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Laughter in Lucian:

**Perspectives on wealth and poverty in *Necyomantia*, *Cataplus*,
and *Dialogi Mortuorum***

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM

The intention of this study is to examine the literary techniques that Lucian exploits to achieve a perspective and provoke laughter out of otherworldly scenery in three satiric dialogues. Regarding the antithetical pair of wealth and poverty as a conventional literature motif, as well as a recurrent theme in Lucian's dialogues, the primary focus is on his representation of rich and poor characters wandering in Hades. The main question is whether the author aims to criticize the society in which he lives or if the humor effect that he achieves is just for the sake of satire; namely, if the author attempts to represent his contemporary social environment and attack its inequalities or if the types of rich and poor people, belonging to conventional literature, are here invoked due to an aim to produce humor and entertainment to a particular audience. Wealth and poverty are collectively realized within social and political contexts. The study does not wish to approach these terms in a historical way, but rather to examine their instance and role in the Lucianic dialogues. The dialogues of the otherworldly, containing an inherent contrast between two worlds, manifest a view of the author's treatment towards these two notions.

1.2 MATERIAL

The texts to be examined are the following: *Necyomantia*, *Catapplus*, and *Dialogi Mortuorum*. In *Necyomantia* a member of the society of the living has just returned from a visit to the netherworld. In *Catapplus* members of the human society have just descended to Hades. In *Dialogi Mortuorum* gods and mortals observe and comment on the life of the dead in the domain of Hades. Considering the antithesis between rich and poor a recurrent, if not predominant, theme of these dialogues, we regard them as a unity. Despite some differences in narrative structures that these texts display, they can be considered homogeneous since they all champion the superiority of the life of common people upon the futile pursuit of wealth.¹

All three of them project a variation on the theme of Hades, a conventional literary locus, which offers the three texts a kind of homogeneity

¹ ROBINSON, 1979.

that allows them to be discussed together. The question that arises from the quantity of the texts dealing with Hades is whether this variation tries to exhaust the subject in rhetorical terms or if it expresses different perspectives on a diachronic theme.

According to Branham, the locus of Hades is not the property of any particular author or genre. It is originally epic, however, and comic treatments of it function primarily by contrast with the treatment offered in serious genres; without that contrast it would lose much of its comic potential. Lucian's use of parody offers that comic potential generously.²

Furthermore, all three dialogues belong to the genre of satiric dialogue that Lucian himself claims to have created. In *Bis Accusatus* 33 the personified Dialogue, Lucian's alleged spouse, after abandoning Rhetoric's companion, accuses the Syrian (Lucian's alter-ego in this dialogue; constructing literary masks that partially reveal the authorial face being an ordinary technique of our author) to have attributed to him qualities of the Cynics, of the writers of Old Comedy (Eupolis and Aristophanes) and of Menippus the dog. Dialogue complains in front of the court to have been deprived of his original Platonic-philosophical status and to be dealing with comic and satiric subjects; to have been, in Lucian's words, a literary Centaur.³ *Bis Accusatus* clearly demonstrates Lucian's innovative technique in mixing the philosophical dialogue with the Old Comedy, the Cynic diatribe and the Menippean formula of prose and verse. Dialogue's accusation reveals all the generic features of Lucian's invention. By rejecting Rhetoric and embellishing Dialogue with new qualities, he attempts to accommodate traditional genres into the literary context of his historical present.

Finally, all three texts share common thematic contexts. All of them treat subjects that relate to the life of the living people, such as wealth, power, beauty and physical strength. They also attack contemporary moral values as well as religious matters and philosophical standards. The antithesis between wealth and poverty though is quite prominent among them and can be detected in narrative devices and rhetorical and linguistic choices; the predominance of the antithesis is the reason why it is chosen as a focal point in the study.

² BRANHAM, 1989, 134, n. 24. For a full account of the visit to Hades as a literary motif, see YOUNG, 1933.

³ *Bis Accusatus* 33.

Philostratus in his *Vitae Sophistarum* presents the subjects that occupied the sophists of the period that he calls Second Sophistic (to distinguish from the old one that started with Gorgias). He includes subjects that derive from history as well as historical types of persons; the rich and the poor, the princes and the tyrants.⁴ Philostratus' lack of any reference to Lucian in his list of sophists may be justified if one thinks, like Bowersock, that our author's ability to observe and satirically describe his age does not render him "a sophist in his own right".⁵ Since Philostratus includes literary men of the age who did not fulfill the criteria of a sophistic career, like Arrian, Appian, Dio, and Plutarch, we may wonder whether Lucian's absence from the biographer's catalogue is due to personal judgment or lack of success. Eshleman has argued on Philostratus' bias while composing his list; a bias explained by his desire to authorize his own position as sophist and as historian. The scholar regards Philostratus' work as a selective version of the sophistic circle, based on his own critical choice and personal affiliations.⁶ However, the evidence that we possess shows that, apart from internal evidence in Lucian's own work, there is no contemporary reference to his name or work. The only *testimonia* provided by the tradition (and written by men quite subsequent to Lucian's time) are collected by Baldwin.⁷ Philostratus may not have considered Lucian as a person of any importance, he may not even have known anything about him, or he may have selectively excluded him from his biographies; his introduction, however, states the interests of the people of the period called Second Sophistic and the internal evidence in Lucian's work denote that he was active during that period. Therefore, we may include him in the era Philostratus describes, and realize his interests as integrated in a specific social and cultural environment.

⁴ PHIL. VS 1.481: τοὺς πένητας ὑπετυπώσατο καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς ἀριστεὰς καὶ τοὺς τυράννους καὶ τὰς ἐς ὄνομα ὑποθέσεις, ἐφ' ἃς ἡ ἱστορία ἄγει.

⁵ BOWERSOCK, 1969, 115.

⁶ ESHLEMAN, 2008.

⁷ BALDWIN, 1973, 98-102.

1.3 METHOD

In order to answer the above set of questions regarding Lucian's occupation with wealth and poverty in his satiric dialogues, a full preview of the Lucianic corpus would be necessary. We do not intend, however, to extract a conclusion that would characterize Lucian as a personality and an author, but rather to investigate the methods he used to treat the subject under different perspectives. We wish to detect the antithesis he creates in different contexts but in the same framework; that of the universal locus of Hades. As a literary term, antithesis is "a contrast or opposition in the meanings of contiguous phrases or clauses, emphasized by **parallelism**- that is, similar order and structure- in the *syntax*."⁸ This contiguity is investigated here in wider grounds, namely within fully elaborate texts, instead of the narrow environment of a sentence.

A descriptive and structural approach of the texts is attempted so that the representation of rich and poor characters can be more easily portrayed. Moreover, based on the humor-producing language use we wish to discuss the varied literary techniques that are being applied in the texts.

The study is divided in two chapters. In the first chapter we attempt to designate the variation technique that Lucian manipulates and applies to gain different perspectives of wealth and poverty in observing the human condition from Hades. By that approach, we wish to detect the instances that illuminate that search for a perspective angle. This angle is achieved by engaging the characters in the search of a vantage-point that is instantly transmitted to the audience.

In the second chapter the aspect of laughter as a result of the quest for a vantage-point is investigated. Lucian seems to practice his varied literary techniques with respect to an educated audience and its cultural background. His excessive use of laughter language and laughter-provoking techniques testify to his aim to convey a message promoting common sense by constructing paradoxical and incongruous situations. In Branham's words "the power of humor to alter our perceptions by exposing latent incongruities is a means of generating critical thought from a new perspective."⁹

⁸ ABRAMS, 1988, 11-12.

⁹ BRANHAM, 1989, 56.

As for the aspect and use of laughter, its comprehension is based on the social and cultural situations that condition it.¹⁰ In antiquity laughter was approached in general terms; Aristotle and Plato attempted to define the 'laughable', but no theory was ever articulated.¹¹ Even though a precise definition of laughter is not feasible, Halliwell's claim that "laughter can serve as an expression of individual and cultural mentalities" may enlighten the way in which it is used and thematized in Lucian's work.¹² Bergson has noted that "our laughter is always the laughter of a group."¹³ This assumption leads to realizing laughter as acquiring a possibility of expression within common social and cultural contexts.

In both chapters all the texts are included in the discussion; some contemporary parallels are also attempted. A separation of the texts into different chapters would throw doubt on their homogeneity and unity, which is not based on formal features, but rather on common intertextual virtues.

1.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Modern scholars have long been debating on Lucian's skill in composing original and innovative texts or rather works that have to be evaluated according to their relationship with the tradition: the inherited literary values that have become common ground during his era.¹⁴ Moreover, they have been discussing Lucian's stance towards society, describing him either as a social satirist commenting on the contemporary social unrest or as a man of his time, "acculturated" within the framework of the Roman empire within which he acquired a Greek education and formed his literary style.

Bompaire, in his seminal study on the doctrine of *mimesis* in Lucian, claimed that he is an author that has to be evaluated in terms of his art; as a bookish recluse who applied the doctrine of imitation of literary and

¹⁰ Although humor is also understood as culturally conditioned, we do not consider laughter as necessarily being the product of humor. As BREMMER and ROODENBURG have noted, "although humour should produce laughter, not all laughter is the fruit of humour." See BREMMER and ROODENBURG, 1997, 2.

¹¹ For Plato's definition of the laughable, see *Phlb.* 48a-50b. Aristotle's definition of the comedy includes the γελοῖον in *Poetics* 1449a32-37. GRANT, 1924 has offered an overview of the ancient theories of the laughable.

¹² HALLIWELL, 2008, 8.

¹³ BERGSON, 1980, 9.

¹⁴ For an overview of Lucian's appreciation during the 16th and 17th century, see ROBINSON 1979.

rhetorical tradition in his work.¹⁵ The scholar acknowledges Lucian's borrowing of multiple traditions, but he considers him as an author dedicated to the *jeu superieur* that his contemporaries invented, *le divertissement sophistique*.¹⁶ He, therefore, assumes that Lucian's preoccupation with wealth and poverty is nothing more than an imitation of the conventional Cynic-Stoic diatribes, a use of common places.¹⁷

Baldwin on the other hand, motivated by a footnote in Rostovtzeff's major work *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*,¹⁸ emphasizes the social aspect of Lucian's writings assuming that his selection of literary themes might be influenced by personal experience and social environment. He even considers Lucian as an anti-Roman social agitator.¹⁹ Reviewing his original thesis some years later,²⁰ he came to conclude that "Lucian offered no solutions, beyond the reflection that wealth and poverty alike are transient, and he did not care to go on record as supporting violent action against the authorities".²¹ This conclusion comes to terms with scholars' remarks of the sophists of the second century being integrated in the Roman empire and institutions.²²

A similar shift in attitude, although from a different angle, is observed in Highet's assessment of Lucian's literary skills and effects. Describing satire as a literary genre, Highet seems to be unfavorable towards Lucian regarding him as *atopical* - topicality considered as a primary choice for satire's subject-matter - using a language that comprises "a colorless pastiche", and fully imitating "Greek authors of the long-departed classical age."²³ While composing his important work on the Greek and Roman influences on Western literature though, he seems to have changed his mind when concluding about Lucian: "His work is unlike nearly everything else that survives from Greco-Roman literature."²⁴

¹⁵ BOMPAIRE, 1958.

¹⁶ Ibid., 125.

¹⁷ Ibid., 208. Bompaire's views on Lucian's description of Hades, see BOMPAIRE, 1958, 365.

¹⁸ ROSTOVITZEFF, 1957, 621, n.45: "The social problem as such, the cleavage between the poor and the rich, occupies a prominent place in the dialogues of Lucian; he was fully aware of the importance of the problem."

¹⁹ BALDWIN, 1961, 199-208.

²⁰ BALDWIN, 1973, 107-118.

²¹ Ibid., 112.

²² For the relation between the sophists and Rome, see: BOWERSOCK, 1969, GOLDHILL, 2001, ANDERSON, 1993. For the relation between the sophists and their cultural past, see: BOWIE, 1970.

²³ HIGHET, 1962, 42-43.

²⁴ HIGHET, 1985, 304.

Anderson, discussing Lucian's use of fantasy in his satiric dialogues, characterizes him as "a manipulator with fairly limited literary horizons."²⁵ He insists on the author's rhetorical background and on his constant use of it in exploiting variation on the same subjects. In his study on the Second Sophistic as a cultural phenomenon of the Roman empire, he acknowledges Lucian's skill in producing works full of fantasy as a "deft application of *paideia* to what might otherwise have been a tedious catalogue of marvels."²⁶ He therefore views Lucian's treatment of wealth and poverty in the scenery of Hades as a variation on a subject abundantly treated in the rhetorical schools of the time.

Branham's perception of Lucian as an author who reconceptualized traditional forms seems to respect both his art and his interaction with his social milieu. Branham reflects on Lucian as a public performer that had to entertain a special audience, that of a second century learned and nostalgic of the past group of people. Instead of insisting on the 'tradition versus topicality' dichotomy that previous scholars have drawn on, Branham emphasizes "the dynamic role of humor in Lucian's comic refashioning of the tradition", assuming *a priori* that humor is "culturally conditioned."²⁷ In that way, he offers a new perception of Lucian's literary techniques and effects, as well as of his seriocomic style.²⁸

²⁵ ANDERSON, 1976, preface.

²⁶ ANDERSON, 1993, 195.

²⁷ BRANHAM, 1989, 6.

²⁸ Seriocomic is here understood as a blending of serious and comic elements. For the first instances of the seriocomic notion, see Ar. *Frogs*, 391-395, Cicero, *De Or.*, 2.250. The Greek word *spoudaiogeloios* is first attested as a notion in Strabo (16.2.29, C759) and Diogenes Laertius (6.86) and appearing in an inscription: IG12, 8, 87.

2. IN SEARCH OF A VANTAGE-POINT: TEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON WEALTH AND POVERTY

Scholars have regarded Lucian either as a library recluse or as a social satirist. These attitudes have been discredited now, but some of their study results still have value for the Lucianic studies. For instance, Anderson's claim that Lucian, totally indebted to the rhetorical practice that educated him, "works his themes and variations to a saturation point,"²⁹ can advance our reading of the netherworld dialogues in terms of examining the multiple perspectives provided. In addition, Baldwin's assertion that Lucian is a social satirist, as well as his arguments towards a critical observation of society from the author's standpoint can help us evaluate that multiplicity of perspectives on the matter of wealth and poverty.

In the first chapter we want to examine the multiple perspectives displayed in the netherworld dialogues which display variation and are associated with Menippus and the literary genre called Menippean satire.³⁰ In the second one we wish to investigate them as an externalization of the author's comic fantasy which is expressed through an elaborate incorporation of laughter.

Branham's study on Lucian has generated a shift on the attitude towards the satirist. What Branham pointedly noted is that in order to assess Lucian and his work we should better look with what means and to what ends he engaged "an audience of second century traditionalists" in his "seriocomic tenor".³¹

In this chapter we wish to stress these crucial passages that may enlighten our focus of study more, but the discussion cannot advance outside the texts' general context. Therefore, we will attempt to point out the parts that can enhance the discussion within the general framework of each text in respect.

²⁹ ANDERSON, 1976, 21.

³⁰ RELIHAN, 1987.

³¹ BRANHAM, 1989, 1-8.

2.1 NECYOMANTIA: PERSPECTIVES FROM HADES

The retrospective narrative of *Necyomantia* introduces the literary character of Menippus the Cynic.³² He has just returned *from* Hades where philosophic perplexity led him to meet Tiresias.³³ Menippus was looking for

*a plain reliable map of life.*³⁴

That inquiry led him to the philosophers who convinced him that

*the real golden life is that of the man in the street.*³⁵

The philosophers' conflicting attitudes as well as their incompatibility in accommodating their precepts with practice motivated Menippus' fantastic quest to the netherworld. Already from the beginning he declares that what he looks for is

*what is the best life and the right choice for a man of sense.*³⁶

He is therefore initiating his journey on seeking a perspective that can help him understand human life; he is looking for this perspective in Hades. After approaching the Magi of Babylon, he is led by Mithrovarzanis, through a mystic ritual and a necessary disguise, to the realms of the netherworld.³⁷ It is in the court of Minos where Menippus ridicules the rich for their futile pursuit of their earthly wealth. There are two groups of dead that are to be judged by Minos. The first one is comprised by

*adulterers, procurers, publicans, sycophants, informers, and all the filth that pollutes the stream of life.*³⁸

³² The titles of the texts as well as the names referred in the texts preserve their Latin form for any confusion to be avoided and for the reference to be more convenient. See D.L. 99-101 for what was known of the real character of Menippus the Cynic and his works.

³³ Compare with *Icaromenippus*, where Menippus, perplexed by the philosophers is looking for a vantage-point in the sky. The two works are paralleled almost scene by scene. For their comparison, see ANDERSON, 1976, RELIHAN, 1993.

³⁴ 4: τινα ὁδὸν ἀπλῆν καὶ βέβαιον. The translations are based on Fowler and Fowler translation of 1905 with slight modifications.

³⁵ 4: ὥστε μοι τάχιστα χρυσοῦν ἀπέδειξαν οὔτοι τὸν τῶν ιδιωτῶν τοῦτον βίον.

³⁶ 6: τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄριστος βίος καὶ ὃν ἂν τις ἔλοιτο εὖ φρονῶν.

³⁷ An interesting parallel to the theme of the *katabasis* to Hades is provided by a magical papyrus of the late third or early fourth century CE. See BETZ, 1980.

³⁸ 11: τελῶναι καὶ μοιχοὶ καὶ πορνοβοσκοὶ καὶ κόλακες καὶ συκοφάνται καὶ τοιοῦτος ὄμιλος τῶν πάντα κυκλώντων ἐν τῷ βίῳ.

The second one consists of

*rich and usurers, pale, pot-bellied, and gouty, each with a hundredweight of spiked collar upon him.*³⁹

The prosecutors are the shadows that follow men all along their life and Minos' severe judgment falls upon the members of that second group that were

*puffed up with wealth and authority,*⁴⁰

and expected reverential treatment. Minos could not stand their

*ephemeral presumption and superciliousness, their failure to realize their mortality.*⁴¹

Menippus' reaction to the rich people's nakedness after having been stripped of their wealth is pointedly expressed by a compound verb denoting exaggeration (ὑπερέχαιρον) that shows his condemnation towards the pursuit of wealth.

Watching later on the dead being punished, all looking alike in their bones, with nothing distinguishing the one from the other (14-15), Menippus achieves to find the perspective he was looking for. He can now observe all human types in equal terms and enunciate his simile of human life (16).

The life of man looks like a pageant directed according to Tyche's will. She distributes costumes and properties to everyone as she likes; she can even exchange these qualities from the one man to the other. When the pageant is over she takes everything back and the ones complaining about being undressed of their wealth are deceived to think that what they possessed was ever theirs.

The simile moves on to the tragic actors, who, dressed in their theatrical costumes, when the play is over, have to undress and forget their roles.

*Such is the condition of mankind, or so that sight presented it to me.*⁴²

³⁹ 11: οἱ τε πλούσιοι καὶ τοκογλύφοι προσήεσαν ὥχροι καὶ προγάστορες καὶ ποδαγροί, κλοιὸν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν καὶ κόρακα διτάλαντον ἐπικείμενος.

⁴⁰ 12: ἐπὶ πλούτοις τε καὶ ἀρχαῖς τετυφωμένων.

⁴¹ 12: τὴν τε ὀλιγοχρόνιον ἀλαζονείαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ὑπεροψίαν μυσαττόμενος, καὶ ὅτι μὴ ἐμέμνηντο θνητοῖ τε ὄντες αὐτοὶ καὶ θνητῶν ἀγαθῶν τετυχηκότες.

⁴² 16: τοιαῦτα καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πράγματά ἐστιν, ὥς τότε μοι ὁρῶντι ἔδοξεν.

What follows is the narration of the assembly of the dead that took place in Hades as well as the decree voted against the rich (19-20). The dead accuse the rich of

*violence, ostentation, pride, and injustice;*⁴³

The decree suggested is voted by everyone according to the procedure of the Athenian law. The rich

*are guilty of many illegalities on earth, harrying and oppressing the poor and trampling upon all their rights,*⁴⁴

and therefore, they are convicted to be transformed into asses after death and remain like that for 25.000 years under the commands of the poor.

The decree comes right before Menippus' encounter with Tiresias. When they all have agreed and voted for the decree's proposition, Menippus meets the seer (21) and asks him

*his views upon the best life.*⁴⁵

According to Branham, "Tiresias' advice recalls both the thought and wording of a famous line of Simonides quoted as a chreia by Theon:"⁴⁶

*The life of the ordinary man is the best and most prudent choice; cease from the folly of metaphysical speculation and inquiry into origins and ends, utterly reject their clever logic, count all these things and idle talk, and pursue one end alone — how you may do what your hand finds to do, and go your way with ever a smile and never a passion.*⁴⁷

Moreover, the same conclusion regarding the life of the ordinary man is reached by Odysseus in the myth of the Republic, corroborating Lucian's intertextual activity and integration in his works, as well as the predomination of the ordinary man's life in the tradition.⁴⁸

⁴³ 19: βίαι καὶ ἀλαζονίαι καὶ ὑπεροψίαι καὶ ἀδικίαι.

⁴⁴ 20: Ἐπειδὴ πολλὰ καὶ παράνομα οἱ πλούσιοι δρῶσι παρὰ τὸν βίον ἀρπάζοντες καὶ βιαζόμενοι καὶ πάντα τρόπον τῶν πενήτων καταφρονοῦντες.

⁴⁵ 21: ποῖόν τινα ἡγεῖται τὸν ἄριστον βίον.

⁴⁶ BRANHAM, 1989(b) suggests that the line of Simonides quoted as a χρεῖα by Theon is the following: παίζειν ἐν τῷ βίῳ καὶ περὶ μηδὲν ἀπλῶς σπουδάζειν.

⁴⁷ 21: Ὁ τῶν ιδιωτῶν ἄριστος βίος καὶ σωφρονέστερος. παυσάμενος τοῦ μετεωρολογεῖν καὶ τέλη καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐπισκοπεῖν καὶ καταπτύσας τῶν σοφῶν τούτων συλλογισμῶν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα λήρον ἡγησάμενος τοῦτο μόνον ἐξ ἅπαντος θηράσῃ, ὅπως τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέμενος παραδράμῃς γελῶν τὰ πολλὰ καὶ περὶ μηδὲν ἐσπουδακῶς.

⁴⁸ *Rep.* 620c. See also: *Pisc.* 34, *Symp.* 35.

2.2 CATAPLUS: DESCENDING TO HADES TO GAIN A PERSPECTIVE

Cataplus is a dramatic narrative framed in the Lucianic satiric dialogue. The action unravels *in* Hades and the characters are introduced in the first scene where Clotho, Charon, and Hermes are getting ready for the embarkation of the dead on Charon's boat that will carry them to the netherworld. Among the dead Clotho distinguishes Megapenthes the tyrant, Cyniscus the Cynic philosopher, and Micyllus the cobbler.

*One of them is bound, and another enjoying the joke; and there is one with a wallet slung beside him, and a stick in his hand; a cantankerous-looking fellow; he keeps the rest moving.*⁴⁹

Megapenthes, designated as the conventional tyrant, appeals to Clotho demanding that he returns to earth alive in order to grasp his wealth. In a passage of ambiguous authorial intention due to its macabre content, he narrates how his slave copulated with the tyrant's concubine in the room where he was lying dead and then violated his dead body (12).

*It is about my slave Carion. The moment he knew of my death, he came up to the room where I lay; it was late in the evening; he had plenty of time in front of him, for not a soul was watching by me; he brought with him my concubine Glycerium (an old affair, this, I suspect), closed the door, and proceeded to take his pleasure with her, as if no third person had been in the room! Having satisfied the demands of passion, he turned his attention to me. 'You little villain,' he cried, 'many's the flogging I've had from you, for no fault of mine!' And as he spoke he plucked out my hair and smote me on the face. 'Away with you,' he cried finally, spitting on me, 'away to the place of the damned!' — and so withdrew. I burned with resentment: but there I lay stark and cold, and could do nothing. That baggage Glycerium, too, hearing footsteps approaching, moistened her eyes and pretended she had been weeping for me; and withdrew sobbing, and repeating my name. If I could but get hold of them.*⁵⁰

⁴⁹ 3: Δεδεμένον τινὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἄλλον γελῶντα, ἕνα δὲ τινὰ καὶ πῆραν ἐξημμένον καὶ ξύλον ὀρῶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ ἔχοντα, δριμύ ἐνορῶντα καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐπισπεύδοντα.

⁵⁰ 12: Καρίων ὁ ἐμὸς οἰκέτης ἐπεὶ τάχιστα με ἀποθανόντα εἶδε, περὶ δέλην ὀψίαν ἀνελθὼν εἰς τὸ οἶκημα ἔνθα ἐκείμην, σχολῆς οὐσης- οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἐφύλαττε με- Γλυκέριον τὴν παλλακίδα μου- καὶ πάλαι δε, οἶμαι, κεκοινωνήκεσαν- παραγαγὼν ἐπισπασάμενος τὴν θύραν ἐσπόμενός τε καθάπερ οὐδενὸς ἔνδον παρόντος· εἴτ' ἐπειδὴ ἄλις εἶχε τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, ἀποβλέψας εἰς ἐμέ, Σὺ μέντοι, φησὶν, ὦ μιᾶρον ἀνθρώπιον, πληγὰς μοι πολλάκις οὐδὲν ἀδικοῦντι ἐνέτεινας· καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμα λέγων παρέτιλλέ με καὶ κατὰ κόρρης καταπτύσας μου καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀσεβῶν χώρον ἄπιθι ἐπειπὼν, ὥχετο· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐνεπιμπράμην μέν, οὐκ εἶχον δὲ ὅμως ὅ τι καὶ δράσαιμι αὐτὸν αὐτὸς ἤδη καὶ ψυχρὸς ὢν. καὶ ἡ μιὰ δὲ παιδίσκη

Micyllus' appearance in the dialogue right after Megapenthes constructs the antithesis in an effective way. He introduces himself with the quality of a cobbler and delivers two speeches to Clotho. In the first one he stretches the difference between the life of the rich, whose insistence on preserving their wealth is resembled to a birdlime, and that of the poor in an antithetical scheme formed with the particles μέν - δέ (14-15: ὁ μὲν γε τύραννος - ἐγὼ δέ), concluding that in Hades where equality persists

*the laugh is with us poor men; it is the rich that moan, and are ill at ease.*⁵¹

In his second speech Micyllus has to explain the reason for his laughter during his *katabasis* and he proceeds to compare his impression of the life of the tyrant while still alive and after his death (16), without neglecting to laugh at himself in a self-sarcastic manner for having been deceived by the envy he felt towards the tyrant's life. He motivates his laughter even more when describing Gniphos the usurper's inability to enjoy his wealth (17: ὅτι μὴ ἀπέλαυσε τῶν χρημάτων).⁵² Micyllus' speeches provide an image of the life of rich and poor on earth, while his laughter witnesses that in Hades he found a vantage-point from which to comment on the wealth quest and condemn the rich for their greed.

Cyniscus has appeared early in the dialogue providing Micyllus' double pair.⁵³ He is the philosopher whom Clotho was looking for before the embarkation and the one that helped Hermes when Megapenthes tried to escape. When Charon's boat reaches the realms of Hades, Cyniscus and Micyllus walk together in the darkness (22: τοῦ ζόφου) to meet Rhadamanthys' court.

In *Catapplus*, in contrast to *Necyomantia*, Rhadamanthys is the one who judges the dead, providing an important hint of Lucian's variation technique and corroborating Macleod's assertion that "the topography of Lucian's Hades doesn't bear too close examination, being a mixture of Odyssey 11, the

ἐπεὶ ψόφου προσιόντων τινῶν ἦσθετο, σιέλῳ χρίσασα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὡς δακρύσασα ἐπ' ἐμοί, κωκύουσα καὶ τοῦνομα ἐπικαλουμένη ἀπηλλάττετο. ὦν εἰ λαβοίμην.

⁵¹ 15: ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ οἱ πένητες γελῶμεν, ἀνιῶνται δὲ καὶ οἰμώζουσιν οἱ πλούσιοι. For a parallel description of the life of the poor and that of the rich, see Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 7. Berry (BERRY, 1983) argues that Dio's moral message here is "that the life of honest poverty, simple and rugged, is better than that of the rich, who only covet more." See also *Charon* 15 for the antithetical syntactic structure.

⁵² 17: *without ever knowing the taste of wealth.*

⁵³ ANDERSON, 1976, 67-84.

myths of Plato, Attic comedy and no doubt other sources.”⁵⁴ In Rhadamanthys’ court the dead are judged according to the number of brands (24: ἀπὸ τῶν στιγμαμάτων), signs of sinful mortality, they bear on their corpses. Cyniscus and Micyllus are found clean and pure, but the Cynic philosopher wishes to accuse Megapenthes of vanity and disdain (26: καὶ ὑπεροψίας μὲν γε καὶ τύφου) calling as witnesses his bed and lamp. The evocation of the tyrant’s personal objects amplifies the validity of their testimony and their personification amplifies the humor of the scene.⁵⁵ The inevitability of escaping the testimony of the brands as well as that of the bed and lamp reminds of the orators in Minos’ court in *Necyomantia*. The shadows of the dead are also witnesses from which the man cannot escape, and the extension of this motif in a double pair in *Catapplus* comes to terms with the pair of the philosopher and the cobbler.

As in *Necyomantia* (decree voting) the dialogue has to end with an agreement, which is the punishment of Megapenthes. Cyniscus suggests that the tyrant does not taste the water of Lethe, so that he keeps yearning for his lost wealth in eternity. Rhadamanthys agrees and Megapenthes, the rich tyrant, is set in that way besides Tantalus and his eternal torture (29).

2.3 DIALOGI MORTUORUM: PERSPECTIVES IN HADES

Dialogi Mortuorum, or “Dialogues of the Dead” in their English translation,⁵⁶ is the text on which Baldwin mostly focused when he claimed that Lucian is a social satirist.⁵⁷ In this collection of thirty brief dialogues, where the narrative is dramatic again, the dead are *in* Hades and observe and discuss the human folly. The dialogues’ formal difference from the longer ones requires that they are treated in a different way; namely, we cannot extract crucial passages by designating a kind of structural approach to the text. Their miniature form is exclaimed within the text itself, when Minos demands that Sostratus does not procrastinate (24.1: λέγε, μὴ μακρὰ μόνον). As Anderson has noted,

⁵⁴ MACLEOD, 1991, 267. MacLeod may probably want to mainly point out the spatial description of Hades, but the function of the characters within the netherworld indicates that it is not of any significance to try to recreate Lucian’s manipulation of the theme of Hades, but it is rather important to assess his variation technique on the same motif.

⁵⁵ 27: ΚΥΝΙΣΚΟΣ: Προσκάλει μοι, ὦ Ἑρμῆ, τὸν λύχνον καὶ τὴν κλίνην· μαρτυρήσουσι γὰρ αὐτοὶ παρελθόντες, οἷα πράττοντι συνηπίσταντο αὐτῷ.

ΕΡΜΗΣ: Ἡ κλίνη καὶ ὁ λύχνος ὁ Μεγαπένθους τούτω· εὖ γε ἐποίησαν ὑπακούσαντες.

⁵⁶ Many scholars prefer the English titles of the texts; *Dialogues of the Dead* correspond to our *Dialogi Mortuorum* and *Menippus* to *Necyomantia*.

⁵⁷ BALDWIN, 1961.

“miniatures offer a natural opportunity for literary variation”⁵⁸ and we can see that unfolding clearly throughout the dialogues.

It is not an easy task to categorize the dialogues or even restore their order. As for their enumeration, we follow MacLeod’s edition that prefers the manuscript edition preserved in Γ. Bartley supports that “it is impossible to say whether the order presented preserves that of Lucian. Nevertheless, the way that Diogenes and Menippus appear together only once does suggest that dialogue 1 occupied an introductory place.”⁵⁹ As for the thematic categorization of the dialogues we prefer Papaioannou’s reasoning in dividing them according to the characters participating.⁶⁰ We therefore have dialogues where Homeric heroes prevail (23, 26, 27, 28); dialogues where Alexander the Great discusses with other dead people (12, 13, 25); dialogues where the legacy hunting is the main motif (16, 17, 18, 19, 21), and dialogues with clear Cynic nuance. We intend to mainly focus on the Cynic ones in order to keep a linear, following *Necyomantia* and *Catapplus*, investigation of the problem; treat the legacy hunting ones as a unity and partly discuss the ones where Homeric heroes are involved, excluding Alexander the Great for not being relevant with the rest of the characters discussed. The huge gallery of characters participating in *Dialogi Mortuorum* reveals the universality of the locus of Hades in an extended degree, since we come across dialogues between characters that are not related chronologically, thus imposing an unexpected spatial detachment to the audience.

In the first dialogue Diogenes asks Pollux, who is ready to ascend to earth, to send messages to certain particular persons and groups of people on earth. Apart from sending an instruction to Menippus to descend in order to laugh eternally at the human folly, he also instructs Pollux to advice the rich to stop evaluating their wealth so highly, since after death they only need to possess an obol for the ferryman. The message to the poor advises them not to cry or lament, since equality prevails in Hades (1.4: λέγε μήτε δακρύειν μήτε οἰμώζειν διηγησάμενος τὴν ἐνταῦθα ἰσοτιμίαν). According to Bartley “it is notable that Diogenes and Menippus appear together only once, where they are established in their roles as philosophical guides to the underworld in dialogue 1 and thence appear separately in the majority of the dialogues (16 of 28 in total) to provide a unity to the *Dialogi Mortuorum* as a whole.”⁶¹ Menippus is encountered in the dialogues 1 through 10 and in the dialogues 20 and 30, while Diogenes has a role in 1, 11, 12, 13, 21, and 22.

In 2 Menippus, asked by Charon to deliver the traditional obol, utters the thereafter proverbial phrase

⁵⁸ ANDERSON, 1993, 188.

⁵⁹ BARTLEY, 2005.

⁶⁰ PAPAIOANNOU, 1976, 128.

⁶¹ BARTLEY, 2005.

You can't have from the one who doesn't have it. ⁶²

Menippus' answer reminds of Micyllus and his financial difficulty in embarking Charon's boat. When Menippus encounters the traditionally rich men in Hades (Midas, Sardanapalus, Croesus), he cannot restrain his amusement and laughter for their lamenting of their lost earthly wealth and luxury (3). Having asked Aeacus to guide him around the realms of Hades to meet the famous men (6), he decides that he wants to dwell next to the ones that were once rich on earth, so to laugh eternally at their vanity.

I am off, to take up my quarters by Croesus and Sardanapalus. I expect huge entertainment from their outcries. ⁶³

In his encounter with Chiron, Menippus wonders why an immortal would ever choose to be mortal and live in the realms of the netherworld. Chiron's answer

I like the truly democratic equality that prevails; ⁶⁴

indicates the unfair state of affairs on earth.

In the group of dialogues where the legacy hunters prevail (15,16,17,18,19), placed by MacLeod in the central part of the text, the dead young men complain for the longevity of their elder lovers; that is the reason why Pluto suggests that Hermes brings down only the young κόλακες of Eucrates the elder and let the old man survive them for a long time. Hermes' answer corresponds to the general tone of the dialogues:

Well, they are rascals, and it would be a comic ending. ⁶⁵

In dialogue 20, the longest one in the collection, we return to the embarkation scene that we met in *Cataplus*. Charon, in order for the boat not to be overweighed, asks the dead to come aboard in their skins.⁶⁶ Hermes undertakes to accomplish the task. Menippus voluntarily leaves behind his belongings, his stick and staff. Lampichus the tyrant is forced to leave behind his wealth, his pomp (τύφον ἀπόρριψον), and his pride (καὶ τὴν ὑπεροψίαν);

⁶² 2.1: οὐκ ἂν λάβοις παρὰ τοῦ μὴ ἔχοντος.

⁶³ 6.6: ἐπεὶ τὸν Κροῖσον καὶ τὸν Σαρδανάπαλλον ἄπειμι πλησίον οἰκήσων αὐτῶν ἔοικα γοῦν οὐκ ὀλίγα γελάσσεσθαι οἰμωζόντων ἀκούων.

⁶⁴ 8: ἡ γὰρ ἰστοιμία πάνυ δημοτική.

⁶⁵ 15.2: Γελοῖα πείσονται, πανοῦργοι ὄντες.

⁶⁶ 20.1: γυμνοὺς χρή τὰ περιττὰ ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμόνος καταλιπόντας.

qualities that remind of the accusations against the rich in *Necyomantia* and against Megapenthes the tyrant in *Catapplus*. When it comes to Crato the rich, he is forced, too, to get rid of his belongings; his wealth (πλουῦτος), his luxury (μαλακία), and his effeminacy (τρυφή). Menippus' continuous laughter at the dead people's lamenting seems to annoy the philosopher who designates Menippus' attitude:

Oh, all right, Menippus; suppose you leave your independence behind you, and your plain - speaking, and your indifference, and your high spirit, and your jests!- No one else here has a jest about him. ⁶⁷

In the rest of the dialogues, Menippus disappears but we encounter Diogenes in the companion of Crates and Antisthenes commenting on their experience of the netherworld as well as pointing out which the Cynic necessities (21.3: ἃ γὰρ ἐχρήν) for life are; not the possession of gold and treasures, but

wisdom, independence, truth, frankness, and freedom. ⁶⁸

Antilochus consoles Achilles in 26, reminding him that nature commands that all die one day, and

Is there not comfort in the common fate? It is something not to suffer alone. ⁶⁹

The main theme of *Dialogi Mortuorum* is summarized in the last dialogue of the series where Menippus is invited to judge the beauty of Nireus and Thersites (30). Menippus' verdict is that none is handsome in Hades, because

equality prevails in Hades; one man is as good as another here. ⁷⁰

In these short dialogues Lucian produces comedy by reproducing the literary locus of Hades and making it "yield its inherent potential for incongruity by selectively isolating the distinctive qualities of its governing

⁶⁷20. 9: Οὐκοῦν καὶ σύ, ὦ Μένιππε, ἀπόθου τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ ἄλυπον καὶ τὸ γενναῖον καὶ τὸν γέλωτα, μόνος γοῦν τῶν ἄλλων γελᾷς.

⁶⁸ 21.3: Σοφίαν, αὐτάρκειαν, ἀλήθειαν, παρρησίαν, ἐλευθερίαν.

⁶⁹ 26.3: φέρει δὲ παραμυθίαν καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ πράγματος καὶ τὸ μὴ μόνον αὐτὸν πεπονθέναι.

⁷⁰ 30.2: ἰσοτιμία γὰρ ἐν ᾧδου καὶ ὅμοιοι ἅπαντες.

conventions.”⁷¹ In this way, he exploits the literary motif’s preconceived consistency by reformulating it parodically and, thus, offering a new perspective to an audience with a specific preconception of Hades’ function. Baldwin has observed that “the central motifs of the Dialogues of the Dead are developed and unified in the more ambitious *Cataplus*, *Menippus*, and *Gallus*.”⁷² Observing the perspectivism offered in *Dialogi Mortuorum* we can extract the antithesis between wealth and poverty projected in many varied ways, taking advantage of the genre’s possibility for manipulating characters coming from different generic environments. This occupation obtains a more developed treatment in *Cataplus* and *Necyomantia* where the subject is treated in a more elaborate way. Branham has recognized the “search for a privileged perspective” as “a central preoccupation of Lucian’s work.”⁷³ Having traced the passages where our theme unfolds, we intend to go on discussing how this privileged perspective is expressed through humor in order to produce laughter to a particular audience. Hence, we intend to investigate the means and ends of Lucian in transforming traditional themes and incorporating them to his historical present with respect to his audience.

To conclude this chapter we have to underline the significance for Lucian of achieving a perspective, a vantage-point from which to observe humanity and discuss-among others-the theme of wealth and poverty in as many varied ways as possible. This can be considered as a result of the rhetorical education Lucian asserts to have acquired,⁷⁴ but only in elaborating and exploiting the varied ways of expression the rhetorical schools provided. Exaggerated views of Lucian’s technique as a library recluse, or as a social satirist dedicated to externalizing the social unrest of his era underestimate his varied literary work and his power of fantasy.⁷⁵ Lucian does not demand from his audience to identify itself with any of his characters; even he “distances himself from Menippus and his moralizing.”⁷⁶ His manipulation of “stock characters, references to classical mythology and ancient history, and moral commonplaces” may reveal a closeness to literary variation, but the thematic functions of fantasy, which prevails through literary inappropriateness, testifies for a literary value that reflects “the circumstances

⁷¹ BRANHAM, 1989, 134.

⁷² BALDWIN, 1973, 109.

⁷³ BRANHAM, 1989, 23.

⁷⁴ See *Somnium sive vita Luciani*.

⁷⁵ BRANHAM, 1989, 1-8.

⁷⁶ RELIHAN, 1987.

and intellectual attitudes of the Antonine period."⁷⁷ The depiction of this intellectual attitude overcomes the necessity for topicality that Highet has championed as an indispensable feature of satire. Lucian's representation of wealth and poverty seems to preach the superiority of common sense in life. The means used through the netherworld comic dialogues, based on fantasy, allusiveness, and accommodation of traditional means, are of major significance here.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

3. LUCIAN ON HIS WORK: THEMATIZING LAUGHTER

Lucian's literary techniques, developed through the refashioning of the tradition, derive from his observation of the standard literary genres and his defiance of acknowledging any generic boundaries. In *Bis Accusatus* he describes the procedure that he followed in order to formulate his satiric dialogue; he manages to manipulate the philosophical dialogue, the Old Comedy and the works of Menippus and create a genre with multiple possibilities. Baldwin's insistence on Lucian's references to topical class issues on the one hand, and Highet's denial to accept Lucian's work as satiric because of its atypicality on the other hand, seem to neglect the fact that Lucian "typically writes not satires but comic dialogues."⁷⁸ As Relihan argues, *Bis Accusatus* is indicative of the way in which Lucian himself defines "the comic dialogues in terms suggestive not of verse satire but of Menippean satire."⁷⁹ Branham remarks that "satire frequently uses parody, and parody can be satiric-the concept of parody is arguably more characteristic of Lucian's oeuvre than that of satire, with its overtones of social and moral reform."⁸⁰

Parody does not indispensably relate to ridicule or laughter;⁸¹ in Hutcheon's definition it is "repetition with difference."⁸² This difference depends on the critical distance the audience is required to keep between the original text and its parodied form; between "the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work".⁸³ Branham discusses the qualities of the parodied character and concludes that "a parodic character is funny because he is presented in the parodic text in such a way as to be at odds with

⁷⁸ RELIHAN, 1987.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ BRANHAM, 1989, 130. For the social and moral aspects and targets of satire, see HIGHET, 1961.

⁸¹ For the meaning of the word *παρωδία* in earlier authors, see HOUSEHOLDER, 1944, where he describes the sense of the term as "a narrative poem of moderate length, in epic metre, using epic vocabulary, and treating a light, satirical, or mock-heroic subject." For the meaning of the word in Lucian, see *Charon* 14, where Charon uses Homeric verses to retell a story of Herodotus, *Od.* 1.50, *Od.* 1.180, *Hdt.* 3.39-43, and Hermes describes Charon's technique with the phrase: *Εὖ γε παρωδεῖς, ὦ Χάρων*.

⁸² HUTCHEON, 2001, 32.

⁸³ Ibid.

the culturally received notion of his “proper character” and of his kind, whether it be that of a god, philosopher, or hero.”⁸⁴ All three dialogues under study represent characters dislocated from their traditionally image and presence; either by engaging in fantastic journeys, or by being presented in a different appearance (disguised or appearing only as skull and bones), or even by engaging in discussions with characters chronologically coming from different ages.

Lucian’s preoccupation with the invention of comic dialogue reveals an interest in eliciting emotions from his audience and is in consistency with the rhetorical performance of his time.⁸⁵ A parodic text cannot extract feelings if the audience ignores the aforementioned backgrounded text. Satiric dialogue desires to create ludicrous situations that elicit laughter; this is something Lucian himself tells us in *Bis Accusatus*. The “digging out” of Menippus, the dog that bites and laughs at the same time, explains laughter’s constant presence in the Lucianic work.

We have already pointed out the significance of Micyllus’ laughter in *Cataplus* as well as Diogenes’ invitation to Menippus to descend to the netherworld in order to laugh eternally (*Dialogi Mortuorum* 1). In *Necyomantia*, the central part the character of Menippus plays implies the significance of laughter in the text. Assuming that laughter occupies an important place in Lucian’s netherworld compositions, in the sense that it opens perspectives from which to observe human life, we intend to investigate his use of it as incorporated in his generic intentions, and as related to his characters and audience. The questions that arise from Lucian’s “thematization of laughter” are manifold.⁸⁶ How can Hades, and by extension death, be funny? How can the characters of poor people be laughable? Tracing the instances and conditions of laughter within the texts can be illuminating.

3.1 NECYOMANTIA: “DIGGING OUT” MENIPPUS

In the first chapter we attempted to designate Menippus’ alteration from seeking a perspective to achieving it. We also demonstrated his simile of human life as a crucial passage as regards man’s futile pursuit of wealth. What is attempted here is to approach Lucian’s constant pursuit of

⁸⁴ BRANHAM, 1989, 133.

⁸⁵ Philostratus clearly describes the sophists’ tours around the empire proclaiming extempore speeches and being conscious of the theatrical possibilities of their speeches.

⁸⁶ Halliwell uses the term “thematization” for Lucian’s occupation with laughter, regarding this activity as purposeful and generically inclined. See HALLIWELL, 2008, 429-462.

perspectives through the pursuit of provoking laughter. The simile of life, uttered in Hades, as well as the entire dialogue is based on the theatrical quality of disguise. In the opening lines of the text Menippus appears in front of his friend dressed in Odysseus' cap, Orpheus' lyre and Heracles' lion-skin, characteristics essential and literary conventional of the heroes and well-acknowledged by a second-century learned audience.

Menippus' disguise and his friend's surprise (1: *What has he been getting himself up like that for?*),⁸⁷ modeled on Aristophanes' *Frogs* 45-47, offers a comic character appearing on stage. When Menippus is forced to justify his appearance (8: *What was that for, Menippus? I see no reason either for the get-up or for the choice of names.*),⁸⁸ we can see how what Branham calls "controlled evocation of a role" is important to understand Lucian's technique. Branham describes Lucian's method as of "distancing his audience from his characters by emphasizing their comically theatrical or artificial qualities and by using inside jokes shared by the author with his audience but inaccessible to the character "onstage" or inappropriate to his role."⁸⁹ In *Necyomantia* both methodological devices are used. Menippus' friend ignores the reason why Menippus got dressed like that to descend to Hades, but Menippus admits that

*Oh, obvious enough; there is no mystery in that. He thought that as these three had gone down alive to Hades before us, I might easily elude Aeacus's guard by borrowing their appearance, and be passed as an habitue; there is good warrant in the theatre for the efficiency of disguise.*⁹⁰

Even if the audience, cultivated in a literary tradition familiar to the particular heroes already from the opening lines has realized what the disguise means, the character of Menippus is required to remind the importance of the disguise in the theatre. This forwards the simile of life and its disguise foundation. Tyche controls the pageant of life, and distributes costumes to every man (16: *who distributed infinitely varied costumes to the performers*),⁹¹ according to her will; according to her will she can also take them back,

⁸⁷ 1: τί οὖν αὐτῷ βούλεται τὸ ἀλλόκοτον τοῦ σχήματος.

⁸⁸ 8: Ὡς δὴ τί τοῦτο, ὦ Μένιππε; οὐ γὰρ συνήμι τὴν αἰτίαν οὔτε τοῦ σχήματος οὔτε τῶν ὀνομάτων.

⁸⁹ BRANHAM, 1989, 19.

⁹⁰ 8: Καὶ μὴν πρόδηλόν γε τοῦτο καὶ οὐ παντελῶς ἀπόρητον· ἐπεὶ γὰρ οὗτοι πρὸ ἡμῶν ζῶντες εἰς Αἴδου κατεληλύθεσαν, ἡγεῖτο, εἴ με ἀπεικάσειεν αὐτοῖς, ῥαδίως ἂν τὴν τοῦ Αἰακοῦ φρουρὰν διαλαθεῖν καὶ ἀκωλύτως ἂν παρελθεῖν ἅτε συνηθέστερον, τραγικῶς μάλα παραπεμπόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ σχήματος.

⁹¹ 16: διάφορα καὶ ποικίλα τοῖς πομπεύουσι τὰ σχήματα προσάπτουσα.

exchange them and in the end, when the pageant is over, deprive every man of his costume. Menippus comments on those who wish to keep their loaned costumes and moves on to give a further parallel of the pursuit of earthly goods, before putting forth laughter as a proposition for treating life. He compares the outcome of Tyche's pageant with the tragic actors on scene; when the play is over, they have to undress and return to their life as a Satyr or a Pollux, instead of Agamemnon or Creon (16: *his name is not now Agamemnon son of Atreus or Creon son of Menoeceus, but Polus son of Charicles of Sunium or Satyrus son of Theogiton of Marathon*).⁹²

Just before the assembly and the decree against the rich, Menippus has to answer to his friend's question

*if a man occupies a costly towering sepulchre, or leaves monuments, statues, inscriptions behind him on earth, does not this place him in a class above the common dead?*⁹³

Menippus' amusement is expressed through standard gelastic vocabulary (17: ληρεῖς, ὦ οὗτος).⁹⁴ He starts using the verb γελῶ, which will be central to Tiresias' advice in the end.

Echoing Plato,⁹⁵ Menippus remembers that he has to narrate the assembly and the decree against the rich (19: τὸ περὶ τῶν πλουσίων). In a humorous parodic scene of the Athenian law system, Menippus convicts the rich in transforming into asses, shifting from the temporariness of disguise to the semi-permanent nature of 25.000 years of transformation.

Branham intelligently calls the last scene of *Necyomantia* a climactic moment of Menippus' quest. Tiresias, before responding to his inquiry, laughs (21: ὁ δὲ γελάσας). His response also includes the element of laughter

*pursue one end alone — how you may do what your hand finds to do, and go your way with ever a smile and never a passion.*⁹⁶

⁹² 16: οὐκέτ' Ἀγαμέμνων ὁ Ἀτρεΰς οὐδὲ Κρέων ὁ Μενουκίεως, ἀλλὰ Πῶλος Χαρικλέους Σουνιεύς ὀνομαζόμενος ἢ Σάτυρος Θεογεΐτονος Μαραθώνιος. Anderson, regarding *Necyomantia* as the doublet of *Icaromenippus*, concludes that Lucian's use of tragedy represents the artificial and pretentious, and parallelizes the simile of 16 to *Icaromenippus* 29, where the actor's costume is also commented (ANDERSON, 1976).

⁹³ 17: οἱ δὲ τοὺς πολυτελεῖς τοῦτους καὶ ὑψηλοὺς τάφους ἔχοντες ὑπὲρ γῆς καὶ στήλας καὶ εἰκόνας καὶ ἐπιγράμματα οὐδὲν τιμιώτεροι παρ' αὐτοῖς εἰσι τῶν ιδιωτῶν νεκρῶν.

⁹⁴ HALLIWELL, 2008, 5, n.15.

⁹⁵ 19: Εὗ γε ὑπέμνησας.

⁹⁶ 21: τοῦτο μόνον ἐξ ἅπαντος θηράσῃ, ὅπως τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέμενος παραδράμῃς γελῶν τὰ πολλὰ καὶ περὶ μηδὲν ἐσπουδακῶς.

Tiresias' advice appears to reflect Lucian's literary techniques profoundly; Lucian manipulates the traditional character of the seer, set in Hades, a universal locus; Tiresias utters an advice which entails proverbial wisdom. The advice is argued to be derived from Simonides, the lyric poet. Right after the simile of life where humanity has been paralleled to a huge pageant, the seer's advice reflects Lucian's "ironic perspective on human endeavor" and "draws the appropriate moral"; that of the common man's life being the best to conduct. Menippus' quest showed him that "what is taken most seriously on earth, wealth and power, is seen from Hades to be an illusion of perspective,"⁹⁷ and a reason for laughter.

3.2 CATAPLUS: MICYLLUS' LAUGHTER

Cataplus reveals the antithesis between wealth and poverty in a more extended degree and projects laughter as the means and end of the satiric dialogue. Micyllus' laughter, the central and most important feature of the dialogue is dispersed in the text in almost every scene. But it is also Megapenthes' attitude that forwards the laughter of the cobbler, as well as Cyniscus' affiliation with Micyllus and his grave accusations against the tyrant. The relationship that is developed between the three major characters provides the text with manifold and different perspectives towards the rich and the poor. According to Halliwell, it is this "triangular relationship between the three highlighted individuals, including the permutations of laughter which their destinies bring into view, that will orientate but also complicate the work's perspective on human attitudes to life and death."⁹⁸

Megapenthes is represented as the stereotypical tyrant that wishes for life prolongation and even bribes Clotho for some more time on earth next to his wealth (9). The characters that conventionally belong to the locus of Hades, fully conscious of what death means, handle his escape attempt with a sense of mockery, describing him as μάταιος (3), or τρισκατάρατος (4). Clotho's attitude towards the tyrant's appeals reveals her amusement with mortals who believe that they can deceive death. When Megapenthes expresses his wish to return to earth to build his palace,⁹⁹ he is treated by Clotho in a way that reminds of Menippus' amusement towards his friend's

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ HALLIWELL, 2008, 456.

⁹⁹ Halliwell (ibid.) points out the etymological explanation of the tyrant's name (Great-griever) as the reverse to Micyllus' laughter.

questions.¹⁰⁰ Her ironical tone in response to Megapenthes' wealth is expressed with the verb θάσσει,¹⁰¹ whereas her response to his bribing of one thousand talants seems to necessarily include the vocative ὦ γελοῖε. Megapenthes' appeals to Clotho do not get the desired result; instead she keeps mentioning that he is a cause for laughter to the ones left behind as well to the ones who are in Hades. His statues and portraits will provoke laughter to the ones that see them;¹⁰² his quality as a tyrant is of no significance anymore, since Rhadamanthys judges everyone equally.¹⁰³

Megapenthes comprises the first part of the antithesis between rich and poor that circumscribes the entire dialogue; the first manifestation of this antithesis is found in the Carion scene (12). The slave calls the tyrant-as if he were alive-*'You little villain,'*¹⁰⁴ and starts spitting on his corpse. Halliwell argues that "the frisson of triumphant mockery of the dead – a frisson of exhilaration for its perpetrators, and (in a rather apt sense) mortification for those who picture themselves or their kin as its victims – is attested across the whole history of ancient Greek culture",¹⁰⁵ and gives parallels of hostile laughter in the Homeric Iliad (*Il.* 4.176–81), as well as in the tragic plays.¹⁰⁶

Megapenthes' appeal

*Dread Fate, let me be some common man, some pauper! I have been a king, let me be a slave! Only let me live!*¹⁰⁷

reveals the rich men' contempt towards the life of the poor and the tyrant's lust for life next to his fortune. The tyrant's appeal reminds of Achilles' response to Odysseus' admiration of the hero's post mortem glorification. Achilles incontestably prefers life over death, even as a poor man, as long as he is alive.¹⁰⁸ Clotho's answer sharply relieves the expected agreement or

¹⁰⁰ 8: ληρεῖς· ἀλλὰ ἔμβαινε. See *Necyomantia* 17 for the verbal response.

¹⁰¹ 8: *Be under no uneasiness* (Fowler).

¹⁰² 11: <αῖ> εἰκόνες δὲ καὶ ἀνδριάντες οὓς ἡ πόλις ἀνέστησέ σοι πάλαι πάντες ἀνατετραμμένοι γέλωτα παρέξουσι τοῖς θεωμένοις.

¹⁰³ 13: ΜΕΓΑΠΕΝΘΗΣ: Καὶ τίς ἀξιώσει κατ' ἀνδρὸς τυράννου ψῆφον λαβεῖν; ΚΛΩΘΩ: Κατὰ τυράννου μὲν οὐδεὶς, κατὰ νεκροῦ δὲ ὁ Ῥαδάμανθους, ὃν αὐτίκα ὄψει μάλα δίκαιον καὶ κατ' ἀξίαν ἐπιτιθέντα ἐκάστῳ τὴν δίκην.

¹⁰⁴ 12: ὦ μιᾶρὸν ἀνθρώπιον.

¹⁰⁵ HALLIWELL, 2008, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Aesch. *Pers.* 1034, *Eum.* 789/819, Soph. *Ant.* 839, *Aj.* 79 (endorsed by Athena), 196–9, 367, 382, 958–62, OT 1422, *El.* 1153, 1295, *Phil.* 1023, 1125, OC 902–3, 1338–9, Eur. *Medea* 383, 404, 797, etc.

¹⁰⁷ 13: καὶν ἰδιώτην με ποιήσον, ὦ Μοῖρα, τῶν πενήτων ἓνα, καὶν δοῦλον ἀντὶ τοῦ πάλαι βασιλέως· ἀναβιώναί με ἔασον μόνον.

¹⁰⁸ *Od.* 11.486–490. The same motif is again manipulated by Lucian in *Dialogi Mortuorum* 26.

disagreement on the request, with the use of an ironic question that entails theatrical elements.

Where is the one with the stick? ¹⁰⁹

Lucian seems to exploit the audience's theatrical visibility in employing a colloquial phrase that may seem incomplete, but is attested as a lively and direct conversational style.¹¹⁰

A comic scene between Hermes, Charon, Megapenthes, and Cyniscus follows before Micyllus makes his appearance to confront in a reverse manner the character of the tyrant and to form the second part of the antithesis. As we mentioned earlier, Micyllus' laughter is treated here as the central and focal part of the dialogue. Megapenthes' exaggerated agony for his earthly fortune is confronted in Micyllus' first appeal to Clotho with a characteristic indifference expressed through a negation of the Cyclop's promise in *Odyssey* 9.369.¹¹¹ The huge difference (14: ἐκ διαμέτρου γὰρ ἡμῶν οἱ βίοι) between the life of the rich and the life of the poor is described successfully by Micyllus who concludes in calling the rich men bold in every act of life, but cowards in front of death, while his description of his immediate obedience to Atropos' call has an amusing character. Micyllus abandoned a boot that he was repairing to follow the procession of the dead. In Hades he is satisfied by the equality that prevails between rich and poor and gives a description not of what is better in the netherworld, but of what does not exist there; tax payment, winter time, sickness, and hard beatings. This status of equality provokes his laughter which appears to be the laughter of his entire social class; the plural verbal expression testifies for that.¹¹²

When Clotho demands that he explains why he was also laughing earlier, Micyllus moves to utter an antithesis which encloses the reasons that provoke his laughter as well as the targets of his laughter. The tyrant's way of life and habits reflected to the cobbler a man of divine quality (16: καί μοι ἐδόκει τότε ἰσόθεός τις εἶναι), so that the tyrant previously had seemed to acquire a beyond-human status.¹¹³ The tyrant's predicates are indicative of the

¹⁰⁹ 13: Ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τὸ ξύλον;

¹¹⁰ The theatrical elements of this syntactic choice as well as the colloquial use of this particular syntactic construction have been examined in detail by WIFSTRAND, 1934, who has also collected the earlier uses of the construction and its instances in Lucian's work.

¹¹¹ 14: *I find but cold comfort in that promise of the Cyclops: 'Outis shall be eaten last,' said he; but first or last, the same teeth are waiting.*

¹¹² 15: *the laugh is with us poor men.*

¹¹³ 16: ὑπεράνθρωπός τις ἀνὴρ, see also Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. BABICH, 2013: "Lucian's ὑπεράνθρωπος in this same dialogue is – as has long been argued – the source for

Aristophanic comic language; either the compound augmentative adjectives (ὑπεράνθρωπος, τρισόλβιος) or the comparative ones (καλλίων, ὑψηλότερος). After the tyrant's death, however, Micyllus' admiration is substituted by laughter.

But when he was dead, he made a queer figure, with all his finery gone. ¹¹⁴

But Micyllus laughs more at himself in a moment of self-sarcasm for having been deceived by the tyrant's ephemeral merriness and wealth. He uses the verb καταγελῶ for himself, a verb that implies mockery as an aggressive act.

though I laughed more at myself than at him. ¹¹⁵

Micyllus' laughter at Gniphos the usurper provides a further perspective on the ephemerality of wealth and on the futile pursuit of it.¹¹⁶ He cannot help laughing at Gniphos's inability to enjoy his wealth before death and employs for one more time the plural verbal utterance of the verb γελῶ before ending his narration.

There will be time enough on the voyage to have our laugh out watching them lamenting. ¹¹⁷

Micyllus' laughter seems to achieve justice when in a comic scene on Charon's boat he is placed on Megapenthes' shoulders (19); however, it is culminated in the scene where Hermes demands that the cobbler should lament along the other dead (20). Micyllus' lamentation song, where he ironically grieves for the fortune he lost, is in accord with his general attitude towards the rich.

Cyniscus' appearance is not sudden. He has been among the passengers since the beginning of the dialogue and has even helped Hermes to muster everyone in order. He and Micyllus walk together in the darkness displaying an affinity, Anderson's aforementioned Lucianic double pair.¹¹⁸ In employing Cyniscus though, Lucian does not seem to only wish for more

Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the super- or over-human." and " In Lucian, this supposed higher man, here the tyrant Megapenthes, as he is distinguished in life, i.e., in the world above, is tracked in his reluctant 'translation' or passage to Hades or the underworld."

¹¹⁴ 16: ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπέθανεν, αὐτός τε παγγέλοιος ὥφθη μοι ἀποδυσάμενος τὴν τρυφήν.

¹¹⁵ 16: κάματοῦ μᾶλλον κατεγέλων, for the aggressive meaning of the Greek verb, see HALLIWELL, 2008, 25.

¹¹⁶ For the ludicrous effect the inability of enjoying one's wealth causes, see also Plutarch, *De cupiditate divitiarum* 3.295.

¹¹⁷ 17: καὶ μεταξὺ γὰρ πλέοντες τὰ λοιπὰ γελασόμεθα οἰμώζοντας αὐτοὺς ὀρώντες.

¹¹⁸ ANDERSON, 1976.

characters displaying the same features. It is rather the Cynic attitude to life that promotes Cyniscus' appearance. "The Cynic's contempt for worldly power was fearless in life and is apparently vindicated in death."¹¹⁹ Cyniscus' role is the one that carrying a Cynic manner is able to accuse Megapenthes before Rhadamanthys and provide a clear image of the tyrant's life (26). His invocation of Megapenthes' lamp and bed as witnesses improve and emphasize the parodic mode of the dialogue; the parallelism of Megapenthes' punishment with Tantalus' torture (29) can affect Lucian's audience, since the story of Tantalus has been a common property of many literary genres as well as of the cultural tradition.

3.3 *DIALOGI MORTUORUM*: A "GALLERY OF ROLES"

Relihan has argued that in *Dialogi Mortuorum* there is a "general lack of humor at the expense of philosophical thought."¹²⁰ Without any intention to dismiss his proposition, we attempt to regard it as derived from his article's preoccupation with the character of Menippus and the elaborate development of his personality in the dialogues. What is of interest here is rather the instances where Lucian shares qualities of laughter-producing humor that emphasize the antithesis between wealth and poverty and its treatment. Moreover, these instances intend to display the means and ends through which Lucian, with his technique of parodying traditional models, refashioning the standard literary genres and adapting Menippus into his comic dialogue, conveys the moral message of common sense as superior to pursuing wealth and power.

Assuming with MacLeod that the first dialogue of *Dialogi Mortuorum* occupies an introductory part to the series of dialogues that follows, we can detect the mechanism of laughter being summoned from the very beginning of the work. Diogenes, in his only appearance with Menippus (though distanced; Menippus is still alive on earth), invites the latter through Pollux to what seems a codification of suicide. He invites him to descend to the netherworld to laugh eternally at the human folly and proceeds to sending messages to categories of people that he asserts deserve mockery. Only the poor are treated with respect and invited to enjoy the equality of Hades (4).

¹¹⁹ HALLIWELL, 2008, 457.

¹²⁰ RELIHAN, 1987.

Diogenes disappears through dialogue 11 and Menippus sets forth a quest among the dead where humorous scenes take place.¹²¹

In 2, Menippus wants to embark on Charon's boat but he lacks the necessary fare. Charon's aggressive reaction provokes Menippus' comic question as a response

*I ought not to have died, I suppose?*¹²²

The Cynic is accused by the stereotypically rich men (Midas, Sardanapalus, and Croesus) of mocking them incessantly but he is amused when Pluto asks for an explanation.¹²³ Menippus' incessant laughing at the rich is due to their *hubris* against the rest of men, whom they demanded to submit to them (3.2).

In 6, having enjoyed a guided tour throughout the abodes of Hades from Aeacus, he decides that the best place to settle is next to those rich men that make him laugh with their lamentations of their lost properties (6.6).

In the group of dialogues that include the legacy hunters the chances for humor are abundant. Halliwell emphasizes the scenario of dialogue 17 as indicative of Lucian's overt thematization of laughter. Callidemides narrates how he died. He wanted to poison his patron but the patron's servant served the poisoned glass of wine to Callidemides himself. Zenophantus' laughter insults Callidemides,¹²⁴ but he confesses that even the patron started laughing once he realized the trick. Halliwell underlines that Lucian's thematization of laughter possesses the "capacity to transmute what ordinarily counts as horrific – choking, attempted murder, death by poison at the dinner table – into an occasion for somebody's unabashed mirth, thus setting up an internal incongruity of values and mentalities."¹²⁵

Dialogue 20 is thematically formulated in a humorous context, with Charon having the dead undress from what could outweigh the boat. The scene brings vividly into mind the dramatic simile of life uttered in *Necyomantia*, as well as the embarkation scene in *Catapulus*. Menippus abandons his belongings voluntarily in what seems a negation of material necessities, whereas Lampichus the tyrant begs for keeping his diadem and robes. Hermes says no and even orders him to get rid of his cruelty, folly, insolence, and hatred. Craton the rich man is requested to leave behind his fortune and his inscriptions and tombs since they would be too heavy for the

¹²¹ The order of the dialogues is always the one MacLeod prefers in his edition.

¹²² 2.2: τί οὖν; ἐχρῆν διὰ τοῦτο μὴ ἀποθανεῖν;

¹²³ 3.1: καὶ σὺ μωραίνεις, ὦ Πλούτων.

¹²⁴ 17.2: τί τοῦτο γελάς, ὦ Ζηνόφαντε; καὶ μὴν οὐκ ἔδει γε ἑταίρω ἀνδρὶ ἐπιγελαῖν.

¹²⁵ HALLIWELL, 2008, 443.

boat. While the rich are requested to embark devoid of all their fortune, Menippus is asked by the philosopher to leave

*your independence behind you, and your plain-speaking, and your indifference, and your high spirit, and your laughter!- No one else here keeps laughing.*¹²⁶

Hermes however, who represents a character traditionally belonging to both worlds, the upper and the lower one, advises Menippus to keep his qualities with him, as being valuable and useful to the journey.

When in 21 Diogenes, discussing with Crates, condemns the occupations of the rich and their lust for their treasures, he promotes wisdom as a necessity for life, along with

*independence, truth, frankness, and freedom.*¹²⁷

This attitude of the Cynic philosophers differentiates the character of Menippus from their company; hence, they never encounter each other in Lucian's Hades. Menippus does not appear to carry and represent the Cynic mentality; he does not need wisdom to realize the reason for which he should laugh at death. He descends to the netherworld, he observes the condition of the dead and utters his final words conscious of the mentality that he achieves. Nevertheless, as Relihan observes, in Lucian's works that are closer to the literary genre called Menippean satire (*Necyomantia*, *Icaromenippus*, *Dialogi Mortuorum*), the author displays a "real appreciation to one vital aspect of the Cynic movement and Cynic literature." This aspect is "the subversive nature of Cynic criticism."¹²⁸

Lucian does not intend to impose a vantage-point to his audience; he rather offers a "perspective on life 'from death'."¹²⁹ His ability to provide a variety of ludicrous situations, full of fantasy, acknowledged allusiveness and comic impropriety allows his second century audience to extract the promotion of common sense, by frustrating its expectations. Hades, and by extension death, is not a taboo subject for Lucian. Halliwell views death in Lucian's netherworld dialogues as "both a mediator and an object of

¹²⁶ 20.9: ἀπόθου τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ ἄλυπον καὶ τὸ γενναῖον καὶ τὸν γέλωτα· μόνος γοῦν τῶν ἄλλων γελᾷς.

¹²⁷ 21.3: αὐτάρκειαν, ἀλήθειαν, παρρησίαν, ἐλευθερίαν.

¹²⁸ Relihan in BRANHAM, GOULET-CAZÉ, 1996, 179. For Lucian's attitude towards the Cynic tradition, see BOSMAN, 2012, where the author's debt to the innovative literary style of the Cynics is argued. Moreover, compare *De morte Peregrini* and *Demonax* for the author's different stance towards his contemporary Cynics.

¹²⁹ HALLIWELL, 2008, 441.

laughter” which makes it distinctive and has caused Bakhtin’s characterization of it as a “carnivalised netherworld.”¹³⁰

Moreover, Branham has summarized the gravity of Lucian’s seriocomic style: “If laughter provokes thought, its sources and implications are, after all, integral to the work’s meaning and an index of its significance for an audience.”¹³¹ Cicero’s passage from *De Oratore* seems to corroborate this claim: “there is no source of laughing-matters from which austere and serious thoughts are not also to be derived.”¹³²

Ragland, regarding laughter as “the result of comic effect”, defines it as “a means of communicating a wide variety of emotions, according to personal and cultural setting.”¹³³ Lucian’s use of parody reflects his respect towards his audience of educated men and functions as a medium of bridging the distance between the historical past and the cultural present of the second century. Hence, the thematization of laughter in dialogues where rich and poor characters prevail does not seem to intend to mobilize social sentiments or to elicit cultural nostalgia –being a traditional subject-matter. It rather seems to create a playful interaction between the author, his characters and an educated audience. Ragland’s assertion that “laughter rebels against norms, aiming not to destroy, but to restore harmony and freedom through fusion, through momentary wholeness”, indicates that Lucian’s preoccupation with offering that bridging through the parodic use of the traditional literary genres, appropriated in the present cultural values, aims at engaging his group at this exact moment of that bridging.

¹³⁰ Quoted by HALLIWELL, 2008, 441, n. 23.

¹³¹ BRANHAM, 1989, 26.

¹³² Cicero, *De Or.* 2.250: nullum genus est ioci, quo non ex eodem severa et gravia sumantur.

¹³³ RAGLAND, 1976.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Recent scholarship has pointed towards the direction of assessing Lucian's work according to his seriocomic art, namely, according to his skill in blending serious and comic elements to produce thought-provoking works that can have an appeal to the audience of his era, as well as to a contemporary audience. We have already discussed Anderson's insistence on studying Lucian against his rhetorical education. This provides the background for his ability to produce works that draw from the tradition and, at the same time, exploit the variability of rhetoric. In these terms, *Cataplus*, *Necyomantia*, and *Dialogi Mortuorum* should be regarded as texts that display variation and precise and inflexible literary skills. Branham's shift towards Lucian's ability to generate humor through incongruous situations suggests that the author does not intend to criticize his society or just serve the art of satire, but that he rather produces works that engage his audience in an instant overlapping of diverging traditions.

In this study we have attempted to sketch out the representation of the antithesis between wealth and poverty in Lucian's *Necyomantia*, *Cataplus*, and *Dialogi Mortuorum*. Assuming a kind of homogeneity to be the common element of these texts, we have tried to approach them as a unity. Considering the antithetical pair of wealth and poverty as a recurrent theme encountered in the three texts, we have attempted to point out the significant passages where the theme is mostly emphasized. Moreover, we have endeavored to indicate Lucian's effort to achieve a perspective through variation on the same contextual environment. The second part of the study has focused on the author's intentional thematization of laughter as an element crucial for the understanding of the texts. Thus, we have attempted to incorporate in the study the combination of the serious and the comic elements Lucian uses in his works, since we have considered this combination of great importance in order to understand the author's frequent focusing on rich and poor characters. As aforementioned, we do not intend to judge the author's general stance towards the social antithesis of wealth and poverty, since that would presume a deduction of conclusions based on the entirety of his work. Nevertheless, what we have attempted is Lucian's treatment as an author of boundless comic fantasy who can instantly evoke serious and comic

skills to engage his audience/readers into aspects of everyday life with a playful spirit.

As a subject for further investigation we would suggest the examination of laughter's presence and significance as incorporated in Lucian's satiric dialogues as well as in the rest of his works. Without necessarily focusing on rich and poor characters, a further study could process multiple groups of characters and themes that Lucian elaborates and manipulates while elaborating his texts in order to produce laughter and communicate it to his audience. The inquiry of laughter's thematization and its presumable applicability in the rest of Lucian's works could give us some clues about the literary skills and intentions of our author. Moreover, it could be decisive in the assessment of Lucian's seriocomic style.

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