to poetry's proper ends. Indeed comedy rivals tragedy in its typicality in plot construction and choice of names. And it is, of course, its typicality that makes poetry more serious than history in Aristotle's view. The distinction between a tendentious comic mode targeted on individuals (*psogos*) and one more typical in its subject and less direct in its aims (*to geloion*) persists throughout ancient discussions of jokes and comedy. This distinction shows that even within the framework of Aristotle's discussion the way is prepared for according the value of the serious arts to some forms of comic literature.[65]

In any event, the philosophers' sharp distinction between the serious and the comic and their carefully qualified appreciation of the latter is curious, since seriocomic art owes as

much to philosophical literature as to dramatic comedy itself. To be sure, Aristophanes shows himself aware of a seriousness in his comic art irreducible to the Platonic aims of relaxation or the ridicule of individuals.[66] As we have seen, his importance for Lucian takes many forms. But the figure in which the serious and comic are most memorably and potently intertwined is the Platonic Socrates: a teacher, social critic, and philosopher par excellence, and yet a jester, a mocker, an ironist, a character. As the ironist he of course claims to know nothing, but engages patiently in the give-and-take of dialogue until his interlocutor is revealed by refutation (*elegkhos*) to be a pretender (*alazōn*) whose claims to knowledge collapse into confusion (*aporia*) at Socrates' hands. As Plato argues in *Philebus* (48–50), the exposure of a discrepancy between self-perception and reality, particularly with regard to intellectual or moral capacities, is the exemplary subject of comedy. Hence the basic dramatic structure of many of the Socratic dialogues is comic, although their themes, such as the nature or teachability of virtue, and their conclusion, the intractability of human ignorance as revealed in philosophical bewilderment (*aporia*), are serious. The seriousness of the comedy is expressed dramatically in Socrates' quietly unrelenting opposition to any form of *alazoneia*, a stance that characterizes many of Lucian's own voices.

Unlike Diogenes and Menippus, however, who frequently appear as satiric provocateurs in Lucian, Socrates is not a favorite dramatis persona, probably because he had been rendered too serious and too familiar by tradition. He is even satirized as an *alazōn* in *Dialogues of the Dead* (4) for only pretending not to fear death when he really had no choice: he broke down and cried like a baby when he got a glimpse of Hades, Cerberus informs us. (Only Diogenes and Menippus arrived in the underworld laughing and cursing.) Nevertheless, he epitomizes a style of serious jesting with important parallels to Lucian's own. In the character of Socrates, Plato

articulates a far subtler understanding of the comic than he ever attempts to formulate explicitly.[67]

As Plato presents him, Socrates' audience is often unsure whether he is serious or joking.[68] His notorious irony is the means by which he evokes so ambivalent a response, using it at one moment to underline his essential seriousness, at another to call into question the grounds for that seriousness. The seriocomic character of Socrates is elaborated most fully in the *Symposium*, where it forms one of the central themes of Alcibiades' encomium. The speech itself takes on the attributes of its subject in using the comic comparison of Socrates to a Silenus as a means of revealing his true character (215a). Thus Alcibiades describes him as a satyr figure who disdains (*kataphronei*) good looks, money, honor, and even his friends (*hēmas ouden einai*)—in short, all those things taken seriously by the world. In fact he spends his whole life playing ironically with everyone (*eironeuomenos de kai paizōn panta ton bion pros tous anthrōpous diatelei:* 216d–e). The climax of Alcibiades' confession of his erotic encounter with Socrates occurs when, in spite of Alcibiades' most earnest efforts, Socrates responds to all his allurements with derisive laughter (*kategelase:* 219c). Socrates shows an equally comic disregard for conforming to social norms; instead, his attention is focused exclusively on matters that he considers of real importance. Hence all his principal character traits and mannerisms go against the grain of serious Athenian society. He takes no interest in the serious pursuits of acquiring property or political power. Even his personal habits are comically inappropriate. He rarely bathes, and goes barefoot even on military duty in the winter.

But if Socrates tends to respond with laughter, smiles, and irony to what the world takes seriously, his own most serious pursuits make him seem equally comic to the world, as Aristophanes appreciated. Hence Alcibiades remarks that his endless arguments about "pack asses and blacksmiths" seem quite ridiculous to most people (221e). Similarly, he has the

habit of stopping, wherever he is and whatever he is doing, to consider an idea when it occurs to him. When he submerges himself in thought on Agathon's neighbor's porch at the beginning of the *Symposium*, Agathon finds him strange, bizzare (*atopon*: 175a). Such eccentricities (*atopia:* 215a) combine with his ironic manner and satyric appearance to make Socrates a genuinely seriocomic figure. His principal characteristics, as such, are a tendency to call into question, both in thought and in deed, the appropriateness of the categories of the comic and the serious as they are generally conceived, and a willingness to see the comic as conducive to certain kinds of truth telling, as it is shown to be in Alcibiades' speech. Socrates' irony is often treated as a convenient trope, and his other comic qualities ignored, but as Plato portrays him they were an essential part of his character and his way of practicing philosophy.[69]

Thus there seems to have been an important shift in Greek thinking about laughter and the comic in the fourth century. It begins with the tension that we have observed in Plato between his theoretical pronouncements, in which he has little use for the comic, and the extensive and powerful use that he makes of humor, irony, and wit in the dramatization of Socrates. In Aristotle, Plato's explicit critical stance against comedy, with its aristocratic distrust of the potentially subversive power of laughter, is qualified: pure comedy, which presents *to geloion*, is commended, while the applied comedy of the *psogos* is not.[70] As part of their reaction against traditional Greek social norms, the Cynics, beginning with Diogenes of Sinope, take the process a step further by rejecting the subordinate status assigned to laughter and comedy by previous theorists and adopting what could reasonably be called a comedic mode of philosophy systematically opposed to intellectual and cultural conventions.

The portrait of Diogenes preserved by tradition is of a self-dramatizing iconoclast who lived in the streets and taught anyone who would listen by paradox, subversive wit, and

hyperbole. His attitude toward conventional thinking is reflected by the legend that he received an oracle instructing him "to alter the current coin" (Diogenes Laertius 6.20–21). Similarly, he is said to have discovered his modus vivendi in the homely example of a mouse, who showed him the simplest means of adapting to circumstances (D.L. 6.22). In Diogenes Laertius he is consistently shown to have used wit to force significant incongruities on the attention of his audience: when he saw the officials of a temple leading off someone who had stolen a bowl he remarked, "The great thieves are leading away the little thief" (6.45). Menippus says that when he was captured, put up for sale, and asked what he could do, Diogenes replied laconically, "Govern men" (*andrōn arkhein*: D.L. 6.29).

One of Diogenes' favorite tactics was to teach by example, using immediate experience to dramatize a point or subvert a theoretical quandary: once he lit a lamp in broad daylight and walked about saying, "I am looking for a human being" (*anthrōpos*: D.L. 6.29). After Plato had elaborated a definition of man in terms of genus and differentia as a "featherless biped," Diogenes walked in with a plucked chicken saying, "Here is Plato's man!" (D.L. 6.40). When confronted with a theoretical question, Diogenes would shift the argument to another plane by rejecting the question's premise; thus, when asked by Lysias the perfumer if he believed in the gods, he retorted, "Of course—when I see how they hate you?" (D.L. 6.42). Similarly, when asked where he saw good men in Greece, he replied wryly: "Good men nowhere, good boys in Sparta" (D.L. 6.27). In each of these examples the humor is deliberately provocative: it is used to raise questions about what it is to be human or a good man, or to cast doubt on the utility of theoretical disputes about the existence of the gods or the proper definition of *homo sapiens*. While any of these anecdotes would repay detailed analysis, my point here is merely to emphasize the purposeful nature of Cynic humor.

In *A History of Cynicism* D. R. Dudley observes that "the stories about Diogenes are decidedly funnier than those Diogenes Laertius tells about other philosophers. Perhaps some of the apothegms . . . did originate with Diogenes."[71] The opposite inference seems equally possible, however. The humor of the traditions about Diogenes reflects the polish of a self-consciously rhetorical practice that made optimal use of the argumentative resources of the pointed anecdote (*khreia*).[72] In fact Cynic rhetoric drew praise on formal grounds from as discerning a critic as Demetrius, who notes in particular the importance of humor for the Cynic style (*kunikos tropos*).[73] All true humor has an enthymematic character: it requires the audience to perform an act of mental collaboration that can be variously described as bridging a logical gap; moving between alien codes, frames of reference, or universes of discourse; or, in Koestler's classic formulation, bisociating divergent matrices of meaning. His analysis of this process convinced Koestler that humor exemplifies "the logical pattern" of inventive thinking generally.[74] In whatever language we choose to describe it, it is precisely this feature that distinguishes the *khreiai* about Diogenes. Though Dudley acknowledges that Diogenes' "shamelessness" (*anaideia*) was philosophically motivated, he fails to see that the traditions about him make wit essential to his chief didactic method, his *parrhēsia:* "the finest thing in the world" (D.L. 6.69; *Philosophers for Sale!* 8).

Diogenes was aptly characterized by Plato as Socrates gone mad (D.L. 6.54): he lacks Socrates' urbanity and tends to be both more acerbic and more buffoonish. Socrates' irony and eccentricity become his freedom in speech (*parrhēsia*) and action (*anaideia*). Like so many of the other Hellenistic philosophical traditions,[75] Cynicism can be seen as a development of certain aspects of the Platonic Socrates, his lack of interest in conforming to conventions and his willingness to practice philosophy informed by irony and a cunning sense of humor. These very tendencies are expressed in the unconventional

literary vehicles that the Cynics developed to propagate their philosophical position. Diogenes' followers and the early Skeptic Timon of Phlius (third century B.C.), who shows a similar antipathy to the official schools of thought, aggressively pursued the rhetorical and literary possibilities of humor. Of particular significance is the extensive use of parody of the high genres, particularly epic and tragedy, as the medium for philosophical polemic in both Cynic and Skeptic literature. The seriousness of dogmatic philosophy and the aristocratic decorum of the classical genres were combatted in tandem as expressions of traditional Greek culture that the new philosophers rejected. Gorgias' advice, "Destroy your opponents' seriousness with a joke," ably describes their comic-philosophic strategy.[76]

While Crates (fourth-century Cynic) appears only twice in Lucian (*Dialogues of the Dead* 21, 22) and Bion (third-century Cynic) and Timon are not even mentioned, the fragments and titles of their "trifles" (*paignia*), "squibs" (*silloi*), and "satiric monologues" (*diatribai*) suggest a family resemblance,[77] particularly with regard to the calculated use of literary humor (cf. Horace, *Epistles* 2.2.60). If Menippus (dubbed *spoudogeloios* by Strabo) is the best-known representative of this tradition, it is primarily because of his prominence as a character in Lucian.[78] While the scanty evidence makes any precise assessment of the relation between Lucian and the early Cynics and Skeptics impossible, it is significant that he refers to Cynicism in general along with Menippus in *The Double Indictment* (33). The affinities are not only literary.[79]

If Lucian resists easy derivation from a single strand of tradition such as Aristophanes, Plato, or Menippus, it is precisely because his brand of traditionalism did not stop at imitating structures or themes from the classics or at stylizing older genres. His works are best approached as "complex refinements and recyclings of previous [literary] forms, borrowing a device here, polishing or discarding a style there,

artfully recombining elements from a number of discrete sources."[80] The relative importance of any one form—Old Comedy, Socratic dialogue, or Cynic diatribe or parody—is far less significant than the fact that rhetorical strategies dependent on intricate comic structures, particularly those of parody, were a conscious technique of exoteric philosophical literature, as well as of dramatic comedy; thus it was recognized in practice, if not in theory, that the power of humor to alter our perceptions by exposing latent incongruities is a means of generating critical thought from a new perspective. This recognition provided the aesthetic justification for the varied forms of literary jesting produced in the late classical and early Hellenistic periods. In fact, an observation voiced by Caesar Strabo in the discussion of wit in Cicero's *De Oratore* suggests that the serious ramifications of humor had come to be widely appreciated: "There is no type of joke from which serious inferences may not be drawn" ("nullum genus est ioci, quo non ex eodem severa et gravia sumantur": 2.250; cf. 2.262–3.52).

Without attempting to condense such varied traditions into a single type we can abstract a central feature: a seriocomic text or performance works by revealing to the audience as problematic the appropriateness of laughter or seriousness in a given context. As we have seen, this is precisely how Alcibiades characterizes Socrates: as making the serious problematic by taking none of the normal things seriously, while devoting himself with great seriousness to arguments about cobblers and carpenters. This perverse stance is also shared by Diogenes and his followers. It is nicely illustrated by a story that Lucian tells in the introduction to his essay *How to Write History*, to explain his motives for writing a work on historiography at a time when so many would-be Herodotuses were rushing out to chronicle the latest war between East and West. Lucian says that his present situation reminds him of that of Diogenes, who, when everyone was frantically preparing for

Philip's attack on Corinth, began to push his little tub up and down the Craneum. When asked why he was doing this Diogenes replied, "So as not to be thought the one idle man," implying that he was not the only one exerting himself to no avail. Thus, while in the body of the essay on historiography the author urges historians to write for posterity as Thucydides did and offers his supporting arguments most seriously, he begins by suggesting that his advice bears the same relationship to the historians' endeavors as Diogenes' did to the Corinthians': a vain reproof to idle efforts. At least he will not be a silent extra in the comedy (3–4). The disarming ambivalence, in this case the irony, is typical of the author. He hesitates to let us take even his own serious efforts with unqualified seriousness. In *Dionysus* he reverses the categories and the moral by using a comic narrative of Dionysus' invasion to suggest that his own performances, far from being "merely comic," repay serious attention. Thus we are made wary of the author's seriousness in *How to Write History* and admonished to be serious about his jests in *Dionysus*. In both cases Lucian uses humor to provoke the audience to consider the subject simultaneously from divergent, conflicting perspectives. It is in exactly this sense that the *utile* and *dulce* are joined, as Erasmus and Fielding assert of Lucian. "Seriocomic," therefore, is less a way of describing a thematic structure or generic focus than a flexible set of literary methods to which the disorienting and subversive effects of humor are instrumental.[81]

Authorizing Humor: Lucian's *Demonax*

Men practice rhetoric with speeches. They practice philosophy by being silent, by being playful, and, yes by Zeus, by being the butt of jokes and the jester.
—*Plutarch*, Sumposiaka

No work could be better suited to complement the argument that Lucian is best understood as an heir of seriocomic

traditions as I have characterized them than his portrait of his teacher, the philosopher Demonax. *Demonax* connects Lucian directly to the philosophical practice of serious jesting and provides an opportunity to examine the particular stamp that he gives it. Formally Boswell's portrait of Johnson is the closest thing in English to *Demonax.* Like Johnson—once called by a friend "the Demonax of the present age"[82]—the philosopher appears in a series of dramatized moments rather than a continuous narrative. Lucian's decision to use detached incidents rather than a connected narrative as in his accounts of the rogues Alexander and Peregrinus shows that his subject is not Demonax's career so much as his way of life (*bios:* 1) or character (*logizesthai hopoios ekeinos anēr:* 67). This is best revealed by letting Demonax appear in his own words, unlike the satiric target Alexander, for example, who is never allowed to speak for himself. Lucian knew that character "must be manifested in the concrete"[83] to be memorable and that uniqueness of character is best displayed in expressive moments. The conventional vehicle for sayings of wise men, the pointed anecdote (*khreia*), was perfectly suited to this purpose. It places Demonax in a rhetorical frame used especially with idealized figures and associated in particular with Diogenes and the Cynics (cf. Theon 1.40–42; 3; Butts ed.). It thus allows Lucian to use a series of isolable episodes to construct a model of the rhetorical uses of humor instantiating a comic method and rhetorical stance clearly indicative of his own.[84]

If Aristotle is right when he says the comic genres tend to represent men as worse than they are in making them appear funny, then presenting an image of authority, a source of admiration, poses an interesting rhetorical problem for writers whose heroes are humorous. It is one that Plato and the followers of Diogenes solved by emphasizing the comic qualities of their heroes but presenting them as instrumental to a larger purpose that may well seem absurd when viewed through a conventional lens. Lucian is deliberately following their lead

when he seeks to embody the oxymoronic ideal of a "comic authority figure" in Demonax. His express purpose is twofold: to preserve the memory of Demonax among the best men and through him to provide a contemporary pattern (*kanōn*: 2) by which men can shape themselves (*autous rhuthmizein:* 2). Thus *Demonax* as a whole is epideictic. It is meant to commemorate a particular life as it embodied an iterable ideal, but its means of commemoration is in essence a collection of jokes. After briefly sketching Demonax's upbringing and philosophical temper, his indifference to the things normally regarded as good (3), Lucian turns to the philosopher's role models (4): although Demonax was too intellectually wary to commit himself to the doctrines of a particular philosophical sect,[85] he is said to have most in common with Socrates and Diogenes. Lucian stresses, however, that Demonax eschews the exhibitionism of Diogenes' antics and the hauteur of Socratic irony, which, as Aristotle remarks, was sometimes felt to be disdainful (*Rhetoric* 1379b30–31). Instead we are shown Demonax adopting Cynic license (*parrhēsia*) and Socratic techniques of irony to fit his own philosophical style, in which wit is used as a delicate weapon for puncturing the windy self-concepts of his interlocutors.

Thus if Demonax takes Socrates and Diogenes as his models, it is less for the specific content of their philosophies than for their success in expressing philosophical perspectives in highly idiosyncratic comic styles. Like Diogenes or the Socrates of the *Symposium*, Demonax makes of himself a didactic instrument that issues naturally in a comic mode. Every anecdote Lucian tells represents an attempt to preserve and examine distinctive aspects of Demonax's improbable combination of comedy and philosophy. He establishes Demonax's ethos in the only extended *khreia* he recounts, that of Demonax's trial, which serves as a bridge between the introductory narrative (1–10) and the collection of shorter *khreiai*. Demonax's "Apology" shows the sage at a dramatic moment, play-

ing the role assigned to the philosopher-hero by tradition, but easily evading its tragic potential. The repeated allusions to Socrates concentrated in this passage are used to mark differences in their responses to a similar situation, as well as to enhance Demonax's stature and to suggest the injustice of the charges against him. Demonax's freedom of speech and action (*parrhēsia kai eleutheria*) had excited resentment in some quarters, resulting in a trial on religious charges. Unlike Socrates, who sought to refute his accusers and was convicted, Demonax uses humor to disarm the jurors, countering his adversaries' malice with comic insouciance and Cynic logic. Accused of being the only person in the community never to have joined the Eleusinian mysteries, the philosopher's defense is merely to explain his motives: he had never joined because, if the rites were bad, he would dissuade the uninitiated from the cult, while if they were good, he would divulge their secrets to everyone out of his instinctive goodwill (*philanthrōpia*). Ethical criteria override religious scruples and the jurors relent: "The Athenians, who were already poised to stone him, were at once disarmed, and from that time onward paid him honor and respect" (11).

One way to establish the authority of a marginal figure is to pit him against the established authorities, to contrast his ethos with theirs. The Demonax who appears wearing a garland at his own trial in imitation of a sacrificial animal is notably free of any trace of self-seriousness (*alazoneia*). Indeed, he gets into trouble precisely through a failure to take "serious things" seriously, as his casual attitude toward the Eleusinian mysteries shows (11, 34). The words for laughing and smiling appear repeatedly in the stories about him. When asked if he was worried about being eaten by birds and dogs after his death (the nightmare of the epic hero), he replied that he would be glad to be of use (66; cf. 35).[86] When the sophist Favorinus asked him what philosophical school he preferred, he replied, "Who told you I was a philosopher?" (13). This

natural antipathy to taking one's role too seriously leads Demonax to point out embarrassing incongruities to those who abuse the authority of their positions. Thus, when he saw a Spartan beating a slave he remarked drily, "Stop treating him as your equal!" (46). Similarly, when a depilated Roman proconsul was about to punish a Cynic severely for having called him a catamite, Demonax intervened in defense of Cynic license (*parrhēsia*). When the proconsul asked him to propose an alternative punishment for a second offense, Demonax retorted, "Depilate him!" (50). In this exchange the moral authority of the official, sanctioned by law, is deftly appropriated by the philosopher.

Implicit in Demonax's method is Dr. Johnson's advice: "A man should pass a part of his time with the laughers, by which means anything particular or ridiculous might be presented to his view and corrected."[87] Thus most of *Demonax* is devoted to anecdotes that dramatize the philosopher as an interesting example of the seriocomic type, a specialist in the techniques of comic deflation. Demonax's wit is, therefore, usually gently tendentious, but is sometimes purely playful, "wit for its own sake."[88] His forte is not the Cynic harangue or shrewd Socratic questioning, but the one-liner in the style of Diogenes. Much of his humor is verbal and works through puns and wordplay (15, 17, 19, 21, 29, 30, 31, 47–49, 54, 56). His only working assumption, one he shares with Diogenes and Socrates, is that most people he meets are in some sense poseurs. His practice therefore applies Plato's theory (*Philebus* 48–50) that one becomes comic through a lapse in self-knowledge; as though wearing the ring of Gyges with reverse effect, the respect in which the comic figure is risible tends to be invisible to himself.[89] Demonactean wit seeks to expose these blind spots in the self-concepts of his interlocutors by calling attention to the discrepancy between solipsistic fantasies and public realities. For example, when the wealthy sophist Herodes Atticus was ostentatiously mourning the death of his favorite slave, Polydeuces, he continued to have the dead

man's chariot prepared and his dinner served as if he were still alive. When he heard that Demonax had arrived with a message from Polydeuces, Herodes assumed that he was falling in with his pretense like everyone else, but Demonax's message was: "Polydeuces is unhappy with you for not coming to join him at once" (24). Similarly, a muscular Roman soldier who had just given a demonstration of his prowess with the sword on a post asked Demonax what he thought of his swordsmanship: "Excellent—if you have a wooden adversary" (38).

All the prominent qualities of Demonax as he is presented in the anecdotes, the purposeful application of wit, verbal play, and ridicule, his detachment, self-deprecating humor, and aversion to *alazoneia*, correspond to common characteristics of Lucian's varied authorial stances. Demonax uses wit Lucianically to provoke his interlocutors to consider themselves and their situations from unexpected and often incongruous perspectives. The recurring theme of the anecdotes is the philosopher's resistance to deception, particularly self-deception. The most frequent targets of his witticisms are those who arrogate illusory powers and beguile themselves and others with inflated self-images. Of particular significance is Demonax's skepticism, which on several occasions pits him against theorists, prophets, and magicians, the preeminent *alazones* of the day (22, 23, 27). Significantly, the vast majority of his barbs are aimed at sophists, philosophers, and religious figures (12, 14, 19, 25, 28–29, 31, 33, 36, 44, 48, 53, 56), and secondly at representatives of officialdom, wealthy aristocrats, and Roman officers (15, 18, 32, 38, 41, 50, 51).

Although Demonax expresses his admiration for Thersites as a prototypical Cynic (61), Lucian is careful to distinguish his comic style from the noisome abuse of Cynic street preachers in the story of his encounter with the infamous Cynic Peregrinus Proteus. Peregrinus reproaches the jocular Demonax for his lack of seriousness, for his habit of jesting and laughing with everyone (*hoti egela ta polla kai tois anthrōpois*

prosepaize: 21), and accuses him of "not acting like a real Cynic" (*ou kunais*). Alluding to the misanthropic tendencies inherent in the harsher examples of the Cynic style (*kunikos tropos*) and the root meaning of "Cynic" (doglike), Demonax replies simply, *ouk anthrōpizeis*—"you aren't really human." As Sartre argues, echoing Rabelais: "Laughter is proper to man because man is the only animal that takes itself seriously: hilarity denounces false-seriousness in the name of true-seriousness."[90] It is an argument that Lucian and Demonax would obviously have appreciated. In Demonax, Lucian presents the Socratic tradition persisting in an exoteric role in which humor becomes a means of satire and refutation reflecting the discovery of the resources of humor not only as a rhetorical instrument, but also as a source of insight: for "all humor and much intelligence entails an ability to think on two planes at once."[91] *Demonax* is an attempt to show why this is so.

Chapter Two ❧

Fourth-century Attic sculpture of wrestlers. Uffizi.

Agonistic Humors
Lucian and Plato

One uses humor to make people laugh . . . The trouble is it makes them think you aren't being serious. That's the risk you take.
—Philip Larkin

One of the main reasons for recognizing the validity of the concept of universe as an autonomous dimension in semantic theory . . . is the fact that very often we may have identity of context (in the narrow sense of linguistic context), identity of situation, but two normally quite distinct universes, which, whether deliberately or accidentally, have been juxtaposed or superimposed . . . within a single situation and a single linguistic context, two universes collide, and it is this collision that makes many forms of humour possible.
—G. B. Milner, "Towards a Semiotic Theory of Humour and Laughter"

IN HIS self-characterization in *The Double Indictment* Lucian stakes his claim to our attention on his success at reinscribing philosophical dialogue in a variety of comic traditions, taking a form that had become detached from experience and moving it in the direction of a living audience. Among the prime examples of Lucianic dialogue we can distinguish two principal types: those more Old Comic (or Cynic) in conception, in which mythological characters and parodic fantasy play a constitutive role, and those that preserve the naturalistic manner of the Platonic model. To appreciate the gargantuan dimensions of Lucian's boast—to have saved Dialogue from the Academy—we need to put it in context. Plato is arguably the single most influential author in the classical revival of Lucian's time, and interest in him was by no means limited to Platonists

or even to philosophical writers. His dialogues were intensively studied both as rhetoric and as philosophy: "He is surprisingly prominent even among the sophists, in spite of the seemingly unplatonic nature of their pursuits."[1] Authors as different in style and intellectual focus as Plutarch, Galen, Apuleius, and Hermogenes wrote about Plato; "The case for a fairly general firsthand knowledge of Plato is made even stronger by the observation not only that verbal reminiscences of Plato are fairly common in second century writers, but that many of them are unlabelled . . . we are expected to recognize a Platonic tag when we hear one. This practice makes heavy demands on the audience."[2] Lucian himself reflects the current fascination with Plato. Of the dozens of authors he appropriates in various fashions only Homer is quoted more frequently, and Plato is obviously more important than Homer both for linguistic style and for literary strategies.[3] Hence, assessing Lucian's claim to have "modernized" Plato[4] is significant not only for an evaluation of his accomplishment but also as an example of the way in which culturally prestigious classical authors, by then almost five hundred years old, could be adapted and transformed in the Greek renaissance of the second century.

Plato might have been surprised to hear Lucian claim such originality for the comic-philosophic dialogue. Humor is hardly incidental to his own literary practice. If Lucian's claim has any content, it has to mean that he has reconceptualized the form, not merely diluted its abstruse elements. Hence, Platonic dialogue would not be the only philosophically significant form of dialogue developed in antiquity, as it is often taken to be. But what is the purpose of separating the dialogue from Platonism? How does Lucian avail himself of certain aspects of Platonic practice while pursuing distinctive ends? More important, how is the relation between the role of humor and the philosophical point of using dialogue affected? To answer these questions it is necessary to specify the ways in

which Plato produced humor and the rhetorical purposes to which he put it.

Plato as Satirist

Socrates: *Have you noticed that many people are laughably incompetent at what they do professionally?*
—Euthydemus *307b*

To canvass all the forms of humor in Plato would obviously exceed the limits of this inquiry, and fortunately it is not necessary. One work, the *Euthydemus*, stands out from Plato's corpus for its extensive use of humor and exemplifies its principal rhetorical functions in the dialogues. In theory Plato recognized only the one source of humor that he analyzes in the *Philebus*. It is not coincidental that this is the form of humor that Socratic dialogue is uniquely suited to produce. Plato was keenly aware that public argument is always potentially comic because each participant continually runs the risk of making himself ridiculous (*geloios*) by accidentally slipping over the limits of his own powers of reasoning. It is the purpose of Socratic refutation (*elegkhos*) to produce just such an outcome by revealing the contradictions latent in an interlocutor's initial position. If Plato sees humor in general as the product of an inflated self-image (*alazoneia*), it is only the expression of an underlying error in self-knowledge, a contradiction between perception and reality when the object perceived is oneself. The humor characteristic of such Socratic interlocutors as Ion and Euthyphro derives principally from this source, which is for Plato both cognitive and ethical, and which is pointedly contrasted with the wily self-consciousness of Socratic irony. Thus, while Plato is always concerned to show how erroneous arguments reflect erroneous self-concepts, he also dramatizes humor of a more strictly intellec-

tual kind in the very process of argument and refutation itself, in the clash of mutually incompatible languages. This "dialectical humor" differs from the humor of character in that it is produced by the confrontation of alien perspectives rather than by the presentation of personality. In the *Euthydemus* both types of humor form conspicuous parts of a coherent rhetorical strategy that is itself concerned with the problem of refutation as entertainment.[5]

For Plato, the problem posed by sophistic refutations is that the entertainment they afford might appear to many as very much the same kind of comic putdown provided by Socrates in his conversations with those who claim to know. Logic-chopping is not unique to the sophists. The situation is complicated by the fact that while sophists such as Dionysodorus and Euthydemus may have turned the act of refutation into a kind of epideictic entertainment, their methods raise questions about the possibility of false statement (284c) and contradiction (286b–e) that Plato found sufficiently problematic to examine at length in the *Sophist*. Their performance skillfully exploits the puzzles of contemporary logic in an attempted demonstration of the cornerstone of sophistic thought, that either side of any question can be argued with equal success (272a–b), an idea well illustrated by a sophistic treatise appropriately entitled *Dissoi Logoi* (*Double Arguments*), which consists of pairs of mutually contradictory arguments. On this model, "truth" is nothing more than a rhetorical effect.[6] It is the disturbing potential thus created for undermining the legitimacy of philosophical discourse as Plato conceived it (304d–306d), by confusing Socratic with sophistic procedures, that motivates the dialogue and determines both its singular form and the crucial rhetorical role played by subversive forms of humor.

The *Euthydemus* is the only Platonic dialogue in which exchanges that shift among alternating participants (Socrates, Cleinias, Ctesippus/the sophists, and Socrates/Cleinias) are

framed and periodically interrupted by dialogue between an auditor (Crito) and narrator (Socrates). This unusual form is fashioned for purposes peculiar to the *Euthydemus*. It allows Plato to subordinate the encounter with the sophists to an inner, reported dialogue in which their methods and Socrates' can be pointedly juxtaposed while keeping the audience and Socrates, as narrator, above the ludicrous fray. It thus permits us to view their act at one remove, with the detachment conducive to a comic presentation. Moreover, Socrates, as interlocutor in the inner dialogue and narrator in the frame, is even more completely in control of the dialogue than usual. The *Euthydemus* differs markedly from Plato's usual practice in that Socrates cannot actually control the process of refutation, since the sophists do not adhere consistently to the same rules of argument. Unlike most of his interlocutors, therefore, they cannot be refuted on their own terms and yet are more than willing to argue. The frame is Plato's way of subordinating their irrefutable performance to a larger thematic structure. In the inner dialogue they and their methods can be savagely caricatured even if not refuted, while the outer dialogue can establish a rational, that is, Socratic frame in which to assess the demonstration of sophistry. The Socratic frame is a satiric device for distancing and defining a target. It is used to ensure that the reader does not regard the act as redounding to the sophists' credit, as the audience in the inner dialogue evidently does when it applauds them enthusiastically (303b).[7]

Applause is an appropriate response to entertainment but not, usually, to philosophical inquiry. This is precisely Plato's point. He wishes to devalue the sophists as rival practitioners of philosophy by continually contrasting their performance, as a novel kind of entertainment or combative sport (277e; 278b–d; 283b; 288b–d), with Socrates' attempt to engage Cleinias in more properly Platonic forms of inquiry. His satiric derogation of the sophists works through a sequence of comic meta-

phors that induce us to see them throughout the dialogue in ludicrous and inapposite roles combining frivolity and aggression. Sophistry was still a new intellectual commodity being marketed as a form of expertise that rivaled Plato's own. Plato seeks to subvert the seriousness of the sophists' claim to expertise by systematically presenting them in terms of more familiar pursuits lacking in any intellectual value. Each comic conceit is carefully constructed to highlight some unflattering aspect of sophistry. The dominant metaphor is martial. Socrates introduces the sophists as experts in battle who began their careers by giving instruction in how to fight at arms and have now applied their belligerent skills to words, enabling them to promise their pupils victory in the courts as well as on the battlefield. He dubs this adaptable "science" the "pancratic art," the art of winning, to suggest their belief that the only point of an argument, like a battle, is victory (272a). Similarly, as the sophists aim to entertain and mystify their audience, they are likened to dancers, directors, and leaders of the corybantic rites (276d; 276b; 277d–e). Since their "pupils" are treated more like victims, opponents, or prey, the sophistic teachers are likened to practical jokers, wrestlers, and hunters (218b; 277c; 295d; 302b).[8]

Plato's use of comic conceits in which notorious aspects of doctrine are reflected in the behavior of the philosophers themselves neatly inverts the idea that philosophical views reflect the character of those who advocate them. It is characteristic of Plato's comic technique to present thinkers as personified expressions of their theories, as comic instantiations of their own dominant ideas. In the *Theaetetus,* for example, Socrates refers to a group of Heraclitean philosophers who cannot stay still long enough to pursue a conversation: they are literally in perpetual motion (179e–180a). Plato's satiric metaphors for the sophists Dionysodorus and Euthydemus work in the same way by rendering epistemological and moral issues in literal

and physical terms.[9] As pancratists they embody their view of philosophy as verbal polemics. The ludicrous effect of such comparisons serves the satiric purpose of robbing the target of any claim to serious attention.

The funniest comic device in Plato's presentation of character in the *Euthydemus* is also the most pointed satirically: Plato compounds the humor of the controlling metaphors for sophistry by doubling the role of sophist. After all, the same argumentative ground could be covered with a single opponent. But Plato dramatizes a pair of brother sophists as if they were a team of mischievous acrobats working in tandem in order to present a physical expression of the duplicitous contortions of sophistry. Unlike other interlocutors, one must argue with the two of them simultaneously: when an opportune word falls out of Euthydemus' mouth, Dionysodorus catches it "like a ball" and "aims it" (*estokhazeto:* 277b) at their opponent. If the arguments of Euthydemus falter, Dionysodorus fills in, and vice versa. Plato emphasizes the virtual identity of the sophists by consistently referring to them in the dual (which is rare in Attic and normally used of symmetrical sets, like a pair of hands or eyes). Just as the sophists' teamwork aptly reflects their view of discourse as a competitive game, so their duality comically embodies the sophistic idea of truth as expressed in paired opposites, as literally amphibolous; thus Plato has made the sophists themselves as interchangeable as are philosophic positions on their view. Since for their purposes one side of an issue is as good as another, the sophistic advocates are made similarly replaceable, as rhetorical gymnasts equally skilled at the game of refutation using the same formulaic arguments and "moves" to knock out any challenger. The double-edged eristic methods of the *Dissoi Logoi*, with its implicit denial of the principle of noncontradiction, could scarcely find juster representation than in a symmetrical pair of professional logomachists—the *dissoi*

philosophoi.[10] Plato turns the sophists into a team of rhetorical athletes as a metaphorical expression of the trivialization of discourse that sophistic technique implies.

The subversive humor enabled by the frame and produced by comic conceits and the doubling of the sophists is meant to make the central point of the dialogue, the contrast between sophistic and Socratic procedure, too obvious to require argument. The ethos[11] of Socratic irony in this context is unambiguously satiric: Socrates' feigned interest in enrolling as a student with the sophists, like his wry comparison of their impatience with his stupidity to that of his cithara teacher, Connus, only forces on our attention the absurdity produced by treating the sophists as what they claim to be, teachers (272; 295d; 304c). But the play of humor in the *Euthydemus* is not limited to satiric images of the sophists as social and intellectual anomalies. The arguments between the sophists and their interlocutors are often absurdly funny examples of dialectical humor, but what makes them so? And what is the philosophical point of these comic exchanges? Why do they form the dominant element in Plato's satiric rendition of sophistic technique?

While performing the act of refutation, the sophists Dionysodorus and Euthydemus speak an artificial language, or *Kunstsprache*, in which the observance of certain conventions of usage that regulate the equivocal and ambiguous use of terms has been deliberately suspended: this is their professional tongue. Aristotle attempts a systematic account of its conventions in his treatise *Sophistic Refutations*, but that was written at least a generation after the *Euthydemus*. The sophists of Plato's time capitalized on the fact that only a few points of accepted usage need to be ignored to generate monstrous paradoxes, such as that "there is no falsehood" and "everyone knows everything." The humor of the argumentative exchanges of the *Euthydemus* is produced by the sophists' attempt to foist their professional idiolect on unsuspecting interlocutors as if it were the common tongue. The intent of Plato's satiric repre-

sentation of sophistry is to expose their argumentative techniques as an abuse of language, while both acknowledging and dispelling the impression of a similarity between sophistic and Socratic procedures.

Plato structures the argumentative exchanges with the sophists into three distinct stages in which the absurdity of the proofs becomes increasingly flagrant (275d–277c; 283b–288d; 293a–303a). The first series of arguments with the sophists hinges merely on a facile equivocation with the verb "to learn." By the conclusion of the final set the sophists are "proving" that "Socrates can sacrifice his gods." What makes these extremely paradoxical arguments funny is not simply the fact that they depart so sharply from rational norms; it is also that the sophists not only recognize their counterintuitive status but insist on it, seeking through verbal ambiguities to force their audience to affirm absurdities as logically valid. This creates a hilarious discrepancy between the sophists' eager athletic manner and the comic matter of their claims and accentuates the underlying disparity between the sophistic play with language and the ordinary usage of their unsuspecting interlocutors. More significantly, Plato presents the sophists' attempted refutations as a caricature of Socratic discourse and thus uses them to develop the principal satiric concept of the dialogue: the contrast between the serious Socratic philosopher and the eristic jester as rival claimants to a single kind of expertise. Normally, there is some humor in the fact that Socrates is able to draw from his interlocutor's own assertions logical inferences which had never dawned on the interlocutor himself and which conflict with his original position: this is, of course, the process of Socratic refutation (*elegkhos*). But in eristic discourse the inferences and conclusions drawn from the carefully elicited assertions of the interlocutor conflict not only with his own beliefs but also with the rational and linguistic norms shared by the audience, Socrates, and the reader. The very feature that makes Socrates' conversations

humorous, whereby the interlocutor is led to discover that his conscious beliefs entail contradictions, is carried by the sophists' illogic to farcical extremes: they can make any statement appear to yield a contradiction.[12] Their performance is presented, therefore, as a comically deviant version of recognizably Socratic procedures (cf. *Sophist* 231b).

Specifically the sophists' method is to construct traplike arguments out of verbal ploys that serve as logical banana peels for the victim of the farce. The actual refutation of an interlocutor works exactly like a punch line to which the immediate audience can respond appropriately with laughter and cheers (276b–d, 303b). Thus, their typical "argument" resembles the type of joke that depends on our taking a word in one sense, which then turns out to be used in another, incompatible sense. The auditor of a joke of this kind plays the same role as the refuted interlocutor in an exchange with the equivocating sophists. Their aim is to use the technique of equivocation to reduce the interlocutor to choosing between apparent self-contradiction—the claim to be both "knowing" and "not knowing"—or paradox—the claim to be "knowing" absolutely (293b–294a).[13]

The comic texture of the argumentative exchanges is elusive, but Plato succeeds in evoking the topsy-turvy quality of the sophists' linguistic performance as a kind of nonsense humor, not simply as a faulty method of proof, but as a frontal assault on the audience's commonsense notions of language and reality, comically dressed up in the trappings of logical rigor. The greater the gap between the sophists' tactics and the common sense of the interlocutor, the funnier the exchange. Thus, the best examples of dialectical humor occur when the sophists are pressed by Socrates into abandoning any pretense to reason and reveal their methods for what they are; at these moments the sophistic abuse of language that enables the brothers to perform their logical maneuvers at the expense of the average interlocutor is comically exposed. For example, at

one point Socrates tries to show the incoherence of the sophists' "proofs," that he and everyone know everything and always have (293b–296e), by asking Dionysodorus how one can know that good men are unjust, an apparently self-contradictory statement. Just as Dionysodorus is about to concede Socrates' point, Euthydemus interrupts him and reproaches him for muffing the refutation. Of course, this implies that Dionysodorus was mistaken and hence that error is possible, which the sophists have already denied. So Socrates takes aim at Euthydemus: "Do you think your brother who knows everything is not right?" (297b). But just when we think Socrates has caught the sophists out, Dionysodorus turns the tables on him by refusing to accept the factual content of the question: "Am I Euthydemus' brother?" he asks, presumably with a grin on his face, since he is capable of "proving" that he is both everyone's and no one's brother (cf. 297d–298d).

Socrates' attempt to get a grip on the sophists fails comically because the two parties do not attach the same reality to words; there is nothing stable within the sophists' linguistic world: any assertion and its contrary are potentially "true." Hence there is no possibility of refutation or real proof either. It is the deliberate extremity of the sophists' stance that makes their confrontation with Socrates so peculiar an example of the comedy of cognitive incongruity—of humorous failures of two parties to grasp the meaning of each other's words, to pin down precisely what the other means, to find a common tongue. It is peculiar because one party to the argument, the sophists, deliberately uses language in a way that precludes the very possibility of significant discourse and tries with specious logic to compel the interlocutor to assent to the paradoxical contentions that this usage enables. But it is just this intellectual effrontery that makes the sophists genuinely funny rather than merely asinine: they are unfazed by the absurdity of their own utterances, as if intoxicated by the suspension of ordinary rules of thought. Their almost quixotic indifference

to the constraints of common sense results directly from their characteristic working assumption that, contrary to common belief, anything can be proved true.

The conflict between two distinct linguistic worlds, between the ordinary usage of the interlocutors and the sophistic, indeed solipsistic, idiolect of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, makes the dialogue a comedy of incompatible languages and in so doing replicates in exaggerated form the comic tendencies of Socratic dialogue. For as long as their fallacies go undetected, the sophists' performance, like a Socratic interrogation, poses a disconcerting affront to the audience's commonsense assumptions. The clash between sophistic and ordinary usage places the audience, like the Socratic interlocutor, in an intellectually untenable position: they know the sophists have not persuaded them, but they cannot say exactly why they are wrong (cf. *Gorgias* 513c). Both parties seem to be speaking the same language, but it does not behave in the same way for each, because the sophists' standard technique is to ignore the conventional or intended sense of a word or phrase in order to entrap the interlocutor in paradox. This is of course what invalidates their procedure and makes it a caricature of Socratic practice rather than a "serious" rival. But if it were not a potential rival and perceived by some, such as the anonymous observer described in the concluding section (Isocrates?: 304d–305a), as proof of the pointlessness of philosophical discourse, Plato would hardly have bothered to compose so elaborate and tendentious a satire on its practitioners. The final argumentative exchange illustrates the dialogue's satiric tendency in a comically reduced form: Ctesippus shouts "Bravo, Heracles! [*Puppax O Herakleis*]—what a fine argument!" in sarcastic approval of Euthydemus' just-completed "refutation" of Socrates. Not about to let him get away with this dismissal of their performance, Dionysodorus pops up and asks if he means "Heracles is bravo [*puppax*]" or that "bravo [*puppax*] is Heracles." In the

face of such shrewd arguments (*deinoi logoi*) Ctesippus surrenders to the "invincible duo" while the audience roars with laughter (303a).

Plato's portrait of the sophistic brothers voluntarily cut off from public reality through their immersion in sophistic discourse is not unlike that of the philosopher whom Bergson describes as "an out and out arguer" who, when it was suggested "that his arguments though irreproachable in their deductions, had experience against them . . . put an end to the discussion by merely remarking 'Experience is in the wrong.' "[14] Plato uses their performance less as a demonstration of the penchant in argument for error, when methods go unexamined, than of the comic isolation that results from substituting for ordinary language a kind of professional tongue that can be used to mystify an audience and inflate its users' image precisely because it is fully intelligible only to initiates, or to quick learners like Socrates. The artificiality of the sophists' linguistic isolation makes the resulting humor unlike otherwise similar forms found in farce or serious drama in which the irreducible gap between private mental worlds is bridged only sporadically by language. Plato highlights the artificiality of sophistic usage precisely to reflect the gratuitous isolation of its practitioners from the common understanding. He presents their hypersophisticated play with language as ultimately frivolous, as much for social as for epistemological reasons: it privatizes discourse, insulating its users from the larger community of speech. Socrates is attacking just this feature of the sophists' specialized form of rhetoric when he recommends that they save their refutations for an audience capable of appreciating them—one composed of fellow sophists (303c). Thus, Plato uses the sophists to illustrate a more general point about the self-limiting nature of specialized forms of discourse that make sense only to those who fabricate and use them.

In the *Euthydemus*, then, the two primary forms of humor, those of character and argument, work, like the sophists, in

tandem against a common opponent. The tendency of the dialectical humor of the arguments is to redirect the laughter from its usual target, the refuted interlocutor, to the sophists themselves, and so embodies dramatically the critical point of Socrates' characterization of the sophists in the narrative frame as comic reflections of their approach to philosophy. Socrates the narrator emphasizes this point when he says it is more shameful to refute than to be refuted by such arguments (303d). Plato's satiric representation of sophistry thus seeks to subvert its claim to legitimacy by presenting its practitioners as bumptious charlatans whose arguments are jokes and whose working assumptions are nonsense. Humor is not instrumental to these argumentative aims; it constitutes them: for in laughing at the sophists we are accepting Plato's polemical assessment and participating in a rhetorical rebuke to his professional adversaries. Adorno[15] would recognize the strategy in which humor becomes an effective substitute for argument.

While the extent and ethos of the humor in the *Euthydemus* are exceptional, its sources typify Platonic practice, as does its rhetorical function, which subordinates the humor itself to the presentation of the Socratic ideal of the philosopher and philosophical discourse. There is in fact very little humor in Plato that is not tendentious; Socratic irony, dialectical humor, and comic conceits are used to bring the Socratic model into sharper focus by ridicule or humorous subversion of what may rival or be confused with it. The rhetoric of humor in Plato is carefully integrated with the thematic effect of the refutations—even when Socrates is "refuted": to present Socratic practice as forcefully as possible as the standard of rational discourse and thus as uniquely serious and deserving of our attention. As Socrates himself says in conclusion: "My dear Crito, are you not aware that in every field the no-accounts [*phauloi*] are numerous and worthless, whereas those worth taking seriously [*spoudaioi*] are rare and priceless?" (307a).

Lucianic Dialogue

It is clear that there are certain broad similarities in the ways in which Lucian and Plato make their dramatized conversations comic. Just as the dialectical humor of a Platonic dialogue such as the *Euthydemus* derives from Plato's manner of presenting a language gap, so much of the humor of Lucian's dialogues is generated by the staging of imaginary encounters between interlocutors whose lack of a shared language inhibits mutual comprehension: their struggle to overcome the barrier is the comic spring of the work as well as its intellectual focus. The differences between Plato and Lucian lie in the nature of the barriers separating their interlocutors and in the chosen means of attempting to overcome them. Unlike Plato, Lucian does not confine his dialogues to systematic contrasts between a rational, self-conscious use of language exemplified by Socrates and that of a variety of sophistic or naive interlocutors representing conversations of a kind that could in fact have taken place. Nor is his aim to delineate more persuasively the qualities of Socratic or some other favored form of inquiry. Instead, he is just as likely to present conversations that in the nature of things could not take place in order to evoke a recognition of the incongruous multiplicity of literary styles, stances, and genres that Greek culture had accumulated over the centuries dividing his audience from Homer: it is the gaps between dominant traditions that form the locus of Lucianic dialogue.

The comic confrontation of alien traditions stands out most conspicuously in the mythological dialogues in which Lucian interfaces the discontinuous perspectives of myth and philosophy. In *Zeus Refuted*, for example, the father of men and gods submits to interrogation by Cyniscus ("little Cynic"), who uses the argumentative methods supplied by his own, ultimately Socratic, tradition to refute the son of Cronus. The humor stems from the unlikely meeting of Zeus's "mythy

mind," embarrassingly incompetent at offering a coherent account of its world, with the modern, skeptical intelligence of the Cynic—an encounter between representatives of two radically different universes of discourse. Their meeting, like so many others in Lucian, is an exchange less between characters conceived as individuals or professional types, like Plato's characters, than between characterizations—or caricatures—of traditions[16] that had evolved in utterly different circumstances but were all now gathered into the canon of Greek literature in which Lucian and his literate contemporaries were trained. Lucian's real subject in the dialogues is the disconcerting babel of incompatible traditions that marks the post-classical form of Hellenic culture in the empire.[17]

While the use of mythological characters facilitates the comic collision of "two normally quite distinct universes," the underlying technique is not unique to the mythological dialogues. This calculated contrast of incongruous perspectives also characterizes certain works of Lucian that deploy historical or fictional characters in Platonic settings. But unlike Platonic dialogue, in which the humor is systematically subordinated to the presentation of an ideal, a model of discourse that can be used to critique rival philosophical and cultural models, Lucian's technique is to take a subject idealized by tradition—such as the philosopher as an intellectual ideal (*Hermotimus*) or the practice of athletics as a social institution (*Anacharsis*)—and expose it to comic interrogation from a point of view alien to the relevant tradition.

Anacharsis: Concerning Athletics is a masterly demonstration of Lucian's conception of dialectical humor. While the meeting of legendary but antipathetic figures (such as Diogenes and Alexander, Menippus and Teiresias) is a tactic familiar from the *Dialogues of the Dead*, in the *Anacharsis* Lucian does not choose to avail himself of the universal setting of Hades where any meeting is conceivable. Instead he places his discussion of the value of Greek cultural traditions in the

Lyceum, a specifically Attic setting used by Plato in such dialogues as the *Lysis* and the *Euthydemus*. This choice of setting reflects the tradition (also preserved by Plutarch) that the archaic sages had in fact met in Solon's Athens (sixth century B.C.) and, more important, by suggesting a complicity with contemporary classicism, forms an ironic counterpoint to the content of their conversation. For instead of exploiting its prestigious cultural associations as a literary backdrop for a celebration of Athenian traditions in the style of the time, Lucian makes this local shrine, complete with a statue of Apollo (7), the immediate cause of a discussion that turns on the limits of the very traditions the Lyceum represents; the dialogue achieves its effects by accentuating the cultural barriers that separate Athens' would-be encomiast (Solon) from his intended audience (Anacharsis).

The key to Lucian's satiric strategy is the character of Anacharsis, an exemplary combination of tradition and Lucianic invention. He is presented in the text as a nomadic tribesman who lives on his wagon and has only recently arrived in Athens from his own violent and lawless part of the world (18, 34), once associated with such barbarous practices as cannibalism and human sacrifice (cf. Herodotus 4.62–65, 106; *Dissoi Logoi* 2.13). Yet by Lucian's time he had long been ranked among the legendary wise men of ancient Greece, like his Athenian interlocutor. As the outsider who has become a figure of cultural authority he combines the conflicting ideas of "barbarism" and "Hellenic" wisdom. Both aspects are emphasized by Lucian (14, 17–18): Anacharsis is one of those paradoxical figures, like Demonax or Socrates, whose peculiar perspective sets him at odds with the norm while giving rise to an equally eccentric form of insight and authority. These characters are satyrlike, as Alcibiades says of Socrates, in that they were regarded as not entirely civilized and, precisely for this reason, as free of certain conventional ways of seeing and thinking: they are liminal figures who are in society but not of it.[18]

A significant tension between the ingenuous barbarian,

Anacharsis, and the cultured Athenian, Solon, is already present in the tradition that Plutarch reports of their first meeting: upon his arrival in Athens, Anacharsis went straight to Solon's house, knocked on his door, and announced that he had come "to establish ties of friendship and hospitality with him" (*Solon* 5). When Solon replied inhospitably that it was better to make one's friends at home, Anacharsis retorted, "then since you're at home, make me your friend and guest" (cf. *Demonax* 63). Impressed by his wit (*agkhinoia*), Solon received him as a guest (cf. Diogenes Laertius 1.102). Here Anacharsis' impetuous style is reminiscent of the *parrhēsia* practiced by Demonax and Parrhesiades. In fact, Diogenes Laertius remarks that Anacharsis was so given to *parrhēsia* that he gave rise to the proverb "to speak like a Scythian," meaning "to speak one's mind." In two other anecdotes of Plutarch, Anacharsis comes off as a skeptical critic of Solon and Greek society: he compared Solon's famous legislative reforms to "spiders' webs" that would succeed in restraining only the weaker citizens (cf. *Demonax* 59). Plutarch observes that events revealed the truth of Anacharsis' comparison. Similarly, after attending the Athenian assembly, Anacharsis expressed his astonishment at finding that among the Greeks, wise men (*hoi sophoi*) make the speeches but fools (*hoi amatheis*) make the decisions (*Solon* 5; D.L. 1.103).

Seen through this tradition Anacharsis appears as the perspicacious outsider, oblivious to social formalities and wryly skeptical about the efficacy of law and civil institutions. If this critical stance toward convention (*nomos*) is not itself the result of Cynic tampering with the legend, it would suggest why Anacharsis could plausibly be associated with certain Cynic attitudes.[19] But another sharply contrasting aspect of the Anacharsis legend is recorded by Herodotus, according to whom Anacharsis was no critic of Greek society but an enthusiastic philhellene who came to Greece to study its institutions and was killed in the process of trying to import a

Greek rite to his native Scythia (Herodotus 4.76–77; cf. D.L. 1.102, 105). Both aspects of Anacharsis are aptly reflected in the tradition reported by Diogenes Laertius that he was bilingual, born of a Greek mother and a Scythian king (1.101).[20] The marked ambivalence of Anacharsis' attitude toward the Greeks, suggested by these conflicting traditions, is again distinctly reminiscent of Demonax, who is described as "everyone's friend" (*Demonax* 10) in Athens but is invariably shown criticizing whomever he encounters and is brought to trial for neither sacrificing nor joining the mysteries (11)—that is, for insisting on standing outside the community. The famous dictum that Aristotle attributes to Anacharsis, "Play in order to be serious" (*paizein d'hopōs spoudazēi: Nicomachean Ethics* 1176b33–34), epitomizes the Januslike character of the Anacharsis legend. Is this the "Cynic" Anacharsis asserting that play must always have some practical application, as Aristotle suggests, thus implicitly criticizing the Greeks for their excessive cultivation of play for its own sake much as he does in the *Anacharsis?* Or does it display a more profound and very Greek appreciation of the serious element in "play," such as Plato shows in a famous passage in the *Laws* (803)? Lucian's portrait includes both these traditional aspects of Anacharsis: the practical-minded down-to-earth critic of Greek cultural conventions and the philhellenic student of the Greeks and their peculiar customs.

Lucian's Solon is just the obverse of this quizzically ambiguous outsider.[21] As the personification of autochthonous Athenian culture (18), he represents one aspect of imperial Athens' idealized self-image: radiating confidence in the superiority of the society whose laws he wrote, he is more than pleased to initiate the benighted nomad in the ideology of Hellenic values through an explication of that quintessentially Greek institution, the gymnasium. Lucian's Solon breathes the air of the Second Sophistic.[22]

Given the centrality of athletics to traditional Greek ed-

ucational and cultural ideals, it is not surprising that the value of athletic training and the nature of athletic excellence are recurring themes in the literature of the Greek renaissance of the second century. As H. I. Marrou observes, "in our day, it is the school, letters, that we automatically associate with the word 'education'; for the Greek, it was first, and long remained, the palaestra and the gymnasium, where the child and adolescent were trained in sports."[23] Hence the enthusiasm for athletics, evident in works such as Philostratus' *Gymnasticus* and Dio Chrysostom's pieces on the boxer Melancomas (*Orations* 28–29), is perfectly consonant with the traditionalism of the time. These works are interesting precisely because they give us some sense for the kind of reception that more conventional treatments of the subject could expect from their audience. Philostratus regards the value of athletics as self-evident and seeks to defend its status as an art (*tekhnē*), describing its history and basic principles in order to promote its proper cultivation. While Dio's treatment of the gentle boxer, Melancomas, is less programmatic in its aims, he uses the occasion of the boxer's death to construct an image of the athlete as an ethical ideal. Athletics, he argues, is "the most noble and difficult of pursuits" (29.9), demonstrating an excellence superior even to martial virtue: "There is scope for courage alone in warfare whereas athletics produces courage, physical strength and self-control simultaneously" (29.9; cf. 29.15). That this attitude does not merely reflect imperial rhetoricians' penchant for hyperbole is suggested by an inscription (from the early third century A.D.) commending a local Olympic victor, named Achilles, as the embodiment "of all existing spiritual and physical excellence."[24]

While this conception of athletics as a quasi-heroic endeavor reflects profoundly traditional thinking on the subject going back to Pindar and Homer (cf. D. Chrys. *Orations* 29.14), Lucian and much of his audience would also have been familiar with a rival tradition sharply critical of the honored role of

the athlete in Greek society.[25] The polymath Athenaeus (second century A.D.) cites similar passages of Xenophanes and Euripides in which "the whole institution [*eidos*] of athletics" is denounced as pointless and unprofitable:

> Of all the countless evils besetting Greece, there is none worse than the tribe of athletes: first, they don't learn to live well, nor could they; for how could anyone, enslaved to his jaw, mastered by his belly, surpass his father's accomplishments? . . . I see no point to the Greek custom of holding assemblies for their sake and honoring them with the pleasures of a feast. What good to his country is a man who wins a crown for wrestling well, running swiftly, hurling a discus, or throwing a good punch? Will they fight the enemy with discus in hand or penetrate a line of shields to box the enemy from their land . . . ? We must, I think, crown wise and good men with garlands and whoever, being sober and just, considers what is best for the city. (Euripides, *Autolycus;* Athenaeus 413c–f)

The position that first appears in Xenophanes and Euripides is later elaborated by philosophers, rhetoricians, and diatribists who argue not only that athletes are given far greater honors than their real accomplishments merit (e.g., Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 1–2), but also that the practice of athletics develops the body at the expense of the mind, producing something short of the classical ideal. As Lucian's contemporary Galen observes: "That athletes have never shared in even a dream of mental blessings is clear to anyone . . . their mode of life resembles that of swine, but with this exception, that swine do not overexercise or force themselves to eat."[26] The great physician proceeds to argue that athletics confers neither health, beauty, nor strength on the athletes themselves, is of no use to the community, nor the source of any pleasure worth pursuing. His critique provides a trenchant summary of the intel-

lectual opposition to the cult of the gymnasium: he would exclude it altogether from the liberal arts.

From Xenophanes to Galen there is more at stake in the quarrel over athletics than professional rivalries or the professionalization of sport: it is a centuries-old debate over the relevance of an aging cultural ideal, over what deserves to be admired and what is worth pursuing. Instead of simply rehearsing the dispute between the two traditional positions, Lucian sets the debate on a new footing by introducing a character innocent of the whole matter who is encountering for the first time a group of athletes at their exercises and is bewildered by what he sees. Through the estranging device of Anacharsis' uninformed glance Lucian makes the sight of Greeks exercising a matter of renewed curiosity and puzzlement for a second-century audience. Lucian's technique in the dialogue is therefore characteristic of his literary practice: by imagining Anacharsis questioning Solon on the purpose of an ancient and uniquely Greek institution, he brings two highly traditional but incongruous points of view into collision in order to show both in a new and comic context. The effect is to call into question the assumptions underlying either position by exposing both to the point of view they necessarily exclude.

Like Plato, Lucian usually begins his dramatic dialogues with enough introductory material to set the scene for the exchange that follows.[27] It is important, however, for the critical effect of Anacharsis' humorous queries that they be posed unexpectedly, without any such introduction. Thus Anacharsis opens the dialogue by confronting us immediately with a teleological question: "Why are your young men acting this way, Solon?" His question calls attention to the fact that we in the audience are not in a position to know what these young men are actually doing until Anacharsis describes them to us. But when he describes them, we are made aware of the difference between what he sees and what we, as Greeks,

would infer he is looking at: "Some of the young men are tangled up together and tripping each other while others are squeezing and twisting each other and are mixed up in the mud, rolling around like pigs" (1). Not surprisingly Anacharsis finds this behavior all the more peculiar since the same young men who just a moment before were anointing each other quite peaceably (*mala eirēnikōs*) have now suddenly bent over and dashed their foreheads together like a pair of rams (*hōsper hoi krioi*). He then looks on in amazement as one youth proceeds to smash another into the mud and strangle him (*agkhei athlion*). Anacharsis plausibly interprets the victim's desperate attempt to break his opponent's grip (by striking his shoulders) as a form of supplication (*hiketeuōn oimai*). Throughout this passage Lucian avoids the standard sporting idiom (such as *sphallō*, "to throw an opponent") and intersperses words with alien associations such as *sunanaphurō*, which may also be appropriated to a sexual context (cf. *Saturnalia* 23), or *sunarattō*, which is normally used of banging together inanimate objects or of fatal military encounters. Thus, in his innocence Anacharsis interprets the scene in oddly inappropriate physical images such as dashing, strangling, or wallowing (*sunarattō, agkhō, sunanaphurō*) as it might appear to an observer unaware of the rules and motives of the athletes' rituals, which alone differentiate their conduct from that of the rams, pigs, and assassins to which they are compared.[28]

After witnessing the bizarre activities at the palaestra (the names of which he has yet to learn), Anacharsis declares that no one could easily convince him that these young men are not out of their minds (*hōs ou parapaiousin hoi tauta drōntes:* 5). Thus Lucian uses Anacharsis' comic bewilderment and naive vocabulary in this opening scene to establish what is otherwise inaccessible to his Greek audience—a culturally uninformed perspective from which to view a highly conventional form of behavior, one that is governed by its conformity to certain positive rules and by its role in a larger educational and social

context that conditions an insider's interpretation of its character. It is precisely the fact that Anacharsis is oblivious to the conventional character of the activities he is observing that allows him to see them as "mad" rather than, like Solon, as a rational expression of the social order (14). His point of view is at once amusing and persuasive and yet somehow, at least to an Athenian like Solon, not merely foreign but wrong. It is to produce this perspectival conflict between Solon and Anacharsis and between Anacharsis and Lucian's Greek audience that Lucian presents him describing the athletes unmediated by any explanatory context, thus showing us the scene first through Scythian eyes, unencumbered with the familiar associations that would automatically impede our seeing it from his "imported" perspective.

If the establishment of excluded, neglected, or alien perspectives is fundamental to Lucian's satiric strategies in the dialogues, indeed, to the creation of Lucianic dialogue itself, it is worth analyzing exactly how he uses them. The exchange between Anacharsis and Solon exemplifies Lucianic practice only because it does not present merely a disagreement—as if any dramatized differences of opinion were a "dialogue"—but a difference of perspective as embodied in distinct traditions and reflected in specific "universes of discourse" or languages. Accordingly, the humor of the dialogue depends precisely on the convincing evocation of perspectives that do not—that cannot—mesh. The argument hinges not on a disagreement about what Anacharsis actually sees but about the validity of competing perspectives. The crucial question posed by this competition is what language most accurately describes the scene, that of Athenian educational and social customs as eulogized by Solon, or the culturally more neutral but perhaps reductive or distorting tongue of Anacharsis, which simply renders the scene visible, divesting it of any alleged purpose or value in a larger context. There are some values that no uninformed gaze can detect or visual appearance embody: So-

lon's comic task is to convey these intangibles to his commonsensical guest, and thereby bridge the discrepancy between Athenian and Scythian viewpoints.[29]

Solon begins this improbable undertaking by cheerfully informing Anacharsis that his initial aversion to athletic bouts is merely the result of lack of familiarity with them quite understandable in a foreigner: if he stays in Greece, he too will soon be covered in mud or dust (*autos esēi tōn pepēlōmenōn ē kekonimenōn:* 6) and even learn to regard the practice as both pleasant and useful (*hēdu te hama kai lusiteles:* 6). While Solon assumes the Scythian's response merely reveals his ignorance of Hellas, Anacharsis bristles at the very suggestion that he should be so thoroughly "Hellenized": "If any one of you treats me like that, he'll learn we don't wear scimitars for ornament" (6). Yet Solon's claim sets the terms of the discussion as reflected in the thematic structure of the dialogue. Anacharsis had originally asked only what good such behavior could serve (*tauta oun ethelō eidenai tinos agathou an eiē poiein:* 5). But Solon has now to show that Greek sports are good both in themselves (*hēdu*) and for their consequences (*lusiteles*). Thus the dialogue focuses, first, on the pleasures accruing from the prizes, glory, and excitement of the games (6–13) and, second, on the broader question of the utility of athletic contests for society as a whole; the second section turns into a general treatment of Greek educational and cultural institutions, including theater (14–37). The third and final phase of the dialogue concerns the notorious customs of Sparta as instituted by Lycurgus (38–40). The tripartite structure is prima facie much like that of such Platonic dialogues as the *Gorgias*, a work that Lucian knew well. If the dialogue shares an analogous thematic coherence, the apparently tangential third section will reflect back on issues implicit but unacknowledged in the first two stages, just as the second stage, on education, clearly confronts issues underlying the initial queries on the sanity of sport. A brief analysis of the way each stage progresses the-

matically and the argumentative styles of the speakers shows that the dialogue's meandering course does in fact embody a deliberate rhetorical strategy for unraveling the implications of the opening question: "Why are your young men acting this way, Solon?"

After identifying the Lyceum and naming the activities that Anacharsis has just observed there, Solon explains that the athletes are preparing for contests (*agōnes*) in which the winner carries off prizes (*ta athla:* 8). At the mention of prizes Anacharsis' ears prick up: enormous awards would provide a suitable motivation for the otherwise pointless antics of these Greeks. But when Solon informs him that these prizes consist of apples, olive oil, or wreaths of parsley or pine, the respect that the Athenian expects to evoke automatically from his interlocutor is, much to his consternation, not forthcoming: Anacharsis can only laugh at the idea of men's submitting to being "broken in two" for apples and parsley (9). Realizing that he has somehow failed to create the correct perception, Solon tries to convey what the prizes signify: it is not the wreaths themselves, he hastens to explain, so much as the attendant glory (*eukleia*) that spurs the athletes on. To give Anacharsis a more compelling idea of this incentive, he describes the vast crowds of spectators who witness the games and idolize the victors (10). But once again Solon's attempt at persuasion only broadens the gulf between them: in Scythia, Anacharsis remarks indignantly, it would require only one witness to such behavior, let alone a vast crowd, to prosecute the perpetrator for *hubris* (assault). (In other words, this celebrated custom of the Greeks would be against the law, *nomos.*) To submit to such treatment at all is unfortunate; to do so before a large audience is simply pitiful (*to oiktiston*). And what conceivable pleasure (*terpnon*) there could be for the spectators in watching their fellow citizens "struck, pummeled, and dashed to the ground" is beyond him.

Like the English-speaking tourist who tries to make him-

self understood to foreigners by repeating the same words more emphatically, Solon thinks he need only describe the games more fully to win Anacharsis over. He urges him to imagine himself among the spectators admiring the skills and physical beauty of the athletes (*aretas andrōn kai kallē somatōn:* 12) and cheering (*epiboōn*) them on. But Anacharsis can imagine only "jeering" (*epikhleuazōn*) and "laughing" (*epigelōn*) at the thought of enduring a beating for the sake of a wreath. ("I love to think of those prizes of yours": 13). The problem that Solon is slow to recognize is that his words simply fail to evoke from Anacharsis the expected recognition of values that are culturally specific. Indeed, much of the dialogue's humor derives from the fact that Solon's speeches have precisely the opposite of their intended perlocutionary effect. Where Solon looks for admiration, he hears laughter. If the two parties do not attach the same reality to words, it is because the literally outlandish frame of reference by which the Scythian interprets Solon leads him continually to construe meanings at odds with the Greek's intentions.

Solon's difficulties with Anacharsis' barbaric perspective on sport may suggest to Lucian's audience, if not to Solon, that the attractions and benefits of athletic interests are not objective attributes perceptible to any observer but local social constructs as peculiar to the Greeks as their language and education, lacking any inalienable claim to value independent of the social context in which they evolved. Without reference to this context the speakers are stalemated. It is this predicament that provokes Solon's next tack and a shift in the focus of the argument. Finding his praise of the great games falling on deaf ears, the Athenian decides the problem is with his audience: the alleged vanity (*matēn:* 14) of athletic endeavor is not a property of the noblest of institutions (*ta kallista tōn ethōn*) but a reflection of his nomadic interlocutor's intellectual limitations. Anacharsis unjustly ridicules Greek sports (*en psogōi etitheso*) because he has never reflected sufficiently on the role

of rivalry (*philotimian hēn philotimoumetha*) in political order (*politeias orthēs:* 14). Until now Solon has not hinted that the games derive their value from something called *politeia*, so he can hardly blame Anacharsis for failing to appreciate its relevance. But as soon as Anacharsis affirms his philhellenism (which one may well have cause to doubt), Solon's good humor is restored: "Well, Solon, why did I come all the way from Scythia . . . but to learn the customs (*nomoi*) of the Greeks, study your institutions (*ethē*), and learn the best constitution (*politeia*)? That is why I chose you of all Athenians as my friend and host" (14; cf. Plutarch, *Solon* 5.1). Now Solon admits, implicitly conceding the validity of Anacharsis' initial skepticism, that it is not really for the sake of the games (*heneka tōn agōnōn*) that these practices (*tas askēseis tautas*) are prescribed, but to realize a greater good for the city. To clarify the matter, he says with characteristic grandiloquence, he must "go back to the beginning, to that many-prized contest which I tell you is the real end of all" (16 Fowlers).

The "many-prized contest" to which Solon refers is nothing less than the happiness of society as a whole (15). His attempt to rationalize athletics by explicating its role in the social order (*politeia*) provokes a digression on the concept of the polis (20). Lucian's use of digression at this second stage of the argument to integrate themes that are vertically related, as sport is to Solon's political theory, and his repeated emphasis on the leisure of the interlocutors (*skholē:* 16, 19) are a conscious evocation of Platonic practice (cf. *Theaetetus* 172c–177c). Similarly Platonic is the way Lucian uses the altered pace of the dialogue to develop contrasts between the personae of the speakers and to highlight the connection between their "philosophical" perspectives, rhetorical styles, and cultural backgrounds. This technique, playfully adumbrated in the speakers' contrasting responses to the searing Mediterranean sun (16), is systematically pursued. Just as Anacharsis' natural terms of reference in the opening scene were drawn from

nature (e.g., eels, rams, pigs), so, in the digression, Solon consistently represents their conversation in grand institutional images as befits the advocate of established customs (*ethē*): he compares himself to a litigant pleading before the Areopagus and Anacharsis to a judge (19). The winner of their debate, he proposes, should be announced on the Pnyx and honored with a statue in bronze (17). In a wryly Lucianic moment he even feels impelled to warn Anacharsis not to regard everything he says as "law" (*nomos:* 17). Solon's expansive style, his tendency to digress and speechify, is as distinctly characteristic of his performance in the dialogue as Anacharsis' instinctive skepticism and irrepressible sense of humor is of his (23, 31–33). The contrast extends to smaller structures as well: the Athenian's sentences, like his speeches, tend to be longer and more involved than the Scythian's until at one point his loquacity threatens to reduce the dialogue to a monologue (23–31). In fact Solon shows a rhetorician's fondness for demonstrating his verbal finesse (*katarrhētoreuomenos:* 19) by defending his position with elaborate tropes and extended analogies, a habit that encounters a resistance to abstract and figurative speech in the more literal-minded Scythian. Whereas Solon thinks in figures (*eikones*), Anacharsis insists on seeing reality in terms he can understand, taken from concrete experience and expressed in practical terms. At one point he balks at even attempting to construe one of Solon's more labored comparisons ("I can't get hold of that, Solon, it's too clever for me": 36). It is as much this difference in their way of representing a viewpoint as the viewpoints themselves that creates the conditions for Lucianic dialogue.

This contrast is the pivot on which the dialogue turns, as we can see by examining Anacharsis' response to Solon's two principal arguments. The first is an idealized account of those traditions and institutions, including theater, to which Solon attributes the intellectual training of the citizenry (20–23); the second attempts to come to terms with Anacharsis' original

query by defining the value of athletics almost exclusively in military terms (24–30). While Solon apologizes for the digressive character of the first stage of his argument, it does not in fact digress from the dialogue's theme so much as decode it through a shift in context: by occasioning an exchange over theater it serves to transfer the problem of cultural perspective to another celebrated and peculiarly Greek institution. Solon's sanguine assessment of the moral effect of Greek drama as teaching the audience to shun vice and pursue virtue (22) prompts Anacharsis to recall his visit to the festival of Dionysus, where he observed an event that did indeed move the audience to pity if not to fear—to pity those hapless men who wear the gigantic shoes: "I've seen those you call tragedians and comedians, Solon, at least if they're the ones who wear those heavy-looking shoes with high heels, and the brightly gilded clothes; they also have hilarious helmets [*kranē*] with giant mouths on the front, from inside which comes an enormous voice while they strut around in big steps—which is scarcely safe in those shoes" (22). What Solon had fondly presented as the final polish on an Athenian's moral education is converted by Anacharsis' naive interpretation of the visible facts, divorced from their conventional fields of association, to sounding like the rites of an alien people.[30]

The second stage of Solon's synoptic account of Greek educational practices, set forth in the longest speech in the dialogue (24–30), finally addresses Anacharsis' specific question: "What do dust and somersaults contribute to excellence [*aretē*]?" (18). The Athenian's entire argument is an attempt to persuade Anacharsis that, far from being activities frivolously pursued for their own sake, Greek sports are more than justified by their military applications: "We take all these preparations, Anacharsis, with a view to that contest [*ton agōna*] at arms" (24). His argument relies heavily on analogies developed to illustrate this point: athletic training is compared to a winnowing fan, which cleans the crop for future use (25); the men

so trained are compared to wheat, which lasts longer in a fire than chaff or husks (26); the athlete's skin is compared to leather made supple and tough with oil (24). Solon has no difficulty finding martial value in the athletes' suntans and splendid physiques or their habituation to mud and dust (28). Greek sports are revealed as, in essence, an effective if unlikely form of boot camp shrewdly designed to produce guardians (*phulakas:* 30) for the city, as Solon concludes in his peroration.

Anacharsis' response is a precisely focused parody of Solon's tendency to reason by analogy, to conflate the literal with the figurative, betraying the Lucianic critique that motivates the Scythian's naïveté: it works by systematically exploiting the bothersome gap between the key terms of Solon's discourse, athletics and battle, transferring conspicuous elements of the former directly into the actual context of the activity for which they are supposedly the ideal preparation. Solon's argumentative strategy is revealed as a rhetorical subterfuge in which the idealization of his theme is achieved by confusing "like" with "is":

> I see, Solon: when an enemy invades, you anoint yourselves with oil, dust yourselves over, and go forth sparring at them; then they of course cower before you and run away, afraid of getting a handful of your sand in their open mouths, or of your dancing around to get behind them, twining your legs tight around their bellies, and throttling them with your elbows rammed well under their chinpieces. It is true they will try the effect of arrows and javelins; but you are so sunburnt and full-blooded, the missiles will hurt you no more than if you were statues; you are not chaff and husks; you will not be readily disposed of by the blows you get; much time and attention will be required before you at last, cut to pieces with deep wounds, have a few drops of blood extracted from you. Have I misunder-

> stood your figure [*tou paradeigmatos*], or is this a fair deduction from it . . . ? Seriously now, are not these refinements of yours all child's play—something for your idle, slack youngsters to do? (31 Fowlers)

The technique of Anacharsis' parodic implosion of Solon's rhetoric is distinctly similar to that used by Euripides in the passage from the *Autolycus.* It emphasizes those very qualities of athletic competition deriving from its character as a game, as play, that are most radically inconsistent with the particular practicalities alleged to constitute its social *telos.* "Simile non est idem": sports may be like military training, but to treat them as identical, as Anacharsis does in imitation of Solon, comically exposes the neglected differences.[31] But there is more involved in Anacharsis' response than a critique of Solon's specific claims for athletics. His facetious suggestion (32) that the Athenians could simply scare the enemy away by donning their tragic "helmets" and chasing them in "those lofty shoes" offers a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole idea of assigning straightforwardly practical applications to complex cultural traditions, a mode of argument that Solon adopted, however, in response to Anacharsis' childlike demand for practical value: "What good is it?" If Solon's defense of the utility of his beloved institution is too pat to be entirely plausible, it implies at another level a recognition of the inadequacy of utilitarian criteria in accounting for the function of aging social and cultural traditions, a recognition of particular relevance to a time rightly noted for its preservation of tradition. Anacharsis' ensuing questions as to why the Athenians do not actually train in arms if martial virtue is their aim (34–35) and what military value there would possibly be in competing in the nude (36) reinforce the implication that traditions of this kind are distinguished precisely by their gratuitous character. Their value originates "in their being experienced as *unnecessary*, as free activity,"[32] rather than in

any practical applications they may have. Thus Lucian comically juxtaposes Anacharsis' narrowly practical and literal perspective with Solon's highly figurative and traditional one to produce an implicit view of the subject over and above that articulated by either interlocutor.[33] The nature of this implicit view is the subject of the dialogue's coda.

So far Anacharsis has led Solon to suggest several reasons why deeply traditional practices may well strike a detached observer, one to whom the conventions are foreign, as arbitrary or absurd, without their necessarily being so.[34] If the dialogue went no deeper than this in its interrogation of Greek culture, there is no apparent reason why it should not end here (36). That it does not suggests that the closing section, in which Solon eulogizes Athenian cockfights and the Spartan practice of flagellation,[35] is somehow essential to an understanding of what precedes it. The choice of topic hardly seems designed to strengthen our confidence in Solon's position; rather, it returns us to the original focus of the dialogue—the apparent madness (*mania:* 5; *mainesthai:* 38) of other peoples' customs—and to sharpen that focus. In the process laughter itself is thematized.

What the concluding examples—athletics, cockfights, flagellation—have in common is that all three reflect the Greek passion for violent contests. The repeated use of the word for contest (*agōn*) in this section suggests that it is precisely the agonistic character of Greek culture (*agōnas:* 37; *agōni:* 38; *agōnos:* 39) which forms the ultimate object of Anacharsis' laughter and for which Solon himself has such difficulty accounting. The customs that Solon praises here are chosen because they evoke a pattern of socially sanctioned violence of the kind that provoked Anacharsis' initial outburst. In fact these very customs had been criticized by other Greeks as brutal or frivolous (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1338b9–39; Marcus Aurelius 1.6). But instead of conceding the peculiarity of mandating cockfights by law (*nomos:* 37) or the whipping of one's

own citizens, Solon cites these practices by way of rebuking Anacharsis' ready laughter, lest the Scythian be amused by the "wrong" things on his travels through Greece (cf. *oude . . . geloion:* 37; *mē katagelasai, katagelōn:* 38; *katagelasta:* 39); he should beware particularly, says Solon, of finding a cause for laughter in the Spartans' singular training program (*agōn*), which aims to benefit the state by producing citizens who laugh at more appropriate objects—their enemies: "Above all [do not laugh] if you see them flogged on the altar and streaming with blood while their mothers and fathers stand by—their mothers, far from being angry at the sight, actually urging them on with threats to hold out until the final lash, begging them to resist to the bitter end and endure the worst. As a matter of fact many citizens have died in the process, unwilling to give in while still alive" (38).

As always, Anacharsis wants to know not what he is supposed to find admirable or comic but the actual benefit of these customs to the community or, say, to the Spartan lawmaker Lycurgus. When he learns that Lycurgus retired to Crete upon completion of his task without having actually lived under his laws, Anacharsis asks if the Athenians have borrowed the Spartans' good ideas: "Did you not copy Lycurgus and whip your young men? It is a fine institution quite worthy of yourselves" (39 Fowlers). But Solon, directly contradicting his earlier claim that the Athenians would gladly learn even from a barbarian (17), replies feebly, "We rarely care to imitate foreign ways" (*zēloun de ta xenika ou panu axioumen:* 39). When he hears that the Athenians find as little worth imitating in Spartan customs as he has in those of the Athenians, Anacharsis rejects Solon's admonition against laughing at the Greeks and predicts that he will emit a riotous and disdainful cackle in Sparta: "I will probably be stoned to death by them publicly for laughing [*epigelōn*] every time I see them getting beaten like thieves, robbers, or criminals" (39). With this prediction he reasserts both his original charge of madness

and his right to ready laughter, which has now become a potent expression of his own brand of satiric *parrhēsia:* "Really the city must need a dose of hellebore if it submits to such ridiculous [*katagelasta*] treatment at its own hands" (39). The dialogue closes with an agreement to return the following day to discuss Scythian customs, implying the reversibility of the process by which traditions are found incongruous when viewed from outside the relevant conventions.

Why then does Lucian end the *Anacharsis* with the Scythian showing so little respect not only for Greek athletics but for Greek institutions generally? A reasonable expectation at the beginning of the dialogue would be that just the reverse would occur: Solon would convert the Scythian to his enlightened enthusiasm for the palaestra in celebration of the old Greece that evidently enthralled so many of Lucian's contemporaries. Traditionally, discussion of the *Anacharsis* has sought to answer this question by determining whether Lucian concurs in Solon's philhellenic enthusiasms or the Scythian's skepticism. R. Heinze, for example, offers two alternative interpretations of the dialogue's ending: either Solon is right and Lucian is using the Scythian's resistance to suggest the peculiarly Hellenic value of athletics and theater inaccessible to barbarians, or, as Heinze himself believes, Anacharsis serves as a mouthpiece for Cynic traditions which Lucian is adapting.[36] Aside from the fact that evidence for the Cynic origins of Lucian's Anacharsis is sketchy at best, neither speaker is given a decisive edge in the argument. And before seeing Lucian as even covertly unathletic, we need to take account of the fact that, as becomes the spokesman for the norm (*nomos*), Solon, like Philostratus and Dio Chrysostom, is voicing the received opinion of an audience of Greeks in praising Greek athletics and the wisdom of Greek customs generally: he is preaching to the converted.

The problem with this typical approach to Lucian is less its assessment of his arguments or sources than its assumption

about Lucianic dialogue: that one figure, like Socrates in a Platonic dialogue, is used to authorize a particular, usually subversive, viewpoint that invalidates its rivals.[37] If the focus of Lucianic dialogue is often less distinct than this model would suggest, it may be because Lucian has deceived us into mistaking Platonic atmosphere for Platonic methods. First, unlike those of Plato, Lucian's "characters" are highly stylized expressions of the cultural *données* of tradition, not just ideas and beliefs, but the tacit assumptions and ego-ideals of aging ideologies. Second, the purpose of engaging them dialogically is not to test their truth value, which would make little sense, but to create comically unorthodox perspectives from which to interrogate their traditional meanings. If the inconclusive ending of the *Anacharsis* eschews a clear authorial judgment between Solon's philhellenic complacency and Anacharsis' myopic view of Hellenic cultural traditions, it is true to our conception of a seriocomic art: Lucian's technique is not to persuade us of the truth of one of two opposed dogmas but to generate comically disorienting contrasts between traditional "truths," and thereby to reveal both the kind of validity that inhabits a tradition and why that validity is merely partial.

While athletics serves as the vehicle of the discussion, the argument is not only or even primarily about the desirability of certain forms of exercise, any more than it is "about" theater or cockfights. The dialogue centers on the problem of locating, describing, and authenticating value and the difficulty in communicating value when a common frame of reference is missing. It is this missing element, the absence of an adequate linguistic bridge between the Greek and the Scythian, that gives the *Anacharsis* its specifically comic meaning and precludes the possibility of closure. The fact that neither side can claim victory on the force of arguments alone does not mean, however, that the humor is semantically neutral: both sages are presented as unintentionally comic figures, but, since Solon sees himself at the outset more as a guide than as a mere

interlocutor, his failure to extract any but comic responses to the customs he praises is significant. Moreover, the source of Solon's risibility is a cultural chauvinism so profound as to make him regard even quail fights (*agōnes*), decried by Plutarch among others,[38] as illustrative of the virtues of Athenian culture. Little wonder that the brutality of his agonistic ideal, so "uncivilized" to a nomadic barbarian like Anacharsis, is invisible to him. Thus, while neither figure is given Socratic authority by the author, it is Solon's baroque celebration of Athenian cultural superiority that is made the more suspiciously ludicrous; the effect of the humor is not to refute Solon, but to suggest a subtle appreciation of the relativity of cultural values, a point of view that we might well expect a Hellenized "barbarian" sophist to share.

Careful assessment of the roles of humor and refutation in the dialogue can also place Lucian in relation to his classical model. Platonic and Lucianic dialogue differ above all in the way in which insight is represented as emerging in conversation. For Lucian, it is stumbled upon when things are seen momentarily with the veil of convention suspended by humor: it is a comic discovery made possible by a shift of perspective. The characteristic procedures of Platonic dialogue, the systematic refutations and the search for a philosophical method that will compel agreement, require that the conversation be controlled by a single speaker, usually Socrates. In Lucianic dialogue, however, neither interlocutor gains control of the conversation. Both have difficulty even comprehending the other's perspective, let alone refuting it. For the focus of Lucianic dialogue is the source of humor in the conceptual incongruities of tradition, which Platonic techniques would dispel by reducing the comic multiplicity of possible perspectives to the true (Socratic) and the false. If the humorous gropings of Lucian's interlocutors can yield neither the proof nor the refutation required for Socratic truth, they may at least produce for the audience a sense for the perspectival

nature of traditional truths and, with it, a sophist's awareness of the potential incongruity of any single way of seeing a subject.

The role of humor in the *Anacharsis* is representative of a significant group of Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues that depend on analogous contests between an idealizing enthusiast closely associated with some established ideology (Cynicism: *Cynicus;* Stoicism: *Hermotimus*) and an unappreciative or hostile interlocutor (such as Lycinus), whom he attempts unsuccessfully to convert. Lucian's perspective on these traditional ideologues is perhaps most cleverly suggested by *The Art of Sponging* (*De Parasito*), where the role of the enthusiast is given to Simon the parasite; Simon easily enshrines his profession, "the art of sponging," in the same self-important quasi-technical language traditionally reserved for the self-descriptions of philosophers and rhetoricians.[39] But however we assess the philosophical tendency that motivates the comic exchanges in the *Anacharsis* and similarly structured dialogues (*Cynicus,*[40] *Hermotimus*), it is less important historically than the cultural process Lucian's reconceptualization of dialogue embodies: in it humor is used as a means of perception, as a distancing device that enables ironic scrutiny of those idealized Hellenic traditions in which the Greeks sought to recuperate their identity in a time of political impotence and cultural nostalgia such as the Second Sophistic.

Lucian's *Symposium*

A quiet man had better keep clear of the feasts of reason.
—Lycinus

Satiric humor often operates through the conceptually simple but rhetorically powerful use of binary contrasts: between past and present, role and reality, the ideal and the actual. More than any of his other works, Lucian's Platonic

dialogues are concerned with the gaps between these terms as applied to Hellenism's most distinctive institutions. As with most satire, their success depends largely on the way in which these primary thematic contrasts are established and the critical perspectives they make possible. In the *Euthydemus*, for example, the narrative structure allows Plato to juxtapose the frivolity of sophistic discourse, which claims to be instructive but is so only inadvertently, and the authentic didacticism of Socratic procedure. Lucian's *Symposium or the Lapiths*, however, includes no philosophic hero like Socrates with whom the unregenerate philosophers at the wedding feast can be compared. Instead of focusing on contrasting character types, the satiric strategy of the *Symposium or the Lapiths* operates through two complex parodic structures, both of which are adumbrated in the title of the work and which it is Lycinus' role as narrator to evoke as interpretative frames for the tale.

Thus while Lucian's *Symposium* is formally identical to Plato's *Euthydemus*—a dialogue frames a narrative that is periodically interrupted by the comments of the narrator to a fictive auditor—the narrator's role differs significantly. The principal narrator of the *Symposium* is Lycinus, one of a series of seriocomic voices used by Lucian that includes Anacharsis, Menippus, and the narrators of his satiric biographies of Alexander of Abonoteichus and Peregrinus the Cynic. In fact Lycinus is the most common mask worn by Lucian and is found in a large and formally varied group of dialogues that span much of the author's career. In some, probably early, works, Lycinus is a witty and playful but unsatiric spokesman for points of view that are offered only token resistance. In these works the interlocutors may provide useful but limited opposition (*Images Defended*), serve as affable listeners (*On the Dance*), or even share the task of expounding his theme, as Polystratus does in the *Images*. More recognizably Lucianic are those dialogues in which the interlocutor serves as the target of

Lycinus' barbs, as in the *Lexiphanes*, where Lycinus derides the hyper-Atticism of a sophist, or the *Ship*, where he rudely deflates his companions' idle daydreams. The tendency of his wit is equally in evidence in the more complex *Eunuch* and *Symposium*, in which Lycinus regales a friend with malicious tales of errant philosophers.

Although Lycinus, like Socrates in the *Euthydemus*, is both the narrator and a participant in the comic events of a story told with a view to unmasking some philosophic poseurs, his own motives are, as we might expect, less than straightforward. When Philo approaches him to ask for an account of the now notorious banquet, Lycinus appears to be shocked at the very thought:

> What an indiscreet demand, Philo! What, make the story public? A veil should be drawn over such things; they should be ascribed to Dionysus; I am not at all sure that he will pardon the man who holds aloof from his mystic influence. I should like to be sure that it does not betray an evil nature if you dwell too curiously on what you should forget as you leave the dining-room. "Bubble wet, but dry forget" [*misō mnamona sumpotan*] goes the old saying . . . My lips are sealed. (3 Fowlers)

But in a matter of moments Lycinus abandons his pretense to discretion and propriety—which he evidently enjoys while it lasts—and eagerly launches into a full account of the evening's events. Lucian stages this minor peripeteia as conspicuously as possible in order to emphasize the frankly embarrassing nature of the tale he is about to tell: it involves, he clearly implies, something shameful—and therefore worth hearing. He is winking at the audience, invoking considerations of politesse only to discard them immediately. Lycinus' feigned reticence is a device for implicating the audience that conspires in his indiscretion ("only don't repeat it to everybody").

But what kind of narrative perspective does Lucian use the evasive Lycinus to establish? While he is clearly not, like Socrates or Demonax, the embodiment of a rival ideal or a serious moralist, he can be viciously censorious. In his only extended comment on the events at the banquet he formulates a response clearly designed to exploit popular suspicions about the morality of professional philosophers:

> All this time, Philo, my thoughts were busy with the old commonplace that there's little point to learning if you don't apply it. Here were these masters of precept acting perfectly idiotic in practice. Then it occurred to me that the common opinion may be right, and learning [*to pepaideusthai*] misleads those who focus only on books and bookish ideas. Of all that philosophic company there was not a man—not so much as an accidental exception—who didn't do something disgraceful or worse than disgraceful. (34)

He then adds with relish that Dionysus could not be used to excuse the philosophers' misconduct, as the proverb suggests, since one of the rudest, Hetoemocles the Stoic, was stone sober. In this respect the resemblance to the *Euthydemus* is clearly more than formal: Plato would certainly recognize the advantages of narrative for vilifying professional rivals. Yet, unlike Socrates in Plato's satiric narrative, Lycinus exists primarily as a narrative device, discreetly observing the philosophers from his vantage point (*ek periōpēs heōrakōs:* 11), but playing no active role. Throughout the evening Lycinus maintains a familiar Lucianic stance, that of the satiric spectator, aloof from the sordid events around him. When the fight breaks out among the guests, he moves quietly out of harm's way, deplores the chaos, and moralizes (45). Others can lend a hand to the wounded groom and his grieving mother and bride: "As for me, I stood by the wall and watched the whole

performance without getting mixed up in it: Histiaeus' part had taught me the dangers of intervention" (45).

Thus, while Lycinus as narrator is clearly instrumental to the satiric perspective of the text, he cannot be said to provide it as, say, Socrates or Anacharsis do in other texts. The central source of humor and the thematic focus of the dialogue depend rather on the interaction of the two divergent frames of literary reference. As its title suggests, Lucian's *Symposium or the Lapiths* is woven of two widely disparate narrative traditions: Lucian has superimposed on the mythical story pattern of wedding feasts disrupted by strife (*eris*) the tradition of the philosophic symposium, originating with Plato and Xenophon, which celebrates the ideal of the philosophic temper as illustrated by Socrates. The alien associations set up by invoking inapposite narrative frames are of course complementary: as the resemblance to the doomed marriage feasts of myth becomes more explicit, the lapse from the Platonic model grows more pointed and grotesque (43–47). As always with Lucian, the language of one established tradition provides the critical perspective from which to scrutinize another.

No work entitled the *Symposium* could help recalling Plato's masterpiece to a second-century audience,[41] especially in view of the sustained tradition of erudite symposiastic literature it had inspired.[42] But since there is little point in inverting the norms of a tradition unless the audience has been cued to its relevance, Lucian does not leave the matter to chance: in the opening conversation between Lycinus and Philo the audience's expectation for a learned symposium, of which Plato's work would be only the most celebrated model, is deliberately and carefully elicited. After hearing Lycinus' description of the good Aristaenetus and his cultured guests, Philo exclaims, "My, what a learned party [*mouseion ti to symposion*] you tell of," and commends the host for celebrating the greatest festal day with the wisest men (*tous sophōtatous*) from every school "in preference to everyone else."[43] It is because

the proper grounds for such preference are a central concern in Plato that its contemporary application warrants satiric scrutiny in Lucian.

The connection between drinking and wise conversation that made memorable speech the proper *telos* of a *sumposion* (drinking party) was very much alive both as a literary conception and as a cultural ideal in Lucian's time. Of course, both Plutarch and Athenaeus wrote works specifically in the symposiastic tradition (*The Symposium of the Seven Sages; Sophists at Dinner*). Plutarch also composed a selection of short sympotic dialogues that discuss in great detail questions of proper conduct on such occasions: Should the host seat the guests or let them seat themselves (615c–619a)? When is joking appropriate, and on what topics (629e–634f)? What kind of philosophical discussion is suitable (612e–615c)? Plutarch's introduction to *Table-Talk* (*Sumposiaka*) illustrates contemporary attitudes toward the sympotic occasion. Significantly, he begins by quoting the very proverb used by Lycinus (*misō mnamona sumpotan:* "I hate a drinking companion with a memory"): "Some think the proverb [*paroimian*] recommends amnesty for all that is said and done while drinking. It is for this reason that tradition [*hoi patrioi logoi*] dedicates forgetfulness and the narthex to the god, because one should remember either none of the false notes sounded when drinking or only those requiring a light and playful reproof" (612c–d). Plutarch then justifies recording at least some of what transpires over Dionysus by citing numerous philosophers who had done so:

> Since you too believe that forgetfulness of absurdities [*atopōn*] is wise, as Euripides says, but that to forget completely all that occurs over wine is not only contrary to the festivity of the table but even has the most respected philosophers on record against it—Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Speusippus, Epicurus, Prytanis, Hieronymus, and Dio of the Academy, all of whom

> thought it worthwhile to record conversations had while drinking—and since you also thought that I should collect suitable parts of the learned conversations which I have frequently engaged in over food and drink, I have applied myself to the task. (612d–e)

The seriousness with which Plutarch regards these occasions is not simply a literary pretense. Dio Cassius, for example, thinks it worth noting not only that Hadrian used to dine with the best and most prominent men (*tōn protōn kai aristōn*) but also that their banquets occasioned wide-ranging discussions (*to sussition pantodapōn logōn pleres:* 69.7). It is no exaggeration to argue, as one historian has, that the symposium was "a defining feature of Greek culture and society."[44]

Plato's importance in this context is that his *Symposium* was the exemplar of the genre:[45] it established the norms of a tradition in which social and literary practices intersect. At the center of Plato's conception is the idea of festive speech, speech that is liberated by the occasion of a drinking party (Plutarch, *Table-Talk* 613c) and by the desire (*erōs*) of the symposiasts. The emphasis on speech as opposed to music, song, or games is in fact the principal difference between the intellectual symposium, as conceived by Plato, and its archaic prototype. Behind both lies the epic *dais* or heroic feast of merit. Plato ensures the preeminent role of speech by casting his *Symposium* in the form of a jocular competition in praise of Eros, the god who in more than one sense presides over the occasion.[46] The chosen theme is treated in general terms by every speaker except Alcibiades, who discourses on the peculiar *erōs* aroused by Socrates. During this feast of language, wine is kept at a minimum, the servants are given a free hand, and the flute girls are banished. In all this Plato is pointedly departing from common practice.[47] What is planned by Agathon as a celebration of his own verbal prowess, as shown in his recent victory in the dramatic competitions, becomes in Alcibiades' speech a

homage to Socrates as the master of *erōs*, the philosopher, and in Socrates' own speech, a demonstration of the superiority of Socratic to any other form of discourse represented at the banquet. Socrates' victory over his literary rivals is expressed dramatically by the fact that he alone emerges conscious from the party, leaving his vanquished companions strewn around the banquet table.

The rivalry of Lucian's banquet presents a parodic inversion of the Platonic conception of a sympotic competition in wit. The central theme of Lucian's banquet, trumpeted in the opening sentence, is thus the literal opposite of Plato's: the *eris* (strife; *erin ou smikran:* 1) of the philosophers and the violent dissolution of their *sunousia* (social intercourse). The contrast begins to emerge in the very first incident of the party: while in Plato the symposiasts tease each other amicably about sitting next to Socrates, Lucian's banquet begins when the old Stoic Zenothemis threatens to leave at once if he is not seated in a more honored place than that of his rival, Hermon the Epicurean (cf. Plutarch 615e–616b; 618d–619a). Zenothemis' failure to maintain Stoic detachment at the thought of being insufficiently esteemed is only the first indication of the lapsed nature of this *mouseion sumposion;* the learned guests persist in demonstrating the inverse of the sympotic virtues in an ascending series of affronts to the decorum of the festive occasion. Unlike Agathon's guests, who engage in festive rivalry with ingenious speeches and pointed jests, Lucian's belligerent (*philoneikountes:* 36) literati compete with misdeed, invective (*loidoria*), and, ultimately, blows, "the tangible equivalent of improper speech."[48] The very accoutrements of the celebration, the food and drinking bowls, become weapons that wound the groom whom they were meant to honor. Most important, table-talk (*sumposiaka:* Plutarch 629d), which is at the heart of the Platonic *Symposium* and which we have been led to expect by Philo's opening remarks (*logous philosophous eirēsthai:* 1), is conspicuous by its absence. In a grotesque

inversion of the festive meal as an expression of a communal norm or shared ideal, these embodiments of Hellenism scarcely open their mouths except to eat or rail. Significantly, the value traditionally accorded festive speech is maintained, but in the narrative frame: Lucian has neatly appropriated the Platonic symposiasts' role of festive speaker for Lycinus and that of literate banqueter for his audience, as he emphasizes in the opening scene by Philo's repeated characterization of Lycinus' tale as a *hestiasis*[49] (banquet or feast) safely removed from the violence of philosophers (*hestiōn hēmas hēdisten tautēn hestiasin . . . en eirēnēi kai anaimōti exō belous hestiasometha:* 2).[50]

The professional thinkers are presented not merely as falling short of the role of symposiast as idealized in the erudite tradition, but as fractured images of the very ideals championed by their own sect. Thus like Plato in the *Euthydemus*, Lucian converts the doctrines associated with the sects into devices for exposing the philosophers' pretensions to virtue and knowledge. Zenothemis, who is eager to defend the Stoic doctrine relegating material goods to a matter of indifference (*adiaphora*), is spied filching food as soon as the banquet begins (11). The Epicurean is a priest (9). The Cynic Alcidamas, who routinely denounces luxury in favor of the simple life in the Cynic manner, engorges food and drink as greedily as any parasite (cf. Athenaeus 4.164a–d; Lucian, *Cynicus*). Given the importance of Plato in the tradition, we would expect the Platonist to come in for special attention, and he does. First, he receives the most grandiose introduction: he is nicknamed "Kanon" ("Rule" or "Standard") and his arrival is compared to a divine visitation (7). Unlike the other philosophers, he is connected to his host professionally as his son's tutor. This makes it all the more comic when he claims as Platonic the idea that pederasty is more virtuous than marriage and then attempts to spark conversation by sketching Plato's critique of monogamy, themes so inappropriate (*ouk en kairōi*) to the occasion that they provoke only laughter (*gelōs:* 40). Both ele-

ments of Kanon's speech (39) are witless echoes of Plato's theories of *erōs*.[51]

Thus, the primary moral and aesthetic qualities of the Platonic literary banquet, the focus on *erōs* both as a concept and as the common *pathos* (experience) of the friends of Socrates (*Symp.* 177d–e), the moderate drinking and erotic bonding of the symposiasts, and, above all, the celebration of philosophy as something lived by Socrates and duly acknowledged in the festive speech of his fellow symposiasts, are all recalled but in an inverted form. Even the agonistic character of the philosophers' feast is originally Platonic, and it is precisely the inversion of this aspect that is most significant: the erotic *agōn* of Plato receives spurious imitation in Lucian's eristic *agōn*. The function of the most overt parodic structure in the text is to extrapolate the sources of this *eris* in a systematic interpretation of the climax of the tale by means of antique myths of strife (*eris*). But Lycinus' narrative is constructed from a varied (*poikilē:* 1) series of comic incidents, some of which do not further the plot or concern the philosophers at all. How are they related thematically to each other and to the violent conclusion that provides their *telos* (48)?

Superficially such ancillary episodes as those of the clown and doctor (18–20) bear no significant relation to the central events of the tale in which they are inserted. But in fact both episodes turn on acts of self-assertion and rivalry. Indeed, so pervasive is the agonistic character of the action that literal contests (*agōnes*) crop up with comic frequency. The arrival of Satyrion the clown, who might have been expected to lower tensions as his counterpart in Xenophon does (*Symp.* 1.11–16), produces instead a buffoonish pancratium (*pankratiazein*) with the irascible Cynic Alcidamas, "good at the war-cry," when the philosopher is riled by the jester's pun on Cynic (*kunidion:* "doggie"). Heracles' follower (13, 16) is quickly worsted (*katagōnistheis:* 19) by the clown. Not long after this bout (*ou polu katopin tou agōnos:* 20) the doctor Dionicus arrives and tells

a comic anecdote to explain why he is late. Like the episode of the clown, the tale of Dionicus would seem at first to be an entertaining digression, thematically independent of the main plot. It turns out, however, that the doctor's misadventure hinges on another curious *agōn:* entrapped by a mad piper, Polyprepon ("Magnifique"), he is able to free himself only by pretending to challenge him to a musical competition (*es agōna gar prokalesasthai auton:* 20). After playing badly (as he knew he would), he manages to disarm his captor when handing him the pipe. It is surely no accident that the plots of both episodes hinge on spurious imitations of the most traditional kinds of contest in Greece—those in sport and music. As comic derogations of competitions sanctioned by tradition they serve as pointed metaphors for the text that contains them.[52]

If the relation of these episodes to Lycinus' story is oblique, the letter from the excluded guest, Hetoemocles the Stoic, poses no such difficulties on the level of plot. As Lycinus observes in retrospect: "I thought one could find no better simile for our symposium than the poets' story of Eris. When she was not invited to Peleus' nuptials, she threw that apple on the table which brought about the great Trojan war. Hetoemocles' letter was just such an apple, woeful *Iliad* and all" (after Fowlers 35). But the letter does not merely propel the plot toward sympotic catastrophe; as a device for the comic exposure of hypocrisy that enacts "a plot which recoils on the head of its author,"[53] it illustrates Henry Fielding's contention—clearly derived from Plato—that "affectation" is the root of "the true Ridiculous" and thus provides in miniature a synopsis of the comic procedure of the text as a whole.[54] For while attempting to present himself as a genuine Stoic, undeservedly slighted (*atimia:* 24) in contrast to his gourmandizing rivals, Diphilus and Zenothemis ("happiness for me is not found in a plate of wild boar"; 22 Fowlers), Hetoemocles shows himself moved to petty vengeance by that most un-Stoic of emotions, anger (*aganaktēsai moi dokō; aniōmai; orgize-*

sthai soi dokō: 24–25).[55] But anger is one thing, stupidity another. Hetoemocles' effort to justify his wrath with an absurd comparison of himself to Artemis angry at being neglected at a sacrificial feast (25; *Iliad* 9.537) demonstrates, as he says, "the qualities of him whom you have passed over" (26 Fowlers). He then compounds the absurdity of the comparison by supporting it with a string of superfluous quotations from Homer, Sophocles, and Euripides. This inflated show of learning, like the ostentatious use of technical philosophical terms (*katalēptikē phantasia, skhesis, hexis:* 23) and his boastful reference to shopworn philosophical puzzles (23.25–26), serves only to expose the pretense of the would-be Stoic. When he finally stoops to implying (admittedly with good reason [29]) that Diphilus has been enjoying the favors of his pupil, the host's son Zeno, he succeeds in exemplifying Fielding's definition of the comic hypocrite as "the exact reverse of what he affects." Accordingly, Hetoemocles' pose in the letter achieves the exact reverse of its intended effect: the audience laughs at every line. The Stoic is alone in taking his role seriously; his rivals will suffer a precisely analogous reversal through the tale that Lycinus is telling. Once again the rivalry (*philoneikia:* 1; *atimia:* 24) of those obsessed with the honor accorded their role motivates the action; later this thematic focus is made explicit when the meaning of *zēlos* (rivalry, jealousy, pride) becomes still another bone of contention (40). As Hetoemocles' reference to the angry Artemis of the *Iliad* unwittingly suggests, this is a symposium so "traditional" that Agamemnon or Achilles might feel at home.[56]

When the guests begin to take apart Hetoemocles' letter, they note the absurdity of his simile, which likens him to Artemis, and Aristaenetus to the offending hero, Oeneus (30). But of course they do not hear Lycinus' simile, quoted above, comparing the letter to the apple of Eris, which wryly casts Lucian's text in the role of the *Iliad!* Lycinus' simile makes explicit the sense in which Lucian is subjecting the later philo-

sophic version of the normative or ideal *sumposion*, as created by Plato, to the same turn of events as its mythical prototypes, by embedding its afterimage among archaic traditions of the violated feast represented in the text by the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs and the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (45, 35). While the function of the various parallels with and inversions of Plato's *Symposium* is to set up a tacit contrast in the mind of the audience between the erotic and eristic feast, Lucian's series of parodic allusions to and quotations of myth give definition to that contrast and focus its satiric significance quite precisely: the eristic feast of Lucian's philosophers is presented both as a grotesque deviation from Plato's harmonious colloquy and a reversion to much older, heroic narrative patterns. The source of Lucian's humor lies characteristically in merging traditions with incongruent matrices of meaning.

The effects of the combination are complex. They can function by focusing our attention on contrasting or parallel qualities in the terms of the comparison, or, as often happens, on both simultaneously: to compare small things with great, such as Chaireas' wedding feast, with those of Peleus or Peirithous, as Lycinus does (35, 45), has the ludicrous effect of making the smaller term of the comparison seem to dwindle into nothing; that is, they function primarily by contrast. But similar comparisons, such as those that Lycinus makes between Alcidamas and Heracles (14) or between Hetoemocles' letter and the apple of Eris (35), can function by revealing unexpected likenesses. In combination they endow Lycinus' story with a mock-epic sense of absurdity and disproportion, just as the theme of eris recalls epic "strife" but with a comic difference: the violence may be "epic," but its causes are not. The comic-epic ambience created by Lycinus' comparisons presents the philosophers not just as an exaggerated picture of impropriety so much as a recrudescence of the archaic violence of the myths and the style of heroism they enshrined; thus the representatives of the whole range of philosophical estates,

long regarded by themselves as the very exemplars of Hellenism, appear as threats to ordinary social discourse, whose atavistic individualism and rampant self-assertion have more in common with the heroic code than with that of Socrates and his fellow symposiasts.

The lapse from the festive virtues of wit, generosity, and tolerance[57] into a comic derogation of epic heroism is dramatized in the final scene, the division of the spoils, which exploits a complex of mythic motifs surrounding the epic *dais* or feast of heroes.[58] The scene acquires its parodic force not only from the insertion of quotations from Homer or the use of Homeric words and phrases in isolation, but also from the generic resonance of the narrative procedure itself. Its peculiar texture warrants close examination. The scene begins like an epic quarrel with a philosopher-warrior outraged at being deprived of his due portion of the feast, which in Homeric narrative was a public token of the hero's status (*timē*). In this instance, however, the disputed dish is the remaining food of Diphilus' absent pupil, ironically designated by the phrase routinely used of the heroes' feasts in Homer, *ta parakeimena* (what was set before [us]). Rising to the challenge, Diphilus plunges into a mighty tug-of-war with the servants over this share of the leftovers "as if they were dragging away the body of Patroclus" (42). He retires from battle beaten and "as angry as if he had suffered the greatest possible wrong" (*ēganaktei, ēdikēmenos:* 42); but the Stoic's defeat at the hands of the servants is only a prelude to what Lycinus calls "the kernel of the whole affair" (43 Fowlers).

Up to this point all present have had equal shares (*panta isa*) and the division has been peaceful (*aneilonto eirēnikōs*). But by chance a fatter bird (wryly described by the Homeric *pioteran*, "fatter," "richer": 43) is placed before Hermon the Epicurean. "At this point Zenothemis let his own bird lie, and took the fatter one before Hermon" (43 Fowlers). The Epicurean, however, does not suffer fools gladly and refuses to

tolerate the Stoic's greed (*ouk eia pleonektein:* 43). When Hermon takes his stand, a shout goes up (*boē to epi toutois*), and a general engagement ensues, with the symposiasts striking one another in the face with roasted fowl (43). The philosophers quickly close ranks; the Epicurean defender is reinforced by the Peripatetic (Cleodemus), while the old Stoic (Zenothemis) allies himself with the bellicose Cynic (Alcidamas) and his fellow Stoic (Diphilus). The Platonist, always ambiguous on the relation between duty (Stoicism) and pleasure (Epicureanism), preserves a precarious neutrality in the middle (*meson heauton ephulatten:* 44). As the hosts engage, Zenothemis lifts a goblet from the table and hurls it at Hermon. Adapting a line from Homer (*Iliad* 11.233; 13.605), Lycinus says: " 'And it missed him and was turned in another direction,' cleaving the bridegroom's skull in two with a wound that was generous and deep."[59] Alcidamas then shows his mettle (*ēristeuse:* 44.9) by following up the Stoic assault: swinging his walking stick, he cracks Cleodemus' skull and takes out Hermon's jaw. Somehow the Epicurean and Peripatetic manage a counterattack: Cleodemus pokes out Zenothemis' eye with his finger and bites off a piece of his nose.

The almost Rabelaisian grotesquerie[60] of the scene is unusual in Greek literature—if not without parallel.[61] It is created in part by the context of the violence but also by its form: biting was not permitted even in the brutal pancratium. This graphic description of wounds combines with the choreography of the fight, the marshaling of the philosophers behind two duelists, to recreate the squabble of the sects as a caricatured form of Homeric battle with its formal duels between heroes and anatomical descriptions of weapons penetrating the body. Similarly, just as Homer conventionally connects the death of warriors on the battlefield with the grieving of wives and parents at home, here the sounds of grieving and combat echo each other as the shout heralding battle (*boē:* 43.22) is answered by the keening of the women (*boē:* 44.6) who rush to

the aid of the fallen bridegroom. The wedding rite is transformed by the philosophers' violence into its ritual opposite, the rite of mourning. Thus, the narrative procedure succeeds in exacerbating an oxymoronic tension between role and reality, between the ceremonial context and the actual events.

Lucian uses the Homeric resonance to extend the tension to larger structures as well: while the *eris* of epic is always ultimately consonant with the will of Zeus,[62] here the element of divine intervention and providence is replaced by chance and happenstance. When Agamemnon's spear misses its target in the line that Lycinus adapts from Homer (*Iliad* 11.233), he does not wound an innocent bystander as the Stoic does here. Nor do Homeric warriors find themselves "unstringing" the wrong man as Diphilus does when he kicks the innocent Histiaeus in the teeth, leaving him "to vomit gore" (cf. *Iliad* 15.11). The random, improvident quality of the philosophers' violence is personified in the Cynic Alcidamas, who, having knocked out all his real enemies, proceeds to club whomever he meets (*paiōn ton prostukhonta:* 45). In his rampage he finally knocks over a lamp, bringing on "profound darkness" (*skotos mega*), a parodic echo of the epic convention by which night is brought on by a concerned deity, as when Hera sends Helios into Ocean against his will in order to bring an end to the grueling battle for the corpse of Patroclus (*Iliad* 18.239–242; cf. Lucian, *Symposium* 42.9–10).[63]

The realism and violence of this scene push it momentarily in a tragic direction: "Everything was full of chaos and tears. The women were bent over Chaireas and wailing . . . It was a sight to recall the Lapiths and Centaurs—tables upside down, blood in streams, bowls hurtling in the air" (45). Lucian creates this quasi-tragic effect in order to counter it in two ways, thus producing the abrupt shifts in tone, the oscillation between tension (*tasis*) and release (*anesis*), noted by Hermogenes as a distinctive trait of the seriocomic. First, he brings the battle to a farcical conclusion in which the tears for the

groom are converted into a final burst of laughter at the buffoonish guests (*to sumposion teleutēsan ek tōn dakruōn authis eis gelōta:* 47.11–12). When a lamp is finally brought in, Alcidamas is found busy stripping (*apogumnōn*) a flute girl, while Ion and Dionysodorus are caught in the act of pilfering a goblet. As the old Stoic, Zenothemis, is carried out with one hand on his eye and the other on his nose, Hermon, the Epicurean, takes a final dig at his rival, reminding him that pain (*ponos*) is for a Stoic a matter of indifference (*adiaphoron*). Second, Lucian seals the tale with a quotation from Euripides that distances us from the events of the story just as it does at the end of a tragedy, by generalizing the suffering of the protagonists into a familiar rule, and yet simultaneously calls our attention to the ludicrous gap between the magnitude of these events and those of tragic drama whose movement Euripides' lines were meant to solemnize:

> Hidden power sways each hour
> Men propose, the gods dispose
> Fail surmises, come surprises.[64]
> (48 Fowlers)

Thus the Euripidean moral is attached to the farcical unmasking of Ion, Alcidamas, and Dionysodorus to restore the comic dissonance created by viewing the eristic banquet through the magnifying lens of epic and tragic conventions.

This examination of Lucian's refashioning of Platonic dialogue began by questioning, first, how Lucian's hybrid differs in principle from the classical model used to authorize it and, more generally, what Lucian's modernization implies as an example of the reception of classical texts in the Greek renaissance. Although the analysis of the *Anacharsis* addressed both questions, the second remains problematic precisely because Lucian's mode of traditionalism was, as he claims, atypical—not to say barbaric. It is clear, however, that his renova-

tion of Platonic dialogue as a vehicle for critiquing both philosophers as social types (*Symposium*) and the language by which philosophy sought to define itself and garner pupils (*Hermotimus*, *The Cynic*, *The Art of Sponging*) involves a complex process whereby the traditional forms for propagating an ideology are used ironically to undermine its current practitioners. On one level this is a clever move in the ancient rivalry between philosophy and rhetoric going back to Isocrates and Plato,[65] but it also reflects a fundamental shift in the status of philosophers as a social class. This shift is of critical importance for placing Lucian in relation to Plato.

When Plato wrote his *Symposium*, philosophy had yet to be institutionalized, a process in which his founding of the Academy was instrumental. Lucian, on the other hand, lived much of his life in an empire ruled by a devoted and pious philosopher at a time when imperial edicts had made a variety of significant privileges available to those who called themselves teachers or were "especially knowledgeable" (*agan epistēmones*). In marked contrast to Plato's Athens, in which philosophers were still regarded with a mixture of suspicion and disdain (as Callicles shows in the *Gorgias*), by the second century A.D. philosophy had largely relinquished its adversarial role and had become an accepted element in the self-image of the ruling class; consequently, it came to be materially advantageous to have a veneer of philosophical culture.[66] This situation naturally produced many pretenders to philosophical virtue and simultaneously made the choice of a sect and teacher increasingly problematic. Galen records that his father, a successful architect, warned him "not to be hasty in proclaiming myself a member of one sect, but that I must inquire, learn and form my judgments about these sects over a considerable period of time [and] that I must strive now and throughout my life to pursue those practices which all men praised and which the philosophers agreed must be emulated."[67] So successfully had the philosophers promoted themselves and their ideal of

human excellence that the philosopher was generally acknowledged as an authoritative role model, which some seriously emulated and others feigned to advance their interests. As Galen observes, "The large number of [philosophical] sects makes it clear that some charlatans are winning disciples; it is also clear that these charlatans would not have convinced anybody to accept their teachings as true unless they bore a certain similarity to the truth."[68] Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues clearly reflect this anxiety about sorting out the true philosopher from his counterfeit image,[69] much as Plato had been concerned to make unambiguously clear the sometimes fuzzy distinction between Socrates and his sophistic rivals. After all, it is only the success of the Platonic traditions of erudite symposia that licenses Lucian's attack on those who play their honored role ineptly, like apes trained to dance ballet, as Parrhesiades puts it (*Fisherman* 36).

Yet when we stand back from the detailed analysis of the sources and thematic functions of humor in particular texts, a pattern emerges characteristic of Lucian's adaptation of Platonic dialogue, one that indicates a critical response as well as a change in cultural context. While an important part of Plato's rhetorical appeal is his unrivaled ability to fabricate in a convincing fashion those idealized occasions on which language is lucid and conversation progresses dialectically, leading the interlocutors (and reader) to see a subject from a radically transformed perspective, Lucian constructs an ironic counter-image to Plato, a parodic double,[70] by evoking those more typical and lackluster occasions on which the Platonic ideal of discourse is recalled but not achieved. Thus, when two legendary sages come together in the Lyceum, nothing is resolved: the Scythian's perspective proves to be so resistant to the Athenian's idealizing rhetoric that the confidence Solon accords his own evaluative language comes to seem increasingly odd without another vantage point or method, like that of Socrates in Plato, being offered to supplant it. Instead, the

humor of the exchange focuses our attention on the ethnocentricity of Hellenic perspectives and on the incongruity created by stepping over a cultural horizon. Similarly, where Plato's narrative of the banquet of literati serves to idealize the philosopher, to elevate him to a privileged role meant to inspire emulation, Lucian intrudes an older stratum of Hellenic culture, the language of myth, to disrupt the philosophical tradition's idealization of itself: shifting the activity of the philosophers into an ironic frame, he provides a perspective outside the eristic squabbles of the sects from which the seriousness conventionally accorded them seems gratuitous.

Thus Lucian plays the role of a naive barbarian or a detached, ironic symposiast to inject a note of comic dissonance or jarring realism into such classically Platonic contexts as a philosophical conversation in the Lyceum or a *mouseion sumposion*. He creates his distinctive effects by recalling Plato formally in his general manner of presentation, setting, and fluid Attic style and then diverging pointedly from the norms of Platonic practice. The result is a form of dialogue in tension with its classical model insofar as it displaces idealizing modes of discourse by superimposing disparate traditions. Lucian's method of disclosing the comical aspects of some of his culture's oldest and most influential ideals—the philosopher, the athlete, the contests in which they displayed their special excellence—must have been an important part of his appeal for an audience that had inherited so much of what it admired from "a past that never was present."[71] For, as Bakhtin observes of the force of parodic literature generally, "All that is high wearies in the long run. The more powerful and prolonged the domination of the high, the greater the pleasure caused by its uncrowning!"[72]

Chapter Three ❧

Ostia, II, iv, 2, Terme di Nettuno, room B, monopod view. Neptune driving a team of hippocamps, a common theme of "the black-and-white style [of mosaic that] emerges around 20 B.C., reaching its apogee in the second and early third centuries of our era"; John R. Clarke, Roman Black and White Figural Mosaics *(New York 1979) xix. Photo courtesy of John R. Clarke.*

Aging Deities
Lucian's Olympus

Literature is a game with tacit conventions; to violate them partially or totally is one of the many joys (one of the many obligations) of the game, whose limits are unknown.
—Jorge Luis Borges

A joke is a play upon form. It brings into relation disparate elements in such a way that one accepted pattern is challenged by the appearance of another which in some way was hidden in the first.
—Mary Douglas, "Jokes"

ARISTOTLE sees the origin of comic art in the ludicrous mimicry of one man by another. Parody is the literary analogue to Aristotle's conception of comedy's preliterary origins: it is a form of comic imitation that exposes incongruities in the characteristic qualities of its model and in so doing often brings into sharper focus exactly what those qualities are. In it humor, or comic incongruity, becomes a flexible instrument of criticism, appreciation, and deflation. As M. A. Rose points out, "the use of incongruity distinguishes parody from other forms of quotation or literary imitation and shows its function to be more than imitation alone."[1] Parody is the most versatile of Lucian's modes, for it allows him to exploit for comic purposes an enormous range of "classical" material, from Homer to Theocritus, by bringing key elements of a given tradition—its settings, roles, linguistic styles, or thematic perspectives—into generically illicit relations with one another. Though this chapter will focus on Lucian's comic imi-

tations of the Olympian gods in the *Dialogues of the Gods* and *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*, many other works (such as *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, *Dialogues of the Sea Gods*, *On the Syrian Goddess*, *On Astrology*, and *Gout*) share their specifically parodic character, for their comic qualities are a function of the incongruous re-presentation of immediately recognizable exemplars such as Athenian tradegy (*Gout*), Herodotus (*On the Syrian Goddess*), or New Comedy (*Dialogues of the Courtesans*). Obviously, parody in the general sense of comic imitation of literary models is fundamental to any study of Lucian the writer: Lucian's parodic renovations of classical forms such as Platonic dialogue and Aristophanic comedy have already been considered as examples of his complex relation to inherited literary practice. But now the interpretative focus changes significantly in two ways. First, in concentrating on the gods, our concern is with the adaptation of a recurring set of roles rather than a single form or genre; Olympus will afford an entry into a major group of texts corresponding even less than Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues to a single genre or generic grouping but distinguishable precisely by their use of mythical motifs. Second, the sheer antiquity and manifold extraliterary dimensions of the gods make their literary status problematic in a way other traditional roles or formal structures are not; consequently, assessment of the dialogues' ethos and reception becomes crucial in interpreting the *Tendenz* of Lucian's comic conception of Olympus.

The possible cultural significance of comic representations of the gods has inspired a long critical tradition concerning Lucian's Olympians. Marx, for example, argued that Lucian's treatment was part of the historical decline of pagan religions: "The final phase of the world historical process is its comedy. The Greek gods already once mortally wounded, tragically, in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* had to die once more comically in the dialogues of Lucian. Why does history proceed in this way? So that mankind will separate itself happily

from its past."[2] Not surprisingly, Marx's view has not exercised much influence—where, for example, does Aristophanes fit in?—but the idea that Lucian's mythological works are documents of religious and philosophical significance forming part of a serious critique of traditional religion has a long history going back to the Byzantine patriarch Photius.[3] Although this notion still lingers, it has been largely superseded in this century by a more bookish and less serious image of the satirist. Bompaire, for example, prefers to characterize the mythological works as literary *jeux d'esprit* but concentrates on their various sources rather than on the rules of Lucian's games or the varied nature of his parodic techniques.[4] Clearly, neither deciphering the dialogues as veiled Epicurean polemic or trivializing them as belletristic exercises in mimesis does them justice.[5] What is needed as the basis for a more convincing account is an investigation of how Lucian's parodic techniques serve his distinctive generic conception of renewing tradition. Exactly how does the re-presentation of familiar literary exemplars create comedy in Lucian? What is the relation of parody to burlesque or travesty, or to irony or satire? Is it useful to distinguish in this context between Lucianic and Aristophanic methods or between the miniature dialogues and more complexly structured works such as *Zeus: The Tragic Actor?* If we focus not on the question "What did Lucian really believe?"[6] but rather on the prior question of how his mythological dialogues produce their peculiar brand of meaning, as literary inventions wedged between ancient materials and a contemporary audience, a view of Lucian as the parodist of Olympus emerges that differs significantly from the two most influential models: the academic pasticheur and the rationalist reformer à la Voltaire or Swift.

Parody is of course no more necessarily satiric than satire is necessarily parodic. Specifically, parody differs from satire in its literary focus: it always makes the object of its critical attention part of its own aesthetic structure through

those features taken over from its literary model.[7] Satire may include literary codes as a target but commonly extends to social and moral ones as well. There may also be a characteristic difference in tone if satire is, as it is usually treated, essentially negative or critical.[8] Nabokov's half-truth, "satire is a lesson, parody is a game,"[9] points to this characteristic difference created by the inherently more ambiguous relationship of a parodic text to its model or target: its own appeal is in part a function of that of the text or tradition it imitates; an audience ignorant of the model will have little use for a parody of it.[10] Thus although the effect of parody is comic,[11] as ancient critics observed, it frequently shows a capacity for ambivalence: a parodist such as Lucian often evinces amused appreciation as well as criticism or deflating ridicule for the qualities of the parodied material.[12] It is, therefore, no exaggeration to argue that "all parody is overtly hybrid and double-voiced":[13] we listen simultaneously to the author and the speaker and try to assess the relation between them. As a self-consciously dissimulative form of expression, one with two or more messages for the audience to discern, parody resembles irony and, again like satire, is easily confused with it because it so often incorporates irony as a rhetorical strategy.[14]

A mode that is by nature an ambivalent mixture of emulous imitation and subversive mimicry is clearly instrumental to the primary techniques of serious jesting,[15] generic disorientation, and satiric scrutiny by which Lucian sought to mediate the aging legacy of a classical past.[16] Though the two are of course intimately related—satire frequently uses parody, and parody can be satiric—the concept of parody is arguably more characteristic of Lucian's oeuvre than that of satire, with its overtones of social and moral reform. Given the centrality of literature and the memorization of texts to the classicizing ideology of Greeks in the empire, it is easy to see why satire might come to rely so heavily on parody as a means: in Lucian

the parodied text or genre is as often the weapon as the target of satire, as seen in the parodic use of myth in the *Symposium.*[17]

The terms *parody, travesty,* and *burlesque* are often used interchangeably and have not been clearly distinguished historically.[18] Since their earliest appearances in print travesty and burlesque have been conflated with each other—as in Scarron's title, *Le Virgile travesti en vers burlesques* (1648)—and with parody, despite the determined efforts of critics to distinguish them as types of comic literary imitations or to assign to each a defining function or characteristic device. The problem is complicated by the fact that all three terms can be used of caricatures whose targets are not actually literary but social or cultural codes or types, such as legendary philosophers (e.g., *Philosophers for Sale!*) or ritual practices (e.g., *On Sacrifices*). When the targets are literary, however, the three terms are commonly said to denote imitations that achieve comic-critical effects by creating or revealing tensions between form and content. Sometimes the definitions are made more precise and parody is thought of as targeting the form of its model and travesty the content, or parody as presenting a lowly or ludicrous subject in a grand or serious style and travesty a grand or serious subject in a lowly or ludicrous style.[19] Parody and travesty, however, have also been characterized as "high" and "low" burlesque, respectively.[20] Moreover, there is no agreement on how closely any of the three types of comic imitation is modeled on its target. Because of the potential for imprecision in such terms as *form* and *content* and *high* and *low,* and because the three terms for literary caricature are often defined in terms of one another,[21] no single definition has gained general acceptance and, more important, none of them is particularly useful as a tool of analysis unless it is further qualified with reference to particular texts. As R. P. Falk observes, "no good purpose can be served by too rigid insistence upon nomenclature in a discussion of parody, burlesque, or travesty in literature. All three employ the device of incongruous imita-

tion and deflationary treatment of serious themes."[22] The specific techniques, force, and qualities of the caricature have to be determined in a given context.

As the oldest and probably most general of these terms, parody has a wider applicability than burlesque or travesty. Accordingly, the following discussion uses parody in two senses: as the most general term for comic literary imitations, including "travesty" and "burlesque"; and, quite specifically, to refer to that type of comic imitation that caricatures the linguistic style of a recognizable model. Since the generalized concept of parody overlaps with those of burlesque and travesty, the term *travesty* is reserved for comic imitations or parodies that combine generically distinct models or violate the exclusively literary focus of parody. Travesty thus refers to texts that encompass multiple forms of parody and may include extraliterary, or satiric, caricature. Hence parody, in the limited sense of stylistic caricature, can form part of a travesty, as Seneca's parody of a funeral lament in honor of Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis* forms part of a complex satiric travesty of the process of imperial deification, or as Lucian's parodic quotations from Homer and Euripides form one tier of his ambitious travesty of the discourses of myth and philosophy in *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*. By contrast, the wry impersonations of the Olympians in the miniature dialogues are parodic only in the general sense, precisely because their comic miming of Homer's gods and sparing use of epic allusion do not produce their principal effects either by overt generic mixture or by stylistic caricature of Homer's verse. The appeal of the miniature dialogues largely depends on the skill with which highly typical episodes and scenes are played out anew, in selective observation—and defiance—of acknowledged generic limits.[23] Much of their humor comes from the probing of implicit boundaries, the exploitation of internal incongruities, and the testing of the generic competencies of author and audience. In the travesties, however, it is produced by

deliberate transgressions, since multiple parody is itself an aggravated offense against the intrinsic decorum of any single genre.

To define the concept of travesty more precisely as a form of multiple parody in Lucian, we must first distinguish the source of humor that characterizes the parodic mode in general (whether discussed as parody, burlesque, or travesty), from that of nonparodic, literary comedy. Addison's discussion of burlesque in the *Spectator* no. 249 (1711) provides a useful starting point. Nonparodic comedy, he says, "ridicules persons by drawing them in their proper character," that is, by showing how a character is fixed in his responses, involuntarily like himself and his kind; parodic comedy, on the other hand, which Addison calls burlesque, creates its effects "by drawing [its characters] quite unlike themselves." In this connection the etymological sense of "travesty," from the Italian *travestire*, "to disguise," is relevant: parody, of which travesty is a species, functions by presenting a familiar literary feature in an unfamiliar guise, by making it appear both like and unlike itself. Thus to apply Addison's distinction, a character in a comedy, such as Molière's Harpagon, is funny because of his remarkable—indeed, as Bergson argues, automatic—self-consistency; driven by a single obsession in the most varied circumstances, he appears as comically inappropriate as he is predictably "in character." A parodic character, however, is funny because he is presented in the parodic text in such a way as to be at odds with the culturally received notion of his "proper character" and of his kind, whether it be that of a god, philosopher, or hero. Playing its presentation of a particular character off against the audience's culturally conditioned expectations for a given type, parody can comment both on the type and on those expectations. Hence its particular historical interest as a mode that always takes institutionalized art as its subject: the types of characters parodied are usually those routinely idealized in the most influential and authoritative

traditions, which, in Lucian's case, means those derived from Homer and the major schools of moral philosophy. Not surprisingly, Lucian's favorite targets for caricature are gods and their earthly rivals, the philosophers.

Lucian employs two principal methods to produce this kind of parodic comedy or caricature. One is to reproduce a generic milieu such as Olympus and make it yield its inherent potential for incongruity by selectively isolating the distinctive qualities of its governing conventions. This kind of parody elicits comedy from elements that already exist in or are clearly associated with an internally consistent literary world, whether that of a particular text, author, or genre. By reproducing the model's features selectively, it emphasizes the artifice of the original version in the distorted image of the parody. Lucian's second method of making the chosen target comic is more radical: to transfer entire elements to a starkly different context or, just the reverse, to intrude elements utterly foreign to the generic assumptions and conventional decorum of the relevant text or tradition. The first is the principal method of Lucian's parodic miniatures (e.g., *Dialogues of the Gods*); both procedures, however, characterize the more complex examples of parodic imitation provisionally termed travesty (e.g., *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*).[24] Hence if the same subject should appear in both modes, as it frequently does, its comic embodiments would differ as sharply as the given techniques of comic imitation. As a parodist Lucian will make the subject comic through tonal devices and strategic omissions—exaggeration, ellipsis, misplaced emphasis—that accentuate the indigenous peculiarities of a familiar world. In a travesty, in addition to these devices, he will overtly introduce qualities and circumstances generically hostile to the traditional conception of the subject's role in the "high" genres. In both cases the end is a comic incongruity between the parodic image and its normative form.[25] The difference in technique, however, results in a difference in the quality and force of the caricature, reflecting

the more radically disorienting nature of the incongruities produced by travesty.[26]

This distinction between parody and travesty is merely a critical convenience but may not be wholly arbitrary: it arguably corresponds to the primary modes of comic imitation of myth in antiquity. In the classical period the stories about the gods had, of course, long been subject to comic treatment in two distinct traditions. In the satyr plays the gods (and heroes) were presented comically but in the roles and plots supplied by the traditional stories (*muthoi*). In Old Comedy, on the other hand, the gods were transported from their timeless traditional settings in epic, lyric, and tragic poetry to a newly fabricated plot driven by the contemporary motives of the fifth-century Athenian citizens who were its typical protagonists. Lucian seems to be activating these two established modes of comedicizing archaic myth, both of which alter the temporal perspective of the material but one of which, the satyr play, respects the generic limits of the model.[27] Thus Lucian's parodic works (e.g., *Dialogues of the Gods*) are, in the manner of a satyr play, generically homogeneous and exploit an anachronism of tone rather than content (*muthos*), while the travesties (e.g., *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*) combine elements of alien genres to juxtapose the mythic and the modern in the style of Old Comedy. In any case, Lucian's practice depends on analogous changes in the contextual setting of highly traditional materials whether it takes the form of a subtle shift in tone and temporal perspective or a sharp break. But "no integration in a new context can avoid altering meaning and perhaps even value."[28] Hence the interpretative puzzles posed by Lucian's parodic Olympians.

The *Dialogues of the Gods* and Homer's Olympians

In the likeness of man created he them and the only excuse for him is that he obviously desired his readers not to take them seriously.
—Samuel Butler, "The Humour of Homer"

In connecting humor with the Homeric gods Lucian was following a well-trodden path—his favorite kind. Of course, Homer himself uses the gods for comic effect in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Sexual intrigues, domestic spats, and familial rivalries provide the gods with enough plotting and deception for a New Comedy. But what makes the gods so adaptable to comic ends when in other contexts they serve to elevate the action or intensify its significance? In a thoughtful discussion of humor on Olympus, K. R. Seeskin argues that as a distinguishing feature of men laughter was a necessary part of Homer's anthropomorphic gods and that the gods themselves provide the only suitable objects for this laughter. Hence the comedy on Olympus: "Better to imagine the gods with smiling countenances than with tusks, fangs or claws."[29] But, surely, just as Homer chose not to use theriomorphic images of the gods, he might not have included scenes of comedy. Indeed, some scholars have doubted the authenticity of the scenes in question, arguing that they are later insertions that violate epic decorum.[30]

Nevertheless humor and immortality are intimately related in Homer. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* humor forms part of a basic thematic structure in which Olympian life acts as a defining counterpoint to mortal sweat and toil. The immortality of the gods creates the ideal conditions for comic action, since it shelters them from the most serious consequence a human action can have. Comedy, as they live it, is a defining feature of Olympian privilege.[31] Accordingly, in dramatizing divine freedom from mortal vulnerabilities the comic scenes in Homer set in bold relief the fundamental asymmetry between mortals and immortals. Thus it is precisely the actions most fraught with tragic potential on the mortal plane that Homer exploits most extensively in his comic episodes: the gods can engage in battle (*Iliad* 21) or adultery (*Odyssey* 8.266–366) with a reckless self-regard possible only for the permanently existing few. Similarly, this basic asymmetry

between gods and men explains why Homer's gods do not contradict Aristotle's contention that comic characters are "inferior" (*phauloterōn*: *Poetics* 1449a31) but rather exemplify his conception of comedy; for the gods do indeed possess the quality that makes the comic character "worse" (*kheirous:* 1448a16) by the norms of the poem precisely insofar as they are funny (*tou aiskhrou . . . to geloion morion:* 1449a34). Yet because they are gods, being ridiculous is more truly painless for them (*anōdunon kai ou phthartikon:* 1449a35) than it ever could be for mere mortal comedians. Their counterparts in popular comedy are those indestructible characters in farce whose physical resilience resembles that of a rubber hammer.[32]

The sources and limits of comedy in Homer are well illustrated by the tale of Aphrodite and Ares that Demodocus sings to entertain the Phaeacians and their guest (*Odyssey* 8.266–366). The principal thematic focus of the *Odyssey* is the testing of the hero and heroine's loyalty to themselves and each other. As the betrayal of Clytemnestra is the cause of Agamemnon's grisly homecoming, his experience exemplifies the tragic potential in Odysseus' return. Thus the issues raised by loyalty and betrayal are central to the poem and have the gravest consequences for the characters involved, but not so for the gods. When Hephaestus catches Ares with Aphrodite in his elaborate trap—"a web so subtle/air is comparatively crude"[33]—the gods almost laugh themselves mortal. A contraption (*tekhnas:* 327) that serves to make its inventor's cuckolding a matter for public ridicule, but not to prevent it, is indeed a risible invention. As Apollo asks Hermes in an irreverent aside, "Would you accept a coverlet of chains, if only / you lay by Aphrodite's golden side?" (trans. Fitzgerald). It is at this moment, when Hermes affirms that he would gladly brave a coverlet of chains many times as thick (339–342), that the comic quality of the scene crystallizes, for suddenly it is Hephaestus' attempt to revenge himself on the philanderers that appears ludicrously inappropriate (*geloios*). The rational pat-

tern of crime and punishment is effectively called into question by the gods' laughter at the cuckold: license momentarily triumphs over control, intimacy over formality, unofficial values over official ones.[34] That Hephaestus is primarily concerned with the return of his wedding gifts (317–320) prevents any sympathy for him from inhibiting the laughter. Poseidon's arbitration quickly restores order, but Homer does not need to remind his audience how far from comedy the resolution would have been if the actors were mortal.[35] Actions do not carry the same weight among the gods; their immortality and the aristocratic decorum that governs their relations in the poem sharply limit the kind of suffering that may result from their conflicts as long as mortals are not involved. Thus the affair of Aphrodite and Ares can serve as a comic antithesis to the relations between mortal men and women, which drive the poem to its bloody climax. Like the seduction of Zeus in the *Iliad*, the cuckolding of Hephaestus illustrates Aristotle's conception of comedy as dramatizing something painlessly funny (*to geloion*).[36]

Invulnerability promotes hilarity, and mortality seriousness. But that is not the whole story. Immortality may lower the price of levity and create a peculiar background for any mortal action, but it does not in itself make a character comic or even prone to comedy. Consider Milton's God. It is rather the asymmetric conjunction of divinity with something that smells of mortality—something unfinished, unseemly, inappropriate, or deviant (*aiskhros*), preferably physical—that makes a god *geloios*. Such is the embarrassment and error (*hamartēma ti kai aiskhos*) stumbled into by Aphrodite and her husband.[37] Hence the topics that Quintilian (3.7.7–9) prescribes for encomia of the gods (greatness, power, inventions, deeds, parents and progeny) are precisely those most susceptible to comic subversion through the imputation of mortal foibles. Accordingly, in his discussion of "fictitious hymns" Menander (341–342) singles out the birth of Athena from the

head of Zeus,[38] the subject of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods* 12, as an episode to be avoided and recommends generally that the hymnist exclude the incongruities in the myths, the principal thematic focus of dialogues such as *Zeus Refuted.*[39] But the unexpected contrast between the ontological status of the gods and their erotic, domestic, or zoological roles is not the only source of Olympian comedy. By fundamentally altering the conditions of action, immortality creates a dimension of absurdity in finite situations just as it would rob many a human act of its rationale; to place characteristically human concerns in an immortal context suspends the reasons for taking them seriously: Hephaestus' lawyerly claim to due compensation seems oddly irrelevant for a permanent aristocrat. Thus comedy erupts when contradictory aspects inherent in the paradoxical concept of anthropomorphic gods, of immortal mortals, are exposed.

Homeric comedy operates within the thematic boundaries of epic, but what finally does that tell us of its emphasis? While we are made to laugh both with and at the gods, few would agree with Butler that they are, therefore, not to be taken seriously *simpliciter.* Longinus (9.6–7), for instance, still took Homer's Olympians seriously enough to be disturbed by their implications. Similarly, Homerists who challenge the authenticity of the comic scenes with the gods do so in the belief that such scenes subvert the kind of divine authority assumed elsewhere in the poem. But the gods' status (*timē*) is not affected by Demodocus' tale; Aphrodite returns to Paphos to be anointed by the Graces, Ares leaps off to Thrace. Each is restored to his or her element.[40] The very fact that Homer's ironic mirroring of mortal heroism in Olympian comedy has been seen as both subversive (embodying "Milesian Skepticism")[41] and primitive (relics of an older mythology)[42] demonstrates how easily the remarkable latitude that even epic allowed with the gods can be construed as reflecting the divergent assumptions of different readers; the freedom that

Homer assumes and the variety of conflicting interpretations that this freedom has elicited provide a valuable point of reference for assessing the tendencies of Lucian's comic rhetorical strategies in the *Dialogues of the Gods.*

Lucian was of course thoroughly steeped in Homer. Quotations, allusions, parodies, and paraphrases of the poet pervade his corpus. No other author is drawn on as frequently or in as many different ways. O. Bouquiaux-Simon's study of Lucian's knowledge and use of Homer concludes from his apparently automatic association of related phrases that he quoted from memory but did so with an intimate knowledge of the original context, including both semantics and sound patterns. When Lucian evokes Homer's fictional world, he does so, she says, as one who had enjoyed "a prolonged tête-à-tête with the author."[43] The same agility is apparent in his adaptation of larger structures. In fact Lucian's parodic recreation of Olympian life in the miniature dialogues is less often a mere caricature of epic practice than an ironic reworking, a modernization, of the complex mode of comedy developed by Homer.

How, then, does Lucian modernize Homer? What does he add or develop and what does he choose to omit or alter in his version of Olympus? If we consider the Homeric tale of Ares and Aphrodite, there are two principal sources of comedy, plot and voice. The entrapment of the lovers is "a situation which recoils on the head of its author," a common form of comic plot, as Bergson notes.[44] Hephaestus unwittingly becomes the butt of his own machinations. But since the miniature dialogues are too short for comedy that requires more than an implicit plot, this feature is less important for Lucian than the tonal incongruities created by dramatizing the Olympians in domestic conflict. It is this that suggests Lucian's comic strategy. The shift in the means of expression in the dialogues is instrumental to his development of the gods' comic voices: instead of the stately medium of epic, lyric, or

tragic verse, the gods express themselves in the vernacular tonalities of conversational prose, the traditional mode of mere mortals—of sophists, philosophers, and characters in novels, not of gods and heroes. The use of "mortal prose" complements a distinctly un-Homeric turn in the choice of themes: in contrast to Homer's deities, Lucian's gods are concerned, not just occasionally but exclusively, with private matters—erotic adventures, domestic rivalries, past indiscretions, events barely on the fringe of epic. More important, they approach their affairs with an oxymoronic combination of shrewdness and literalism, all the while showing themselves ignorant of common mythological facts and assumptions that the audience will know. In short, they seem to have only recently arrived on Olympus and to be puzzled by the conventions that govern mythopoeic existence.

Thus the change in voice reflects an altered perspective on their experience, an estrangement from their own peculiar roles as dictated by tradition. It is this that marks the difference between Lucian's gods and Homer's and makes their conversations an ironic embodiment of contemporary distance from the ancient myths. The miniature adaptations of mythic themes differ in this respect from Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues, such as the *Anacharsis*, where the central thematic incongruities result from the contrasting perspectives of the two speakers: here the gap is between voice and role, the character's perspective and the generic context. The gods' prosaic realism and oddly circumscribed comprehension of their own predicament are perfectly inapt when applied to the superhuman happenings that make up their ordinary experience, such as metamorphosing themselves into assorted animals, deceiving houseguests with alluring clouds, or bidding the sun to postpone his daily journey (*Dialogues of the Gods* 2, 6, 9, 14). Zeus's complaint to Eros exemplifies the strategy: "Satyr, bull, swan, eagle, shower of gold—I have been everything in my time; and I have you to thank for it. You never by

any chance make the women in love with *me;* no one is ever smitten with *my* charms, that I have noticed. No, there must be magic in it always; I must be kept well out of sight; they like the bull or swan well enough but once let them set eyes on *me* and they are frightened out of their wits." Eros: "Well, of course; they are but mortals, the sight of Zeus is too much for them" (6.1 Fowlers).

While the importance of voice and style to generic orientation is a given, one aspect of Lucian's modernization may be so obvious as to be overlooked: the question of size and scale. Yet ancient authors such as Aristotle and Callimachus show an astute awareness of the relation of scale to genre and the effect of length on audience reception.[45] Lucian wrote all his works in two sizes, small and medium. In part this choice reflects the requirements of public recitation, which could easily accommodate an introductory piece and a work of moderate length (e.g., the *Symposium*) or a series of short dialogues, depending on the occasion. But, of course, size is also a generic choice, a matter of formal structure as basic as voice or theme and fundamentally related to both. Dialogues of such brevity, sometimes less than a page, were a distinct type, as unusual then as now. The comic effect of miniaturization, of telescoping mythic events to the tiny scale of these dialogues, is as integral to their conception as the Alexandrian diminution in the voice and gravity of the characters; epic magnitude (*megethos*), so essential to the leisure and complexity of Homeric narrative, is one of the principal features whose inversion informs the small world of Lucian's Olympus, shaping its character as a counterimage of heroic poetry.

The abbreviated size of the *Dialogues* is also significant because it makes possible a collection, an inherently more heterogeneous and open-ended entity than a single, continuous work. Instead of one text united by plot or argument we have a series of detachable moments, like a book of epigrams or short poems,[46] but with no detectable relation among them. (If

there is a significant pattern to either of the traditional ways of ordering the *Dialogues*, it has yet to be discovered). Taken as a whole they evoke a static mythical world, at once strange and familiar, rather than tell a story about it. Each conversation coheres as a unit, in Aristotle's sense, with a beginning, middle, and end, which, far from surprising us with a punch line or unexpected (*para prosdokian*) ending, usually serves to return us to the beginning.

Thus, Lucian's method of adapting Homer's Olympians for comic purposes is to superimpose two frames of reference so that, as in puns, irony, or parodic texts generally, "we see or hear double."[47] The voices of postclassical genres—prose fiction, New Comedy, and pastoral poetry[48]—are poured into the bottles of myth. The discrepancy between the gods' voices and their inherited roles is then exacerbated by focusing on aspects of their existence already difficult to harmonize with the more elevated conception of the gods normally found in the classical genres. Those areas of Olympian life that are on or beyond the periphery of Homer's more decorous view are brought to the fore in Lucian. Accordingly, a majority of the dialogues treat the gods' subjection to Eros and the body, themes that inhibited Lucian's finest translators, the Fowlers, from Englishing *Dialogues* 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 21 (cf. 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 23). Similarly, in other dialogues the gods confront such earthly realities as birth (13), work (4), confusion (25), jealousy (17, 18, 22), and error (16). Throughout the collection, Lucian is never merely replaying an older version or intruding absurdities. His subject is the implicit dimension of tradition, the curious and comic paradoxes the old myths generate if reimagined as literally true.

Each dialogue consists of an imagined response to a known event or set of facts; the event or facts are mythic, the gods' responses Lucianic. Thus each dialogue answers an implicit Lucianic question about a mythical datum. Datum: Zeus raped Ganymede. Question: What did the shepherd Gany-

mede think of Zeus (10)? What did Hera think of her new cupbearer (8)? Datum: Zeus gave birth to Athena from his head, to Dionysus from his thigh. Question: What kind of midwife could deliver the fully armed virgin from his cranium (13)? What did the other gods think of his "breeding all over his body" (12)? Datum: Hermes has an unusual number of functions—messenger of the gods, escort of dead souls, patron of rhetoric and wrestling. Question: Did he ever feel overworked (4)? These are the same kinds of wrongheaded, impertinent questions posed directly to Hesiod and Zeus in other dialogues (*A Word with Hesiod*, *Zeus Refuted*). They are funny because they develop a perspective on the *données* of myth alien to the genres in which a given story, or its source, was originally canonized.

Would the dialogues be funny, then, if the audience were completely ignorant of Homer or the representation of the gods in serious traditional poetry? Yes, but not in the same way or for the same reasons. For one of the principal ways in which Lucian creates the specific incongruities described above is by selecting episodes from traditional myths that allow him to cast the gods in roles adapted from other comic genres, particularly New Comedy: the beleaguered husband (8, 22), the desperate lover (6, 16), the domineering matron (8), the lazy slave (4). Mythic archetypes are translated into cultural stereotypes. Since these roles can be successfully comic even with mortal players, some of the dialogues may well seem funny to an audience ignorant of the gods' original contexts. Insofar as this is true, the humor of the dialogues is not specifically parodic. For example, the situation in *Dialogues of the Gods* 10, in which Zeus is a polymorphous pederast seducing a guileless bumpkin, Ganymede, would be funny even if we changed the names, deleted any reference to Zeus's actions or qualities *qua* god, and replaced the notion of Olympus with that of some exclusive human society. But if this secularized version were still comic, it would be because one of the central

incongruities of Lucian's original—the odd juxtaposition of the simple shepherd and the libidinal Olympian—had been preserved. Moreover, since our sense of the characters derived from more serious texts greatly accentuates the oddity of their appearance in such dislocated roles, a crucial part of the comic effect of Lucian's version is parodic. It is generally true of the *Dialogues of the Gods* that their comedy is lessened, if not lost, if a reader lacks a certain familiarity with the motifs derived from serious traditional poetry, of which Homer would naturally be the prime exemplar. This fact justifies calling their humor parodic even though only a couple of dialogues (11, 21) actually refashion passages of Homeric poetry. Indeed, the dialogues rarely depend for their effect on the audience's remembering in detail how Homer or another poet tells a particular story. They capitalize on the audience's shared knowledge rather than expose its limits. The sense of rediscovery, which Aristotle argues is the ultimate basis of all artistic pleasure (*Poetics* 1448b4–19), is highlighted in their comic effects: much of the pleasure of a reading or performance comes from the recognition of familiar elements expressed in the defamiliarizing tones and contexts of a comic impersonation. Thus are the stale motifs of myth revived.

It is interesting that in the two instances in which the *Dialogues of the Gods* draw most directly on Homeric poetry, the archaic models are comic and Lucian does not radically subvert so much as carefully rework the original. One such piece is *Dialogues* 21 (cf. 11), in which Hermes comes to Apollo to recount the cuckold's revenge on Ares and Aphrodite. The tone is familiarized, the temporal setting shifted to just after the event, the narrative (one hundred lines of Homer) condensed; yet every single point essential to Homer's fabliau is carefully retained—excluding the arbitration of Poseidon, irrelevant to Lucian's purposes—and translated into prose dialogue. Lucian even has the dialogue pivot, as does Demodocus' tale, on the comic reversal of Hephaestus' plot: instead of

exciting the gods' indignation, he has aroused their envy for Ares enmeshed in unbreakable chains with Aphrodite. (Apollo: "You mean you wouldn't have minded being tied up in such circumstances?" 21.2). While the relation between the *Dialogues* and their classical pre-texts can vary significantly, in this instance Lucian's version is no more subversive of Homer's than Homer's is of the Olympians.

All the *Dialogues of the Gods* involve some repetition of stories heard before, but Lucian always uses this fact to his advantage, making the audience's foreknowledge the premise for his own experiments. The act of displacement, the way Lucian bounces off known versions, enables the comic strategy of a given dialogue. In *Dialogues* 21 he sticks quite close to his Homeric pre-text. Even so, our knowledge of Ares and Aphrodite (or the infant Hermes in *Dialogues* 11), from texts that have been read as classics for centuries, creates an ironic context for conversations between two Olympians, one of whom is hearing for the first time—as news or local gossip—the twists of Demodocus' tale or the unusual bent of Hermes' talents as celebrated in the *Hymn to Hermes*. (Even in *Dialogues* 21 Lucian is required to reshape the archaic pre-text to the extent of suppressing the fact that Apollo was present, according to Homer, at Ares' and Aphrodite's unveiling, so that he can use him as a straight man for Hermes' story.) This is not just a matter of comic paraphrasing of the classics—like Groucho Marx giving a plot summary of *Hamlet*. The *Dialogues* are parodic fantasies on the trajectory of highly stylized characters; they imagine events immediately surrounding those that are familiar from classic versions of the myths but translated into a more contemporary tongue. In this, as in much else, the *Dialogues of the Gods* resemble the other collections of miniature dialogues based on myth or legend (*Dialogues of the Sea Gods; Dialogues of the Dead*). The questions they explore are equivalent to asking what happened to the characters before or after a celebrated film or novel; they treat as familiar and on-

going what time has endowed with the finished air of a classic. In the process they extrapolate comedy from the fictional world of the myths, inferring what might have happened from what tradition tells us did happen.

For example, Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods* 4 and 11 take up where the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* leaves off. In the *Hymn to Hermes* Apollo appears as the victim of the infant Hermes' prodigious powers of fraud. The archaic poem narrates a contest of wits between the elder (Apollo) and younger (Hermes) brother as a way of commemorating Hermes' defining qualities (*aretai*). According to the *Hymn*, "as soon as [Hermes] leapt from his mother's immortal womb, he did not lie long in his sacred cradle, but darted off in search of Apollo's cattle" (lines 20–22). The infant has no intention of playing second fiddle to the archer, as he explains to his mother when he returns: "As for honor [*timē*], I will get as much as Apollo has, and if my father [Zeus] will not give it to me, I will try—and I can do it—to be the prince of thieves" (lines 172–175). After tracking his cattle to Hermes' cave and Hermes to his cradle, Apollo attempts to extract a confession. Hermes continues to deny his role in the heist, however, until they are forced to turn to Zeus to settle the quarrel. There Hermes elaborates further lies: "Father Zeus, I will tell you the truth, for I am honest and don't even know how to lie" (lines 368–369), he says with his swaddling clothes upon his arm (388). But Zeus laughs out loud and tells Hermes to lead Apollo to the cattle. Hermes finally gives in and, after returning his cattle, charms Apollo on the lyre and makes his newly invented instrument a gift to his brother (line 496). Apollo is still wary of the infant, though, and asks him to promise not to steal anything else from him, particularly his bow and cithara; Hermes agrees. Out of gratitude Apollo formally swears friendship to him and, as a token of the new amity, gives him a golden staff and initiates him in his own art of prophecy.[49]

Significantly, in neither of the dialogues about Hermes

does Lucian focus on the infant's heroic theft of Apollo's cattle—it is not even mentioned—or have one god recount to another other events central to the *Hymn*, as Hermes retells the tale of Demodocus to Apollo in *Dialogues* 21.[50] Instead, in *Dialogues* 11 he shifts the dramatic focus from Hermes' prowess to its effects on the other gods, the victims of his peculiar range of abilities; to this end he introduces the avuncular Hephaestus, absent from the *Hymn*, enthusing over his new brother: "Have you seen Maia's baby, Apollo? Such a pretty little thing, with a smile for everyone; you can see it'll be a real treasure" (11.1). Apollo labors under no such illusion: "That infant a treasure? Well, in roguery, Iapetus is young beside it" (11.1). Evidently, the pact of amity that concluded the *Hymn* did not last long: Apollo: "Ask Poseidon; he stole his trident. Ask Ares; he was surprised to find his sword missing. Not to mention myself, disarmed of bow and arrows." The dialogue, however, does not turn on the rivalry of the brothers or the multiplication of victims—extending to Zeus and Aphrodite (11.3)—but on Hephaestus' own comic recognition of the god's nature: "Zeus, where are my tongs? . . . Did he practice thieving in the womb?" (11.2) Disbelief turns to amazement as Apollo describes the infant's fluency of speech, his wrestling victory over Eros, his invention of the lyre, and his nightly visit to Hades. Like the *Hymn*, the dialogue develops the motif of theft as a focal image of Hermes' varied attributes; his sleight of hand slides into his fluency of speech, his tripping up of Eros into the appropriation of Aphrodite's girdle at the moment of victory. The incongruous multiplicity of roles, god/infant/musician/wrestler/thief/rhetorician/messenger, already a source of humor in the *Hymn* with its piling up of unepic epithets ("A schemer, a robber, a cattle-rustler, a bringer of dreams, a night-watcher, a thief at the gates" lines 14–15) is parodically magnified by Hephaestus' wide-eyed innocence: "Why, what harm can it do, when only just born?" (11.1).

Thus, much of the same ground covered by the *Hymn* is revisited in the dialogue in an unexpected form. The specifically comic effect of the exchange between Hephaestus and Apollo depends on shifts along the axes of style, voice, and scale—in other words, in generic orientation of the kind that I have ascribed to the *Dialogues* in general. For example, our image of the infant/god from the archaic poem, where he rustles cattle, is only partially consonant with the pilfering of girdles and tongs. Classical antecedents are recalled only to be miniaturized and domesticated; obvious continuities are used to mark comic discrepancies. Our own generic expectations become the leitmotif of the *Dialogues*' humor.

Lucian's ability to reinvent the familiar, evidenced in his dexterous renovation of traditional motifs, is a crucial element in his success as a parodist. Accordingly, in treating Hermes' versatility—like thievishness a defining attribute also celebrated in the *Hymn*—in *Dialogues* 4 Lucian is again embarking on a theme so well known it would seem hard, if not impossible, to bring it to life. He must invent still another way of viewing this familiar figure. Instead of dramatizing in miniature the unforeseen consequences of having so deft a god on Olympus (as in *Dialogues* 11), Lucian imagines the practical exigencies for Hermes himself of playing so many roles; hence the god is made the main speaker and complains to his mother Maia that, far from living the life of ease gods are rumored to enjoy, he has such an absurd number of jobs in heaven that he scarcely has time to breathe:

> Mother, I am the most miserable god on Olympus . . . Am I to do all the work of heaven with my own hands, to be hurried from one piece of drudgery to another, and never say a word? I have to get up early, sweep the dining-room, lay the cushions and put all to rights; then I have to wait on Zeus, and take his messages, up and down, all day long; and I am no sooner back again (no

> time for a wash) than I have to lay the table; and there was the nectar to pour out, too, till this new cup-bearer [Ganymede] was bought. And it really is too bad, that when everyone else is in bed, I should have to go off to Pluto with the Shades, and play the usher in Rhadamanthus' court. It is not enough that I must be busy all day in the wrestling-ground and the Assembly and the schools of rhetoric, the dead must have their share in me too . . . And now here I am only just back from Sidon, where He sent me to see after Europa, and before I catch my breath—off I must go to Argos, in quest of Danaë, "and you can take Boeotia on your way," says father, "and see Antiope." I am half dead with it all. Mortal slaves are better off than I am: they have the chance of being sold to a new master. (Fowlers)

In assessing the relationship of the *Dialogues* to their archaic (or classical) pre-texts this coincidence of theme is no less significant than the divergence in tone, voice, or style. Lucian deliberately focuses *Dialogues* 4 and 11 on the god's distinctive powers and offices, the themes proper to a hymn, but from the perspectives of alien genres. As a result, in *Dialogues* 4 Hermes' singular role as the servant of the gods appears more as a burden than as an honor, his famous versatility the unenviable lot of an overworked slave; in *Dialogues* 11 his talent for fraud begins to resemble kleptomania. What is conceived of in the *Hymn to Hermes* as a feat of skill or daring is reimagined as a kind of involuntary tic (11) or socially imposed role (4). But if, in the process, the god's distinguishing traits are not only wryly acknowledged but once again made memorable, it is because of, not in spite of, the comic dislocations of Lucian's parodic portraits. Indeed, several other dialogues also recall hymns in that they commemorate, however comically, the birth and distinctive attributes of a particular god (Pan: 2; Dionysus:

22; cf. 3, 18). The intrinsic ambiguity of parody makes it a way of recuperating a tradition—often of coopting it—as well as of critiquing it from an ironic vantage point reached by an act of displacement from acknowledged classics.[51]

The Hermes pieces are interesting as examples of Lucian's technique because they straddle the most basic parodic strategies in the collection. Lucian's standard procedure in the *Dialogues of the Gods* is to develop the implicit logic of a traditional image or tale until it implodes comically or is on the verge of doing so. The possibilities for pursuing this strategy are clearly available in figures such as Pan, Priapus, or Hermaphroditus, whose physical peculiarities give them obvious comic potential (2, 3); or in younger gods or demigods, whose more ambiguous relation to the original Olympian pantheon in Homer or Hesiod makes it possible to present them as arrivistes and comic interlopers on Olympus (Heracles and Asclepius: 15; Dioscuri: 25; Dionysus: 22).[52] Any deviance from an Olympian norm (or, in some cases, a merely human one) invites parodic extrapolation (e.g., 2, 3, 15, 22). On the other hand, there are traditional authority figures, such as Zeus or Apollo, who require very different tactics if they are to be parodied—subjected to comic imitation—rather than merely ridiculed or caricatured. Lucian's solution is to place these inherently more serious and typically Olympian figures in dubious roles (Zeus as lover, mother, pederast, henpecked husband: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 22) or in compromising situations (e.g., 5, 14, 16, 17, 24) that are, nevertheless, documented by tradition. Hermes does not fit into either category easily. While his credentials as an Olympian are beyond reproach,[53] even in the *Hymn* he is a breaker of taboos and transgressor of boundaries; as such he embodies a parodic counterpoint to Olympian norms, expressed dramatically in his fraternal rivalry with Apollo. That Lucian should be drawn to this figure—he appears in the *Dialogues* more often than any other god—at once highly traditional and innately deviant, is

profoundly expressive of his approach to the past and suggests a reason for the oblique continuities between the archaic text and his own. To project this image into the language of post-classical genres is to revise a parodic mode as old as the *Hymn*. But whether developing the implications of marginal figures or portraying the principal gods in marginal roles, Lucian seeks to bring us up against the tacit assumptions of the older genres as they are embodied in a particular motif. Therein lies the logic of humor in the *Dialogues*.

The intricacies of the underlying technique of crosshatching genres of the archaic or classical periods with those of Hellenistic or imperial origin are nicely demonstrated in such works as *Dialogues of the Gods* 2, in which Lucian isolates a point on which traditions are shady, ambiguous, or contradictory and weaves from it a scene that the generic logic of hymnal or epic poetry would never allow. Both Pan and Hermes are associated with Arcadia, and the Hellenistic *Hymn to Pan* (third century) concurs with Herodotus (2.145) in making Hermes the father of the goat-footed god: at the birth of the bearded child, Pan's mother (in this version the daughter of Dryops) panics and flees, but Hermes accepts his son as, if not normal, at least his own (lines 35–46). That the *Hymn* should turn on the contrasting responses of the parents is significant for Lucian's own strategy. There were many other possible versions of Pan's origins to choose from, including one, reflecting his goatish nature, that made him the offspring of faithful Penelope—and all the suitors.[54] That Penelope and Hermes were the proud parents is simply taken for granted by Herodotus; yet, in most other respects, it is true that "Pan is utterly remote from the epic traditions."[55] Standing as he did "at the boundary of the polis culture and of humanity itself"[56] his Olympian connections were anomalous accretions on the original shaggy figure. He is not even mentioned by Homer or Hesiod. Lucian decides to set the record straight once and for all by devoting a dialogue to just this questionable element in

Pan's mythology. He does so by staging a father-and-son reunion in which the alleged father, Hermes, is reluctantly forced to acknowledge a connection with his goatish son. When Pan, who is typically portrayed in art "with goat feet and large goat horns and very often as ithyphallic,"[57] first approaches his father, Hermes disdains the very suggestion that he could possibly have engendered anything so unseemly: "I suppose I led some nanny astray," he says dismissively (2.1). But the Olympian soon begins to waffle ("Perhaps I led a nanny astray without knowing it"), and when Pan insists on quoting his mother Penelope's account of his origins, including the fact (not mentioned in the *Hymn*) that the Argeiphontes had taken the form of a goat to facilitate the "seduction" (*biazein:* 2.1), his reversal is worthy of Wilde: "Ah yes, I do seem to remember doing something like that" (2.2). Having established their relationship, Pan attempts to reassure his father that there are many reasons to be proud of his unlikely-looking son—as a dancer, a piper, and patron deity of the Athenians. He has even inherited his father's erotic proclivities. While Hermes tries to muster a polite interest in his son's accomplishments, he is clearly more concerned that this justly neglected association could prove embarrassing and concludes his unwanted family reunion with a sincere request: "Please don't call me daddy where anyone can hear you" (2.4).

Like an Alexandrian poet, Lucian brings together aspects of disparate traditions and then develops their implications in improbable directions. Thus the dialogue combines the two strategies sketched above: tracing the trajectory of an intrinsically comic figure, a poor relation of Homer's Olympians, is instrumental to casting Hermes in a questionable or marginal role. Other authors refer to Pan's parentage; only Lucian imagines Penelope giving a circumstantial account of it to Pan as she packs him off for a career in Arcadia, and Pan quoting it verbatim to an embarrassed Hermes (2.2). Hermes comes off like an errant father in New Comedy forced by circumstance

to acknowledge the forgotten offspring of his youthful adventures, while Pan comically pronounces his own encomium (2.3). We can think of the comic structure of the scene as a pair of intersecting incongruities, one horizontal, a meeting of generically alien minds—a pastoral god meets the herdsman of Olympus—the other vertical, in the discrepancy between the idealization of Hermes as a master of deceit and protective father in the *Hymn* and his nervous evasions and incompetent lying in the parodic text. The dialogue focuses on the vertical incongruity in that Hermes' recognition of Pan as his own entails admission, not only to human but also to goatish qualities. As Hermes moves from an airy rejection of the very idea of fatherhood to casual confession to the deed, the dialogue slides down the scale of god/man/beast but in the process celebrates the meeting of both ends of the joke (god/goat) in Pan himself, patron of Athens. This is in fact a characteristic movement of the *Dialogues:* the characters initially appear as the deities familiar to us above all from the high genres of epic and tragedy and are revealed by their words to be reconstituted in the language of postclassical genres. What they lose in stature they gain in proximity to the audience's world.[58] Thus the *Dialogues* are structured as a series of descending incongruities that parody the stylization and generic logic of their mythological antecedents rather than specific texts or concepts.

In the introduction to his edition of the *Dialogues* M. D. Macleod argues that "Lucian's primary purpose" is "to amuse," but "nevertheless [his] *reductio ad absurdum* of Homer's Olympians is a no less effective criticism than the more serious strictures of Xenophanes and Plato."[59] Nor is he the first scholar to discern satiric intent in Lucian's presentation of the gods of traditional religion in the *Dialogues*. While Macleod's formulation subordinates the critical function to amusement, it suggests the kind of ambiguity of voice that I have argued is characteristic of Lucian generally. But in what sense, if any,

are the *Dialogues* satiric? How can "effective criticism" of traditional religion be subordinated to literary "amusement?"

I have already argued that in those cases in which direct comparison is possible, *Dialogues of the Gods* 11 and 21, Lucian's techniques are certainly different but are not in principle any more hostile to the gods' traditional status (*timē*) than those of his playful archaic antecedents in the *Odyssey* and the *Hymn to Hermes*, especially given the greater cultural authority invested in early epic and hymnal poetry. If we compare them instead to Aristophanes, Lucian's comic practice seems positively restrained.[60] Such comparisons would be superfluous, however, if Lucian was writing in a time when the Olympians had long ceased to be taken seriously anyway, as Macleod himself claims: "scarcely any educated or intelligent man of Lucian's day could still believe in these traditional myths."[61]

This characterization of educated Greeks seems a reasonable inference in light of the sophistication of the philosophical literature written over the six centuries before Lucian, but in fact it assumes an oversimplified picture. First, it simply is not possible to isolate a norm in second-century religious beliefs, even among educated Greeks; the evidence is too complex, contradictory, and incomplete.[62] But it is not difficult to demonstrate that the myths were still taken seriously in educated circles and pondered as problems of interpretation to which many different approaches were devised.[63] The experience of Lucian's contemporary Pausanias is instructive. After recounting an Arcadian version of Poseidon's birth Pausanias explains that when he first began his study of antiquities he regarded such tales as full of foolishness but now considers them riddles (*ainigmata*) that the wise men of the past used instead of reasoned argument (*logos*). "In things relating to the divine," he concludes, "I will use the received tradition" (8.8.2–3). Elsewhere he contrasts his own historical period with a magical past in which the events related in myth that are now impossible, such as men's turning into gods or animals, actually

happened (8.2.3–4). That Pausanias' readiness to accept the old myths was somewhat exceptional is suggested by his complaint that they were now discredited in the eyes of many because of "the lies built on" the original tales (8.2.4; cf. Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 358e–f). But his comments also suggest that a serious concern with the meaning of mythical traditions, including the willingness to entertain the idea that they were "true," was not confined to philosophical allegorists, religious enthusiasts such as Aelius Aristides, or the countless patrons of oracles and sanctuaries.[64] The point is not that Lucian's audience was likely to share the attitude of a Pausanias, but that the mythical material, for all its antiquity, remained socially charged.

If we consider only the reception of literary representations of the gods, rather than that of myth in general, again the audience appears both diverse and sensitive to the interpretative issues raised by different modes of representation. It is not surprising that a cultural conservative such as the Emperor Julian was outraged at the presumably parodic depiction of the gods by the Cynic Oenomaus, a critic of oracles roughly contemporary with Lucian;[65] nor is the fact that Longinus (9.6–7) considered Homer's theomachy unacceptable unless allegorized. Both readers had philosophical reservations about traditional anthropomorphism that many would not have shared. But their responses also show how seriously sophisticated readers scrutinized the implications of different modes of representing the Olympians. An attitude more indicative of the rhetorical approach to gods in literature, as one element in a writer's repertoire, is suggested by Menander's frequent recommendations to use the Olympians, or stories about them, in various kinds of encomia; their use in the ceremonial praise of cities[66] shows that cultural prestige was still attached to them, a fact that Lucian is ready to exploit in his encomiastic pieces (*Images* and *Images Defended*) aimed at the emperor's court. The multiple roles of the Olympians make it futile to

generalize about their significance in any period, since it necessarily varied greatly according to the audience and the social and generic context; but it is clear that Lucian was writing in a time in which they remained deities of central cultural, civic, and religious importance. If we set this fact beside the ancient tradition of mythological burlesque it becomes clear why we cannot resolve the questions of the *Dialogues'* satiric tendencies by reference to social or cultural context alone.

The problem of specifying what if any satiric focus can be ascribed to the *Dialogues* raises fundamental questions about the rhetoric of Lucianic parody that we are now in a position to answer: (1) What exactly forms the object of laughter in the *Dialogues?* (2) What is its tone or ethos? As we have analyzed them, the sources of humor in the *Dialogues of the Gods* always depend on contrasts with the stylization of the older genres from which the material of the *Dialogues* is appropriated. The parodic contrast directs our attention, not to the gods per se, still less to theology, but to the language of heroization, the artifice of elevation that the high genres, especially epic, perfected for producing their particular forms of illusion. That is why we nowhere find it necessary to invoke specifically religious considerations (matters of ritual or prayer) to understand the humor, and why in antiquity it did not seem inconsistent to attribute epic parodies (*Margites*, *Batrachomyomachia*) to Homer himself.[67] This is not surprising. The distinction between literary gods and the gods of cult was long-standing and applied equally to the serious genres. As E. R. Dodds argues, "The Homeric picture of the gods has caught the imagination of the world, but it bears no close relation to the actual practice of religion as we know it in the Classical Age."[68] While Dodds may have exaggerated the distance of Homer's gods from religious practice, the autonomy of literary practice, its freedom to fashion the gods for its own ends, is clear from Homer through Aristophanes to Lucian.

Still, Homer's gods are characters in the *Dialogues*, and

parodic caricature of such idealized figures could be fashioned with a view to satirizing epic as a literary and cultural target. What attitude is evinced toward the Olympians? The literary use of the gods in Lucian is much like the use of type characters in farce and other highly stylized forms of comedy. Olympus supplies him with an entire population of known types whose traditional origins give them a set of known attributes and the illusion of existence beyond what their brief appearance in the text could possibly suggest but which the author has available to use. Accordingly, the *Dialogues* share the natural tendency of farce toward ironic acceptance of its characters' absurdities.[69] The laughter that the *Dialogues* elicit is an instinctive recognition of the gods' characteristically human responses. Indeed, it is precisely the "characteristically human" element that makes the images the gods project incongruous, out of context. The humiliating laughter used to brand a satiric target as alien is reserved by Lucian for flesh-and-blood offenders such as the prophet Alexander or the unfortunate addressee of *The Would-be Critic:* "It would fail in its object if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness."[70]

This is not, of course, to deny the distinctive Lucianic ambiguity in tone that Macleod's remarks implicitly acknowledge but to suggest that its terms are not "serious criticism" versus "literary entertainment" so much as distance versus complicity and strangeness versus familiarity, the poles of parodic scrutiny. The conservative function of parody is reflected in the second term of each pair, its critical dimension in the first, but both are merely different aspects of the same process of comic imitation. The humor renews and commemorates as well as distancing or ironizing the model. This paradox is perhaps more conspicuously at work where the model is drawn from other genres. For example, Jones has pointed out how in Lucian's essay *On the Syrian Goddess* he parodies the idiosyncrasies of Herodotean narrative in the historian's own Ionic dialect even as he uses it to invest a Syrian shrine with

the cultural prestige of the *Histories*, thereby bringing it "within the pale of Hellenism."[71] The impersonation of Herodotus reporting strange customs (e.g., 36–37) and making absurd conjectures (e.g., 6, 36–37) distances us from contemporary archaizing as something comically anachronistic, but only by indulging a taste for it to ironic excess.[72] Impersonation of this kind is an act of comic homage, of appreciative mockery.[73] In the process the prominent features of the mask, be it Herodotus, Zeus, or Menippus, are thrown into comic relief by transposition to an alien context.

The relative weight of affection and aggression is what distinguishes satiric parody as one of a series of possible kinds. When Lucian uses parody satirically to lash stylistic *alazones* such as Lexiphanes, we are left in no doubt that the model is a "target," and that the target is ridiculous. But parody may also mark differences, acknowledge distance, while evincing the kind of comically qualified appreciation that formal imitation alone makes possible, as in *On the Syrian Goddess*. The specifically comic tone of the *Dialogues* is different from either of these, just as their mythical models differ from Herodotean historiography.

Lucian's dialogic use of Olympian personae for parodic reflection on the logic of those traditions from which the Olympians themselves emerged is masterfully demonstrated by *Dialogues* 25. Apollo is deeply puzzled. It seems he cannot tell the difference between Castor and Pollux: "Hermes, have you any idea which of those two is Castor, and which is Pollux? I never can tell them apart." Hermes is on top of the problem: "It was Castor yesterday and Pollux today." Apollo's bewilderment is funny, not only because it is an odd experience for a prophet, but also because it literalizes an implication of the myth while accurately reflecting traditional iconography of the heroes, on coins for example, where they do indeed look as indistinguishable as their horses. As Apollo notes: "Each has his half eggshell, with the star on top; each his javelin and

his white horse. I am always calling Pollux Castor and Castor Pollux." The wily Hermes has no trouble here: Pollux is the one with the boxing scars. Again we are asked to literalize the myth. That Pollux, as an Argonaut, fought a heroic bout with Amycus was legendary; the resulting scars were not.[74] Moreover, by fastening on an external attribute Hermes confirms the suggestion of Apollo's question that, without labels, the heroes are as alike as two peas in a pod. Apollo is still perturbed. Why are they never seen together? Why do they alternate between Hades and Olympus? Hermes is ready with the facts: because only one of Leda's sons was immortal (as the son of Zeus), they chose to share a common fate out of brotherly love. Oblivious to the heroism of their choice,[75] the Far-Shooter is struck by its impracticality: "Not a very clever way of sharing it, was it, Hermes, since they presumably wanted to see each other." Finally, there is the economic implication to consider. "What," queries Apollo, "is their trade [*tekhnē*]? We can't very well have these big strapping fellows up here idle all the time, stuffing themselves." The practicality of the question is translated into the terms of myth and easily answered: they save sailors in storms. Apollo is reassured: "A most humane profession" (Fowlers).

Thus Lucian/Hermes plays the straight man, at home with the logic of Olympus, and Lucian/Apollo the natural jester to whose literal understanding and childlike reasoning the heroes' existence is strangely puzzling. Apollo's questions are funny only in part because of our superior vantage point, because we know the mythical data that Hermes uses to answer him. Nor is it simply that his questions point to incongruities in the myth but that the incongruities are there to point to only if the myth is assumed to be true and then interrogated as a literal reality. The tacit convention of understanding a story on its own terms is deliberately suppressed; the myth is accepted as a premise, but the terms of the ques-

tions to which Apollo subjects it are taken from a level of discourse as familiar to the audience as it is alien to that which Castor, Pollux, Hermes, and Apollo traditionally inhabit. But even to entertain Apollo's queries forces us to pretend for a moment that the story is true *simpliciter*, to reimagine it as a hard fact rather than as an odd, old myth; this act of translation, this shift of perspective, gives the *Dialogues* their playful poetic function, as if we were looking at the myths through bifocal—traditional/contemporary—lenses. It is in this sense that Lucian's treatment renews the status of the stories as myth precisely by restoring a sense of their otherness, of their unreality. As Huizinga has famously argued, "a half-joking element verging on make-believe is inseparable from true myth."[76] This merging of jest and "make-believe" makes the *Dialogues* much more than a *reductio ad absurdum* of Homer's Olympians: instead of pretending that nothing had changed, that the myths could still be used as they once had been in the high genres, the sense that they are as strangely remote as they are familiar is retained and explored through their parodic re-creation.

While this playful reanimation of myth into a series of Lucianic moments would hardly serve to inspire some forms of traditional piety and was pointedly at odds with certain contemporary modes of celebrating the Olympians,[77] its tone is wryly comic rather than tendentious or polemical. To see the *Dialogues* in the tradition of the philosophers' critiques of anthropomorphic divinities is not inconsistent with their logic, but it inserts them into a specific argumentative context they neither need nor evoke. Their "seriousness" lies not in reiterating ideas over seven hundred years old but in engaging the ancient myths from a genuinely contemporary point of view. Given the ubiquity of the gods in both domestic and public settings, the mere act of casting them in comic roles might seem radically subversive, but in fact it aligns the *Dialogues* with a tradition of mythical jesting that goes back through Old

Comedy and the satyr play to Homer and the Homeric Hymns. No comic poet, no matter how ridiculing his treatment of the Olympians, was ever prosecuted for impiety.[78] The *Dialogues* are the last representative of this tradition that licensed literary play with its gods.

In assessing the *Dialogues*' relation to traditional religious attitudes it is equally important not to oversimplify the teachings of traditional religion or to exaggerate the difference between skeptics and traditionalists. It is true that "a belief in the gods could become little more than formal without the essential attitude becoming modified."[79] An analogous genre useful for understanding the combination of gods and laughter in mythological comedy is the literature parodying the Bible and the Latin liturgy written by clerics in the Middle Ages.[80] To engage in these playful inversions of the culture's defining text and official language did not require the writer to be an enemy of popular religion. A cultural system does not imply consistency. The same audience that enjoyed Lucian's parodies might well have shown sincere respect for the ceremonies of traditional religion in other contexts, just as Lucian refers to the gods and heroes elsewhere with a straight face.[81]

In his classic essay, "Lachende Götter" (Laughing gods), Paul Friedländer takes the argument a step further: not only was burlesquing the gods not hostile to the Olympians, it was a just and intensely traditional reflection of their own nature.[82] The priest of Dionysus was, presumably, no less pleased than the rest of the audience at the buffoonery of his divine patron in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. This venerable tradition of laughing gods and laughing at gods lies behind the generic assumptions of the *Dialogues*. The Greek gods were hardly killed by laughter, as Marx suggests and Photius fondly imagined; but, on the contrary, by those who ceased to find their antics amusing—such as Lucian's contemporaries Tatian (of Assyria) and Aristides of Athens. Indeed, the Christian apologists point to many of the very same stories Lucian draws on but in a

dismissive, polemical spirit, as proof of the bankruptcy of pagan traditions. The gap between their perspectives defines the difference between standing inside and outside a given cultural tradition, between polemic that seeks to annul a rival authority and parody that assumes that authority and implies the status of its model and target.[83]

Laughter is essentially communal.[84] It evokes complicity as well as distance. In missing the proper response to a joke "you are not so much wrong as different. It is not a trivial difference."[85] What we find amusing and why defines us as part of an actual community every bit as tellingly as what we admire. Far from being a covert attack on Homer's Olympians, Lucian's miniatures are among the last successful attempts in antiquity to revitalize their role in the literary life of a particular community. In this sense, they just may be the most pious things he ever wrote. They certainly are the funniest.

Renovating Old Comedy: *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*

If this analysis of the miniature dialogues is correct, Lucian is less concerned with attacking old gods than with modernizing a tradition of mythological jesting by subjecting the myths to a variety of pointedly postclassical perspectives. In the mythological travesties, where the gods appear in invented plots or situations, he is not merely extending the same process, or putting a broader interpretation on the license to jest; he is exchanging[86] the dry Alexandrian mode of wit cultivated in the miniature *Dialogues* for a more fantastic, broadly aggressive, Old Comic brand of buffoonery marked by abrupt shifts between historic and mythic locales, linguistic caricature of classical texts, and an Aristophanic confrontation of cultural opposites, a pious Stoic and a freethinking Epicurean. It is traditional to see the inclusion of figures openly abusive of the regime on Olympus such as Momus (*Assembly of the Gods*), Cyniscus (*Zeus Refuted*), or Damis (*Zeus: The Tragic Actor*) as

distinguishing these texts from the "purely literary" miniature *Dialogues.*[87] The differences are real but reflect a generic choice more than an altered philosophical stance; to acknowledge the generic orientation of a work such as *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* does not require us to mitigate the impact of its absurdist humor or to ignore the implications of the most inventive comic writing since Aristophanes. Rather it enables us to see its divergent tendencies—literary parody versus cultural satire, the ludic versus the ridiculing—as part of an intelligible literary strategy consonant with Lucian's usual methods of adapting classical traditions to a contemporary or postclassical audience.

These methods are clearly demonstrated in the *Assembly of the Gods.* The work's comic hypothesis is "What if the gods applied the same mode of reasoning in stratifying their community that human societies do?" The hypothesis was particularly timely if the work was composed after many citizens were excluded by reason of birth from political activity in Athens (165 A.D.), but, whatever its date, "such disputes were endemic in the Greek cities of the empire"[88] and clearly relevant to the satire.The points that have been missed in discussions of the *Assembly of the Gods* are the way the gods are used and what is actually being satirized. It was once seen as an attack on the gods enfeebled by the fact that Lucian omits so many obvious contemporary targets,[89] but the mythological material is more the vehicle than the target of the satire; the production of humor and articulation of thematic structures have to be analyzed in light of each other. It is not so much "spurious gods" as the arbitrary basis of the categories used to distinguish legitimate from spurious members of a community that Lucian mocks, by applying analogous criteria to the oldest, most exclusive society in Greece, that on Olympus. Accordingly, Momus denounces only well-established gods and familiar allegorical figures such as Virtue while passing over such "spurious" new gods as Hadrian's lover Antinous. To

name them would undermine his rhetorical strategy for using Momus ("Censure") ironically to highlight the arbitrariness of the process by which one's place in an artificial construct such as a society, whether on Olympus or in Athens, is determined, a point that might well have struck an observant Syrian residing in Athens who was quite aware of his own barbarian origins. Even the most conservative Athenian aristocrat, say, Herodes Atticus, would presumably have considered Dionysus' genealogy unexceptionable as qualification for full participation on Olympus, but not Lucian/Momus the "Accuser General" of the divine assembly:

> I will mention the name. I refer, in fact, to Dionysus. Although the mother of this truly estimable demi-man [*hēmianthrōpos*][90] was not only a mortal but a barbarian, and his maternal grandfather a tradesman in Phoenicia, one Cadmus, it was thought necessary to confer immortality upon him. With his own conduct since that time, I am not concerned; I shall have nothing to say on the subject of his snood, his inebriety or his manner of walking. You may all see him for yourselves: an effeminate, half-witted creature, reeking of strong liquor from the early hours of the day. But we are indebted to him for the presence of a whole tribe of his followers, whom he has introduced into our midst under the title of gods. Such are Pan, Silenus and the Satyrs; coarse persons of frisky tendencies and eccentric appearance, drawn chiefly from the goat-herd class. The first mentioned of these, besides being horned, has the hindquarters of a goat, and his enormous beard is not unlike that of the same animal. Silenus is an old man with a bald head and a snub nose, who is generally to be seen riding on a donkey; he is of Lydian extraction. The Satyrs are Phrygians; they too are bald, and have pointed ears, and sprout-

ing horns, like those of young kids. When I add that every one of these persons is provided with a tail, you will realize the extent of our obligation to Dionysus. (4 after Fowlers)

The fact that Momus begins by denouncing as "Syro-Phoenician" (*Syrophoinikos:* 4) or "barbarian" one of the most inalienably Greek of gods, Dionysus, and proceeds to attack Pan, Silenus, the satyrs, and Zeus's eagle (8) should alert us to the irony of the Syrian's strategy. What we are made to laugh at is the absurdity of the process, which would require disfranchisement of much of Olympus, making it a comic mirror of local pretensions to stratification by birth. After the "reforms" in Athens, Heracles, who, as Momus points out (7), was once the slave of Eurystheus, would have been ineligible for membership in the Council, let alone the Areopagus.[91] The strategy is worthy of Swift and has never been properly appreciated.[92] The superimposition of a legal, social framework on mythical material creates the hilarious incongruity heard in Momus' indignant references to "tails," "snoods," and "a certain Cadmus." The humor of Momus' indictment is produced by the same descriptive technique used in the *Dionysus* and elsewhere: the data of myth are imagined realistically and described as if they belonged to some other category, namely history. The traditional anthropomorphic conception of the gods enables the ironic projection of certain specific political and social attitudes onto the mythical community.[93] "In other words the process is a metaphoric one of speaking of A as if it were B or of getting at A through B."[94] The way in which this comic perspective on Olympus serves simultaneously as a means of mocking more secular forms of authority, seen most clearly in the parodic legal decree that Zeus imposes on the assembly,[95] is the most significant connection between the *Assembly of the Gods* and the much more complex *Zeus: The Tragic Actor*.

If it is true "that something like a joke lies at the heart of every comedy,"[96] the joke at the center of *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* is a complex reworking of that of Aristophanes' *Birds*. But the economy of Lucian's joke differs significantly. The threat to sever the flow of sacrifices to Olympus is now posed not by a quasi-military blockade, as in Aristophanes, but by a philosophical dispute in Athens. The point of view from which the action unfolds is not that of the comic usurpers but of the endangered species on Olympus. Zeus is beside himself with worry: if the freethinking Epicurean, Damis, should prove that sacrifice is pointless, it would spell an end to the holy barbecues. Thus, while the threat of starvation is retained, the substance of the challenge to the gods' authority is modernized from a physical threat to a conceptual one. But it still serves to motivate a comic action: the gods visit Athens in the desperate hope of somehow influencing the debate, just as in Aristophanes they seek a negotiated settlement with Peisthetaerus, eventually buying him off with godlike power and privilege. In Lucian the threat is averted when the momentous debate dissolves into laughter and abuse. This ending is puzzling, however, because the arguments of the philosophers are not particularly original or compelling.[97] To locate the significance of Lucian's most elaborate travesty (with thirteen characters in three scenes) in this exchange of philosophic *topoi* is rather like expecting the punch line of this particular joke to be delivered by the straight man.

Of all Lucian's literary anomalies, *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* is formally closest to the kind of hybrid of dialogue and comedy that lands the Syrian in court in *The Double Indictment*. It is important to remember that it is Dialogue who brings the complaint: after all, it is his identity that is threatened by his being penned up with Old Comic poets and Cynics. To understand why Lucian has the debate in *Zeus*, mock-serious to begin with, break off in laughter, we have to ascertain the function of Dialogue in his alien new context. That requires an

analysis of Lucian's comic strategies in the travesty in which Dialogue is now firmly embedded. For, in addition to rearranging the elements of Aristophanes' joke/plot, Lucian inscribes within its framework his own distinctive mode of seriocomic jesting with traditional motifs.

The issue at stake for the gods is, as Zeus puts it, whether they shall be regarded as "mere words" (*onomata monon:* 4) or continue to be honored as before. A rhetorical view of the gods as mere names, words, representations, as cultural artifacts rather than as facts of nature, is the comic premise of the scenes on Olympus.[98] The dialogue begins with a medley of parodic verse as Hermes, Athena, and Zeus adapt their lines from classics in different genres; Hermes addresses Zeus as a servant from Menander, while Athena impersonates her own Homeric self. Zeus responds to their queries in three short Euripidean outbursts, lamenting his fate in the words of Electra (*Orestes* 1–3), cursing Prometheus as the maker of mankind, and addressing a question to his thunderbolt. No wonder Hera finds the generic signals bewildering (*komōidian, rhapsōidein, Euripidēn:* 1) and demands that they revert to prose. Whether simply from wifely cynicism or because she overheard Hermes questioning Zeus with lines addressed to a lovesick youth in Menander,[99] Hera immediately accuses the son of Cronus of hamming up another comic role, of going to pieces over an erotic entanglement with some Danaë, Europa, or Semele (2). Only when Zeus has convinced her of the gravity of the plot facing them does she concede the propriety of his tragic pose (*ou matēn . . . epetragōideis:* 5). The gods are not merely cultural artifacts but cultural aficionados. Like imperial literati (*pepaideumenoi*), when they have something serious to say they "rummage in a silt of memories" for an appropriate quotation from a classic text.

After a moment's deliberation Zeus decides to hold an emergency meeting of the divine assembly, which he bids Hermes to announce. The performer playing Hermes turns,

presumably toward the audience, and shouts, "Hey, you gods, come to the assembly. Hurry up, all of you, come on, we're going to have a big meeting" (6). Accustomed as he is to Homer and Euripides, Zeus is appalled at Hermes' utter lack of style: "Hermes! so bald, so plain, so prosy an announcement—on this momentous occasion?" (Fowlers 6). Hermes is not playing his role properly. Zeus suggests that if he added "some meter, a little poetic sonority," the gods would be more likely to come. He is perfectly aware that the desired effect depends upon adopting a suitable style. Hermes is uncooperative: "I'm no good at poetry," he explains unhelpfully.[100] A patient Zeus suggests that in that case he should borrow from someone who is—such as Homer, whom he must surely know by heart: "You presumably have him memorized." Hermes: "Well, not exactly, but I'll try" (16). Thus full of faltering diffidence, Hermes launches into a homemade bit of Homeric doggerel that in fact opens with a quotation lifted from one of Zeus's own addresses (*Iliad* 8.7), a touch that evidently gratifies Zeus, for he warmly congratulates the Argeiphontes on a job well done: "Splendid, Hermes! Now that's a proclamation" (7).

If Lucian's rhetorical strategy has not emerged from this account of the opening scene, the response to Hermes' Homeric summons should clarify it: the "gods" who appear are not merely statuesque; they are statues, led by those most famous for their workmanship—including the Colossus of Rhodes; but what bothers Hermes is not the animated icons approaching him, but how to seat them. Should they be ranked by artistic quality or by the value of their marble or gold—that is, by birth or property qualifications? The comic hypothesis of *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* is simply this: "What if the gods actually conformed so closely to the traditional modes of representation as to consist of marble or ivory, speak verse in several metrical patterns, and act, in general, like Greeks—even to the extent of quoting the classics and ranking themselves

by wealth or birth?" As the assembly of statues illustrates, the dialogue does not merely parody anthropomorphic conceptions but rather insists on the reality of the gods as a product of the imagination and as parodic reflections of their makers. Thus the modes in which the gods are traditionally imagined are put in laughing quotation marks, to adapt Bakhtin's metaphor for parody, by literalizing their figurative content.

That this is in fact Lucian's method in the travesty is made explicit in the series of absurd jokes that constitutes the assembly scene. When Aphrodite confronts Hermes and claims her place among the gods of gold, she cites Homer's repeated reference to her as "golden Aphrodite." Hermes is too shrewd for her, though. He looks her over and replies, "Not so, Aphrodite, if I can trust my eyes, I am quite blind or you are white marble; you were quarried, I take it, from Pentelicus, turned by Praxiteles' fancy into Aphrodite and handed over to the Cnidians" (10 Fowlers). The point of these jokes lies in the suggestion that the gods originate not merely in art but specifically in the arts of the classical past; thus individual gods exist not only in multiple versions but also in distinctive styles, of which Zeus shows himself an astute observer: "Who is this breathless messenger? Bronze—a nice clean figure and outline—coiffure rather out of date. Ah, he must be your brother, Hermes, who stands in the market by the Stoa" (33 after Fowlers). The method of literalization serves to accentuate the materiality and historicity of traditional images. The estranging effect produced by effacing the distinction between *repraesentans* and *repraesentatum* serves precisely to remind us of the difference between the two; it is by doing so that comic literalization activates the conventional, or dead, metaphorical content of traditional images[101] by calling attention to their artificiality.

As Zeus's comment on Hermes' brother, "Hermagoras," indicates, there are two distinct kinds of gods on Lucian's Olympus: those immobilized in time as statues, and others,

like Zeus, who see them from a contemporary point of view as "rather out of date" (*arkhaios:* 33). Each type of parodic creation reflects a different way in which tradition impinges on the present: as a collection of timeless images and as a script for contemporary roles. Those gods who are not parodied by being assimilated to specific texts or artifacts are imagined rather as contemporaries masquerading in the roles that tradition has scripted. Hence the title: Zeus as tragic actor; the *tragōidos* sought to impersonate the personae of myth, the peculiar dynamics of which, from a postclassical perspective, the impersonator of Menippus, Zeus, and Solon knew from experience. Both the god as statue and the god as actor are literalistic ways of representing conflicting assumptions of anthropomorphism: (1) that the gods are like their idealized images in art, and (2) that they are like us. The first type literalizes the tendency toward idealization as the second does that toward realism, as in Hermes' comment on the feast of the gods: "Heracles! What a noise! Day after day: 'Give us our shares!' 'Where is the nectar?' 'The ambrosia is all gone!' 'Share those victims!' " (13). Both types are merely different ways of reflecting on the reality of tradition: its origin in artistic projection and its reception in "the script," those "large chunks of precise and exquisitely shaped material internalized by memory at an early age."[102]

Those gods who are not presented as marmoreal embodiments of a classical style are prosaic derogations of all that style implies. The gods as actors labor under the burden of living up to their inherited roles, those polished images and texts that constitute the classical past in the present, and are no better at it than many of Lucian's contemporaries must have felt themselves to be in analogous contexts. When Zeus is about to address the assembled divinities he is struck with stage fright and all but forgets his Demosthenes (14–15). Apollo tries to squirm out of giving an oracle in public and, when pressured into it by Momus, succeeds only in sputtering

out some incomprehensible verse (31). Heracles' advice on how to cope with "The Present Danger" is violent and dull-witted. Zeus's delicate sensibilities are offended by the idea of destroying the elegant sculpture on the Stoa, so fine a theme for declamation:

> Now by Heracles—I can swear by you, I certainly cannot swear by your plan—what a crude—what a shockingly philistine suggestion! What! Destroy all those people for one man's [i.e., Damis's] wickedness and the Stoa thrown in, with the Miltiades and Cynaegirus on the field of Marathon? Why, if these were ruined, how could the orators ever make another speech, with the best of their stock-in-trade taken from them? (32 Fowlers)

These gods are as alien to their idealized images in verse and stone as the audience would have been. It is this that makes them such fitting expressions of the comic gap between the audience's self-awareness and the inherited forms of its art and literature.[103]

It would make as little sense to deny that the travesty ridicules conventional conceptions of the gods as it would be reductive to suggest that it does nothing more than that. The mythic creatures provide the means of parodic reflection on the nature and reception of classical culture in Lucian's empire. Lucian knew firsthand the studied preoccupation with form and precedent that characterizes a classicizing culture. The reality of an Aelius Aristides might seem as precariously dependent on evoking his beloved Isocrates as Hermes' is on Homeric hexameters. Indeed, in his own way Lucian manifests many of the same concerns with self-validation by identification with tradition. His marble Aphrodite and Demosthenic Zeus are mocking comic metaphors for slavishly literal forms of traditionalism of the kind he subjects to ironic scrutiny in the special cases of Atticism in *Lexiphanes* and

historiography in *On the Syrian Goddess*. As always with Lucian, the material of the old myths is of more interest for what it says and can be used to say about its makers than as the expression of erroneous or antiquated doctrine.

This particular mode of mockery that parodies the gods of myth by reducing them to aesthetic conceptions, to statues and actors, appears to be completely original to Lucian.[104] It is at the same time, as we would expect, a distinctively Lucianic way of reconstituting a venerable tradition of free and open ridicule of the powers that be that formed a conspicuous part of Old Comic practice. While presenting the gods of epic as bumbling incompetents dithering over seating arrangements and prooemia may also recall the inversion of epic heroism in the archaic *Margites*[105] (seen as the model [*skhēma*] of comedy by Aristotle), the Old Comic art of vilification with its roots in iambic blame poetry[106] is more immediately relevant. In presenting the gods in the role of children precariously dependent on mortal approval and subject to the harsh reproaches of the "Accuser General," Momus, Lucian is clearly inverting the normal relationship of god and man in much the same way that Aristophanes did when presenting gods "not only as worsted by aggressive humans, as in *Birds*, but also as stupid, greedy and cowardly."[107] Even the explicit connection between the withholding of sacrifices and the misconduct of the Olympians as rulers, the recurrent theme of Momus and Damis, is prefigured in Aristophanes:

Hermes: Ever since Wealth recovered his sight no one offers incense or bay or a cake or an animal—not a single thing—to us gods anymore.

Karion: No, and they won't either. You gods looked after us pretty badly when you had the chance. (*Wealth* 1113–17, Dover trans.)

Dover characterizes the aggressive humor directed at the gods in Old Comedy as a licensed fictional means of "ridi-

culing the ruler,"[108] of venting the pent-up hostilities of subalterns against the social and heavenly hierarchy to which they were subject. This analysis applies *mutatis mutandis* to Lucian. The tacit analogy such jokes assume between gods and rulers—"What is a god? That which wields power [*to kratoun*]. What is a king? Like a god [*isotheos*]"[109]—and between worshipers and subjects would have been enhanced by the fact that in Lucian's time rulers were deified and accorded cult status and that in *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* it is specifically the gods' failure as rulers that is used against them. The point is emphatically not that the emperor was being covertly satirized; even Lucian was not that devoted to *parrhēsia*, and, insofar as it is part of the effect, the humor cannot be covert. But the assimilation of the emperor to the Olympians, the carefully cultivated congruity between divine and secular orderings,[110] would color and fuel the comic insubordination involved in caricaturing the Olympians, giving it a specifically contemporary dimension absent from other more ludic forms of mythical parody such as the *Dialogues of the Sea Gods*. Thus to see the critical element of the comedy as traditional is not to deny its abusive force but to define it more precisely and to recognize that ridiculing forms of speech licit in some contexts have the force they do only if they remain illicit in others.[111] The presence of role inversion and the ridicule of authority figures in the dialogue illustrate how Lucian appropriated as a generic feature of Old Comedy the "saturnalian" element, or comic license, that was originally a function of the festive occasion of performance.[112]

The consequences of generic context are no less significant for construing the philosophical contest that motivates the action. Once it is recognized that the great debate between Damis and Timocles is closer in function to the mutual thrashings of an Old Comic *agōn*[113] than to the deliberate scrutiny of a Platonic dialogue, the familiarity of its philosophical content ceases to be a defect: the typicality of the positions adopted is

instrumental to the effect. The *agōn* is always a clash of highly stylized opposites that comically schematize positions that would be seriously upheld elsewhere, much as do the caricatures of political cartoons.[114] The agonists serve to capture in a few broad strokes the defining features of a recognizable type: the laughing atheist (cf. Plutarch, *On Superstition* 169d) is to serious Epicureanism what the angry Timocles is to Chrysippus.[115] Lucian modernizes the *agōn* by recasting it as antilogical debate that recapitulates the issues raised by the travesty in a rival form of discourse, which can then be comically juxtaposed with the fractured world of the aging myths. It thus allows Lucian to bring preexisting but alien traditions into collision, thereby reviving Old Comic structures in a distinctively second-century guise.

In its earliest comic forms, as in Epicharmus, the agonistic exchange was between natural or divine opposites such as Land and Sea or Male and Female Reason (*Logos* versus *Logina*).[116] In Aristophanes the agonists are used to evoke cultural or political standpoints but often recall these more permanent oppositions as well, as in the battle of the sexes (*Lysistrata*) or the clash of generations (*Clouds*).[117] Nevertheless, it is always clear who will win and why. The same is true of the battle of the sects in Lucian. Damis is voluble, ironic (52), and adept at public speaking; Timocles, a surly pedant, is incapable of addressing a general audience. A rhetorician's dig at "hairsplitting" philosophers animates their duel. The opposition of styles underlies and justifies Damis's victory in perennial comic terms: easy laughter and rhetorical agility win out over stale syllogisms and Procrustean traditionalism; common sense defies doctrine.

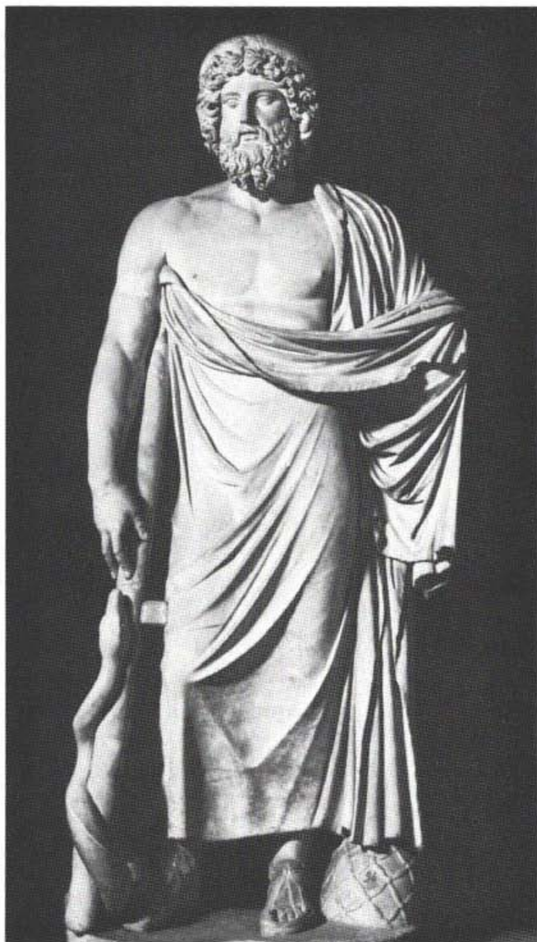
If both sides use points that could be and had been taken seriously in other contexts (e.g., in Cicero and Sextus Empiricus), Lucian's method of staging the debate continually disrupts the agonists' emphasis on rational argument and counters the apparent seriousness of Damis's victory. The use of gods

as auditors for the *agōn* finds an obvious precedent in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, but Lucian is here playing with the epic use of gods as spectators of fateful duels whose outcome they may lament but are unable to alter.[118] While the divine audience of epic serves to intensify the significance of the action witnessed, these jittery gods provide a comic echo, a ludicrous context, for both the theses about them: (1) they do indeed hear Damis "blaspheming," as Timocles insists (36–37), (2) but they are in fact unable to control events, as Damis argues. Coenen rightly compares the gods' role in this scene to that of the buffoons (*bōmolokhoi*) of Old Comedy, whose comic byplay is appreciated by the audience but ignored by the agonists.[119] Thus, when, in the most serious exchange in the debate, Damis offers persuasive arguments against the order of nature, the authority of the poets, and the *consensus gentium* as evidence for divine governance (38–42), Zeus panics, repents of his negligence as a monarch, and promises "to introduce reforms" (42 Fowlers). Similarly, after Damis crowns his argument by developing a counterinterpretation of Timocles' world-as-ship trope, Zeus notes punningly how easily "capsized" (*euperitrepta*) the Stoic's positions are. The two levels of action, human and divine, in this final scene create a characteristically Lucianic mode of interplay between types of discourse and planes of awareness—between the ostensibly decisive debate aimed at a human audience and its ludicrous reception by an audience of eavesdropping deities.[120] But where does this interplay lead Lucian's audience?

The juxtaposition of such radically different forms of discourse as antilogical debate and mythological travesty does, of course, serve to elucidate the philosophical assumptions of the travesty:[121] insofar as the content of the debate casts a dubious light on the mimetic validity of serious mythological poetry, it confirms Zeus's worst fear, that the gods will be revealed as "mere words." But the significance of the debate itself is mediated by the responses of those ridiculous mytho-

logical creatures who remain before us after the debate dissolves. The reader may well be left wondering whether Lucian's joke is really on Zeus or on Damis, whether the Epicurean's rhetorical figures (*paradeigma:* 49) are actually presented as more reliably imitative of the world than epic conventions, or whether the authority of the many genres of speech used in the text is not made to appear strictly relative to context and occasion: this clash of gods and philosophers is aimed less to persuade[122] than to give the audience a temporary comic release from both their forms of seriousness. Damis is right to exit laughing. Lucian's comic reworkings of mythology are neither Epicurean propaganda nor sophistic frippery, but a peculiarly second-century form of literary jesting; as such, they reflect Mary Douglas's characterization of jokes in a traditional society by bringing together in a single context conventions expressive of widely disparate traditions to "afford the opportunity for realizing that an accepted pattern has no necessity" and in so doing to give the audience "an exhilarating sense of freedom from form in general."[123] For an age so acutely sensitive to correctness of form as determined by inherited patterns, the parodic impersonations of the "irresponsible Syrian" must have been exhilarating indeed.

Chapter Four ❧



Asclepius and his snake. Napoli Museo Archeologico Nazionale.

Sudden Glory
The Revenge of Epicurus

Writing satire is a literary not a political act, however volcanic the reformist or even revolutionary passion in the author. Satire is moral rage transformed into comic art.

—*Philip Roth, "On 'Our Gang'"*

The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly.

—*Hobbes,* The Elements of Law

IN THE only anecdote we have about Lucian himself Galen reports that he forged some dark sayings meaning nothing, attributed them to Heraclitus, and then used some intermediaries to induce a respected local philosopher to expound their meaning![1] Not only did the philosopher fail to see through the ruse; he prided himself on the acuity of his readings. Lucian contrives a similar trick in *Alexander or the False Prophet* when he submits mock-questions to the oracle (Where was Homer born? 53) to sabotage its claim to prophetic knowledge. In fact the rhetorical uses of fakery, of feints and poses, to expose the poses of others is a technique that Lucian relished. It depends not merely on the author's adopting a pose or playing a role but also on his masking the relationship between himself and any given voice or the same voice at different moments in a text or performance. Hence the difficulty of locating Lucian in relation to Menippus, Anacharsis, or the Herodotean "I" of *On the Syrian Goddess*. Yet the satiric provocateur behind the *Alex-*

ander is too often read as if he were Arrian in a malevolent mood instead of the ventriloquist of the dialogues experimenting with still another form. While the *Alexander* has been carefully studied as a historical document and its factual basis firmly established,[2] a by-product of this focus is, as Fox argues, that "even now [it] is read too literally as history without due allowance for Lucian's gifts of parody and satire."[3] Too little attention has been paid to the way in which Lucian adapts the techniques that typify his work, of self-dramatization and appropriation of tradition both serious and ironic, to transform his frank hatred for the prophet into the "sudden glory" of the *Alexander*.

The most successful attempt to assess the literary stratagems that shape the *Alexander* remains that of Bompaire.[4] While conceding some value to the view advanced by Reitzenstein and Levy that the *Alexander* is a satiric parody of the legend of Pythagoras and, with it, the genre of aretalogical writing, Bompaire prefers to characterize the text as a "pamphlet" that utilizes a compendium of parodic techniques: blending inapposite materials from both popular and literary accounts of Alexander the Great and Pythagoras, Lucian creates a parodic *jeu d'esprit* by "comic transfer," a "synthesis of parodic techniques," and "diabolical fantasy," so that in the end the *recréation* of fiction is more important than the work's literary target (in this case, aretalogy) or satiric focus. Bompaire's analysis shifts the emphasis, then, from the biographical sources of the work read as a pamphlet, a calculated attack with personal or ideological motives, to its formal resources stressing the primacy of literary *recréation*. Although there is much to be said for the latter approach, in that it recognizes the autonomy of the text and does not seek to reduce it to a single function (such as parodying a particular aretalogy or pillorying a personal enemy), it detaches the work so completely from any social context as to denude it of its overt satiric force. This formulation of the work's parodic character

takes no account of the serious aims the narrator explicitly claims for his efforts (61). Indeed, the question of the narrator's role seems to have fallen out of sight in all discussions of the work, as if we could assume that there is no artifice in the author's self-presentation—just a few incidental lies.[5] Bompaire thus leaves unexplained the puzzling relation between the parodic cast of much of the work produced by *la volonté de recréation* and the spirit of serious quasi-philosophical polemic that often animates the Epicurean narrator. His analysis leads too easily to the conclusion that the work's *livresque* character automatically excludes historical *actualité*. He therefore tends to underestimate the value of Reitzenstein and Levy's attempt to place the *Alexander* in the relevant cultural context of the serious traditions of wonder-literature in which figures like Pythagoras and Apollonius are portrayed sympathetically.[6]

To specify the sense in which the work draws on and responds to such various rival traditions it will be useful to look at an authentic example of the kind, one in which the narrator shows some interesting points of tangency with Lucian's Alexander and which can serve as a foil to his comic treatment of the type.[7] Such an example is provided by the letter written to the emperor by the famous "physician" of the first century A.D., Thessalus of Tralles.[8] The text handed down under the names of Thessalus and Hermes Trismegistus is a proclamation of its author's skills and shows how closely intertwined the traditions of "aretalogy," "paradoxography," and Hermetic literature could be in practice.[9] Each of these traditions works by making a simple and direct appeal to the reader through the presentation of *paradoxa* (marvels or wonders).[10] The systematic appeal to wonder, whether through tales of magic and revelation or catalogues of natural marvels, indicates the underlying affinity of these traditions. Certainly the author of the letter knows what will capture the attention of his audience: he uses the word *paradoxa* twice in his first sentence. He opens his letter to the Caesar with the

grand claim that while many have undertaken to hand down marvelous things (*paradoxa*), the darkness obscuring their thoughts prevented them: he, Thessalus, alone in all time has been able to produce a certain marvel, namely the work at hand. We then learn that like the medical talents of Lucian's Alexander, Thessalus' ability to provide this remarkable benefit originates in a privileged relationship with the god of healing, Asclepius. He proceeds to tell us that, having met with disappointment after studying the work of King Nechepso in Alexandria, he withdrew into inner Egypt, where he tearfully entreated a priest of Asclepius to bring him into contact with a god. Apparently taking to heart the Hippocratic maxim *ars longa vita brevis*, Thessalus chose to leave medical school in favor of revelation. After three days of preparatory exercises he was led, with his papyrus and ink secretly in hand, into a house and left by the priest before the seat of the god—where Asclepius promptly appeared and dictated the treatise on astrological botany which is the source of Thessalus' wisdom and which he proceeds to pass on to the reader in the rest of the letter. Nechepso knew the correct herbs, it seems, but not where and when they must be gathered. Armed with this information, Thessalus offered an incomparable form of therapy to his prospective patients; he was apparently very popular in Nero's Rome.

Lucian's Alexander is cast in the same mold. His claim to public attention and the status of prophet is also based on his story of a privileged relationship with Asclepius. Hence he is often consulted on medical problems, and Lucian concedes that he has some elementary knowledge of cures (22). (He was particularly fond of prescribing his own brand of bear's grease.) His appeal is much broader and more compelling than that of a Thessalus, however, whose wisdom was confined to revealed medicine; for, by establishing the oracle at Abonoteichus, Alexander could hold out the promise of power over future events and insert himself in an ancient pattern of con-

sulting the gods. With this institutional base he launched a career as prophet and healer that would have excited the envy of Thessalus, who boasts of his own success in his epitaph: "Conqueror of Doctors" (*iatronikēs*).[11] These two figures, with their stories of divine favor and supernaturally acquired knowledge, exemplify much of the appeal of the ancient literature of saving wisdom and revealed truth. Unlike their divinely favored predecessors in the old myths, these heroes are willing and able to market the preternatural gifts of the gods as the prescience of personal destinies and the cure for mortal natures. As Festugière observes, "The interest of these little treatises is that they allow us to enter into the quick of an infinitely complex society where, besides serious physicians, one can meet charlatans who promise an Eldorado for a few obols."[12] Indeed, at the close of his letter Thessalus suggests that mortality itself will yield to the power of certain plants or stones, while Alexander optimistically prophesies a miraculously long life—for himself (61; cf. 24).

The point is not just that there is evidence for other men like Lucian's Alexander, but that Lucian can use him to represent a known type whose virtues had been celebrated and creeds promulgated in various kinds of serious religious and parascientific literature. What makes Thessalus particularly interesting is that as a successful practitioner at Rome he shows how close the fabled sages of the day were to representing existing social types. Thus we can glimpse how in the representation of this figure, the charismatic sage dispensing philosophical arcana and exotic cures, social and literary categories overlap. It is this overlap of wonder literature with religious/medical practice that enables Lucian to use Alexander to make an argument,[13] to present his literate attack in the spirit of public reform. Thus does revenge become art, a personal grudge a memorable act of verbal malice.[14] To generalize his polemic Lucian calls attention to the prophet's ties to Pythagoreanism through Apollonius of Tyana (5), an asso-

ciation that would by no means discredit him in the eyes of many. The laughter that Alexander's rise and fall is used to elicit has broad implications, given that his operation in Abonoteichus was in fact typical of the oracles of the day; even the collaboration between oracles and philosophers has contemporary parallels.[15] Alexander's career provides the material for the satire but is only its proximate target. But if the *Alexander*, or the ideologically similar *On the Death of Peregrinus*, is not simply an exercise in malice for its own sake, the vitriolic energies of traditional blame literature (*psogos*, *iambos*) are vital rhetorically to making it an effective satiric antidote to the myth-making literature of idealization and wonder.

In the case of Alexander of Abonoteichus the process of mythologization expressed itself in more concrete forms than legends or aretalogies. Images of his serpent, Glycon, with a human or lion's head appear on coins into the next century.[16] The only other cults appearing for the first time in approximately this period and achieving comparable prominence were those of Jupiter of Doliche and Mithras.[17] There is no known instance in the pagan world in which a single "religious genius" achieved success equal to that of Alexander. He appeared from nowhere and convinced people throughout much of the Mediterranean basin that he was, in some sense, intimate with the divine. In choosing the founder of so successful a cult—one that had followers in the emperor's court (52)—as the vehicle for his satire, Lucian was undertaking an unusually ambitious project.

Although Lucian used to be accused of being a poor observer of his age,[18] in focusing his satiric narratives on the power acquired by certain charismatic figures such as Alexander and Peregrinus whose wondrous feats could elicit religious awe, effect conversion to a cult, and ultimately create belief in their own apotheosis, he is in fact directing his irreverent gaze toward what seems in retrospect to be among the defining characteristics of his time.[19] When Lucian wrote these satires

the process of canonization of both Alexander and Peregrinus was by all indications well under way. The cult of Alexander's snake, Glycon, apparently flourished into the third century. Peregrinus undoubtedly had his apostles (such as Theagenes) ready to appoint him to the Cynic pantheon beside Heracles and Diogenes. It is just this process of idealization and apotheosis that Lucian's satiric narratives contrive to challenge and subvert. In the *Peregrinus* the narrator himself invents an account of Peregrinus' ascension that is shortly repeated to him as "evidence" of the Cynic's apotheosis. Lucian is clearly interested, not just in Alexander and Peregrinus themselves, but in the process whereby such figures gain their mythical stature. If the tendency to engage in the idealization of certain figures—whether because of their personal qualities or institutional settings—is in fact one particularly expressive of this period, as Peter Brown argues,[20] those works of Lucian in which the heroes of incipient legends of apotheosis are recast as the protagonists of satiric comedy represent a timely use of parodic inversion.

To satirize the type successfully the writer has to rob him of the source of his power: his ability to evoke awe and wonder in his audience. For the prophet's hold on his followers is a function of their belief in the marvels of prophetic knowledge and the remarkable benefits it promises to those whom the prophet favors. In resting his claim to the public's attention and admiration on forms of miraculous knowledge—for the oracle recognizes nothing beyond its ken—Alexander was typical of the religious movements of his time, in which the essential ingredient of conversions was the proclamation of wonders. Hence, to deprive the prophet's legend of the power of effecting further conversions the satirist must retell it so as to provoke another response, one inimical to wonder—namely laughter. The satiric strategy of the *Alexander* is to recast the sacred history of Alexander into a kind of rogue fiction. Here is the *volonté de recréation.* Lucian appropriates for comedy the

fiction that he claims Alexander created and lived for his own purposes and—what may be most astonishing to his satirist—persuaded so many others to live with him.

Accordingly, in the satiric narratives such as the *Alexander* and *Peregrinus*, the "traditional" charges made by the satirist, that the prophet had prostituted himself or that Peregrinus was a parricide, are of less importance to the attempt to dethrone them from the esteem in which they are held by their admirers than the sequence of theatrical metaphors through which both are presented as role-players, actors (*hupokritai*) who make their very existence into living theater for a paying audience. Underlying these satires is an unmistakable fascination with the protagonists' success in projecting their self-created identities, a fascination matched only by a sense of indignation and disbelief at the willing collaboration of those upon whom they impose. *Mundus vult decipi* is their unavoidable conclusion. The discrepancy between the public and private selves, between the honored prophet of Asclepius and the cagey operator whose grandiose fantasies all but escape mortal constraints, is the genesis of much of the comedy as well as the means of exposing the theatrical nature of the performances. Henry Fielding's discussion of the source of "the true Ridiculous" in the preface to *Joseph Andrews* furnishes the best introduction to this type of Lucianic comedy:

> The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation . . . Now, affectation proceeds from one of these two causes, vanity or hypocrisy: for as vanity puts us on affecting false characters in order to purchase applause; so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavor to avoid censure, by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues . . . From the discovery of this affectation arises the Ridiculous—which always strikes the reader with surprise and pleasure; and that in a higher and stronger degree when the

affectation arises from hypocrisy, than when from vanity: for to discover anyone to be the exact reverse of what he affects, is more surprising, and consequently more ridiculous, than to find him a little deficient in the quality he desires the reputation of.

While affectation is clearly not the "only source of the true Ridiculous," Fielding's formulation of it as one of the principal sources of the comic has wide applicability and could not be more germane to Lucian. For by making Alexander's career into a comedy of affectation, the satirist uses wit to bypass troublesome arguments about superstition and prophecy, which provided the focus of more traditional polemics.[21] In this he reflects one of Freud's most astute observations in *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, that wit has the power to provoke laughter independently of our reasoning processes. Laughter is, in this sense, an intuitive response and hence can be used to reinforce a supporting argument or to circumvent an opposing one without our engaging in the logical process of argumentation normally required to convince us that something is the case: "Where wit is in the service of the cynical or skeptical tendency, it shatters the respect for institutions and truths in which the hearer had believed, first by strengthening the argument, and second by resorting to a new method of attack. Where the argument seeks to draw the hearer's reason to its side, wit strives to push aside this reason. There is no doubt that wit has chosen the way that is more psychologically efficacious."[22]

Some of Lucian's prospective audience who might be provoked into laughing at Alexander might not be swayed by a polemical treatise arguing against the possibility of his having the prophetic powers he claimed, or disputing the historical evidence that he did. The satirist chooses the "more psychologically efficacious" way. By making the prophet comical the narrator can challenge the reader to question the seri-

ousness with which such figures, embossed on coins, are usually regarded. This seriocomic strategy, in which wit supplants argument, using laughter to shape our considered perceptions of the grounds for admiration, is embedded in the very form of the *Alexander* and is reflected in the character of its narrator.

Now we are in a position to begin to answer the question that Bompaire's discussion skirted. Is the narrator out to teach us something, or only to divert us? If, as he claims in the final chapter (61), the work has both functions, what is the relation between the two? Are they different aspects of the same process or competing tendencies within the text? The simplest answer to these questions is the one suggested above—that tendentious wit integrates the stated aims of the work to divert and instruct, and the principal form in which the wit is expressed is that of the comedy of affectation, the exposure of the comic discrepancy between image and reality. But this formulation of the role of humor in the text needs to be specified with reference to the actual process of narration and the rhetoric of the narrator himself. What is his relationship to the story he tells, and how does he function as part of the intended effect of the *Alexander?*

The *Alexander* is an epistolary biography (*bion:* 1) consisting of narrative, comic dialogue between a man and a serpent (43), and many oracles. It is addressed to a certain Celsus[23] who is periodically apostrophized to remind us of his role (1, 17, 20, 21, 61) and whose Epicurean and rationalist attitudes are used to form part of the work's thematic structure and establish its moral tone. Ancient biography as we see it in, say, Plutarch is directly concerned with the moral evaluation of its subject, with his *ēthos* (character). The *Alexander* shares this interest in exploring one variety of *ēthos*—that of the religious entrepreneur—which is depicted in part by the satirist's contrasting it unfavorably with that of the wise Epicurean, shared implicitly by the narrator with his addressee and, through

him, with the community of fellow Epicureans. Furthermore, the aim of Plutarchan biography is explicitly didactic: the narrative description of virtuous qualities in the lives of famous men is intended to inspire imitation of those qualities by the reader (cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 1–2). Similarly, the narrator of the *Alexander* attributes a certain utility (*khrēsimon ti:* 61) to his own work, if not in inspiring virtue, at least in refuting dangerous falsehoods and "confirming certain truths in the minds of discerning readers" (61). By placing his narrative in this explicitly didactic biographical framework, the author prepares the reader for a comic inversion of conventional biography, for while the relationship of our narrator to his subject is almost the reverse of that of Plutarch's to his, he insists on observing the niceties of the form. In the opening paragraph he solemnly emphasizes the difficulty of the task and compares the greatness of his theme to the paradigmatic subject of traditional biographical writing: Alexander of Macedon.

Our narrator's conscientious adherence to the conventions of biography when his subject is so atypical of the genre only calls attention to the oddity of his own role. Not only was there no tradition in antiquity of chronicling a rogue's progress (such as later appears in fictional form in Boccaccio, Thomas Nashe, or Fielding),[24] but E. L. Bowie has shown how surprisingly rare contemporary themes were generally in later Greek literature.[25] Our biographer is aware of the problem and in the Plutarchan manner addresses the question of his work's purpose and value at its outset in order to make clear exactly why his chosen subject warrants our serious attention. It is not, as Celsus might think, a slight or trivial (*mikron te kai phaulon:* 1) matter to record roguery (*kakia*) as great in magnitude as was the heroism (*aretē*) of Alexander the Great. The theme of *kakia* defines the specifically comic nature of the narrative in a way Plato or Aristotle would recognize.[26] What distinguishes this comic protagonist and makes him worthy of a biographer's labors is the heroic scope of the *malitia* ascribed

to him. Indeed, so great is the biographer's task (*athlon:* 1) that he repeatedly urges the reader "to fill in the gaps" (11), to stretch his imagination (*epinoēson:* 4; cf. 16) to conceive Alexander's knavery. But the very magnitude of Alexander's *kakia* poses a paradox: the value of biography as it was traditionally conceived was largely a function of the virtuous qualities its subject was thought to have demonstrated, however imperfectly. Acknowledging this difficulty when considering the value of recording Alexander's life, our narrator confesses that he is ashamed to take so seriously (*spoudē:* 2) the task of preserving in the public memory a character unworthy of the attention of his learned audience.[27]

He apparently solves this dilemma to his own satisfaction, however, by citing a precedent (*paradeigma:* 2): the practice of Arrian, Alexander of Macedon's biographer. If so respectable a historian, a student of the Stoic Epictetus, thought it worthwhile to record the life of the desperado Tillorobus, who was active only in remote forests and mountains, then it is obviously worth remembering the exploits of a much more savage (*ōmoterou*) villain whose field of action included cities and, indeed, the whole Roman Empire. This is persuasive reasoning indeed. Our narrator claims to be ashamed (*aidoumai:* 2) of his subject and compares writing his life to cleaning out the dung (*kopros:* 1) from the Augean stables—"that three thousand oxen were able to produce over many years" (1); but when asked for his reasons, he replies, in effect, "Ask Arrian": "he can plead our case for us" (2). But Arrian's distinction as a historian and biographer was hardly attributable to his life of Tillorobus, of which no other trace survives.[28] Apparently our narrator was alone in taking it as the exemplar of any genre. Instead of reassuring the audience of the familiar aims and values of biographical writing, this comically circuitous apologia, so reminiscent of the evasions of Lycinus, forces on our attention the artifice of a self-conscious narrator who feels the need to explain himself because of the

patently incongruous nature of his undertaking. We may well find ourselves feeling that we have yet to grasp fully the narrator's real motives.

The introduction to the *Alexander* (1–2) is clearly playful, ambiguously serious and comic. It involves a typically Lucianic application of the conventions of a given genre to material that is comically alien to it. While Alexander's only claim to distinction is the dubious one of his criminal nature, our narrator insists on dignifying his interest in so unedifying a spectacle even if it means inverting the canons of biographic writing. The more seriously he presses his case, the more comic it becomes. So, while he offers as his explicit motive his desire to please his friend Celsus and insists that his choice of theme does indeed conform to precedent, what may linger in the reader's mind is his allusion to Heracles' Augean labor, with its distinctly Cynic odor,[29] and his surprisingly savage assertion that, despite what he is claiming, his subject would be more justly "torn to shreds" by apes and foxes "before a vast crowd" (12) than preserved for posterity by a sophist's talents. This wry and intentionally incongruous self-presentation with its comically atypical precedent, professions of shame and loathing, and muckraking metaphor for the text alerts the audience to the ludic, deliberately eccentric ethos of this would-be biographer and suggests that the story he tells should be taken accordingly—with a few grains of salt and a sophist's sense of narrative as rhetorical performance.

To see that these effects are deliberate, and peculiar to the *Alexander*, we need only compare its narrator and narrative procedure with the Lucianic satire that most resembles it, *On the Death of Peregrinus*. In the *Peregrinus* the satirist's strategy is to counter the astonishment evoked by Peregrinus' Heraclean bravery before death with his own Democritean laughter at Peregrinus' folly and his admirers' susceptibility to a performance that he regards as an act of misguided exhibitionism (2, 7, 37, 45). The work is cast in the form of a letter written to

an interested friend, Cronius. The Epicurean sympathies so appropriate to the satirist of a popular religious figure such as Alexander are absent from the *Peregrinus*. Epicurus' atomism and rational hedonism are less essential to Lucian's purposes here than the critical distance created by sardonic, debunking laughter. Hence, the principal narrator is characterized explicitly as a man of taste (*kharieis:* 39) and, above all, ready laughter who prides himself on his courage to laugh at fools even at the risk of angry reprisals (2). His role is modeled on the legendary laughing Democritus, who is invoked on several occasions as emblematic of the satirist's perspective on the likes of Peregrinus (7, 45).

As its title suggests, the principal speaker in *On the Death of Peregrinus* does not present his task as the writing of a biography, nor does he carry it out like one. Whereas the narrator in the *Alexander* begins with Alexander's childhood and early experiences and proceeds chronologically to his death, his counterpart in the *Peregrinus* tells only the final act of Peregrinus' career in his own voice. The rest of the Cynic's story is recounted by another very Lucianic character whom the principal narrator claims to have heard speak in rebuttal to the Cynic Theagenes in Elis shortly before Peregrinus' immolation at Olympia (7). Thus, the responsibility for the veracity of this version of Peregrinus' career is conveniently shifted to the eloquent stranger whose tale of Peregrinus' protean pursuits occupies most of the satire. The principal narrator serves primarily to set the scene, describe the Cynic's bizarre suicide, and provide the overarching thematic structure. Since he does not offer the work as a biography, he is freed of comical justifications for his efforts, but the backdrop of serious biography as an ironic frame for his antihero is also lost.

Thus both the characterization of the narrator and the actual narrative procedures of the *Peregrinus* differ from those of the *Alexander*. The parodic resemblance to a serious form (biography) and the association of the satirist with a rival creed

that is well defined (Epicureanism) are developed only in the *Alexander*. Both of these features call attention to the narrator and his role in interpreting the action and judging the agent; they also determine the extent to which our response to his story is shaped by our sense for his character. We have already seen how the narrator in the *Alexander* calls attention to himself by the awkwardness with which he fits into the biographer's role. The comical manner in which he presents and comments on the action recurs periodically and creates an uncertainty in our response to him. That he means to make Alexander ridiculous (*geloios*) is clear, but how seriously can we take him in the role of narrator? Quite simply, what is the narrator's role in this performance?

Normally, of course, the biographer tries to show the subject's virtues through his actions, to invite a comparison between the reader's nature and the marvelous nature of the hero, and, ultimately thereby, to elicit admiration for the extraordinary individual. To this end ancient biographers such as Plutarch present a series of episodes each of which encapsulates distinctive qualities of the protagonist. The *Alexander* follows a similar procedure except that at each point there is something subtly or overtly at odds with the conventional and expected treatment. When our modest narrator, who confesses his inadequacy at conveying visual impressions, describes the personal appearance of his subject, Alexander is, as becomes his role, tall, handsome, and truly godlike; his skin is fair, his beard light, his hair—partially false. The narrator adds, almost apologetically, that it looked so much like real hair that most people never noticed. This ostensibly parenthetical remark is merely the first manifestation of the discrepancy between appearance and reality, immediately repeated (4) in the contrast between Alexander's looks and character that is fundamental to the comic presentation of his heroic exploits. It is indicative of the kind of detail our biographer preserves. The very last thing he tells us of Alexander (59) is that, in a futile effort to extend his

life, he had to remove his wig. Thus his act ends at the moment when he is forced by death to doff his costume.

This salient discrepancy is expressed on the most general level through the theatrical metaphor that the narrator uses systematically both to characterize the rise and fall of his hero and to explore the source of his power. Alexander's career is actually presented as analogous to a drama, and the narrative that contains it falls fairly clearly into five acts preceded by a prologue.[30] The prologue consists of the circuitous introduction and the description of the protagonist's formidable physical and intellectual qualities (1–4). The action begins, appropriately enough, with Alexander, still a boy, playing his first role, as a prostitute, through which he meets his original mentor in medicine, a pupil of the divine Apollonius of Tyana. Upon his death the doctor is succeeded by a Byzantine performer of choral songs. Together they provide the moral impetus for Alexander's later medical and theatrical achievements and his remarkable blending of those normally distinct arts. With his apprenticeship complete, the scene shifts from Asia to Macedon, where, with the help of a mysterious woman and some tame snakes, Alexander and his partner plot a new expedition against Asia. The prophet's mission takes on an explicitly theatrical character (*meta toiautēs tragōidias:* 12) with the "invasion" of Abonoteichus, the feigned madness of Alexander, and his cunning staging of the miraculous birth of Glycon the serpent. The successful perpetration of this illusion marks the conclusion of the first act (5–16), with Alexander safely ensconced in a little room in Abonoteichus and the serpent wrapped around him as the Paphlagonians file through to see and touch the divine beast.

The narrative is punctuated at this point by a moment of reflection in which the narrator steps back from the action and, addressing his audience through Celsus, actually excuses the "thick-witted rubes" of Abonoteichus (*pakhesi kai apaideutois:* 17) for being deluded by Alexander's performance. The proph-

et's ruse was so shrewd (*hōste panu to mēkhanēma*) that the "adamantine mind" (*gnomē*) of a Metrodorus, Democritus, or even Epicurus himself was needed not to be taken in by this birth of a "New Asclepius" from a goose egg. This passage picks up the Epicurean note sounded at the beginning of this episode (8), when Alexander and his partner, Cocconas, are said to have come to understand that human life is governed by two tyrants, hope and fear, and that by manipulating these they could enrich themselves as had Delphi, Delos, Clarus, and Branchidae. The prophet's debut in Abonoteichus confirms their theory as the Abonoteichans run up to the little snake squirming in Alexander's hands and eagerly beg him for health, wealth, and "all other goods" (14). These general observations following the dramatic account of the epiphany align the audience's attitude toward the action with that of the biographer and establish more explicitly the system of norms by which the hero will be judged deviant: he represents not merely a violation but a wily perversion of the Epicurean ideal. While Epicurus advocates "tranquillity" (*ataraxia*) through freedom from unnecessary desires, Alexander succeeds precisely by inflaming the passions of his audience, most notably their desire for security against the future through prophetic knowledge and mediated contact with the divine. But he is also consistently associated with sexual desire and gratification (5, 39, 41–42): he maintains a whole chorus of boys as his personal slaves. The narrator and his immediate audience, insofar as they are followers of Epicurus, are accordingly characterized as the obverse of the histrionic prophet. Their hero is the proponent of simple, sober realities, the enemy of superstition and idealist metaphysics, the author of the *Kuriai Doxai* (*Authorized Doctrines*) and many scientific works. Important elements of his ethical teachings are referred to in the course of the narrative (47), and his empiricism and philosophical materialism provide the implicit grounds for our narrator's skepticism toward the phenomena of popular reli-

gious experience. Alexander, by contrast, is the dexterous manipulator of myth and fantasy who invades Abonoteichus by making the town into his own stage.

Taking his "cue" (*endosimon:* 19) from the legendary Amphilochus, founder of a "successful" oracle in Cilicia, Alexander proceeds in act 2 (18–29) to translate the plot of his personal myth (*ta panta ememēkhanēto:* 19) into public reality: with the help of his snake, which, the narrator remarks with evident distaste, would submit to anything (15), he establishes himself as the prophet of Asclepius. The temple provides the setting (*skēnē:* 19) for this act, as Alexander announces his willingness to answer any and all questions submitted to him on scrolls sealed with wax or clay. While dismissing such devices (*mēkhanēma*) as transparent to Celsus or himself, lest the ability to supply an oracular response to sealed questions be taken as proof of divinity, the narrator digresses on the mechanics of deception and explains how the sealed scrolls were opened and resealed. This is the closest thing in Lucian's treatment to the more conventional concerns of the literature of exposure; the information it contains is probably less important rhetorically than the fact that it serves to authorize the narrator's account by revealing that his addressee, Celsus, is the author of an entire treatise on the subject (*Against Magicians*). The digression functions rhetorically as the discursive counterpart to the theatrical metaphor that frames it: for the metaphor to take hold as an interpretative frame the critic must explain the verisimilitude of the prophet's performance, the props and tactics by which Alexander flourished and the oracle's reputation spread all the way to Rome and the court of Marcus Aurelius (48).

Against this background emerges the actual conflict between the local Epicureans and the followers of Alexander, which dramatizes the ideological origins of the satire. Opposition to the prophet comes to be correlated with clarity of mind and sobriety. Thus the men of good sense (*tōn noun*

ekhontōn: 25), foremost among whom are the "friends of Epicurus," rise up "as if from a profound intoxication" (*ek methēs batheias:* 25) and begin to detect the stagey quality in the prophet's performance (*suskeuē tou dramatos:* 25). Sectarian strife (*polemos, prosepolemei:* 25) ensues when the prophet denounces the "atheists" and Christians in his realm (cf. 38) and delivers an abusive oracle on Epicurus' fate in Hades:

> Of slime is his bed
> And his fetter of lead.
> (25 Fowlers)

Just in case slow-witted members of the audience are missing the point of this conflict, the narrator pipes up to defend the master, Epicurus, "who discerned the nature of reality and alone knew its truth" (25). The "relentless Epicurus" (*ategktos Epikouros:* 25), as he was called in Abonoteichus, was justly hated (*ekhthistos dikaiōs:* 25) because, like our satirist, he treated such matters as the material for comic diversions (*panta tauta en gelōti kai paidiai tithemenos:* 25). In this he and his followers stand in sharp contrast to the other schools of philosophy: Stoics, Pythagoreans, and Platonists are on the most peaceful terms with the prophet (*eirēnē batheia:* 25). The opposition is isolated and stands alone against a world of fools, knaves, and collaborating metaphysicians. The narrator's increasingly overt identification with the rival creed and its founder is not, of course, to be taken for granted. Lucian satirizes many other figures and sects without aligning the satiric spokesman with a particular body of positive doctrine. This narrator's emphatically Epicurean loyalties and his adulation of the philosopher as the sole guide to truth set him apart from other Lucianic voices, a point it is important to realize in order to appreciate the complex rhetorical strategy of the *Alexander*. It is also relevant to remember that the Epicureans, more than any other ancient philosophical sect, revered their founder as a savior and identified their philosophy with

the man. It was a strongly dogmatic tradition even by ancient standards.[31]

The third act (30–42) recounts the expansion of Alexander's activities from Asia to Italy. The "invasion" of Rome is represented in the narrative by a significant addition to the dramatis personae, Rutilianus, a former consul whose remarkable susceptibilities provide a string of comic incidents exemplifying the prophet's power over the ruling class. Rutilianus is seen as a representative figure, not simply as an unfortunate exception or comic stereotype: "When the fame (*kleos*) of the oracle spread to Italy and invaded the city of Rome, the only question was who would get there first; those who did not go themselves sent messengers; the keenest of all were those who had the greatest power and highest rank in the city" (30). Rutilianus' significance as a follower of the prophet is that, unlike the uneducated Abonoteichans (*apaideutoi*), he has the cultural background that is supposed to inoculate its possessors against the deceptions used perennially on the less fortunate. From the satire's perspective, therefore, he and his kind are an anomaly that must be explained. From our perspective it is clear that the rationalism championed by the satirist was far less typical, even among the educated, than the attitude of Rutilianus. While Lucian was prudent enough to withhold his attack until the most powerful participants in his story—Alexander, Rutilianus, Marcus Aurelius—were safely buried, his unflattering inclusion of the emperor's court among those duped by the prophet clearly contradicts the idea that those accused of gullibility in religious matters in antiquity were typically "caricatured by being represented as marginal—socially, biologically, intellectually . . . marginal."[32]

Rutilianus is, of course, not just another gullible victim but an exemplary one, eager to enter into a relationship with the mysterious other. A "good man" (*kalos kai agathos*) in every other respect, he has one peculiar weakness: a pathological (*noson:* 30) obsession with the supernatural. His habit of falling

down on the ground to do obeisance to stones and to beg blessings from them (30) recalls Theophrastus' portrait of the superstitious man (*Characters* 16). But the satirist is not interested in superstition as a form of *deilia* (fear/cowardice) as Theophrastus defines it, but as the expression of a deeply rooted desire for illusion. When Rutilianus sends his servants from Rome to Abonoteichus to learn about the oracle, they return with exaggerated accounts, knowing what will please their master. As a result "poor Rutilianus" (*ton athlion geronta:* 30) is so excited that he can scarcely contain himself (*eis manian:* 31). So eager is he to believe in the prophet's powers that once he arrives in Abonoteichus he reinterprets to the oracle's advantage its absurd recommendation of Homer and Pythagoras as his son's tutors only a few days before the boy's death (33). The oracle repays such loyalty with a genealogy of Rutilianus' soul that traces its descent from Achilles through Menander and Rutilianus to a sunbeam (34). The god's favor is shown most clearly, however, in an oracle urging Rutilianus to marry Alexander's daughter, borne by the moon goddess, Selene, an idea that he quickly acts to realize. Imagining himself the son-in-law of a divinity, he delights in his fictional world "propitiating his mother-in-law, the moon, with whole hecatombs and fancying himself one of the Celestials" (35).

The triumph of illusion of which Rutilianus' fate is the dramatic illustration receives its most memorable expression in the performance of the mysteries of Abonoteichus, written, directed (*prosemēkhanato:* 38), and acted by Alexander himself. In the enactment of the *historia sacra*, the perception of Alexander's power as an outgrowth of his skill as a purveyor of fictions is elaborately dramatized as the whole community gathers to affirm the prophet's fantasies as its common cultural inheritance. The celebrations begin with a ritual expulsion of evil spirits: atheists, Christians, and Epicureans. On three successive days the divine genealogy of Alexander and his serpent, from the birth of Apollo and the marriage of Poda-

leirius with Alexander's mother, to the epiphany of Glycon and the love of Alexander and Selene, is reenacted in a torch-lit spectacle. Alexander plays the prophet, and the wife of the emperor's steward, his lover, plays the Moon (Selene) "before the eyes of her worthless husband." This scene, in which Alexander's role allows him to act out his illicit desires as a figure of myth, while the victims themselves compose his eager audience, marks the highest and most characteristic achievement of his prophetic art.

Thus the first three acts of Alexander's career, which describe his rise to power, the emergence of the Epicurean opposition, and the invasion of Rome and the empire by religious *mania* (madness), culminate in the public sanctioning of the prophet's personal mythology, in which the erotic as well as the theatrical sources of his power are manifest. Alexander is at his acme, but we have yet to hear so much as a single word from his mouth other than oracular or liturgical utterances. Instead, the role of the satiric biographer dominates the foreground and, with it, the role of his intended audience. The narrator creates an active and overt rapport with his audience in the opening paragraph by addressing the work to Celsus, urging him, as an ideally competent reader, to play an active part in forming the tale by imagining even what the narrative omits. An identity in point of view is assumed from the outset. Thereafter the narrator continually addresses the reader through Celsus (1, 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 21, 25, 33, 43, 50, 53, 61), inviting him to enter into the story: "Picture to yourself a little chamber into which no very brilliant light was admitted, with a crowd of people from all quarters, excited, carefully worked up, all aflutter with expectation" (16 Fowlers). He defines the critical attitude to be adopted with heavy-handed invocations of the Epicurean rationalism expressed in his favored form, the rhetorical question: "What Democritus would not have been confounded [*dietarakhthē*] upon hearing specific names and places [in the prophecies] and then spat at them when he had

seen through the ruse?" (50 Fowlers). He projects a common attitude of disdain and indignation toward Alexander's followers by responding to their naïveté with ridicule and sarcasm. After quoting the oracle on Epicurus' fate in Hades, he comments: "Do you wonder that the oracle flourished in view of the refined and intelligent [*sunetas kai pepaideumenas:* 25] questions of its visitors?" He also tries to assure the reader of the truth of his story by noting the sources of some of his assertions or by citing what was said on a particular occasion (5, 43). The resulting tone is that of a learned conversation between friends who interpret the world in the light of old and familiar beliefs and will view the actions narrated from a shared perspective of self-conscious superiority—of a kind appropriate to Hobbesian laughter. The narrator presents himself as one of a group of *pepaideumenoi* composed of serious Epicureans like Celsus, who oppose the likes of Alexander from their libraries with critical biographies and learned treatises (21). The style is accordingly lively and informal, with a very sparing use of abstract or figurative language. Attitudes are not developed or justified, but assumed and reasserted: in joining in the laughter at the gullible Abonoteichans we affirm that those assumptions are also ours.

The first three acts also establish a parallel structure of rising tensions between Alexander and his Epicurean opponents and between Alexander's role and reality. The tensions erupt into a series of increasingly farcical incidents that compose the fourth act (43–53). The clash between Alexander and the followers of Epicurus, which began as an exchange of abuse (*loidoria*: 46), degenerates into brute violence as the conflict nears its darkly comic conclusion in the "funniest thing" (*geloiotaton:* 47) that Alexander does: he burns Epicurus' *Authorized Doctrines* in the marketplace as if it were the philosopher himself and then tosses the ashes into the sea. This sacrilegious outrage provokes an encomiastic outburst from the narrator: "That scoundrel had no idea of the blessings

conferred by that book upon its readers, of the peace, tranquillity [*ataraxia*], and freedom it engenders, liberating others from terrors, apparitions, and portents, vain hopes and extravagant desires, implanting in them intelligence and truth, and truly purging their understanding, not with nonsense like torches and herbs but with right reason, truth, and frankness" (47). With its catalogue of the benefits of Epicurus' teaching, this is the most highly rhetorical passage in the work. It confirms a perception of the biographer as a committed, indeed zealous, Epicurean of the most devout kind, whose judgment can be relied on to give a rational account of Alexander's career in accordance with the well-defined values of his code. To him the most laughable thing (*geloiotaton:* 47) Alexander can do is to attack that very code, his bible, a mode of discourse whose authenticity reveals the sham seriousness of the prophet and thus provoked his futile rage in the form of fire and stones.

The narrator's task seems to be near completion. He has not only offered a thorough and persuasive Epicurean exposé of the prophet's career but also has shown the source of Alexander's power over others in their needs and his own talents, while taking every opportunity to render his legend impotent by revealing him to be a comic trickster who, when measured against rational Epicurean norms, is less to be feared than laughed at by the wise. The seriousness (*spoudē:* 2) with which this *historia* (inquiry/history) is undertaken, which the narrator at first feels obliged to apologize for, may well seem vindicated.

It is therefore something of a surprise when, in chapter 53, our biographer enters the narrative unannounced as an actor. Thus far we have been given no inkling that he has had any direct contact with his subject, the prophet, or will form a part of his story. Our surprise may turn into smiles of complicity when we hear that the first inquiry that our Epicurean guide makes of the oracle is whether Alexander is bald. Curiously, the appearance of this tricky satirist submitting

various kinds of unanswerable or impudent questions (53–54) is marked by the same vocabulary used earlier to describe how the prophet himself tricked the Abonoteichans: "I contrived [*epemēkhanēsamēn:* 54] many such traps for him," he announces proudly. He even tries to dissuade the devout Rutilianus from relying on the shrine. Indeed, he tells us that he tried to avert Rutilianus' marriage, an action that made him the archenemy (*ekhthistos:* 54) of the prophet, like Epicurus himself (cf. *ekhthistos:* 25). But that means that he must have come to Abonoteichus before the events that he has already narrated took place. Why, then, is the account of his visit to the Paphlagonians reserved for the last act of the tale instead of taking its proper chronological place?

The reason becomes evident in the scene in which our narrator, having entered the tale, encounters his subject face to face. For the preceding fifty-five chapters he has been using every conceivable device, from pointed allusions to Pythagoras and Alexander the Great, to embarrassing anecdotes, ridiculing caricature, and sarcastic contrasts with Epicurean models of rationality, to deflate his "hero" by metamorphosing him into a comic rogue. In case these "devices" have failed to achieve their intended effect, he now steps into his tale and, true to his covert Cynic tendencies,[33] gives his creation a "crippling bite" on the hand when Alexander politely extends it to be kissed. The effect of this unexpected bit of farce is complex. To the extent that we have come to share his indignation toward Alexander and have felt his frustration at the inability of the Epicureans successfully to unmask the duplicitous prophet, we cannot help but respond to the satirist's bite as a refreshing bit of comic subversion. With this single debasing gesture he rejects as nonsense the seriousness accorded the impostor by the boneheads of Abonoteichus, but in doing so he runs the risk of becoming more ridiculous than the satiric target. If he steals the prophet's show, it is less by outwitting him with deceptive inquiries than by coopting his

role as the central figure in this performance: the vengeance he was unable to wreak on Alexander by legal means (51) he now takes by literary means, casting himself in the traditional role of the unmasking poet of blame who "bites as he smiles."[34]

But as the narrator reveals himself in this new role he comes into conflict with his presentation of himself as the sober *pepaideumenos*, the serious Epicurean biographer. Until this moment we have been persuaded to share with him, however precariously, a detached and superior authorial perspective firmly based on Epicurean principles. The bite abruptly shifts our perspective on the narrator and hence our reception of his story. Readers who simply identify the biographer with the historical Lucian are especially disconcerted by the bite: "A curious absence of shame," comment the Fowlers. This is precisely the point, however, for the satirist is demonstrating Cynic virtue (*anaideia*, *parrhēsia*) in shamelessly reproaching vice even in the rich and powerful, a didactic method in the tradition of Diogenes—and Parrhesiades.[35] Moreover, at the very moment when he deals his opponent his most insulting satiric blow, he also complicates the nature of the satire. By shocking his readers with shameless behavior and casting himself in an undeniably comic role, he subverts the tendency of the audience, a tendency he has encouraged, to idealize the biographical narrator as an embodiment of the norms of common sense and rationality by which the satiric target has been shown deviant. The narrator suddenly diverges from these implicit standards, violating the decorum of his role and betraying the carefully elicited expectations of his audience for a predictably Epicurean narrator.

Just how far he is from the ataractic ideal becomes clearer in his subsequent machinations. As soon as he is alone with the prophet, his adamantine mind (*gnomē*: cf. 17) and the momentary courage shown in biting Alexander's hand disappear. Even though he has a bodyguard, he hurriedly patches things up and, the next thing we hear, is getting out of town—

loaded with presents from the prophet (56). After barely escaping an elaborate attempt on his life by Alexander, he makes his way back to Amastris and mounts a futile if feverish campaign to punish his enemy legally, a campaign described in martial terms (57). Vengefulness is not among the Epicurean virtues, but our narrator is willing to go to war (*epekorussomēn*), to use every resource at his disposal to satisfy his desire to pay Alexander back (*panta kalōn ekinoun amunasthai boulomenos:* 57), whom he detests (*misōn*) as his bitterest enemy (*ekhthiston*). On this note of violence, passion, and futility the account of the narrator's own exploits concludes with a resentful growl.[36]

But he has still to put the finishing touches on his biography of Alexander, which must now draw to a seemly conclusion. In an effort to reestablish himself as the ironic observer of knavery rather than as its angry and somewhat inept avenger, to reaffirm the shared perspective of audience and narrator, in a long rhetorical question he decries Alexander's petition to the emperor requesting that Abonoteichus be renamed Ionopolis and that a new coin be struck with the likeness of the prophet and his serpent (58). Such hubris does not go unrequited, it seems, for in the next chapter we learn that, although Alexander prophesied that he was fated (*heimartai:* 59) to live a hundred and fifty years before perishing in a flash of lightning, he actually died a mortal's death at seventy. Having lived his life as a theatrical pursuit, his comic reversal is that his death must conform to dramatic ideas of justice and propriety. He lives out the *telos* of this *tragōidia* of his own creation, but in an ironically reduced and literal form. Thus the climax (*katastrophē:* 60) of the son of Podaleirius' drama is to die unexpectedly from a disease on his *poda* ("foot"). As if this were not a sufficient unmasking of the mortal nature of his oracular feat, the narrator hastens to add that, while receiving treatment for his disease, his bald pate was revealed.

Lest we misinterpret the *telos* of this drama by using other than rational standards and see in it the workings of a provi-

dential order, comic or otherwise, our narrator *qua* earnest Epicurean assures us that his story is not meant to suggest anything of the kind (60). The fact that Alexander meets so appropriate an end, rotting up to his groin and shedding his wig, is only the product of *tukhē* (chance), an event thrown up, no doubt, by a particularly provident constellation of atoms and void.[37] Thus while presenting Alexander's life as a play complete with dramatic reversals (*katastrophē*) and an end most pitiful (*oiktistōi telei*), suggesting a causal relationship between his transgression and its *telos*, the narrator tries to dispel this impression, which his own art has created, by ascribing the events to *tukhē* rather than to intelligent causation. His chosen metaphor is at odds with his Epicurean explanations. Moreover, his denial that Alexander's life exhibits a purposeful pattern (*pronoia:* providence) only calls our attention to the gap between his narration and the events themselves, thus lessening its credibility. The conflict in this passage between the language of dramatic necessity and poetic justice (*telos, katastrophē, drama, tragōidia:* 59–60), which the satirist imposes on Alexander's life to reflect his interpretation of it, and that of random *tukhē*, which as an Epicurean the narrator is obliged to uphold, reveals a curious incongruity in the biographer's self-presentation, between the indignant and sometimes comical satirist and the serious would-be Epicurean.

This sense of a narrator divided against himself is confirmed in the irony of his concluding remarks, in which the satirist, who in his only encounter with his subject gives him "a crippling bite" on the hand, seals his biography with an elaborate compliment to his friend Celsus, a true Epicurean, whom he accordingly admires for the "gentleness," "mildness," and "tranquillity" of his life, but above all for his "courtesy toward all whom he encounters" (*tropou pràoteti kai epieikeiai kai galenēi biou kai dexiotēti pros tous sunontas:* 61). It is in the light of this irony that we must construe his claim to entertain (*soi men kharizomenos*) and instruct (*khrēsimon ti ekhein:*

61) his readers by "revenging Epicurus." For if this speaker "confirms certain truths in the minds of discerning readers" (61), it is by reflecting the world he satirizes. The very discrepancy between self-created role and reality that makes the prophet a proper vehicle for the comedy of affectation recurs in the tension between the narrator's roles as actor and as observer, as an avenging Cynic satirist and as an Epicurean manqué. Similarly, the narrator's zeal in idealizing Epicurus as "holy and divine" (*hierōi kai thespesiōi:* 61) makes him sound disconcertingly like his opponents in his willing submission to sanctified authority. If Alexander can succeed only in a world in which men are like himself, his biographer reveals himself to be enough a part of that stagey world to be entrammeled in his own metaphors for it.[38] The comedy cuts both ways. While the older, more authoritative discourse of Epicurean philosophy is used to call into question the seriousness of the cultic images and rites used by Alexander, the authenticity of that stance inevitably appears relative to the character of its advocate.

In its attempt to excoriate the prophet as a flimflamming scoundrel by contrasting his antics with the recognized and accepted code of its immediate audience, Lucian's *Alexander* has the best claim of any of his works to the unambiguous seriousness of a topical pamphlet (*psogos*), and yet even it is not univocally serious. If this kind of rhetorical complexity and playfulness seems excessively subtle or self-conscious, what is the alternative to this reading? That Lucian created the incongruities but was not sufficiently attuned to Epicurean values[39] to detect any tension between the "moral rage" of revenge and a turning away from the passions of public life in favor of private *ataraxia*. The irony of the Epicurean emphasis on tranquillity, gentleness, mildness, and courtesy (*galēnē, epieikeia, praotēs, dexiotēs:* 61) in the conclusion is then unintended: the joke is on Lucian. In preference to this sleepy sophist, I would argue by analogy with the Menippus pieces, *On the Syrian*

Goddess, *The Art of Sponging*, *A True Story*, *The Professor of Rhetoric*, and other texts[40] that in fact no rhetorical game is more characteristically Lucianic than the ironic impersonation of a didactic voice, a seriocomic stratagem that was not to be lost on satirists from Erasmus to Swift. Instead, I will take refuge in authority and conclude with Dryden, who observes categorically in his *Life of Lucian*, "No man is so great a master of irony as our author."[41]

Conclusion
Potter or Prometheus?

Almost nothing in Lucian is trivial.
—Erasmus, epistle 256

The last great master of Attic eloquence and Attic Wit.
—Macaulay

THE prologist of *A True Story* cheerfully informs us that although he has nothing true to say and has experienced nothing worth telling, he is nevertheless vain enough (*kenodoxias:* 4) to wish to leave something to posterity and so, like other writers in his situation, has taken up lying (4). He insists, however, that his work is not a form of idle amusement designed merely to divert (*psukhagōgian:* 1), but a kind of "literary speculation" (*theōrian ouk amouson:* 2) as necessary to those who work with language as physical relaxation is to the athlete. His is not just a novel, witty, and variegated composition (*xenon, kharien, poikila:* 2), he assures us, but from beginning to end "a witty riddle" (*ouk akōmōidētōs einiktai:* 2) woven from the works of poets, philosophers, and historians who showed a weakness for fantastic fictions (*polla terastia kai muthōdē:* 2). As to who these liars are, the audience can guess from its own reading. The crucial difference between this writer and his derided authorial models is that he is a self-confessed liar: "I humbly solicit my reader's incredulity" (4 Fowlers).

The salubrious effects of literary speculation that combines formal experimentation, wit, and novelty in the service of an aesthetic view of literature are ironically advertised in the

opening gambit to *A True Story*;[1] the prologue itself initiates the facetious game it describes with its parodic reference to Odysseus as the archetypal liar/author deceiving the simple Phaeacians with his preposterous tales (*bōmolokhias:* 3).[2] The prologist's conception of literary activity as freely recreating traditions in a parodic process that is itself recreative for author and audience may suggest some of the reasons behind the curious history of Lucian's reception in Europe. The contrast between the enthusiastic response to Lucian by other writers from Erasmus to Leopardi and his terse dismissal by influential nineteenth-century scholars as an " 'irresponsible Syrian,' nihilistic, lacking in seriousness, unworthy even of comparison with Heine"[3] could scarcely be sharper. I know of no classical author who has received such contradictory evaluations. The moralizing language in which the scholarly rebuke is couched, as well as its gratuitous divergence from centuries of literary activity inspired by a different assessment, makes it difficult not to infer ideological motives[4] reinforced by a more general tendency to regard later writers as necessarily "derivative" and therefore inferior.[5] But insofar as the pejorative characterization was a response to Lucian's work and not to his barbarous origins[6] or postclassical status, it reflects a lack of sympathy with the generic aims of comic writing, and of parody in particular. Parodic writing evinces a lively skepticism about the meaning and value accorded tradition and is consequently incompatible with certain forms of reverence for the past. It does not idealize (or, as Aristotle puts it, "represent men better than we are"), nor does it cater to the self-transcending emotions cultivated by the high genres or to Romantic conceptions of originality and literary value.[7] But at a time when much postmodern literary and critical practice is devoted to exploring the creative expropriation of tradition through parody and pastiche, Lucian's writerly emphasis on literature as an invigorating interpretative game between author and audience may seem less an apologia for a particular

kind of comic writing than an ironic acknowledgment of the reader's role in the production of parody.[8]

"Good enough interpretation," as Frank Kermode suggests, "is what encourages or enables certain necessary forms of attention."[9] It is implicit in the approach developed here that the forms of attention appropriate to the comedy of traditions are still available to us, if we are prepared to take seriously the eloquent resources of humor harbored by an extremely complex tradition and to entertain the possibility that "classics" were written in prose, after the classical period, by an interloper from the East. If, for the sake of analysis, it has been useful to distinguish the various modes of Platonic dialogue, Old Comedy, and traditional biography, this focus should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Lucian's parodic experiments with established forms combine to form an unusual oeuvre, whose very heterogeneity betrays a consistent approach to the past. While readily conceding the ludic character of Lucian's rhetorical performances, I have argued that his play upon form is not merely frivolous, an escapist expression of contemporary classicizing (*psukhagōgia*), but also a writer's search (*theōria*) for voices and forms adaptable to the present. The humor is not only instrumental, a way of reinforcing a point or evoking a point of view, but also symptomatic of a literary method: it is the immediate consequence of this sophist's approach to tradition as a paradigmatic array of rhetorical feats that may not be rivaled on their own terms but can be recalled and renewed through selective combination and calculated shifts in generic perspective. The restless formal experimentation that produced so varied an oeuvre could as well be described as the search for an audience, that is, for the community implicit in the tradition. Hence the insistence that a given voice, whether of a learned Epicurean, a clownish Cynic, or a teller of tall tales, is ultimately traditional, adapted from that constellation of acknowledged exemplars, the classics. By playing off a special background of inherited forms

and preconceptions, the humor of Lucian's masks galvanizes a common sensibility; in the momentary recognition of that common ground of shared perspectives that alone enables the humor, a community acknowledges itself.[10] Lucian's jesting with traditional motifs or vengeful derision of those who, unlike the worthy Syrian, appropriate Hellenic traditions for "unclassical" purposes, depends on evoking a specific attitude toward a past perceived as common property. The extraordinary importance with which the Greeks of the empire invested "cultural archaizing" is not only, or even primarily, a product of wistful nostalgia or a failure to "face facts." Lucian is not alone in using the past obliquely to appeal to a sense of common identity and cultural authority persisting independently of the political structures that had furnished its basis in the classical period.

Lucian's comic practice, therefore, is inextricably tied, not to particular arguments or positions, although it may serve them well in a given context, but to his way of fitting himself into a tradition that might well seem to have exhausted all the available possibilities.[11] He realized more clearly than most of his classicizing contemporaries that even serious voices needed to be recreated with a sense of critical distance, of irony, if they were not to be utterly anachronistic in their effects. It is this unfailing sense of comic detachment that allows him to try on almost all the authorial roles his culture had to offer—from Plato to Menippus, from Herodotus and Aristophanes to contemporary pedants, sophists, Cynics, and novelists—without ever becoming firmly identified with any one style, voice, or genre. Indeed, he was not even considered a sophist by a Philostratus. The voices we most closely associate with him—those of Menippus, Diogenes, Lycinus, Anacharsis, and Parrhesiades—are themselves ironic, detached, and comically inclined to embrace contradictions. It is the fundamental ambivalence of Lucian's style of rhetorical performance, at once traditional and ironic, that led Dryden to conclude with a note

of frustration that he was "too giddy, too irresolute, to be anything at all or anything long"[12] and has led others to suspect that in being "no more this than that" he might be nothing at all. But it is precisely the teasing ambiguities of Lucian's comic stance that mark his work as a second-century product, when classical traditions were still very much alive and could elicit immediate response from an audience, and yet were heard from a distance in both their increasing eccentricity and malleable authority. As one critic has argued, those who could understand Lucian's performances were unlikely to balk at their sophistication: "An Asiatic who had out-Greeked the Greeks, a writer of the Christian era who had brought a thousand years of Greek culture to life as though it were contemporary, [Lucian] was an example of what still might be done."[13] If this sounds a little like "a literary Prometheus," so be it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in the Notes are based on those in Liddell-Scott-Jones's *Greek-English Lexicon* and *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
CHCL	*Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, ed. P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, vol. 1 (Cambridge 1985)
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
NJbb	*Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum*
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The first approach is the thesis of J. Bompaire's encyclopedic study of Lucian's use of literary and rhetorical traditions, *Lucien écrivain: Imitation et création* (Paris 1958), while the second is forcefully argued by B. Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto 1973), and C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, Mass. 1986).

2. Jones, *Culture and Society* (1–5), concisely summarizes how the French response to the nineteenth-century German dismissal of Lucian as an "irresponsible oriental" resulted paradoxically in his portrayal as an anachronistic traditionalist by M. Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris 1937), and Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*. To reinstate Lucian as an authentic heir of classical Greek culture, French classicists, beginning with M. Croiset *(Essai sur la vie et les oeuvres de Lucien* [Paris 1882]), virtually assimilated his work to tradition, as an imitation (*mimēsis*) of a more creative past. The emphasis on Lucian's contemporaneity in work since Bompaire and Caster (see Chapter 1 note 6) has provided a needed corrective to the view that, in Caster's words, "Lucian lived in the second century A.D. with the mind of a contemporary of Menander: five hundred years out of date" (389). It is important to emphasize, however, not only the now obvious distortions in this once orthodox view but also the reliance of the debate that produced it on a series of problematic dichotomies: "originality" versus "traditionalism," "historical reality" versus "literary representation," and "serious" versus "comic." On the last, see Chapter 1.

3. Of fundamental importance to an understanding of the cultural context of imperial Greek literature is E. L. Bowie's study of archaism, "The Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic," *Past and Present* 46 (1970) 3–41: "The archaism of language and style known as Atticism is only part of a wider tendency, a tendency that prevails in literature not only in style but in choice of theme and treatment and that equally affects other areas of cultural activity" (3). Cf. idem, "The Importance of Sophists," *YCS* 28 (1982) 29–59; and G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969). For the sophistic movement generally, see B. P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II et III siècles après J.-C.* (Paris 1971) 99–198.

4. Bowie, "The Greeks and Their Past" 27.

5. Cf. ibid. (28): "With the autonomy of Greek cities only

nominal those Greeks who felt that in a different age they might have wielded political power in a Greek context must needs be dissatisfied with the present and attempt to convert it to the past where their ideal world lay." For examples, see ibid., 28–35.

6. Cf. ibid. (23): "The political and cultural achievements of classical Greece, and particularly Athens, were very closely woven together in the Greek memory of the past, and this may well have fostered the illusion in some that a cultural resurgence would somehow bring with it a restoration of political power and independence." For the bearing of the literary past on the social and political present, see P. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1.2 (1983), esp. 1–14: "It was widely agreed [in the Greco-Roman world] that any problem that was going to get solved had first to be reduced to a clear-cut issue of deportment, that could be viewed in relation to a constellation of vivid human exemplars preserved in the classics: for only then could the impressive resources of the civilization of *paideia* be brought to bear with hope of success" (2). I am suggesting that the cultural past need not be only a means of escape as Bowie indicates but, in the hands of a satirist, also a means of criticizing the present. In Lucian it is both. For the role of the classics in ancient education generally, see H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in the Ancient World*, trans. G. Lamb (New York 1956). For the practical application of the classics in rhetorical training, see J. R. Butts, *The Progymnasmata of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary* (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1986).

7. While Philostratus attaches particular value to extemporaneous performance (*skhedioi logoi*), it is the appearance of extemporaneity as the proof of a completely internalized mastery of sophistic technique that contemporary audiences admired. Such "improvisation" was the clearest proof of the meticulous preparation and training that makes art second-nature. For sophistic techniques of improvisation, see Reardon, *Courants* 111–114.

8. Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* is itself symptomatic of imperial traditionalism in its attempt to associate contemporary rhetorical literature with the prestigious classical past by presenting it as another phase in a continuous tradition extending back to Gorgias and the sophists of the fifth century. Philostratus' *Heroicus* and *Gymnasticus* also reflect contemporary classicism in their concern with the persistence of the heroic past in the present (*Heroicus*) and the revival of an ancient institution (*Gymnasticus*). For the *Gymnasticus* see the discussion of Lucian's *Anacharsis* in Chapter 2.

9. Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 541. Most of the theatrical qualities of sophistic performances are illustrated by Philostratus' description of Polemo's act, which he claims is based on a letter from Herodes Atticus, Polemo's pupil, to Varus: 537–538; cf. Scopelianus, who is described as representing dramatically (*hupekrinato*) the qualities characteristic of barbarians (*en tois barbarois ēthesin* 520); for typical sophistic themes, see 522, 527–528, 533, 589–590, 626. For the sophists' attention to their appearance, see 571–572, 587, 623. Cf. Jones, *Culture and Society* 71 n. 14; cf. also D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge 1983), esp. chaps. 4–5.

10. Cf. Bowie, "The Greeks and Their Past": "What is certain, at least, is that the favored themes of the sophists harked back constantly to the classical period. The classicism of theme is as much evident in those orators whose rhythms have been labeled Asian (as opposed to Attic)" (6).

11. Cf. J. L. Moles, "The Career and Conversion of Dio Chrysostom," *JHS* 98 (1978) 79–100.

12. As documented by the statistical studies of F. W. Householder, Jr., in *Literary Quotation and Allusion in Lucian* (New York 1941).

13. I use *humor* as a general term for the comic as in A. Koestler's definition: "Humour, in all its many-splendour'd varieties, can be simply defined as a type of stimulation which *tends* to elicit the laughter reflex . . . Laughter is a reflex . . . Its only purpose seems to be to provide temporary relief from the stress of purposeful activities"; *Janus: A Summing Up* (New York 1978) 110–111 (my emphasis). For the psychological utility of laughter, see F. Roustang, "How Do You Make a Paranoiac Laugh?" trans. D. Brick, *Modern Language Notes* 102.4 (1987) 707–718.

14. H. Levin, *Playboys and Killjoys: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Comedy* (New York 1987) 175.

15. The lack of a critical account of humor in Lucian is not surprising. The role of humor in the comic genres has traditionally been neglected by critics as self-explanatory ("purely entertaining" or "ridiculing") or reduced to a formula from Bergson or Freud. For some notable exceptions, see note 17 below and the Bibliography. Cf. also Chapter 1 notes 65, 70, 79.

16. Quoted in A. Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York 1964) 30. For humor as culturally conditioned, see M. L. Apte, *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach* (Ithaca 1985).

17. As Mary Douglas argues, just as no analysis of humor can

ignore the cultural contexts that make possible different forms of joking, so neither can the text in question be isolated from the governing conventions of the relevant genres and rhetorical traditions. The basis of the formal analysis of humor is the incongruity theory, first formulated by Plato in the *Philebus* (see Chapter 1); it has received many subsequent reformulations and refinements but remains an important element in most analytical approaches to humor. Those most relevant here include Koestler, *The Act of Creation;* G. B. Milner, " 'Homo Ridens': Towards a Semiotic Theory of Humor and Laughter" *Semiotica* 5 (1972) 1–30; M. Douglas, "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception," *Man* 33 (1968); reprinted as "Jokes," in *Implicit Meanings* (London 1975) 90–114; N. Schaeffer, *The Art of Laughter* (New York 1981); M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin 1981); idem, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Bloomington 1984); E. L. Galligan, *The Comic Vision in Literature* (Athens, Ga., 1982); T. Cohen, "Jokes," in *Pleasure, Preference, and Value: Studies in Philosophical Aesthetics*, ed. E. Schaper (Cambridge 1983) 120–136; W. D. Redfern, *Puns* (Oxford 1984); A. Ingram, *Intricate Laughter in the Satire of Pope and Swift* (New York 1986). See also N. W. Holland, *Laughing: A Psychology of Humor* (Ithaca 1982) pt. 1; J. Moreall, ed., *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor* (Albany 1987); V. Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, Texts and Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy, vol. 24 (Dordrecht 1985).

18. Of *libelli* 1–80 in M. D. Macleod's *Luciani Opera*, vols. 1–4 (Oxford 1972–1987), I believe only *Am.*, *Halc.*, *Macr.*, and *Ocyp.* to be inauthentic. For bibliography on disputed works, see Jones, *Culture and Society* app. C.

19. I use the term *sophist* in the neutral sense of "public literary performer," a common one in the second century, not to deny that Lucian's performances differ significantly from those of Philostratus' sophists or to characterize his skill as specifically "sophistic" as opposed to "rhetorical," "dramatic," or "literary." For this use of *sophistēs*, see Bowie, "The Greeks and Their Past" 5.

20. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar" 3.

1. THE RHETORIC OF LAUGHTER

1. For Lucian and later European literature, see the Bibliography.

2. C. Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (Chapel Hill 1979) 198.

3. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 2; cf. B. A. Van Groningen, "Literary Tendencies in the Second Century A.D.," *Mnemosyne* 18 (1965) 56: "It is a neglected [literature] in a neglected century, and, generally speaking, it deserves this neglect."

4. G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford 1949) 304; idem, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton 1962) 42–43.

5. For Lucian's "nihilism," see C. A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Theory* (Leiden 1965) 111; J. Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker* (Berlin 1879) 44; K. W. F. Solger, *Erwin: Vier Gespräche über das Schöne und die Kunst*, ed. W. Henckmann (Munich 1970) 388; for his lack of seriousness, cf. R. Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* (Leipzig 1906); U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*[3] 1.8 (Berlin 1912) 172–174; Wilhelm Capelle, "Der Spotter von Samosata," *Sokrates* 2 (1914) 606–622; W. H. Tackaberry, *Lucian's Relation to Plato and the Post-Aristotelian Philosophers* (Toronto 1930); *Lucian: Selected Works*, trans. B. P. Reardon (Indianapolis 1965) xxiv–xxx.

6. Bompaire's *Lucien écrivain* is significant as the most systematic study of Lucian as a literary figure rather than as a moralist, philosopher, journalist, or plagiarist. (Cf. J. J. Chapman, *Lucian, Plato, and Greek Morals* [Boston 1931]; and Tackaberry, Wilamowitz, Helm, cited in the note above.) Bompaire's aim was "the explication of Lucian's oeuvre by reference to a cultural heritage" (*Revue des études grecques* 88 [1975] 228), and his work serves as a sounding board for most later studies: O. Bouquiaux-Simon, *Les lectures homériques de Lucien*, Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, Mémoires, vol. 59.2 (Brussels 1968), argues from Lucian's knowledge and use of Homer that Bompaire's concept of rhetorical mimesis is too close to mere imitation to account for Lucian's relation to tradition (57–58, 374); Reardon, *Courants* 155–180, places Lucian's work in the context of the major literary movements of his time and emphasizes the centrality of the dialogue form, parody, and humor to an understanding of Lucian's art or "philosophical thought." B. Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (reviewed by J. A. Hall, *JHS* 97 [1977] 189–190), and Jones, *Culture and Society*, reject Bompaire's approach as ahistorical and attempt to specify the contemporary contexts of Lucian's works; Jones draws heavily on the work of L. Robert, particularly *A travers l'Asie Mineure: Poètes et prosateurs, monnaies grecques, voyageurs, et géographie*, Bibliothèque des Ecoles Français d'Athènes et de Rome (Paris 1980) cap. 18; J. A. Hall, *Lucian's Satire* (New York 1981), offers a judicious survey of Lucian's work concentrating on questions of chronology, sources, authenticity, and social context. G. Ander-

son, *Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic, Mnemosyne suppl.* 41 (1976) and *Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction, Mnemosyne suppl.* 43 (1976), both reviewed by Hall, *JHS* 100 (1980) 229–232, studies Lucian's compositional methods by focusing on his repeated use of similar material; cf. also Anderson, "Lucian: A Sophist's Sophist," *YCS* 27 (1982) 61–92. Other important studies include: H. D. Betz, *Lucian von Samosata und das Neue Testament* (Berlin 1961); J. Schwartz, *Biographie de Lucien de Samosate* (Brussels 1965); and Bowie, "Lucian," in *CHCL* 1: 673–679, 872–874. The most significant developments in work since Bompaire include a tendency to reinstate the dimension of social reality that his "mimetic" approach discounted (e.g., Baldwin, Hall, Robert, Jones) and to replace the notion of traditionalism as imitation (*mimēsis*) with a more comprehensive, dynamic, and flexible concept of the phenomenon of archaism in imperial Greek culture (Bowie, "The Greeks and Their Past").

7. A. R. Bellinger, "Lucian's Dramatic Technique," *YCS* 1 (1928): "As a matter of fact, in the one hundred and eighteen dialogues he employs two hundred and thirty-four characters, all but sixty of whom are named, though fourteen are mere personifications such as 'Riches,' 'Justice,' and the like" (8). Cf. also Bompaire, "Quelques personnifications littéraires chez Lucien et dans la littérature impériale," in *Mythe et personnification*, ed. J. Duchemin (Paris 1977).

8. See B. P. McCarthy, "Lucian and Menippus" *YCS* 4 (1934) 3–58; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* chap. 2.

9. Other titles include: *The Birth of Epicurus and The School's Reverence for the Twentieth Day; Wills; Against Natural Philosophers, Mathematicians, and Grammarians; The Sale of Diogenes; Symposium;* and *Arcesilaus* (D.L. 6.101, 6.29; Athenaeus 14.629f, 14.664e). The three brief fragments add little to this picture. One, cited by Athenaeus (14.629e–f), contains a comic reference to the Stoic doctrine of *ekpurōsis*. How Menippus used dialogue or parodic verse is not known, but "Probus" testifies that the link between the Cynic and Varro was an affinity for generic mixture: "Varro . . . Menippeus non a magistro . . . nominatus, sed a societate ingenii quod is quoque omnigeno carmine satiras suas expoliverat": *In Verg. Buc.* 6.31; cf. Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 469 n. 10; J. C. Relihan, "On the Origin of 'Menippean Satire' as the Name of a Literary Genre," *CP* 79.3 (1984) 226–229.

10. While philosophical perplexity (*aporia*) was originally a Socratic theme and would have been a familiar reference, it is also

central to Pyrrhonean Skepticism (e.g., Sextus Empiricus, *P.* 1). The notion that the philosophical schools are mutually contradictory, prominent in both Menippus pieces, is pointedly Skeptical. The overlap of Cynic and Skeptic positions is not new. Pyrrhonean Skeptics also took over such Cynic terminology as *tuphos* (smoke/vanity), a word that recurs frequently in Lucian, particularly in *Dialogues of the Dead.* The Pyrrhonists shared the Cynic hostility to *alazoneia,* especially where dogmatic philosophers are concerned. Lucian shows a diffuse reflection of Skepticism that, whatever its provenance, complements his own impartially satiric treatment of the philosophical sects (e.g., *Philosophers for Sale!*, *Symposium*, *Hermotimus*, *Eunuch*, *Liars*) as well as his rhetorical use of philosophical stances generally (see *Alexander* and Chapter 4 in this volume). Lucian's skepticism is invasive but not programmatic. His caricature of Pyrrho, for example, in *Philosophers for Sale!* shows no favoritism (cf. S.E., *P.* 1.13, where S.E. denies that Pyrrhonists doubt what is "evident"). In *The Fisherman* (29–37) Parrhesiades defends Lucian's caricature of famous philosophers in *Philosophers for Sale!* by arguing that it applies only to those who play the role of philosopher badly, aping the genuine philosophers who founded the sects. The discrepancy between the ideal and the actual is in fact a central preoccupation in Lucian, but he often uses the contrast to call the ideal itself into question. See McCarthy, "Lucian and Menippus"; A. A. Long, "Timon of Phlius, Pyrrhonist and Satirist," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 24 (1978) 68–91; idem, "Sextus Empiricus on the Criterion of Truth," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 25 (1978) 35–49; A. Brancusi, "La filosofia di Pirrone e le sue relazioni con il Cinismo," in *Lo scetticismo antico*, ed. G. Giannantoni (Naples 1981) 213–242; K. Praechter, "Skeptisches bei Lucian," *Philologus* 51 (1882) 284–293.

11. K. McLeish, *The Theatre of Aristophanes* (New York 1980) 69–70.

12. "A premise . . . behind all performance"; V. Turner, "Are There Universals of Performance?" *Comparative Criticism* 9 (1987) 50.

13. For Lucian's "sham seriousness," see Van Rooy, *Classical Satire* 92. For his failure as a satirist, see Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* 42.

14. See Bellinger, "Lucian's Dramatic Technique": "We must conclude that Lucian wrote his dialogues to be read aloud, and to be self-sufficient relying on the imagination of the audience and on the ingenuity of his work to make them enjoyable and understandable"

(40). For the possibilities for dramatic readings in various genres (including Plato, the Mime, Old and New Comedy) at dinner parties, see Plutarch, *Quest. Conviv.* 613a, 711–712.

15. Cf. the effect of the interlocutor's comparison of Menippus to Ganymede in the opening of *Icaromenippus.*

16. E. Rohde, *Über Lucian's Schrift "Loukios ē onos" und ihr Verhältniss zu Lucius von Patrae und den Metamorphosen des Apuleius* (Leipzig 1869) 32.

17. L. J. Styan, *Drama Stage and Audience* (Cambridge 1975) 190; for a lucid application of this concept to Aristophanes, see McLeish, *Aristophanes* chap. 6; also N. W. Slater, *Plautus in Performance* (Princeton 1985).

18. J. J. Winkler, *Auctor & Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' "Golden Ass"* (Berkeley 1985) 275.

19. Both the role and the costume echo the Cynics' penchant for self-dramatization. Diogenes Laertius reports that the Cynic Menedemus went about "in the guise of a fury" saying he had just returned from Hades to spy on vicious conduct for the gods below. He wore "a gray tunic draped to his feet, a purple belt, an Arcadian felt hat embroidered with the twelve signs of the zodiac, tragic buskins, and an enormous beard" and carried an ashen staff (6.102). The *Suda*, s.v. *phaios*, attributes this costume to Menippus. See J. C. Relihan, "Vainglorious Menippus in Lucian's 'Dialogues of the Dead,' " Illinois Classical Studies 12.1 (1987) 194 nn. 28, 29.

20. Cf. A. M. Young, "The 'Frogs' of Aristophanes as a Type of Play," *CJ* 29 (1933–34) 23–32.

21. See Levin, *Playboys and Killjoys:* "When comedy becomes more purposeful than playful, then it is satire" (195).

22. D. Duncan, *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* (Cambridge 1979) 16.

23. Cf. M. Kokolakis, *The Dramatic Simile of Life* (Athens 1960).

24. Cf. Van Rooy, *Classical Satire* 111; Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 387; Winkler, *Auctor & Actor* 271: "This wisdom that Menippus brings back is a conventional Cynic diatribe on wealth." Cf. also R. B. Branham, "The Wisdom of Lucian's Tiresias," *JHS* 109 (in press).

25. Cf. Simonides fr. 141 Page (quoted by Theon 3.268, Butts ed.): "play in life and be entirely serious about nothing" (*paizein en tōi biōi kai peri mēden haplōs spoudazein*). See Householder, *Literary Quotation and Allusion* 37.

26. The remarks of R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New

York 1987), suggest how the detachment of the "inner life" from the "stage play" of ceremony and tradition, such as that repeatedly conveyed by Lucian's theatrical metaphors, far from being an empty trope, may in fact be symptomatic of some of the underlying anxieties of this classicizing culture (66). See M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson (Minneapolis 1984) 119.

27. Cf. Freud's conception of humor as the superego's means of consoling the ego: *Humour*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. J. Strachey, vol. 21 (London 1961) 166: "The main thing is the intention which humour carries out whether it is acting in relation to the self or other people. It means: 'Look, here is the world, which seems so dangerous! It is nothing but a game for children—just worth making a Jest about.'" See Roustang, "How Do You Make a Paranoiac Laugh?" 709; J. Moreall, *Taking Laughter Seriously* (Albany 1983).

28. T. Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge 1973) 23.

29. The *idiōtēs* is an amateur without specialized skills or an acknowledged role. Cf. *Charon* 4, where the *idiōtēs* is contrasted with the *poiētikos*, with Socrates' characterization of himself as an improvising amateur (*idiōtēs autoskhediazōn: Phaedrus* 236d) as opposed to the "experts." Lucian could also use *idiōtēs* in a merely pejorative sense (*Salt.* 83). I infer the idea of "improvisation" in this context from Teiresias' phrase *to paron eu themenos* (21).

30. For Erasmus, see C. Robinson's introduction to *Luciani Dialoghi Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami* (Amsterdam 1969) vol. 1, bk. 1, 379 ff.; for Fielding, see *Covent Garden Journal*, no. 52 (1752), and Robinson, *Lucian* 198–235.

31. According to the *OED*, the word *seriocomic* first appeared in print in Colman's *Prose for Several Occasions* (1787), where it was applied to a "Satyrick Piece." "Jocoserious" appeared in similar contexts in the seventeenth century and was associated with Greek *eirōneia*. Similar formations were common in Renaissance Latin. The Greek term *spoudogeloios* is illustrated only by the uses of Strabo and Diogenes Laertius discussed in the text, while *spoudaiogeloios* appears only in an inscription: *IG* 12.8, 87 (Imbros; "date récente," in L. Robert, *Opera Minora* 1 [Amsterdam 1969] 689–690).

32. But D.L. denies that there is anything serious in his work (*spoudaion ouden* 6.29) and describes it as full of *katagelōs* (derision, absurdity). This is interesting in light of a comment in Plato's *Symposium* where Aristophanes says he does not mind if his speech is funny (*geloia*), but he is afraid it may be absurd (*katagelasta: Symp.*

189b). The comedic is distinguished from something pointless or merely ridiculous, which is alien to the comic muse (*hēmeteras mousēs).*

33. Cf. Horace, *Sermones* 1.1.23: "ridentem dicere verum." For Highet's suggestion, see *The Anatomy of Satire* 36, 250 n. 2.

34. Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists and Philosophers* 454, actually proceeds in the rest of the sentence, which is less often quoted, to attribute considerable seriousness to certain works of Lucian: *di'holou spoudasas.* He cites *Demonax* as an example. The reason Eunapius' comment has received, perhaps, undue attention is that there is so little independent evidence of what Lucian's intended audience of educated pagan Greeks thought of him.

35. See D.L. 9.17; Robert, *Opera Minora* 1:689–690.

36. Cf. A. Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis 1985) chap. 1.

37. Lucian's presentation of this contrast may well involve some rhetorical inflation; see Jones, *Culture and Society* 9–10, 15–16.

38. Cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.21–34; cf. also the references to Heracles' birth and to Xenophon's report of a prophetic dream (*Anab.* 3.1.11) at *Somnium* 17, which seem to be used as a sly acknowledgment of the classical origins of Lucian's vision.

39. My translation of *Pseudologistes.*

40. T. Adorno, "Juvenal's Error," in *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (Thetford, England, 1978) 210. Cf. Steele, *Guardian* 29 (1713), discussed by Ingram, *Intricate Laughter* 4–6.

41. Jones's identification of the addressee of *The Would-be Critic* with the great sophist Hadrian of Tyre is persuasive (*Culture and Society* 110–116). It would make no sense for Lucian to pit himself against an unimportant sophist. The eastern origins of Hadrian also help to explain the acute concern with barbarous usage and the oddly Lucianic theme of the Critic's declamation at Olympia (viz., the exclusion of Pythagoras from the mysteries as a barbarian because he claimed to have been the Trojan Euphorbus in a previous life).

42. W. H. Auden, in "Notes on the Comic," in *The Dyer's Hand* (New York 1962) 383.

43. Ibid.

44. M. Butler, "Against Tradition: The Case for a Particularized Historical Method," *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. J. J. McGann (Madison, Wis., 1985) 39. See also J. J. McGann, *Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988).

45. While *barbaros* can mean simply "foreign," it tends to be pejorative. It is originally tied to the idea of language: a *barbaros* is one who does not know Greek and therefore stands outside the community of those who do. Cf. *xenos* ("stranger"), which is not primarily a linguistic category. It is easy to see how a foreign writer of Greek would be particularly sensitive to the label *barbaros*. See Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain:* "Lucian's literary ideal, his faith in the culture, reflect his own need to be integrated with Hellenism . . . Lucian has the 'complex' of a metic [resident alien]" (150). Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 84, plausibly suggests that Lucian's unrivaled sense of Greek ethnocentricity, his un-Greek sense of the peculiarities of Greek traditions, stems from his polylingual background in Samosata, Syria, on the edge of the empire where the native language was Syriac, the official language Latin, and the language of culture Greek. See Redfern, *Puns:* "Punning appeals particularly to exiles (whether external or inner) for, having two homes and languages, the exile has a binary, split perspective (or strabismus) on his adopted culture: Ionesco, Beckett, Nabokov, Joyce . . . It is hard to be entirely serious in your non-native tongue . . . You see the second language from the outside, and its mechanisms, its automatisms, are that much more apparent to you" (164). See also A. Toynbee, "The Meanings of the Terms 'Barbarian' and 'Hellene' in Hellenic Usage," *Some Problems of Greek History* (Oxford 1969) 58–63; M. F. Baslez, *L'étranger dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1984); M. Dubuisson, "Remarques sur le vocabulaire grec de l'acculturation," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 60 (1982) 5–32.

46. Levin on Rabelais; *Playboys and Killjoys* 137.

47. *Parrhēsia* is a privilege generally associated with Athenian democracy and Old Comedy (cf. Eur., *Hipp.* 422; Plato, *Rep.* 557b; Isoc. 8.14) and in Aristotle (*E.N.* 1124b29) with the "magnanimous man." In *The Education of Children* (1B), attributed to Plutarch, it is the right of the wellborn; cf. *Superstit.* 165. See also D.L. 2.127. For Cynic *parrhēsia*, see on Diogenes later in this chapter. The idea of *parrhēsia* is fundamental to Lucian's self-concept as a writer. See *Ind.* 30, *Conc. Deor.* 2, and the discussion of the *Demonax* later in this chapter. M. D. Macleod, "Lucian's Activities as a 'Misalazon,'" *Philologus* 123 (1979) 326–328, notes that *parrhēsia* and *alētheia* are linked at *Dem.* 11, *Tim.* 36, *Cont.* 13, *Merc. Cond.* 4, *Lex.* 17, *Hist. Conscr.* 41 (327).

48. If Dialogue seems to exaggerate the amount of verse he has to tolerate we should remember that he is trying to earn the jury's

sympathy. While there are few extended passages of parodic verse set in prose (*I. Trag.* 1–2; *Fug.* 30; *Pisc.* 1.3; *Nec.* 1), parodic quotations and paraphrases of poetic traditions are fundamental to Lucian's technique, as Householder's study shows. Cf. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 599–654. On the supersession of verse by prose in the second century, see Reardon, *Courants* 231–232; cf. Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 55.1–13.

49. Cf. W. Trimpi, *Muses of One Mind* (Princeton 1983) 24.

50. K. Mras, "Die 'prolalia' bei den griechischen Schriftstellern," *Wiener Studien* 64 (1949) 71–81; G. Anderson, "Patterns in Lucian's Prolaliae," *Philologus* 121 (1977) 313–315; cf. A. Stock, *De Prolaliarum usu rhetorico* (Diss. Konigsberg 1911); Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 286–288; Reardon, *Courants* 165–166.

51. See Reardon, *Courants* 105: "C'est un genre [the *prolalia*] à la mode à l'époque."

52. Lucian's other *prolaliai* include the *Hercules*, *Electrum*, *Dipsades*, *Harmonides*, *Herodotus*, and *Scythia*. The *De Domo* and *Somnium* are formally related to this group, though the former is probably too long for an introduction. Cf. Anderson, "Patterns" 314 n. 5.

53. Lucian typically uses such terms as *pepaideumenos* and *euphuēs* to characterize his *intended* audience as literate and intelligent, while rebuking unappreciative auditors with such pejorative epithets as *okhlos* and *barbaros:* "barbarians love money, not beauty": *Dom.* 6. See *Herod.* 8, *Apolog.* 3, *Scyth.* 10–11, *Harm.* 3. In *Dom.* 3 Lucian compares the echoing hall he is praising to a receptive listener (*eumathēs akroatēs*) who mimes the encomiast perfectly, having learned his words by heart. For the literacy of the audience, see Bowie, "The Greeks and Their Past" 35.

54. Cf. G. Monaco, *Paragoni burleschi degli antichi* (Palermo 1963); many of the examples in Aristotle's discussion of the simile, *Rhet.* 1406b20–1407a17, are comic. Cf. also Quintilian 6.3.57–65.

55. Eupolis' joke, "Cleon is a Prometheus—at planning the past" (*meta ta pragmata*: 2) is the equivalent of calling Cleon an Epimetheus and hence anticipates—and perhaps suggested—the joke with which Lucian concludes his Promethean self-description (7).

56. The idea of novel mixtures and varied combinations (*summiges*, *poikilon*) as the proper mode of adapting traditions is fundamental to Lucian's aesthetic; cf. his emphasis on adapting, combining, and harmonizing (*metakosmein*, *suntithenai*, *harmozein*) different works of art in his portrait of an unnamed beauty (presumably the emperor Verus's mistress Panthea) in *Imag.* 5. Polystratus makes a point of criticizing this composite style of portraiture as "at odds

with itself" (15), the very terms in which Lucian casts the criticisms of his comic dialogues in *Bis Acc.* and the prologues. Cf. also *Pisc.* 6, where Lucian adapts the ancient comparison of the writer to a bee to defend his *ars combinatoria*. See E. Panofsky, *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory* (New York 1968) 14–15 and notes.

57. See P. H. von Blanckenhagen, "Easy Monsters," in *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. A. Farkas et al. (Mainz am Rhein 1987) 85–94. See also G. Sillitti, *Tragelaphos*, *Elenchos* 1 (1980). It is not possible to determine from Lucian's self-descriptive metaphors exactly which works he is characterizing in the prologues and apologetic dialogues. While the governing ideas illuminate his conception of the dialogue form generally, they are most clearly exemplified by the Menippus pieces and those works formally comparable to the apologetic dialogues themselves. For the basic formal distinction between dialogues conceived on a Platonic model and those more Old Comic (or Cynic?) in conception, see Reardon, *Courants* 172–174, and Chapters 2 and 3 in this volume. For the chronology of Lucian's work, see Hall, *Lucian's Satire* chap. 1; Jones, *Culture and Society* app. B.

58. V. Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine* (The Hague 1955) 150–151. See V. Shklovskij, "Die Kunst als Verhahren," in *Texte der Russischen Formalisten*, ed. W. Kosny, vol. 1 (Munich 1969) 2–35.

59. See M. Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London 1967).

60. V. Shklovskij, "The Resurrection of the Word," in *Russian Formalism*, ed. S. Bann et al. (Brighton, England, 1973) 44.

61. It is significant that Lucian had to write an introduction that reproaches his audience for not taking him seriously enough because what he writes is comic (*Dion.* 5). It is another indication of the fundamental ambivalence of his most characteristic modes of writing.

62. Bakhtin, *Problems* 106–107.

63. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 557; Hermogenes 2.445–456, Spengel ed.

64. *Philb.* 30e, *Laws* 816, *Rep.* 452d.

65. Although Aristotle makes no mention of self-ignorance in his brief references to *to geloion*, the terms of his definition of the comic as a form of vice (*kakia*) are close to those of Plato in the *Philebus*. Evidently *psogos* and *to geloion* are distinguished (1448b37) because *psogos*, unlike *to geloion*, does not necessarily concern only the species of *kakia* that is "painless and not harmful" (*anōdunon kai ou*

phthartikon: 1449a35); on the contrary, it may well target characters whose *kakia* is vicious or destructive as well as ludicrous. By removing "pain" or "injury" from the realm of comedy (*to geloion*) Aristotle is defending it against Plato's charge that comedy necessarily appeals to *Schadenfreude* (*phthonos:* envy).

More crucial to Aristotle's distinction between two possible types of comic literature, however, is the typicality of true comedy, which he distinguishes in this respect from the invective of iambic poetry and, presumably, *psogos* in general (1451b11–15). Since he considers poetry "more philosophical" by virtue of its typicality (*to katholou*), he may well have conceded some philosophical value to comedy as well. But as is the case with tragedy, according to Aristotle, comedy would have been accorded only a precisely limited philosophical value. Its primary value would lie in the emotional effects peculiar to the genre (comic catharsis) that are enabled by the typicality of its mimesis. Cf. Lucian's claim to typicality for his caricatures, *Fisherman* 38. For this view of Aristotle, see K. von Fritz, *Antike und moderne tragödie* (Berlin 1962). For interesting reconstructions of Aristotle's theory of comedy, see U. Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom,' " in *Carnival!* ed. T. A. Sebeok (Berlin 1984) 1–9; L. Golden, "Aristotle on Comedy," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42.3 (1984) 283–290; Golden, "Comic Pleasure," *Hermes* 115.2 (1987) 165–174; R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a Reconstruction of Poetics II* (Berkeley 1984), esp. 161–212. Cf. also L. Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy* (New York 1922) 60–98, 166–224; G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Toronto 1965) 144–149; E. Olson, *The Theory of Comedy* (Bloomington 1968) 46–47; R. M. Torrance, *The Comic Hero* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) 285; D. A. Russell, *Criticism in Antiquity* (London 1981) 152–153; R. B. Heilman, *The Ways of the World: Comedy and Society* (Seattle 1978) app. 3.

66. Cf. *Frogs* 381; *Wasps* 651, 1043; *Knights* 510. See also McLeish, *The Theatre of Aristophanes* 21; K. J. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* (Berkeley 1972) 30–59.

67. For an interesting attempt to explain the apparent discrepancy between Plato's practice and critique of comedy, see M. Mader, *Das Problem des Lachens und der Komödie bei Platon* (Tübingen 1977).

68. *Gorgias* 481b, *Phaedrus* 234d, *Apology* 20d, *Republic* 337a.

69. A notable exception is G. Vlastos, "Socratic Irony," *CQ* 37.1 (1987) 79–96. A statement attributed by Cicero to Zeno the Epicurean shows that Socrates' comedic qualities did not go unnoticed by other philosophers: "Zeno used to say that Socrates

himself . . . was an Attic jester [*scurra*]"; *D. Nat.* 1.34.93. Cf. K. Kleve, " 'Scurra Atticus': The Epicurean View of Socrates," *Suzetesis. Studi sull' Epicureismo Greco e Romano offerti a Marcello Gigante*, ed. G. P. Caratelli (Naples 1983): 227–253.

The paradox of Socrates' comic character, illustrated by Alcibiades' comparison to Silenus, became a common metaphor in the Renaissance for a person or artifact whose unpromising surface conceals something of great value. See Rabelais's preface to *Gargantua;* Montaigne, *Essays*, vol. 3 no. 12; Erasmus' very Lucianic *Moriae Encomium*. Cf. also D. J. Kinney, "Erasmus' *Adagia:* Midwife to the Rebirth of Learning," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 11.2 (1981) 184–192.

70. The strictures against certain forms of aggressive humor are as persistent in ancient theoretical discussions as their practice was in fact. Cicero exemplifies the contradiction. See M. A. Grant, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable: The Greek Rhetoricians and Cicero*, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, no. 21 (Madison 1924) 24–32, 76–87. Closely analogous to Aristotle's distinction between *psogos* and *to geloion* are those made by Baudelaire between "significative" and "absolute comedy" and by Freud between "tendentious" and "innocent" jokes. See Baudelaire, "On the Essence of Laughter," in *The Mirror of Art*, trans. J. Mayne (Garden City, N.Y., 1956); E. Kern, *The Absolute Comic* (New York 1980); S. Freud, "Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious," in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York 1966) 688–708.

All these dichotomies suggest the two basic poles of humor: at one it serves a clear purpose, subversive or otherwise; at the other the point of the humor moves in several different directions, is less univocally satiric or aggressive, and therefore resists easy analysis. But virtually all humor is "tendentious" to a degree if we follow up its implications; as Orwell observed, "a joke worth laughing at has an idea behind it, and usually a subversive idea"; G. Orwell, "Charles Dickens," in *A Collection of Essays* (New York 1953) 100. A central problem in the analysis of satiric or comic literature—and the two are hard to distinguish in Lucian—is that of defining the emphasis of its usually subversive tendencies and assessing the interaction between different modes of humor in a single context.

71. D. R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism* (London 1937) 29 n. 2.

72. See *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, vol. 1: *The Progymnasmata*, ed. R. F. Hock and E. N. O'Neil (Atlanta 1986); J. F.

Kindstrand, "Diogenes Laertius and the 'Chreia' Tradition," *Elenchos* 7.1–2 (1986) 219–243: As Kindstrand points out (224), Metrocles (the "teacher" of Menippus) is the first known collector of *khreiai* (D.L. 6.33). Of course, whoever recorded the *khreiai* about Diogenes, Dudley may be right to see in them the work of Diogenes, since he is represented in one instance as having planned a joke (*khreia*) to play on Aristotle (D.L. 5.18). Since the joke backfired, it is not surprising that it appears in the life of Aristotle but not of Diogenes. Cf. also J. Barnes, "Aphorism and Argument," in *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. K. Robb (La Salle, Ill., 1983) 91–105.

73. Demetrius, *De Elocutione*, shows himself keenly aware of the rhetoric of humor. While discussing the graces (*kharites*) of the elegant (*glaphuros*) style, he observes that the most potent effect (*hē dunatotē kharis*) is created by the introduction of humor into an otherwise noncomic context; he cites as an example a jest of Xenophon made at the expense of a dour Persian (134–135). Demetrius admires this technique precisely because the writer produces an effect ostensibly at odds with his material. He touches on the *kunikos tropos* explicitly in two passages. In the first (170), he notes the affinity between the pointed humor of Crates' encomium of the lentil and that of anecdotes and maxims generally (*khreia*, *gnomē*). Later (259–261), in discussing the stylistic sources of forcefulness (*deinotēs*), Demetrius observes that it is created in comedy and Cynic literature by the element of playfulness (*ek paidias*); he cites as examples a line of Crates' "Cynic epic" and a *khreia* about Diogenes at the Olympics: "At the conclusion of the hoplite race Diogenes ran up and declared himself victor over all mankind—in nobility of character [*kalokagathia*]." Demetrius observes that while the *khreia* excites laughter (*gelatai*) and surprise (*thaumazetai*), it also bites (*hupodaknei*). He then reports another *khreia* about Diogenes and observes that its wit is covertly pointed and significant (*hē keuthomenē emphasis*). This complexity of effect, he says, makes the whole genre (*eidos*) of Cynic discourse (*logos*) like a dog that wags its tail and bites at the same time. Cf. Lucian, *Bis Acc.* 33.

74. The theme of chaps. 1–4 of *The Act of Creation;* cf. Cohen, "Jokes" 129–132.

75. See A. A. Long, "Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy," *CQ* 38.1 (1988) 150–171.

76. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1419b4–5. See also Aristotle's definition of "wit" (*eutrapeleia*) as "cultured" or "sublimated aggression" (*pepaideumenē hubris*: *Rhet.* 1389b11).

77. For example, Timon's comic poem, *Silloi*, contains such Lucianic elements as Homeric parodies, a mock-epic battle between philosophers (cf. Lucian's *Symposium* and Chapter 2 in this volume), and a journey to Hades with satiric intent (cf. *Men.*, *D. Mort.*).

78. H. Piot, *Un personnage de Lucien, Menippe* (Rennes 1914).

79. Cf. D.L. on Crates. Cf. also Monimus, who is said to have composed playful works in which covert seriousness was blended (*paignia spoudēi lelethuiai memigmena:* D.L. 6.83). Bion, Crates, and other relevant figures are discussed in R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog* (Leipzig 1895); G. A. Gerhard, *Phoinix von Kolophon* (Leipzig 1909); J. Geffcken, "Studien zur griechischen Satire," *NJbb* 27 (1911) 393–411, 469–493; J. F. Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthenes* (Uppsala 1976); E. Livrea, *Studi Cercidei* (Bonn 1986). For Lucian's relationship to Menippus, see above, note 8. For Cynic and Skeptic literature generally, see A. A. Long, "Skeptics, Cynics, and Other Post-Aristotelian Philosophers," in *CHCL* 1: 636–639, 850–854. Grant, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories*, provides a useful survey of ancient theories of the comic and its potentially serious functions, although her study stops with Cicero. Drawing her conclusions less from literary practice than from theoretical pronouncements, she specifies the two primary senses in which the comic was thought to have a serious function, namely, in effecting understanding and reform: "Laughter is an amusement, its purpose is one of relaxation, to prepare us for serious activities. The conception of *to spoudaiogeloion* is parallel to this: Laughter helps us to understand serious things. Another equally important view was that laughter was an effective instrument of reform" (60). Cf. also L. Radermacher, *Weinen und Lachen: Studien über antikes Lebensgefühl* (Vienna 1947); L. Giangrande, *The Use of Spoudaiogeloion in Greek and Roman Literature* (The Hague 1972); G. Anderson, *Eros Sophistes: Ancient Novelists at Play* (Chico, Calif., 1982). The best account of Lucian's theory of humor is K. Korus, "The Theory of Humour in Lucian of Samosata," *Eos* 72 (1984) 295–313.

80. T. Eagleton's characterization of the eclectic technique used in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* is strikingly applicable to Lucian: *The Function of Criticism* (London 1984) 19.

81. Cf. J. Beaujeu, "Sérieux et frivolité au IIᵉ siècle de notre ère: Apulée," *Bulletin de l'Association G. Budé* 34 (1975) 83–97. Beaujeu sees seriousness and frivolity simply as characterizing different parts or aspects of Apuleius, so that the two are alternated to produce variety, or seriousness is adorned or lightened by levity. If we

subtract the frivolous elements, nothing is lost but some of the work's entertainment value. On this view, the "frivolous" elements are used to decorate or variegate the serious core of the work. I am arguing, however, that in Lucian—or in Apuleius, Petronius, Aristophanes, Plato, et al.—there is an interaction between contrasting elements such that their combined effect is different in kind from the sum of its parts. That is why we cannot analyze the text, e.g., into serious (content) and nonserious (presentation) and identify the author's thought with the former as Beaujeu does. The relationship between divergent qualities is dynamic: the effect of one qualifies our reception of the other. See Winkler, *Auctor & Actor* 228–233.

82. D. Franklin used this epithet in dedicating his translation of the *Demonax* to Johnson; *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, vol. 4 (New York 1904) 40.

83. R. Rader, "Literary Form in Factual Narrative," in *Boswell's Life of Johnson: New Questions, New Answers*, ed. J. A. Vance (Athens, Ga., 1985) 28.

84. Lucian's *Demonax* is virtually the only evidence of Demonax's existence. I am not concerned here with the truth of Lucian's portrait, but with the qualities of the character whom he presents as his teacher and exemplar. See K. Funk's notion of Demonax as Lucian's *Idealbild: Untersuchungen über die Lucianische 'Vita Demonactis'*, *Philologus Supplementband* 10 (1907) 561–574. Cf. also A. Elter, " 'Gnomika homoiomata' des Socrates, Plutarch, Demophilus, Demonax, Aristonymus u.a.," 1 Univ.-Prog. (Bonn 1900); Dudley, *History of Cynicism* 158–162; A. J. Malherbe, "Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ed. B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders, vol. 3 (Philadelphia 1982) 46–59; Jones, *Culture and Society* chap. 9.

85. Cf. *Dem.* 62: "When asked which of the philosophers was most to his taste, he said, 'I admire them all; Socrates I revere [*sebō*], Diogenes I admire [*thaumazō*], Aristippus I love [*philō*]' " (Fowlers). Demonax's nonsectarian stance would have had particular appeal for Lucian.

86. Cf. Diogenes, D.L. 6.79.

87. Quoted by J. A. Vance, "The Laughing Johnson," in *Boswell's Life of Johnson* 210.

88. See Freud, "Wit": "It is easy to guess the character of the witticism by the kind of reaction that wit exerts on the hearer. Sometimes wit is 'wit for its own sake' and serves no other particular purpose; then again, it places itself at the service of such a tendency,

i.e., it becomes tendentious. Only that form of wit which has such a tendency runs the risk of ruffling people who do not wish to hear it . . . 'Harmless' or 'abstract' wit should in no way convey the same meaning as 'shallow' or 'poor' wit . . . A harmless jest, i.e., a witticism without a tendency, can also be very rich in content and express something worthwhile" (688–690).

89. Cf. H. Bergson, "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. W. Sypher (Baltimore 1980) 71.

90. *L'idiot de la famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857*, vol. 1 (Paris 1971) 821; cited and translated by P. Caws, "Flaubert's Laughter," *Philosophy and Literature* 8.2 (1984) 173–174. See Rabelais's preface to *Gargantua;* Bergson, "Laughter" 62; Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium* 673a8–9: "no animal but man ever laughs." Lucian parodies Aristotle's observation in *Vit. Auct.* 26: "man is an animal that laughs, while asses do not laugh, and neither do they build houses nor sail boats."

91. Redfern, *Puns* 2.

2. AGONISTIC HUMORS

1. P. De Lacy, "Plato and the Intellectual Life of the Second Century A.D.," in *Approaches to the Second Sophistic*, ed. G. W. Bowersock (University Park, Pa. 1974) 4.

2. Ibid., 6.

3. Householder, *Literary Quotation and Allusion* tab. 1, p. 41. Lucian's debt to Plato is actually greater than Householder's statistics indicate because they take no account of the generally Platonic manner of the dialogues, which any ancient audience would have been aware of. That Plato was of central importance to the literary culture of his time for both his style and his philosophical methods is an essential element of the background tacitly shared by Lucian with the audience of his "Platonic" dialogues and must be considered in characterizing their effects. For Christian authors (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr) interested in Plato, see Reardon, *Courants* 283–285.

4. Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues are those that deliberately recall Plato's conception of the form: the naturalistic presentation of informal debate between historical (i.e., nonmythological) characters. The best examples are the *Anacharsis* and *De Parasito*, and Lycinus-dialogues such as the *Hermotimus*, *Symposium*, *Navigium*, and *Cynicus*. (The authenticity of the last has been challenged, but

unpersuasively. Cf. J. Bieler, *Über die Echtheit des Lucianischen Dialogs Cynicus* [Hildesheim 1891].) Other Lycinus-dialogues include the *Lexiphanes, Eunuchus, Imagines, Pro Imaginibus, De Saltatione.* Cf. also the generally Platonic manner and mise-en-scène of such works as the *Philopseudeis* and *Toxaris* and the dubiously Lucianic *Demosthenis Encomium* and *Amores.* (The *Hesiodus* straddles the distinction between "Platonic" and mythological dialogues.) Cf. Bompaire, "Eléments Socratiques" 303–320; R. Hermann, *Über die Lykinosdialoge des Lukian* (Hamburg 1886); H.-G. Nesselrath, *Lukians Parasitendialog: Untersuchungen und Kommentar* (Berlin 1985). Nesselrath's demonstration that Lucian's parody of the concept of *tekhnē* in the *Paras.* reflects extensive knowledge of the philosophical traditions is significant for Lucian's "Platonic" dialogues generally. Whereas Bompaire's analysis of the relevant dialogues as a group concludes that Lucian succeeded in reproducing only the accoutrements and atmosphere of Plato's dialogues, Nesselrath's research strongly supports the argument that Lucian's divergence from the essentials of Platonic practice is not merely a lapse in mimesis, but the key to his reworking of the form. (For the authenticity of the *Paras.*, see G. Anderson, "Motifs and Techniques in Lucian's *De Parasito*," *Phoenix* 33 (1979) 59–66; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 331–339; Nesselrath 1–8.)

5. This distinction can be seen in the fact that certain argumentative exchanges such as those that occur in the *Euthydemus* are funny even if we know nothing of the characters of the speakers. There is something inherently ludicrous about these exchanges, and we laugh at that rather than at the qualities of the interlocutors per se. Another way of stating the distinction is that one type of humor derives from the characters' moral, the other from their intellectual, limits. The best treatment of humor in Plato is Mader, *Das Problem des Lachens.* H. L. Tracy's "Plato as Satirist," *CJ* 33 (1937) 153–162, is inadequate.

6. E.g., in their initial exchange with Cleinias, D. and E. first "prove" that the foolish (*hoi amatheis*) are learners (*hoi manthanontes*), and then the opposite, that the wise (*hoi sophoi*) are learners (275d–277bc). E. questions Cleinias to prove the first proposition, and then his double, D., questions him again to reach a contradictory conclusion. The methods of the *Dissoi Logoi*, like the doctrines of the impossibility of falsehood and contradiction, are common to the whole sophistic movement; see G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge 1981) chap. 9.

7. The dialogue is structured as follows: introductory

dialogue between Socrates and Crito (271a–272e). First narrative segment: description of characters and setting, mock-invocation of the muse (272c–275d), account of the initial exchange between the sophists and Cleinias (275d–277c), account of Socrates' analysis of the "refutations" and his ensuing conversation with Cleinias, offered to the sophists as an example of "protreptic discourse" (277c–282e). Dialogue between Socrates and Crito (283a–b). Second narrative segment: the arguments with the sophists (283b–288d), Socrates' conversation with Cleinias (288d–290d). Dialogue between Socrates and Crito (290e–293a). Third narrative segment, recounting arguments with the sophists (293a–303a). Concluding dialogue between Socrates and Crito (303b–307c).

8. The characterization of the sophists as pancratists, stated and elaborated by Socrates in the frame at the beginning of the dialogue (271c–273b), is varied in the course of his narrative with many briefer comparisons involving images of play, popular entertainment, or athletics or simple sarcasm: D. and E. are compared to a director (*didaskalos*) and their followers to a chorus (276b); E.'s skill in twisting questions is compared to that of dancers (276d); the sophists' argument is likened to a ball (277b); the refutation of Cleinias is compared to a fall in a wrestling bout (277c); the sophists' initial refutation of Cleinias is compared to the "sportive gambols" of the Corybantes before an initiation ceremony (277d–e); the sophists themselves are compared to practical jokers who pull stools out from under people when they are about to sit down (278b) and later to Medea (285c) and to Proteus, "the bewitching Egyptian sophist" (288b); they are also likened to the Dioscuri about to save Socrates and Cleinias from a high wave of *logos;* finally, they are compared to hunters and their arguments to nets and snares (295d, 302b). The only image of sophistry as constructive is the comparison of the brothers to craftsmen (301c). While each of these images functions locally, they also contribute to our cumulative impression of the sophists.

9. Cf. Bergson, "Laughter" 92.

10. For reasons that have never been adequately explained, to duplicate a character almost always makes him (and his double) appear more ludicrous than either would by himself. Two Macbeths or two Socrates would be as irresistibly comic as Molière's two Sosiases are in the *Amphitryon*, or the interchangeable sophists in the *Euthydemus* (see Lucian's treatment of the two Dioscuri, *D. Deor.* 25). Perhaps Bergson is right and the doubling of a character robs him of

his uniqueness, by making him seem like a copy cast in a mold or a marionette ("Laughter" 82–83). Yet why is the appearance in a human being of a puppetlike regularity or repetition funny? Because an incongruity is created between the way people see themselves, as autonomous and unique, and the way they are made to appear when doubled, namely as typical and predictable, as one example of a species. We are led back again to Plato's conception of humor as stemming from a kind of self-ignorance. The technique is all the more effective when, as in the *Euthydemus*, the twins make a point of offering something altogether sui generis. Cf. R. Girard, "Comedies of Errors: Plautus-Shakespeare-Molière," in *American Criticism in the Poststructuralist Age* (Ann Arbor 1981) 66–86.

11. L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (New York 1985): "By ethos I mean the ruling intended response achieved by a literary text . . . An ethos, then, is an inferred intended reaction motivated by the text" (55). This is close to Aristotle's use of *pathos*, as Hutcheon notes.

12. Plato calls attention to this at the opening of the dialogue by having D., grinning ear to ear (*panu meidiasas tōi prosōpōi*), whisper to Socrates just before Cleinias answers their first question: "Let me warn you, Socrates, that whatever the boy answers, he will be refuted" (276e).

13. Cf., for example, the equivocal use of *manthanein* in the first exchange with Cleinias and Socrates' analysis of it (277c–278a). R. K. Sprague, *Plato's Use of Fallacy* (New York 1962) 6, isolates the two principal devices used by the sophists in the *Euthydemus*, namely equivocal questions and *secundum quid*, "taking absolutely what should only be taken accidentally." Both devices are ways of exploiting simple verbal ambiguities. Cf. Aristotle, *On Sophistic Refutations* (166b38–167a21); Kerferd, *Sophistic Movement* chap. 7.

14. Bergson, "Laughter" 91.

15. Adorno, "Juvenal's Error."

16. Cf. Bompaire, "Le destin dans le 'Zeus Confondu' de Lucien de Samosate," in *Visages du destin dans les mythologies*, Mélanges J. Duchemin, Actes du Colloque de Chantilly (Paris 1983) 131–136.

17. For a concise attempt to describe Lucian's probable reading and "the full course of education" (*hē enkuklios paideia*) in his time, see Householder, *Literary Quotation and Allusion* app. 3. It is one of the defining features of Lucian's art that he makes the often-incongruous relations between previous literary traditions part of what his own work is about. This acute awareness of the incongruities

embraced by tradition could come about only when the traditions concerned had passed into history and become the object of study and imitation. See A. C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), chap. 1; Bakhtin, *Problems* 119 and *The Dialogic Imagination* 64–68.

18. For Greek attitudes toward barbarians, see J. F. Kindstrand, *Anacharsis: The Legend and the Apothegmata* (Uppsala 1981) 17 n. 1; for the conflicting strains in the Anacharsis legend, see ibid., 23–32. Cf. A. Momigliano, "The Fault of the Greeks," *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford 1977): "The original reaction of the Greeks was a refusal to involve themselves deeply in foreign ways of thinking. They never had the curiosity to learn either Latin or Hebrew. This is only one of the manifestations of what we may well call the normal attitude of the Greeks toward foreign civilizations . . . [Even in Herodotus we find] a cool, ultimately self-assured, look at foreign civilizations. There was no temptation to yield to them . . . It was observation from outside, clever, searching, fair, occasionally humorous. In Herodotus, Scythians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Libyans are observed in turn. What emerges is the superiority of the Greek love of freedom" (17–18). Lucian uses Anacharsis, an idealized barbarian, to turn this Herodotean perspective on the Greeks themselves, to challenge what Momigliano calls the "normal attitude." See the brilliant parody of Herodotus, *De Syria Dea*, and Householder's observations (*Literary Quotation and Allusion* 64) on the importance of Herodotus for Lucian.

19. R. Heinze, "Anacharsis," *Philologus* 50 (1891) 458–468, sketches certain Cynic attitudes that had come to be associated with the Scythian. Cf. A. J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (Missoula, Mont., 1977). Kindstrand, *Anacharsis* (33–65), persuasively challenges both the idea that Anacharsis' place among the sages was primarily the result of Cynic influence and Heinze's theory of a Cynic model for Lucian's *Anacharsis*.

20. Anacharsis is credited with poems on Greek and Scythian customs (D.L. 101) and on skepticism (S.E., *M.* 7.55–59; Kindstrand, *Anacharsis* 8–9). Though probably fabricated, the attributions suggest the range of interests traditionally associated with him.

21. Cf. A. Toynbee, *The Greeks and Their Heritages* (Oxford 1981), commenting on King Skyles, another Hellenizing Scythian: "The Hellenic and the nomad ways of life were at opposite poles" (40), making each a source of fascination to the other. Cf. Lucian, *Pseudol.* 2.

22. It may be relevant to Solon's posture in the dialogue that he was associated with the institution of cash prizes for the victors at the major games: Plutarch, *Solon* 23.3 (cited by R. S. Robinson, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics* [Chicago 1955] 59–60); cf., however, D.L. 1.55. Lucian attended the games himself and surely knew that there were prizes greater than apples or parsley. He suppresses this fact, however, as it would provide an obvious motive for the participants that even an Anacharsis could appreciate.

23. H. I. Marrou, "Education and Rhetoric," in *The Legacy of Greece*, ed. M. I. Finley (Oxford 1981) 186. J. Jüthner, *Philostratus über Gymnastik* (Leipzig 1909), surveys much of the ancient material on athletics. See Robinson, *Sources;* S. G. Miller, *"Arete": Ancient Writers' Papyri and Inscriptions on the History and Ideals of Greek Athletics and Games* (Chicago 1979). Cf. also D. C. Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago 1984).

24. C. P. Jones, "Two Inscriptions from Aphrodisias," *HSCP* 85 (1981) 177. This is just one of many possible examples; see L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche* (Rome 1953).

25. Cf. Isocrates, *Panegyr.* 1–2, *Antid.* 250, letter 8.5; Plato, *Rep.* 3.404a; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1335b6–10, 1338b9–39; Seneca, *Epist.* 89.18–19; Lucian, *Pharsalia* 7.279; Pliny, *N.H.* 35.13; Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 3.2–4, *Roman Questions* 40 (for Seneca, Lucan, Pliny, and Plutarch, see Robinson, *Sources* 151, 164–165); D. Chrys. 8–9; Lucian, *Demon.* 16, 49; Galen, *Protrepticus* 9–14 (Robinson, 191–197); A. Oltramare, *Les origines de la diatribe romaine* (Lausanne 1926); M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* (New York 1985) 104–105; for the tradition of Anacharsis' criticism of athletics, cf. D.L. 1.103–104; D. Chrys. 32.44; Kindstrand, *Anacharsis* 117–118; the common theme of these *khreiai* is Anacharsis' response to athletics as a kind of madness peculiar to the Greeks. Cf. Lucian, *Anacharsis* 5–6, 37–38.

26. *Protrepticus* 11 (Robinson, *Sources* 196–197).

27. Compare the abruptness with which the *Anacharsis* begins with the introduction to the context of the discussion in other dramatic dialogues (i.e., those not framed or narrated), such as the *Hermotimus* and *De Parasito* or Plato's *Laches*, *Ion*, and *Euthydemus*.

28. Cf. the reports in Philostratus' *Imagines* 2.6 and Pausanias 8.40.1–2 (Robinson, *Sources* 79–82) of the strange death of the pancratist Arrachion (sixth century B.C.). Although his opponent won technically in that he succeeded in strangling him to death, Arrachion was awarded the palm for managing to wrench his opponent's toe (or ankle) out of joint just as he expired. Philostratus' admiring

account of this feat contrasts nicely with Anacharsis' dismay at what he sees at the Lyceum. Cf. Pausanias 6.4.2 on victories won by twisting an opponent's fingers.

29. It is interesting that Lucian does not, *pace* Heinze, make Anacharsis an advocate of nature's norms in the Cynic mode, as this would have been an obvious way to differentiate him clearly from Solon and one that is reflected in one strain of the Anacharsis legend. Cf., for example, Diodorus Siculus, who reports that Anacharsis advised Croesus to follow nature, and took wild beasts as his moral paradigm (*einai gar tēn men phusin theou poiēsin, ton de nomon anthrōpou thesin*: 9.26). Similarly, Athenaeus records the *khreia* that Anacharsis was once at a symposium and was not amused at the clowns (*gelōtopoioi*), but when an ape was brought in he laughed saying, "this [ape] is naturally funny, but the man is putting on an act [*epitēdeusei*]" (14.613d); cf. Heinze, "Anacharsis" 462–463. The preference for nature even as a source of humor that this anecdote illustrates almost reverses the position of Lucian's Anacharsis, who laughs at Greek cultural institutions from athletics to drama because of their inexplicable divergence, not from nature, but from Scythian customs, which he regards as "natural" or "sensible." It was, however, a commonplace of popular morality, one probably older than Cynicism, that much could be learned from "primitive" peoples and wild animals because of their greater proximity to nature. Cf. Oltramare, *Origines* 46; D. Chrys. 6.18–29; Plutarch, *Gryllus*. Thus while Lucian's avoidance of overtly Cynic themes must be deliberate (Kindstrand, *Anacharsis* 24, 37–39, 65–67), his Anacharsis' critical perspective on Greek culture as a peculiar phenomenon does resonate with the Cynic rejection of convention. To this extent, at least, Heinze is right to call attention to the "Cynic" strain.

30. Cf. *Salt*. 29.

31. In fact the "slender soldier" is pointedly contrasted with the "fleshy athlete" in *The Education of Children* (8d), attributed to Plutarch. That the serious pursuit of sports was alien to martial discipline seems to have been widely acknowledged, at least by Lucian's time: Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 3.2; Robinson, *Sources* 151.

32. A. Middleton, "Chaucer's 'New Men' and the Good of Literature in the 'Canterbury Tales,' " in *Literature and Society*, ed. E. W. Said (Baltimore 1980) 23.

33. Only one sentence is devoted to the useful function athletics are supposed to serve in peace, which is to keep the young men out of trouble (30). It could well be that the inordinate emphasis on

martial value in Solon's defense is intended as an implicit criticism of an archaic institution whose original social rationale, however questionable, had come to seem anachronistic by Lucian's time. Philostratus' opening remarks in the *Gymnasticus* suggest that the cult of athletics was in decline, but this may be a rhetorical gambit on his part. According to Moretti, *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche* (viii), athletics flourished in the empire until the end of the third century A.D.

34. Cf. the irreverent mockery and giggling that the solemn rites of the Bantu provoke from their uncomprehending neighbors, the Pygmies: M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York 1970) 15.

35. Cf. H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge 1962) 175–177.

36. Cf. note 19 above.

37. Many scholars have, like Heinze, seen one speaker as voicing Lucian's views; see Kindstrand, *Anacharsis* 60 n. 66.

38. "Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat": *Solon* 34d.

39. Cf. Nesselrath, *Lukians Parasitendialog*, esp. 222–230.

40. For the *Cynicus* see R. B. Branham, "Utopian Laughter: Lucian and Thomas More," *Moreana* 86 (1985) 26–28. For the ironic use of a didactic voice, see Lucian's *Soloecista*, where a character named Lucian denounces some of Lucian's own usages along with genuine solecisms as part of a satire on the hypocrisy of contemporary pedants; see M. D. Macleod, " 'An' with the Future in Lucian and the 'Solecist,' " *CQ* n.s. 6 (1956) 102–111; and Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* 53–57.

41. Cf. Lexiphanes' description of his most recent piece: "A modest challenge [*antisumposiazō*] to the son of Ariston" (1 Fowlers). If we can infer anything about contemporary literary practice from Lexiphanes, it is that the symposia typical of the vogue for classicizing literature were period pieces relying primarily on Attic "atmosphere" and classical diction.

42. Cf. De Lacy, "Plato and Intellectual Life" 10: "It would be my judgment that the defense of a position that is exactly counter to a position taken by Plato in one of the better known dialogues would have been recognized by a reasonably well educated audience (in the second century A.D.) as a deliberate rejection of the Platonic position, even though Plato's name was not mentioned."

43. Cf. Athenaeus' contrast between himself as a habitué of *mouseia sumposia* (613c) and those prone to heavy drinking.

44. O. Murray, "The Greek Symposion in History," in *Tria Corda: Scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano*, ed. E. Gabba (Como 1983) 258: "Athenaeus was not the first or the last to regard the

symposion as the organizing principle of Greek life." For reservations about unitary views of Greek "rituals of conviviality," see P. Schmitt-Pantel, "Sacrificial Meal and Symposion: Two Models of Civic Institutions in the Archaic City?" in *The Deipnosophistae*, ed. O. Murray (Oxford 1986). Cf. also L. Gernet, "Ancient Feasts," in *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Hamilton and B. Nagy (Baltimore 1981).

45. Cf. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 314–319; E. Ulrich, *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Literaturgattung des Symposium* (Würzburg 1908). Cf. also Bakhtin's discussion (*Rabelais* 295–300) of medieval symposia, which in some respects are closer to Lucian than are his classical models, Plato and Xenophon, in that philosophical discourse is absent or peripheral.

Bompaire (316–317) notes the roles common to Lucian and his models: the uninvited guest (Plato's Aristodemus, Lucian's Alcidamas), the tardy guest (Plato's Alcibiades, Lucian's Dionicus), the doctor (Plato's Eryximachus, Lucian's Dionicus), the clown (Xenophon's Philippus, Lucian's Satyrion). Other features, such as the letter that is read to the guests and the presence of female symposiasts, are found only in Lucian and in Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Sages*.

Bompaire's characterization of Lucian's *Symposium* as "très Cynique" (300) is misleading. The only Cynic at the feast, Alcidamas, is presented as a repellent figure. Just as Plato's *Symposium* serves to celebrate Socrates and his way of life, Cynic symposia appear to have celebrated Cynic values, not to have ridiculed Cynics as Lucian does. See, for example, the praise of lentil soup in the Cynic symposium quoted by Athenaeus (4.156c–158d). The skepticism that Lycinus expresses on the moral efficacy of formal learning (*to pepaideusthai*), like the contrast between the decorous behavior of the ordinary guests (*hoi idiōtai*) and the outrageous antics of the learned fools (34–35), has deep roots in popular morality and is not necessarily Cynic.

46. Cf. Murray, "Symposion" 264: "It is indeed the *symposion* which, with its daytime extension the *gymnasion*, explains both the origin and persistence of the aristocratic phenomenon of homosexuality in Greek society . . . Almost all of the distinctive features of the high culture of archaic Greece are expressions of the sympotic way of life."

47. See Plato, *Symposium*, ed K. J. Dover (Cambridge 1980) 11.

48. Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 365.

49. The metaphoric use of *hestiasis* (feast of words) is also Platonic: *Tim.* 27b.

50. The incidents are structured as follows: Prologue: introductory conversation between Lycinus and Philo (1–5); introduction of the dramatis personae (6–8). First episode, the seating of the guests: Zenothemis, the Stoic, insists on a place of honor above the Epicurean, Hermon (9–10). Second episode: Zenothemis is spied stealing food (11). Third episode: Alcidamas, the Cynic, crashes the party (12–14). Fourth episode: Cleodemus, the Peripatetic, is caught seducing a servant (15). Fifth episode: a Cynic toast to the bride (16). Sixth episode, private performances: as they become drunk, the guests engage in characteristic pursuits: the rhetorician, Dionysodorus, performs speeches for the servants; the grammarian, Histiaeus, composes parodic verse; Zenothemis, the Stoic, reads from a book in small print; the Cynic, Alcidamas, becomes more abusive (17). Seventh episode: the battle of the Cynic and the clown (18–19). Eighth episode: the doctor's tale (20–21). Ninth episode: the neighbor's letter (22–27) and its effects, the disgrace of Zeno, the host's son (28–29). Tenth episode: the philosophers' exchange (*loidoria*) over the letter; Aristaenetus tries to quell their first fight (30–33); the narrator's reflections (34–35); the fight is renewed until Ion the Platonist and food intervene (36–38). Eleventh episode: Ion's failed attempt to initiate a Platonic discussion (39–40). Twelfth episode: Histiaeus' wedding song (41). Thirteenth episode: the feast erupts into a battle over food between Hermon and Zenothemis, and the groom is wounded; the party breaks up (42–47); Euripidean epilogue (48).

51. E.g., the speech of Pausanias in *Symp.* 180c–185c and the proposal to abolish monogamy in *Rep.* 5.457b–466d.

52. The presence of the doctor, emphasized by his late arrival and misadventure, also functions, like the clown's, as part of the contrast between Lucian and his models (Plato and Xenophon). Unlike Plato's doctor, Eryximachus, who proposed the festive competition in praise of Eros, Dionicus will be needed in a more professional capacity, as Lycinus observes—to treat the wounded.

53. Bergson, "Laughter" 122.

54. For "affectation" as the root of "the true Ridiculous" see Fielding's preface to *Joseph Andrews.*

55. Galen, in his treatise *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, singles out the comprehension and mastery of anger as one of the paramount tasks of the philosopher. As an eclectic, Galen can be taken to reflect a wide range of opinion on the subject. Cf. W. S. Anderson, "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca," in *Essays in Roman Satire* (Princeton 1982) 293–361.

56. Murray, "Symposion" 268–270, argues that violence, directed toward social and political rivals, had been an integral part of the sympotic occasion since the archaic period.

57. Represented in the text not by Lycinus but by the genial host Aristaenetus, who thus serves as a foil to the defects of his learned guests.

58. For the division at a feast as the locus of epic quarrels: *Od.* 8.172–182; *Thebaid* frs. 2–3; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1583–1602; cf. A. L. Motto and J. R. Clark, "*Ise Dais:* The Honor of Achilles," *Arethusa* 2 (1969) 109–125; G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) index s.v. *dais*. Cf. idem, "On the Symbolism of Apportioning Meat in Archaic Greek Elegiac Poetry," *L'uomo* 9 (1985) 45–52.

59. After Harmon's trans., Loeb Classical Library (London 1913). Note that both the young men at the banquet—Chaireas, the groom, and Zeno, Aristaenetus' son—are ruined—one is disgraced, the other wounded—by the philosophers who are supposed to oversee their education and upbringing (*paideia*).

60. "Of all antique banquets," observes Bakhtin, "this particular *Symposium* [by Lucian] is closest to Rabelaisian scenes" *Rabelais* (207). Yet while recognizing the importance of Lucian's *Symposium* for Rabelais, Bakhtin is uncharacteristically unperceptive about its qualities. He completely misconstrues the way Lucian draws on traditional material, remarking curiously, "The fight featured in the *Symposium* is a symbolical broadening of the traditional material of his images and seems not to be his intention" (ibid.). He goes on to characterize the humor of Lucian's *Symposium* as "abstract" and "rationalist" in contrast to comparable scenes of thrashing in Rabelais, "which are profoundly ambivalent; everything in them is done with laughter and for laughter's sake 'et le tout en riant' " (208). Much of what Bakhtin says of Rabelais's scenes of fighting and thrashing is in fact applicable to Lucian: "In Rabelais abuse . . . is universal . . . [the pretenders] are all subject to mockery" (212). Bakhtin's criticism of Lucian reflects the limitations imposed by his basic dichotomy between "popular-festive" and "satirical-negative" forms (290). Bakhtin's approach to Lucian in *The Dialogic Imagination* (esp. "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" 41–83) is far more suggestive, presumably because he is not using him as a foil for defining Rabelais's distinctive achievements.

61. Cf., however, Ovid, *Met.* 12.210–535, for comparable humor in a battle scene.

62. Nagy, *Best of the Achaeans* 112.

63. *Skotos* is common in Homer and usually denotes the darkness that covers a hero's eyes at the moment of death. The resonance of the incident is epic, but the reference is inspecific.

64. *Pollai morphai tōn daimoniōn / polla d'aelptōs krainousi theoi / kai ta dokēthent' ouk etelesthē.* The same lines conclude Euripides' *Alc.*, *Andr.*, *Ba.*, *Hel.*, and *Med.*

65. In the *Anacharsis* Solon names both sophists and philosophers as the educators of Athens (22).

66. Cf. Lucian, *Ind.* 22; Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. 2 n. 14; Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*, esp. chap 3: the classes singled out for privileges by Hadrian included grammarians, rhetoricians, and physicians as well as philosophers (33), but particular emphasis was laid on teaching (39). Later, restrictions were added to keep down the costs to cities of promoting *paideia*.

67. *Galen on the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, trans. P. W. Harkins (Columbus 1963) 58.

68. Ibid., 76. For other contemporary criticisms of philosophers (by Aulus Gellius, Favorinus, Aristides, Dio Chrysostom, Dio Cassius, among others), see Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 190–191.

69. Cf. the philosopher who serves as Lucian's *kanōn:* Demonax is thoroughly unprofessional, independent of any sect, and uninterested in doctrinal disputes.

70. Cf. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination:* "There never was a single strictly straightforward genre, no single type of direct discourse—artistic, rhetorical, philosophical, religious, ordinary, everyday—that did not have its own parodying and travestying double, its own comic, ironic contre-partie. What is more, these parodic doubles and laughing reflections of the direct word were, in some cases, just as sanctioned by tradition and just as canonized as their elevated models" (53). Cf. V. Sklovshij, "The Connection between Devices of *Syuzhet* Construction and General Stylistic Devices" (1919), in Bann et al., *Russian Formalism:* "Not only a parody, but also in general any work of art is created as a parallel and a contradiction to some kind of model" (53).

71. G. Grote's gloss on the mythical past of Greece aptly characterizes the cultural myth of classical Athens in the age of the sophists; *A History of Greece*, 2d ed. (London 1869) 1:43; cited by F. M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven 1981) 88 n. 20.

72. Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 305.

3. AGING DEITIES

1. M. A. Rose, *Parody // Metafiction* (London 1972) 22. *Poetics* 1448b20–27: the comic arts grew out of improvisational *psogoi* (*ek tōn skhediasmatōn*).

2. K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"* (1844), ed. J. O'Malley, trans. A. Jolin and J. O'Malley (Cambridge, Mass., 1970) 174.

3. Phot. *Bibl.* 128.

4. For Lucian's mythological dialogues as religious satires see Croiset, *Essai* 175–235; B. P. Hophan, "Lukians Dialoge über die Götterwelt" (Diss. University of Fribourg 1904); G. Lojacano, *Il riso di Luciano* (Catania 1932); Caster, *Lucien* chaps. 3–4, 9; J. Coenen, *Lukian: Zeus Tragoedos, Überlieferungsgeschichte, Text und Kommentar*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 88 (Meisenheim am Glan 1977) 34–35. For the opposed view, which tends to discount any iconoclasm in Lucian's depiction of the Olympians, see Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 491–499; 561–585; 599–655; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 194–207. Cf. also Anderson, *Theme and Variation* 94–102; Kindstrand, *Homer in der Zweiten Sophistik* (Uppsala 1973).

5. It is important to remember with Bompaire (*Lucien écrivain* 298) that there was in fact no rhetorical exercise (*progumnasma*) for dialogue.

6. Lucian's distance from traditional religion can be inferred from many texts and is explicit in *On Sacrifices;* on his "agnosticism" generally, see Jones, *Culture and Society* chap. 4.

7. Rose, *Parody* 35, 150.

8. This view is problematic (what of Horace?) but is generally accepted. L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York 1985), argues well in support of it (44–56), citing M. Eastman, *Enjoyment of Laughter* (New York 1936) 236; H. Morier, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique* (Paris 1961) 217; Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* 69; E. Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York 1964); S. D. Valle-Killeen, *The Satiric Perspective* (New York 1980) 15.

9. V. Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* (New York 1981) 75.

10. *Poetics* 1448b17–18: "If a man does not know the original [of a work of art], the imitation [*mimēma*] as such gives him no pleasure." Cf. Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* chap. 5. Hutcheon errs in arguing that humor is not essential to parody (20, 24–25, 32–43). Satiric humor, mockery or ridicule, is not essential, but humor of

some kind is; otherwise parody becomes indistinguishable in principle from other forms of literary imitation. The history of parody has always connected it with humor in both theory and practice; see J. A. Dane, *Parody: Critical Concepts versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne* (Norman, Okla., 1988). Cf. G. Genette, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Paris 1982).

11. F. W. Householder, Jr., "Parōdia," *Journal for Classical Philology* 39 (1944) 1–9. For Quintilian and others *parōidia* was a "device for comic quotation" (5). Householder shows that this was a common notion of parody in antiquity and offers this definition of the verb *parōideō:* "to quote, paraphrase or imitate serious verse in comedy, lampoon or satire" (9). For studies of the word *parōidia*, cf. also H. Koller, "Die Parodie," *Glotta* 35 (1956) 17–33; E. Pöhlmann, "Parodia," *Glotta* 50 (1972) 144–156. Pöhlmann argues persuasively that the ancient conception of "parody" was flexible and sees "the essence of ancient literary parody" in Johannes Siculus' formulation: "It is parody when one covertly introduces into one context something that clearly belongs in another" (Walz 6.400.16). Cf. also F. J. Lelièvre, "The Basis of Ancient Parody," *Greece & Rome* 1 (1954) 66–81; E. Courtney, "Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire," *Philologus* 106 (1962) 86–100; H. Wolke, *Untersuchungen zur Batrachomyomachie*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 100 (Meisenheim am Glan 1978) 178–194. Much has been written on parody and mythological burlesque in Aristophanes. A. M. Komornicka provides an overview of the scholarly literature and sketches some of the principal types of comic imitation in Aristophanes; "Quelques remarques sur la parodie dans les comédies d'Aristophane," *Quaderni ubernati di cultura classica* 3 (1967) 51–74; cf. P. Rau, *Paratragodia*, *Zetemata* 45 (1967); H. Hofmann, *Mythos und Komödie*, *Spudasmata* 30 (Hildesheim 1976).

12. Cf. Rose, *Parody* 33–35; Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* chaps. 3–4; Lucian's *D. Mar.*, *D. Mer.*, *D. Deor.*

13. Cf. Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* 64. Cf. Friedrich Schlegel's notion of irony as "self-parody": Rose, *Parody* 52.

14. Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* 28.

15. Cf. Lessing's description of Cervantes' art as "a serious manner of joking": Rose, *Parody* 36 n. 28.

16. Cf. W. J. Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), cited by Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* 4.

17. Cf. J. A. Yunck, "The Two Faces of Parody," *Iowa English Year Book* 8 (1963) 29–37. I agree with A. Fowler, *Kinds of*

Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), that, strictly speaking, parody and satire are modes or quasi-generic groupings rather than genres because they have never corresponded to any one kind (110). Satire, as Fowler observes, "catalyzes generic mixture" (188) in part because of its affinity for parodic means. Hence the notorious difficulty in classifying Lucian or his oeuvre generically or defining ancient satire generally: Old Comedy (Aristophanes' *Knights*, *Clouds*), hexametric verse in the first person and verse dialogue (Horace), parodic fantasies in the first person (Timon of Phlius, Menippus?), dialogue, monologue, and narrative in several forms (Lucian) are all examples of ancient satire. As Fowler observes, "diversity of form is paradoxically the 'fixed' form of satire" (110). For the concept of mode as it applies to Lucian, see note 23 below.

18. Rose, *Parody* chap. 2; Hutcheon *Theory of Parody* chap. 1, esp. 40–43.

19. Cf. Householder, "Parōdia" 2; cf. also W. Karrer, *Parodie, Travestie, Pastiche* (Munich 1977) 53–54.

20. J. Jump, *Burlesque* (London 1972), discusses parody as "high burlesque" and travesty as "low burlesque."

21. See, e.g., the definition of "burlesque" in the *OED:* "To turn into ridicule by grotesque parody or imitation; to caricature, travesty." Burlesque, from the Italian *burla* (joke, ridicule), was imported from Italy to France in the seventeenth century, where it acquired varied but often pejorative meanings; H. Markiewicz, "On the Definitions of Literary Parody," in *To Honor Roman Jakobson, Essays on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, vol. 2 (The Hague 1966) 1266.

22. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton 1974), s.v. "Burlesque," 88.

23. Lucian's collections of miniature dialogues are best approached as examples of modes, that is, as distillations from well-established genres of certain distinctive features (e.g., typical settings, episodes, or roles) detached from their original generic structure (e.g., plot, choral interludes, metrical patterns). Thus *The Dialogues of the Courtesans* are in the mode of New Comedy, *The Dialogues of the Sea Gods* in the modes of the satyr play and Alexandrian poetry (cf. Bompaire on "transposition," *Lucien écrivain* 562–585, and note 26 below). The distinction between mode and genre is useful for Lucian: see Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, esp. 111.

24. According to Householder's tables in *Literary Quotation and Allusion*, there are no determinate references to texts other than those of Homer (and perhaps Hesiod) in the *D. Deor.*, unless they be to earlier comic treatments of the mythological material. Cf. *D. Deor.* 10.1–2, 8.5 to *CAF* 1429 and *D. Deor.* 9 to *CAF* 1430. Cf. also *D. Deor.* 5 to *Theogony* 540–541. Bouquiaux-Simon (*Lectures homériques* 379) shows that specifically Homeric references are scattered throughout the *D. Deor.* Cf. *D. Deor.* 1.1: *Il.* 8.19–26; *D. Deor.* 1.2: *Il.* 1.397–406; *D. Deor.* 6.2: Zeus's attributes; *D. Deor.* 9.3: *Il.* 14.317–318; *D. Deor.* 10.2: *Il.* 8.48; *D. Deor.* 11.4: *Od.* 24.1–5; *D. Deor.* 13: *Glaukopis*; *D. Deor.* 15.2: *Il.* 5.89; *D. Deor.* 17.3: *Od.* 8.274–281, 335–342; *D. Deor.* 21.1–2: *Od.* 8.266–342. By contrast, fewer than half of the traceable references in *I. Trag.* are Homeric (12 of 28). As we saw in the *Nec.* in Chapter 1, a major source of comic effects in the group containing *I. Trag.*, which I call travesties, is the convergence of mutually antagonistic traditions or alien genres, a feature that is absent from the more homogeneous medium of the *D. Deor.* Lucian's favorite mythic locales, Hades and Olympus, are not the property of any particular author or genre. They are originally epic, however, and comic treatments of them function primarily by contrast with the treatment offered in serious genres. Without that contrast they would lose much of their comic potential.

25. Cf. R. Scruton, "Laughter," in Moreall, *The Philosophy of Laughter* 161.

26. Bompaire's definitions (*Lucien écrivain* 587–589) of burlesque, irony, humor, parody, and pastiche are—perhaps inevitably—overlapping but also, as Reardon observes (*Courants* 176 n. 46), sometimes contradictory. Similarly, the relation of parody and related comic procedures to his central categories of "transposition" and "contamination" (547–548) is problematic. To take only one example, the term *transposition* is itself misleading because in these relatively few cases in which we can specify Lucian's "model" we find he is recasting and reworking more than "transposing." For instance, in *D. Mar.* 1, considered like all the miniature dialogues as an example of "transposition," Lucian develops Theocritus' comic idea of portraying the Cyclops as an unrequited lover by imagining Galatea discoursing in all seriousness on his neglected virtues as a suitor. The dialogue skillfully exploits our familiarity with Theocritus and Homer, but it is parodying them, that is, using comic techniques of impersonation, exaggeration, and irony to recast rather than "transpose" his models. The term *transposition* supports the

erroneous notion of Lucian as sophistic pasticheur. Yet the examples of "transposition" do not support this view.

My distinction among three categories of dialogue—Platonic, mythological parodies, and mythological travesties—parallels Reardon's characterization (*Courants* 173) of three comic manners in Lucian, represented in Platonic dialogues, "transposed" or miniature dialogues, and "Lucianic" or "Menippean" dialogues (cf. Bompaire's "contamination"). I would call any of the three Lucianic and, to avoid confusion, use Menippean only of works in which Menippus figures as a character. The taxonomic problem posed by Lucian is a by-product of the deliberate blurring of generic distinctions. As I have argued, some of his most characteristic features span these purely formal and somewhat arbitrary classes. They are critical tools and nothing more.

27. The intrusive modern elements in Euripides' *Cyclops*, for example, are crucial to its comic meaning but are not categorically different from the anachronistic treatment of myth in fifth-century tragedy generally. See P. E. Easterling, "Anachronism in Greek Tragedy," *JHS* 105 (1985) 1–10.

28. Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* 8; cf. F. Vodicka, "The History of the Echo of Literary Works," in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, trans. and ed. P. L. Garvin (Washington, D.C., 1964) 80.

29. K. R. Seeskin, "The Comedy of the Gods in the 'Iliad,' " *Philosophy and Literature* 1.3 (1977) 300. Cf. P. Friedländer, "Lachende Götter," in *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin 1969) 3–18; W. Burkert, "Götterspiel und Götterburleske in altorientalischen und griechischen Mythen," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 51 (1982) 335–367.

30. Summarized and critiqued by G. M. Calhoun, "Homer's Gods: Prolegomena," *TAPA* 68 (1937) 11–25; idem, "Higher Criticism on Olympus," *AJP* 58 (1937) 257–274.

31. Seeskin, "The Comedy of the Gods" 301.

32. E.g., Hephaestus' fall from Olympus to Lemnos is recounted to cheer up Hera (*Il.* 1.584–596); cf. the comic wounding of Aphrodite (*Il.* 5.334–430) and the slapstick theomachy in *Il.* 20–21.

33. From e. e. cummings' parodic recreation, "in heavenly realms of Hellas dwelt."

34. Douglas, "Jokes" 98.

35. Cf. *OCD*, s.v. "adultery" 10: "A law of Draco allowed a man to kill anyone caught in the act with his wife . . . according to a law of Solon the offended husband could deal with the adulterer as he liked. The adulterer could, however, buy himself off . . . The

husband of a woman convicted of adultery was compelled to repudiate her, otherwise he became liable to *atimia* by a law of Solon." Hephaestus of course allows Poseidon to buy Ares off with a compensatory payment (*khreios*: 8.355). Odysseus is more Draconian and refuses to make any deal with the suitors even though their transgressions would seem less serious. There are of course aesthetic reasons for his refusal to compromise.

36. See L. Golden, "Comic Elements in the 'Iliad'" (forthcoming). Cf. also W. Burkert, "Das Lied von Ares und Aphrodite," *Rheinisches Museum* 130 (1960) 130–143.

37. These are of course the terms by which Aristotle defines *to geloion*, "the comic"; *Poetics* 1449a32–35. I take *hamartēma* to refer to any kind of (nonfatal) mistake or error and *aiskhos* to refer to anything that causes shame or embarrassment. Both can be described as *aiskhros*—ugly, unseemly, shameful, embarrassing—of which *to geloion* is said to be the "painless" or "undestructive" species. Black comedy deliberately violates Aristotle's restriction of the comic to painless or harmless error; satiric humor often does so.

38. The birth of gods may have been a popular theme in Old Comedy; Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 218; cf. J. J. Winkler, "Akko," *CP* 77 (1982) 138.

39. Quintilian's list is useful because it is slightly more selective than others. Cf. *Menander Rhetor*, ed. and trans. D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford 1981) xxiii–xxiv; Hermogenes, Rabe ed., 15–17; also Aristotle's observation (*Poetics* 1460a11–b2) that to present incongruities (*thaumasta; to atopon*) onstage or to use them unnecessarily tends to produce comic effects.

40. P. Friedländer, "Lachende Götter," in *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin 1969) 4; W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer* (London 1974) 338–339, argues that the scene is "typically Homeric" and even finds in it an admonition against adultery.

41. G. Murray, *The Rise of Greek Epic* (Oxford 1943) 271; Burkert, "Götterspiel" 356, sees the play with the gods as verging on mockery.

42. Calhoun, "Homer's Gods" 16.

43. Bouquiaux-Simon, *Lectures homériques* 363.

44. Bergson, "Laughter" 122; cf. Ovid, *Ars Am.* 2.561–600; *Met.* 4.167–189.

45. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450b21–51a15, 1459b17–1460a5; Callimachus, *Aetia* 1.1–20; *Epigrams* 13; cf. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature* 62–64.

46. The only roughly comparable collection of short (serio-

comic) dialogues from antiquity is the second book of Horace's *Sermones*.

47. Redfern, *Puns* 93.

48. Pastoral (Ganymede: *D. Deor.* 10; Pan: *D. Deor.* 2), rhetoricians (Momus: *Deor. Conc.*; Prometheus: *Prom.*), lovers reminiscent of New Comedy or the novel (Zeus: *D. Deor.* 6, 8, 10; Apollo: *D. Deor.* 16; Selene, Aphrodite: *D. Deor.* 19).

49. Cf. C. A. Sowa, *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns* (Chicago 1984) chaps. 6–7.

50. Cf. Bompaire on *D. Deor.* 11: "An excellent abridgment of the *Hymn to Hermes*" (*Lucien écrivain* 573).

51. The recuperation of myth through the parodic reworking of wornout motifs is the impulse behind *A True Story*.

52. Herodotus 2.145: "Among the Greeks, Heracles, Dionysus, and Pan are considered the youngest gods." Dionysus' youth is a reflection of his nature, not of historical fact; he appears in the Linear B tablets as a member of the Mycenaean Greek pantheon.

53. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. J. Raffan (Oxford 1985) 157.

54. *RE* Suppl. 8 (1956) 952–953: Other accounts made Pan the offspring of Zeus and Kallisto (Epimenides fr. 16 Diels), Apollo and Penelope, Aether and the nymph Oenoe, or earthborn (*gēgenēs:* Pindar fr. 100 Schroeder).

55. H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (New York 1959) 168.

56. Burkert, *Greek Religion* 172.

57. *Ibid.* Cf. Blanckenhagen, "Easy Monsters" 91–94; R. Herbig, *Pan* (Paris 1948).

58. Cf. Addison, *Spectator* no. 249 (1711): "Burlesque is of two kinds. The first represents mean persons in the accoutrements of heroes; the other describes great persons acting and speaking like the basest among the people. Don Quixote is an instance of the first and Lucian's gods of the second."

59. M. D. Macleod, *Lucian*, vol. 7, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1961) 239; Croiset, *Essai* 175–235; Caster, *Lucien:* "At the source of the [*Dialogues of the Gods*] is an Epicurean critique" (195). Cf. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 578; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 194–207; Jones, *Culture and Society* 34.

60. In general, Aristophanes relies more on the techniques of stage farce, Lucian on applying an ironic, familiar or intellectual tone to mythological subjects. Aristophanes shows none of Lucian's interest in the internal incongruities and logical anomalies of myth.

Lucian makes little use of obscenity. For the continuities between them, see the discussion of *Zeus: The Tragic Actor* later in the chapter. Cf. also P. Ledergerber, "Lukian und die altattische Komödie" (Diss. Fribourg 1905).

61. Macleod's view (*Lucian* 7:239) is not unrepresentative; cf. Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* 42–43; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 198.

62. R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven 1981), emphasizes the diverse and contradictory nature of the evidence (62–73). For an excellent survey of the religious culture of the period, see Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, esp. chaps. 1–5.

63. Most critics of mythology and inherited religious beliefs show a desire to accommodate the traditional stories (cf. P. Veyne, *Les Grecs onts-ils cru à leurs mythes?* [Paris 1983]). If they found an allegorical or implicit meaning (*huponoia*, *allēgoria*, *ainigma*, *symbolon*) in them consistent with philosophical beliefs (e.g., Plut. *Is. et Os.* 352c–355c, 358e–f, 359d–e, 367c, 374e–f, 379f) as did some Platonists, Stoics, and Cynics, or equated the gods with demons (cf. Plut. *De Def. Or.* 415a–417b; *Is. et Os.* 360d–361e), they were assuming that the myths, if properly interpreted, told important truths; cf. F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris 1956); J. Pepin, *Mythe et allégorie* (Paris 1958); Kindstrand, *Homer* 113–229. If they criticized them on moral, empirical, or theological grounds, they were frequently concerned to ferret the truth out of the tradition, e.g., Palaephatus, *Peri apistōn*, ed. N. Festa, *Mythographi Graeci*, 3.2 (Leipzig 1902) 73–87. Sextus Empiricus' survey of the arguments for and against the existence of gods (*Adv. Phys.* 1.49–94) effectively conveys the welter of conflicting opinions concerning the divine. Criticism of popular religion in works such as Seneca's *Superstit.* (in Aug. *Civ. Dei* 6.10) and Lucian's *Sacr.* suggests the persistence of attitudes and practices that a small elite had long deplored (for works critical of mythology in the Roman tradition, see MacMullen, *Paganism* 177 n. 13). This long, open-ended debate over the meaning of mythological traditions and the contemporary theological significance of the Olympians formed an important part of the background tacitly shared with his intended audience by a writer such as Lucian.

64. Jones, *Culture and Society:* "The Olympian religion . . . does not appear from the literature or the monuments of the time to have been in decline" (35); on oracles, see ibid. 44–45. A standard collection of Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor in this period (*IGR* vols. 3–4) shows that Apollo, Athena, Dionysus, Ar-

temis, and Aphrodite were the more frequently invoked deities other than Zeus, who is named more than twice as often as any other god; MacMullen, *Paganism* 7, 144 n. 31. As MacMullen points out, the statistics are too incomplete to be reliable but do seem to indicate that the Olympians were still regarded as important patrons and held their own beside the newer cults. If they were not taken seriously in some contexts, it is inconceivable that they would appear in comic literature either. See Holland, *Laughing* 55: " 'The comic cannot deal,' says E. Kris [in his *Psychoanalytic Explorations of Art*], 'with the eternally forbidden (murder, say) or with material to which the superego is indifferent. It must deal with something represented now in the superego.' "

65. *To the Cynic Heracleius* 210d–211a. Julian denounces Oenomaus' lost tragedies (presumably travesties) as containing "every conceivable vileness and folly." Oenomaus' work against prophecy, *Exposure of Frauds* (quoted in Eusebius, *PE* 5–6), offers an interesting contrast to Lucian. The excerpts of his work make it sound like a kind of diatribe. It is forcefully argued and loaded with sarcasm, rhetorical questions, apostrophes to Apollo and the gods, and verse quotations from oracles and poets. It introduces no fictional interlocutors and contains almost no narrative. Much of Oenomaus' argumentation, such as his criticism of the oracle given to Croesus (5.20) or his questioning of the gods' own free will, finds specific parallels in Lucian (cf. *I. Trag.* 15, *I. Conf.*). The difference of course is that Lucian converts the Cynic's debating points into material for comic fictions: he is interested in the comic possibilities of the incongruities offered by the legendary material, whereas Oenomaus simply wants to convince his audience of the folly of consulting oracles, the impossibility of prophecy, and the incoherence of traditional beliefs on the subject. Oenomaus does have a sense of humor, though, as is shown in his assertion of the free will of the flea (6.7) and in his account of his own dealings with Clarian Apollo (5.22). Lucian's Cyniscus, who is portrayed refuting Zeus in the *I. Conf.*, is a sympathetic parody of the Cynic voice found in works like those of Oenomaus.

66. Cf. *Menander Rhetor* 362.

67. Thus Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* 55.

68. "The Religion of the Ordinary Man in Classical Greece," in *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford 1973) 143; cf. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 93, 110; cf. also Burkert, *Greek Religion* 119–120, on the distinctions between

cult, myth, and poetry and the semiotic autonomy of early epic and lyric: "the poetic language does not transmit factual information; it creates a world of its own" (125). Cf. Burkert, "Götterspiel" 356; also Friedländer on Wilamowitz's contrast between myth as poetry and free play, and belief as inner conviction ("Lachende Götter" 12).

69. J. R. Milner, "A Structural Approach to Humor in Farce," in *It's a Funny Thing, Humour*, ed. A. J. Chapman and H. C. Foot (Oxford 1977) 391–394.

70. Bergson, "Laughter" 187.

71. Jones, *Culture and Society* 41; for the authenticity of *Syr. D.* and its Herodotean features, see Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 374–381.

72. Cf. the criticism of historians who "imitate" Herodotus or Thucydides by mechanically reproducing their stylistic mannerisms, dialect, or narrative procedures; *Hist. Conscr.* 15–16, 18.

73. As Hall correctly observes, "the reading of [*De Syria Dea*] does not tend to diminish one's appreciation of Herodotus" (*Lucian's Satire* 378); on the contrary, it assumes it and enhances it. The *De Syria Dea* is not a parody only if we limit the term to works that simply ridicule their models.

74. Cf. Theocritus 22.26ff.; Apollonius Rhodius 2.1ff.

75. Cf. Pindar, *N.* 10.55–90.

76. J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (New York 1950) 143; on play and jest as integral to myth, see Friedländer, "Lachende Götter" 12; cf. Burkert's definition of myth in *Greek Religion* "as a complex of traditional tales . . . united in fantastic combinations to form a polyvalent semiotic system which is used in multifarious ways" (120). Parody is one way of renewing the polyvalence of aging myths. See Turner, "Are There Universals of Performance?"; Ingram, *Intricate Laughter* chap. 4.

77. Cf. Aelius Aristides' prose hymns to Athena, Zeus, or Dionysus.

78. Friedländer, "Lachende Götter" 15.

79. H. Lloyd-Jones, *Classical Survivals* (London 1982) 59.

80. Dover, *Fifty Years and Twelve of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 127–128, 152 nn. 20–22; P. Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart 1963); Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 13–15, 83–84; Kern *Absolute Comic* 51, 71.

81. Lucian's stance toward the gods and heroes of myth depends entirely on rhetorical context. For example, Lycinus blithely conflates myth and history in his arguments in support of the antiquity of mimic dance and is at least ostensibly serious when citing

Castor and Pollux as the inventors of the Caryatic, a dance in honor of Artemis (*Salt.* 7–10). Similarly, there is nothing risible about the anthropomorphic goddesses of Olympus when they can serve to enhance an encomium of the emperor's mistress in *Im.* and *Pro Im.* It is probably significant that these more conventional attitudes are assumed in works written for the emperor's court.

82. Friedländer, "Lachende Götter" 17–18.

83. Cf. *Tatian "Oratio ad Graecos" and Fragments*, ed. M. Whittaker (Oxford 1982); J. Geffcken, *Zwei griechische Apologeten* (Leipzig 1907); H. B. Harris, *The Newly Recovered Apology of Aristides: Its Doctrine and Ethics* (London 1891); Jones, *Culture and Society* 35–36 n. 1; Caster, *Lucien* 190–196.

84. Cf. Bergson: "Our laughter is always the laughter of a group . . . A man who was once asked why he did not weep at a sermon when everybody else was shedding tears replied 'I don't belong to the parish!' What that man thought of tears would be still more true of laughter" ("Laughter" 64). Cf. D. P. Varene, "Philosophical Laughter: Vichian Remarks on Umberto Eco's 'The Name of the Rose,' " *New Vico Studies* 2 (1986) 77.

85. Cohen, "Jokes" 124.

86. This way of putting it may suggest a chronological relationship that cannot be established, but of course the generic contrast is unaffected by the order in which the various dialogues were written.

87. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 578; Hophan, "Lukians Dialoge"; Jones, *Culture and Society* 34.

88. Jones, *Culture and Society* 38; Jones defends the interpretation of the work as an attack on "spurious" gods; cf. J. H. Oliver, "The Actuality of Lucian's Assembly of the Gods," *AJP* 101 (1980) 304–313; Oliver sees the *Assembly* as a satire against the inclusion of "unworthy elements" in the city. See notes 91 and 92 below.

89. Croiset, *Essai* 207–235; Caster, *Lucien* 335–346. If Lucian had been primarily concerned to "expose" spurious gods, he could surely have done so more effectively than by pointing to their barbarian origins and funny tails.

90. Cf. the formation *hēmidoulos*, "half-slave" (E. *Andr.* 942), a status that could exclude one from political activity in Athens.

91. The qualifications eventually accepted (ca. 174 A.D.) required that a man be freeborn, not manumitted, for membership in the Council of the Five Hundred and be the son of a freeborn father to belong to the Areopagus. The emperors had originally attempted

(165 A.D.) to require three generations of free birth on both sides: see Oliver, "Lucian's Assembly" 308, 311 n. 9.

92. Cf. Oliver: "The main target is surely the complete enfranchisement of unworthy elements in a noble city of ancient prestige" ("Lucian's Assembly" 307). There was no "complete enfranchisement," as Oliver himself shows (307–308), only a relaxation of the *trigona* (a rule requiring three generations of good birth for membership in the Areopagus).

93. Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252b25.

94. T. Hawkes, *Metaphor* (London 1972) 90.

95. The fact that Momus' proposal is simply declared law when Zeus sees he lacks the votes to carry it (19) reinforces the impression that the imposition of "reforms" from above (i.e., the emperor) is being mocked. For possible allusions to the emperor, see Oliver, "Lucian's Assembly" 312–313.

96. Galligan, *Comic Vision* 4.

97. Jones, *Culture and Society* 40; cf. Coenen, *Lukian* 107–109.

98. Cf. Damis, the Epicurean philosopher in *I. Trag.* 42; Coenen, *Lukian* 53–54.

99. Coenen, *Lukian* 38.

100. Hermes' inadequacy as a poet (*hēkista poiētikos:*5) is comically illustrated by his first line (16), which is a foot short. For this reading of the text, see Reardon's review of *Luciani Opera*, vol. 1, ed. M. D. MacLeod (Oxford 1972), in *JHS* 94 (1974) 201.

101. It is important to remember that popular belief often identified the god with its statue and attributed magical powers to it; cf. *Deor. Conc.* 12, Plut., *Is. et Os.* 379d. Cf. R. Gordon, "The Real and the Imaginary," *Art History* 2.1 (1979) 5–34.

102. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar" 3.

103. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 57.

104. For parallels in the elusive "Menippean tradition" in Seneca and Apuleius, see Coenen *Lukian* 48–49.

105. Cf. M. Forderer, *Zum homerischen Margites* (Amsterdam 1960).

106. See R. M. Rosen, *Old Comedy and the Iambographic Tradition* (Atlanta, 1988).

107. Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 32.

108. Ibid.

109. F. Bilabel, "Fragmente aus der Heidelberger Papyrussammlung," *Philologus* 80 (1925) 339, cited in S. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) 234.

110. Cf. Price: "Standing at the apex of the hierarchy of the Roman empire the emperor offered the hope of order and stability and was assimilated to the traditional Olympian deities" (*Rituals and Power* 233). Price emphasizes that assimilation did not mean simple identification: "Hadrian is often closely associated with Zeus Olympios in dedications and had great prominence in the sanctuary . . . but he was clearly differentiated from Zeus himself" (47).

111. Some continued to object to such license in any context: see Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 29 "Concerning the Prohibition of Comedy": "If we regard this practice as dear to the gods, we contradict ourselves in avoiding the same whenever we approach the gods. But if we believe that it is hateful to them and yet we delight in it, how is our conduct pious?" (12). Against the didactic defense of satiric comedy, he argues, "The Dionysia, if you wish, or the Sacred Marriage and the Night Festivals, if you prefer them, are not the occasions for educators but for jesters" (20); P. Aelius Aristides, *The Complete Works*, trans. C. A. Behr, vol. 2 (Leiden 1982) 140–146. For comic abuse (*aiskhrologia*) as apotropaic, cf. Plut., *Is. et Os.* 361b.

112. Lucian thinks it important to the defense of his satiric tendencies in *The Fisherman* to invoke the example of the Old Comic poet: if the license granted the poets was strictly a function of the occasion, not of the genre, this argument would make no sense.

113. For the parallels with Aristophanes, see Coenen, *Lukian* 109–111.

114. E.g., in the *Clouds* Aristophanes has Right engaging in sexual fantasies even as he accuses his opponent of licentiousness; *Clouds*, ed. K. J. Dover (Oxford 1970) 157; see Dover's introduction, xxv–xxvi; Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 68. Cf. Timocles' liberal use of abuse (*I. Trag.* 35, 36, 52).

115. As Zeus observes (49), Timocles espouses a rudimentary form of Stoicism based on philosophical commonplaces as found, for example, in Cicero (Coenen, *Lukian* 107–109, 122). Damis' position, a Lucianic blend of Epicureanism and Skepticism (ibid. 116, 123, 128, 131), is considerably more sophisticated but still schematic. Cf. D. Babut, *La religion des philosophes grecs* (Vendôme 1974) esp. chaps. 5–6.

116. E. W. Handley, "Comedy," in *CHCL* 1: 370.

117. Cf. Levin, *Playboys and Killjoys* 33.

118. Coenen, *Lukian*, compares *Il.* 20.144–155, 22.162–166; for Homer's gods as spectators, see J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) chap. 6.

119. Coenen (*Lukian* 110) cites T. Gelzer, *Der epirrhematische Agon bei Aristophanes*, *Zetemata* 23 (Munich 1960) 124.

120. For comparable scenes of divine eavesdropping, see *Timon* 1, *Cont.* 10: Coenen, *Lukian* 107.

121. Thus Coenen, *Lukian* 35.

122. Cf. Hermes' consoling remark to Zeus: "It is no great disaster if a few go away infected [by doubt]. Many more take the other view [i.e., Timocles']—the vast majority of Greeks and all the barbarians" (53).

123. "Jokes" 96. Joking's "excitement lies in the suggestion that any particular ordering of experience may be arbitrary and subjective. It is frivolous in that it provides no real alternative" (ibid.).

4. SUDDEN GLORY

1. G. Strohmaier, "Übersehenes zur Biographie Lukians," *Philologus* 120 (1976) 118–119; D. Nokes, *Jonathan Swift, A Hypocrite Reversed: A Critical Biography* (Oxford 1985), records how Swift advertised a "totally fictitious auction" of "esoteric books, prints, and medals" to be held on April Fool's Day: "Tricks of this kind reveal a curiously childlike pleasure in deception that lies at the heart of many of Swift's more sophisticated ironic strategies" (105).

2. O. Weinreich, "Alexandros der Lügenprophet und seine Stellung in der Religiosität des II Jahrhunderts n. Chr.," *NJbb* 47 (1921) 129–151; M. Caster, *Études sur "Alexandre ou le faux prophète" de Lucien* (Paris 1938); Robert, *Asie Mineure;* Jones, *Culture and Society* chap. 12; Fox, 243–250.

3. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 243.

4. Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 477, 614–621.

5. Cf. Fox: "Most studies of the *Alexander* do not allow enough for Lucian's own mendacity. Even L. Robert (1980) may have shown more about Lucian's eye for local color than about the truth of the *Alexander*" (*Pagans and Christians* 721 n. 7). Fox exaggerates here in that the physical evidence in Robert does indeed corroborate Lucian's picture of the oracle as an institution but the institution is not at the center of the *Alex.* Alexander and his biographer are, as well as what each is made to represent. As Robinson, *Lucian*, points out: "The hero as an historical entity means far less to the author than the hero as symbol" (231). This is obvious but tends to be overlooked in assessments of the satire's "historical truth," Fox's included. While there is little point in speculating on whether Lucian really bit the

prophet in public or Alexander actually tried to have him killed, it is necessary to ask why Lucian chose to represent Alexander and himself the way he does. How do the various elements of his story cohere rhetorically? Questions of how the work produces meaning, questions of rhetoric and genre, are logically prior to any claims for or against its "truth."

6. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig 1906), critiqued by Winkler, *Auctor & Actor* 236–237; H. Blumner, "Fahrendes Volk im Altertum," in *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Munich 1918), esp. "Wanderpropheten," "Wunderdoktoren"; I. Levy, *Recherches sur les sources de la légende de Pythagore* (Paris 1926); A. Kiefer, *Aretalogische Studien* (Diss. Freiburg im Breisgau 1929); A. J. M. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, vol. 1 (Paris 1944) esp. chaps. 2–3; H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs* (Oxford 1954); V. Longo, *Aretalogie nel mondo greco*, vol. 1: *Epigrafi e papiri* (Genoa 1969); A. Scobie, *Aspects of the Ancient Romance and Its Heritage* (Meisenheim am Glan 1969); idem, "Storytellers, Storytelling, and the Novel in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," *Rheinisches Museum* 122 (1979) 229–259; Reardon, *Courants* 237–243; M. Smith, "Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, the Gospels and Jesus," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 (1971) 174–199.

7. Examples include figures such as Apollonius of Tyana, as in Philostratus or an earlier version, and Pythagoras, who was the subject of several biographies during this period. Alexander is explicitly compared to both (*Alex.* 4, 5, 40). The normative influence of Pythagoras in early imperial culture is suggested by Galen's comment in *On the Passions of the Soul*: "You may be sure that I have grown accustomed to ponder twice a day the exhortations attributed to Pythagoras—first I read them over, then I recite them aloud" (49). The figure of the magician is also common in the romances and *Kleinliteratur* of the early empire. Cf. A. J. M. Festugière, "Les prophètes de l'orient," in *La Révélation* 19–45; for the magician as narrator of his own quest for wisdom in Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca* and Antonius Diogenes' *Marvels beyond Thule*, see Winkler, *Auctor & Actor* 265–272. For the cultural perception of magic and parareligious phenomena, see R. Gordon, "Aelian's Peony: The Location of Magic in the Greco-Roman Tradition," *Comparative Criticism* 9 (1987) 59–95.

8. I am treating the author of the letter as identical with the doctor of the same name who flourished under Nero, as Cumont

plausibly hypothesized, but they may be different. See F. Cumont, "Écrits herméneutiques (II): Le médecin Thessalus et les plantes astrales d'Hermès Trismégiste," *Revue de philologie* 42 (1918) 85–108; A. J. M. Festugière, "L'expérience religieuse du médecin Thessalos," *Revue biblique* 48 (1939) 45–77. (Festugière accepts Cumont's hypothesis and, in a general discussion of Thessalus' letter, compares his search for truth through revelation following his disappointment with traditional means of enlightenment to that used by Menippus in Lucian's *Menippus*.) It is not crucial to my discussion that this identification of the letter-writer be correct, because I am primarily interested in how a sage associated with Asclepius presents and promotes himself in the letter. The Neronian Thessalus was also certainly a self-promoter, as his epitaph, *iatronikēs* ("Conqueror of Doctors"), shows (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 29.9). He is criticized by Galen for mass-producing doctors using a very simplified medical curriculum (10.4 ff., Kühn). For the text of Thessalus' letter I have used H. V. Friedrich, *Thessalos von Tralles, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (Meisenheim am Glan 1968). J. Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, vol. 23 of *Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden 1978), argues that Thessalus' letter is indicative of "a large class of cultic phenomena that exhibit characteristics of mobility, what I would term religious entrepreneurship and which represent both a reinterpretation and a reaffirmation of native, locative, celebratory categories of religious practice and thought" (68). If this is true of Thessalus, it would also serve as a description of the activities of the historical Alexander of Abonoteichus and as a possible explanation of his success, in which case Lucian's satiric treatment of him represents a critique from the point of view of conservative, cosmopolitan, pagan traditionalists, that is, of his audience of *pepaideumenoi* such as Celsus. For the possibility that the historical Alexander was using the resources of local legend, see A. D. Nock, "Alexander of Abonoteichus," *CQ* 22 (1928) 160–162.

9. As Winkler (*Auctor & Actor* 270 n. 29) points out, "paradoxography" normally refers to a treatise that catalogues marvels (e.g., A. Westermann, *Paradoxographi Graeci* [1839; reprint, Amsterdam 1963]; A. Giannini, *Paradoxographorum Graecorum Reliquiae* [Milan 1965]), but narrative material was sometimes included in such works. He also argues that "aretalogy" should be considered the activity of an *aretalogos* rather than a determinate genre: "The most likely examples of what an *aretalogos* could have narrated are the stories of cures at the healing shrines of Serapis and Asklepios" (237).

10. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* 1–2.

11. Jones, *Culture and Society* 140, estimates that the yearly proceeds of Alexander's oracle would have been sufficient "to maintain a hundred or so persons in comfort."

12. Festugière, *Révélation* 153. For discussion of comparable texts (Bolos of Mendes, Harpokration's *Kyranides*), see Winkler *Auctor & Actor* 260–265.

13. For the place of the *Alexander* in the polemical literature on oracles and divinized philosophers, see Jones, *Culture and Society* 147–148 and Gordon, "Aelian's Peony" 59–84.

14. Levin, *Playboys and Killjoys*: "Swift discerned 'two ends that men propose in writing satire': one 'private satisfaction'; the other and more altruistic, 'public spirit'—or to rephrase, one revenge and the other reform. The former may achieve its sublimation in the latter, when revenge is transposed into reform by a Swift" (200). Cf. Ingram, *Intricate Laughter* chaps. 1–2.

15. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 246–247.

16. E. Babelon, "Le faux prophète Alexandre d'Abonoteichus," *Revue numismatique*, 4th ser. 4 (1900) 1–30; Robert, *Asie Mineure* 395, 400–402; Jones, *Culture and Society* 138.

17. MacMullen, *Paganism* 118–122.

18. Caster, *Lucien* 335–360, 382–389. Cf. Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 212–220.

19. For the crucial role that wonders played in winning over devotees and admirers and the use of theatricality in some cults, see MacMullen, *Paganism* 95–98, 124–126.

20. P. Brown, "A Social Context to the Religious Crisis of the Third Century A.D.," Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture, *Colloquy* 14 (9 Feb. 1975); cf. P. Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity* (Boston 1983) chap. 3.

21. The more traditional literature of exposure concentrated on the mechanics of deception and on empirical and logical objections. We get a glimpse of it in *Alex.* 21; cf. Hippolytus *Ref.* 4.29; Oenomaus in Eusebius, *PE* 5.20–22.

22. P. 723.

23. The addressee, Celsus, has been identified with the author of *The True Doctrine* attacked by Origen, but there is no reason to do so. Origen's Celsus is a Platonist, not an Epicurean, and it would be an astonishing coincidence if they happened to be the same person. Cf. H. Chadwick, *Origen Contra Celsum* (Cambridge 1953) xxiv–xxix; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 512 n. 63.

24. *Decameron* 1.1; Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller;* for Fielding's *The Life of the Late Jonathan Wild the Great* and the *Alex.*, see Robinson, *Lucian* 230–234. The closest thing to rogue fiction in antiquity would be Petronius.

25. "The Greeks and Their Past," esp. 16–18. (Lucian does not observe a distinction between *bios* and *historia* but uses both to refer to the *Alex.* 1–2.) Bowie notes that biography was the favored form in imperial Greek literature for treating the contemporary world but tended to be either encomiastic (e.g., Aspasius of Byblos or Zenobius on Hadrian: Bowie 16) or strongly appreciative (e.g., Philostratus' *V.S.*). Clearly neither mode has much in common with the *Alex.*

26. *Poetics* 1449a32–37; *Phlb.* 48–50.

27. A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), observes that Greek biography was closely related to the encomium from its inception (15, 24–28). It is safe to say that turning a biography into a *psogos* such as the *Alex.* is itself a striking inversion of the traditional norms of the genre of *bios.*

28. Cf. P. A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia* (Chapel Hill 1980) 162.

29. Heracles as cleaner of the Augean stables was emblematic of the Cynic *parrhēsiastēs*: Dio Chrysostom describes how Diogenes concluded a public diatribe on the theme of Heracles at the Isthmian games by combining a Cynic interpretation of the Augean labor with an act of public defecation (8.35). The moral? What Heracles was to the Augean stables, Cynic *anaideia* is to its intended audience.

30. Roughly as follows: prologue (1–4); act 1 (5–17): rise of Alexander; act 2 (18–29): the emergence of the Epicurean opposition; act 3 (30–42): the conversion of Rutilianus; act 4 (43–53): the burning of Epicurus; act 5 (54–61): the revenge of Epicurus: the narrator vs. Alexander.

31. Cf. Malherbe, "Self-Definition among Epicureans and Cynics" 47–48.

32. Gordon, "Aelian's Peony" 66.

33. Cf. the narrator's likening of his task to that of the Cynic role model, Heracles, in emptying the Augean stables: *Alex.* 1. For Heracles as the Cynic role model, see *Peregr.* 4, 21, 24–25, 29, 33, 36. See also note 29 above.

34. The parallel between blaming and biting is as ancient as the association of dog (*kuōn*) with the language of blame poetry: see Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.53, and Nagy, *The Best* 224–226. Cf. also Horace's impersonation of a "dog" in *Epode* 6. For the bite of Menippus, see

Lucian, *Bis Acc.* 33. See also Diogenes' comment when asked what kind of dog he was (D.L. 6.60): "I fawn on those who give me anything, I yelp at those who refuse, and I bite scoundrels." For the dog as a "philosophic animal" who knows whom to bite: Plato, *Rep.* 375e; Plutarch, *Is. et Os.* 355b. The Cynics' name as well as their caustic tone and their parodies of the "encomiastic" genres of tragedy and epic suggests that they saw themselves as the modern successors to the archaic poets of blame. See Nagy's discussion of Aristotle and blame poetry (253–264); for the notion of the Cynics as the blame poet's successors, see G. A. Gerhard on Hipponax, *Pauly-Wissowa* VIII.2 (1913) col. 1906. See also Demonax's praise of Thersites as a Cynic diatribist (*Demon.* 61). Last but not least, biting was a form of reproach used on slaves: Galen, *On the Passions*, reports that his mother used to bite her slaves when she lost her temper.

35. See Galen, *On the Passions* 36: "If, therefore, anyone who is either powerful or rich wishes to become good and noble, he will first have to put aside his power and riches, especially in these times when he will not find a Diogenes who will tell the truth even to a rich man or monarch." The mordant frankness of the narrator is obviously meant to contrast with the elaborate deceptions of the prophet.

36. To get a sense of how the narrator's anger and vengefulness would have been viewed by the *pepaideumenoi* such as Celsus to whom he addresses himself, cf. the comments of Galen, *On the Passions*, whose philosophical views were eclectic and whose comments can therefore be taken as indicative of a norm among the philosophical-minded: "The most important thing is that, after you have decided to esteem yourself as a good and noble man, you see to it that you keep before your mind the ugliness of the souls of those who are angry [*tōn orgizomenōn*] and the beauty of the souls of those who are not prone to anger" (44). Elsewhere, he says that the man "who indulges his anger . . . is living and acting like a wild animal rather than a man" (43). Throughout his treatise Galen treats anger as the single most vicious *pathos* the philosopher must overcome. Cf. Anderson, "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca."

37. For the use of disease by partisan writers to execrate controversial figures, see T. W. Africa, "Worms and the Death of Kings: A Cautionary Note on Disease and History," *Classical Antiquity* 1.1 (1982) 1–17.

38. That Lucian is motivated in part by jealousy (*phthonos*), a sense of rivalry between provincial arrivistes in competition for Hellenic audiences and public recognition, may in part explain the pe-

culiar combination of fascination and deep-seated hostility in the *Alexander*; Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 249.

39. Cf. *Kuriai Doxai* 1, 7, 31, 39; cf. Plutarch's critique of the Epicurean maxim *to lathe biōsas* in *Is "Live Unknown" a Wise Precept?*

40. Both the *Cyn.* and *Solon* depend on this device: see chap. 2 n. 40.

41. *The Works of John Dryden*, ed. W. Scott and G. Saintsbury, vol. 18 (London 1893) 76.

CONCLUSION

Epigraphs: "Nam a Luciano nihil fere triviale solet proficisci"; *Opus Epistolarum Des Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen (Oxford 1906) 520. Erasmus is here applying an interpretative principle usually reserved for scripture. The quotation from Macaulay was used by the Fowlers as an epigraph to their translations of Lucian.

1. Cf. *I. Trag.* 39; also *Hist. Conscr.* 8–10, 60.

2. It is hard to tell where the honest prologist ends and the lying narrator begins: Does the prologist really believe relaxation is more important (*megiston*: 1) for an athlete than exercise? Or is this the first lie?

3. Jones's (*Culture and Society* 3) characterization of "Helm's Lucian," who is clearly representative of a line of thought going back through Norden, Wilamowitz, and Bernays. See Helm, *Lucian und Menipp* 6–7; cf. J. Vahlen, *Opuscula Academica*, vol. 1 (Leipzig 1907) 181–197; B. L. Gildersleeve, "Lucian," in *Essays and Studies* (New York 1980) esp. the comparison with Rabelais (313); R. Jebb, "Lucian," in *Essays and Addresses* (Cambridge 1907) 164–192.

4. See Jones, *Culture and Society:* "The new humanism [of late nineteenth-century Germany] preferred the early to the late, the direct to the artful, and to a degree poetry to prose; and it had other darker prepossessions" (1). Cf. M. Bernal, "Black Athena Denied: The Tyranny of Germany over Greece and the Rejection of the Afroasiatic Roots of Europe 1780–1980," *Comparative Criticism* 8 (1986) 3–70; E. Leach, "Aryan Warlords in Their Chariots," *London Review of Books* 9.7 (April 2, 1987) 11. Of course the aesthetic and ideological assumptions of "the new humanism" reflect general trends characteristic of Romanticism that led to the reassessment of many other writers once celebrated for their "wit."

5. The deleterious effects of this tradition are not to be underestimated. Many of its assumptions are still at work in A. Lesky's

treatment of Lucian (*A History of Greek Literature*, trans. J. Willis and C. de Heer [London 1966] esp. 842) in which Helm (*Lucian und Menipp*) is still cited as a standard authority (845) thirty years after his specific thesis, deriving Lucian from the lost works of Menippus, had been soundly refuted by McCarthy, "Lucian and Menippus." It has since been refuted again by both Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain*, esp. 549–560, and Hall, *Lucian's Satire* chap. 2.

6. Cf. Jones, *Culture and Society* 3 n. 9.

7. Cf. I. Berlin, "The 'Naiveté' of Verdi," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York 1980) 287–295; M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York 1958).

8. See Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody* 1–29; cf. P. Hutchinson, *Games Authors Play* (London 1983).

9. F. Kermode, *Forms of Attention* (Chicago 1985) 91.

10. Cohen, "Jokes" 129.

11. Cf. Toynbee, *The Greeks* 45: "The Old Masters' successors had to make a painful choice. Either they had to abandon a field in which their predecessors had left no room for further conquests, and this called for a deliberately revolutionary departure, or else the epigoni had to lapse into an imitative archaism, adulating, Narcissus-like, inherited masterpieces that they could not emulate."

12. In the conclusion to his "Life of Lucian."

13. Duncan, *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* 22.

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