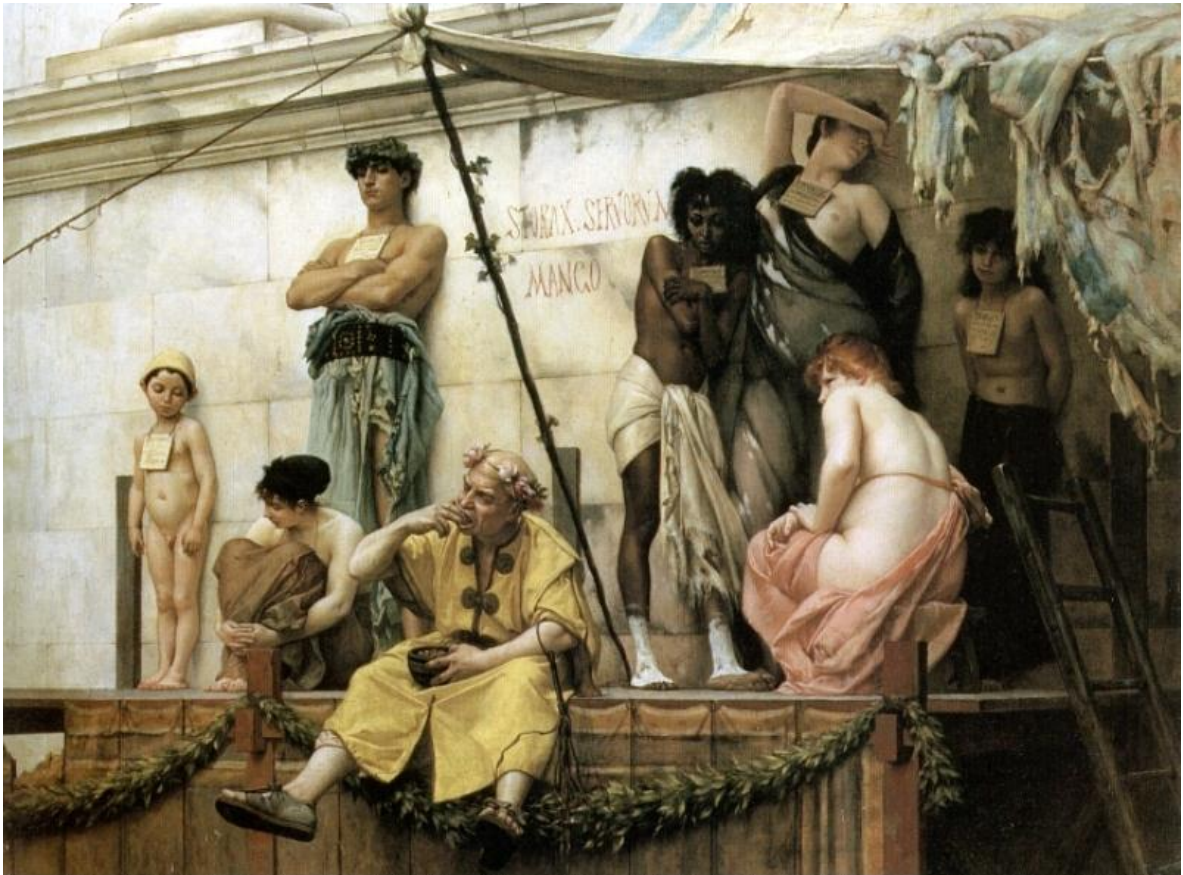


Lucian of Samosata
Philosophers for Sale

Translated by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler



Le marché aux esclaves by Gustave Rodolphe Clarence Boulanger

1 Sale of Creeds¹

Βίων Πράσις
Vitarum Auctio
Sale of Creeds
Philosophies for Sale

From Fowler HW & Fowler FG. (Tr.) *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905.
Vol. 1 of 4, pp. 190-206

Zeus puts various philosophers up for sale in a slave market

Zeus Now get those benches straight there, and make the place fit to be seen. Bring up the lots, one of you, and put them in line. Give them a rub up first, though; we must have them looking their best, to attract bidders. Hermes, you can declare the sale-room open, and a welcome to all comers. — *For Sale! A varied assortment of Live Creeds. Tenets of every description. — Cash on delivery; or credit allowed on suitable security.*

Hermes Here they come, swarming in. No time to lose; we must not keep them waiting.

Zeus Well, let us begin.

Hermes What are we to put up first?

Zeus The Ionic fellow, with the long hair. He seems a showy piece of goods.

Hermes Step up, Pythagoreanism, and show yourself.

Zeus Go ahead.

Hermes Now here is a creed of the first water. Who bids for this handsome article? What gentleman says Superhumanity? Harmony of the Universe! Transmigration of souls! Who bids?

First dealer He looks all right. And what can he do?

Hermes Magic, music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, jugglery. Prophecy in all its branches.

First dealer Can I ask him some questions?

Hermes Ask away, and welcome.

First dealer Where do you come from?

Pythagoras Samos.

First dealer Where did you get your schooling?

Pythagoras From the sophists in Egypt.

First dealer If I buy you, what will you teach me?

¹ The distinction between the personified creeds or philosophies here offered for sale, and their various founders or principal exponents, is but loosely kept up. Not only do most of the creeds bear the names of their founders, but some are even credited with their physical peculiarities and their personal experiences.

Pythagoras Nothing. I will remind you.

First dealer Remind me?

Pythagoras But first I shall have to cleanse your soul of its filth.

First dealer Well, suppose the cleansing process complete. How is the reminding done?

Pythagoras We shall begin with a long course of silent contemplation. Not a word to be spoken for five years.

First dealer You would have been just the creed for Croesus's son! But *I* have a tongue in my head; I have no ambition to be a statue. And after the five years' silence?

Pythagoras You will study music and geometry.

First dealer A charming recipe! The way to be wise: learn the guitar.

Pythagoras Next you will learn to count.

First dealer I can do that already.

Pythagoras Let me hear you.

First dealer One, two, three, four, —

Pythagoras There you are, you see. *Four* (as you call it) is *ten*. Four the perfect triangle. Four the oath of our school.

First dealer Now by Four, most potent Four! — higher and holier mysteries than these I never heard.

Pythagoras Then you will learn of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water; their action, their movement, their shapes.

First dealer Have Fire and Air and Water *shapes*?

Pythagoras Clearly. That cannot move which lacks shape and form. You will also find that God is a number; an intelligence; a harmony.

First dealer You surprise me.

Pythagoras More than this, you have to learn that you yourself are not the person you appear to be.

First dealer What, I am some one else, not the I who am speaking to you?

Pythagoras You are that you now: but you have formerly inhabited another body, and borne another name. And in course of time you will change once more.

First dealer Why then I shall be immortal, and take one shape after another? But enough of this. And now what is your diet?

Pythagoras Of living things I eat none. All else I eat, except beans.

First dealer And why no beans? Do you dislike them?

Pythagoras No. But they are sacred things. Their nature is a mystery. Consider them first in their generative aspect; take a green one and peel it, and you will see

what I mean. Again, boil one and expose it to moonlight for a proper number of nights, and you have — blood. What is more, the Athenians use beans to vote with.

First dealer Admirable! A very feast of reason. Now just strip, and let me see what you are like. Bless me, here is a creed with a golden thigh! He is no mortal, he is a God. I must have him at any price. What do you start him at?

Hermes Forty pounds.

First dealer He is mine for forty pounds.

Zeus Take the gentleman's name and address.

Hermes He must come from Italy, I should think; Croton or Tarentum, or one of the Greek towns in those parts. But he is not the only buyer. Some three hundred of them have clubbed together.

Zeus They are welcome to him. Now up with the next.

Hermes What about yonder grubby Pontian?²

Zeus Yes, he will do.

Hermes You there with the wallet and cloak; come along, walk round the room. Lot No. 2. A most sturdy and valiant creed, free-born. What offers?

Second dealer Hullo, Mr. Auctioneer, are you going to sell a free man?

Hermes That was the idea.

Second dealer Take care, he may have you up for kidnapping. This might be matter for the Areopagus.

Hermes Oh, he would as soon be sold as not. He feels just as free as ever.

Second dealer But what is one to do with such a dirty fellow? He is a pitiable sight. One might put him to dig perhaps, or to carry water.

Hermes That he can do and more. Set him to guard your house, and you will find him better than any watch-dog. — They call him Dog for short.

Second dealer Where does he come from? and what is his method?

Hermes He can best tell you that himself.

Second dealer I don't like his looks. He will probably snarl if I go near him, or take a snap at me, for all I know. See how he lifts his stick, and scowls; an awkward-looking customer!

Hermes Don't be afraid. He is quite tame.

Second dealer Tell me, good fellow, where do you come from?

Diogenes Everywhere.

Second dealer What does that mean?

Diogenes It means that I am a citizen of the world.

² See *Diogenes* in Notes.

Second dealer And your model?

Diogenes Heracles.

Second dealer Then why no lion's-skin? You have the orthodox club.

Diogenes My cloak is my lion's-skin. Like Heracles, I live in a state of warfare, and my enemy is Pleasure; but unlike him I am a volunteer. My purpose is to purify humanity.

Second dealer A noble purpose. Now what do I understand to be your strong subject? What is your profession?

Diogenes The liberation of humanity, and the treatment of the passions. In short, I am the prophet of Truth and Candour.

Second dealer Well, prophet; and if I buy you, how shall you handle my case?

Diogenes I shall commence operations by stripping off yours superfluities, putting you into fustian, and leaving you closeted with Necessity. Then I shall give you a course of hard labour. You will sleep on the ground, drink water, and fill your belly as best you can. Have you money? Take my advice and throw it into the sea. With wife and children and country you will not concern yourself; there will be no more of that nonsense. You will exchange your present home for a sepulchre, a ruin, or a tub. What with lupines and close-written tomes, your knapsack will never be empty; and you will vote yourself happier than any king. Nor will you esteem it any inconvenience, if a flogging or a turn of the rack should fall to your lot.

Second dealer How! Am I a tortoise, a lobster, that I should be flogged and feel it not?

Diogenes You will take your cue from Hippolytus; *mutates mutandis*.

Second dealer How so?

Diogenes "The heart may burn, the tongue knows nought thereof."³ Above all, be bold, be impudent; distribute your abuse impartially to king and commoner. They will admire your spirit. You will talk the Cynic jargon with the true Cynic snarl, scowling as you walk, and walking as one should who scowls; an epitome of brutality. Away with modesty, good-nature, and forbearance. Wipe the blush from your cheek for ever. Your hunting-ground will be the crowded city. You will live alone in its midst, holding communion with none, admitting neither friend nor guest; for such would undermine your power. Scruple not to perform the deeds of darkness in broad daylight: select your love-adventures with a view to the public entertainment: and finally, when the fancy takes you, swallow a raw cuttle-fish, and die. Such are the delights of Cynicism.

Second dealer Oh, vile creed! Monstrous creed! Avaunt!

Diogenes But look you, it is all so easy; it is within every man's reach. No education is necessary, no nonsensical argumentation. I offer you a short cut to Glory. You may be the merest clown — cobbler, fishmonger, carpenter, money-changer; yet

³ Hippolytus (in Euripides's play of that name) is reproached with having broken an oath, and thus defends himself: "The tongue hath sworn: the heart knew nought thereof."

there is nothing to prevent your becoming famous. Given brass and boldness, you have only to learn to wag your tongue with dexterity.

Second dealer All this is of no use to me. But I might make a sailor or a gardener of you at a pinch; that is, if you are to be had cheap. Three-pence is the most I can give.

Hermes He is yours, to have and to hold. And good riddance to the brawling foul-mouthed bully. He is a slanderer by wholesale.

Zeus Now for the Cyrenaic, the crowned and purple-robed.

Hermes Attend please, gentlemen all. A most valuable article, this, and calls for a long purse. Look at him. A sweet thing in creeds. A creed for a king. Has any gentleman a use for the Lap of Luxury? Who bids?

Third dealer Come and tell me what you know. If you are a practical creed, I will have you.

Hermes Please not to worry him with questions, sir. He is drunk, and cannot answer; his tongue plays him tricks, as you see.

Third dealer And who in his senses would buy such an abandoned reprobate? How he smells of scent! And how he slips and staggers about! Well, you must speak for him, Hermes. What can he do? What is his line?

Hermes Well, for any gentleman who is not strait-laced, who loves a pretty girl, a bottle, and a jolly companion, he is the very thing. He is also a past master in gastronomy, and a connoisseur in voluptuousness generally. He was educated at Athens, and has served royalty in Sicily,⁴ where he had a very good character. Here are his principles in a nutshell: think the worst of things: make the most of things: get all possible pleasure out of things.

Third dealer You must look for wealthier purchasers. My purse is not equal to such a festive creed.

Hermes Zeus, this lot seems likely to remain on our hands.

Zeus Put it aside, and up with another. Stay, take the pair from Abdera and Ephesus; the creeds of Smiles and Tears. They shall make one lot.

Hermes Come forward, you two. Lot No. 4. A superlative pair. The smartest brace of creeds on our catalogue.

Fourth dealer Zeus! What a difference is here! One of them does nothing but laugh, and the other might be at a funeral; he is all tears. — You there! what is the joke?

Democritus You ask? You and your affairs are all one vast joke.

Fourth dealer So! You laugh at us? Our business is a toy?

Democritus It is. There is no taking it seriously. All is vanity. Mere interchange of atoms in an infinite void.

⁴ See *Aristippus* in Notes.

Fourth dealer Your vanity is infinite, if you like. Stop that laughing, you rascal. — And you, my poor fellow, what are you crying for? I must see what I can make of you.

Heraclitus I am thinking, friend, upon human affairs; and well may I weep and lament, for the doom of all is sealed. Hence my compassion and my sorrow. For the present, I think not of it; but the future! — the future is all bitterness. Conflagration and destruction of the world. I weep to think that nothing abides. All things are whirled together in confusion. Pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, great and small; up and down they go, the playthings of Time.

Fourth dealer And what is Time?

Heraclitus A child; and plays at draughts and blindman's-bluff.

Fourth dealer And men?

Heraclitus Are mortal Gods.

Fourth dealer And Gods?

Heraclitus Immortal men.

Fourth dealer So! Conundrums, fellow? Nuts to crack? You are a very oracle for obscurity.

Heraclitus Your affairs do not interest me.

Fourth dealer No one will be fool enough to bid for you at that rate.

Heraclitus Young and old, him that bids and him that bids not, a murrain seize you all!

Fourth dealer A sad case. He will be melancholy mad before long. Neither of these is the creed for my money.

Hermes No one bids.

Zeus Next lot.

Hermes The Athenian there? Old Chatterbox?

Zeus By all means.

Hermes Come forward! — A good sensible creed this. Who buys Holiness?

Fifth dealer Let me see. What are you good for?

Socrates I teach the art of love.

Fifth dealer A likely bargain for me! I want a tutor for my young Adonis.

Socrates And could he have a better? The love I teach is of, the spirit, not of the flesh. Under my roof, be sure, a boy will come to no harm.

Fifth dealer Very unconvincing that. A teacher of the art of love, and never meddle with anything but the spirit? Never use the opportunities your office gives you?

Socrates Now by Dog and Plane-tree, it is as I say!

Fifth dealer Heracles! What strange Gods are these?

Socrates Why, the Dog is a God, I suppose? Is not Anubis made much of in Egypt? Is there not a Dog-star in Heaven, and a Cerberus in the lower world?

Fifth dealer Quite so. My mistake. Now what is your manner of life?

Socrates I live in a city of my own building; I make my own laws, and have a novel constitution of my own.

Fifth dealer I should like to hear some of your statutes.

Socrates You shall hear the greatest of them all. No woman shall be restricted to one husband. Every man who likes is her husband.

Fifth dealer What! Then the laws of adultery are clean swept away?

Socrates I should think they were! and a world of hair-splitting with them.

Fifth dealer And what do you do with the handsome boys?

Socrates Their kisses are the reward of merit, of noble and spirited actions.

Fifth dealer Unparalleled generosity! — And now, what are the main features of your philosophy?

Socrates Ideas and types of things. All things that you see, the earth and all that is upon it, the sea, the sky, — each has its counterpart in the invisible world.

Fifth dealer And where are they?

Socrates Nowhere. Were they anywhere, they were not what they are.

Fifth dealer I see no signs of these “types” of yours.

Socrates Of course not; because you are spiritually blind. I see the counterparts of all things; an invisible you, an invisible me; everything is in duplicate.

Fifth dealer Come, such a shrewd and lynx-eyed creed is worth a bid. Let me see. What do you want for him?

Hermes Five hundred.

Fifth dealer Done with you. Only I must settle the bill another day.

Hermes What name?

Fifth dealer Dion; of Syracuse.

Hermes Take him, and much good may he do you. Now I want Epicureanism. Who offers for Epicureanism? He is a disciple of the laughing creed and the drunken creed, whom we were offering just now. But he has one extra accomplishment — impiety. For the rest, a dainty, lickish creed.

Sixth dealer What price?

Hermes Eight pounds.

Sixth dealer Here you are. By the way, you might let me know what he likes to eat.

Hermes Anything sweet. Anything with honey in it. Dried figs are his favourite dish.

Sixth dealer That is all right. We will get in a supply of Carian fig-cakes.

Zeus Call the next lot. Stoicism; the creed of the sorrowful countenance, the close-cropped creed.

Hermes Ah yes, several customers, I fancy, are on the look-out for him. Virtue incarnate! The very quintessence of creeds! Who is for universal monopoly?

Seventh dealer How are we to understand that?

Hermes Why, here is monopoly of wisdom, monopoly of beauty, monopoly of courage, monopoly of justice. Sole king, sole orator, sole legislator, sole millionaire.

Seventh dealer And I suppose sole cook, sole tanner, sole carpenter, and all that?

Hermes Presumably.

Seventh dealer Regard me as your purchaser, good fellow, and tell me all about yourself. I dare say you think it rather hard to be sold for a slave?

Chrysippus Not at all. These things are beyond our control. And what is beyond our control is indifferent.

Seventh dealer I don't see how you make that out.

Chrysippus What! Have you yet to learn that of *indifferentia* some are *praeposita* and others *rejecta*?

Seventh dealer Still I don't quite see.

Chrysippus No; how should you? You are not familiar with our terms. You lack the *comprehensio visi*. The earnest student of logic knows this and more than this. He understands the nature of subject, predicate, and contingent, and the distinctions between them.

Seventh dealer Now in Wisdom's name, tell me, pray, what is a predicate? what is a contingent? There is a ring about those words that takes my fancy.

Chrysippus With all my heart. A man lame in one foot knocks that foot accidentally against a stone, and gets a cut. Now the man is *subject* to lameness; which is the *predicate*. And the cut is a *contingency*.

Seventh dealer Oh, subtle! What else can you tell me?

Chrysippus I have verbal involutions, for the better hampering, crippling, and muzzling of my antagonists. This is performed by the use of the far-famed syllogism.

Seventh dealer Syllogism! I warrant him a tough customer.

Chrysippus Take a case. You have a child?

Seventh dealer Well, and what if I have?

Chrysippus A crocodile catches him as he wanders along the bank of a river, and promises to restore him to you, if you will first guess correctly whether he means to restore him or not. Which are you going to say?

Seventh dealer A difficult question. I don't know which way I should get him back soonest. In Heaven's name, answer for me, and save the child before he is eaten up.

Chrysippus Ha, ha. I will teach you far other things than that.

Seventh dealer For instance?

Chrysippus There is the "Reaper." There is the "Rightful Owner." Better still, there is the "Electra" and the "Man in the Hood."

Seventh dealer Who was he? and who was Electra?

Chrysippus She was *the* Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon, to whom the same thing was known and unknown at the same time. She knew that Orestes was her brother: yet when he stood before her she did not know (until he revealed himself) that her brother was Orestes. As to the Man in the Hood, he will surprise you considerably. Answer me now: do you know your own father?

Seventh dealer Yes.

Chrysippus Well now, if I present to you a man in a hood, shall you know him? eh?

Seventh dealer Of course not.

Chrysippus Well, but the Man in the Hood is your father. You don't know the Man in the Hood. Therefore you don't know your own father.

Seventh dealer Why, no. But if I take his hood off, I shall get at the facts. Now tell me, what is the end of your philosophy? What happens when you reach the goal of virtue?

Chrysippus In regard to things external, health, wealth, and the like, I am then all that Nature intended me to be. But there is much previous toil to be undergone. You will first sharpen your eyes on minute manuscripts, amass commentaries, and get your bellyful of outlandish terms. Last but not least, it is forbidden to be wise without repeated doses of hellebore.

Seventh dealer All this is exalted and magnanimous to a degree. But what am I to think when I find that you are also the creed of cent-per-cent,⁵ the creed of the usurer? Has *he* swallowed his hellebore? is *he* made perfect in virtue?

Chrysippus Assuredly. On none but the wise man does usury sit well. Consider. His is the art of putting two and two together, and usury is the art of putting interest together. The two are evidently connected, and one as much as the other is the prerogative of the true believer; who, not content, like common men, with simple interest, will also take interest *upon* interest. For interest, as you are probably aware, is of two kinds. There is simple interest, and there is its offspring, compound interest. Hear Syllogism on the subject. "If I take simple interest, I shall also take compound. But I *shall* take simple interest: therefore I shall take compound."

Seventh dealer And the same applies to the fees you take from your youthful pupils? None but the true believer sells virtue for a fee?

Chrysippus Quite right. I take the fee in my pupil's interest, not because I want it. The world is made up of diffusion and accumulation. I accordingly practise my pupil in the former, and myself in the latter.

⁵ [An usurer.]

Seventh dealer But it ought to be the other way. The pupil ought to accumulate, and you, “sole millionaire,” ought to diffuse.

Chrysippus Ha! you jest with me? Beware of the shaft of insoluble syllogism.

Seventh dealer What harm can that do?

Chrysippus It cripples; it ties the tongue, and turns the brain. Nay, I have but to will it, and you are stone this instant.

Seventh dealer Stone! You are no Perseus, friend?

Chrysippus See here. A stone is a body?

Seventh dealer Yes.

Chrysippus Well, and an animal is a body?

Seventh dealer Yes.

Chrysippus And you are an animal?

Seventh dealer I suppose I am.

Chrysippus Therefore you are a body. Therefore a stone.

Seventh dealer Mercy, in Heaven’s name! Unstone me, and let me be flesh as heretofore.

Chrysippus That is soon done. Back with you into flesh! Thus: Is every body animate?

Seventh dealer No.

Chrysippus Is a stone animate?

Seventh dealer No.

Chrysippus Now, you are a body?

Seventh dealer Yes.

Chrysippus And an animate body?

Seventh dealer Yes.

Chrysippus Then being animate, you cannot be a stone.

Seventh dealer Ah! thank you, thank you. I was beginning to feel my limbs growing numb and solidifying like Niobe’s. Oh, I must have you. What’s to pay?

Hermes Fifty pounds.

Seventh dealer Here it is.

Hermes Are you sole purchaser?

Seventh dealer Not I. All these gentlemen here are going shares.

Hermes A fine strapping lot of fellows, and will do the “Reaper” credit.

Zeus Don’t waste time. Next lot, — the Peripatetic!

Hermes Now, my beauty, now, Affluence! Gentlemen, if you want Wisdom for your money, here is a creed that comprises all knowledge.

Eighth dealer What is he like?

Hermes He is temperate, good-natured, easy to get on with; and his strong point is, that he is twins.

Eighth dealer How can that be?

Hermes Why, he is one creed outside, and another inside. So remember, if you buy him, one of him is called Esoteric, and the other Exoteric.

Eighth dealer And what has he to say for himself?

Hermes He has to say that there are three kinds of good: spiritual, corporeal, circumstantial.

Eighth dealer There's something a man can understand. How much is he?

Hermes Eighty pounds.

Eighth dealer Eighty pounds is a long price.

Hermes Not at all, my dear sir, not at all. You see, there is some money with him, to all appearance. Snap him up before it is too late. Why, from him you will find out in no time how long a gnat lives, to how many fathoms' depth the sunlight penetrates the sea, and what an oyster's soul is like.

Eighth dealer Heracles! Nothing escapes him.

Hermes Ah, these are trifles. You should hear some of his more abstruse speculations, concerning generation and birth and the development of the embryo; and his distinction between man, the laughing creature, and the ass, which is neither a laughing nor a carpentering nor a shipping creature.

Eighth dealer Such knowledge is as useful as it is ornamental. Eighty pounds be it, then.

Hermes He is yours.

Zeus What have we left?

Hermes There is Scepticism. Come along, Pyrrhias, and be put up. Quick's the word. The attendance is dwindling; there will be small competition. Well, who buys Lot 9?

Ninth dealer I. Tell me first, though, what do you know?

Socrates Nothing.

Ninth dealer But how's that?

Socrates There does not appear to me to *be* anything.

Ninth dealer Are not *we* something?

Socrates How do I know that?

Ninth dealer And you yourself?

Socrates Of that I am still more doubtful.

Ninth dealer Well, you *are* in a fix! And what have you got those scales for?

Socrates I use them to weigh arguments in, and get them evenly balanced, They must be absolutely equal — not a feather-weight to choose between them; then, and not till then, can I make uncertain which is right.

Ninth dealer What else can you turn your hand to?

Socrates Anything; except catching a runaway.

Ninth dealer And why not that?

Socrates Because, friend, everything eludes my grasp.

Ninth dealer I believe you. A slow, lumpish fellow you seem to be. And what is the end of your knowledge?

Socrates Ignorance. Deafness. Blindness.

Ninth dealer What! sight and hearing both gone?

Socrates And with them judgement and perception, and all, in short, that distinguishes man from a worm.

Ninth dealer You are worth money! — What shall we say for him?

Hermes Four pounds.

Ninth dealer Here it is. Well, fellow; so you are mine?

Socrates I doubt it.

Ninth dealer Nay, doubt it not! You are bought and paid for.

Socrates It is a difficult case. . . . I reserve my decision.

Ninth dealer Now, come along with me, like a good slave.

Socrates But how am I to know whether what you say is true?

Ninth dealer Ask the auctioneer. Ask my money. Ask the spectators.

Socrates Spectators? But can we be sure there are any?

Ninth dealer Oh, I'll send you to the treadmill. That will convince you with a vengeance that I am your master.

Socrates Reserve your decision.

Ninth dealer Too late. It is given.

Hermes Stop that wrangling and go with your purchaser. Gentlemen, we hope to see you here again tomorrow, when we shall be offering some lots suitable for plain men, artisans, and shopkeepers.

F.G. Fowler

2 The Fisher, a resurrection piece

Αναβιοῦντες ἢ Ἀλιεύς
Revivescentes sive Piscator
The Dead Come to Life or The Fisherman

From Fowler HW & Fowler FG. (Tr.) *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905.
Vol. 1 of 4, pp. 206-30

An autobiographic sequel to the Sale of Creeds where Lucian, who has taken upon him the name of rhetor Parrhesiades or Free Speaker, continues satirising philosophers

Socrates Stone the miscreant; stone him with many stones; clod him with clods; pot him with pots; let the culprit feel your sticks; leave him no way out. At him, Plato! come, Chrysippus, let him have it! Shoulder to shoulder, close the ranks;

Let wallet succour wallet, staff aid staff!

We are all parties in this war; not one of us but he has assailed. You, Diogenes, now if ever is the time for that stick of yours; stand firm, all of you. Let him reap the fruits of his reveling. What, Epicurus, Aristippus, tired already? 'tis too soon; ye sages,

Be men; relume that erstwhile furious wrath!

Aristotle, one more sprint. There! the brute is caught; we have you, villain. You shall soon know a little more about the characters you have assailed. Now, what shall we do with him? it must be rather an elaborate execution, to meet all our claims upon him; he owes a separate death to every one of us.

First Philosopher Impale him, say I.

Second Philosopher Yes, but scourge him first.

Third Philosopher Tear out his eyes.

Fourth Philosopher Ah, but first out with the offending tongue.

Socrates What say you, Empedocles?

Empedocles Oh, fling him into a crater; that will teach him to vilify his betters.

Plato 'Twere best for him, Orpheus or Pentheus like, to

Find death, dashed all to pieces on the rock;

so each might have taken a piece home with him.

Lucian Forbear; spare me; I appeal to the God of suppliants.

Socrates Too late; no loophole is left you now. And you know your Homer:

'Twixt men and lions, covenants are null.

Lucian Why, it is in Homer's name that I ask my boon. You will perhaps pay reverence to his lines, and listen to a selection from him:

Slay not; no churl is he; a ransom take
Of bronze and gold, whereof wise hearts are fain.

Plato Why, two can play at that game; *exempli gratia*,

Reviler, babble not of gold, nor nurse
Hope of escape from these our hands that hold thee.

Lucian Ah me, ah me! my best hopes dashed, with Homer! Let me fly to Euripides; it may be he will protect me:

Leave him his life; the suppliant's life is sacred.

Plato Does this happen to be Euripides too —

Evil men evil treated is no evil?

Lucian And will you slay me now for nought but words?

Plato Most certainly; our author has something on that point too:

Unbridled lips
And folly's slips
Invite Fate's whips.

Lucian Oh, very well; as you are all set on murdering me, and escape is impossible, do at least tell me who you are, and what harm I have done you; it must be something irreparable, to judge by your relentless murderous pursuit.

Plato What harm you have done us, vile fellow? your own conscience and your fine dialogues will tell you; you have called Philosophy herself bad names, and as for us, you have subjected us to the indignity of a public auction, and put up wise men — ay, and free men, which is more — for sale. We have reason to be angry; we have got a short leave of absence from Hades, and come up against you — Chrysippus here, Epicurus and myself, Aristotle yonder, the taciturn Pythagoras, Diogenes and all of us that your dialogues have made so free with.

Lucian Ah, I breathe again. Once hear the truth about my conduct to you, and you will never put me to death. You can throw away those stones. Or, no, keep them; you shall have a better mark for them presently.

Plato This is trifling. This day thou diest; nay, even now,

A suit of stones shalt don, thy livery due.

Lucian Believe me, good gentlemen, I have been at much pains on your behalf to slay me is to slay one who should rather be selected for commendation a kindred spirit, a well-wisher, a man after your own heart, a promoter, if I may be bold to say it, of your pursuits. See to it that you catch not the tone of our latter-day philosophers, and be thankless, petulant, and hard of heart, to him that deserves better of you.

Plato Talk of a brazen front! So to abuse us is to oblige us. I believe you are under the delusion that you are really talking to slaves; after the insolent excesses of your tongue, do you propose to chop gratitude with us?

Lucian How or when was I ever insolent to you? I have always been an admirer of philosophy, your panegyrist, and a student of the writings you left. All that comes from my pen is but what you give me; I deflower you, like a bee, for the behoof of

mankind; and then there is praise and recognition; they know the flowers, whence and whose the honey was, and the manner of my gathering; their surface feeling is for my selective art, but deeper down it is for you and your meadow, where you put forth such bright blooms and myriad dyes, if one knows but how to sort and mix and match, that one be not in discord with another. Could he that had found you such have the heart to abuse those benefactors to whom his little fame was due? then he must be a Thamyris or Eurytus, defying the Muses who gave his gift of song, or challenging Apollo with the bow, forgetful from whom he had his marksmanship.

Plato All this, good sir, is quite according to the principles of rhetoric; that is to say, it is clean contrary to the facts; your unscrupulousness is only emphasized by this adding of insult to injury; you confess that your arrows are from our quiver, and you use them against us; your one aim is to abuse us. This is our reward for showing you that meadow, letting you pluck freely, fill your bosom, and depart. For this alone you richly deserve death.

Lucian There; your ears are partial; they are deaf to the right. Why, I would never have believed that personal feeling could affect a Plato, a Chrysippus, an Aristotle; with you, of all men, I thought there was dry light. But, dear sirs, do not condemn me unheard; give me trial first. Was not the principle of your establishing — that the law of the stronger was not the law of the State, and that differences should be settled in court after due hearing of both sides? Appoint a judge, then; be you my accusers, by your own mouths or by your chosen representative; and let me defend my own case; then if I be convicted of wrong, and that be the court's decision, I shall get my deserts, and you will have no violence upon your consciences. But if examination shows me spotless and irreproachable, the court will acquit me, and then turn you your wrath upon the deceivers who have excited you against me.

Plato Ah, every cock to his own dunghill! You think you will hoodwink the jury and get off. I hear you are a lawyer, an advocate, an old hand at a speech. Have you any judge to suggest who will be proof against such an experienced corrupter as you?

Lucian Oh, be reassured. The official I think of proposing is no suspicious, dubious character likely to sell a verdict. What say you to forming the court yourselves, with Philosophy for your President?

Plato Who is to prosecute, if we are the jury?

Lucian Oh, you can do both; I am not in the least afraid; so much stronger is my case; the defence wins, hands down.

Plato Pythagoras, Socrates, what do you think? perhaps the man's appeal to law is not unreasonable.

Socrates No; come along, form the court, fetch Philosophy, and see what he has to say for himself. To condemn unheard is a sadly crude proceeding, not for us; leave that to the hasty people with whom might is right. We shall give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme if we stone a man without a hearing, professed lovers of justice as we are. We shall have to keep quiet about Anytus and Meletus, my accusers, and the jury on that occasion, if we cannot spare an hour to hear this fellow before he suffers.

Plato Very true, Socrates. We will go and fetch Philosophy. The decision shall be hers, and we will accept it, whatever it is.

Lucian Why, now, my masters, you are in a better and more law-abiding mood. However, keep those stones, as I said; you will need them in court. But where is Philosophy to be found? I do not know where she lives, myself. I once spent a long time wandering about in search of her house, wishing to make her acquaintance. Several times I met some long-bearded people in threadbare cloaks who professed to be fresh from her presence; I took their word for it, and asked them the way; but they knew considerably less about it than I, and either declined to answer, by way of concealing their ignorance, or else pointed to one door after another. I have never been able to find the right one to this day.

Many a time, upon some inward prompting or external offer of guidance, I have come to a door with the confident hope that this time I really was right; there was such a crowd flowing in and out, all of solemn persons decently habited and thoughtful-faced; I would insinuate myself into the press and go in too. What I found would be a woman who was not really natural, however skilfully she played at beauty undorned; I could see at once that the apparent *négligé* of her hair was studied for effect, and the folds of her dress not so careless as they looked. One could tell that nature was a scheme of decoration with her, and artlessness an artistic device. The white lead and the rouge did not absolutely defy detection, and her talk betrayed her real vocation; she liked her lovers to appreciate her beauty, had a ready hand for presents, made room by her side for the rich, and hardly vouchsafed her poorer lovers a distant glance. Now and then, when her dress came a little open by accident, I saw that she had on a massive gold necklace heavier than a penal collar. That was enough for me; I would retrace my steps, sincerely pitying the unfortunates whom she led by the — beard, and their Ixion-embracings of a phantom.

Plato You are right there; the door is not conspicuous, nor generally known. However, we need not go to her house; we will wait for her here in the Ceramicus. I should think it is near her hour for coming back from the Academy, and taking her walk in the Poecile; she is very regular; to be sure, here she comes. Do you see the orderly, rather prim lady there, with the kindly look in her eyes, and the slow meditative walk?

Lucian I see several answering the description so far as looks and walk and clothes go. Yet among them all the real lady Philosophy can be but one.

Plato True; but as soon as she opens her lips you will know.

Philosophy Dear me, what are Plato and Chrysippus and Aristotle doing up here, and the rest of them — a living dictionary of my teachings? Alive again? how is this? have things been going wrong down there? you look angry. And who is your prisoner? a rifler of tombs? a murderer? a temple-robber?

Plato Worse yet, Philosophy. He has dared to slander your most sacred self, and all of us who have been privileged to impart anything from you to posterity.

Philosophy And did you lose your tempers over abusive words? Did you forget how Comedy handled me at the Dionysia, and how I yet counted her a friend? Did I ever

sue her, or go and remonstrate? Or did I let her enjoy her holidays in the harmless old-fashioned way? I know very well that a jest spoils no real beauty, but rather improves it; so gold is polished by hard rubs, and shines all the brighter for it. But you seem to have grown passionate and censorious. Come, why are you strangling him like that?

Plato We have got this one day's leave, and come after him to give him his deserts. Rumours had reached us of the things he used to say about us in his lectures.

Philosophy And are you going to kill him without a trial or a hearing? I can see he wishes to say something.

Plato No; we decided to refer it all to you. If you will accept the task, the decision shall be yours.

Philosophy Sir, what is your wish?

Lucian The same, dear Mistress; for none but you can find the truth. It cost me much entreaty to get the case reserved for you.

Plato You call her Mistress now, scoundrel; the other day you were making out Philosophy the meanest of things, when before that great audience you let her several doctrines go for a pitiful threepence apiece.

Philosophy It may be that it was not Ourselves he then reviled, but some impostors who practised vile arts in our name.

Plato The truth will soon come to light, if you will hear his defence.

Philosophy Come we to the Areopagus — or better, to the Acropolis, where the panorama of Athens will be before us.

Ladies, will you stroll in the Poecile meanwhile? I will join you when I have given judgement.

Lucian Who are these, Philosophy? methinks their appearance is seemly as your own.

Philosophy This with the masculine features is Virtue; then there is Temperance, and Justice by her side. In front is Culture; and this shadowy creature with the indefinite complexion is Truth.

Lucian I do not see which you mean.

Philosophy Not see her? over there, all naked and unadorned, shrinking from observation, and always slipping out of sight.

Lucian Now I just discern her. But why not bring them all with you? there would be a fullness and completeness about that commission. Ah yes, and I should like to brief Truth on my behalf.

Philosophy Well thought of; come, all of you; you will not mind sitting through a single case — in which we have a personal interest, too?

Truth Go on, the rest of you; it is superfluous for me to hear what I know all about before.

Philosophy But, Truth dear, your presence will be useful to us; you will show us what to think.

Truth May I bring my two favourite maids, then?

Philosophy And as many more as you like.

Truth Come with me, Freedom and Frankness; this poor little adorer of ours is in trouble without any real reason; we shall be able to get him out of it. Exposure, my man, we shall not want you.

Lucian Ah yes, Mistress, let us have him, of all others; my opponents are no ordinary ruffians; they are people who make a fine show and are hard to expose; they have always some back way out of a difficulty; we must have Exposure.

Philosophy Yes, we must, indeed; and you had better bring Demonstration too.

Truth Come all of you, as you are such important legal persons.

Aristotle What is this? Philosophy, he is employing Truth against us!

Philosophy And are Plato and Chrysippus and Aristotle afraid of her lying on his behalf, being who she is?

Plato Oh, well, no; only he is a sad plausible rogue; he will take her in.

Philosophy Never fear; no wrong will be done, with madam Justice on the bench by us. Let us go up.

Prisoner, your name?

Lucian Parrhesiades, son of Alethion, son of Elanxicles.⁶

Philosophy And your country?

Lucian I am a Syrian from the Euphrates, my lady. But is the question relevant? Some of my accusers I know to be as much barbarians by blood as myself; but character and culture do not vary as a man comes from Soli or Cyprus, Babylon or Stagira. However, even one who could not talk Greek would be none the worse in your eyes, so long as his sentiments were right and just.

Philosophy True, the question was unnecessary.

But what is your profession? that at least is essential.

Lucian I profess hatred of pretension and imposture, lying, and pride; the whole loathsome tribe of them I hate; and you know how numerous they are.

Philosophy Upon my word, you must have your hands full at this profession!

Lucian I have; you see what general dislike and danger it brings upon me. However, I do not neglect the complementary branch, in which love takes the place of hate; it includes love of truth and beauty and simplicity and all that is akin to love. But the subjects for this branch of the profession are sadly few; those of the other, for whom hatred is the right treatment, are reckoned by the thousand. Indeed there is some danger of the one feeling being atrophied, while the other is over-developed.

⁶ I.e., a Free-speaker, son of Truthful, son of Exposure.

Philosophy That should not be; they run in couples, you know. Do not separate your two branches; they should have unity in diversity.

Lucian You know better than I, Philosophy. My way is just to hate a villain, and love and praise the good.

Philosophy Well, well. Here we are at the appointed place. We will hold the trial in the forecourt of Athene Polias. Priestess, arrange our seats, while we salute the Goddess.

Lucian Polias, come to my aid against these pretenders, mindful of the daily perjuries thou hearest from them. Their deeds too are revealed to thee alone, in virtue of thy charge. Thou hast now thine hour of vengeance. If thou see me in evil case, if blacks be more than whites, then cast thou thy vote and save me!

Philosophy So. Now we are seated, ready to hear your words. Choose one of your number, the best accuser you may, make your charge, and bring your proofs. Were all to speak, there would be no end. And you, Parrhesiades, shall afterwards make your defence.

Chrysippus Plato, none of us will conduct the prosecution better than you. Your thoughts are heaven-high, your style the perfect Attic; grace and persuasion, insight and subtlety, the cogency of well-ordered proof — all these are gathered in you. Take the spokesman's office and say what is fitting on our behalf. Call to memory and roll in one all that ever you said against Gorgias, Polus, Hippias, Prodicus; you have now to do with a worse than them. Let him taste your irony; ply him with your keen incessant questions; and if you will, perorate with the mighty Zeus charioting his winged car through Heaven, and grudging if this fellow get not his deserts.

Plato Nay, nay; choose one of more strenuous temper — Diogenes, Antisthenes, Crates, or yourself, Chrysippus. It is no time now for beauty or literary skill; controversial and forensic resource is what we want. This Parrhesiades is an orator.

Diogenes Let me be accuser; no need for long speeches here. Moreover, I was the worst treated of all; threepence was my price the other day.

Plato Philosophy, Diogenes will speak for us. But mind, friend, you are not to represent yourself alone, but think of us all. If we have any private differences of doctrine, do not go into that; never mind now which of us is right, but keep your indignation for Philosophy's wrongs and the names he has called her. Leave alone the principles we differ about, and maintain what is common to us all. Now mark, you stand for us all; on you our whole fame depends; shall it come out majestic, or in the semblance he has given it?

Diogenes Never fear; nothing shall be omitted; I speak for all. Philosophy may be softened by his words — she was ever gentle and forgiving — *she* may be minded to acquit him; but the fault shall not be mine; I will show him that our staves are more than ornaments.

Philosophy Nay, take not that way; words, not bludgeons; 'tis better so. But no delay now; your time-allowance has begun; and the court is all attention.

Lucian Philosophy, let the rest take their seats and vote with you, leaving Diogenes as sole accuser.

Philosophy Have you no fears of their condemning you?

Lucian None whatever; I wish to increase my majority, that is all.

Philosophy I commend your spirit. Gentlemen, take your seats. Now, Diogenes.

Diogenes With our lives on earth, Philosophy, you are acquainted; I need not dwell long upon them. Of myself I say nothing; but Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and the rest — who knows not the benefits that they conferred on mankind? I will come at once, then, to the insults to which we have been subjected by the thrice accursed Parrhesiades. He was, by his own account, an advocate; but he has left the courts and the fame there to be won, and has availed himself of all the verbal skill and proficiency so acquired for a campaign of abuse against us. We are impostors and deceivers; his audiences must ridicule and scorn us for nobodies. Did I say “nobodies”? he has made us an abomination, rather, in the eyes of the vulgar, and yourself with us, Philosophy. Your teachings are balderdash and rubbish; the noblest of your precepts to us he parodies, winning for himself applause and approval, and for us humiliation. For so it is with the great public; it loves a master of flouts and jeers, and loves him in proportion to the grandeur of what he assails; you know how it delighted long ago in Aristophanes and Eupolis, when they caricatured our Socrates on the stage, and wove farcical comedies around him. But they at least confined themselves to a single victim, and they had the charter of Dionysus; a jest might pass at holiday time, and the laughing God might be well pleased.

But this fellow gets together an upper-class audience, gives long thought to his preparations, writes down his slanders in a thick notebook, and uplifts his voice in vituperation of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and in short all of us; *he* cannot plead holiday time, nor yet any private grievance; he might perhaps be forgiven if he had done it in self-defence; but it was he that opened hostilities. Worst of all, Philosophy, he shelters himself under your name, entices Dialogue from our company to be his ally and mouthpiece, and induces our good comrade Menippus to collaborate constantly with him; Menippus, more by token, is the one deserter and absentee on this occasion.

Does he not then abundantly deserve his fate? What conceivable defence is open to him, after his public defamation of all that is noblest? On the public which listened to him, too, the spectacle of his condign punishment will have a healthy effect; we shall see no more ridicule of Philosophy. Tame submission to insult would naturally enough be taken, not for moderation, but for insensibility and want of spirit. Who could be expected to put up with his last performance? He brought us to market like a gang of slaves, and handed us over to the auctioneer. Some, I believe, fetched high prices; but others went for four or five pounds, and as for me — confound his impudence, threepence! And fine fun the audience had out of it! We did well to be angry; we have come from Hades; and we ask you to give us satisfaction for this abominable outrage.

Resurgents Hear, hear! well spoken, Diogenes; well and loyally.

Philosophy Silence in court! Time the defence. Parrhesiades, it is now your turn; they are timing you; so proceed.

Parrhesiades Philosophy, Diogenes has been far indeed from exhausting his material; the greater part of it, and the more strongly expressed, he has passed by, for reasons best known to himself. I refer to statements of mine which I am as far from denying that I made as from having provided myself with any elaborate defence of them. Any of these that have been omitted by him, and not previously emphasized by myself, I propose now to quote; this will be the best way to show you who were the persons that I sold by auction and inveighed against as pretenders and impostors; please to concentrate your vigilance on the truth or falsehood of my descriptions. If what I say is injurious or severe, your censure will be more fairly directed at the perpetrators than at the discoverer of such iniquities. I had no sooner realized the odious practices which his profession imposes on an advocate — the deceit, falsehood, bluster, clamour, pushing, and all the long hateful list, than I fled as a matter of course from these, betook myself to your dear service, Philosophy, and pleased myself with the thought of a remainder of life spent far from the tossing waves in a calm haven beneath your shadow.

At my first peep into your realm, how could I but admire yourself and all these your disciples? there they were, legislating for the perfect life, holding out hands of help to those that would reach it, commending all that was fairest and best; fairest and best — but a man must keep straight on for it and never slip, must set his eyes unwaveringly on the laws that you have laid down, must tune and test his life thereby; and that, Zeus be my witness, there are few enough in these days of ours to do.

So I saw how many were in love, not with Philosophy, but with the credit it brings; in the vulgar externals, so easy for any one to ape, they showed a striking resemblance to the real article, perfect in beard and walk and attire; but in life and conduct they belied their looks, read your lessons backwards, and degraded their profession. Then I was wroth; methought it was as though some soft womanish actor on the tragic stage should give us Achilles or Theseus or Heracles himself; he cannot stride nor speak out as a Hero should, but minces along under his enormous mask; Helen or Polyxena would find him too realistically feminine to pass for them; and what shall an invincible Heracles say? Will he not swiftly pound man and mask together into nothingness with his club, for womanizing and disgracing him?

Well, these people were about as fit to represent you, and the degradation of it all was too much for me. Apes daring to masquerade as heroes! emulators of the ass at Cyme! The Cymeans, you know, had never seen ass or lion; so the ass came the lion over them, with the aid of a borrowed skin and his most awe-inspiring bray; however, a stranger who had often seen both brought the truth to light with a stick. But what most distressed me, Philosophy, was this: when one of these people was detected in rascality, impropriety, or immorality, every one put it down to philosophy, and to the particular philosopher whose name the delinquent took in vain without ever acting on his principles; the living rascal disgraced you, the long dead; for you were not there in the flesh to point the contrast; so, as it was clear enough that *his* life was vile and disgusting, your case was given away by association with his, and you had to share his disgrace.

This spectacle, I say, was too much for me; I began exposing them, and distinguishing between them and you; and for this good work you now arraign me. So then, if I find one of the Initiated betraying and parodying the Mysteries of the two Goddesses, and if I protest and denounce him, the transgression will be mine? There is something wrong there; why, at the Games, if an actor who has to present Athene or Poseidon or Zeus plays his part badly, derogating from the divine dignity, the stewards have him whipped; well, the Gods are not angry with them for having the officers whip the man who wears their mask and their attire; I imagine they approve of the punishment. To play a slave or a messenger badly is a trifling offence, but to represent Zeus or Heracles to the spectators in an unworthy manner — that is a crime and a sacrilege.

I can indeed conceive nothing more extraordinary than that so many of them should get themselves absolutely perfect in your words, and then live precisely as if the sole object of reading and studying them had been to reverse them in practice. All their professions of despising wealth and appearances, of admiring nothing but what is noble, of superiority to passion, of being proof against splendour, and associating with its owners only on equal terms — how fair and wise and laudable they all are! But they take pay for imparting them, they are abashed in presence of the rich, their lips water at sight of coin; they are dogs for temper, hares for cowardice, apes for imitativeness, asses for lust, cats for thievery, cocks for jealousy. They are a perfect laughing-stock with their strivings after vile ends, their jostling of each other at rich men's doors, their attendance at crowded dinners, and their vulgar obsequiousness at table. They swill more than they should and would like to swill more than they do, they spoil the wine with unwelcome and untimely disquisitions, and they cannot carry their liquor. The ordinary people who are present naturally flout them, and are revolted by the philosophy which breeds such brutes.

What is so monstrous is that every man of them says he has no needs, proclaims aloud that wisdom is the only wealth, and directly afterwards comes begging and makes a fuss if he is refused; it would hardly be stranger to see one in kingly attire, with tall tiara, crown, and all the attributes of royalty, asking his inferiors for a little something more. When they want to get something, we hear a great deal, to be sure, about community of goods — how wealth is a thing indifferent — and what is gold and silver? — neither more nor less worth than pebbles on the beach. But when an old comrade and tried friend needs help and comes to them with his modest requirements, ah, then there is silence and searchings of heart, unlearning of tenets and flat renunciation of doctrines. All their fine talk of friendship, with Virtue and The Good, have vanished and flown, who knows whither? they were winged words in sad truth, empty phantoms, only meant for daily conversational use.

These men are excellent friends so long as there is no gold or silver for them to dispute the possession of; exhibit but a copper or two, and peace is broken, truce void, armistice ended; their books are blank, their Virtue fled, and they so many dogs; some one has flung a bone into the pack, and up they spring to bite each other and snarl at the one which has pounced successfully. There is a story of an Egyptian king who taught some apes the sword-dance; the imitative creatures very soon picked it up, and used to perform in purple robes and masks; for some time the show

was a great success, till at last an ingenious spectator brought some nuts in with him and threw them down. The apes forgot their dancing at the sight, dropped their humanity, resumed their apehood, and, smashing masks and tearing dresses, had a free fight for the provender. Alas for the *corps de ballet* and the gravity of the audience!

These people are just those apes; it is they that I reviled; and I shall never cease exposing and ridiculing them; but about you and your like — for there *are*, in spite of all, some true lovers of philosophy and keepers of your laws — about you or them may I never be mad enough to utter an injurious or rude word! Why, what could I find to say? what is there in your lives that lends itself to such treatment? but those pretenders deserve my detestation, as they have that of heaven. Why, tell me, all of you, what have such creatures to do with you? Is there a trace in their lives of kindred and affinity? Does oil mix with water? If they grow their beards and call themselves philosophers and look solemn, do these things make them like you? I could have contained myself if there had been any touch of plausibility in their acting; but the vulture is more like the nightingale than they like philosophers. And now I have pleaded my cause to the best of my ability. Truth, I rely upon you to confirm my words.

Philosophy Parrhesiades, retire to a further distance. Well, and our verdict? How think you the man has spoken?

Truth Ah, Philosophy, while he was speaking I was ready to sink through the ground; it was all so true. As I listened, I could identify every offender, and I was fitting caps all the time — this is so-and-so, that is the other man, all over. I tell you they were all as plain as in a picture — speaking likenesses not of their bodies only, but of their very souls.

Temperance Yes, Truth, I could not help blushing at it.

Philosophy What say you, gentlemen?

Resurgents Why, of course, that he is acquitted of the charge, and stands recorded as our friend and benefactor. Our case is just that of the Trojans, who entertained the tragic actor only to find him reciting their own calamities. Well, recite away, our tragedian, with these pests of ours for *dramatis personae*.

Diogenes I too, Philosophy, give him my need of praise; I withdraw my charges, and count him a worthy friend.

Philosophy I congratulate you, Parrhesiades; you are unanimously acquitted, and are henceforth one of us.

Parrhesiades Your humble servant. Or no, I must find more tragic words to fit the solemnity of the occasion:

Victorious might
My life's path light,
And ever strew with garlands bright!

Virtue Well, now we come to our second course; let us have in the other people and try them for their insults. Parrhesiades shall accuse them each in turn.

Parrhesiades Well said, Virtue. Syllogism, my boy, put your head out over the city and summon the philosophers.

Syllogism Oyez, oyez! All philosophers to the Acropolis to make their defence before Virtue, Philosophy, and Justice.

Parrhesiades The proclamation does not bring them in flocks, does it? They have their reasons for keeping clear of Justice. And a good many of them are too busy with their rich friends. If you want them all to come, Syllogism, I will tell you what to say.

Philosophy No, no; call them yourself, Parrhesiades, in your own way.

Parrhesiades Quite a simple matter. Oyez, oyez! All who profess philosophy and hold themselves entitled to the name of philosopher shall appear on the Acropolis for largesse; eight pounds, with a sesame cake,⁷ to each. A long beard shall qualify for a square of compressed figs, in addition. Every applicant to have with him, of temperance, justice, and self-control, any that he is in possession of, it being clearly understood that these are not indispensable, and, of syllogisms, a complete set of five, these being the condition precedent of wisdom.

Two golden talents in the midst are set,
His prize who wrangles best amongst his peers.

Just look! the ascent packed with a pushing crowd, at the very first sound of my eight pounds. More of them along the Pelasgicum, more by the temple of Asclepius, a bigger crowd still over the Areopagus. Why, positively there are a few at the tomb of Talos; and see those putting ladders against the temple of Castor and Pollux; up they climb, buzzing and clustering like a swarm of bees. In Homeric phrase, on this side are exceeding many, and on that

Ten thousand, thick as leaves and flowers in spring.

Noisily they settle, the Acropolis is covered with them in a trice; everywhere wallet and beard, flattery and effrontery, staves and greed, logic and avarice. The little company which came up at the first proclamation is swamped beyond recovery, swallowed up in these later crowds; it is hopeless to find them, because of the external resemblance. That is the worst of it, Philosophy; you are really open to censure for not marking and labelling them; these impostors are often more convincing than the true philosophers.

Philosophy It shall be done before long; at present let us receive them.

Platonists Platonists first!

Pythagoreans No, no; Pythagoreans first; our master is senior.

Stoics Rubbish! the Porch is the best.

Peripatetics Now, now, this is a question of money; Peripatetics first there!

Epicureans Hand over those cakes and fig-squares; as to the money, Epicureans will not mind waiting till the last.

⁷ [It is probably this particular passage that inspired John Ruskin to name the first of two lectures delivered to Mancunians in December 1864. Full text in our Down to Earth Series.]

Academicians Where are the two talents? none can touch the Academy at a wrangle; we will soon show you that.

Stoics Not if we know it.

Philosophy Cease your strife. Cynics there, no more pushing! And keep those sticks quiet. You have mistaken the nature of this summons. We three, Philosophy, Virtue, and Truth, are about to decide which are the true philosophers; that done, those whose lives are found to be in accord with our pleasure will be made happy by our award; but the impostors who are not truly of our kin we shall crush as they deserve, that they may no more make vain claims to what is too high for them. Ha! you fly? In good truth they do, jumping down the crags, most of them. Why, the Acropolis is deserted, except for — yes, a few have stood their ground and are not afraid of the judgement.

Attendants, pick up the wallet which yonder flying Cynic has dropped. Let us see what it contains — beans? a book? some coarse crust?

Parrhesiades Oh dear no. Here is gold; some scent; a mirror; dice.

Philosophy Ah, good honest man! such were his little necessaries for the philosophic life, such his title to indulge in general abuse and instruct his neighbours.

Parrhesiades There you have them. The problem before you is, how the general ignorance is to be dispersed, and other people enabled to discriminate between the genuine and the other sort. Find the solution, Truth; for indeed it concerns you; Falsehood must not prevail; shall Ignorance shield the base while they counterfeit the good, and you never know it?

Truth I think we had better give Parrhesiades this commission; he has been shown an honest man, our friend and your true admirer, Philosophy. Let him take Exposure with him and have interviews with all who profess philosophy; any genuine scion that he finds let him crown with olive and entertain in the Banqueting Hall; and for the rascals — ah, how many! — who are only costume philosophers, let him pull their cloaks off them, clip their beards short with a pair of common goatshears, and mark their foreheads or brand them between the eyebrows; the design on the branding iron to be a fox or an ape.

Philosophy Well planned, Truth. And, Parrhesiades, here is a test for you; you know how young eagles are supposed to be tested by the sun; well, our candidates have not got to satisfy us that they can look at light, of course; but put gold, fame, and pleasure before their eyes; when you see one remain unconscious and unattracted, there is your man for the olive; but when one looks hard that way, with a motion of his hand in the direction of the gold, first off with his beard, and then off with him to the brander.

Parrhesiades I will follow your instructions, Philosophy; you will soon find a large majority ornamented with fox or ape, and very few with olive. If you like, though, I will get some of them up here for you to see.

Philosophy What do you mean? bring them back after that stampede?

Parrhesiades Oh yes, if the priestess will lend me the line I see there and the Pirae-an fisherman's votive hook; I will not keep them long.

Priestess of Athene You can have them; and the rod to complete the equipment.

Parrhesiades Thanks; now quickly, please, a few dried figs and a handful of gold.

Priestess of Athene There.

Philosophy What is all this about?

Priestess of Athene He has baited his hook with the figs and gold, and is sitting on the parapet dangling it over the city.

Philosophy What are you doing, Parrhesiades? do you think you are going to fish up stones from the Pelasgicum?

Parrhesiades Hush! I wait till I get a bite. Posidon, the fisherman's friend, and you, dear Amphitrite, send me good fishing!

Ah, a fine bass; no, it is not; it is a gilthead.

Exposure A shark, you mean; there, see, he is getting near the hook, open-mouthed too. He scents the gold; now he is close — touching — he has it; up with him!

Parrhesiades Give me a hand with the line, Exposure; here he is. Now, my best of fishes, what do we make of you? *Salmo Cynicus*, that is what you are. Good gracious, what teeth! Aha, my brave fish, caught snapping up trifles in the rocks, where you thought you could lurk unobserved? But now you shall hang by the gills for every one to look at you. Pull out hook and bait. Why, the hook is bare; he has not been long assimilating the figs, eh? and the gold has gone down too.

Diogenes Make him disgorge; we want the bait for some more.

Parrhesiades There, then. Now, Diogenes, do you know who it is? has the fellow anything to do with you?

Diogenes Nothing whatever.

Parrhesiades Well, what do you put him at? threepence was the price fixed the other day.

Diogenes Too much. His flavour and his looks are intolerable — a coarse worthless brute. Drop him head first over the rock, and catch another. But take care your rod does not bend to breaking point.

Parrhesiades No fear; they are quite light — about the weight of a gudgeon.

Diogenes About the weight and about the wit. However, up with them.

Parrhesiades Look; what is this one? a sole? flat as a plate, thin as one of his own fillets; he gapes for the hook; down it goes; we have him; up he comes.

Diogenes What is he?

Exposure His plateship would be a Platonist.

Plato You too after the gold, villain?

Parrhesiades Well, Plato? what shall we do with him?

Plato Off with him from the same rock.

Diogenes Try again.

Parrhesiades Ah, here is a lovely one coming, as far as one can judge in deep water, all the colours of the rainbow, with gold bars across the back. Do you see, Exposure? this is the sham Aristotle. There he is; no, he has shied. He is having a good look round; here he comes again; his jaws open; caught! haul up.

Aristotle You need not apply to me; I do not know him.

Parrhesiades Very well, Aristotle; over he goes.

Hullo! I see a whole school of them together, all one colour, and covered with spines and horny scales, as tempting to handle as a hedgehog. We want a net for these; but we have not got one. Well, it will do if we pull up one out of the lot. The boldest of them will no doubt try the hook.

Exposure You had better sheathe a good bit of the line before you let it down; else he will gorge the gold and then saw the line through.

Parrhesiades There it goes. Posidon grant me a quick catch! There now! they are fighting for the bait, a lot of them together nibbling at the figs, and others with their teeth well in the gold. That is right; one soundly hooked. Now let me see, what do *you* call yourself? And yet how absurd to try and make a fish speak; they are dumb. Exposure, tell us who is his master,

Exposure Chrysippus.

Parrhesiades Ah, he must have a master with gold in his name, must he? Chrysippus, tell me seriously, do you know these men? are you responsible for the way they live?

Chrysippus My dear Parrhesiades, I take it ill that you should suggest any connexion between me and such creatures.

Parrhesiades Quite right, and like you. Over he goes head first like the others; if one tried to eat him, those spines might stick in one's throat.

Philosophy You have fished long enough, Parrhesiades; there are so many of them, one might get away with gold, hook and all, and you have the priestess to pay. Let us go for our usual stroll; and for all you it is time to be getting back to your place, if you are not to outstay your leave. Parrhesiades, you and Exposure can go the rounds now, and crown or brand as I told you.

Parrhesiades Good, Philosophy. Farewell, ye best of men. Come, Exposure, to our commission. Where shall we go first? the Academy, do you think, or the Porch?

Exposure We will begin with the Lyceum.

Parrhesiades Well, it makes no difference. I know well enough that wherever we go there will be few crowns wanted, and a good deal of branding.



H.W. Fowler