

CHAPTER 33

Mimet(h)ic *Paideia* in Lucian's *True History*¹

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Identity and Role-playing

Recent research on Lucian often addresses the ways in which this author could shape and convey his identity in the various discourses of the “globalized” world of his time (Goldhill 2002, 60–107; Whitmarsh 2001, 90–130). The sophist from Samosata could well have felt marginalized in the socio-cultural structure of the Second Sophistic: he was a Syrian whose mother tongue will have been neither Greek nor Latin, he came from a small town near the Eastern border of the Roman Imperium, and belonged to a family that probably was neither wealthy nor influential. Yet, attributing such a self-perception and ambitions to Lucian might be too modern. In the sophistic society, success is linked to a talent for a special, unique performance (e.g. the famous performances of Herodes Atticus, Favorinus, Polemon, and the many anecdotes told by Philostratos in *The Lives of the Sophists*), to an excellent grasp of the Attic language of the fifth and fourth century BC, and to an extensive refined education (*paideia*) focusing on the arts, literature, rhetoric, historiography, and philosophy of said time. This education aims at fashioning one’s personality into an embodiment of *paideia* in the sense of a complete identification with the requirements of classical ideals.

In his works, Lucian explicitly depicts human life as a theater that compels everyone to play one or several roles as well as possible (e.g. *Nec.* 16, *Salt.* 82f., *Pisc.* 31f). This identity, this perfect identification with a role, is what counts: the “naked” person behind the mask, on the other hand, is not unique but simply one of many and therefore not of special interest (*Nec.* 16). Seen this way, the role of the “poor Syrian,” too, was nothing but another role that had to be performed convincingly. Privileging this role as his defining identity and therefore as the one Lucian wanted to convey to his works would

mean misunderstanding him and his intentions. For, as has been claimed by Said (1993), it becomes quite obvious in Lucian's works—not least by his choice of different *personae* (Lukianos, Parrhesiades, Tychiades, Syros, Lykinos)—that he saw his creative challenge in the multiple auctorial roles rather than in the focused portrayal of one, however impressive, personality.

Constructions of *Paideia* and the *Pepaideuменos* in the *Imagines* and the *Somnium*

The learned and cultivated man (πεπαιδευμένος) in Lucian's construction is a hybrid figure whose striking resonance is largely due to the coexistence of different roles.² This becomes apparent in two texts in which Lucian sketches representative depictions of *paideia*. The first are the *Imagines* with the description of beautiful Panthea at the center, the second is the *Somnium*, a pseudo-autobiographical preface (*prolalia*) where "Lucian" gives an account of his rise to sophistic renown.

In the *Imagines*, Lykinos tries to describe the appearance of an unknown beautiful woman to his friend Polystratos. However, he is unable to do so in a straightforward and holistic way. He therefore chooses to describe her part for part by drawing on five classical statues and four classical paintings, complemented by Homeric *epitheta* for female beauty (*Im.* 4–8). After Polystratos realizes that the woman is Panthea, the emperor's mistress, he adds an appraisal of her intellect and character to the description, again drawing on ideal models (*Im.* 12–21). Bretzigheimer (1992) has recognized that, despite referring to a historical person, in combining a perfect outward appearance with equally exceptional inner qualities, the woman portrayed here is a personification of *Paideia*. The impossibility of giving a uniform, totalizing description of her beauty is a significant indicator of Lucian's conception of *paideia* (Möllendorff 2004). Reversing a well-known anecdote about Zeuxis (when Zeuxis was asked to paint a portrait of Helen for the people of Croton, he had the five most beautiful women of the place line up and, since he found all of them lacking absolute beauty, he picked the most perfect part of each woman's body as model for his painting [Cic. *De Inv.* 2.1]), for Lucian there are indeed people who are an embodiment of ideal *paideia*, yet its concept can be understood and described only as a hybrid combination of individual heterogeneous elements. Indeed, Lucian's position is by no means idiosyncratic, since the objects of imperial *paideia* are, on the one hand, highly accredited for their indebtedness to classical ideals and, on the other hand, completely diverse with regard to genre, medialization, style, and aesthetics.

Hybridity is characteristic for the representation of the *pepaideuменos* as well. Lucian's account of his call to a career as a sophist in the *Somnium* may serve as an example for this: the core of this "autobiographic" story is the dream about being given a life-defining choice by the ladies "Education" (Παιδεία) and "Craft" (Τέχνη)—clearly an allusion to Prodikos' story of Heracles at the crossroads as told by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*. Furthermore, after "Lucian" decides to pursue a career under the guidance of *Paideia*, the rest of the dream—a journey through the sky in a winged chariot and the blessing of humanity with *logoi*—refers to a vision of a journey through the sky in the didactic poetry of Parmenides and to the myth of Triptolemos. The story includes several other

more or less obvious allusions: in his edition, Macleod points out the biographical writings on Socrates, the myth of Prometheus, the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Diogenes Laertius, and Pausanias as sources for motifs and phrasing. This multitude of entangled allusions makes it impossible to reconstruct a sound historical, autobiographical substructure. In the end, the speaker is a figure solely constituted by the text(s) whose “identity,” if the term is still to be used, consists in the hybrid agglomeration of literary references.

Still, just as Panthea in Lucian’s dialogues on *eikones*, this figure does not remain a lifeless construct. *Pro Imaginibus* shows Panthea in a discussion with Lykinos, where she no longer is—as in the *Imagines*—an object of the desiring male gaze, but the subject of ethically relevant statements, however mediated they might be presented. This ethical dimension evokes an important part of education, which is striving for ideal and valuable ways of interacting with the world and other people. This is the touchstone that reveals whether *paideia* is merely the maximization of an archive of knowledge, or whether it has actually fashioned a *human being*. In the *Somnium*, the ethical dimension unfolds from an inversion of motifs in the allusion to the Heracles-myth of Prodikos (Möllendorff 2010). The description of the allegorical figures of Paideia and Techne, who appear to “Lucian” in his dream, complicates their relation to Prodikos’ “Virtue” (Ἀρετή) and “Badness” (Κακία): while the description of respectable *Techne* who promotes effort, diligence, and moderation matches Prodikos’ *Arete*, Paideia with her promises of easy labor and quick success matches Prodikos’ *Kakia*. A recipient who has a closer look at the allusion to Xenophon will not only recognize the allegory, but also remember Xenophon’s exact wording so that he can compare it with the *prolalia* even during their presentation. Such a recipient is indeed a *pepaideumenos* who has earned this title. Yet, the decoding of the allusion discredits the promises of Paideia—in reality, they are fruits that can be plucked by few, and only with great effort. Above all, the recipient has to understand the difference between appearance and reality and, consequently, reflect upon his own life: whether this is the right choice of career or whether he should not pursue another path, keeping in mind that following Paideia will mean giving up on other things. This passage as well as the dialogues on Panthea gives insight into Lucian’s concept of *paideia*. It is not a direct admonition that motivates the recipient’s ethical reflection. Instead, it is a process based on an initial intellectual effort drawing on erudite knowledge, since to uncover the ethical value of the text the allusions have to be decoded first. So if these texts aim at the formation or modification of an ethical position, they require previous knowledge, which in turn guarantees that the recipient himself is responsible for their effect. Or, in other words: if the quest for *paideia* fails, it is not the teacher but rather the student who is to be blamed.

Two aspects of Lucian’s concept of *paideia* have become clear. First, education and erudition cannot merely consist of an accumulation of knowledge, methods, and competence, but the *pepaideumenos* will have to find a harmonious combination of these elements. This alone is common enough in the concepts of *paideia* in the Second Sophistic. But furthermore, *excellent paideia*—and this is new—is realized as aesthetic perfection, in the successful combination of the most heterogeneous components of the products and configurations of *paideia*. Lucian exemplifies this in the *Bis Accusatus*, more extensively and theoretically in the *prolaliae*, *Prometheus es in verbis*, and *Zeuxis*,

and in his hybrid creation of comedy and philosophical dialogue (cf. Möllendorff 2006 and the vivid analysis of Zweimüller 2008, 79–88). Panthea, whose description is based on both the evocation of most diverse works of art and layers of equally diverse inter-texts, and who appears as a radiant embodiment of excellent erudition, may serve as an example of this concept of hybrid *paideia*. Second, the focus on the work of a *pepaideumenos* is important. The destination of his arduous, time-consuming pursuit lies in a distant future—even more, the recipient has to become aware that the journey itself is the reward, and any promises to the contrary should not be trusted. The *pepaideumenos* himself is responsible for the process of his education.

Mimetic Constructions of *Paideia* and the *Pepaideumenos* in the *True History*

These two aspects, the aesthetic perfection of mimetic hybridity and the responsibility of the *pepaideumenos*, can also be found in a text which I would like to regard as Lucian's most important and elaborate monument of his conception of *paideia*: the *True History*. It is the longest of his works and has often been read (e.g. by Rütten 1997, 80–93) as a parody of false stories in classical literature, which are incriminated by the speaker of the prooemium, or at least as a parody of philosophical musings (Rütten 1997, 63–79; Georgiadou and Larmour 1998a), historiographical discourse (Georgiadou and Larmour 1994 and 1998b, 28–32; also Rütten 1997, 47–62), and the contemporary travel novels (among others, Jones 1986, 53, and more detailed Rütten 1997, 94–110). These readings are usually strengthened by pointing to the second part of the prooemium in which selected “victims” are criticized: Ktesias' *Indika*, Iambulos' description of the islands of the sun, paradoxographical travel literature in general with Homer's Odysseus as its founder, and finally the philosophers, which probably mainly refers to Plato's myths (1.3f.). However, this approach neglects two aspects. Firstly, “Lucian” uses the names listed in the preceding text as generic paradigms in order to summarize the previous narrative and historiographical literature and speculative philosophical argumentation that was more or less explicitly obliged to veracity. If the allegations of falsehood were serious, the all-out accusation in every direction would make it less effective. And, indeed, “Lucian's” accusations lead to a final ironic auto-destruction when he emphasizes that his own accounts, too, are lies, but that he adheres to the truth by calling them lies (1.4). Clearly, the allegation of mendacity here refers to a metaliterary topos, namely the ancient literary debate about truth (ἀλήθεια) and falsehood (ψεῦδος) of literature, a forerunner of the later discussion on fictionality in literature (for a summary of this debate in antiquity, see Möllendorff 2000, 525–534). These and other topics of a refined discourse, indeed of literary theory *avant la lettre*, appear to be the motivating forces behind the following account of a fantastical journey.

Second, and in correspondence with this, the first part of the prooemium stresses both the role of the learned reader and the mimetic quality of the account of the voyage. The reader is promised a broadening of his education: the story would contribute to his future endeavors (1.1f.)—what else could this refer to but to the refined performance, the active command of Attic Greek, and the perfect mastery of classical

knowledge? This learning success is a result of the reader's decoding of all-encompassing allusion: every single detail of the narration alludes to the ancient poets, prose writers, and philosophers, which the educated reader will find out for himself (1.2). This defines the highest performance target—whoever can decipher most of the allusions will profit the most from his or her reading—and at the same time requires the reader's responsibility.

In the following, I would like to discuss two examples from the travel account of the *True History* in order to demonstrate the literal extent of allusion “in every single detail,” both in regard to individual motifs and whole narrative structures. Thereby, it will become clear that a metapoetic topic—the traditional discussion about the ontological status, about “truth” and “mendacity” of literature—lies behind the continuous mimetic harmonization of the various elements alluded to. A third example will show that the *pepaideumenos* as well is integrated by Lucian into his *True History* with a special focus on his ethos, a motif conveyed through the earlier-mentioned discussion on truth and mendacity.

Lychnopolis

Instances particularly rich with examples for Lucian's allusive technique are two stops of the Lucianic ship. At the beginning of the first book, it was hurled to the moon by a storm, and after various adventures in space the travelers are passing two cities on their way back to earth (1.29): Lamptown (Λυχνόπολις) and Cloud-Cuckoo-Land (Νεφέλοκοκκυγία) (for an extensive discussion, see Möllendorff 2000, 193–205). It is evening when the travelers reach Lychnopolis. There, they encounter lamps walking around on the *agora* and near the port. The lamps have houses and can speak. An invitation to dinner is declined by the travelers who are afraid to eat or sleep. In the center of the city are the administrative headquarters, where an *archon* is calling forth each lamp by name during the night. If it does not come in time without a valid excuse, it is treated as a deserter and suffers the death penalty (extinction). “Lucian” also meets his own house lamp and is informed about the situation back home on earth.

Lamptown, a darkly fantastical place, is constructed out of about 15 allusions to older texts and traditions of different origin: astronomy (cf. Aldebaran [gr. Λαμπαδίας] as the brightest star of the constellation Tauros), popular beliefs about stars (for the belief that the stars were the deceased, cf. Aristophanes *Peace* 832–841; for the notion that every human being had a star, cf. Pliny *NH*. 2.28f.), cult practice,³ comedy,⁴ and even specific grotesque lamp forms (for ancient figural lamps, cf. Bailey 1975–1996, *passim*). No detail of this description was invented by Lucian. Instead, his description is based on the combination of minute motifs connected with lamps in the material and epistemic tradition. It is not the individual motif that is original but the combination of heterogeneous elements to a completely new and, despite its heterogeneity, consistent narrative whole. The nocturnal events observed by the travelers are not just incomprehensible, but also uncanny: the lamps come from earth, can speak, but apparently have left their designated place in the house when they were unobserved. Consequently, we come to the understanding that even in our home we are not surrounded by useful objects but by independent creatures that might pursue their own affairs and be absent when we would

need them to light up the dark. Both incomprehensibility and uncanniness force the reader to question the rules and the meaning of this secret world. If there is an *archon*, an *agora*, and a law against deserters, if you can call at a port and be invited to dinner, there has to be a *raison d'être*, a justification for existence, an inherent meaning as well, which resembles our notion of an institutionalized and civilized society and is comprehensible. Yet, such a meaning can be disclosed neither by studying the narrative syntagmatic structure of the story nor by following the allusions of the paradigmatic details. This could propel us to accept Herodotus' solution of the dilemma in his account of the festival of lamps in Sais and locate the meaning in secret mysteries, an inaccessible ἰδὸς λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ λεγόμενος (*Hdt.* 2.62.2)—if Lucian had not pointed out in his prooemium that nothing of his accounts was true. Under such circumstances, the process of decoding allusions suggested to the reader is inconclusive: all the texts integrated via allusion that had been meaningful in their original context now refer to their new combination—and this combination in turn is merely the result of the compatibility of its elements and their imitation of real cultural practices (which do not facilitate understanding). Seen this way, the central topic appears to be a presentation of the possibilities, range, and methods of combinatory mimesis.

Nephelokokkygia

While the Lychnopolis-episode draws on a variety of traditions, the following episode in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land uses a seemingly more simplistic allusion to one explicitly mentioned model. In Aristophanes' comedy *Birds*, staged in 414 BC, Peisetairos turns his back on human civilization and, with the help of birds, builds a city in the clouds (Nephelokokkygia), thereby cutting off the gods' supply to sacrifices. In the end, Zeus abdicates and Peisetairos takes over world domination in his place. Although we would like to know what might happen after the *exodos* of the comedy, Lucian informs us about three things only: that the airflow prevents the travelers from landing, that another king rules now in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, Κόρωνος (not Κόρων, as the name is given by Georgiadou and Larmour 1998b, 155) ὁ Κοττυφίωνος, and that Aristophanes must have been a wise and truthful man (σοφὸς καὶ ἀληθής) whose descriptions have been unjustly doubted.

The most interesting information is the reference to the change of rulers. It continues the timeline and story beyond the end of the comedy, since in the *exodos* Peisetairos leaves Nephelokokkygia (*Birds* 1755–1758: ἐπεσθὲ νῦν γαμοῦσιν, ᾧ / φύλα πάντα συννόμων / πτεροφόρῳ, ἐπὶ πέδον Διὸς / καὶ λέχος γαμήλιον), which invites the question who would succeed him on the throne of the established city. There would have been several possible candidates. Lucian's choice of Koronos is surprising, although plausible when considered more closely. Both Peisetairos' original companion Euelpides and the hoopoe, who appoints himself as the official promoter of Peisetairos' project at the beginning of the comedy, would have died in the approximately 18 generations between the founding of Nephelokokkygia and Lucian's own time. Crows (κορώναι), on the other hand, were traditionally known for their longevity. Hesiod ascribes them a lifespan nine times the length of human life (cf. *fr.* 304.1f. M.-W., and *Ov. Met.* 7.274). Supposing an average human lifespan was c. 60 years, this would exactly fill the 18 generations

mentioned earlier (cf. Plut. *Def. Orac.* 415C–E postulating an average lifespan of 54 years); Plutarch also puts the maximum of Hesiod’s γενεά at 108 years, which would explain the passage in the *Birds* that places the crow’s lifespan at no more than five human generations (for the crow’s lifespan, cf. also Bömer 1976, 275). Therefore, a crow as successor of Peisetairos and current ruler of Cloud–Cuckoo–Land is entirely probable. If it is also taken into consideration that it was a crow who led Peisetairos to the very place (*Birds* 5f., 23, 49), Lucian’s choice becomes entirely feasible and is indeed a congenial mimetic continuation of the Aristophanian fiction.

One could still take a step further, for several specific metaphors in Greek are based on the crooked beak of the crow. Among others, there is the technical term κορωνίς for the curlicue ornament that marks the end of text parts or the whole text in manuscripts, and is seen as a symbol for the completion of a written work (cf. e.g. Plut. *Quom. adul.* 66E, *De Alex. magn. fort. aut. virt.* 334C, Schol. Ar. *Nub.* 510, AP 11.41 [Philodemos], Luc. *Hist. conscr.* 26). An Imperial-educated reader would have editions where the *Birds*, too, were signed off with the final sign of the *koronis*. Hence, it could have been as well this sign that created the new, and in this case also eternal, ruler Koronos.

Therefore, the Nephelokokkygia-episode also facilitates a metapoetic focus on classical mimesis, which in this special case is also strengthened by a corresponding design of the model text. The *Birds* lead the recipient to the notion that the city of the birds is a purely verbal construction and thus a fiction, a “lie” (ψεῦδος). The immense building project (*Birds* 1124–1167) is described to such an extent that the city could hardly have been presented on stage, maybe not even visually hinted at (also, Euelpides is sent πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα [837] to participate in the construction of the city [837–846]). Even Peisetairos doubts its existence: ἴσα γὰρ ἀληθῶς φαίνεται μοι ψεύδεσιν (1167)—“truly, this looks like lies.” This paradoxically pointed phrase matches the suspicion that arises even at the beginning of Peisetairos’ plans, that the conception of the city, as has been claimed by Dobrov (1988) and Möllendorff (2002, 112f.), is nothing but a verbal construct: ὅτι δὲ πολεῖται τοῦτο καὶ διέρχεται / ἅπαντα διὰ τούτου, καλεῖται νῦν πόλος. / ἦν δ’ οἰκίσθητε τοῦτο καὶ φάρξθηθ’ ἅπαξ, / ἐκ τοῦ πόλου τούτου κεκλήσεται πόλις (*Birds* 181–184: “Here while the heavens revolve, and yon great dome / Is moving round, ye keep your Station still. / Make this your city, fence it round with walls, / And from your Station is evolved your State” [translation from B. Rogers 1924]). The logic of this argument can be questioned (see Dunbar 1998, 145), and—as long as a “real” building of a wall is supposed—is completely irrelevant for the further development of the plot. Instead, the recipient is rather led to the belief that the city had sprung from a pun on the assonance of τόπος (*Birds* 180)—πόλος—πόλις.⁵ Lucian’s description of Cloud–Cuckoo–Land is merely a mimetic continuation of something already inherent in Aristophanes’ thematic concentration on the capacities of language: a metapoetic reflection leading to the core of Lucian’s central topic in the *True History*—language and literature in the tension between truth and lie. Here, the notion that language, although in itself not concrete, can constitute reality becomes a literary motif. Correspondingly, the airflow, which is nothing but the metaphorically enhanced breath of inspiration, does not let the travelers stop. Cloud–Cuckoo–Land is a construction of fluffy language and therefore cannot be entered. Since this is already written in Aristophanes’ text, he was indeed a “wise and truthful man” who was “unjustly doubted.”

Truth, Lies, and the Pēpaideuēnos

The two examples of Lychnopolis and Nephelokokygia will sufficiently show how Lucian successfully integrates the most diverse areas of knowledge from different media into an aesthetically perfect ensemble. The connecting element, the core topic which these constructions adjust to and find cohesion in, is the reflection on the capability of language to both denote what is and create what is not: the field of tension between “truth” and “lie,” ἀλήθεια and ψεῦδος. This ancient pair of terms (important works on this topic: Weinrich 1966, Kannicht 1980, Rösler 1980, Booth 1983, Romm 1992, Pratt 1993, Gill and Wiseman 1993, Puelma 1995) does not only pertain to questions of semiotic concepts but also to ethical implications inherent in these. Since language influences action and thus the actual shaping of reality—not to mention that speech itself can be action—anyone who uses language has to consider the consequences following his actions. It might have been due to exactly these implications that ancient theory never really coined a special term for “fiction,” but continually used ψεῦδος to speak of both lying and fictionalizing.

For Lucian, “truth” and “lie” are first of all standardized and traditional categories of literary criticism. It is their metapoetic character that is placed at the center of Lucian's employment of motifs in the *True History*. Some other examples should be mentioned at least briefly. The river of wine that the travelers cross at 1.7 is a motif typical for the per-definition-false paradoxographical literature, but as a sympotic motif it first of all recalls the speaker's obligation to truth. The storm that attacks the travelers several times, carries them first into the wide ocean, then to the moon, and in the end to the ἐτέρα γῆ in the farthest west (1.6; 1.9f.; 2.47), represents, as τυφῶν, obscurity, and lies, but, as πνεῦμα, inspiration. The travelers' forced sojourn in the giant fish (1.30–2.1) alludes in several individual motifs to Plato's theories on the constitution (*politeia*) and the soul, but also to central elements of his Analogy of the Cave and thereby to a basic discourse about truth, which here is woven into classic sailor's yarn. On the island of dreams (2.32–35), the travelers have to continue their way through either a door of horn or a door of ivory, traditionally representing truth and lies (cf. *Od.* 19.560–569; the analogy is based on the seeming similarity of κέρασ [horn] and κραιῶν, “fulfil,” and ἐλέφας, “ivory,” and ἐλεφαίρομαι, “deceive”). However, as the reader is not told which one they choose, he seems to be encouraged to differentiate between lies and truth, while at the same time he is not able to do so.

This is the same distinction the reader is called to make in the twofold request of the prooemium: on the one hand, he is supposed to decipher the allusions in the text (1.2), and on the other hand he is told that the text contains lies only, and the only truth is the open advertising of lies. The exercise in decoding relates to the reader's erudition; to call this erudition false and therefore inferior is hardly possible in the era of the Second Sophistic. If the allusions are still labeled as lies, then this can only ironically refer to their fictional status. This status is therefore explicitly marked, which leaves the reader free to regard the following account not as a fictional story but as an argumentative, in a sense also allegorical, discourse on the literariness of the individual motifs.

The learned reader, whose *paideia* also includes the ability to undertake critical reflections on literature, here encounters motifs from the context of “speaking about

literature” realized as literary motifs, a transformation that is highly refined but in the end playful and without purpose. Both relaxation and intellectual progress are supposed to result from this encounter. The confrontation with a highly hybrid text that requires intense decoding first of all promises to enhance one’s literary erudition. Yet, in his other works, Lucian emphatically demands an ethical competence as well, a distinction between right and wrong behavior, and most of all a pledge to an honest way of life that is not interested in superficial appearances; analogically at the end of the prooemium of the *True History*, he characterizes the striving for fame as κενοδοξία (1.4). Considering this, the vehement insistence on the motif of truth and lies also seems to carry the ethical dimension of *paideia* and pertains to the person of the *pepaideumenos* himself.

The Selenites

Of course, the figure of the *pepaideumenos* would not openly appear in a text such as the *True History* that is constructed as a composite mimesis *par excellence*. Likewise, we would expect it to be an enigma and a hybrid construction. This corresponds with Lucian’s presentation of himself in his works: not as a clearly defined person with a directly associated identity but as an ensemble of various masks behind which the biographical Lucian is obscured. This specific mimetic design matches the allegory of *Paideia* in the two dialogues on *eikones*. While the multiplication and fragmentation of Panthea is already on the verge of the grotesque, the fragmentation and hybridization of the *pepaideumenos* in the *True History* is hyperbolically intensified.

This can be exemplified in the description of the people of the moon. Carried to the moon by a storm, the travelers are drawn into a war between the Selenites and Heliotēs (the inhabitants of the moon and the inhabitants of the sun), and are given the opportunity to explore the characteristics of life on the moon and of its inhabitants. The description of the anatomy and physiognomy of the Selenites (1.23–25) is quite significant: they consider baldness beautiful and hate longhaired people (κομηται), who are in turn highly regarded on the comets. The Selenites wear their beards down to their knees, their toes are shaped like the hooves of horses, a long sprout-like tail grows from the small of their backs, they use their fur-lined zipped belly as a bag, and they have removable eyes.

Every grotesque detail in this description can be traced back to one or several sources often connected directly to ancient notions on the moon and its life or to metapoetic motifs (cf. Möllendorff 2000, 164–178). However, most fascinating is the model the whole imagery is based on, which Lucian, primarily by integrating other motifs, distorted into a grotesque one: this model is obviously the Silen. He has similar horse-like characteristics—ears, tail, facial hair, round eyes, hooves—and from the fifth century BC onward he is supposed to be bald and pot-bellied (Hartmann 1927, Demont 1996). He belongs to the followers of Dionysus—and like Dionysus, the Selenites are born from the thigh (1.22). Having accepted these analogies, one wonders about the reason for choosing the Silen as a model. Two reasons can be given. The first may well be the easily audible assonance of the (in Lucian’s spelling) almost identical Σελήνη (moon) and Σειληνός (Silen). The second reason might lie in the appearance of the Selenites, which may have reminded the reader of the most famous of all “Silens,” Socrates, who used to

be compared to these horse-like mythical creatures on account of his similar physiognomy (cf. Giuliani 1996, Scheibler 1989, Zanker 1995, 38–45, for the reasons of this equation see 44f.; Vogt 1999, 77–87; the *locus classicus* is the speech of Alcibiades in Plato *Symp.* 215b3–216c3, v.a. 215b4–6).

Now, the characteristics of Silen and Socrates, especially the receding hairline and the beard, had been, since Hadrian and up to the late Antonine times, part of an ideal self-fashioning of the members of the intellectual elite. A regular “face of the contemporary intellectual” (Zanker 1995, 190–251) had evolved, based on Socrates and other philosophers such as Diogenes and Antisthenes, most of them Cynic and therefore close to Socrates. In the last quarter of the second century AD, the choice between baldness and hair seems to have been the topic of an intellectual discussion on fashion. Lucian might refer to that when he puts this very question at the center of a quarrel between the inhabitants of the comets and the Selenites (1.23), although the pretext is, of course, the pseudo-physiognomic contrast between the appearance of the full moon and a comet. That the κοσμηταί, annually appointed administrators for the gymnasia, can be regarded as a prime example for such kinds of imperial self-fashioning is probably more coincidence than a reason for Lucian's choice; cf. Zanker (1995, 209 and 116f. with illustration 21) for the resemblance of cosmetes to Silen and Socrates. The ever-growing beard of the Selenites, too, may correspond to an intellectual ideal of the late second century (Zanker 1995, 211).

This goes well with the high level of interest in physiognomic questions displayed by the intellectuals of the Second Sophistic, who were after all schooled in performance. According to the sophist Polemon of Laodicea, special emphasis was put on the eyes, since they are an unmistakable source of information about the true nature of the man they belong to (Polemon's φυσιογνωμικά are edited in the Arabic and Latin versions in the *Scriptores Physiognomici* vol. I, ed. Richard Foerster, Leipzig 1893, 98–294; the importance of the eyes is well captured in Gleason 1995, 33–52). The eyes of Lucian's Selenites are removable, therefore exchangeable: this poses the danger of utmost deception, and in this way the main topic of the *True History* is touched upon yet again. The other physiognomic details are relevant as well in discussing the question of who is seen as a true or false *pepaideumenos*, or in other words: how are discursive authenticity and falsehood manifested, and how can you tell the difference? In turn, this leads to the Socratic question of knowledge and ignorance and its consequences on right behavior, which is the central question of ethic philosophy.

Conclusion

Lucian's concept of *paideia* is genuinely hybrid. Typically for the Second Sophistic, it is based on an emphatic postulate of mimesis, but it also accentuates the possibility to intensify one's own intellectual endeavors by integrating as many objects of the most heterogeneous nature as possible. The consistent tension of such diverse mimetic operations creates the specific feature and originality of *paideia*. This corresponds with Lucian's portrayal of the *pepaideumenos*—as seen in the example of Panthea from the dialogues on *eikones*—by multiple allusions that obscure a specific identity and complicate defining him by fixed models and patterns of behavior. Moreover, Lucian used the same method

for his own portrayal—as seen in the autobiographical subject of *Somnium*—and hid his biographical person behind a variety of auctorial masks. In the second part of this chapter, I analyzed three episodes from Lucian’s *True History*. Here, the method of mimetic compilation became apparent in its extreme versions. Furthermore, the core topic of this work became obvious: the metamimetic imagery of categories of thought and discussion that at the same time serves also as a reflection about the ethical configuration of the *pepaideumenos*: the ancient and well-known opposition of truth and lies.

Finally, why did Lucian conceptualize *paideia* in precisely this way, as a hardly systematic, primarily associative structure of classical knowledge operating with distant and surprising relations on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as a constellation of heterogeneous figurations that do little to invite admiring identification? From an epistemological perspective, Lucian’s concept is unusual because it is diametrically opposed to a concept of *paideia* that is orientated to the antithesis of canonical conformism and non-conformism. For Lucian, everything is relevant if it can be worked, via association, into combinations full of tension and rich with imagery. From an ethological perspective, in such a construction of an ideal *pepaideumenos*, the reader is not faced with characters whose behaviors he can agree or disagree with, but whose ethical impact has to be decoded in the first place. This puzzling enigma (αἰνίττεσθαί: *VH* 1.2) enforces the constructive participation of the recipient. This turns a mere acknowledging of ethical idealism into an active discussion of it and intellectually involves the reader in the process of ethical education.

Notes

- 1 I am very grateful to Maria Rossdal for translating this contribution into English.
- 2 Lucian is not the only sophist of this time who seeks to found his exceptionality on multiple roles. Dion of Prusa appears to have spent part of his life as a travelling cynic preacher (cf. *D. Chr. or.* 13.9–11 and 12.1–20; Philostr. *VS* 488): For the question of fictionality and reality in these accounts, see Brenk (2000, especially 269f.). Favorinus of Arelate was flirting with his image as a sexually active eunuch and feminized man and his Celtic origin (cf. Philostr. *VS* 489). The combination of these contradictory characteristics was intended to create an unsettling effect and also attracted the enmity of Polemon of Laodikeia, who in turn emphasized his own exceptionality by a perfect stylization of his wealth, power, and influence (cf. Philostr. *VS* 532, 535). Lucian appears to have staged his complex role-play on a literary level only, which allowed for more diversity.
- 3 Λαμπαδηδρομῖαι were important cultic events in some Greek cities. There are several mentions of Athens, such as for the cult of Bendis in the Piraeus, where they took place under the direction of a Λαμπαδάρης (cf. among others Arist. *Pol.* 5.1309a19). According to Hdt. 2.62, the festival of Λυχνοκαΐη was celebrated in Egyptian Sais, which, during the festival, must have looked like a city of lamps.
- 4 Apart from the allusion to Arist. *Peace*, one might think of allusions to the λύχων ἐρημία in *Birds* 1482–1493 and to the prologue of the *Ecclesiazusai* 1–288, especially 7–13, 27f., 49f., 19–27 (belated appearance), 35–40, and 53–55 (excuses).
- 5 Place (“pole”) city. Likewise, there is a pun on the name of the city, Νεφελοκοκκυγία, which is based on clouds and lofty celestial phenomena (*Birds* 818f, ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καὶ τῶν μετεώρων χωρίων / χαῦνόν τι πάννυ). νεφέλαι and μετέωρα in particular are common terms of Aristophanes’

comedies, representing the flexibility and instability of language (cf. *Clouds* 226–230 and 345–355, especially 348: [sc. αἰ νεφέλαι] γίνονται πάνθ' ὅ τι βούλονται). They are prominently used in the *Clouds*. The second and extant version of this play was staged between 420 and 415 AD, possibly in close proximity to the *Birds*; cf. Storey (1993).

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