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Philosophy and Pedagogy in Horace Epistles I

George Brocklehurst

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George Brocklehurst
The Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London

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The conventional system of education, *enkyklios paideia*, was formalised in the Hellenistic period and to a large extent remained fixed throughout antiquity.[1] Education in the ancient world existed to promote the transmission of an established body of knowledge, about which there was wide consensus, with numeracy, music, astrology and geometry occupying a peripheral place alongside literary and rhetorical studies.[2] At the same time, *paideia* functioned as a vehicle of elite socialisation and political continuity, assimilating young boys into the rules of the dominant order and preparing them for a life of civic duty. Ancient sources indicate that philosophy was not part of the standard round of education, but that it occupied a separate position in the curriculum and attracted a very limited student intake[3], with philosophical educators employing alternative pedagogical methods and pursuing very different aims from the mainstream.

The values and techniques of mainstream education were criticised by philosophers from the classical period onwards. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates contrasts the education of the sophists, which was supposed to equip young men for public life, unfavourably with the *elenchus*, which nurtures the individual soul.[4] The contest between dialectical and rhetorical modes of education is picked up in the *Republic*, where Socrates argues that only a life-long education in philosophy can form the ideal citizen, while sophistic education corrupts its students by instilling them with false notions of right and wrong.[5] Hostility to mainstream education became commonplace in Hellenistic ethics, with Epicurus urging the young initiate to 'flee all education'[6] and praising the disciple who is 'pure of *paideia*'[7]. By the same token, the early Stoa regarded the cyclical arts as useful only insofar that they served virtue, with Seneca later dismissing the study of grammar and rhetoric as contributing little to the good life, since such learning was motivated by material ambition.[8] Similar ideas are encountered throughout the philosophical successions.[9]

For the most part, philosophy existed in contention with the mainstream, with philosophical educators of different backgrounds believing that *enkyklios paideia*, especially in its rhetorical phases, failed to instruct students in virtue. This paper situates Horace's satire of Roman educators and institutions

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[1] Cribiore (2001a) 8.
[2] For broader treatments of ancient education, see Marrou (1956); Morgan (1998); Cribiore (2001a). On Roman education and its critics, see Bonner (2012) and Maurice (2013).
[3] Cribiore (2001a) 3.
[4] *Gorg.* 519d-520a.
[5] *Rep.* 498b-c. Cf. Nightingale (2001) on educational themes in the *Republic.*
[6] Diog. Laert. 10.6.
[7] Ath. 13.588a.
[8] On Stoic pedagogy, see Pire (1958.) On the later tradition, Reydams-Scils (2010). On Seneca and the Roman imperial Stoic pedagogy, Verbeke (1965); Schafer (2001).
[9] On the evidence for Cynic pedagogy, Höistad (1948); Sluiter (2005).

within the longstanding ancient tradition of philosophical critiques of education. It concludes that the first book of *Epistles*, drawing on an eclectic range of philosophical-pedagogical techniques and traditions, sets out a virtue-based system of education which is opposed to the materialist values of mainstream Roman pedagogy.

In the first place, the *Epistles* are poems about moral guidance, therapy and education. As McCarter (2015) has shown, the first book not only dramatises Horace's own 're-education' in moral philosophy (Ep. 1.1.11 *quid verum atque decens*) but also portrays him in the role of philosophical mentor to others.[10] To his young correspondents, who number fellow-poets, soldiers, travelers and adolescent students of rhetoric, Horace offers practical moral advice, mixed in with satirical critiques of luxury, commerce and urban living, together with periodic attacks against mainstream Roman educational institutions and professionals.[11] Both the stated moral-therapeutic aims of the collection and its satirical targeting of schoolteachers warrant a close investigation into the pedagogical strategy of the *Epistles*.[12] I will be arguing that the sustained contrast of philosophy with conventional forms of Roman education reflects the stereotyped preference of philosophers for virtue-based models of education over the standard round of *paideia*.

One of the benefits of a pedagogical reading of the *Epistles* is that it offers one plausible literary explanation for Horace's choice of the epistolary form. In antiquity, the art of writing letters, introduced under the grammarian and later perfected at the school of rhetoric, was an important part of a student's literary and rhetorical training. Theon of Alexandria and the sophist Nicolaus in the 5th c. allude to the practice of writing epistles in connection with the preliminary exercises of *ethopoeia* ('impersonation'), while the handbooks of model letters collected in Ps-Demetrius and Ps-Libanius, suggest that this exercise was widespread.[13] Looking ahead to later epistolary educators like Fronto and Libanius, it is also clear that letters would have been used as a means of continuing an educational course during periods of separation, with a student's letters to his teacher doubling as both school exercises and real communication.[14]

There is also abundant evidence that epistles served an important role in philosophical education. Within Epicureanism, it has been argued that epistolography provided a medium for disseminating doctrine across geographically dispersed communities.[15] Ferri (1993), Harrison (1995), Armstrong (2004) and Morrison (2007) all believe that Epicurean traditions of letter-writing motivated Horace's choice of the epistolary form. Cucchiarelli, moreover, identifies a number of similarities between the Platonic letters, Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* and the first book of the *Epistles*, highlighting the youth of the recipients relative to the senders in each collection, the comparable function of moral criticism

[10] McCarter (2015) 62, *passim.*
[11] Bonner (1972) establishes the cultural context of the 'street-school' topos in *Epistles* 1.1 and 1.20. Reckford discusses the mocking school children of the first epistle in the context of the idea of the *ludus*. The topic of education in the epistles has otherwise not received sustained attention.
[12] This paper uses the term 'pedagogy' to refer to the education not just of children but of students of all ages. Horace is forty-four years old (*Ep.* 1.20.24-5) when he claims he began relearning the 'rudiments' (*Ep* 1.1.27) of philosophy. Epicurus famously accepted students from all age groups, cf. Asmis (2001) 210.
[13] Cribiore (2001a) 216.
[14] Libanius reproaches an ex-student for not writing to him in spite of the fact that he knows the epistolary art (*Epist.* 777.6). In another letter, he exhorts the young man to keep on writing epistles in order to strengthen his professional communication (*Epist.* 300.4). Cf. Cribiore (2001a) 217.
[15] Cucchiarelli (2019) 47.

and the recurring contrast between the recipients' worldly obligations and philosophy.[16] Writing on Seneca's letters, John Schafer suggests that the collection of epistles is the most appropriate format for dramatising a course of philosophical instruction, given that a physical setting (for instance, a Horatian *sermo*) 'impose[s] difficulties…concerning choice of detail.'[17] Whether or not this longstanding association between letter-writing and educational instruction motivated Horace's choice of the epistle form, the book of letters is clearly well-suited to representing the application of therapeutic and reciprocal criticism and for dramatising a course of education in a reflexive, essay-like manner.

This paper begins by examining Horace's satire of elementary education in the first epistle, where he represents two kinds of 'elementary' learning, the basic instruction in literacy offered by 'street teachers' in Rome's financial district and the poet's own 're-education' in the basic doctrines of moral philosophy. I will place the 'street-school' within its cultural context as a proletarian educational institution and seek to define more clearly what Horace intends by the 'philosophical elements.' I will then turn to the final epistle, where Horace pictures the afterlife of his collection as it is transformed into a schoolbook/*magister ludi*. Finally, I will consider how Horace contrasts philosophy with more elite forms of literary and rhetorical education in the correspondence with Lollius Maximus (1.2 and 1.17.)

The Elements

The first epistle parallels two forms of elementary education, the philosophical and the mainstream. At the same time as he declares his intention to relearn the principle doctrines of moral philosophy, Horace contrasts the object of his study to satirical effect with the elementary education provided at the Roman 'street-school' (*ludus litterarius*), where to learn the 'elements' meant to receive basic instruction in literacy. This epistle plays on several meanings of the word *ludus* and its cognates, emphasising the educational theme. In the opening address, Horace begs Maecenas to retire him from his circle of poets, which he compares to a gladiatorial training school (*ludus*): *Maecenas iterum antiquo me includere ludo? / Non eadem est aetas, non mens* (3-5). Promising to give up on 'verses and other nonsense' (*nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono*, 10), he adopts the pose of a slave begging freedom from his *lanistra*, forecasting the end of *Epist*. 1.20 where his collection will be imagined as a fugitive slave eager to escape into the world. Having grown out of the 'games' (*ludicra*) of his younger years, Horace now dedicates himself to philosophy (*quid verum atque decens*), a more fitting use of *otium* for a man entering middle age.[18] He starts from the elements:

> *restat ut his ego me ipse regam solerque elementis* (27).

[16] Cucchiarelli (2019) 46ff.
[17] Schafer (2001) 35.
[18] Cf. *Epist*. 1.14.36 *nec lusisse pudet, sed non incidere ludum*; 2.2.214 *lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:* Philod. *Anth. Pal.* 5.112 = *GPh* 3268-73 G.-P., spec.5 = 3272 παίζειν ὅτε καιρός, ἐπαίξαμεν**.** The final epistle places Horace at the significant age of forty-five (1.20.27) at which, according to Varro (*Cens.* 14.2), a Roman man ceased to be a *iuventus* and became a *senior*.

> It remains that I should seek guidance and consolation for myself from these simple lessons (trans. Davie (2011) *hic et infra*)

The notion of the 'elements' of philosophy is familiar from the Theaetetus, where Plato compares the student taking her first steps in philosophy to a child practising the elements (*stoicheia*) of speech.[19] The concept of the philosophical 'element' was important in the 'basic stage' of Epicurean education, which involved memorising collections of authoritative texts and sayings

> ἃ δέ σοι συνεχῶς παρήγγελλον, ταῦτα καὶ πρᾶττε καὶ μελέτα, στοιχεῖα τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν ταῦτ' εἶναι διαλαμβάνων.[20]
>
> Do and practise what I always tell you, knowing that these are the elements of the good life (my trans.)

In this passage from the Epicurean *Letter to Menoeceus*, the 'elements of the good life' (στοιχεῖα τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν) are the basic doctrines of Epicureanism. These were the founding texts, which included both gnomic collections like the Κύριαι Δόξαι (*Principal Doctrines*) or the Vatican Sayings as well as Epicurus' epistolary works and were assigned to the student to memorise at the basic stage of her training.[21] As Braicovich (2017) shows, the memorisation of these collections, rather than being a process of mechanical repetition comparable to rote-learning, as Cicero has it,[22] was in fact an active, collaborative process which involved close communication between the student and her mentor. The student was instructed to reflect deeply on the sentences and epistles she read and, with the aid of her teacher, who acted as interpreter, would learn to appropriate Epicurus' doctrines as a personal standard of conduct and gain a deep understanding of their significance and consequences.[23] Horace's study of the elements closely resembles this practice, as it entails the habitual (*soler*) reading of introductory texts, pictured as a means to attaining a state of personal sovereignty and independence, or *autarchia* (*regam*).

Epicureans characterised the benefit of reading the principle doctrines as a 'four-fold remedy' (*tetrapharmakos*),[24] playing on the traditional metaphor of philosophical instruction as medical treatment.[25] This idea is picked up by Horace, who invokes the 'words and expressions' that soothe pain and cure disease (*sunt verba et voces quibus hunc lenire dolorem / possis et magnam morbi deponere partem*, 35-35) and the 'book' which, read thrice over, can cure any moral disorder (*invidus*, *iracundus*, *iners*, *vinosus*, *amator*, 38). Cucchiarelli believes that the book Horace has in mind here, rather than

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[19] *Theaet.* 202d8-e1.
[20] *Ep. Men.* 123.
[21] Asmis (2001) 216-7. Armstrong (2004) 279-80 identifies a number of the Vatican Sayings reworked in *Ep.* 1.2.
[22] *Nat. D.* 1.72. Cf. Booth (1981) 7-8.
[23] Braicovich (2017) 148: 'El destino de las epítomes, si esta suposición es correcta, consistía en ser estudiadas en forma detenida por los discípulos en el seno de una comunidad de aprendizaje (ya sea bajo la guía de un tutor específico, como sugiere convincentemente Asmis, o bajo una modalidad más casual), y es ese horizonte el que ponía a disposición del discípulo las argumentaciones que respaldaban las doctrinas expuestas en forma sintética en las epítomes.'
[24] Memorisation allowed the Epicurean trainee to arrive at the same discoveries as Epicurus by following a similar process of reasoning; Asmis (2001) 217. Braicovich (2017) is certain the letters would have been counted among the initiatory texts of Epicureanism.
[25] Cf. Nussbaum (2009).

being the collection of epistles itself, as Harrison imagines,[26] is in fact the Epicurean *tetrapharmakos*, the compilation of doctrines and epistles whose effect was compared in antiquity to that of a strong medicine,[27] with the 'rites' (*piacula*) which Horace mentions presumably standing for the mnemonic and hermeneutic methods that formed the core of Epicurean education at the initiatory stage.[28] Horace's earlier claim that he is not bound to swear by the precepts of any teacher (*nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri*, 14) suggests that his reading of this *libellus*, which may also be taken, in line with Horace's professed philosophical eclecticism, as an emblem of the basics of moral philosophy more generally, will be one of active, independent self-critique, rather than one of passive assimilation.[29]

According to McCarter (2015), the first epistle differentiates Horace's education from that of the young boys pictured receiving their lesson in the 'elements' at an open-air school beneath the arcades of Janus.[30] The setting of the schoolroom and the character of the mischievous schoolboy are frequent in Horace's later works[31] and feature prominently in the first and final poems of *Epistles* I. Stanley Bonner (1972) establishes the cultural context of the Horatian 'street-school' (*ludus litterarius*), which, it appears, was an institution which taught basic literacy and numeracy to children of the plebeian class preparing to enter a commercial career.

In the first epistle, Janus occupies the role of teacher, while in *Epist*. 1.20, it is the collection of epistles itself that is transformed into the *magister ludi* teaching children their elements, following a career as a prostitute. In *Epist*. 1.1, the children are practising their elements, which, in the context of primary education, were simple expressions and sentences for practising literacy:

> *'O cives, cives, quaerenda pecunia primum est;*
> *virtus post nummos': haec Ianus summus ab imo*
> *prodocet, haec recinunt iuuenes dictata senesque.*
> *[laevo suspensi loculos tabulamque lacerto]*
> *est animi tibi, sunt mores, est lingua fidesque,*
> *sed quadringentis sex septem milia desunt:*
> *plebs eris. at pueri ludentes 'rex eris' aiunt*
> *'si recte facies'.* (53-64)
>
> 'O citizens, citizens, first you must seek money; virtue after cash': this is the rule proclaimed by Janus from top to bottom, this the instruction that young and old alike chant back, dangling satchels and slate from left arm. You have sense, you have morals, you have eloquence and honesty, but you are a few thousands short of the four

[26] Harrison (1995) 52.
[27] Cucchiarelli (2019) *ad loc.*
[28] McCarter (2015) 67ff.and Cucchiarelli (2019) *ad loc.* also remark on the magical language of these lines. On the Socratic dialectician as sorcerer, *Charm.*. 157a-c, 176b (the magical power of songs); *Phd.* 114d; *Men.* 80a; Xen *Mem.* 2.6.10. On the idea that philosophical texts grant magical protection, *PHerc.* 465, a sentence of Epicharmis defining *apophylake*.
[29] Braicovich (2016).
[30] For this line of argument, see McCarter (2015) 62.
[31] *Epist*. 2.1.99; 2.142; *AP* 159.

> hundred; you will prove to be a nonentity. Yet boys at play cry, 'Play by the rules and you'll be ruler!'

Here we have another *ludus*, 'with Janus as master and the citizens of Rome his pupils.'[32] These lines, which call to mind the schoolboys learning their elements in the first satire,[33] show students of all ages (*iuuenes…senesque*) taking dictation from Janus, the god of financial enterprise. While *elementa* tends to be translated as 'ABC's,' the students of Janus are not reciting the alphabet, but rather, as Bonner demonstrates, short example sentences (*O cives…nummos*), called out by the magister and repeated back (*recinunt*) by the class, one syllable at a time.[34] Seneca criticises this exercise (*syllabarum enarratio*) as one kind of educational activity which renders no moral benefit to the student, unlike the study of the liberal arts, especially philosophy.[35] Prejudice against the person whose training has been limited to the elements was common among elites in antiquity and was a standard topic of philosophical critiques of mainstream education. According to Plato, Protagoras accused his contemporaries of being little better than elementary teachers.[36] Protagoras in turn was abused by Epicurus as a 'village schoolmaster',[37] referring to his sophistic activity, with Nausiphanes using the same insult once more against Epicurus.[38]

It is clear that Horace intends something similar to Seneca by creating a parallel between the elements of moral philosophy and those of Roman primary instruction, setting the spiritual aims of the former against the materialist ethos of mainstream pedagogy. Where the elements of Horace's virtue-based educational programme 'profit rich and poor alike' (*aeque pauperibus prodest, lucupletibus aeque*, 25), the streetschool privileges material advancement over ethics (*virtus post nummos*, 54) and discriminates on the basis of social status (*plebs eris*, 59).[39] In the *Ars Poetica*, Horace will associate the primary stage of Roman education with commercial greed,[40] so, at this school, good moral conduct comes second to profit (*rem facias, rem, / si possis, recte, si non, quocumque modo rem*, 65-66). The boys' rhyme (*rex eric…si recte facies*) makes a mockery of Janus' lesson and aligns them with Horace's moral philosophy (*regam*, 27)[41] while, for Reckford, these boys are more serious in the end and more in touch with the ultimate reality than their teacher.[42]

Needless to say, classical philosophy tended to regard the desire for social and material advancement as a moral danger. On the other hand, people of low income and status in antiquity naturally hoped that learning literacy would bring their children a more prosperous future.[43] Horace's first epistle pitches the basic stage of moral-philosophical education, characterised by the quasi-magical effect of reading

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[32] Mayer *ad loc.*
[33] *Sat.* 1.1.25-26 *ut pueris dant crustula blandi / doctores, elementa velint ut discere prima.*
[34] Bonner (1972) 513.
[35] *Epist.* 88.3.
[36] *Prt.* 318e.
[37] *Diog. Laert.* 10.8; cf. Ath. 8.354c-d.
[38] Evidence for the prejudice against school teachers is collected by Booth (1981). Since Epicurean pedagogy demanded the memorisation of basic tenets, it could always be compared mockingly to rote-learning under the schoolmaster, Cic. *Nat. D.* 17.2.
[39] Unlike Epicurean education, which, as Asmis (2001) shows, did not discriminate on grounds of class, wealth or gender.
[40] *aerugo et cura peculi, AP* 335-332.
[41] Cf. Cribiore (2001a) 165 on the pedagogical uses of nursery rhymes (*nenia*, 63).
[42] Reckford (2002) 8-9.
[43] Cf. Cribiore (2001a) 249. On the materialist aims of mainstream education, see Lucian's personification of Lady Rhetoric as the river Nile surrounded by wealth and power (*Rhetorum praecepto* 6). For parents' claim that education will bring their sons wealth, John Chrysostom *PG Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 47. 357.21-28.

and criticising elementary ethical texts like the Epicurean *tetrapharmakos*, against mainstream Roman elementary schooling, where learning your letters by passive ingestion and repetition was hoped to render a social and material benefit to the student. It becomes clear from the first epistle that Horace is interested in contrasting philosophical pedagogy with mainstream forms of education for satirical purpose.

The schoolroom setting occurs once more at the end of the collection, where Horace foresees the publication of his epistles as ending in their transformation into a school textbook. The final poem dispenses with the collection's epistolary conceit, even imagining a more permanent format for the work (*pumice mundus*, 1.20.2).[44] It opens with a direct address to the collection (*liber*), which might at the same time be taken for Horace's slave-secretary, with the circumstances of publication resembling the career of a freedman who, after a life of sex work, ends his days as a *magister ludi*. The poet, who was once so anxious for his *carmina* to be conveyed straight into the hands of the emperor, now resigns himself to much less controllable circumstances.

The imagined afterlife of the *Epistles* has been described in terms of 'degradation.'[45] Horace's reluctance to publish his work suggests the attitude of Plato in the *Phaedrus*[46] and the second letter: 'have a care lest one day you should repent of what has been divulged improperly… It is not possible that what is written down should not get divulged [οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν τὰ γραφέντα μὴ οὐκ ἐκπεσεῖν].[47] Moreover, the book/slave's final transformation into magister, or school textbook, calls to mind Horace's statement in the first satire: 'you are mad to want your poems dictated in the common schools' (*an tua demens / vilibus in ludis dictari carmina malis*, *Sat*. 1.10).[48]

In the ancient world, primary school teachers occupied a low social status. Accusing one's father of being a primary teacher was a common insult and authors from Demosthenes to Libanius expressed contempt for members of this profession, which, in the Roman world, was typically practised by lower class freeborn men who sold their meagre knowledge for a small income. Callimachus was derided for having worked as a primary teacher and he, in turn, in his fifth Iamb ridicules a schoolteacher who was accused of molesting children.[49] That becoming a primary teacher was considered a particularly harsh fall is suggested by a well-known epigram of Aratus: 'I lament for Diotimos, who sits on stones teaching the children of Gargara their ABC's.' [50] This longstanding ancient prejudice provides context for Horace's anxiety that his epistles will end up being used as material for dictation exercises in the *ludus*, an anxiety which, as Juvenal proves, was well-founded.[51]

Eager to escape the 'chaste seal and key' of its box, the liber finds its way to the bookshops of the Sosii, here doubling for pimps (prostes, 2), from where he wins the praises of the whole city.[52] The setting of the book stalls (*Vortumnum Ianumque*) calls back to the first epistle, where the commercial arcades of Janus resounded with the dictations of schoolmasters. After travelling the provinces, youth will desert

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[44] Indicating a book-roll rather than the *pugillares/codicilli,* the usual format for epistles, notetaking and school exercises; cf. Cribiore (2001a) 149.
[45] Cf. Oliensis (1995).
[46] *Phdr.* 274c-277a.
[47] Plat. *Epist 2* 314b-c.
[48] Horace will nevertheless emphasise the positive role that a poet should play in the education of young men at *Epist.* 2.1.126-9.
[49] Cf. Cribiore (2001a) 37.
[50] Anth. Pal. 11.437.
[51] Juv. 7.226-7 *quot stabant pueri, cum totus decolor esset / Flaccus et haereret nigro fuligo Maroni*.
[52] Cf. Cribiore (2001a) 146 on the humble profession of bookseller. This edition was probably not of the first quality.

the book before at last, returning to Rome, he ends his life as a teacher of the *ludus*: *hoc quoque te manet, ut pueros elementa docentem / occupet extremis in vicis balba senectus* (17-18). The phrase *extremis in vicis*, as Bonner shows, does not indicate a suburban setting, but rather a 'crossway,' implying the ancient image of the trivium or quadrivium as a metaphor for the lowest divisions of the liberal arts: knowledge obtained 'at the streetcorner.'[53] In the first epistle, the street-school was associated with the poor student's prospects of social and financial improvement (*rem facias*, 1.1.65), and in 1.16 Horace criticises the man who stoops to pick up a penny at the streetcorner (*in triviis*), calling him 'no better than a slave' (1.16.65).

The collection ends on a short biographical note, which could be construed either as a kind of 'author's bio' included with the published work or as part of the magister's lesson. These lines ring a deliberate note of banality, as the author is reduced to a series of dry biographical facts.[54] Before, Horace set out to abandon 'verses and other nonsense' (*ludicra*) and to devote himself to moral philosophy. Now, he looks ahead to a time when his collection, once intended for an intimate elite readership, is degraded to the status of a schoolbook used for teaching children their elements, forgetting the serious moral intentions of the collection.

Philosophy and Elite Education

So far, we have seen how Horace uses the satirical topos of the 'street-school' at the opening and the close of the collection to represent the materialist values of traditional Roman education in opposition to his personal virtue-based philosophical programme. It may be objected that the *ludus litterarius* is a proletarian institution, and that, as such, it does not represent the values of all mainstream education, but only one debased manifestation of it. In the final section, I will attempt to show how Horace mobilises classical philosophical critiques of *paideia* to contrast elite Roman education unfavourably with philosophy. I will be focusing on Horace's allusions to the literary and rhetorical education of Lollius Maximus, the son of the consul mentioned at the end of *Epist*. 1.20, and the only addressee to receive more than one letter (1.2 and 1.18).

Ancient sources indicate that there were three phases of schooling in the traditional Greco-Roman system. We have already discussed the elementary stage, which taught basic literacy and numeracy. Children of the plebeian class learnt their elements at the *ludus litterarius*, while elite children studied under a private tutor, usually an older slave of their household. Progress onwards from the elementary stage was guaranteed only by social status, with elite students going on to study under a grammarian before graduating to the school of rhetoric, finishing their formal education at the age of twenty or so. The move to study under a grammarian began the process of teaching boys how members of the elite talked and behaved. While fundamentally literary in character, with an emphasis on grammar, mastery of the canon, oratorical composition and performance, this stage of Roman education was also geared

[53] Cf. Bonner (1972) 517.

[54] Ending an autobiography with a note of one's age at time of writing was traditional, cf. *Res Gestae* 35.2: *cum scripsi haec, annum agebam septuagesumum*. On forty-five as an important birthday in the Roman world, see n.18.

towards socialisation and preparation for a public career.[55] As mentioned above, there was no place on the standard curriculum for philosophy, with Seneca contrasting the regular round of literary and rhetorical education with those higher studies which have as their object the pursuit of virtue.[56]

The contest of philosophy and rhetoric is flagged in the opening clause of *Epist.* 1.2:

> *Troiani belli scriptorem, Maxime Lolli,*
> *dum tu declamas Romae, Praeneste relegi* (1-20)
>
> Lollius Maximus, while you have been declaiming at Rome, Praeneste has found me rereading the poet of the Trojan War...

In Horace's time, the verb *declamo* had the particular meaning of undertaking an exercise in declamation.[57] In both the grammatical schools and the schools of rhetoric, teachers assigned poetry as the basis of exercises in 'impersonation' (*ethopoeia*/*prosopopoeia*), where the student would imagine himself in the position of some character from history or poetry at a critical point in their life, to try and speak as he or she might have under the circumstances, with papyrus evidence suggesting the *Iliad* inspired the majority of ethopoeiac exercises.[58] Ancient educators often extolled Homer as beneficial to the future orator,[59] while Cribiore suggests that Roman education in particular relied on the teacher's digestion of the Homeric poems, such as Horace demonstrates in this epistle.[60]

We may take *scriptorem*, then, as the object of both verbs, as Horace compares two ways of engaging with Homer's text, corresponding, as we shall see, to two differing kinds of literary pedagogy. While Lollius is preparing an oration for school based on some episode in Homer, Horace has moved on from his study of the 'elements' and is now 're-reading' the Homeric poems.[61] The idea of using literature as a moral guide was common in ancient education, both in its mainstream and philosophical manifestations.[62] One of the most instructive works in this connection is Plutarch's *How a Young Person should study Poetry*. This treatise, whose method closely resembles that of Horace in this epistle, details how, with the help of an enlightened teacher, the student can draw moral benefit from his reading of Homer and use him in preparation for serious philosophical study.[63] Like Plutarch's model teacher, Horace, whose interpretation of the Homeric poems derives from Philodemus' treatise *On the Good King* according to Homer, highlights the various positive and negative moral exempla which the poems contain, with an emphasis on matters of moral interest (*quid virtus et quid sapientia*, 17). Horace's moralising of the Homeric characters, whose behaviour Lollius will do well to contemplate as he prepares to enter public life, is supposed to lead the young student to a more philosophical encounter with literature. Homer is not to be valued as material for classroom exercises, but as a

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[55] Watts (2015) 237 n.88.
[56] Cf. Schafer (2001).
[57] Cucchiarelli (2019) *ad loc.*
[58] Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.52-3, Liban. *Decl.* 3.4. Cf. Bonner (2012) 267-8.
[59] Dionysius *De imitat.* Epitome 2; Quint. Inst. 10.31-130.
[60] Cribiore (2001a) 227.
[61] This unusual verb brings to mind Pliny the younger's exhortation to read the same authors again and again in order to expand one's comprehension (*Epist.* 7.9.15).
[62] Cf. Bonner (2012) 263ff.
[63] Plut. *Mor.* 17d-e; Hunter (2014) 26-7.

propaedeutic to serious moral study. As we have seen, this same attitude characterises Horace's hopes for his own poetry: to be a work of serious moral philosophy, not merely a schoolbook.

Horace resumes the pose of philosophical *praeceptor* when we meet Lollius again in 1.18. In this letter, he professes to act as an advisor to the young student, who is now beginning to make useful connections at the imperial court and wants to know how to please his patron without coming across as a false friend (*professus amicum*, 2) or exposing himself to ridicule. The importance of distinguishing flatterers from friends was a typical concern of ancient moral philosophy, as evidenced by Aristotle's interest in the topic,[64] Theophrastus' portrait of the flatterer[65] and the Cynic commonplace that unbridled frankness is the mark of the true sage.[66] While the concept of parrhesia has a long philosophical pedigree, Horace's advice here is chiefly drawn from Philodemus' treatise *Peri Parrhesias* (*'On Frank Speech'*), whose influence on this epistle is assessed by Kemp (2010). As a recent essay by Braicovich (2016) shows, this text was read in antiquity as a pedagogical manual, and so the fact that Horace draws directly on this work suggests that his advice applies not only to context of social patronage but also to the pedagogic connection between himself and the young Lollius.[67]

He begins by explaining to Lollius that there are two kinds of parasite (*scurra*):

> *alter in obsequium plus aequo pronus et imi*
> *derisor lecti sic nutum diuitis horret,*
> *sic iterat voces et verba cadentia tollit,*
> *ut puerum saevo credas dictata magistro*
> *reddere vel partes mimum tractare secundas;*
> *alter rixatur de lana saepe caprina et*
> *propugnat nugis armatus: 'scilicet ut non*
> *sit mihi prima fides?' et 'vere quod placet ut non*
> *acriter elatrem? pretium aetas altera sordet.'*
> *ambigitur quid enim? Castor sciat an Dolichus plus;*
> *Brundisium Minuci melius via ducat an Appi.* (10-20)
>
> The one man inclines more than is appropriate towards compliance, and, a mocker on the lowest couch, so reveres the rich man's nod, so repeats his words and picks up his remarks as they fall unnoticed, that you'd believe it was a schoolboy repeating the lessons dictated by a severe teacher, or someone performing the second part of a mime. The other comes to blows often over goat's wool, and fights his corner armed with trifles: 'To think, if you please, that I shouldn't be believed before anyone else, that I shouldn't bark out fiercely what I really think! A second life isn't reward enough.'

[64] *NE* 1126b11-1127a12; *Eud*. 1233b40-1234a3.
[65] *Char.* 2.
[66] Cf. Yona (2018) 52 on the philosophical background to flattery and frank speech; Sluiter (2005) on *parrhesia* in Cynic didactics.
[67] Braicovich (2016) 11: 'la interpretación pedagógica todavía representa el modelo más adecuado de abordaje del tratado.'

> Well, what's the point at issue? Whether Castor or Dolichos has more skill; whether the Minucian or the Appian Way is the better road to Brundisium.

The use of 'character-types' to exemplify negative moral traits was a common tool of ancient philosophical instruction. Plutarch identifies the use of 'examples' (*paradeigmata*) as one of the most effective pedagogical aids,[68] while Philodemus refers to the technique of 'setting before the eyes' as an important method within Epicurean instruction.[69] In the *Satires*, we learn that Horace's father conducted ethical investigations on his son's behalf by 'inferring' (*notando*) different character flaws (*quaeque vitiorum*) by means of *exempla*. [70]The use of examples, therefore, again places Horace in the role of philosophical critic.

Calling back again to the first epistle, Horace compares the first *scurra* to a schoolboy taking dictation (*dictata*, 13) from a stern master.[71] The parasite's impressions of his host fall *cadentia* ('unregarded')[72] by the company, with the comparison to the mime suggesting an excessively subservient attitude. The second *scurra*, meanwhile, arrives at the reception 'armed with trifles' (*nugis armatus*, 16), ready to drag the guests into trivial debates. His questions - "do we say goats are covered in 'hair' or 'wool'?" "Who is more skillful, Castor or Dolichos?" - suggest the recondite controversies of the grammarians, whose love of pointless questions and debates (*erotemata*/*quaestiones*), popular in antiquity both as schoolroom exercises and as symposiac entertainment, was a common target of ridicule.[73] It features together with the dictation of the elements on Seneca's catalogue of morally useless kinds of learning[74] and in the following epistle, Horace will warn that the 'games' of the grammarians give way to all kinds of intemperance.[75]

Although this epistle is clearly grounded in the stratified world of patronage, rather than the schoolroom or lecture hall, it nevertheless demands to be read in terms of education. The symposiac setting is traditional in philosophical illustrations of *parrhesia* and *kolakeia* ('flattery'),[76] since it was a convenient setting for displaying different social 'types.' At the same time, however, dining also played an important role in the socialisation of young men and learning how to behave within elite male groups was considered a necessary part of education outside of the classroom. Having interpreted the moral lessons of Homer in *Epistle* 1.2, Horace invokes another literary example favoured by ancient educators,[77] this time from Euripides, to encourage Lollius to join in with his patron's *studia*, instructing the young man neither to praise his own tastes nor to criticise those of his benefactor:

> *Nec tua laudabis studia aut aliena reprendes,*
> *nec, cum venari volet ille, poemata panges.*
> *gratia sic fratrum geminorum Amphionis atque*

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[68] Plut. *On the Education of Children*, 16c-d.
[69] *De lib. Dic.* 42.1ff. Cf. Tsouna (2007) 93.
[70] 1.4.106. Yona (2018) 68: 'manifest[ing] patterns of observable behaviour.'
[71] Cf. *Ep.* 1.1.55 *dictata*.
[72] Mayer *ad loc.*
[73] Cribiore (2001a) 209 quotes a graffito from Cyrene: 'Question: Who was the father of Priam's children?' Cf. Lucian *Amores* 45.
[74] *Epist.* 88.20.
[75] *Epist*. 1.19.35-49.
[76] See Yona 52: the earliest extended portrayal of the *kolax* appears in the fragments of Eupolis' comic play *Flatterers*, which contains references to the sophist Protagoras of Abdera as a parasite at the home of a wealthy Athenian patron (*PGC* 5.157-8).
[77] Cf. Cribiore (2001b).

Zethi dissiluit, donec suspecta severo
Conticuit lyra. fraternis cecisse putatur
moribus Amphion: tu cede potentis amici
lenibus imperiis, quotiensque educet in agros
Aeoliis onerata plagis iumenta canesque,
Surge et inhumanae senium depone Camenae,
cenes ut pariter pulmenta laboribus empta.
Romanis sollemne viris opus, utile famae vitaeque et membris. (39-50)

Be sure not to praise your own favourite pursuits or to criticize those of others, and when he wishes to hunt, be sure not to be penning verse. This was how the goodwill between the two brothers Amphion and Zethus was severed, until the lyre that had earned the one's stern look of distrust fell silent. It's thought that Amphion yielded to his brother's mood: you, too, must yield to a powerful patron's gentle commands, and whenever he takes out into the country his hounds and his mules, weighed down with Aetolian nets, up you get and cast aside the glum spirit of your unsociable Muse, so that you may share his dinner, eating food bought with effort; this is the customary task of Roman men, of benefit to reputation, life, and limb alike...

This scene, from Euripides' *Antiope* (F 212-5), is cited in a well-known passage of Plato's *Gorgias*, where Socrates' opponent Callicles makes the case that while it is fine for a young man to study philosophy, it is shameful to approach it too seriously or to carry it far on into later life:

ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πάνυ εὐφυὴς ᾖ καὶ πόρρω τῆς ἡλικίας φιλοσοφῇ, ἀνάγκη πάντων ἄπειρον γεγονέναι ἐστὶν ὧν χρὴ ἔμπειρον εἶναι τὸν μέλλοντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον ἔσεσθαι ἄνδρα.[78]

However well-endowed one may be, if one philosophizes far into life, one must needs find oneself ignorant of everything that ought to be familiar to the man who would be a thorough gentleman and make a good figure in the world (trans. Lamb 1967)

According to Cleary (2007), in this dialogue, Amphion and Zethus symbolise two competing modes of *paideia*, the rhetorical education of the sophists versus the *elenchus*.[79] Plato presents the debate about modes of education as a contest over different ways of life; namely, 'the life of the democratic politician, oriented to success in the public affairs of the demos, as against the life of the philosopher, which involves privately caring for the soul.'[80] There is an obvious affinity between Plato's and Horace's readings of the myth. In Horace's account, the brothers also represent conflicting fields of leisure, with Amphion the musician standing for private literary pursuits (*poemata panges*, 40), and Zethus, the huntsman, representing the kind of activity enjoyed by Lollius' patron. Horace urges Lollius to trade

[78] *Gorg.* 484c-d.
[79] Cleary (2007) 95-96.
[80] *Ibid*. Morrison (2007) 117 writes that Zethus and Amphion are 'representative of the 'practical and the contemplative life' respectively.

the gloom of his 'unsociable muse' (*inhumanae senium depone Camenae*, 47) for the hunt. Like the *convivium*, hunting (yet another kind of *ludus*) was a core element of ancient education and a vehicle for the socialisation of aristocratic men and is therefore identifiable with the traditional form of elite education which Lollius is undertaking, corresponding to that defended by Callicles in Plato's dialogue.[81]

On the surface, Horace appears to voice the position of Callicles, using the example of Amphion and Zethus to pit the pursuits of the poet and philosopher unfavourably against those of the publicly-engaged *homme d'affaires* and encouraging Lollius not to worry himself too much with writing poems, but to take a healthy part in his patron's hobbies. However, Horace's advice contains an obvious philosophical subtext. After urging Lollius not to neglect his duties to the patron in favour of private study, Horace resumes his discourse on the superiority of the philosophical life:

> *Inter cuncta leges et percontabere doctos,*
> *qua ratione queas traducere leniter aeuum,*
> *num te semper inops agitet vexetque cupido,*
> *num pavor et rerum mediocriter utilium spes,*
> *Virtutem doctrina paret naturane donet,*
> *Quid minuat curas, quid te tibi reddat amicum,*
> *Quid pure tranquillet, honos an dulce lucellum*
> *an secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae.*
> *Me quotiens reficit gelidus Digentia riuus,*
> *quem Mandela bibit, rugosus frigore pagus,*
> *quid sentire putas, quid credas, amice, precari?* (96-106)
>
> In the course of all this be sure to read and to question learned men as to how you can pass your days tranquilly; are you to be tormented and harassed by greed that forever makes you penniless, by anxiety and the hope for things indifferent? Is virtue acquired through training or is it a gift of nature? What reduces cares, what makes you a friend to yourself? What creates a calm mind absolutely, public office or the delights of profit or a secluded journey along the sidepath of a life unnoticed? As for myself, whenever Digentia refreshes me, whose chilly brook Mandela drinks, that village whose folk are wrinkled with the cold, what do you suppose my feelings are?

Whatever happens, Lollius will always be able to draw consolation from the works of the *docti*, the philosophers who teach one how to moderate desire (*cupido*), to avoid fear and live virtuously. As much as Lollius may manage, among the many distractions of his professional life (*inter cuncta* 96), to make time for reading, if he pursues a public career, the truly philosophical life (*secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae*, 103) will be closed off to him. Although Horace does not dissuade Lollius from joining in the pursuits of his patron, at the same time, his comments on the young man's professional ambitions

[81] Cf. *C.* 3.24.54-8 (shame on a freeborn *puer* who cannot ride a horse); cf. Corbeill (2001) 280-281 on hunting in Roman education.

striking a lightly-mocking, parrhesiastic note, he hints that true happiness and virtue lies in withdrawal from public life, in the Epicurean garden at Mandela.

This paper has examined some aspects of Horace's reception of classical philosophical pedagogies and critiques of mainstream education. Drawing on a variety of sources which propose moral philosophy as an alternative to traditional education, Horace sets out a therapeutic, virtue-based programme of education in opposition to traditional modes of Roman pedagogy. In the first epistle, he pitches his study of the philosophical 'elements,' the principle doctrines of Epicureanism, against the simple dictation exercises practised at the *ludus litterarius*. Where Horace's elements bring a number of spiritual benefits, the lessons of the 'street-school' are supposed to render social improvement. In the final epistle, Horace's book is pictured as a debased schoolmaster, teaching children the elements at the Roman crossroads, representing the degradation of Horace's serious ethical message once it comes into contact with the world of mainstream education. The two letters to Lollius Maximus sustain the contrast between philosophical and rhetorical education familiar from Plato's *Gorgias* and portray the use of moral-pedagogical techniques, including *parrhesia*, in action. This paper has sufficed to prove both that the *Epistles* are exceedingly responsive to classical philosophical debates around education and also that the pedagogical concerns of the collection coincide with its use of the epistle form for dramatising a course of moral instruction.

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