

**Reviving and Revising the Classical Past: Studies in the Intertextuality of
Lucian's *True Histories***

A thesis submitted by

Tianran Liu

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Classics

Tufts University

August 2018

Adviser: J. Matthew Harrington

Abstract

The second-century author Lucian worked within the literary practices of the Greek Second Sophistic, a period defined by the pervasive intertextual use of classical Greek literature within a rhetorical frame to emphasize the cultural importance of the Greek East within the cosmopolitan culture of the Roman Empire. On one hand, Lucian shares common writing techniques with these authors: mimesis and self-variation; on the other hand, unlike other authors, Lucian's ambition goes beyond simple recapitulation of the past: through adapting the classical corpus, Lucian not only makes his works a continuation of the classical past, but also constructs his new idea of the classic. This thesis examines Lucian's intertextual engagement with the Aristophanic corpus, with the *Odyssey*, and with his own work *How History Should Be Written*, in *True Histories* to demonstrate how Lucian achieves his ambition of reviving and revising the classical past as a vehicle for asserting his particular literary and cultural priorities.

Acknowledgments

I would like to send my most sincere thanks to a number of people who have helped in the completion of this thesis. I would like to thank my thesis advisor Professor J. Matthew Harrington for his inspirations and arduous edits to my thesis. The independent study about treebanking the book one of *True Histories* under his supervision was the incipience of this thesis. I would like to thank my academic advisor and the second reader Professor Steven W. Hirsch for his patience and faith in me. He is not only my instructor, but also a father – when life was hard, his encouragement was instrumental in my success. I would also like to thank Professor Ioannis Evrigenis for serving on my defense committee. I would like to give special thanks to Professor Susan E. Setnik for leading me to the fascinating world of ancient novels, where I find my central interest and deepest passion in classics. I am further grateful to my partner Yimang Zhou for his support and love. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends on Douban. When I feel lonely in this foreign country, they read my blog articles, share my feelings and give the warmest encouragement, which helps me to make it through the most difficult days. Finally, although he mentioned me in his acknowledgements, I am NOT going to thank my best friend Christopher David Parkinson for going so far away, after leaving behind two years of beautiful memories. David, I hate you – you know that I do.

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O mihi praeteritos referat si Iuppiter annos! (Aeneid 8.560)

Introduction

Lucian was born in the early second century CE¹ in the Syrian city of Samosata. Many scholars think that his native language was Aramaic, but most of the biographical details of this author cannot be securely recovered. Hopkinson (2008) suggests that elementary schools taught Greek in the eastern Roman Empire, and it is possible that Lucian learned Greek from an early age. He traveled as far as Gaul as a peripatetic rhetorician. The last historical event recorded by Lucian is the death of Marcus Aurelius (180 CE), and scholars believe that he died shortly afterward. Little is known about his life, because he is not mentioned by any contemporaries except once by Galen— as Andrade and Rush note, in a lost portion of Galen’s commentaries that are preserved in a book by a 9th century Islamic author.² This limited evidence also raises the question of how to reconstruct Lucian’s life. Scholars can only piece together his life from his own writings, which are prolific yet problematic, because the protagonists are often quasi-Lucian characters disguised by different masks and names.

If we believe what Lucian wrote about “his” life, we can draw an outline of “Lucian’s” career. In his oration *the Dream, or Lucian’s Career*, Lucian claimed that he originally planned to follow his uncle and become a sculptor. After elementary school, he had a dream in which Sculpture and Culture fought over him, and he finally decided to follow Culture and to proceed to higher education. And in the dialogue *the Double Indictment*, a Syrian, who is well-educated

¹ Hopkinson (2008) thinks that he was born around the end of Trajan’s reign (98-117AD), while Marsh (1998) thinks that he was born around 125 AD. Other dates have been proposed, but the consensus is that he was born near the beginning of the second century.

² Andrade and Rush, 2016.

and skillful in rhetoric, just like Lucian³, is indicted by Rhetoric for abandoning her and for embracing Dialogue (26-29). From this work and others, we know that Lucian may have started his career as a rhetorician, with some success, but he became disillusioned and turned to philosophy⁴.

Although it is unlikely that the Syrian, Mr. Frankness, or Lucinus⁵ simply equals Lucian the author, we do see different traditional genres, such as rhetoric and dialogue, within the Lucianic corpus. For example, *The Fly* and *My Native Lands* are typical encomia; *Phalaris I* and *II* are the imaginary prosecution and defense of the tyrant addressed to people of Delphi. These are popular genres for almost all sophists,⁶ and may well reflect components of Lucian's education. Apart from the sophistic works which were supposedly written early in his career, Lucian also writes orations and treatises, such as *On Funerals*, *A Professor of Public Speaking*, *How History Should be Written*, and so on. The large number of comic dialogues are representative of the Lucianic style, balancing between their serious philosophical form and the humorous effects of comedy. There are also several letters and one novel: *True Histories* (*Lucius or the Ass* is thought to be spurious).

From the history of his career and the list of his works, many scholars have argued that he is not part of the Second Sophistic. Although educated during this period and serving for a time as a sophist, once his skills and ability matured, he abandoned sophistry and hurtled into the

³ But it would be too bold to equate this Syrian with Lucian. In this paragraph I try to piece together a "Lucian" according to the clues that are provided in his works, but this does not mean that one should believe it entirely.

⁴ cf. *the Fisherman* 25-27, where Lucian is concealed behind the mask of Mr. Frankness. Diogenes Laertius claims that he started as a public speaker but ended up doing philosophy. In *Hermotimus* 13, again, Lucian (Λουκιανός) is replaced by a character with a similar life and name, Λουκινος, and according to this dialogue he abandoned rhetoric and moved to philosophy at the age of 40.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of these names or masks, see the third chapter of this paper.

⁶ For a more detailed categorization of the Lucianic corpus, cf. Hopkinson, 2008.

world of great literature⁷. Thus, the main part of his corpus is not simply rhetorical. Furthermore, the inventor of the phrase “Second Sophistic” did not include Lucian as a member of this group.⁸ Should Lucian be regarded as a sophist, or even as a member of the Second Sophistic? Before we do an assessment of Lucian, let us first discuss what the Second Sophistic was.

The term “Second Sophistic” was invented by the third century CE writer Philostratus in *Lives of the Sophists*, and he used it both to indicate a group of authors who were famous for “epideictic” oratory and to link them to the sophists of the Greek Classical period. It conventionally refers to the period 60-230 CE. Epideictic orations are not directed at political persuasion or legal argumentation, they are delivered for the purpose of pleasure, to arouse the admiration and respect of the audience.⁹ The shared literary code with the audience is the key feature of the literature of this period, more than any other times. The designated audience consists of three groups: young local aristocrats, common people seeking entertainment, and the sophists’ peers.¹⁰

The goal of this movement is, as Anderson (1993) argues, “to pretend to be in the fifth century BC,” and further, to shape the present literature as a “continuity of the classical past”. The *pepaideumenoí* of this time see that Greece is politically not as important as classical times, and they seek ways of responding to Roman power by emphasizing the cultural heritage of classical Greece.¹¹ That Rome allows local elites in many Greek states to largely manage their own local affairs makes the Greek *pepaideumenoí* “foster at least an illusion of past glories of the

⁷ Putnam, 1909.

⁸ cf. Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*.

⁹ Whitmarsh, 2005.

¹⁰ Anderson, 1993.

¹¹ Whitmarsh, 2001:17.

fifth and fourth centuries BC”¹². This illusion was a shared code among Greek elites, made possible through the *paideia* of this period.

The *paideia* in the Greek east of this period is based on Archaic and Classical Greek authors from different genres – epic poets like Homer, didactic poets like Hesiod, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, comedians like Aristophanes, Eupolis and Menander, tragedians like Sophocles and Euripides, and so on. Attic culture represents elite status and is associated with “high political and civic status”.¹³ Whitmarsh argues that the *paideia* of this period is “...Related to political power to the extent that it worked as an opiate to sedate the restless Greeks, it enabled them to come to terms with, and acquiesce in, their greatly reduced role in society.”¹⁴

I agree with this assertion. At first glance it contradicts the notion that Greek culture is associated with high political and civic status, and, as has been argued above, the epideictic nature of the literature of the second century is deprived of legal and political purpose. Culturally Greek literature is prevalent, even for Roman citizens, but politically it is not as important as before – it serves as a means of entertainment and refinement and a signifier of high status. For Greek authors it is the major way to affirm Greek identity. As Brusuelas argues, “authors do not write because they are Greek, they are Greek because they write.”¹⁵ Literature is a way of emphasizing or reconstructing the importance of Greek world. However, it is also to be noted that not only are authors who write in Greek in this period considered to be Second Sophistic writers, but also Latin writers, like Apuleius, who participated in this movement of recalling and reviving Greek culture and strengthening Greek identity, even though they are not included in

¹² Anderson, 1993.

¹³ Swain, 1996.

¹⁴ This is a quotation from Brusuelas (2008: 30), he claims that he found it in Whitmarsh (1998: 194).

¹⁵ Brusuelas, 2008.

Lives of the Sophists of Philostratus. The scholarly concept is not defined by or confined within this work, but was only *initiated* by it.

Authors who wanted to be popular in this period are bound to work in this arena of *paideia* and to interact with their audience. The intertextuality is created cooperatively by both the author and audience¹⁶. That the readers could react and respond to the author's adaptation of classical works is the key factor of the Second Sophistic. The target readers of these authors are *pepaideumenoí* –well-educated people educated in this *paideia*. In a society constructed by this *paideia*, one has to be familiar with this classical corpus in order to participate in dinner parties, to appreciate paintings and sculpture, to understand lectures of philosophers, and to read books of sophistication.¹⁷ All in all, one's cultural capital is defined by this arena of *paideia*, it is more “a mechanism that created an abstract, intellectual and exclusionary space” than a mere social custom¹⁸. In the process of writing and reading, both the authors and their readers created and reinforced this performance culture which conveys and defines their status. This culture is achieved through intertextuality, through the interaction of authors and readers, and through the process of reference and recognition.

Now let us come back to the previous questions: Is Lucian a sophist, and can we construct a real Lucian through his writings? For the first question¹⁹, the answer is both a yes and a no. As has been discussed above, many scholars think that Lucian is not a member of the Second Sophistic movement because he abandons sophistic practices once his literary career

¹⁶ Brusuelas (2008) further notes that “any theory of intertextuality is ultimately defined by the reader's personal textual experience.”

¹⁷ Bowie, 2007.

¹⁸ Brusuelas, 2008.

¹⁹ For a comprehensive discussion of this question, cf. Putnam 1909 and Anderson 1982. Putnam argues that Lucian is a sophist whose later writings are heavily influenced by his sophistic training, though not in the format of traditional sophistry; furthermore, his temperament and sentiment are influenced by sophistry throughout his career as a writer. Anderson argues that Lucian's main writing techniques, self-variation and mimesis, bear the stamp of his sophistic education, and he describes Lucian as a sophist's sophist.

matures. He moves toward philosophy, as he himself asserts. But his training within the rhetorical education of the Second Sophistic leaves behind pervasive influences in all his writings, no matter what the format. He undertook the more winding road to rhetoric by following Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, Aristophanes and other authors. Instead of utilizing their syntax and vocabulary directly, Lucian chose to adapt whatever of their constructions and words were necessary to vitalize his own style, and thereby achieved his own elegant Attic style.²⁰ In the second chapter I will discuss Lucian's borrowing of classical language, using his adaptation of Aristophanes as an example.

Apart from his language, the plots of his dialogues and romances are largely drawn from the basic curriculum of rhetorical training.²¹ One key feature of Lucian's style is *mimesis*²². Most of his stories are based on traditional *mythos*, stories or historical events. It is no more than literary *mimesis*, which Tim Whitmarsh defines as "the imitation of texts written in the classical past."²³ It allows comparison and reconsideration of the past and present, and thus "an active, dynamic means of creating a cultural identity".²⁴ Through *mimesis*, *pepaideumenoí* are not successful in erasing the disparities between the past and the present; on the contrary, the more they emphasize the present's continuity with the past, the more they reveal the discontinuity as well. When they try to copy the models of past glory, they actually "displace and even obscure

²⁰ Putnam, 1909.

²¹ For a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between classical literature and the Lucianic corpus, cf. Bompaigne 1958, Householder 1941 and Anderson 1976. Bompaigne argues that the Lucianic output is largely based on the basic curriculum; Householder provides a list of all possible quotations and literary allusions in the Lucianic corpus; Anderson argues that Lucian retells the stories from his own corpus and reuses the raw materials from the classical world, and by self-variation he presents the same stories from different perspectives.

²² Möllendorff (2006) points out that the literature of Imperial period is largely "emulative imitation" of classical period. The conception of imitation of that period includes not only language and style, but also issues of content. He argues that the Lucian's innovation is that through the *mimesis* he merges two genres, the Old Comedy and the Socratic dialogue, into one, though these two genres conflict with each other in many ways.

²³ Whitmarsh 2001:88.

²⁴ Whitmarsh 2001:88.

their models and render them inaccessible to viewers”.²⁵ Lucian’s later works, especially his dialogues and fictions, use and adapt the stories of the basic curriculum and the classical past. Through mimesis, with the help of his Attic style, Lucian reconstructs a world of the classical past in his time; however, this effort is bound to be futile, as I will show in the third chapter, using his adaptation of Homer as an example.

Another key feature of Lucian’s style is self-variation, that is, while using the same materials, by approaching them from different directions and by emphasizing different aspects, Lucian expresses different purports by giving old stories new meanings. Usually his comic effects come from the new approach and emphasis in retelling stories that are familiar to his audience. As Putnam notes, “not a new idea but a new combination was the desired fruit of effort.”²⁶ As has been presented above, Lucian hides himself behind different masks, sometimes “Lucinus”, sometimes “a Syrian”, sometimes “Mr. Frankness”, and rarely “Lucian”.²⁷ They share similar features as the author, blurring the boundary between these literary characters and the real author.²⁸ Common motifs include the relationship between truth and falsehood and criticism of philosophers and educated people/sophists.²⁹ Anderson argues that he prefers these topics because they are easy to understand for his audience, and they are flexible and can be accommodated to different scenes and backgrounds.³⁰ Arguably, the performance of elite status remains at the center of most literary discourses. Lucian’s self-variation will be discussed in the

²⁵ Andrade and Rush, 2016.

²⁶ Putnam 1909.

²⁷ For the different names and masks of Lucian, see chapter 3.

²⁸ For the relationship between author and narrator, see chapter 1.

²⁹ For the relationship between truth and falsehood, see *True Histories*, *Alexander the False Prophet*, and *the Lover of Lies*; for the criticism of philosophers, see the *Ignorant Book-Collector*, *Philosophies for Sale*, *the Fisherman*, *Icaromenippus*, and so on.

³⁰ Anderson 1982.

first chapter, taking the intertextuality between *True Histories* and *How History Should Be Written* as an example.

Lucian is no doubt a sophistic author playing in the literary arena of the Second Sophistic. He exploits the rhetorical techniques and resources of the movement, and reconstructs a classical past in his writing. Lucian is “a committed Atticist and philhellene”³¹, as Anderson argues, and he is the most accessible writer and the best advertisement for this movement. And his work, *True Histories*, is the most famous and popular text in his corpus at present. It is significant also because it is the only novel out of the approximately 80 extant works under his name (if we disregard *Lucius or the Ass*, which is generally seen as spurious). It has received considerable attention. Anderson (1976) discusses theme and variation within the Lucianic corpus, and lays out the outlines of book 1 and book 2 of *True Histories*, arguing that there is a parallel between the plots of book 1 and book 2. He thinks that the parallel results from the self-variation of Lucian. In order to utilize as many of the materials as possible, and in order to avoid repetitive materials placed too close to each other, he tries to scatter them, which ultimately lead to a parallel between the two books. Swanson (1976) argues that Lucian discusses the relationship between truth and falsehood through an avowedly fictional work, and *True Histories*, though full of falsehood, is a “truth-serving” fiction. Georgeadou and Larmour’s (1998) commentary on *True Histories* is a comprehensive exploration of all the possible allusions and references to classical works. Kim (2010) examines references to Homer in book 2 of *True Histories*, and argues that Lucian shapes the Island of the Blessed as a stagnated, canonical world of the Classical past which cannot be entered or altered, and emphasizes Lucian’s ambition of ranking himself with Homer. Ni’Mhealaigh (2014) draws connections

³¹ Anderson 1982.

between Lucianic fantasy in *True Histories* and his contemporary culture, arguing that the hyperreality of Lucian is not the only example, and provides a framework for further discussion of that period.

As for the intertextuality, Householder (1941) provides a comprehensive list of quotations and allusions in the Lucianic corpus. Georgeadou and Larmour (1994) compare *How History Should be Written* and *True Histories*, and argue that the latter is a comic continuation of the former. Brusuelas (2007) explains the relationship between Lucian and Aristophanes, and Wilshere (2015) examines the relationship between Lucian's works and Homer's epics. This is the extant outline of the scholarship on Lucian that informs my work.

This thesis intends to examine the intertextuality within the Lucianic corpus as well as the intertextuality between *True Histories* and classical writers. By adapting self-variation and mimesis, Lucian bears the heavy stamp of the Second Sophistic. In the first chapter, I will examine the intertextual relationship between the preface of *True Histories* and the main contentions of *How History Should be Written*, arguing that Lucian is concerned with the relationship between truth and falsehood, the preface is a continuation of the historiographic treatise, and the fantasy narrative is a comic parody of a wrong kind of history. The second chapter will examine the relationship between Aristophanes and *True Histories*, reaching the conclusion that, by adapting the ideas, motifs, and language of Aristophanes to his own time and style, Lucian creates his own meta-comedy, which is a fiction that employs the comedic technique but is prose in format. In the third chapter, I will examine the relationship between the *True Histories* episode on the Island of the Blessed and Homer's *Odyssey*, arguing that, by working on the interplay between the past and present, Lucian creates a world that is representative of the Second Sophistic: a reconstructed world of the Classical past with all the

heroes, philosophers and writers. He sees the paradox of the Second Sophistic movement: the recreation of the past does not recover the past, but replaces the past and makes it even more obscure to the audience.

Chapter 1:

The Preface of *True Histories* in Relation to *How History Should be Written*

As discussed in the introduction, Lucian is a prototypical representative of the authors writing within the literary and social movement often termed as the Second Sophistic, when the extensive intertextuality of the Greco-Roman canon arguably reached an even more ostentatiously elevated pitch. In addition to his dense intertextual use of the canonical authors, Lucian demands of his audience that they apply a knowledge of other texts within his own corpus, also allowing him to engage in a performative self-variation by approaching the same stories from different directions and emphasizing different aspects of them, and each reinterpretation serves different purport. In order to understand the intertextuality of *True Histories* fully, it is proper to start with the examination of the intertextuality within the Lucianic corpus, so as to understand how Lucian presents the same ideology from different aspects and even with different genres. In this chapter, I will compare the preface of *True Histories* with Lucian's treatise *How History Should Be Written*, in order to show how Lucian explains the same principles of historiography in two radically different genres: comic, satiric novel and serious treatise.

Like his other works, the *Ἀληθῆ Διηγήματα*, ("True Histories," *Verae Historiae*, subsequently referred to as *VH*) of Lucian displays a marked degree of intertextual referentiality, and particularly engages with his other works by reutilizing the same materials, or by self-variation. Specifically, familiarity with *Πῶς Δεῖ Ἱστορίαν Συγγράφειν* ("How History Should Be Written," *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda Sit*, subsequently referred to as *Hist. Conscr.*) is crucial to the understanding of *VH*. *VH*. has long been recognized as responding to *Hist. Conscr.*,

and was even styled a “comic sequel” by Gildersleeve, a characterization that has a certain merit.³² Both works³³ critique those historians who wrote incredible facts without inquiry in order to ingratiate themselves with their audiences, since, according to Lucian, the sole task of historians is to preserve truth and to tell the events as they happened.³⁴ At the same time both works interrogate the operational role of truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια) and falsehood (τό ψεῦδος) in the process of historiography.³⁵ The juxtaposition of the title and the untrue content of the text is a performance of the type of problematic claims to truth at the center of the author's critique, while the two texts in conjunction frame a subtle examination of the operation of literary style and authorial *persona* as elements of the historical argument.

The title of Lucian's ἀληθῆ διηγήματα is often translated as “a true story” or “true histories.” Swanson (1976) argues that the translation of “histories” is not convincing, as etymologically it comes from the word “ἱστορία,” which means a narrative written down after inquiry. He suggests translating it as “tale,” which accords with what Lucian acknowledged in the preface (*VH*. 1.1-4) that he is “writing about things which I have neither seen nor had to do with nor learned from others”, that is to say, the book is written without inquiry—it is fictional. By

³² Gildersleeve, 1890. Georgiadou and Larmour noted that *VH* is the ultimate “parody of a wrong kind of history writing” (1994). In their work *Lucian and Historiography: “De Historia Conscribenda” and “Verae Historia”*, Georgiadou and Larmour presented a detailed list of techniques that have been mentioned in *Hist. Conscr.* and employed by Lucian in *VH* to make incredible facts look credible.

³³ There is less doubt about the date of *Hist. Conscr.*, as it is clear that he wrote it during the years of the Parthian war (161-166), cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 2: “No, ever since the present situation arose—the war against barbarians, the disaster in Armenia and the run of victories—every single person is writing history.” The precise date of *VH* is, however, more ambiguous. Georgiadou/Larmour presented a series of relevant arguments about the chronology of the two works. They argued that it is hard to determine the exact date of them, therefore it is hard to prove that *Hist. Conscr.* is after *VH* for sure; but they are generally said to have been written in 165 or 166, and *VH* is probably later than *Hist. Conscr.*. Some scholars put *VH* in 180 or later. Anderson (1976) argues that the chronological order of Lucian's works is irrelevant in understanding his motifs, an assertion which can be extended to the study of *VH* and *Hist. Conscr.*.

³⁴ cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 9: History has one task and one end—what is useful—, and that comes from truth alone. And 40: ...and only to Truth must sacrifice be made.

³⁵ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1994.

putting “ἀληθῆ” and “διηγήματα” together, Lucian uses an oxymoron to indicate that he is dealing with the relationship between truth and lies.³⁶ Georgiadou and Larmour have argued that *VH* is a work closely connected with *Hist. Conscr.*, that the latter is both earlier than *VH*³⁷ and “lays the ground work for the *VH*”³⁸. Lucian, on one hand, shows the audience a history which is not true, on the other hand, by using several of the writing techniques suggested in *Hist. Conscr.*, illustrates that things that are manifestly not true can be created with a truthful flavor. The use of historiographic techniques aligns the text with the historical genre. The juxtaposition of the title with the fabricated content is itself dissonant, and thus encourages the audience to engage with the relationship of truth and falsehood. But this translation falls short of the original meaning of *διηγήματα*, which comes from the verb *διηγέομαι*, literally meaning “go through, describe in detail”. It does not have an implication of truth or falsehood. I think “story” (from medieval Latin *historia*, meaning narrative or illustration—cf. Merriam-Webster) would be a better translation: It conveys the sense of historical narration, and does not imply a judgement about the veracity of the work.

Lucian creates an authorial *persona*³⁹ in the preface of *VH* that is central to his project of interrogating the role of the “author” within the assertion of claims to truth in histories. As is arguably the case with all texts that deploy the authorial *persona* as a character within their narrative, the *VH* calls into question the possibility of accurately differentiating the textual performance of the author (the authorial *persona*) from some hypothetical authorial voice

³⁶ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

³⁷ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1994.

³⁸ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

³⁹ cf. Whitmarsh (2013) pp.63-77 “*An I for an I: Reading Fictional Autobiography*” for a detailed analysis of authorial *persona* in the case of Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*, Petronius’s *Satyricon* and Lucian’s *True History*. He argues that “I” contains serious philosophical and psychological complexity in both composing and reading a story, and that “I” is an “ego that is not the author’s own.” The *autobiographical* nature of those *fictions* is a “deliberate paradox” which blurs boundaries between these categories.

conveying the unaltered viewpoint of the actual author. Despite the irresolvable nature of such a scholarly question, it is the use of this authorial *persona* that calls into question the use of such *personae* by historians as elements of their efforts to persuade the audience of their sound methodology and global veracity. "Lucian" first defines this novel as a relaxation after reading serious works; he follows by professing that his work is enticing because of its novelty⁴⁰ and because everything in this novel is not only false, but also a parody of certain poets, historians, and philosophers, citing specific examples of these categories. This *persona* then confesses that he is a liar, while claiming that he should not be censured because he admits that he is not telling any truth. Several methodological issues are laid out in the preface: his target audience, the task of historians, and some major principles in writing truth in historiography--all correspond with the rules that are presented in *Hist. Conscr.*.

The preface of *VH* is to a great extent a continuation of the arguments of *Hist. Conscr.* in the manner of a demonstration. In *Hist. Conscr.*, Lucian criticizes multiple historians and then presents several suggestions about how to write historical texts properly. It is a guideline for historiography; the preface of *VH* talks about rules for writing lies, which is, in fact, another approach to the rules for writing truth in historiography, and echoes the truth-preserving principle in the *Hist. Conscr.*. In both *Hist. Conscr.* and the preface of *VH*, Lucian adopts the same authorial *persona*, which contrasts with the narrator in the later narrative of *VH*. Indeed, the

⁴⁰ Ni' Mheallaigh (2014) points out that it is striking for Lucian to assert the novelty of his work, since classical authors tended to emphasize "the traditional nature of their subject", while Lucian has both the reference to traditional sources and the novelty that he claims, which is achieved mainly by having both "the exuberance of his fantasy" and "his unapologetic explicitness about his 'honest lying' ." Almost all writers of ancient times, however, play with the traditional materials while at the same time adding in their own biases, approaches, and analysis. Lucian is hardly the first to write on new topics. But the combination of historiography and fictional narrative is an innovation. The authorial Lucian, by claiming it, seizes the mind of his readers. It is also a common practice for Lucian to declare originality, as Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) note, cf. *Zeux* 2-3;7. He is also playing with originality and referentiality, present and past, like he is playing with truth and falsehood, thus creating a paradoxical and confusing dissonance in the text.

preface is the only place in *VH* where the voice of the author appears—once the narrative starts in 1.5, the voice of the author is replaced by and dominated by the narrator.⁴¹ The relationship of Lucian as the authorial *persona* and as the narrator is parallel to that of Homer and Odysseus when the latter is narrating his adventures to the Phaeacians. Lucian critiques Homer as the representative of poets, “πολλὰ τεράστια καὶ μυθώδη συγγεγραφότων (having written many monstrous things and myths) (*VH*.1.2).”⁴² He largely discusses Odysseus, the fictional narrator created by the poet Homer, as if he were a real figure, and he regards Odysseus, rather than Homer, as the “guide and instructor” of charlatanry (*VH* 1.3). Later in the narrative, we find that both Homer and Odysseus appear as characters among the Blessed in *VH* 2.20, where Homer wins a lawsuit with Odysseus as his lawyer. The appearance of both Odysseus, the fictional figure created by Homer, and Homer himself, is a merging of the real world with the fictional world; The same is true of Lucian the authorial *persona* and Lucian the fictional narrator in *VH*: by juxtaposing the veristic and the overtly fictional figures, Lucian plays with the relationship between the author and the narrative *persona*: the authorial Lucian is a self-presentation of the inaccessible real writer behind the text, while the narrator Lucian is the created protagonist represented by the narrative *persona*; the appearance of both Lucians in the same text blurs the boundary between truth and fiction: the authorial Lucian penetrates the fictional world.⁴³

Not only the preface of *VH*, but also *VH* as a whole is problematic in its blending of truth and fiction. When readers approach the end of the story and see the couplet written by the character Homer for the narrator, for the first time the name of the narrator is mentioned:

⁴¹ cf. Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

⁴² Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Lucian are by Tianran Liu.

⁴³ cf. Genette, 1983, pp. 234-237: the mixing of two narrative levels is defined by Genette as “*metalepsis*”, which is a crossing of the “shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds.”

Λουκιανὸς τάδε πάντα φίλος μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν

εἶδ' ἐτε καὶ πάλιν ἦλθε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν. (VH 2.28)⁴⁴

Lucian, dear to blessed gods, beheld all these things

and went back to his own fatherland.

This is the first time that the name of the narrator is specified, and readers discover for the first time that the name of the narrator is the same as the name of the author. They confront the autobiographical frame imposed on the fiction, and even the most experienced reader would start to mix up the narrative *persona* with the authorial *persona*. As has been discussed above, the autobiographical “I” blurs the boundary of fiction and autobiography; readers normally expect the former to be not true, and the latter to be true, but now they are faced with the paradoxical text which contains both categories. The discrepancy between falsehood and reality has been problematized since the beginning of the work.⁴⁵ The narrator “Lucian” largely imitates Odysseus, the unreliable tricky narrator who distorts truth by variation of his narration “for his own ends.”⁴⁶ It is also noted by König that the *VH* is Lucian’s “most extended use of the figure of the unreliable narrator.”⁴⁷ The difference between Homer’s Odysseus and Lucian’s narrator is

⁴⁴ Ni’ Mheallaigh (2014) argues that the revelation of Lucian’s name is “more profoundly disquieting” to his readers than the wildest descriptions in the novel, since he has inserted a real thing—his name—in the fictional world. The fantasy is no longer limited to the text, but also seeps out into the real world which is inhabited by the author and his readers. If we regard *VH* as a history (as Lucian adopts the full set of methodologies of historiography in the writing of the narrative), we might find it not far different from Xenophon’s or Caesar’s histories, in which they also appear as the main characters under their own names. But if we regard *VH* as a novel (as the narrative is full of incredible deeds), the appearance of Lucian’s name is then, as Mheallaigh argues, disquieting to his readers. Lucian plays with the concepts of history and novel, and challenges his readers, who are supposedly familiar with these two genres—on the one hand, readers familiar with Xenophon or Caesar might not find it striking to see Lucian’s name in a history that he writes, on the other hand, they may be astonished when they come across the real name of Lucian intruding into the fictional world created by the author Lucian.

⁴⁵ Ni’ Mheallaigh further notes that this fiction-reality relationship is typical in Roman imperial literature: “this subversive relationship between fiction and reality is characteristic of the narrative, with its repeated paradoxical inversions between reality and fiction, between original and copy, and between past and present—themes which are centrally important in imperial literary culture.

⁴⁶ König, 2009.

⁴⁷ König, 2009.

that the “self-aggrandizement” of Lucian’s narrator is more conspicuous and transparent.⁴⁸

Readers can only suspect the lies from the difference in various accounts given by Odysseus, while they are informed directly in the preface of *VH* that Lucian the narrator is not telling the truth.

What, then, is Lucian’s purpose in blending the authorial voice with the narrator’s voice and in eliding the two different narrative levels? The *VH*, like *Hist. Conscr.*, deals mainly with the problem of truth and falsehood. By juxtaposing Homer and Odysseus with the authorial “Lucian” *persona* and the narrator “Lucian” *persona*, the author intends to blur the boundary between truth and fiction performatively. At the end of the story, “Lucian” the narrator claims that he never told a lie (2.31), which at first sight does not correspond to the assertion in the preface that he is constantly lying—a further step in mixing truth with falsehood. “Lucian” the authorial *persona* confesses that he is a liar, and he is not lying; “Lucian” the narrator, on the other hand, asserts that he is not a liar, which may be true inside the frame of the story, but if we jump out of the story, nothing he reports is true. This narrative dissonance provides a parallel with Homer and Odysseus, while Odysseus is blamed for his untruths by the authorial Lucian. Homer is not similarly castigated because he is a poet and has the freedom which comes with narrating myth. We could reasonably infer that Lucian the narrator is to be blamed, like Odysseus, but Lucian the author, as he himself asserts, could escape censure (*VH* 1.4). Thus, even the seemingly straightforward preface is problematic, as it invites the readers to take part in the recognition of the subject and the object of his *mimesis*.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ König, 2009.

⁴⁹ cf. *VH* 1.2 “οὐς καὶ ὀνομαστὶ ἂν ἔγραφον, εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ σοι ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως φανεῖσθαι ἐμελλον. I would write them down with name, if it were not likely that they will be manifest to you yourself through recognition,” referring to the authors whom he is parodying.

In the preface, Lucian first brings up two sets of contrasts in the reading of historians: between more serious works (τῶν σπουδαιωτέρων) (*VH* 1.1) and less serious works, and consequently between readers of more serious works and readers of less serious works. He defines his own work, *VH*, as the less serious work, providing some relaxation for readers of more serious works. At the same time, there is preserved a sense of harmony (ἔμμελής) in this contrast. Just like relaxation at the right time (κατὰ καιρὸν) is a major part of athletes' training, to relax (ἀνιέναι) after reading serious works is fitting (προσῆκειν). If we, as Gildersleeve (1890) suggests, “premise that the True Story... is a comic sequel to a brilliant essay entitled How to write History”, it is clear that the “more serious works” refer to works like the *Hist. Conscr.*, while less serious works refer to works like *VH* (Georgiadou and Larmour, 1994).

The necessity of reading less serious works for more serious readers is compared to the necessity of relaxation (ἄνεσις) after training (ἄσκησις), a simile not uncommon in the tradition of Greek literary thought, but one that might seem to be distinctive in the context of the Roman Empire. Gymnasium, theater and symposium are “key signs” of Greek culture⁵⁰, yet for Roman writers they are—especially naked training in the gymnasium—suspect. Although Romans also continued these Greek practices, they never took them as seriously as Greeks did⁵¹, and they were never fully convinced of their role as preparation for war.⁵² A special flavor of Greekness is

⁵⁰ Goldhill, 2001.

⁵¹ cf. Plutarch, the *Roman Questions* 274d-e: For the Romans used to be very suspicious of rubbing down with oil, and even to-day they believe that nothing has been so much to blame for the enslavement and effeminacy of the Greeks as their gymnasia and wrestling-schools, which engender much listless idleness and waste of time in their cities, as well as pederasty and the ruin of the bodies of the young men with regulated sleeping, walking, rhythmical movements, and strict diet; by these practices they have unconsciously lapsed from the practice of arms, and have become content to be termed nimble athletes and handsome wrestlers rather than excellent men-at-arms and horsemen. It is hard work, at any rate, when men strip in the open air, to escape these consequences; but those who anoint themselves and care for their bodies in their own houses commit no offence.

Also cf. Cicero, *ad Atticum* 16.5: ...to bare one's body amid citizens is the origin of outrage.

⁵² In another of Lucian's works, *Anacharsis*, he presents an imaginative conversation between Solon and a Scythian guest friend, Anacharsis, in a Platonic style (like what happened in *Phaedrus*) under a tree. Solon tries to explain to and persuade Anacharsis that athletic training is important in that it prepares citizens for war both physically and mentally. Anacharsis, like most Platonic protagonists, was not persuaded in the end.

thus created by the simile, which conforms to the later narrative where the travelers never leave the Greek world: wherever they go, the local people, even people on the moon and sun or people in the whale's belly, speak Greek and observe Greek customs. Athletes and athletic training are also common images in the *Hist. Conscr.*, in which Lucian refers to history as an athlete (8, 9, 10), then compared historians to an athlete (30, 34), and finally, himself to a trainer of talented historians (35).⁵³ The similar motif in both works reminds readers of the close connection of *VH* and *Hist. Conscr.*.

Through this simile in *VH.*, Lucian compares his readers to athletes, who are serious trainees in the discipline of history. Who are not his designated readers? Readers who are like those gullible “ignorant/lacking expertise Phaeacians (ιδιώτας ἀνθρώπους τοὺς Φαίακας *VH* 1.3)”—their foolishness lies in being totally taken in by Odysseus. Likewise, in *Hist. Conscr.* 10 he divides readers into two groups: “the mob and the common people (τὸν συρφετὸν καὶ τὸν πολλὸν δῆμον)” and those who listen with the spirit of judges and fault-finders. He thinks that historians should disregard the former and keep in mind the latter while writing history. His expectations and requirements for his readers are further defined when Lucian claims that everything in his novel is a parody of various poets, historians, and philosophers. He cites only a few of them, and leaves the rest for the readers to recognize. Therefore, the readers are supposed to be familiar with these authors and texts. As stated before, they are invited to take part in the “intellectual journey through the literature of the past”⁵⁴ with the narrator and play the interpretative game with the author. The challenge to readers throughout the reading or journey is to use the “spirit of a judge” constantly, in order to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and not be taken in by the author or narrator, so as to prove themselves not to be gullible and

⁵³ Georgiadou and Larmour 1998.

⁵⁴ Ni' Mheallaigh, 2014.

unsophisticated readers. The invitation is “an ironic acknowledgment of the reader’s role in the production of parody”⁵⁵, so they are required to understand Lucian’s preoccupations and corpus of work. If, however, the readers fail to do so, the price is that they might be led to “excessive skepticism”, and take the narrative as “entirely frivolous”⁵⁶, and thus be banished from the fantastic journey of Lucian. This also casts doubt on Lucian’s assertion that this work is for relaxation—the so called “relaxation” is actually demanding and painstaking⁵⁷, during which the readers can never “drop their guard”⁵⁸ or take full pleasure.

As Swanson argues, the *VH* is a “truth-serving” fiction (1976). The readers’ process of discerning falsehood from truth is also a reconstruction of the narrative. Lucian explicitly regards truthfulness as the foundation of history. He argues that “ἡ δὲ οὐκ ἂν τι ψευδοῦς ἐμπεσὼν ἢ ἱστορία, οὐδὲ ἀκαριαῖον ἀνάσχοιτο (history would not admit a lie, not even a tiny one)” (*Hist. Conscr.* 7), and that the “ἔργον ἓν (one task)” of the historian is “ὡς ἐπράχθη εἰπεῖν (to say how it happened)” (*Hist. Conscr.* 39). This view of the nature of historical writing is more stringent than the typical approach of readers and writers of his time⁵⁹. From the reference comparing the historian to an athlete in *Hist. Conscr.* 8 mentioned above, we can understand Lucian’s concern about truthfulness in historiography:

⁵⁵ Branham, 1989.

⁵⁶ König, 2009.

⁵⁷ As Robinson (1979) argues, the purpose of parody in *VH* is to “keep readers alert for stylistic and thematic allusions to well-known works” by amusing, dazzling and teasing them. How literate they are can be judged from whether they can spot specific references to other works.

⁵⁸ König, 2009.

⁵⁹ As Tomas Hägg (1991) notes: “But the Greek *historia* should not be understood only as “history” in our narrower sense of the word, but also as the exploration of the world in all its aspects and the reporting of what has been seen and heard...nor should we understand the term “history” as the opposite of myth...for earlier times the two flow together, and there is to the Greek mind no difference in principle between such subject-matter as may fill an epic like the *Odyssey* and what a historian like Herodotus may narrate. The demand for “truth” in the broad outlines and the freedom to embroider the details in one’s own way apply to both...On the other hand the historian too has his freedom, within the bounds of the established historical framework, to invent things of his own, in so far as his inventions keep to the credible. The credible, of course, varies with distance in time and space: beyond the limits of the known world men with dog’s heads are possible; in the earliest times gods walked on earth.”

μέγα τοίνυν—μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπέρμεγα τοῦτο κακόν—εἰ μὴ εἰδείη τις χωρίζειν τὰ ἱστορίας καὶ τὰ ποιητικῆς, ἀλλ’ ἐπεισάγοι τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τὰ τῆς ἐτέρας κομμώματα—τὸν μῦθον καὶ τὸ ἐγκώμιον καὶ τὰς ἐν τούτοις ὑπερβολὰς—ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἀθλητὴν τῶν καρτερῶν τούτων καὶ κομιδῆ πρηνίων ἀλουργίσι περιβάλῃ καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ κόσμῳ τῷ ἐταιρικῷ καὶ φυκίον ἐντρίβοι καὶ ψιμύθιον τῷ προσώπῳ.

Therefore it is a big issue – rather, this is too great a mistake – if someone should not know how to distinguish between history and poetry, but bring into history the embellishments of poetry – myth and panegyric and exaggerations in these two – just as if someone were to dress an athlete of such might and toughness with a purple robe and with other elements of a courtesan’s decoration and rub rouge and white lead on his face. (*Hist. Conscr.* 8)

The poetry is connected to the clothing and decoration, while prose is like the vigorous form of an athlete; the former has the hint of deceptive and feminine features, the latter, manly virtue.⁶⁰ Lucian’s insistence on truthfulness in historiography is therefore associated with the manly virtue that is truthful and vigorous.

From the paragraph quoted above, we also see one of the rules laid out by Lucian about writing truthful history: the avoidance of poetic embellishments and myths which decorate history with hyperbole. Hyperbolic language inevitably twists the history and tends to saddle history with untrue origins. For this reason, Lucian criticizes Homer’s Odysseus in the preface, for he talks about “ἀνέμων τε δουλείαν καὶ μονοφθάλμους καὶ ὠμοφάγους καὶ ἀγρίους τινὰς ἀνθρώπους, ἔτι δὲ πολυκέφαλα ζῷα καὶ τὰς ὑπὸ φαρμάκων τῶν ἐταίρων μεταβολὰς (slavery of the winds, one-eyed people, cannibal men, and some rustic human beings, and even many headed-animals and the metamorphoses of his companions under the effect of drugs)” (*VH* 1.3).

⁶⁰ Whitmarsh, 2013.

However, he does not criticize Homer and is relatively friendly to him: unlike the historians (like Ctesias or Herodotus) who are put in the Isle of the Wicked, Homer is placed in the Isle of the Blessed.⁶¹ Homer is a poet, he is allowed to write nonexistent things such as winged horses, and to praise people with hyperbole, but this practice should not be brought into history. Homer and poetry is a very important topic in *Hist. Conscr.*, with Lucian emphasizing the importance of excluding poetry or poetic exaggeration. In the *Hist. Conscr.* 8, Lucian argues that history “ποιητικῆς μὲν καὶ ποιημάτων ἄλλαι ὑποσχέσεις καὶ κανόνες ἴδιοι (has different goals and its own standards than poetry and poems)”. He further states in 45 that a historian’s mind could have “a touch and share of poetry”, but his diction should “keep its feet on the ground”, so that he will not be lost in “poetry’s wild enthusiasm.” Thus he does not entirely eradicate the spirit of poetry from history, but emphasizes that the language and style of poetry are not appropriate in a history. Later, in the narrative of *VH*, Lucian does not fail to obey his rule about telling falsehoods: although the *content* of the story is full of incredible things like hybrid creatures and Neverlands, and the reports of numbers are exaggerated, still the *language* obeys the rule about truth-telling: poetic language is almost totally excluded from the narrative, except for the two lines quoted above from the poem that Homer writes for Lucian the narrator in 2.28.⁶²

⁶¹ One might argue that Lucian asserts in the preface that all that he is going to talk about in the narrative is not true, and therefore he might not be so hostile to Ctesias or Herodotus, even though they are put in the Isle of the Wicked. I agree with Swanson’s (1976) argument: “it is the series of fantastic events which are incredible and not the narrator’s reactions to those series of events.” Although what the narrator tells his audience are fictional, his attitude towards the historical figures and reactions to these fictional events are sincere, which is a further step to give the fictional events a truthful disguise – all reactions and feelings are reasonable and real in those fictional situations.

⁶² Aristotle, however, contradicts the assertion that poetry cannot convey truth. In *Poetics* 1.9, he argues that history is about what has happened, while poetry is about what may happen, so history is about particular truth, while poetry is about universal truth. He deems poetry to be more philosophical and a higher genre than history. Using Alcibiades as an example of history, he argues that his situation cannot be adapted to all human beings. Aristotle does not, however, contradict Lucian’s historiographic principle: although he thinks that poetry is about universal truth, he does not disagree that poetry and history are two different genres, and that poetry should be excluded from history.

Apart from the avoidance of poetic language and myth telling⁶³, it is vitally important for a historian to do history according to the meaning of the word “*historia*” —to inquire. Lucian blames several historians whose practices are not acceptable to him: Ctesias, Iambulus, and supposedly Herodotus. They all write the whole or part of their history without sufficient inquiry. He first names Ctesias, son of Ctesiochus, of Cnidos (Κτησίας ὁ Κτησιόχου ὁ Κνίδιος), because he writes about an India that he never saw or heard about from anyone with a reputation for truthfulness. It is noteworthy that later in the preface the authorial *persona* ("Lucian") also admits that he is writing about things that he has never seen or learned from others (1.4), but he thinks that he can escape censure by confessing that he is a liar, whereas Ctesias, according to Photius 49b39-40, writes myths while claiming to be telling absolute truth. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) note that the “comical alliteration” of his name is evocative of the ridiculed historian Crepereius Calpurnianus of Pompeiopolis (Κρεπέρης Καλπουρνιανός Πομπηϊουπόλιτης) in *Hist. Conscr.* 15, who is an ardent emulator of Thucydides. Lucian does not hide his hostility towards Ctesias, since in *VH* 2.31 he is placed on the Isle of the Wicked, undergoing severe punishment because of lying. In *Hist. Conscr.* 39, Lucian mentions that Ctesias, in order to cater to the Persian king Artaxerxes, writes adulation of the king into his history.

The second historian named by Lucian is Iambulus, who writes about strange things in the countries in the great sea. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) note that the subjects that Ctesias and Iambulus deal with are attributed to the former historian when he is criticized in *Hist. Conscr.* 31. However, it is noteworthy that Lucian appears not to be as hostile to Iambulus as to Ctesias,

⁶³ But in *Hist. Conscr.* 60, Lucian appears to agree with the Herodotean view that the historian should report what is told to him without necessarily believing it, as long as he makes it known to his readers. Georgiadou and Larmour (1994) think that Lucian may agree with the Herodotean precept (or methodology), but not Herodotus’ real practice.

since he says that Iambulus' work is "not unpleasing" (οὐκ ἀτερπῆ) (*Hist. Conscr.* 1.3), and he similarly describes his own work as "not inelegant" (οὐκ ἄμουσον) (*Hist. Conscr.* 1.2). Not only are the uses of *litotes* parallel, but also ἄμουσον and ἀτερπῆ; the root of the former is "Muses" (Μοῦσαι), while the latter shares a root with Terpsichore (Τερψιχόρη), Muse of dance. By making such connections between Iambulus' work and his own, Lucian probably implies that he regards Iambulus as his peer as a novelist, rather than a historian, because he recognizes that Iambulus deals with the same kind of subject matter that he is going to write about in *VH*, i.e. the travel narrative.⁶⁴ Therefore, while he is more tolerant toward Iambulus, he also secretly banishes Iambulus from the circle of historians.

Next Lucian mentions without name "many others" who write about wandering, going away from home, wild animals, savage human behavior and novel lifestyles (*VH* 1.3). Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) suggest that he might be referring to Herodotus, who "travelled widely and described giant insects, cannibalistic peoples, and strange customs". I do not agree totally with this assertion, as these are common subjects of logographers and historians before (and even after) Thucydides, but it is possible that Lucian was thinking about Herodotus as the prototype of these historians. Lucian's attitude towards Herodotus is very ambiguous. In *VH* 2.31, Herodotus is placed on the Isle of the Wicked with Ctesias, so we might deduce that Lucian is hostile to Herodotus⁶⁵, who is also described as among "those who told lies while in life and those who had written what was not true" (*VH* 2.32). But in *Hist. Conscr.* 54, when talking about

⁶⁴ For a summary of Iambulus' travel narrative, cf. Diodorus 2.55-60.

⁶⁵ Moles (1993) argues that Herodotus aligns himself with Homer and his work with Homeric epic. Both talk about war between two great peoples. There are elements similar to Homeric epic in Herodotus' work: the size of the work, language, vocabulary, and so on. For a detailed analysis, cf. Moles, 1993. He also argues that Herodotus plays within the oral tradition, where, performance is more prevailing than preservation of truth. I agree with these arguments, and they support Lucianic view about Herodotus: he is the father of liar, he claims to have seen many things which, indeed, he never sees. This practice of modelling epic in historiography unavoidably undercuts truthfulness in his work – encomia and exaggeration intrude historical facts.

the right way of writing a preface to an historical work, he regards Herodotus as one of the “best historians” (οἱ ἄριστοι), and views his preface as a model for historians. While Herodotus does write about incredible things, constrained by his limited access to facts and the difficulty in filtering the multifarious information that has been presented to him, he strives to preserve whatever he thinks is true, using varied techniques of inquiry. Thus, Lucian’s ambivalent attitude is not unreasonable.

The third principle of historiography suggested by Lucian involves the target readership⁶⁶—while writing history, instead of hoping to gain the immediate applause of contemporary people, a historian should primarily direct his efforts toward the future audience. In *VH* 1.4, Lucian grants himself the freedom of myth telling (τῆς ἐν τῷ μυθολογεῖν ἐλευθερίας), and chooses to lie, as he wants to hand something down to posterity (τοῖς μεθ’ ἡμᾶς). His concern about posterity is conspicuous in the *Hist. Conscr.*, where he argues that, in order to preserve objectivity, a historian should not have in mind the present audience, but those who will meet his work hereafter (40); and at the end of the work (61-63) he again warns historians that they should place their eyes on eternity and posterity instead of present honor.⁶⁷ As mentioned above, in *Hist. Conscr.* 39 Lucian criticizes Ctesias without mentioning his name, claiming that he yields to the power of Artaxerxes, both fearing the king and hoping to receive rewards from the king, and thereby loses his objectivity and allows adulation into his work. Flattery prevents historians

⁶⁶ Tamiolaki (2016) notes that before Hellenistic period, historians normally did not specify their target readers, one could only deduce from their works who they address, masses or elites in general, or specific groups of people. After Hellenistic period, however, historians started to specify their target readers in their works, and Polybius even goes as far as dividing his target readers into three groups. So (I argue) at Lucian’s time, it is not a radical practice to specify his audience and to have expectation about the literacy of his audience, or we should even say, it is the literacy of his audience that allows Lucian to play with the shared literary code.

⁶⁷ For other passages concerning posterity cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 5, 9, 13, 42, 61-3. Tamiolaki also notes that the concern for posterity appears at the beginning and the end of the treatise, which forms a ring, and it alerts the readers to the importance of the idea of posterity.

from telling truth. If they have present audiences—either common people or those in power—in mind while writing history, they inevitably tend to say what the target audiences want to hear, sometimes at the expense of truth. Frankness can be risky, as Asirvatham notes, because “the person who speaks frankly must tell the truth without alienating or angering his audience.”⁶⁸ The natures of frankness and flattery are different: frankness cares about what is good for the society as a whole, while flattery, on the other hand, serves the historian’s personal interests.

It is a standard trope of ancient discussions of historiography that historians should have posterity in their minds while writing history⁶⁹, and that they should communicate truth, no matter how risky that choice might be. As a metaphor, in *Hist. Conscr.* 62, Lucian tells the story of a Cnidian architect who, knowing that the king’s name will fall out soon and his own name will be revealed, inscribed his own name on the masonry inside, while inscribing the name of the reigning king outside. This idea, invoking the impermanence of power, calls to mind the couplet that the character Homer writes in *VH* 2.28, in which for the first and only time the name “Lucian” is mentioned in the text. It is carved on a beryl slab and set up near the harbor, preserving Lucian’s name, but not Homer’s. The author may thus be implying that he is more concerned about the preservation of his name for future readers than praise in the present time, and that he cares more about the good of the state than his own interests. Unlike some historians, whom he criticizes for writing about future events which they never see, he “aspires to the future”.⁷⁰ Lucian implies that, in order to avoid flattery and preserve truthfulness, one should not

⁶⁸ Asirvatham, 2017.

⁶⁹ Branham (1984) argues that Lucian writes with the immediate aim of entertaining an audience of second-century traditionalists, and he speaks to contemporary concerns. I think that there is an ambiguity created by Lucian in his preface. He claims that he intends to leave something for posterity, however, he also claims that whatever he says in *VH* is not true. One might expect that he is frank in his preface, but as discussed before, his preface is also problematic. Even the authorial *persona*, however seemingly sincere it looks, cannot be taken as completely true. Also, the preface is the guideline for writing lies, and *VH* is written as a wrong example of history. If history should be written for future readers, then *VH*, on the contrary, should be written for current readers.

⁷⁰ Tamiolaki, 2016,

pay too much attention to the present time and rather should have future audiences in mind while writing history.

Who, then, does Lucian regard as the model for historians? Given the principles of historiography presented above, which are suggested by both *VH* and *Hist. Conscr.*—to avoid poetic language and myth telling, to write history after inquiry and investigation, and to write history with a view to posterity instead of present applause—Lucian’s readers of more serious works may quite naturally have thought of Thucydides.⁷¹ In Book 1 of his history of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides⁷² refers to similar rules:

Still, from the evidence that has been given, any one would not err who should hold the view that the state of affairs in antiquity was pretty nearly such as I have described it, not giving greater credence to the accounts, on the one hand, which the poets have put into song, adorning and amplifying their theme, and, on the other, which the chroniclers have composed with a view rather of pleasing the ear than of telling the truth, since their stories cannot be tested and most of them have from lapse of time won their way into the region of the fabulous so as to be incredible.

(Th. 1.21)⁷³

⁷¹ Apart from the ideological similarities regarding historiography between Lucian and Thucydides, one can also look for similarities in language and style. Bartley (2003) provided an analysis of the influence of Thucydidean style on the language of the battle between Moonites and Sunites and the peace which followed at *VH* 1.13-21, and of the battle between Lucian’s crew and other inhabitants in the belly of the whale at *VH* 1.40-42. He also touched on possible Thucydidean influence on the language of the battle of the giants rowing the islands (1.40-42), but not in so much detail, because Stengel (1911) had already examined it closely. The commentary by Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) also listed in detail all possible places where Thucydides is implied. Robinson (1979) further notes that “the comedy of the Thucydidean references does not lie in the multiplication and exaggeration of elements, but in the straightforward application of the historian’s techniques to a totally absurd topic”. I do not totally agree with this notion. Although the contrast between the serious historic language and the absurd topic does create humor, it also reflects Lucian’s positive attitude towards Thucydides. By applying his techniques, Lucian shows his approval of these techniques, as *VH* is a parodic example of how history should be written. But few comparisons between the preface of *VH* and Thucydidean principles of historiography have been made.

⁷² Larmour and Georgiadou (1994) argue that Lucian adopts his ideas about historiography from Polybius, who is never mentioned in *Hist. Conscr.*.

⁷³ Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Thucydides come from the Loeb Classical Library, translated by C. F. Smith.

Poets and poetry are not credible, and those chronicles that are composed to please the ear are not believable, because history is about *truth* that can be tested. Thus, he implies that true things are often not pleasing, especially not pleasing to a contemporary audience. Thucydides also talks about his method of inquiry:

But as to the facts of the occurrences of the war, I have thought it my duty to give them, not as ascertained from any chance informant nor as seemed to me probable, but only after investigating with the greatest possible accuracy each detail, in the case both of the events in which I myself participated and of those regarding which I got my information from others. (Th. 1.22)

He emphasizes how he pursues the accuracy of each detail by his own investigation, and checks carefully the information he hears from others. Lucian's assertion that he conveys falsehood is exactly the opposite of Thucydides' claim: "I am writing about things which I have never seen, which had never happened to me, and which I have never learned from others." (VH 1.4)

Thucydides also clearly states his concern about posterity:

And it may well be that the absence of the fabulous ($\mu\upsilon\theta\tilde{\omega}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$) from my narrative will seem less pleasing to the ear; but whoever shall wish to have a clear view both of the events which have happened and of those which will someday, in all human probability, happen again in the same or a similar way—for these to adjudge my history profitable will be enough for me. And, indeed, it has been composed, not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time. (Th. 1.22)

Thucydides here uses the Greek word " $\mu\upsilon\theta\tilde{\omega}\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ " to indicate what is "fabulous", events recorded without proper evidence and based merely on what is said. The same word is used by Lucian in

the preface of *VH*,⁷⁴ when he blames poets, historians and philosophers of old for telling lies; it also appears in *Hist. Conscr.*,⁷⁵ which indicates that this is one of the primary conceptual terms for ancient Greek discourses on the process of writing history. The word “μυθῶδες” bears the same connotation in Lucian’s preface and in Thucydides, referring to that which is pleasing to the ears and popular among readers, yet should be avoided in historiography, because history is about truth, not pleasure, and historians should not aim at merely catering to the present audience. Unlike μυθῶδες, which is pleasing to the ear, his work is less pleasing to the ear⁷⁶. But whoever wishes to have a clear view of past and future events, i.e. whoever considers himself a reader of serious works, is the target reader of Thucydides⁷⁷. His work is not written to win prizes in the present, but as a possession for all (future) time⁷⁸. Each of these individual principles correlates with Lucian’s principles of historiography. They also echo Lucian’s assertion that his *VH*. is a relaxation for readers (1.1), thus, a pleasing work. As has been

⁷⁴ cf. *VH* 1.2: ...ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων ἕκαστον οὐκ ἀκωμωδῆτως ἤνικται πρὸς τινὰς τῶν παλαιῶν ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ φιλοσόφων πολλὰ τεράστια καὶ μυθῶδη συγγεγραφότων... but because each thing from what are told hints at some of the ancient poets, historians and philosophers not uncomically, who have written about many monstrous and fabulous things.

⁷⁵ cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 10, 41, 42. In all these instances, Lucian refers to ungrounded and fictional things. In 60, he also uses “μῦθος” once, indicating a similar idea.

⁷⁶ Mole (1993) notes that Thucydides’ work is for literary readers instead of public performance. His rejection of vulgar pleasure is one proof. Woodman (1998) argues that historiography was seen as a form of rhetoric in the Classical world, and that truth existed merely “in a factual core”, and it depended on how historians wanted to shape their works, or to what extent they wanted to preserve the truth.

⁷⁷ cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 13: “εἰ δὲ τις πάντως τὸ τερπνὸν ἡγείται καταμεμῖχθαι δεῖν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πάσῃ, ἄλλα ἂ σὺν ἀληθείᾳ τερπνὰ ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις κάλλεσι τοῦ λόγου, ὧν ἀμελήσαντες οἱ πολλοὶ τὰ μηδὲν προσήκοντα ἐπεισκυκλοῦσιν. If anyone entirely believes that *pleasure* needs to be mixed with all history, yet there is pleasure that is combined with truth in other refinements of words/speech (λόγου), which many people are neglectful of, and they pile up things that are not at hand.” A reader of serious works is not a reader looking for pleasure in these works, and a serious historian should not attract his serious readers with pleasure – there are other forms of literature for them, but not history, because the goal of history is not pleasure.

⁷⁸ cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 13: ...οὓς μισεῖσθαι καλῶς εἶχεν, ἐς μὲν τὸ παρὸν κόλακας προδήλους καὶ ἀτέχνους ὄντας, ἐς τοῦπιὸν δὲ ὑποπτον ταῖς ὑπερβολαῖς τὴν ὅλην πραγματείαν ἀποφαίνοντας. ...whom (the historians) one was able to hate well, for they are blatant flatterers and are unskillful at their own time, and they make the future people suspect the entire thing with their exaggerations.” Thucydides has his focus on the future, and regards his work as the possession of all (future) time, while here Lucian is also concerned with future readers, fearing that exaggerations will be discovered by them and despised by them.

discussed above, Lucian's preface is a guideline to writing lies, so being pleasing is not a proper practice for historians—truth is less pleasing because of the absence of the fabulous. That is why *VH*, the “comic sequel” of *Hist. Conscr.*, is full of fabulous events. As an example of the practice of the precepts presented in *Hist. Conscr.* to write a wrong kind of history, *VH* pushes the boundary of truth and falsehood to an extreme by writing blatantly incredible events while adopting the principles of preserving true history: *VH* is a literary discussion of truth and falsehood.

In *Hist. Conscr.*, many historians that Lucian criticizes are unsuccessful emulators of Thucydides⁷⁹, which speaks to the fact that the historiographic method of Thucydides in Lucian's time was generally regarded as a model for historians. Indeed, Lucian's positive attitude toward Thucydides is obvious in *Hist. Conscr.*. Lucian agrees with both Thucydidean language and style and his precepts about historical writing. He also asserts that Thucydides is the model for historians and “laid down this law” (*Hist. Conscr.* 42) for future historians. Lucian even directly summarizes Thucydidean precepts⁸⁰:

Thucydides laid down this law very well and distinguished virtue (ἀρετήν) and vice (κακίαν) in (historical) composition... For he says that he writes out a possession more than for a present prize, and that he does not welcome myths (μυθῶδες) but is leaving behind the truth (ἀλήθειαν) of what have happened to posterity. And he brings in the principle of usefulness (χρήσιμον) and finally the question of what one would well think as supporting history, that if ever again one should be in a similar situation, they may be able, he says, by looking at those

⁷⁹ cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 2, 15, 19, 26.

⁸⁰ cf. Thucydides 1.22.4.

events which have been written down as models, to deal well with things at hand. (*Hist. Conscr.* 42)⁸¹

This correlates well with the Thucydidean paragraphs cited above⁸², and Lucian considers them to be laws for historiography, which is of the utmost importance to him.⁸³ Most of the virtues that Lucian refers to are about truth-preserving, which serves his topic well. Why should truth be preserved, or why does Lucian care about truth so much? He quotes Thucydides⁸⁴ and tell us his main concern: from past experience we learn lessons about how to deal with issues that confront us at present—not only us, but also future readers will gain knowledge about history and know how they should correctly handle the situation confronting them. History is not solely about preserving truth, but about persuasion and about the moral that is deduced from it. Preserving truth, however, is one of the most important aspects of historiography: it is the truth that happened to previous people that arouses most empathy, and reminds readers that relevant issues cannot be ignored or maltreated, and thus truth is persuasive. The fact that both *VH* and *Hist. Conscr.* echoes Thucydides demonstrates that *VH* and *Hist. Conscr.* are closely connected.

In sum, the preface of *VH* draws extensively from the *Hist. Conscr.* as its primary intertext, since the narrative of *VH* intends to serve as a practical approach to the precepts of *Hist. Conscr.*, and the preface of *VH* lays out the authorial concerns about historiography. They both deploy the same authorial *persona*, which stands in contrast to the subsequent narrative of

⁸¹ Ὁ δ' οὖν Θουκυδίδης εὖ μάλα τοῦτ' ἐνομοθέτησεν καὶ διέκρινεν ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν συγγραφικὴν, ὁρῶν μάλιστα θαυμαζόμενον τὸν Ἡρόδοτον ἄχρι τοῦ καὶ Μούσας κληθῆναι αὐτοῦ τὰ βιβλία. κτήμ' αὖτε γὰρ φησι μᾶλλον ἐς αἰὲν συγγράφειν ἢ περὶ ἐς τὸ παρὸν ἀγώνισμα, καὶ μὴ τὸ μυθῶδες ἀσπάζεσθαι ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν γεγενημένων ἀπολείπειν τοῖς ὕστερον. καὶ ἐπάγει τὸ χρήσιμον καὶ ὃ τέλος ἂν τις εὖ φρονῶν ὑπόθοιτο ἱστορίας, ὡς εἴ ποτε καὶ αὐθις τὰ ὅμοια καταλάβοι, ἔχοιεν, φησι, πρὸς τὰ προγεγραμμένα ἀποβλέποντες εὖ χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἐν ποσὶ.

⁸² For other places concerning Lucian's attitude toward the Thucydidean ideology of historiography, cf. *Hist. Conscr.* 5, 39, 54, 57.

⁸³ Bartley (2003) has a short chapter examining Lucian's opinions on Thucydides in *Hist. Conscr.*.

⁸⁴ For a detailed comparison cf. Tamiolaki, 2016 pp.302-303. She notes that the word *χρήσιμον* is introduced by Lucian and does not appear in Thucydides, and instead of using the word *ὠφέλιμα*, he uses *χρήσιμον*. She argues that Lucian adapts Thucydides to emphasize that historians should focus on future.

the *VH*. They interrogate the same truth-preserving principles concerning the writing of historical narrative, they criticize the same kinds of historians and liars, and propose the same requirements for readers. There are also some common similes adopted by both works. While the preface of *VH* echoes Thucydidean precepts without mentioning him, *Hist. Conscr.* explicitly brings Thucydides up as model for historians. One of the purposes of *VH* is to present a wrong kind of history so as to show how important it is to preserve history as it is. The topic of truth and falsehood is certainly an important motif in Lucianic corpus. By presenting and repeating the same motif with different genres and from different aspects, Lucian emphasizes the persuasive power of truth, and criticizes lies in historiography. As has been argued in the introduction, Lucian bears a strong stamp of the Second Sophistic. As an author writing in the arena, his self-variation reflects the education and training that he receives in the *paideia* of the second century Greek East.

Chapter 2: Lucian's Adaption of Aristophanic plays in *True Histories*

The Second Sophistic writers consciously adapt the Archaic and Classical Greek authors in their own writings with more emulation than the less adulatory reworkings of the Hellenistic authors, in order to recall what they assert as the climax of Greek literary culture of the fifth to fourth century BC, under the Roman empire where Latin literature prevails. Aristophanes, the most popular and influential author of Old Comedy, is also in the corpus of writers that are referenced or alluded to in this period. He appears many times in the Lucianic corpus, either directly or indirectly. This chapter will focus on the references or allusions to Aristophanes' work in *True Histories* (*Verae Historiae*, subsequently referred to as *VH.*). This chapter is divided into two parts: first, it will talk about the brief history of the reception of Aristophanes and Old Comedy from the Classical Period to the Roman Imperial Period, and particularly the reception of Aristophanes in the Imperial Period; then it will focus on analysis of the intertextuality between *VH.* and Aristophanic plays. By examining the intertextuality between *VH.* and Aristophanes' works, especially *Birds*, *Peace* and *Clouds*, I intend to find out how the references to Aristophanes help to create the comicality of *VH.*, and more importantly, what purpose Lucian intends to achieve through the references to Aristophanes and other classical authors.

In the Roman Imperial Period, Old Comedy, especially the plays of the most popular three authors – Aristophanes, Eupolis and Cratinus – were widely read. Their works were part of the school curriculum. *Pepaideumenoí* of this time all knew Old Comedy, and knew Aristophanes as the major figure in this genre. Aristophanes had become “a kind of subtle

canonical” author, and his work served as a common “shared code” for this period.⁸⁵ That is to say, whoever wanted to use Old Comedy as an intertextual reference could not ignore the works of Aristophanes.

Old Comedy was read as an exemplar and model of the classical Greek language. There was a consensus among Greek authors that they should write in Attic Greek of the 5th-4th centuries BCE,⁸⁶ and Old Comedy was viewed as helpful in preparing orators,⁸⁷ because of its uncontaminated and authentic vocabulary and syntax. But Old Comedy, in spite of its role as a language model, no longer had any political function. What’s more, it has been deprived of its satirical intention. Its texts were the legacy of a past era and a very different political system, and they were therefore deemed as distant from the Imperial period, both in a chronological and cultural sense. Attic Old Comedy did not conform to the proper manner of contemporary comedy.⁸⁸ Old Comedy, as Rosen notes, was no longer appreciated on its own terms, “as a genre of satire in continual tension with a need to generate laughter and a pretense of seriousness and moral efficacy,”⁸⁹ rather, it was read as mere mockery. By saying “read”, it is also implied that Old Comedy was no longer frequently seen in the theater. It was largely read as texts instead of being performed on stage.⁹⁰ Apart from being read at school, Old Comedy was also recited, sung and discussed at symposia, followed by intellectual discussion.

Much of the original meaning and the political function of Old Comedy was lost or abandoned, largely because of concerns for propriety. This concern had been expressed by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

⁸⁵ Brusuelas, 2008.

⁸⁶ Bowie 2007

⁸⁷ Rosen, 2016

⁸⁸ Rosen, 2016.

⁸⁹ Rosen, 2016.

⁹⁰ Ruffell (2014) argues that no convincing argument indicates that it was ever performed in Rome.

ἔστι γάρ τινα πρέποντα τῷ τοιούτῳ λέγειν ἐν παιδιᾷς μέρει καὶ ἀκούειν, καὶ ἢ τοῦ ἐλευθερίου παιδιὰ διαφέρει τῆς τοῦ ἀνδραποδώδους, καὶ πεπαιδευμένου καὶ ἀπαιδευτοῦ. ἴδιοι δ' ἂν τις καὶ ἐκ τῶν κωμωδιῶν τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ τῶν καινῶν· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἦν γελοῖον ἢ αἰσχρολογία, τοῖς δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπόνοια· διαφέρει δ' οὐ μικρὸν ταῦτα πρὸς εὐσχημοσύνην. (Nic.Eth. 1128a)

For there are some proper things for such kind of men to say and to hear in jest, and the jest of free men differs from that of slavish men, and the jest of the educated differs from that of the uneducated. One might see it from old comedies and new ones. For the former obscenity was the (source of) humor, for the latter it was innuendo; these differ not a little regarding refinement.

There is a dichotomy between Old and New Comedy in Aristotle's view. The Old Comedy is for the slavish (ἀνδραποδώδους) and uneducated (ἀπαιδευτοῦ) men, and the source of laughter is obscenity (ἢ αἰσχρολογία), while New Comedy is associated with educated (πεπαιδευμένου) and free (ἐλευθερίου) people, and the source of laughter is innuendo (ἢ ὑπόνοια). He views comedy as a form of *mimesis*, whose main function is education. He argues that through *mimesis* people understand the world, because it imitates the world.⁹¹ Old Comedy mimics a less proper and lower aspect of the world, and thus is not acceptable. His view of comedy is influential, transforming most future understanding and interpretation of Old Comedy.⁹² This view had already been held by Plato and was subsequently followed by Plutarch.⁹³ Thus, in the Imperial period, audience generally did not recognize Old Comedy for what it had

⁹¹ Brusuelas, 2008.

⁹² Rosen, 2016.

⁹³ Brusuelas (2008) discusses the history of the reception of Aristophanes and Old Comedy, which could be traced back to Plato, who banned mimetic poetry from his *Republic* because imitative art is only a poor reflection of primordial forms, and no truth could be conveyed through it. The envy and resentment conveyed by comedy is not

been in the 5th to 4th centuries BC. Their conception and interpretation of Old Comedy was straightforward, as they were not as sensitive to the literary subtleties which are associated with Old Comedy – as Rosen (2016) argues, they did not try to understand Old Comedy as it is, that is, “as a genre of satire in continual tension with a need to generate laughter and a pretense of seriousness and moral efficacy.”⁹⁴ The sense of irony, paradox or absurdity was no longer generally appreciated, and most critics were content with appreciation of the pure, authentic Attic language and took it as straightforward mockery.⁹⁵

However, Lucian’s approach to Aristophanes and Old Comedy is unique in his time. He certainly recognizes his debt to ancient writers, as in his dialogue titled the *Fisherman*, where the autobiographical protagonist, when faced with Plato and other philosophers who come to him and complain to him for having been ridiculed in *Philosophies for Sale*, said:

αὐτὰ γοῦν ἃ φημι ταῦτα, πόθεν ἄλλοθεν ἢ παρ’ ὑμῶν λαβῶν καὶ κατὰ τὴν μέλιτταν ἀπανθισάμενος ἐπιδείκνυμαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; οἱ δὲ ἐπαινοῦσι καὶ γνωρίζουσιν ἕκαστον τὸ ἄνθος ὅθεν καὶ παρ’ ὅτου καὶ ὅπως ἀνελεξάμην, καὶ λόγῳ μὲν ἐμὲ ζηλοῦσι τῆς ἀνθολογίας, τὸ δ’ ἀληθὲς ὑμᾶς καὶ τὸν λειμῶνα τὸν ὑμέτερον. (Pisc. 6)

These very things which I say, where else than from you did I get them? After plucking them off the flower like the bee, I show them to men. They praise each flower and recognize from where and from whom and how I gathered them. And in their words they envy me for the flower-picking, but truly they envy you and your meadow.

compatible with the proper society suggested by Plato. However, it is also noted that Plato did not eradicate the elements of comedy – his Socrates utilizes irony as his main philosophical method. Plutarch, heavily influenced by the dichotomy of propriety and impropriety, educated and uneducated, slavish and free men, defines Aristophanes as coarse and vulgar in his treatise *Comparatio Aristophanis et Menandri*. His view is largely a continuation of Aristotle’s discussion of Aristophanes, and he sees only insulting and inappropriate jokes in Aristophanes.

⁹⁴ Rosen, 2016.

⁹⁵ Brusuelas, 2008.

Lucian refers to himself as a bee, a honey collector, who gathers and shows the ancient texts to his audience. But he certainly goes beyond purely gathering and showing materials. He is unique in his time because he views comedy on its own terms, trying to convey its sense and recreate it in his prose writing, and he is capable of employing the strategies that make Old Comedy powerful and dynamic.⁹⁶ As an admirer of Old Comedy, he takes action to do what the poets of Old Comedy did, and he searches for voices and forms that can be used in his own time⁹⁷. He not only recalls but also renews the Greek tradition, thereby constructing a new Greek identity. He is the recreator of Old Comedy, “in that he has adapted, if not reinvented, its creative and self-conscious poetics within the comic dialogue.”⁹⁸ As will be discussed below, he indeed created some sort of metacomedy in a form of prose.

We see many references of Lucian to Aristophanes in particular, though he also referenced and adapted the other two major Old Comic poets, but insofar as the works of Cratinus and Eupolis are lost, with only fragments and titles preserved, Aristophanes is the author we can most easily identify. A list is given by Householder:⁹⁹

Philopatris: Nu. 86, 833-4; Av. 693-4; Ra. 815, 1016, 1041
A Literary Prometheus: Nu.
The Fisherman: Ach. 280-300
The Runaways: Ra. 87, 107, 115; *Triphales*.
The Illiterate Book Collector: works
The Double Indictment: Nu. 225
Icaromenippus: Nu. 225; Pax 127-30; Ar. Frg. 401
Zeus on Trial: Nu. 398-402
Imagines: Ach. 530-31
Demosthenes Enc: Ach. 530-31
Mennisus: Av. 994
True History: *Birds*
Charon: Ra. 87, 107, 115
Kataplus: Ra. 87,107,115

⁹⁶ Rosen, 2016.

⁹⁷ Brusuelas, 2008.

⁹⁸ Brusuelas, 2008.

⁹⁹ Householder, 1941. This one is from Brusuelas (2008:15), who reorganized the form of Householder.

Amores: Ar. Frg. 401

It is obvious how important Aristophanes is in the Lucianic corpus. But this is certainly not an exhaustive catalog; as I will show below, the allusions to and adaption of Aristophanes go far beyond *Birds* in *VH.* Householder only chooses the works that are directly indicated to be from Aristophanes, but actually Lucian also referenced Aristophanes indirectly, sometimes by adapting his ideas, sometimes by adapting his writing technique, sometimes even his style.

The references to Aristophanes are obvious in *True Histories*, both directly and indirectly. Householder's catalog points to *VH.1.29*, where the narrator talks about Aristophanes, claiming to go past *Cloudcuckooland*:

ἔνθα δὴ καὶ τὴν Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν πόλιν ἰδόντες ἐθαυμάσαμεν, οὐ μέντοι ἐπέβημεν αὐτῆς· οὐ γὰρ εἶα τὸ πνεῦμα. βασιλεύειν μέντοι αὐτῶν ἐλέγετο Κόρωνος ὁ Κοττυφίωνος. καὶ ἐγὼ ἐμνήσθην Ἀριστοφάνους τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ καὶ ἀληθοῦς καὶ μάτην ἐφ' οἷς ἔγραψεν ἀπιστουμένου. (*VH 1.29*)

Indeed there, seeing the city of *Cloudcuckooland*, we wondered at it, but did not go there; for the wind did not allow. However, Coronos son of Cottyphion was said to be king of them. And I remembered *Aristophanes* the poet, the wise and truthful man, being distrusted without reason about which things he wrote.

Lucian praises Aristophanes as wise and truthful (σοφοῦ καὶ ἀληθοῦς). But considering his confession in the preface that everything he says in the story is not true, one might want to add a not before each of these adjectives. The irony here is that, while historians are thought to talk about incredible things in the preface, Lucian gives credit for truthfulness to Aristophanes:

...ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων ἕκαστον οὐκ ἀκωμωδῆτως ἦνικται πρὸς τινὰς τῶν παλαιῶν ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ φιλοσόφων πολλὰ τεράστια καὶ μυθώδη

συγγεγραφότων, οὐς καὶ ὄνομαστί ἀνέγραφον, εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῶ σοι ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως φανεῖσθαι ἔμελλον... (VH. 1.2)

...but also because each of the reports riddlingly allude in a not *uncomic* way to some of the old poets¹⁰⁰, historians, and philosophers, who have written many monstrous and mythical things, whom I would write by names, unless they were going to be evident to you yourself from recognition...

It is to be noted that Lucian uses the phrase οὐκ ἀκωμωδήτως (not uncomic) to define this work of his. Clearly, he is drawing attention to the close relationship between *VH* and comedy. Which author, then, is he referring to? Readers subsequently encounter several passages alluding to Aristophanes,¹⁰¹ but they can never be entirely sure until they come to this point at 1.29 where he specifically points to Aristophanes by name. During this process of trying to figure out which comedian Lucian refers to, readers indeed participate in the game of recognition as invited by the authorial Lucian in the beginning, where he emphasizes the references to and intertextuality with other texts and authors. As has been discussed before, this is one of the core features of Second Sophistic literature, helping Greek authors and readers to cooperatively construct their social and literary status. Moreover, the invitation also dramatizes the role of the author's name.¹⁰² By praising the wisdom and truthfulness of Aristophanes, Lucian also constructs his work as in alignment with the genre of Old Comedy,¹⁰³ which played the game of recognizing names due to its political function. Old Comedy frequently mocks the deeds of contemporary political figures without them being specifically identified by the author, and the ironic humor and political

¹⁰⁰ It has been argued earlier in my thesis that Lucian thinks that poets have the license of telling myths and lies, and though he blames Homer as the guide to lying, he places Homer in the Island of the Blessed, while in *VH*. 2.31 Herodotus and Ctesias are placed on the Island of Wicked.

¹⁰¹ Will be discussed later.

¹⁰² Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014.

¹⁰³ Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014.

criticism are achieved by the participation of the audience who recognize those figures (this lack of names is also the most challenging part for modern scholars). Just like Old Comedy, Lucian's intertextuality and irony are achieved through the participation of readers who recognize the authors that he alludes to or satirizes. The appearance of Aristophanes' name verifies and emphasizes this Old Comic pattern.

Another unusual thing about the description of Clouducukooland is that the reference is not precise. In Aristophanes' *Birds*, the king of Clouducukooland is Tereus, not Coronos (Κόρωνος); according to Greek mythology, Tereus' father is Ares, not Cottyphon (Κοττυφίωνος). One might argue that Lucian frequently makes imprecise quotations, due to the large corpus that he is playing with, and that here is another example of the imprecision. I do not agree with this argument, because unlike the case of a direct quotation, whose precision requires that the author memorize every single word correctly, here it is only an allusion to *Birds*. It is unlikely that Lucian would make a mistake about the name of a major figure in *Birds*, considering the large number of references to Aristophanes in the Lucianic corpus and his familiarity with Aristophanes. It is more likely to have been done on purpose. Bowie (2007) argues that the name Coronos is from *Iliad* 2.746, and Cottyphon is good Attic spelling, different from the koine spelling Cossyphon, so through these two names, Lucian is claiming himself to be as wise as Aristophanes as he remembers trivial figures in the Homeric epic¹⁰⁴ and writes in Attic Greek. I find this explanation farfetched because, according to the *Iliad*, Coronos' father is Caeneus instead of Cossyphon. If he had wished to show off his education in this episode, he would not have made a mistake here. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) note that the

¹⁰⁴ If Lucian truly takes this name of such a trivial figure in Homer from the *Iliad*, it is even less likely that he cannot remember the name of the king in *Birds*.

name Κόρωνος might refer to the crow (κορώνη) in *Birds* 5, while Κοττυφίωνος is etymologically from κόττυφος, black bird, which appears in a different form (κόψιχος¹⁰⁵) in *Birds* 305, 806, 1081. Therefore, it seems that, as with the many other places where Lucian randomly assigns names to people¹⁰⁶, here he assigns random birdy names to the king of Cloudcuckooland and his father, and the reasonlessness is the source of laughter. Also, this unexpected random assignment of name creates a sense of absurdity, which becomes another source of laughter.

Moving away from this one instance of direct reference to Aristophanes, we also see many indirect ones. He refers to Aristophanes by adapting his ideas, writing techniques, and style. Indeed, the whole idea of the fantastic journey in the air and the visit to the islands of the dead could be from Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Frogs*. The former is about a fantastic journey to Olympus, where the protagonist Trygaeus meets the Olympian gods; the latter is about a trip to Hades, where Dionysus meets dead tragedians Euripides and Aeschylus. Both Lucian and Aristophanes like to play off of the audience's familiarity with mythological tradition and the Homeric idea of going to the underworld to meet dead people. Although gods do not appear in *VH.*, in his dialogue *Icaromenippus*, which is agreed to have been written earlier than *VH.*¹⁰⁷, the protagonist Menippus reports to his friend his fantastic journey to the moon and then to the gods' dwelling in the sky and his conversation with Zeus, which echoes Trygaeus' trip. The general idea of aerial travelling in *VH.* is very reminiscent of Aristophanes' *Peace*. Meeting dead people, especially dead authors, is a prevalent idea in the Lucianic corpus. In *VH.* book 2, Lucian, after leaving the belly of a whale, comes to the Island of the Blessed and Wicked, and not only meets

¹⁰⁵ The dictionary says that it equals κόττυφος, but I suspect that they were different birds at Lucian's time.

¹⁰⁶ For example, Homer's name is Tigranes, which is groundless and random.

¹⁰⁷ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

but also has conversations with Homer as well as other authors or literary figures. In *the Fisherman*, which has been mentioned above, the philosophers who feel insulted in *Philosophies for Sale* come back from Hades and have a conversation with the Lucianic-autobiographical figure. This adaptation reveals the continuity of the Aristophanic tradition¹⁰⁸. Lucian, after taking in Aristophanes Eleven¹⁰⁹, which is not a big corpus, pieced together his own metacomedy in *VH.*, and used borrowed thematic ideas repeatedly. He adapts the Aristophanic comic ideas to his own genres, both dialogues and novels. He not only rejuvenates Old Comedy through his adaptations, but also recreates it.

In the preface of *VH.* Lucian claims the unusualness (τὸ ξένον) and the elegance (τὸ χαρίεν) of his work. It echoes the parabasis (518-62) of *Clouds*, where the poet speaks directly to his audience, defining his plays as always new (ἀεὶ καινὰς) and clever (δεξιτάς). They are both authorial and autobiographical voices from the authors: they are independent of the main story line and are expressed through authorial *personae* talking presumably about the “authors” themselves. In classical Greek society, self-revelation and self-sufficiency happen in strictly confined situations, and particularly self-sufficiency, as has been shown by Most (1989): first, it violates the boundary between human and god, and could bring “divine vengeance for human arrogance”¹¹⁰; second, because of the emulating culture of Greek society where people constantly contest against each other, disclosure of self-sufficiency could easily trigger the envy

¹⁰⁸ Branham 1989

¹⁰⁹ Brusuelas (2008) and other scholars argue that, in Lucian’s time, after the selection made by Hellenistic scholars and under the influence of the Aristotelean critique discussed before, we are only sure that these 11 extant works were available to them, but whether the other plays of Aristophanes were accessible is still not decided in the absence of conclusive evidence.

¹¹⁰ Most (1989) uses the Herodotean conversation between Solon and Croesus as an example: human beings can never be defined as happy before they die. While a biographer could wait for his subject to die and thus write a conclusion to that person’s life, one cannot wait until his death to write a conclusion of his own life.

and jealousy of others.¹¹¹ It seems that the only approved and proper self-disclosure is the lamentation of the author's misfortune. This parabasis of Aristophanes is thus very risky and novel¹¹², which of course attracts Lucian's attention. Romans accepted the idea of talking about themselves in the first century BC¹¹³, but Lucian's claim of novelty for his work was still rather striking, as Ni' Mheallaigh (2014) pointed out, because ancient writers tend to emphasize the "traditional nature of their subjects". His adaptation of the Aristophanic autobiographical voice is less dangerous in his own time and aligns him with the Old Comedy poet.

Sexual jokes are common in the tradition of Old Comedy and are "a defining feature of the comic-picaresque of the same period"¹¹⁴. It influences non-romantic fictions all the way down into the Imperial Period. It provides savor for not only the Latin novels of Petronius and Apuleius, but also Greek novels, especially Lucian's *VH.*. In 1.8, at the first stop of the journey, some comrades of Lucian have sex with vine-women and have their genitals stuck in the branches. In *VH.* 1.22, before departing the moon, the narrator reports that moon people give birth by exsecting the right testicle and planting it in the ground. In *VH.* 2.19, when introducing the situation on the Island of the Blessed, he makes sexual jokes about Socrates and beautiful, young men, and concludes that "καὶ οἱ παῖδες δὲ παρέχουσι τοῖς βουλομένοις οὐδὲν ἀντιλεγόντες [the young men offer (themselves) to those who want (them), without denying]". These jokes with direct or indirect sexual implications work well in *VH.*, which is, as the authorial *persona* claims in the preface, relaxation (ἀνέσεως, *VH.* 1.1). This influence is less an example of intertextuality, but rather a more general Lucianic inheritance of Aristophanic style.

¹¹¹ According to Plutarch, several types of self-praising are acceptable, including the defense of one's reputation, the compensation of previous misfortune, and the response to a wrong insult.

¹¹² Again Plutarch, who, as has been shown earlier, was not a fan of Old Comedy, thinks that the bitterness of comic invective could be avoided with self-satirizing. (*Mor.* 853a-4d)

¹¹³ Sidewell, 2014.

¹¹⁴ Smith, 2014.

Other examples show the direct borrowing of Aristophanic language or plot. In *VH.1.11-1.20*, Lucian and his comrades join the Moon people in a war with the Sun people. He provides a detailed list of the armies of both sides, which consist of hybrid human and animal soldiers, like *ἰπρόγυποι* (vulture-calvaries), *ψυλλοτοξόται* (flea-archers), and *κυνοβάλανοι* (dog-faced men on acorns). I will not list off all the types of soldiers here, but I will draw attention to the cloud-centaurs (*Νεφελοκένταυροι*, *VH.1.18*). They are the major players in the war between the Sun people and Moon people – the former defeat the latter with their help. In Aristophanes' *Clouds* 347-9:

γίγνονται πάνθ' ὅ τι βούλονται: κᾶτ' ἦν μὲν ἴδωσι κομήτην
ἄγριόν τινα τῶν λασίων τούτων, οἷόνπερ τὸν Ξενοφάντου,
σκώπτουσαι τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ *κενταύροις* ἤκασαν αὐτάς.

They (clouds) become all things, whatever they please. And then if they see a person with long hair, a wild one of these hairy fellows, like the son of Xenophantes, in derision of his folly they liken themselves to *centaurs*.¹¹⁵

It is obvious that the idea of cloud-centaurs (*Νεφελοκένταυροι*) comes from the centaurs (*κενταύροις*) made of clouds (*νεφέλαι*) of Aristophanes. It is even possible that Lucian, inspired by the cloud centaurs of Aristophanes, invented the two armies of hybrid human and animal soldiers. At the same time, Gerogiadou and Larmour (1998) argue that the idea of animals with human characteristics is inspired by the passage in the *Birds* where different birds use their innate physical features to build Cloudcuckooland's wall.

¹¹⁵ Translation from Perseus: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0019.tlg003.perseus-eng1:314-355>

The last example to be presented is in *VH.1.19*: after the Sun people win the war against the Moon people, they decide to blockade the sun in the middle of the air:

οἱ δὲ πολιορκεῖν μὲν οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὴν πόλιν, ἀναστρέψαντες δὲ τὸ μεταξύ τοῦ ἀέρος ἀπετείχιζον, ὅστε μηκέτι τὰς αὐγὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου πρὸς τὴν σελήνην διήκειν. (*VH.1.19*)

They (the Sun people) decided not to besiege the city, and after returning, they were building a wall in the middle of the air, so that the lights from the sun no longer reach the moon.

Any of Lucian's target readers who are also familiar with the Aristophanic corpus will immediately think of the blockade interrupting human sacrifice to the gods in *Birds* 550-2. Both are blockades in the air, and both are meant to cut off vital resources. The skill of Lucian's flexible adaptation is proved one more time.

In the Second Sophistic, when classical Greek culture was part of the *paideia* which defined the high status of people, any author who wanted to succeed with elite, educated readers had to play with the shared code of intertextual allusions to the educational corpus of classical Attic literature. Aristophanes was part of the *paideia*, but taken mostly as a model for the Attic dialect, while the content of his plays was not taken seriously. Lucian's approach to him was unique—he not only made repeated reference to Aristophanes, but also adapted him to his own time and genres, thus creating a kind of metacomedy of his own, which utilizes the writing techniques of the Old Comedy and bears its spirit, but is adapted as prose fiction in genre, in order to fit into Lucian's own style and the new taste of the Imperial world. His intertextual references are achieved by adapting Aristophanes' motifs, writing technique, and style. On one hand, through the adaption of Aristophanes and other writers, Lucian successfully ranks himself

among the classical authors, and marks himself as a member of the Second Sophistic, playing with shared code of *pepaideumenoí*; on the other hand, his ambition does not stop at the repetition to and simple reference to Aristophanes, it is the recreation and innovation of the new Lucianic comedy in a radically different genre. Through this adaption and recreation, Lucian not only revives, but also revises Aristophanic plays. His claim through the adaption of Aristophanes is clear: instead of simply going back to the fifth century BCE, Lucian creates a new classic of his own time.

Chapter 3:

Lucian's Adaption of the *Odyssey* in *True Histories*

Homer is the literary model for *True Histories*, in that its overall narrative is a parody of the *Odyssey*. The episode on the Island of the Blessed (2.5-36) is the centerpiece of the narrative; occupying over half of the second book; its length indicates its significance.¹¹⁶ As Lucian claims in the preface of *VH.*, Homer's Odysseus is the "guide and instructor of this kind of charlatanry" (ἀρχηγός... καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς τοιαύτης βωμολοχίας *VH.*1.3). Lucian, as a student of Homer in *True Histories*, follows the practice of this instructor.

As has been argued in chapter 1, Lucian does not blame Homer for telling lies, and here we find Homer on the Island of the Blessed with absolute prestige. During Lucian's stay on the island, he meets all the important philosophers, authors and heroes, and observes or involves himself in several episodes in which Homer has a role. This chapter will argue that, by adapting the Homeric epics, Lucian successfully blurs the boundary between truth and falsehood, further confirming that *VH.* is a "truth-serving"¹¹⁷ fiction. In this Homeric realm everything is stagnant and nothing can be altered; by shaping himself as the new Odysseus, however, Lucian shows his ambition to place himself in this canonical classical literary world which is not subject to penetration.

Lucian draws on both Homeric epics. Episodes on the island that are based on the *Iliad* include: the funeral games, the battle between the heroes and the prisoners on the Island of the Wicked, and the seduction of Helen. The seduction of Helen does not result in another Trojan War, but because of the participation of one of Lucian's crewmen, Lucian and his company have

¹¹⁶ Wilshire, 2015; Kim, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Swanson, 1976

to leave the island, and this leads to Lucian’s Odyssean voyage home. The narrative thus “tilt[s] back to the Odyssean side that had already framed the entire narrative”¹¹⁸, while Lucian becomes the new Odysseus. Before his departure, Rhadamanthus prophecies the future after his death (2.27-28), which is a parody of the prophecy of Circe¹¹⁹. In the following episodes, Lucian sails to the Isle of the Wicked and meets the prisoners, which echoes Odysseus’ visit to the spirits of the dead in the Nekuia of book 11; he goes to the Island of the Dreams and sees the gates of horn and ivory, which he recognizes as having been described by Homer (Od. 9), but he claims that Homer’s description is not very accurate.¹²⁰ Lucian also goes to Ogygia and visits Calypso, which will be discussed later in this chapter. All these episodes are directly connected to the *Odyssey*. There are many parallels to the *Odyssey* in *VH*. Book 1: the storm (1.6), the report of the narrator’s travel to a group of people (1.33), and so on. There are also references to the *Iliad*, such as the themes of war, the battle in the sky, and the catalogue of combatants, which is reminiscent of the catalogue of ships in the *Iliad* book 2.¹²¹ Furthermore, Homer is ubiquitous in the narrative—the narrator constantly makes reference to Homer’s account, and sometimes makes minor corrections to his descriptions, such as the shower of blood at the death of Sarpedon (1.17).

Lucian the narrator becomes the “new Odysseus”¹²², and the transformation is completed when he leaves the Island of the Blessed and starts his Odyssean voyage home. As Kim argues, Odysseus is not only the traveler, but also the (lying) narrator of his own journey, and this double

¹¹⁸ Zeitlin, 2001.

¹¹⁹ Zeitlin (2001) thinks that it is a parodic prophecy of Tiresias. I prefer the Circe explanation because in Homer it happens before Odysseus leaves the island of Circe, and in *VH*. when Lucian is about to leave the Island of the Blessed.

¹²⁰ πρῶτον δὲ βούλομαι περὶ τῆς πόλεως εἰπεῖν, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ γέγραπται περὶ αὐτῆς, ὃς δὲ καὶ μόνος ἐπεμνήσθη Ὅμηρος, οὐ πάνυ ἀκριβῶς συνέγραψεν. (*VH*.2.32-33)

¹²¹ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

¹²² Kim, 2010.

role is similarly assumed by Lucian. The ambiguity is that Lucian the narrator is not a liar in the narration, just as he himself confesses at the end the story that he never told a lie (2.31). This assertion is paradoxical: It does not correspond to the assertion in the preface that he is lying, but we should be reminded that in the preface it is the authorial Lucian speaking instead of the narrator Lucian. The assertion is true within the frame of the story. Thus, I do not agree entirely with Kim. At first glance Lucian might seem like Odysseus, both the traveler and the lying narrator of his journey, however, unlike Odysseus, Lucian the narrator does not tell lies in the frame of the story, it is Lucian the author who tells lies.¹²³

Before leaving the island, Lucian the narrator goes to Homer and asks him to write a couplet for himself:

Λουκιανὸς τάδε πάντα φίλος μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν

εἶδέ τε καὶ πάλιν ἦλθε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

Lucian, dear to blessed gods, saw all these things

and went back again to his dear fatherland. (VH.2.28)

As discussed in the first chapter, Lucian expressed his concern about posterity in the preface, which is a constant concern throughout his corpus. This concern is fulfilled here with the inscription left at the shore of the Island of the Blessed before his departure.¹²⁴ It is the first time that the name of the narrator is revealed, which is the same as that of the author. With his name preserved on the Island of the Blessed, the author not only inscribes himself into this island inhabited by canonical classical authors, but also ranks himself among these classical authors,

¹²³ Gildersleeve (1890) points out that Lucian's life must be reconstructed from his own writings. I think not only Lucian, but also most ancient writers, or even modern writers, are trying to reconstruct their lives from their own writings – a license granted more to ancient authors, since there were fewer means to preserve their life events and experience, and later readers could only reconstruct what an author is like from whatever the author himself wrote.

¹²⁴ Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014: 255.

especially Homer.¹²⁵ On the other hand, if we consider the name “Lucian” to be the name of the narrator, it is a gesture to weave the narrator into the Homeric world, and thus he depicts himself as a character in this Homeric world, specifically as the new Odysseus. It has been argued in the first chapter that the juxtaposition of Homer and his characters on the Island is parallel to the juxtaposition of Lucian the authorial *persona* in the preface and Lucian the narrating *persona* in the later narrative. This revelation of the name of Lucian is a confirmation and fulfillment of Lucian’s ambition.

The time and place where the stele is erected is also worth noting. On the day before his departure from the island, Lucian goes to Homer and begs him to compose this couplet for him, and he sets the inscription up near the harbor of the island. It is an epigram marking the narrator’s departure from the world of the dead, and the harbor is the boundary between the world of the dead and the world of the living, between departure and arrival¹²⁶, as well as the boundary of the Homeric classical canonical world. It has been argued in the first chapter that the island is a place where the boundary between character and authors is blurred, so it is also a perfect place for this inscription which blends the real and fictional Lucians.

At this point, let us look back at Lucian’s arrival on the island, where he encounters many ancient authors and heroes. It is a journey to the literary past for his readers, who are referred to as “τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας” in the preface (*VH.1.4*), “the reading ones”. Throughout the narrative,

¹²⁵ Furthermore, there are hints that his ambition does not even stop here. Ni’Mheallaigh (2014) argues that the material of the stele is to be noted: instead of wood or bronze, the inscription is carved on beryl, which is normally used at the temples of immortal gods. Thus Lucian might be hinting that he outdoes these mortal authors. I agree with her. When we consider the Second Sophistic as a whole, we find that the purpose of this movement is not simply nostalgia for the past, nor mere reconstruction of a second classical world, but it means to create a new classic in the imperial Greece.

Wilshere (2015: 17-19) argues that fake beryl was sometimes passed off as authentic in Lucian’s time, so the material is connected to deception.

¹²⁶ Wilshere, 2015: 22.

Lucian uses the double meaning of the verb “ἐντυγχάνω”, “I encounter” or “I read”, as Ni’ Mheallaigh notes¹²⁷, which indicates the nature of the travel, that is, a readerly encounter with the literary past, and confirms Lucian as a reader of Homer (when he departs, the readerly role is transformed to an authorial role, as has been argued above, and Lucian, as the new Homer, is going to write his own epic voyage home, with the Odyssean Lucian as his character). Going to the island is “the dream of a librarian¹²⁸”, and this direct encounter with the literary past is not an uncommon motif in the Second Sophistic.¹²⁹ On arrival, Lucian depicts the environment of the island: sweet and fragrant breezes, flowers, harbors, waves, transparent rivers, meadows, woods, songbirds, music and the sound of a dinner party. (*VH.2.5*) Readers may think of the Golden Age of Hesiod, Alcinous’s garden, or Calypso’s island – they are already included in the atmosphere of the classical world.

Then Lucian provides a long catalogue of heroes, mythical figures and authors, including Ajax, Socrates, Narcissus, Epicurus, Aesop, Homer, Odysseus, and so on, most of them continuing their practices just as when they were alive, except for Diogenes, who resorts to the opposite of his actions while alive. He also notes that “Plato alone is not there” (Πλάτων δὲ μόνος οὐ παρῆν, *VH.2,17*), as he lives in his own imaginary city¹³⁰. The inhabitants on the island are from different times, ranging from the mythical past to the Archaic and Classical periods. It is argued above that the inhabitants are a blend of real figures and fictional ones; here we see a further blend of figures from different times. This state of timelessness is also indicated by the description of the island in *VH.2.12-15*: islanders do not grow old, rather they stay the same ages

¹²⁷ Ni’Mheallaigh (2014:208).

¹²⁸ Bompaire (1958: 672)

¹²⁹ cf. Swain 1996: 79-87. Authors like Philostratus, Lucian and Dio of Prusa all show how educated elites look into the mirror of the past.

¹³⁰ Ni’Mheallaigh (2014: 242-243) argues that Plato’s absence is a reflection of his usual practice of not appearing in his dialogues, which is a continuation of his practice when he was alive.

as when they arrive; there is no night or day on the island, as it is always the time just before sunrise; there is only one season, spring; and there is the never-ending symposium with cups always filled with wine. This timelessness, as Kim argues, represents the stagnated, canonical world of the literary past¹³¹. Lucian, as a traveler, visits that past, just as a reader, every time he opens the book, has the canonical world presented to him in a frozen state, with the same things happening again and again. The characters stay the same whenever the texts are read, they do not grow old, nor do the plots develop. This timelessness is a reflection of the power of canonization.

The most thrilling moment for readers is the encounter of Lucian and Homer on the Isle of the Blessed, when Lucian interviews Homer and asks him several questions (2.20) : where does Homer come from, were the bracketed lines by ancient text editors written by him, why did he begin the *Iliad* with the wrath of Achilles, and did he write the *Odyssey* before the *Iliad*? The answers are all common sense instead of the fruits of scholarly research: all the words were written by Homer, the *Odyssey* was written before the *Iliad*, and there was no significance in starting the *Iliad* with the wrath of Achilles. All these questions were popular topics in the Imperial period. Lucian, by presenting the most banal answers, intends to show that such discussions were not crucial in understanding Homer's poetry, since they are about Homer's biography or the composition of his poetry, while the contents of the poems were skillfully avoided. Such questions have little or no effect on one's understanding of the poems.¹³² The same is true of the interest in the birth place of Homer. In Lucian's time, many places claimed to

¹³¹ Kim, 2010:161.

¹³² Kim, 2010

be the original birthplace of Homer in order to become the cultural capital.¹³³ Lucian's Homer says that he is from Babylon. One might think that Babylon is a totally nonsensical answer, that it is meant to be funny, and that it ridicules the whole scholarly endeavor which tries to figure out Homer's birthplace in vain. But it might be because Babylon is close to Syria, Lucian's place of origin. It is possible that Lucian is reflecting his own identity: Homer, as a Babylonian, just like Lucian himself, who is from Syria, and whose native language is probably Aramaic, but is successful at "being Greek"¹³⁴, and is trained to write perfect Attic Greek. Lucian's ambition of ranking himself with Homer is again indicated.

Homer also mentions his real name, Tigranes, which is clearly fake, just like his origin. Again, this name is nonsense, and it could be a parody of Hellenistic research trying to figure out the real origin of Homer. Furthermore, Ni'Mhealaigh (2014) argues that this name is Lucian's self-projection. The revelation of his real name shows that "Homer" was not necessarily believed to be a "straightforward personal name", just like Lucian himself, who seldom uses his own real name in his work, but "a cast of polyonymous authorial personae of varying degrees of transparency", typically the name "Lykinos". It is not a coincidence that Lucian uses his true name "Loukianos" in the narrative. Lucian has been chary of using his name all throughout his corpus, just like Homer, who never names himself in his epics. Only six times does the name "Lucian" appear in his corpus, and most times he hides himself behind *personae* with different references: Lycinus, an unnamed Syrian, Tychiades, Parrhesiades. They share the same characteristics with the real Lucian, i.e., they are all Syrians, all well-trained rhetoricians, and

¹³³ Zeitlin (2001) notes that ancient scholars proposed multiple birthplaces for Homer, including Athens, Chaldea, Syria, Rome, and even Egypt; some did so seriously, some parodically. Kim (2010) argues that the number of birthplaces claimed for Homer speaks to "the spread of Greek *paideia*", and the "fluidity of Greek identity" in Imperial Rome.

¹³⁴ cf. Kim, 2010.

they all write in perfect Attic Greek.¹³⁵ These *personae* create deceptive and confusing images of the author behind the texts. But in *True Stories*, Lucian's real name appears, which is hardly coincidental. The juxtaposition of the name "Lucian" with the "real" name of Homer marks a connection between Homer and Lucian. As Kim argues, Homer's false biography suggests Lucian's assimilation to the Greek world¹³⁶, in accordance not only with his ambition of being ranked with Homer, but also his further attempt to blend truth with falsehood: the real name Lucian makes the unreal name Tigranes quasi-real.

The Island of the Blessed represents the canonical and stagnated Classical world, it is like "a virtual wax museum of the prestigious figures from the literary past¹³⁷". The characters constantly try to break out of this world, but no one can escape the cycle of Homeric epics. Helen, for example, intends to run away with Cinyras (2.25), but she was not successful and was brought back. Helen's failure suggests that it is difficult to escape the closed literary world. Helen's episode is also the reason why Lucian and his crew members had to leave the Isle of the Blessed, because three of his comrades took part in the conspiracy. Kim argues that this is a parallel to the *Iliad*, insofar as the seduction of Helen ultimately led to both Odysseus' and Lucian's voyages home.¹³⁸ Again, Lucian is identifying himself with Odysseus, showing his ambition to weave himself into the Homeric past, into the canonical literature.¹³⁹ At the end of

¹³⁵ Goldhill (2001: 64-65) further notes that among the six mentions of the name "Lucian", one occurs in the title, "the Dream, or Lucian's life", and he argues that "or Lucian's life" might have been added by later editors; one is a character name in a dialogue, which could also have been added by editors; two appear at the headings of letters, and it is Roman tradition to address the receiver in the heading with one's own name; one is revealed in *Alexander*; and the last one is here in *VH*.

¹³⁶ Kim, 2010.

¹³⁷ Ni' Mheallaigh, 2014.

¹³⁸ Kim, 2010.

¹³⁹ Bompaire (1988) argues that the episode is "not a reconstitution of the past, it is the past and myth invading the present with an irresistible vigor". I do not reject this point of view. Whether this episode is a reconstruction of the past or the past invading the present, it proves that Lucian is mixing the real present with the fictional past—as Swanson (1976) said, *True Stories* is a "truth-serving" fiction. The content and the purpose of the content are

the novel the narrator promises that he will write about his home, a promise never fulfilled and the biggest lie told by the narrator, “at the expense of his readers”¹⁴⁰. Lucian, deeming himself the new Odysseus, must have expected his readers to imagine his home from their knowledge of the *Odyssey*.

In 2.20 Thersites accuses Homer of libeling him in the *Iliad*, but with Odysseus as his lawyer Homer wins the case. The scene is even more dramatic if we realize that it is about a character created by an author accusing the author (although readers by now are probably used to the thrilling juxtaposition of an author and his characters). It is impossible for Thersites to win because, as a character, his existence depends solely upon Homer.¹⁴¹ If he were to win the case, there would be a discrepancy between the ancient literary tradition and what he does in Lucian’s fictional world. His rebellion will be suppressed by the “immense gravitational pull” of Homeric tradition. Thersites’ failure is thus representative of Homer’s authority in Lucian’s time. Lucian shows the readers that, while there seems to be little or no boundary between truth and fiction, indeed no matter how vague it is, the boundary is always there and cannot be eradicated or transgressed.

When Lucian is about to leave the island, Odysseus secretly asks him to bring a letter to Calypso (2.29), which he later reads on his arrival at Ogygia (2.35). In the letter, Odysseus expresses his regret to have given up Calypso’s offer of immortality, reports to her his life after leaving her briefly, and guarantees that he would come to her once he gets the chance. According to the narrator, Odysseus came to him behind the back of Penelope. Ni’Mheallaigh notes that

paradoxical and ambiguous. Almost all the episodes have been variously interpreted, and I believe that there was a certain degree of ambiguity in Lucian’s own mind.

¹⁴⁰ Anderson, 1976.

¹⁴¹ cf. Kim, 2010.

Penelope's presence is never mentioned elsewhere, so it is more likely that Odysseus is trying to avoid the ubiquitous Homer¹⁴². But in 2.36, after the delivery of the letter, Calypso asked about Odysseus and Penelope (especially about her appearance and her prudence), and Lucian provided the answer that would please Calypso. There are two explanations concerning the presence of Penelope: either she does appear on the Island of the Blessed with Odysseus, but is not mentioned but only hinted at in the narration; or she is not there on the island with Odysseus at all — Lucian, the cunning narrator, the new Odysseus, fabricates his encounter with Penelope in order to cater to Calypso's need. I think that Penelope does appear on the island with Odysseus, but Lucian chooses not to mention her because she is not important in the narrative. Odysseus' attempt reminds readers of Achilles' speech in the underworld as reported in the *Odyssey* 11.486-504. Both are dead people hoping to return to the living world and regretting their rejection of long life or immortality, and both are reported by their narrators who are not entirely trustworthy: Odysseus reports to the Phaeacians, while the narrator Lucian reports to his readers. By constructing himself as the untrustworthy narrator, the narrator blurs the boundary between himself and Odysseus.

This episode is another of the examples where the Homeric protagonist is trying to jump out of the Homeric world. We never find out the result of Odysseus' attempt, because the narrator never tells us. But considering the self-contained nature of the Homeric world, it is not difficult for us to infer either that Odysseus will never even try to do so, or that he will try and fail. Just like Thersites, who cannot win his lawsuit, Odysseus cannot escape successfully because, in the Lucianic model, there should not be any gaps between the Homeric episode and the Lucianic episode. The "ruling conceit in *True Stories* is that the figures encountered on the

¹⁴² Ni' Mheallaigh, 2014.

island of the Blessed are literary characters”¹⁴³, tightly bound by the centripetal force of the stagnated, canonical world.

The uncertain and omitted future escape of Odysseus reminds readers of the similarly ambiguous return home of the narrator Lucian that has been promised by the author yet never fulfilled.¹⁴⁴ The readers are invited by the narrator to construct their own version of Odysseus’ escape as well as Lucian’s homecoming. Visiting Calypso is one hint. In order to make the Lucianic-Homeric connection more conspicuous to his audience, the narrator, when he is about to leave the Island of the Blessed, tells us that Rhadamanthus spoke with him briefly about his return and the neighboring islands (2.27), reminding readers of Circe’s predictions before the departure of Odysseus in *Odyssey* 12.¹⁴⁵ By now, any reader with knowledge of Homeric epic will recognize the ambition of the narrator to become the new Odysseus.

This episode is a comic solution to the long debated Homeric question — why did Odysseus reject the offer of immortality? As with Lucian’s interrogation of Homer, the narrator presents us with a most incredible and unsophisticated answer: Odysseus regrets rejecting it, and now intends to seize on the opportunity. The logic behind the episode is, however, not absurd at all. It can be reconciled with the Homeric epic. The reason why Odysseus wants to leave the Island of the Blessed in *VH*. is the same as the reason why he wanted to leave Calypso in the *Odyssey*: nostalgia. When he was alive, his home was Ithaca, and now that he is dead, his nostalgia encompasses the whole world of the living. Wilshire notes that Odysseus returned to

¹⁴³ Kim, 2010.

¹⁴⁴ As Ni’Mheallaigh (2014) notes, “it ends by creating a space for a future, as yet unwritten, story with Calypso...in this respect, too, the letter mirrors Lucian’s narrative, itself a ‘New *Odyssey*’ which also ends with references to further, unwritten, adventures.” pp.253

¹⁴⁵ Kim, 2010.

Penelope because of his attempt to escape Calypso;¹⁴⁶ in this case, his regret results from his hope to escape the post-mortem life and his wife.¹⁴⁷

On arrival at Ogygia, Lucian opens the letter¹⁴⁸ and reads it illicitly. Ni'Mheallaigh (2014) thinks that it results from “an unspoken fear”, particularly the fear of delivering his own death-warrant without knowledge. While the narrator does not mention his fear at all, if we consider him as the new Odysseus, it is not unreasonable for us to expect him to be cunning and cautious. He is capable of anticipating the potential danger that could be brought by the letter, and so takes action to prevent it. The letter is an “embedded hypertext¹⁴⁹” or mirror of the *Odyssey*,¹⁵⁰ yet another step for the narrator in shaping himself as a new Odysseus. Georgiadou and Larmour note that Lucian plays with source material from *Odyssey* 5.29-31¹⁵¹, where Zeus sent Hermes to deliver a letter to Calypso demanding that she free Odysseus. Here the letter from

¹⁴⁶ Wilshere, 2015

¹⁴⁷ Wilshere (2015) also argues that Odysseus spent so much time traveling, that he has “itchy feet”, and that “the grass is always greener somewhere else”. Perhaps Wilshere is pressing the parallels with the *Odyssey* too far. Lucian is meant to be funny, and he tries to dissolve the seriousness of the epic with absurd and superficial explanations. About why Odysseus went back to Penelope, there are many debates and explanations by scholars. It might be because of his pursuit of unconcealed glory, or merely because of nostalgia. Wilshere’s explanation follows the funny logic of Lucian, thus falls short. As has been stated above, readers should constantly be aware of the tricky narrator, and should not be taken in by him.

¹⁴⁸ The letter reads: “Ὀδυσσεὺς Καλυψοῖ χαίρειν. Ἴσθι με, ὡς τὰ πρῶτα ἐξέπλευσα παρὰ σοῦ τὴν σχεδίαν κατασκευασάμενος, ναυαγία χρησάμενον μόλις ὑπὸ Λευκοθέας διασωθῆναι εἰς τὴν τῶν Φαιάκων χώραν, ὑφ’ ὧν ἐς τὴν οἰκείαν ἀποπεμφθεὶς κατέλαβον πολλοὺς τῆς γυναικὸς μνηστῆρας ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις τρυφῶντας· ἀποκτείνας δὲ ἅπαντας ὑπὸ Τηλεγόνου ὕστερον τοῦ ἐκ Κίρκης μοι γενομένου ἀνηρέθην, καὶ νῦν εἰμι ἐν τῇ Μακάρων νήσῳ πάνυ μετανοῶν ἐπὶ τῷ καταλιπεῖν τὴν παρὰ σοὶ δίαιταν καὶ τὴν ὑπὸ σοῦ προτεινομένην ἀθανασία. ἦν οὖν καιροῦ λάβωμαι, ἀποδρᾶς ἀφίξομαι πρὸς σέ.” (VH.2.35) (Odysseus to Calypso, greetings. You should know, having made the raft ready, as I first sailed away from you, I suffered a shipwreck and I was only just saved by Leucothea to get to the land of Phaeacians, by whom I was sent back home, and I caught many suitors of my wife who were living luxuriously on my household. After killing them all, I was at last slain by Telegonus, who was born by Circe to me. And now I am on the Island of the Blessed, I totally regret that I rejected the life beside you and the immortality offered by you. If I ever get the opportunity, I will run away and come to you.)

¹⁴⁹ Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014

¹⁵⁰ Georgiadou and Larmour (1998) note that the opening words of the letter are not accurate summary of *Odyssey*. Lucian frequently plays with the inaccuracy of the original text that he is referring to. It is possible that he has too many materials to refer to and does not care about their accuracy, focusing instead on his use of the materials.

¹⁵¹ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

Odysseus is given by the narrator to Calypso, thus incorporating the narrator into the Homeric epic world.

Odysseus' letter is an infiltration of the Lucianic plot into the Homeric world, and also an attempt by Odysseus to alter the Homeric world — in this sense, Lucian and Odysseus share the same authorial anxiety.¹⁵² Odysseus' anxiety, on the surface, is to hide the extra-marital affair from his wife, as has been argued above, but ultimately it is the anxiety to avoid the ubiquitous Homer. It is the only place where Odysseus appears without the company of Homer¹⁵³, the ultimate writer of his journey and life. Lucian the author realizes the necessity to keep the Homeric canonical world intact, in order to emphasize the untransgressable boundary between truth and falsehood; but we should not forget that he has already warned us in the preface that he is about to lie, and that he regards Homer as his guide and instructor (ἀρχηγὸς ...καὶ διδάσκαλος,) of his charlatany (*VH*. 2.3). Readers continue to face the complicated situation in which they have to struggle to figure out when what the narrator says is true and when it is not. As argued in the last chapter, this complexity results from the blurred boundary between truth and falsehood, keeping the reader from putting down his guard completely, yet this constant effort to not be taken in by the author produces part of the pleasure of reading this text, especially for the sophisticated readers who are the target readers of this book. Furthermore, the readers are invited to participate (though unconsciously) in the furtive and fearful reading of Odysseus' letter by the narrator. They take part and share the fear and excitement with the

¹⁵² Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014

¹⁵³ Ni'Mheallaigh (2014) argues that “this is the only occasion where we see Odysseus both on his own and unaccompanied by the poet.”

narrator.¹⁵⁴ They become conspirators with the narrator and they share a secret with the narrator, which further increases the pleasure of the reading experience.

The Letter is not written in hexameter but in prose. There are two possibilities: either Odysseus can write in hexameter, but chooses to write in prose,¹⁵⁵ or he is, as Wilshere argues, incapable of writing in the lofty epic style without Homer¹⁵⁶. I agree with Wilshere's argument. On the island, the huge centripetal force of canonical Homer traps everyone, including Homer himself — his attempt to write a new epic proves to be futile, and the epic he writes is a cliché repetition of his earlier works. Odysseus's letter, unlike his speeches in the *Odyssey*, is written without the knowledge of Homer, and thus is certainly not able to reach Homer's level without Homer, Odysseus is no longer the epic hero who longs for the immortality of κλέος, but a miserable and stealthy figure deprived of the lofty diction of Homer, regretting his rejection of the offer of physical immortality. Bär argues that Lucian, in his attempt to incorporate Odysseus into his novel, depicts Odysseus as writing in Attic prose.¹⁵⁷ I do not agree with this assertion, because Lucian is capable of writing in hexameter. He could have attributed lower quality hexameter verse to Odysseus, and readers would have regarded it as a degeneration of Odyssean hexameter without the aid of Homer. I think that Lucian purposely chooses to assign prose to Odysseus so that Odysseus can be one step closer to the narrator — not only does he depict an Odysseus-like Lucian-narrator, but also a Lucian-like Odysseus. By this point, Lucian is fully shaped as a new Odysseus.

¹⁵⁴ Ni'Mheallaigh (2014) further notes that “the fearful and illicit reading of the letter dramatizes the ambivalent pleasure the reader feels in response to his own playfully iconoclastic fiction, True Stories”.

¹⁵⁵ Bär, 2013

¹⁵⁶ Wilshere, 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Bär, 2013.

There is not only no escape for the characters on the island, but also no escape even for the author. The most striking attempt to escape the Homeric cycle is, ironically, carried out by Homer himself. He composes new epics after the battle between the Blessed and the Wicked (2.24), which was given to Lucian for him to take to the people at home when he was leaving, was (of course) lost on his way back, with only the opening line of the poem remembered:

Νῦν δέ μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, μάχην νεκρῶν ἡρώων. (VH.2.24)
Now tell me, Muse, the battle of the dead heroes.

It is extremely banal and self-replicative, a repetition and combination of the opening lines of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, or, as Ni'Mheallaigh says, “a clumsy pastiche of the first lines of both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.”¹⁵⁸ The fact that Homer gave the epic to Lucian shows his ambition to have it circulated among the living, however, the self-replicative feature of the verse shows that even Homer cannot escape Homer when he tries to compose a new epic. It has to be lost on Lucian's way home, or else the self-contained bounds of the fictional past would be broken, and the past would be connected to the truthful present by this new Homeric epic.

In sum, the narrative of Lucian's *True Stories* is a mimetic parody of Homer's *Odyssey*, both with respect to the content and to the format. The narrator Lucian is not only depicted as the new Odysseus, but also encounters Homer and Odysseus on the Island of the Blessed. By questioning Homer's biographical identity, he proves the fruitlessness of contemporary scholarly debates, and sets up the connection between himself and Homer. The world of the dead is a stagnant and unalterable space, closed by the authority of Homer. No matter how hard the characters try, there is no escape from the closed Homeric world. The truth-preserving feature of the fiction is thus revealed: on the one hand, Lucian employs different techniques, including the development of his authorial-narrative *persona* and the juxtaposition of real and fictional figures,

¹⁵⁸ Ni'Mheallaigh, 2014.

to blur the boundaries between truth and fiction and to mix them together. On the other hand, Lucian uses the closed Homeric world and failed examples of escape to explain the existence of the boundary. He shows that no matter how much an author may mix truth with fiction, the boundary between them cannot be erased.

By depicting the classical world as a stagnant space, Lucian shows that the attempt to go back to the classical world is bound to be futile, just like the narrator Lucian is driven out from the Island of the Blessed. By writing his *VH.*, which is full of classical allusions, Lucian creates his new *Odyssey*; by depicting the narrator Lucian as the new Odysseus, Lucian shows his ambition that he be ranked with Homer and his works with the classical literature.

Conclusions

In contrast to Anderson's argument that the goal of the Second Sophistic movement was "to pretend to be in the fifth century BC" and to recreate the present literature as a "continuity with the literature of the classical past," through a close examination of the textual interplay between Lucian and the classical curriculum using *True Histories* as an example I have argued in this thesis that Lucian not only recreates a classical world by utilizing the language and materials of the classical past, but also further develops the classical past by adapting the language and materials to his own time and need.¹⁵⁹ Readers of *True Histories* are presented with a quasi-classical world that contains the typical icons and stories from the classical corpus, but reinterpreted by Lucian, whose ambition is not only to replicate the past but also to create a new literary peak in which he is ranked with the classical authors.

The first chapter discusses the relationship between the preface of *True Histories* and the main contentions of *How History Should be Written*. He insists that preserving truth is important for historiography in *How History Should be Written*, and suggests several rules that are to be observed in writing history: the avoidance of poetry and myth, as well as encomia and exaggeration, the necessity of investigation and inquiry, the identity of the target readership, and so on. These principles are echoed one by one in the preface of *True Histories*, as I have argued in the first chapter. Even the following narrative, as Georgiadou and Larmour argue, is "a parody of the wrong kind of history writing,"¹⁶⁰ based on the principles suggested in *How History Should be Written*. The relationship between truth and falsehood is a constant motif in the Lucianic corpus, examined through dialogues, fictions and treatises.¹⁶¹ However, his ultimate

¹⁵⁹ Anderson, 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Georgiadou and Larmour, 1994:1450.

¹⁶¹ For a detailed list of these topics, see the Introduction.

goal goes beyond historiography. Working within the context of the Second Sophistic, through the mimesis of the classical past in *True Histories*, he discusses the relationship between the real world of the second century CE under Imperial Rome and the classical world preserved in literature. *True Histories*, as a “truth-preserving”¹⁶² fiction, discusses the relationship between the literary past and present.

In the second chapter I have discussed the relationship between Lucian’s *True Histories* and Aristophanes’ comedies. In the second century CE, Aristophanes was still read as a model of Attic style, but as a comedian Aristophanes has lost his political and cultural significance. Lucian certainly sensed this trend in reading Aristophanes, but he was able to extract from Aristophanes whatever was useful for himself, and created his own metacomedy through the prose fiction *True Histories*. The general ideas of aerial traveling and visiting the dead in *True Histories* could come from *Birds*, *Frogs* and *Peace*. The authorial *persona* of the preface of *True Histories* is reminiscent of the parabasis (518-62) of Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. Furthermore, *True Histories* and the Lucianic corpus in general are full of sexual jokes, which are common in old comedies. Lucian also borrowed from *Clouds* the idea of hybrid animals and the blockade in the air. This chapter presents a comprehensive list of possible places where Lucian might have adapted the extant Aristophanic corpus in order to create his own comedy fitting into his present time. The classical past is again recreated through the interplay between the Aristophanic corpus and Lucian’s fiction. But Lucian did not stop at the point where he adapted old comedies, instead, he was able to use the motifs and language from the old comedy to create his new metacomedy, though in a different literary form.

¹⁶² Swanson, 1976.

In the third chapter I have argued that, just as he claims in the preface, Lucian followed the “guide and instructor of...charlatanry” (VH.1.3) and wrote his own *Odyssey* in the Island of the Blessed episode. The island is a wax museum of the classical past, where the narrator meets ancient heroes, authors, philosophers, and Homer himself. By describing the island as timeless, he hints that the classical past is stagnant, and the canonical world cannot be recreated or trespassed. The attempt to go back to the fifth century is bound to be futile, and even the attempt to fully understand the past is bound to be fruitless – as Lucian’s interview with Homer reveals, knowing Homer’s birthplace and real name does not make Homer any more familiar to his audience, rather it makes Homer even more obscure. The *mimesis* of the past starts with the intention of drawing closer to the past but ends up pushing the past farther away and even replacing the past with the *mimesis*. Lucian’s ambition is thus revealed: he sees this paradox of the Second Sophistic, and his solution is to write his own corpus as the new classical canon. In *True Histories* this ambition is achieved by writing his new *Odyssey*, shaping his narrator as the new Odysseus, and thus ranking himself with Homer.

This discussion, however, cannot possibly cover all the allusions to classical literature to which Lucian makes reference. Scholars have made countless attempts to trace every single allusion and reference to classical authors in *True Histories*¹⁶³. Nobody can ever claim that they have found all of them because we have lost most of the classical works. For modern scholarship, the more important issue should be “why” instead of “how” Lucian made these references. In order to discuss this “why”, I use *True Histories* as an example drawn from the Lucianic corpus, since it is avowedly fictional and full of intertextuality, as the authorial persona claims in the preface. I chose three samples of works with which *True Histories* has an

¹⁶³ Householder 1941; Georgiadou and Larmour, 1998.

intertextual relationship, one from Lucian's own corpus, one from the corpus of Aristophanes which is representative of the Athenian authors of the Classical Period, and one from the Homeric epics, the "classics" of the Classical Period. These three samples show two typical characteristics of the Lucianic style: self-variation and mimesis. My ultimate conclusion is that Lucian played within the arena of the Second Sophistic but, unlike many other authors of that movement, he saw the classical past as unattainable. Instead of futilely seeking to go back to the classical past, he composed his literary corpus both as a continuation of the classical past and with the ambition to achieve a new classic.

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