

In a number of texts (*Nigrinus*, *Demonax*, *Hermotimus*, *De morte Peregrini*, *Symposium*, etc.) Lucian addresses the question of the right philosophical doctrine and its meaning for society. In *Piscator*, by contrast, his focus is on the competition between philosophy and rhetoric. By staging the interplay between rhetoric and philosophy he refers to the contemporary tensions between these two domains. Lucian thematizes the importance of philosophy for rhetoric in various texts; conversely, that of rhetoric for philosophy becomes nowhere so clear as in *Piscator*. And rhetoric makes its critical contribution in that very task where philosophy according to Lucian so often fails, in discerning the hypocrisy of the sham philosophers.

The work begins with the rhetor Parrhesiades being put on trial by the old philosophers who reemerge from Hades to avenge the injustice they suffered in *Philosophies for Sale*. Parrhesiades prevails in his trial, yet this victory is hardly the text's final word about the relations between the two domains. This paper will show that rhetoric's victory does not amount to a domination over philosophy; rather, the outcome is a coexistence with mutual interactions which are acknowledged by both sides.

Which qualities of rhetoric does Lucian emphasize? In the first part of the action (*Pisc.* 4-39) Parrhesiades not only helps to arrange his own trial, but also manages in his defense speech to redirect the charges to the contemporary pseudo-philosophers, a service Philosophia appreciates, and to obtain his own acquittal. Here Lucian turns the customary instruments of judicial oratory in favor of philosophy. The undeniable coexistence of rhetoric and philosophy and the influence of the latter on rhetoric are discussed in detail. However, Parrhesiades emphasizes the fact that philosophy in its turn cannot dispense with the rhetorician's help in order to debunk pseudo-philosophers, because in his eyes philosophy lacks the instruments that are necessary to do so (*Pisc.* 37. 42).

In the second part (*Pisc.* 40-52) Parrhesiades shows that his rhetorical expertise consists not only in eloquent speech, but also in his ability to assess a situation immediately and to react accordingly (*Pisc.* 40. 47f.). While the pseudo-philosophers might boast similar skills, he claims this performative quality as typical of the well versed rhetorician.

The position of rhetoric is further strengthened on the meta-level of literary form. Lucian shapes the text on the model of Aristophanes. This procedure helps to present the critique of philosophy in a way that makes it acceptable for Philosophia herself: according to her own testimony, the critique from comedy has never done her harm, on the contrary, she has benefited from comedy's attention (*Pisc.* 14).

The symbiosis of rhetoric and philosophy culminates in a significant shift of roles at the end of the dialogue: After having been accused by philosophers, Parrhesiades is not only acquitted by the same philosophers, but mutates into a prosecutor and judge of (pseudo-)philosophers with Elenchos, formerly from the entourage of Philosophia, at his side. I will show that this shift should be read as a *mise en abîme* of the work: The progression from defendant to prosecutor suggests that there is no alternative to the coexistence and interaction of rhetoric and philosophy; rather, they join forces in the same effort, to separate the true from the false philosophers.