simply be joining in its fun? Notably the Scythian, the Syrian, and the Celt are well versed in Hellenic learning - is this not a form of praise? Whatever the case, we must certainly resist so dogmatic or so schematic an inference as to declare that Lucian is ‘anti-paideia’, or that he’s ‘pro-’ it. But it is possible, by way of conclusion, to rest as many others do: Lucian is complicated. A choice of metaphors is available: Lucian is an amoeba, or he is a hydra; he is hard to pin down.28 Nesselrath, in his 1990 article about how to define the genre of Lucian’s peculiar prolaliai, ends one sentence with a noncommittal, “whatever.”29 But in saying Lucian is complicated, especially in these ways of depicting exegetical conversations, perhaps we are reaching a useful observation after all. If the paideia that Lucian encountered was becoming anodyne and – a worse crime to him – boring, then complexity could itself be the point. This Roman Empire is far more expansive than the Alabama-sized peninsula that is Balkan Greece,30 and so Lucian inherently highlights the importance of alterity. Elsewhere Lucian exploded the notion that Hellenic paideia was an all-powerful force that was embraced by those foreign to it, who were then transformed for the better.31 Rather, as our three texts go on to declare, cultural transformation was a two-way street. Debate exists; debate matters; and it may have the effect of rescuing paideia from superficiality. Radical exegesis may be destabilizing, but nevertheless Lucian views it as a form of oxygen on dying embers, just in time to reinvigorate a flame, and


29 Nesselrath 1990, 111.

30 On Lucian’s “geographical thinking” in depicting the varied settings of his essays see Nasrallah 2005, 298.

31 Note Allen 2006, 151-152 on the provocatively ironic passage at Ver. hist. 2.20, where the character of “Homer” is portrayed as a Babylonian hostage (a homeros) who took up Hellenism in captivity; he had formerly been called Tigranes, an effectively clichéd name for Armenian detainees in Rome.