

How (not) to learn rhetoric: Lucian's *Rhetorum Praeceptor* as Rebuttal of a School Exercise

Craig A. Gibson

IN PRODICUS' CHOICE OF HERACLES (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21–34), Vice invites Heracles to take a pleasant, easy, and short road to happiness (23, 29), which she promises he can attain without any physical or mental labor (25); Virtue counters that hard work is necessary for true happiness, despite the superficial attractions of the short road (28, 33).¹ Frequently mentioned, retold, and adapted in antiquity,² this allegory also served as a literary model for two very different portrayals of imperial-era Greek rhetorical education. In the *Rhetorum Praeceptor* (hereafter *Rh.Pr.*), Lucian depicts two roads leading to rhetoric, an impossibly long and old-fashioned one (Virtue) and a comically short, easy, and disreputable one (Vice).³ Lucian's

¹ On the Prodicus myth in Xenophon (=84 B 2 D.-K.) see K. Jöel, *Der echte und der xenophontische Sokrates* II.1 (Berlin 1901) 284–560; D. Sansone, “Heracles at the Y,” *JHS* 124 (2004) 125–142. All translations are my own except where otherwise noted. Translations of Libanius are taken from my *Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2008).

² See Jöel, *Der echte und der xenophontische Sokrates* II.1 311–314; J. Alpers, *Hercules in Bivio* (diss. Göttingen 1912) 31–60; J. T. Fitzgerald and L. M. White, *The Tabula of Cebe* (Chico 1983) 37 n.62; Sansone, *JHS* 124 (2004) 125; R. Hirsch-Luipold et al., *Die Bildtafel des Kebe: Allegorie des Lebes* (Darmstadt 2005) 24–26; S. Zweimüller, *Lukian “Rhetorum praeceptor”: Einleitung, Text, und Kommentar* (Göttingen 2008) 43.

³ G. Anderson, *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic* (Leiden 1976) 70, calls the *Rh.Pr.* an “updated” version of the Choice of Heracles; see also Anderson, “Lucian: A Sophist's Sophist,” *YCS* 27 (1982) 61–92, at

Dropout, a remorseful and ultimately unsuccessful student of the long road curriculum (8), criticizes it as unpleasant, difficult, and even impossible (3, 7–10). Lurking around the trailhead to accost prospective students, he can now only observe the short road from afar (8) and nudge students in that direction, because it is too late for him to go back to school (26). The guide to the long road appears only briefly and, significantly, does not even get to speak (9–10). By contrast, in elaborations of a popular chreia—“Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter, but its fruits are sweet”—students and teachers composed essays in which they praised, justified, and illustrated the claim that education is a long process requiring great physical and mental effort leading to proportionate rewards.⁴ These rhetorical texts praise the long road to rhetoric but ignore the short road entirely.

⁷⁹ R. Criboire, “Lucian, Libanius, and the Short Road to Rhetoric,” *GRBS* 47 (2007) 71–86, at 76–77, notes Lucian’s use of Hesiod, Xenophon, and Ps.-Cebes in his description of the two paths. G. Anderson, “Lucian’s Classics: Some Short Cuts to Culture,” *BICS* 23 (1976) 59–68, at 61, mentions Lucian’s citation of Epicharmus and Hesiod as examples of his use of authors found within other authors. Lucian also uses the Choice of Heracles in *Hermotimus* 22–26, *Bis accusatus* 19–22, and especially *Somnium* 6–16, where he recounts his own vocational decision to follow Education rather than Sculpture. See D. L. Gera, “Lucian’s Choice: *Somnium* 6–16,” in D. Innes et al. (eds.), *Ethics and Rhetoric* (Oxford 1995) 237–250. See Zweimüller, *Lukian “Rhetorum praeceptor”* 47–59, 93–107, for further comparisons within the Lucianic corpus, and 41–43 for discussion of the *Rh.Pr.* in light of the Cynics’ short road to virtue.

⁴ Partial elaborations of this chreia are found in Ps.-Hermogenes 3.7–9, ed. Patillon (perhaps third century CE), and the Byzantine commentator John Doxapatres (Walz, *Rh. Gr.* II 272.14–17), and there are full elaborations from the fourth century by Aphthonius (3.4–11, ed. Patillon) and Libanius (*Progym.* 3.3). The fifth-century theorist Nicolaus of Myra (20.10–12, 21.1–6, 22.21–23.2, ed. Felten), John Doxapatres (*Rh. Gr.* II 254.13–15, 274.24–25), and the later scholiasts to Aphthonius (*Rh. Gr.* II 587.5–8, 588.3–4) use this chreia to illustrate different ways of classifying chreias, which suggests that it was well known to their readers.

Did Lucian know this chreia?⁵ On first inspection, it would seem not. It is not attested in any source contemporary with or prior to him,⁶ unless Minucianus was the author of Ps.-Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata*.⁷ In addition, the *Rh.Pr.* does not quote the chreia, nor does it mention a bitter root or sweet fruits or pay special attention to Isocrates.⁸ Yet, as we shall see, the correspondences between these two quite different portraits of rhetorical education cannot be fully explained by their common debt to Prodicus-Xenophon. In this article, I argue that Lucian conceived of the *Rh.Pr.* as an ironic rebuttal of the chreia's one-sided, positive view of rhetorical education as a long, hard process that is absolutely necessary for success. However, he did not set out to write a rhetorical exercise himself, a mere point-and-counterpoint essay to rebut an elab-

⁵ No one has suggested that this or any other chreia inspired the *Rh.Pr.* Anderson, *YCS* 27 (1982) 62, calls the essay a syncrisis (because it compares two paths). J. Bompaigne, *Lucien écrivain: Imitation et création* (Paris 1958) 255–256, interprets it as a judicial speech; Anderson, *Lucian* 138 n.32, rejects this approach. For Lucian's use of the progymnasmata see Bompaigne 294–303; B. P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II^e et III^e siècles* (Paris 1971) 155–180; Anderson, *YCS* 27 (1982) 61–63, and *Lucian* 41. According to Anderson, *Lucian* 133, Lucian is not “likely to rely in more than the most perfunctory way on rhetoricians' manuals—his equipment in this field is perhaps even more elementary than even Bompaigne would have us believe.” On Lucian's earlier career as a rhetor see B. Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto 1973) 9–10; S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50–250* (Oxford 1996) 309–310.

⁶ See R. F. Hock and E. N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: The Progymnasmata*. (Atlanta 1986) 325–326.

⁷ Tentatively suggested by M. Heath, “Theon and the History of the Progymnasmata,” *GRBS* 43 (2002/3) 129–160, at 158–160.

⁸ The Professor calls Isocrates “garbage” (ἀῆρος, 17), but the *Rh.Pr.* does not otherwise quote, mention, or allude to him. On other references to Isocrates in Lucian see Baldwin, *Studies* 65. Elsewhere in ancient literature this claim about education is variously attributed to Isocrates, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Cicero, but in rhetorical texts, it is nearly always attributed to Isocrates. An exception is the treatise of the Roman grammarian Diomedes, which attributes it to Cato (Keil, *Gramm. Lat.* I 310.2–17).

orated chreia on its own terms; nor does such a thing seem to have been practiced in antiquity.⁹ Instead, Lucian seems to have begun by asking, What would the exact opposite of the recommended rhetorical education look like? He follows the literary model originally set out in Prodicus-Xenophon and later adapted to describe rhetorical education by the chreia. He adds two speaking characters (the Dropout and the Professor), brings them to life with details from the chreia, and sets the whole parody within a frame in which the two speaking characters try to seduce the non-speaking Novice into taking the short road to rhetorical education. Although Lucian does not use these terms, one could say that his short road curriculum has a root that is not bitter and fruits that are only deceptively sweet.

Lucian's response to the chreia

In order to show how Lucian in the *Rh.Pr.* responds to the chreia, we first need to consider how a chreia was elaborated. According to Aphthonius (3.3) a chreia elaboration is divided into the following headings: brief praise of the person represented as speaking and/or acting (*ἐγκωμιαστικῶ*), paraphrase of the chreia (*παραφραστικῶ*), discussion of the rationale

⁹ Of the four ancient authors of treatises on progymnasmata, Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius do not mention refutation of chreias, and there are no examples of it outside of Theon. Nicolaus implies its existence when he says that people who refute chreias should not be trusted (21.18–22.9). (Pace G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* [Atlanta 2003] 141 n.33 and 142, Nicol. 23.16 refers to ‘confirmation’ [*κατασκευάζομεν*], not refutation of chreias.) According to Theon, chreias can be contradicted and refuted (101.4–5, ed. Patillon). Contradiction (*τῇ ἀντιλογίᾳ*, 101.4; *ἀντιλέγομεν*, 103.21) is a short, simple response (or a series of such responses) to a flawed chreia statement rather than a fully elaborated exercise (103.21–29). The refutation of a chreia begins with a special proem suited to the subject (105.31–32) and then proceeds to a point-by-point refutation by nine headings (listed in 104.17–20, with explanations and examples following in 104.20–105.20), using amplification, digressions, and characterization throughout (106.2–3). For further discussion of the Theon passages see Hock and O’Neil, *The Chreia* 71–74.

behind it (τῶ τῆς αἰτίας), elaboration by contrast (ἐκ τοῦ ἐναντίου), elaboration by comparison (παραβολῆ), discussion of relevant examples from history or mythology (παραδείγματι), citation of ancient authorities who support the idea behind the chreia (μαρτυρία παλαιῶν), and a brief epilogue exhorting the reader to follow the advice given in the chreia (ἐπιλόγω βραχεῖ). Most of the contrasts between the *Rh.Pr.* and the chreia elaborations are found under four of these eight headings: cause, comparison, example, and testimony of the ancients. Examination of the heading of testimony of the ancients and the heading of comparison shows how Lucian inverts the chreia's interpretations of Hesiod, Epicharmus, and Homer. He makes the proponents of the short road argue that Hesiod and Epicharmus are wrong about the causal connection between hard work and success; that Hesiod is a hypocrite who did not take his own advice; and that a Homeric tag about unworked land nevertheless producing bountiful yields is a good motto for the aspiring rhetor. In order to rebut the chreia's heading of example, Lucian makes his main characters utterly reject Demosthenes as a literary and ethical model. Finally, a comparison of the heading of cause to Lucian's depiction of the short road curriculum and its benefits to the adult graduate shows that Lucian has in mind a broad range of details from the chreia's opposite depiction of the same process (root) and its results (fruits). As I hope to show here, it is much easier to appreciate the humor and likely contemporary reception of the *Rh.Pr.* if, like Lucian, we presume an audience that had labored over the composition of similar rhetorical exercises in their own schooling and could recognize the *Rh.Pr.* as a parodic inversion of everything their teachers held dear.

1. Testimony of the Ancients (μαρτυρία παλαιῶν)

Under the heading of testimony of the ancients, writers cite Classical literary sources that support the main idea of the chreia. All extant elaborations of the Isocrates chreia cite Hesiod's description of the road to virtue (*Op.* 287–292). Ps.-Hermogenes quotes lines 289–290, saying “Hesiod said ‘the gods placed sweat before virtue’” (τῆς δ’ ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ

προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν, 3.9). Aphthonius paraphrases lines 291–292, saying “Wherefore one must admire Hesiod for saying that the road of virtue is rough, but the summit easy” (τραχεῖαν εἰπόντα τῆς ἀρετῆς τὴν ὁδόν, τὴν δὲ ἄκραν ῥαδίαν, 3.10). Libanius’ treatment of the passage uses fewer of Hesiod’s words but more closely adapts it to the argument of the chreia, saying that virtue “is seated on high, but that the road up to it is steep and rough, which anyone desiring to obtain virtue for himself must complete with much sweat” (ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ μὲν αὐτὴν καθῆσθαι φησιν, ὁδὸν δὲ τὴν ἐπ’ αὐτὴν ἀνάγτη τε εἶναι καὶ χαλεπὴν, ἣν ἀνύσαι χρὴ μετὰ πολλῶν ἰδρώτων τῷ γε τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐπιθυμοῦντι λαβέσθαι, *Progym.* 3.3.36). In the context of these chreia elaborations, the citations of Hesiod serve to corroborate the idea that hard work (a steep, rough road traveled with sweat) is a necessary prerequisite for achieving a noble goal. Hesiod’s virtue easily translates into the chreia’s rhetoric.

Just as in the chreia, Lucian uses this passage of Hesiod to describe the long road to Rhetoric. The Dropout explicitly acknowledges Lucian’s source when he tells the Novice that the long road is “narrow, thorny, and rugged, suggesting much thirst and sweat. And Hesiod has already described it very well before me, so that there will be no need for me to do it” (7). But Lucian’s Hesiodic long road is even harder than Hesiod and the chreia imagined. The Dropout promises the Novice, “I will not lead you by a rough road or one steep and full of sweat (τραχεῖαν τινα οὐδὲ ὄρθιον καὶ ἰδρώτος μεστήν), so that you will turn back from the middle of it exhausted, since we would then be no different from the rest who lead people by that customary road, long and uphill and wearisome and for the most part hopeless” (3). Whereas Hesiod and the chreia envision a reward at the top of the hill, Lucian has the Dropout tell the Novice that the long road cannot be completed and that he will give up in despair only halfway. Moreover, he says, people who take the long road can be seen “creeping up with difficulty over impassable and slippery crags, sometimes rolling off headfirst and receiving many wounds on the rough rocks” (3). The long road to virtue/rhetoric praised by Hesiod and the chreia, in

Lucian's hands, is transformed from a difficult but manageable uphill hike into a life-threatening rock-climbing event.

Lucian's short road to rhetoric is quite different. Standing in place of Prodicus' Vice, the Dropout tells the Novice to reject the Hesiodic long road (7–8) and instead take the road that is “flat, flowery, and well-watered” and “level, without anything crooked” and “very easy and downhill” (ῥάστην καὶ πρανήν, 26). This non-Euclidean downhill road paradoxically still leads up to the personified Rhetoric at the summit: “Ascending (ἀνιών) at your leisure at a walking pace by a road that is very pleasant and at the same time very concise, fit for horses, and downhill (κατάντη) with much pleasantness and luxury through flowery meadows and perfect shade, you will, without breaking a sweat (ἀνιδρωσί), stand at the summit and catch your prey without getting tired” (οὐ καμών, 3). The whole process will be “very easy and at the same time very pleasant” (ῥάστα τε ἄμα καὶ ἥδιστα, 4). Lucian's short road to rhetoric is an inversion of the Hesiodic road to Virtue: short, easy, pleasant, downhill, and sweat-free.

Hesiod figures in Lucian's essay in a second way that is not found in Prodicus-Xenophon but does correspond to one of the chreia elaborations. Alluding to Hesiod's own story of how he became a poet (*Theog.* 22–34), Libanius says of Hesiod that “there is by no means anyone who is so arrogant or utterly bold that he would denounce this witness; for I think that even children know that, more than all the poets who are praised in song, Hesiod would be the one called Muse-inspired (ὁ Μουσόληπτος), and that he was assigned by them to sing of the generation of the gods and many other topics useful to mankind” (*Progym.* 3.3.36). In the *Rh.Pr.*, the Dropout uses the same passage against Hesiod, in order to prove to the Novice that the short road to Rhetoric is “very easy and at the same time very pleasant ... Hesiod, having received a few leaves from Helicon, immediately (αὐτίκα μάλα) became a poet from a shepherd and, having become possessed by (κάτοχος) the

Muses, sang of the races of gods and heroes” (4).¹⁰ Instead of praising Hesiod for his poetic ability, the Dropout praises him for the speed and miraculous ease with which he attained it. Hesiod may have given the classic description of a long road to virtue, Lucian suggests, but he hypocritically did not have to follow his own advice.¹¹ And Rhetoric, the Dropout immediately goes on to say, is even easier and faster to obtain than Hesiod’s “fancy schmancy poetry” (τῆς ποιητικῆς μεγαληγορίας).

Two of the chreia elaborations cite a second author in addition to Hesiod. Ps.-Hermogenes says “and another poet says, ‘the gods sell all good things to us for our hard work’” (τῶν πόνων πωλοῦσιν ἡμῖν πάντα τὰγάθ’ οἱ θεοί, 3.9). The unnamed source is a line of Epicharmus (fr.271 *PCG*), which Xenophon had quoted in the same words in the introduction to Prodicus’ Choice of Heracles (*Mem.* 1.20.1). Libanius paraphrases the line: “Does the man who said that men purchase good things from the gods, not with silver and gold and things of that sort, but with labors, not seem to correspond well with Isocrates, and well with Hesiod?” (ὁ δὲ παρὰ μὲν τῶν θεῶν εἰπὼν

¹⁰ Anderson, *BICS* 23 (1976) 60, lists this as an example of Lucian’s common use of passages from the beginnings and endings of works.

¹¹ The Dropout’s objection here is a good one. In the sixth century Choricus of Gaza attempts to answer it in *Dialexis* 10, which bears the title, “The goal of this preliminary talk is to spur the young [students] on to greater exertion. It shows that, without quite frequent effort, the competence of those who practice any skill is shaky” (transl. R. J. Penella, *Rhetorical Exercises from Late Antiquity: A Translation of Choricus of Gaza’s Preliminary Talks and Declamations* [Cambridge 2009] 43). In 10.1–2 Choricus takes up what is essentially the Dropout’s complaint: Hesiod did not have to go to school because he received his poetic gift from the Muses while still a shepherd. He points out the contradiction and then resolves it: “Why, then, do you advise others to work hard when you yourself went from being a herdsman to a poet without any effort? Isn’t it clear that you wanted to show us that not even the Muses’ teaching is secure without practice?” In 10.6 Choricus cites the (unnamed) Epicharmus line on how the gods reward hard work.

ὠνεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὰ ἀγαθὰ, ὠνεῖσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλὰ πόνων ἄρ' οὐ δοκεῖ καλῶς μὲν Ἰσοκράτει, καλῶς δὲ Ἡσιόδῳ συνάδειν; *Progm.* 3.3.38). In Lucian's essay, the Dropout also knows this line from an unnamed poet, but he says that experience has shown him that it is untrue: "For I didn't see the better way when I was still a young man, but I supposed that that poet was telling the truth when he said that good things are generated by hard work. But it wasn't so. I see now, at any rate, that most people are thought to deserve greater things without hard work, by the happy possession of their choice of words and roads" (οὐ γὰρ ἐώρων νέος ἔτι ὢν τὸ βέλτιον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐκείνον ἀληθεύειν ὡμῆν λέγοντα ἐκ τῶν πόνων φύεσθαι τὰ ἀγαθὰ. τὸ δ' οὐκ εἶχεν οὕτως· ἀπονητὶ γοῦν ὁρῶ τοὺς πολλοὺς μειζόνων ἀξιουμένους εὐμοιρία τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν λόγων καὶ ὁδῶν, 8).

It is significant that Hesiod and the unnamed Epicharmus are the authors cited both in the chreia and in Lucian's essay. In *Xen. Mem.* 2.1.20–21, Socrates quotes Hesiod *Op.* 287–292 on the roads to wickedness and virtue, then immediately quotes Epicharmus by name and tells Prodicus' story of the Choice of Heracles. The use of Hesiod and Epicharmus in close proximity in the chreia and in Lucian suggests that they are recalling these juxtaposed sources from Prodicus-Xenophon. But the fact that Lucian (unlike Xenophon) omits Epicharmus' name, just as Ps.-Hermogenes and Libanius do in their elaborations of the chreia, supports the supposition that Lucian knew a chreia elaboration in which Epicharmus was cited anonymously.

2. Comparison (παραβολή)

The heading of comparison demonstrates the validity of the chreia by drawing on an analogy from outside. Elaborations of this chreia compare students to farmers, in that both must put in hard work in order to enjoy good results. What everyone knows to be true in the sphere of agriculture thus strengthens the chreia elaboration's claim about education. Ps.-Hermogenes: "For just as farmers must reap the fruits by working the land, so also must those who deal with speeches" (3.8). Aphthonius: "For just as those who work the land scatter the

seeds on the land with labor and reap the fruits with greater pleasure, in the same way those who seek after education with labor receive the subsequent glory” (3.8). The authors of these chreia elaborations may have taken their inspiration for this comparison from Prodicus’ allegory, in which Virtue tells Heracles, “if you want the land to bear bountiful fruits, you must tend to the land” (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.28).

Lucian’s treatment of farming in the *Rh.Pr.*, however, seems again to follow a chreia elaboration and not Prodicus-Xenophon. In Libanius’ discussion of the hard work of farmers (*Progym.* 3.3.27–28), he asks “How do you think that farmers reap the gifts of Demeter? Without sowing or tilling, as among the Cyclopes? That is just a myth and a fable” (τὰ δὲ τῆς Δήμητρος οἱ γεωργοὶ πῶς σοι δοκοῦσι θερίζειν; ἄρα ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα κατὰ τοὺς Κύκλωπας; μῦθος ἐκεῖνα καὶ λόγος). He is alluding here to Homer *Od.* 9.108–109, which says that the Cyclopes “neither plant anything by hand nor plow, but everything grows [for them] without sowing or tilling” (οὔτε φυτεύουσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ’ ἀρόωσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ γ’ ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύονται). In the real world outside of myth, as Libanius explains, farmers must work hard to produce food, just as students must work hard to learn rhetoric. In the *Rh.Pr.*, however, the Dropout quotes the same words of Homer but gives them the opposite thrust. He warns the Novice that he should not fall victim to the long course of rhetorical study, as the Dropout himself did, but instead “should let everything grow for [himself] without sowing or tilling, as in the time of Cronus” (σοὶ δὲ ἄσπορα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύεσθω καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ Κρόνου, 8).¹² Lucian easily transfers the Homeric description from the primitive island of the Cyclopes to the ancient time of Cronus, in order to suggest that the short road curriculum is as easy as life in the mythical Golden Age, when nobody had to work at farming or anything else.

¹² Lucian also alludes to this line of Homer in *De Mercede Conductis* 3, *Phalaris* 2, and *Saturnalia* 7 and 20 (Anderson, *BICS* 23 [1976] 63).

The heading of comparison can sometimes contain more than one analogy, and it is possible that Lucian was familiar with just such a chreia elaboration. After discussing farming, Libanius likens the pursuit of education to a career on a merchant ship (*Progym.* 3.3.24–25). Like students, merchants (τῶν ἐμπόρων) must work hard, skimp on sleep, spend a lot of time at their work continually, start all over again when they are unsuccessful or unlucky, and risk fearful and dangerous things. This analogy is unique among the extant elaborations of the chreia. Yet it has an interesting counterpart in Lucian’s essay. According to a story related by the Dropout, a Sidonian merchant (ἔμπορος) once tried to show Alexander the Great a short road from Persia to Egypt that would reduce the twenty-day trip to only three days. Alexander “did not believe him, but thought the merchant was crazy.” However, the Dropout assures the Novice that the merchant’s story is true and warns the Novice not to make the same mistake as Alexander, just because the story of a short road to Rhetoric seems unbelievable (5). According to the Dropout, even merchants avoid hard work and take the short road to success.¹³

3. Example (παράδειγμα)

The heading of example in a chreia elaboration discusses mythological or historical persons whose lives embody the truth of the chreia—in this case, that the root of education is bitter but its fruits are sweet. All extant elaborations of this chreia cite the example of the Athenian orator Demosthenes as a famous man who suffered during his education but reaped rich rewards from it. Ps.-Hermogenes: “Demosthenes, by shutting

¹³ Bompaire, *Lucien écrivain* 453 n.2, calls the story a διήγημα, or ‘narration’, an elementary exercise in the sequence of progymnasmata. Anderson (*Lucian* 41–42) says, “This could be a typical apothegm from the Alexander-historians, but it also embodies two essential motifs from Lucian’s repertoire. He often makes fun of people who try to be in two places at once or take fantastic shortcuts ... Moreover, Lucian’s dialogues are full of unlikely guides emerging *ex machina* to provide fantastic shortcuts.”

himself in a room and laboring greatly, later reaped the fruits, crowns and proclamations” (3.8). Aphthonius: “Consider with me the life of Demosthenes, who was more labor-loving than every orator and became more famous than them all. For indeed, he so excelled in his zeal that he often even removed the ornament of his head, regarding the ornament that comes from virtue as best. And he expended on labors what others expend on pleasures” (3.9). Like Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius, Libanius mentions Demosthenes’ underground study and his shaving part of his head (*Progym.* 3.3.32).¹⁴ He also praises Demosthenes for “not devoting his attention to food and drink, not setting a Sybaritic table, not judging pleasure to be happiness, not indulging his belly, and not giving priority to rest” (30), as well as for achieving so much “by persevering in hard work, but specifically by avoiding the easy way, by clinging to his books, by regarding water as more beneficial than wine for someone making his living with speeches, and by making his time for sleep a time for work” (31).¹⁵

Lucian’s Dropout and Professor would of course reject Demosthenes’ attitude toward hard work, but the *Rh.Pr.* also rejects the example of Demosthenes in other ways. The Dropout disparages Demosthenes the man as the “son of a sword-maker,”¹⁶ whose speeches are irrelevant “in a time of peace, with no Philip attacking and no Alexander making demands” (10). He warns the Novice that the guide to the long road to rhetoric is quite fond of Demosthenes as a literary and behavioral model, and that he will say that drinking water is one

¹⁴ For Demosthenes’ underground study chamber and haircut see Plut. *Dem.* 7.3; [Plut.] *X Orat.* 844D; [Lucian] *Demosthenis Encomium* 14.

¹⁵ For Demosthenes’ famous preference for water and avoidance of wine see Dem. 6.30, 19.46; [Lucian] *Demosthenis Encomium* 15; [Plut.] *X Orat.* 848C. For his habit of working at night see Plut. *Dem.* 8.3; [Plut.] *Vit. X Orat.* 848C; [Lucian] *Demosthenis Encomium* 14, 15.

¹⁶ Demosthenes’ father owned a large workshop that manufactured swords: Dem. 27.9, 30, 31; Plut. *Dem.* 4.1; [Lucian] *Demosthenis Encomium* 11.

of the practices necessary for success (9). He will “point out the footprints of Demosthenes and Plato and some others, big ones and beyond people today, but for the most part already faint and unclear from the passage of time” (ὑποδεικνὺς τὰ Δημοσθένους ἵχνη καὶ Πλάτωνος καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν, μεγάλα μὲν καὶ ὑπὲρ τοὺς νῦν, ἀμαυρὰ δὲ ἤδη καὶ ἀσαφῆ τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου)¹⁷ and will tell the Novice that he will achieve success in rhetoric if he “travels along them just as tight-rope walkers do.” However, the Dropout immediately adds, “if you deviate even slightly or tread outside them or lean too much to one side for balance, you will fall off the straight path” that leads to rhetoric (9). According to the Dropout, Demosthenes is out of date and out of reach as a literary model for students today, and requiring students to imitate him (as the long road curriculum does) is only setting them up for failure. The Professor takes the Dropout’s dislike of Demosthenes a step further: “Don’t you dare read ancient literature!” (ἀναγίγνωσκε τὰ παλαιὰ μὲν μὴ σύ γε), he orders the Novice, including Isocrates, Plato, and “Mr. Lacking in Graces, Demosthenes” (ὁ χαρίτων ἄμοιρος Δημοσθένης, 17). Yet the Professor later recommends that after a performance, “if someone should run into you, speak wonderfully about yourself and praise yourself excessively and become an annoyance to him, [saying] ‘For what is the Paeanian (ὁ Παιανιεύς) compared to me?’ and ‘Perhaps I’m in competition with one of the ancients’, and things along these lines” (21). In the Professor’s view, Demosthenes of the deme Paeania is good only for name-dropping and self-aggrandizement.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf. *Rh.Pr.* 8, where the Dropout says that the long road “never had that many footprints of travelers, and if it had any, they were very ancient” (οὐ πολλὰ ἵχνη τῶν ὁδοιπόρων εἶχεν, εἰ δέ τινα, πάνυ παλαιά).

¹⁸ Lucian elsewhere views Demosthenes the man in a positive light (Baldwin, *Studies* 69). Both the Dropout and the Professor know a little Demosthenes; there is an allusion to Dem. 4.15 in *Rh.Pr.* 4 and an allusion

4. Cause (*αἰτία*)

The heading of cause provides a rationale for the chreia. All extant elaborations give justifications for both parts of Isocrates' claim that education's root is bitter and its fruits are sweet. Ps.-Hermogenes: "For the greatest of deeds usually succeed from hard work (*ἐκ πόνων*), and having succeeded, they bring pleasure" (3.7). John Doxapatres offers his own sample cause in his commentary on Aphthonius: "Because the lovers of education undergo hard work (*πόνους*) while they are being educated, but having reached the end of their education they are adorned with virtues" (*Rh. Gr.* II 272.14–17). Aphthonius himself ties his elaboration more closely to the subject of education, interpreting the bitter root as the student's terrifying classroom experience: "For those who love education are examined by the leaders of their education, whom it is both dreadful to approach and quite unheard of to put off. Fear always attends the boys both when attending class and when about to. By being among these people, the boy upon arriving at manhood is crowned with virtue" (3.6–7). Libanius' elaboration of this heading is the most extensive, and is likewise divided into the root (*Progym.* 3.3.7–11) and the fruits (12–21). In his discussion of the root, he depicts an unfriendly, uncompromisingly difficult, physically abusive teacher (7):

Just consider: the teacher is seated on a lofty seat (*ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ τινος*), like the members of a jury, dreadful, knitting his eyebrows together, exhibiting his anger, showing nothing conciliatory. The young man must approach him trembling and cowering, to make a complicated speech from what he has invented, from what he has composed—and from memory, at that. And if what he has prepared is of poor quality, there will be anger, verbal abuse, blows, and threats about the future...

Libanius goes on to explain that students receive no reward for a successful performance, only an absence of punishment and a harder assignment for next time (7).

to Dem. 25.8 in *Rh.Pr.* 15 (Anderson, *BICS* 23 [1976] 65).

The portrayal of rhetoric teachers in Aphthonius and Libanius is in stark contrast to our first impressions of Lucian's Professor. Introduced by the Dropout as a "hero" (12), the Professor addresses the Novice "with a hint of a smile in that usual soft, smooth way of his" (12) and soon calls him "my dear" (*ὦ μέλημα*, 14), a word expressing literally that the Novice is now the object of his concern. Like the figure of Vice in Prodicus-Xenophon, Lucian's Professor promises the young man that he will receive everything pleasant without having to do anything unpleasant. At the beginning of his instruction he tells the Novice, "you couldn't learn this more easily (*ῥᾶον*) from anyone else" (14). He tells him not to worry "if you haven't finished your prerequisites to rhetoric, all the things that the standard elementary education establishes as the road for stupid morons with a lot of toil" (*εἰ μὴ προετελέσθης ἐκεῖνα τὰ πρὸ τῆς ῥητορικῆς, ὅποσα ἡ ἄλλη προπαιδεία τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ματαίοις μετὰ πολλοῦ καμάτου ὁδοποιεῖ*). In fact, he assures the Novice that he should not hesitate to begin the program "even if, as is very common, you don't know how to write your letters." After explaining his course of training, the Professor expresses confidence that the Novice will soon become an excellent speaker "if you thoroughly learn these things well, boy—and yes, you can; for there is nothing difficult in them" (*οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς βαρύν*, 24). Lucian's Rhetoric—a figure placed, like Libanius' Hesiodic Virtue and his frightening rhetoric teacher, "on a lofty seat" (*ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ*) at the summit¹⁹—is easy to attain and requires no prerequisites, not even basic written literacy.

Libanius' elaboration of the *chreia* goes on to emphasize that the study of rhetoric not only takes a long time, but takes a long time every day and night. It is an all-consuming task (*Progym.* 3.3.10–11):

When evening comes, which releases everyone else from hard work (*τοὺς πόνους*) and their trade, but for young men extends

¹⁹ *Rh.Pr.* 6; cf. *Lib. Progym.* 3.3.7, 36.

them, night, given as a time for rest, becomes for young men a time for work and for greatest complaints, if they cannot shake off sleep until they get their fill. And so, whether they go out or stay at home, whether with their teachers or with their parents, whether night or day, there is never any rest and relaxation, but the hard work goes on continually. For some, at any rate, it is not even possible to enjoy peaceful dreams; rather, these, too, often contain a prophecy of painful things to come.

According to this chreia elaboration, the study of rhetoric will occupy the student both day and night, wherever he may be, and will even intrude into his dreams, never giving him any peace.²⁰

Not so in Lucian. In the *Rh.Pr.*, the Novice is promised that he can complete this course very quickly and without losing any sleep. The Dropout explains that, although rhetoric is a subject worth losing sleep over (*ἀγρυπνήσαι*, 2) and staying awake (*ἀγρυπνίαν*) is a requirement in the long road curriculum—whose overly masculine guide is himself “wide awake” (*ἐγρηγορώς*, 9)—the Novice should expect to “obtain everything that is good in a short time from rhetoric, while all but sleeping” (*ἅπαντα ἐν βραχεί ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀγαθὰ παρὰ τῆς ῥητορικῆς μονονουχὶ καθεύδων λαβών*, 3). In fact, as he explains later, “you’ll learn by experience that nothing will hinder you from already being regarded as a speaker in one day, and not even a whole day” (*εἴση γὰρ πειρώμενος ὡς οὐδέν σε κωλύσει ἤδη ῥήτορα δοκεῖν μιᾶς οὐδὲ ὅλης ἡμέρας*, 6). And when the Dropout is about to describe the short road for a second time, he refers back to his earlier description of it (3), “so that,” he explains, “I may not hold you back from already being able to be a speaker (*ἤδη ῥήτορα εἶναι δυνάμενον*) by saying the same things over and over again” (7). With the word “already” (*ἤδη*) the Dropout implies that the short road takes less time to complete than a mere description of it. Similarly, the Professor promises the Novice, “before the sun sets, I will exhibit you as a

²⁰ The theme is found elsewhere in Libanius; see Cribiore, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 73 n.6.

speaker beyond all the rest, such as I myself am” (*πρὶν ἥλιον δῶναι ῥήτορά σε ὑπὲρ τοὺς πάντας ἀποφανῶ, οἷος αὐτός εἰμι*, 15). Education by the long road, by contrast, is interminable, requiring “many years, counting not by days and months but by whole Olympiads,” and it promises “ultimately to make you old before your time with your labors” (9–10).

In sum, Lucian replaces Aphthonius’ and Libanius’ long course of education at the hands of a difficult and unpleasant teacher (unlike the figure of Virtue in Prodicus-Xenophon) with a short, easy course with no prerequisites, taught by a friendly teacher who cares for his students and promises them that it will all come easily. He also replaces Libanius’ sleepless nights spent in pursuit of the goal (a requirement not found in Prodicus-Xenophon)²¹ with a one-day course requiring no loss of sleep. Lucian’s root of education is not bitter at all, as he emphasizes with repeated, forceful inversions of elements found in the chreia but not in Prodicus-Xenophon.

The second part of the heading of cause is a discussion of the sweet fruits of education. As we saw above, Ps.-Hermogenes interprets these as the pleasure derived from one’s accomplishments, while Aphthonius and his commentator John Doxapatres understand them as publicly acknowledged virtues. Libanius again offers more detail in his elaboration (*Progym.* 3.3.12–21), promising first that the educated man will be welcomed and honored in public meetings. “The whole People looks toward his opinion, and they obey his proposals as if they were oracles” (13). These meetings include discussions of war and peace (19). The educated man will be sent on embassies to resolve disputes with neighboring states (14–15), and locally he will propose beneficial laws and decrees (16). He will receive public proclamations of his goodwill toward the city (13), and

²¹ Virtue tells Heracles that hard physical labor will make him sleep well but not to the point that he will neglect his duties (*Xen. Mem.* 2.1.33). By contrast, the followers of Vice sleep in luxury, during the daytime, and from boredom or too much carousing (2.1.24, 30).

all his public benefactions will bring him “a reputation for virtue” (16). The public’s respect can be seen whenever such men give a public speech: “How splendidly are they accompanied (*παραπέμπονται*) to the speaker’s platform, and how much more splendidly from it, when they are well esteemed” (*εὐδοκιμήσωσι*, 19).

Lucian’s Professor performs none of the political service that Libanius expects of the educated man: no participation in local government, no public benefactions. In fact, Lucian explicitly dismisses the political responsibilities of the rhetorically trained, when the Dropout tells the Novice that he does not need to study Demosthenes, since we are living in a time of peace, with no Philip or Alexander (10). Nevertheless, just as in the *chreia* elaborations, the Dropout assures the Novice that rhetorical training will benefit his standing and reputation. He promises the Novice fame, wealth, power, and compliments (2, 6). Rhetorical education can even retroactively supply him with a respectable pedigree: “Just look at how many men who have up until now been nothing are reputed to be famous and rich and, by Zeus, of excellent birth (*εὐγενέστατοι*) as a result of their speeches!” (2). If the Novice follows the Professor, says the Dropout, he will be “well esteemed by the masses and beloved” (*ἐν τοῖς πλήθεσιν εὐδοκιμεῖν καὶ ἐπέραστον εἶναι*, 26).

This is simply not true. Despite the Professor’s incessant self-promotion in the latter half of the *Rh.Pr.*, in the end he proudly admits that in fact he has a very bad reputation: “But also, the fact that I am hated by everyone and am conspicuous for the depravity of my character—even more than for my speeches—and that they point out with their finger that this is that man who is called the highest in every wickedness—this seems to me, at least, no small achievement” (25). In contrast to Libanius’ depiction of supporters who accompany an educated speaker to and from the speaker’s platform, Lucian’s Professor tells the Novice that he will need “many followers” (*ἀκόλουθοι πολλοί*, 15), and says “let your friends (*οἱ φίλοι*) always leap up and pay the price for their dinners by giving you a helping hand if ever they sense that you’re about to fall down and by

giving you a chance to invent what you're about to say in the breaks between their praises; for indeed, moreover, let this be your concern: to have your own personal chorus to accompany you" (21). The trained speaker in Lucian will gain new fans after his speech: "Let them serve as your bodyguards (*δορυφορείτωσαν*) as you go forth with your head covered in the midst of reflecting on what you said" (21). The true admirers of Libanius' educated man are thus replaced with mere "groupies," which seems quite fitting for Lucian's rock-star Professor.

Libanius' chreia elaboration also points to two practical, vocational benefits of sound rhetorical training. First, educated men can expect to enjoy victory in the lawcourts (*Progym.* 3.3.17). Likewise, the Dropout in the *Rh.Pr.* promises the Novice victory in the lawcourts (26), even though the Professor has just revealed that he is "mostly unsuccessful" at advocacy (*ἡττώμαι μὲν τὰ πλείστα*, 25) and that he mistreats his clients by "betraying them for the most part and promising [to deliver] the jurors to the fools" (25). A second practical benefit of rhetorical training, according to Libanius' chreia elaboration, is that "if a desire for money should enter into them, wealth is near at hand, and it comes to them justly and from their craft" (*Progym.* 3.3.19). Since he has already mentioned advocacy, this must be a reference to employment as a rhetoric teacher. As mentioned above, Lucian's Dropout likewise promises the Novice that the short road to Rhetoric will bring him wealth (2, 6). However, after beginning life in poverty and "living at first with a damned stingy lover for [his] basic upkeep" (*ἐπὶ ψιλῶ τῶ τρέφεισθαι*, 24), the Professor took the short road to Rhetoric, changed his name, and then "shacking up with an old woman, at first ... fed [his] belly at her house, pretending to love a seventy-year-old woman with only four teeth still left, and these fastened in with gold" (24). His poverty (*πενίαν*) and hunger (*λίμος*) forced him to endure "those cold kisses right out of the coffin" (24). He almost became her heir, but when one of her slaves claimed that he had bought poison to kill her, he was kicked out and decided to become an ad-

vocate (24–25). Clearly his rhetorical training has not brought the Professor wealth. Instead, his is a life filled with poverty, hunger, legacy hunting, and shameless self-subjugation, in which he indiscriminately trades sex with distasteful partners in exchange for the basic necessities of life.²² Now he is seemingly on the hunt for students, although he makes no mention of fees; in fact, he reproaches the guide to the long road because “he demands no small tuition” (οὐδὲ μισθοὺς ὀλίγους ἀπαιτεῖ, 9).

In Libanius’ chreia elaboration, a sound rhetorical education also confers benefits on one’s family. Educated men, he says, “bring good repute (εὐδοξίαν) to their parents, and they leave behind a good name (εὐκλειαν) for their children” (*Progym.* 3.3.19). Lucian’s Professor, by contrast, has servile, low-class origins. His father had been a slave in the Nile Delta, and his status as a freedman was never clear; his mother was a neighborhood seamstress (24).²³ There is no mention of his parents deriving any benefit from their son’s education. Nor does the Professor have a wife or children. But this is not very surprising given his unabashed narrative of his own sexual history as a kept lover (24) and promiscuous performer of oral sex (23).

Conclusion

I have argued here that the Isocratean chreia on the bitter root and sweet fruits of education was known already in Lucian’s time and that Lucian learned to elaborate it in school.

²² On parallels in Lucian for the stingy lover and old woman see C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1986) 107. Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.24–25: Vice promises Heracles that he will have all the material comforts, including food, drink, and sex, and that other people’s labor will provide them.

²³ In discussing the identity of the Professor, J. Hall, *Lucian’s Satire* (New York 1981) 275, suggests that Lucian is here “doing exactly what Aeschines and Demosthenes were doing when they disparaged one another’s parentage, title to citizenship, morals, veracity, honesty in the courts, and so forth.” Jones, *Culture and Society* 107, mentions that “servile origin was a common taunt” but suggests a real Egyptian origin for the Professor.

Moreover, he assumes that his readers knew it as well, and that they could recognize and appreciate his clever inversion of the chreia's praise of the long road, its harsh and demanding teacher, and the financial and social benefits enjoyed by its graduates. But Lucian the student grew up to become Lucian the acute social critic, and in the *Rh.Pr.* he filled out what was originally a literary parody of contemporary rhetorical education with people and things observed in the real world around him: a Professor whom many scholars have taken to be an actual person (the lexicographer Pollux);²⁴ a curriculum that overly prized rare Attic vocabulary and allusions to the Persian Wars, taught by teachers who valued self-presentation and style over substance;²⁵ and the reaction of the traditionally educated class to new and faster ways for students to acquire enough rhetorical ability and of the right sort to achieve their career goals.²⁶ The analysis of Lucian's *Rh.Pr.* as a rebuttal of a school

²⁴ On his identity: Baldwin, *Studies* 34–36; Anderson, *Lucian* 68–71; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 273–278; Jones, *Culture and Society* 102, 107–108; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* 47; Cribiore, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 74–75; Zweimüller, *Lukian "Rhetorum praeceptor"* 170–172, 438–440. Lucian constructs the Professor in direct contrast to the chreia's good professor and then adds further personal details about him (including a hint about his name, 24) that would have made him recognizable to Lucian's readers.

²⁵ For the *Rh.Pr.* in its Second Sophistic context see Baldwin, *Studies* 70–73; Hall, *Lucian's Satire* 252–273; Jones, *Culture and Society* 105–108. Previous scholarship on the *Rh.Pr.* has understandably emphasized its parody of training in and performance of declamation over its portrayal of the early (or even pre-) rhetorical training in the progymnasmata.

²⁶ Cribiore, *GRBS* 47 (2007) 77–86, argues that the *Rh.Pr.* shows that an abbreviated rhetorical curriculum was available as an alternative in Lucian's time. M. Heath, in his review of R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late-Antique Antioch* (Princeton 2006) in *Rhetorical Review* 5.3 (2007) 4–9, at 6, challenges this view: "The teacher of rhetoric in Lucian's savage (and, if one accepts that the target is Pollux, highly personalised) invective explains how to become a counterfeit sophist: neither the ludicrous incompetence of your displays of improvised declamation (18), nor your consistent failure as an advocate (25), will damage your reputation if you learn how to over-awe the gullible with the superficial mannerisms of a celebrity virtuoso per-

text is not intended to dismiss or replace these established approaches but to complement them.²⁷

October, 2011

Department of Classics
University of Iowa
Iowa City IA 52242
craig-gibson@uiowa.edu

former. What is offered here is not an abbreviated version of the lengthy traditional course in rhetoric, capable of equipping competent advocates, but a way to bypass that course entirely, aping the sophist's external show without acquiring any of his underlying expertise ... Cribiore's argument in my view should have gone further: the student of rhetoric had a choice, not between a long path and a short one, but between *multiple* paths, differing in kind as well as length." The literary debt of the *Rh.Pr.* to both Prodicus-Xenophon and the chreia, which offer only two stark choices (Virtue/Vice, long curriculum/short curriculum), makes it difficult to assert that there were in reality only two options for rhetorical study. But there must have been at least one readily available alternative to the standard curriculum for Lucian's satire to have amused his original audience.

²⁷ An early version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of CAMWS in 2009. I wish to thank Jeffrey Beneker, Ronald F. Hock, Robert Penella, Sharada Price, and the editor and referee for this journal for their comments and suggestions.