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Identification and Distance in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*: Subjects and their Absences

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I. Reading the Collection Holistically

What do women talk about when they are alone? Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* seduce their readers with the possibility of listening in on the private conversations of Athenian courtesans, dangling out the hope that a number of topics that remain well-hidden in the ancient world will finally be revealed. Lucian delivers on these fantasies with all sorts of titbits that male readers would find fascinating, such as lesbian sex, all-female festivals, and magic, topics about which very little other literature survives. Scholars interested in these subjects have therefore been drawn to certain parts of the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, but such cherry-picking approach has left the collection as a whole understudied. Of the fifteen dialogues in the collection, the preponderance of the most seductive topics centre in the first half of the collection.¹ As a result there has been almost complete scholarly silence on Dialogues 8-15. This chapter will fill the lacuna by first giving a reading of the collection as a whole rather than as a source for a variety of subsidiary interests. It will cross the lines between the popular first half and the unpopular second half. What happens when we read Dialogue 1 in the light of Dialogue 15? Or Dialogue 5 in the light of Dialogue 10?

As a collection, the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* invite us to construct a dialogue among the different short dialogues.² Lucian's other short dialogic collections are about worlds that are regularly inaccessible to mortal men: those of the gods, the sea-gods and the dead. He includes courtesans as inhabitants of an equally inaccessible world, the world of women, which permits for only limited and specific mechanisms of male inclusion. The courtesans present a constant danger of slipping back out of male control and into their own all-female realm.

Much of the scholarship on the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* explores the play with female subjectivity in which Lucian engages (Gilhuly 2007; Strong 2012; Roisman 2015, 201–2). Yet the complicated pleasure of reading the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* for their presumably male readers lies in the *alteration* between identification and distance. At some moments Lucian characterizes his courtesans in ways that are distinctly feminine, such as having them speak in feminine idioms and use distinct feminine markers such as

¹ As the editor of these texts, Karl Mras, has explained, only Dialogues 1-5 are stable in their position in the manuscripts (C. Mras 1930, 4). The concurrence of the manuscript stability with the preponderance of modern scholarship on the first third of the dialogues suggests a consonance between ancient and modern interests.

² Important steps in this direction have been taken in two articles by Kate Gilhuly, in which she examines how Lucian uses the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* to construct his persona (Gilhuly 2006; 2007). Hanna Roisman's chapter also attempts to look at the dialogues holistically, schematizing how the courtesans are positively characterized (Roisman 2015).

matronymics and female-specific oaths. Their involvement with magic, feminine rituals and festivals marks them off as a tribe apart from men. They turn to each other for comfort and advice, creating distinctions between insiders and outsiders based on gender. At other moments, Lucian's courtesans are deeply identifiable for male readers, dealing with their lack of power within omnipresent authority structures that would be felt by all members of society, male and female alike. The slippage between focus on the courtesan as other and the focus on the courtesan as self is similarly mirrored in the ability of the courtesan to leave the stage entirely, even in texts that are presumably all about her. In fact, in their current form, the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* begin with a soldier and end with a virgin.³ The play between identification and distance is a recurring theme in the fifteen short dialogues and is a constant thread that I will follow through the range of specific topics.

This oscillation between identification and distance is constructed within a genre without clear parallels, although it has manifold influences. In subject matter and register, the short dialogues seem closest to New Comedy or the mimes of Herodas and Theocritus (Legrand 1907; 1908), drawing on these influences more than Lucian's other corresponding sets of comic dialogues (*Dialogues of the Gods*, *Dialogues of the Sea-Gods* and *Dialogues of the Dead*), especially in their incorporation of a larger amount of movement and scenic shifting (Bartley 2005). However, in their choice of prose, and in some significant semantic reuses, they echo philosophical dialogues (Gilhuly 2006; Blondell and Boehringer 2014). But scholars who wish to view the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* as philosophical dialogues have not managed to explain how such a classification works for *all* of the dialogues, which are not equally about coming to know or pursuing a line of inquiry. For instance, *Dialogue 12* echoes courtroom rhetoric. *Dialogue 13* stages a braggard soldier who puts off his girlfriend with his over-the-top tales of gore. *Dialogue 14* focuses purely on economic rates for sexual services. The *Dialogues of the Courtesans* draw on several genres and topics that have little to do with philosophy or the philosophical dialogue. In addition, their compressed length does not lend to classification as a philosophical dialogue. Lucian's restless drive towards innovation in his genres has produced an idiosyncratic collection of collections of exchanges between unlikely interlocutors (Anderson 1976a, 94–102; 1976b).

The womanly world in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* is crafted by a clever and self-conscious male author, and at every turn in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* we are presented with the problem of false stories and the potential of intentional misdirection. Boastful clients construct elaborately made-up tales of their exploits (*Dial. Meret.* 9 and 13). In *Dialogue 9*, the courtesan chastises her servant with what she *should* have said when she ran into the absent lover. Then the servant adds retrospectively that she *did* say these things. Do we believe her, or is she also continually making it up to succeed? Mendacious graffiti is both read (*Dial. Meret.* 4) and crafted (*Dial. Meret.* 10), so that even messages inscribed in stone cannot be believed (κατεστηλίτευται, *Dial. Meret.* 4.2).⁴ These short dialogues are full of lies, mistaken identities, and writing that is just as untrustworthy as speech. With so much focus on crafting stories *within* the collection, we are left to wonder who is in control of the stories that we are reading and how credulous we are meant to be as readers. Lucian participates in ancient satire's delight in folding back on the presenter as an equally flawed and implicated viewer (Relihan 1993; Fields 2013). Kate Gilhuly has argued for Lucian's use of the courtesan characters in these dialogues as a hologram for his own position as insider/outsider (Gilhuly 2007, 83), and her argument could be expanded to the mutual

³ *Dialogue 1* opens with referencing a soldier lover in the accusative, and *Dialogue 15* ends with the apostrophe to a flute-girl named "Virgin".

⁴ Melitta has lost the trust and affection of her lover Charinus because of some graffiti. Charinus tells Melitta that it is inscribed on a tombstone in the Ceremicus. When Melitta sends her maidservant to check, she finds the note on the Dipylon Gate (*Dial. Meret.* 4.3). The graffiti is replicating itself, or the original story about the graffiti's location was as untrustworthy as the graffiti itself.

mendacity required of Lucian and his readers, parallel to the wily courtesans and their clients.

II. Changing Focus: Dialogue 1 and 15

Dialogue 1 comes first in all of the arrangements preserved in the manuscript tradition (C. Mras 1930, 4). Therefore, it seems a natural place to look for themes that will persist in importance throughout the set. To show what can be gained from looking beyond the “sexy bits” of the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, I will argue that by looking at the first and last dialogues, we instead see a collection with a distinct focus on the competition between genres and the positioning of the author. The first and last dialogues in the collection share a focus on the *hetaera* as a character that avoids war and escapes conflict, just as the genre of the short dialogues crafts itself as an anti-epic space, with a different set of values.

Dialogue 1 is a conversation in which Glycerion complains to her friend Thais about a client who has recently been “stolen” by another courtesan named Gorgona. Thais counsels Glycerion to let the man go and find another. There are a range of issues of interest in this dialogue, and yet the only time it has emerged into secondary literature is for its brief mention of the Haloa festival. As such, it is frequently connected to Dialogue 7, which also takes place during the Haloa (Burton 1998; Lowe 1998). I will discuss these references to the Haloa in section IV, but here I want to see what can be gained by a literary reading of the dialogue rather than as a source for social history.

The first word of the dialogue, and therefore of the entire collection, is “soldier” (τὸν στρατιώτην, *Dial. Meret.* 1). The readers are led to wonder if perhaps these courtesan dialogues might be “all about men” after all.⁵ However, the soldier is never named. He is passed along from one woman to the next, all of whom are named: Abrotonon – Glycera – Gorgona. In addition, Gorgona’s mother is named: Chrysarium, the witch. It is not the women who are interchangeable, but rather the men: Thais’ advice to Glycera ends with the assertion that male clients are exchangeable commodities. The similarity between the word for “threshing floor” (ἄλωά/*halōa*), and the name of the festival (Haloa), although a false etymology, provides the courtesans with a pun: their clients are the harvest waiting to be cut by women of their profession. The men are passive to the active courtesans of the stories. Not only do the women choose who to pursue and whom to let go, but Gorgona’s mother Chrysarium is the most effective actor in the whole dialogue, working helpful magic on her daughter’s behalf.

The social world created by the first dialogue is one where women are active, named, relying on each other for advice and practical assistance. The men are the commodities that are shared, passed around, and fought over. The polemics are signaled at the outset by the profession of the first client. The “soldier” that is the first word of the collection in all the manuscripts is not only fronting a man in a woman’s story, but also signaling the antagonism that is played with in the profession of the courtesans themselves. Yet, Thais convinces Glycerion to let her soldier go without a fight. Antagonism is suggested only to be abandoned, and Dialogue 1 ends with a decision for peace. Somehow the *hetaerae* avoid war and escape conflict. This dynamic appears again in the final dialogue, 15.⁶ While the men of different professions come to blows, the *hetaera* Crocale escapes unharmed. In Dialogue 15, the courtesan Crocale quickly exits the stage to the neighbouring house of a

⁵ A modern echo is found in the 1939 film *The Women* based on the play by Clare Boothe Luce. Despite featuring an all-female cast of 135, the subtitle of the film claims that “It’s All About Men” (a subtitle missing from the original play).

⁶ Although Dialogue 15 is not universally the final dialogue in the collection, it is in the majority of cases. Karl Mras, the editor of the modern edition, explains that there are reasons to keep the order he has chosen, including the fact that 1 and 15 are the shortest dialogues “...cum non sine causa minimis sermonibus (1. et 15.) ceteri comprehendit” (C. Mras 1930, 4).

fellow courtesan. She leaves behind an increasing wreck, as her ex-lover, a soldier, beats up her current client, a farmer, and breaks the flutes of the narrating flute-girl, who had been hired for the evening. The courtesan is safe.

The courtesan is safe because she is absent, absent twice over. First of all, she is not the direct speaker in the final dialogue. Instead, that role is given to a hired flute-girl, whose job at the symposium was not sexual but musical.⁷ In all of the other dialogues, courtesans are the main speakers. Here, the flute-girl's interlocutor, Cochlis, is herself a courtesan, but the attention is on Crocale, the absent courtesan. Secondly, the courtesan is absent by hightailing it out of the party early on without sustaining any injuries. That absent courtesan is now safely among her sisters in the profession, tucked away as a battle is played out in her absence.⁸

Once the courtesan is removed, the violent competition increases between the two men, who are repeatedly named by their professions as soldier and farmer. This is not a simple battle between rival lovers, but a battle about the value of varying roles. The soldier is violent and cheap. The farmer is obliging and rich, and he has friends in the city that will come back in retaliation against the soldier and his brawny lads with lawsuits rather than violence. Lucian further highlights this focus on the men by ending the dialogue with Cochlis discussing which profession furnishes the best clients for courtesans. Cochlis says that having a soldier as a lover means that you will be subjected to violence. Even worse, they give promises rather than money, putting off payment until their own pay-day. She lists three professions that she prefers for lovers: fishermen, sailors and farmers, calling them "equal in honour" to her own profession as courtesan.⁹ Lucian's suggestion in Cochlis' mouth was picked up later by Lucian's imitator, Alciphron (Schmitz 2005). His minor dialogues focus on almost this exact list: Alciphron has a book each of letters from fishermen, farmers, parasites and courtesans. Cochlis' comment could be read as more damning to the professions that she lists than elevating to the profession of courtesan, or it might return us to the idea that courtesans are good judges of value—at least the value of hard and fast cash.¹⁰

When Lucian ends Dialogue 15 by praising the lowly triplet of fisherman, sailor and farmer over the bombast and "noise" of the soldier, he is signalling a metaliterary justification for his own choice of a minor erotic genre rather than a noisy, competitive one. Furthermore, when Cochlis disparages soldiers who shake their crests (τοὺς λόφους) and describe their battles, Lucian activates our memory of the well-known scene in *Iliad* 6, when Hector joins Andromache and his son Astyanax at the city gate. The baby Astyanax is afraid of the crest on Hector's helmet (λόφον, *Iliad* 6.469), and so Hector removes it to speak to his family. By taking off his crest, Hector is able to enter temporarily a different social world, one of the family, with women and children. But he only enters there briefly before reinstating the separation. Andromache returns to the house full of women,¹¹ and Hector puts back on his helmet to return to battle. Lucian flips Hector's choice. He focalizes his story instead to inside the female-centric community where women support each other and

⁷ She describes the condition of her hire as to play the flute for them (κάμῃ παρέλαβεν ἀυλῆσουσαν αὐτοῖς, *Dial. Meret.* 15.1) and her activities during the symposium as playing a musical accompaniment to dance (ἐγὼ μὲν ὑπέκρεκόν τι τῶν Λυδίων, *Dial. Meret.* 15.2).

⁸ Likewise in Dialogue 9 the courtesan manages to escape into the house while her rival lovers of different professions continue to compete for her outside.

⁹ ἄλιεύς τις ἔμοι γένοιτο ἢ ναύτης ἢ γεωργός ἰσότιμος (*Dial. Meret.* 15.3).

¹⁰ As Gilhuly has analyzed for Dialogue 5, the courtesan world, with its emphasis on practical survival, literalizes the maxim of "bronze for gold" and ignores its use for symbolic exchange in Homeric and Classical predecessors (Gilhuly 2007, 76).

¹¹ His woman-full house bookends the scene. When he first arrives at his house, he asks the female servants where his wife is (*Iliad* 6.374-389), and when Andromache returns home, she instructs all of her female servants to start lamenting Hector as if he were already dead (*Iliad* 6.490-502).

exclude the shaking crests of war.¹² Lucian writes his *Dialogues of the Courtesans* as a genre that avoids epic. The ‘minor dialogues’ not only depict dialogues between characters. And they are not only dialoguing with the other short dialogues in the collection but are also carrying on a dialogue with other genres.

The joke continues with the surprising last word of the dialogue. Cochlis ends the dialogue with identifying braggart soldiers as noise without action (which she means to be gifts), but she saves her apostrophe to the end. The final words of Dialogue 15, and therefore of the whole set of miniature dialogues of the courtesans, is “O virgin”, ὦ Παρθενί, the ironic name of her flute-girl interlocutor. The *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, in their current form, begin with a soldier and end with a virgin. Lucian, even in dialogues which promise provocative peeps into the hidden private conversations of women, ends by displacing the courtesan with the men who fight over her and the ‘virgin’ left in the havoc. Readers are invited to shift their identification among characters, as the courtesan increases her distance from the teller of the story. The courtesan exits early.

III. Mothers, Fathers and Powerlessness

The *Dialogues of the Courtesans* are full of complicated relationships. First and foremost, as we have seen in Dialogue 1 and Dialogue 15, between courtesans and lovers, but also, as we have seen in our analysis of Dialogue 1, between courtesans themselves. There is a third axis of relationship that continually influences these dialogues: mothers and fathers. The pattern of courtesans subjected to “mothers” serves as a cipher for other types of powerlessness in the dialogues, such as wealthy sons with living parents who lack the freedom to do as they please.

The *Dialogues of the Courtesans* have a pervasive focus on mothers. Compiling our evidence of Greek prostitution practices, scholars have argued that these “mothers” should be seen as predominantly madams rather than biological mothers, the bosses of the younger working girls (Faraone 2001, 154; Strong 2012; Fantham 2015, 98; Cohen 2016; D. M. Dutsch 2019). Being a hetaera was a female profession with a strong “maternal” didactic line. As Elaine Fantham has explained in reference to the ancient culture of Athenian courtesans: "There was something like a caste of courtesans, a sequence of mother and daughter families; indeed an aging courtesan without a daughter would look for a foundling to rear as her economic substitute" (Fantham 2015, 98).

There are multiple mother-daughter relationships brought into focus in these short dialogues. One of the most striking examples is Dialogue 6, which recounts a conversation between a mother and a daughter who has just had her first paid sexual encounter. Reflecting on this experience, the mother, Crobyle, encourage her daughter to become a professional courtesan so that she might support the family. When the daughter Corinna is beginning to grasp what is being recommended to her, she asks whether she is going to become a hetaera “like Lyra the daughter of Daphnis” (Καθάπερ ἡ Δαφνίδος θυγάτηρ Λύρα, *Dial. Meret.* 6.2). Her mother replies that she is indeed going to become equally well-known, which will reflect back favourably on her own mother. Crobyle says that if Corinna becomes a successful courtesan, others will say “See how very rich Corinna, Crobyle’s daughter, is (τὴν Κόρινναν τὴν τῆς Κρωβύλης θυγατέρα), and how she’s made her mother prosperous three times over!” (*Dial. Meret.* 6.4). Intriguingly, in both this dialogue and the following one, Dialogue 7, prostitutes call their “mother” by the diminutive ὦ μαννάριον, the only use of this diminutive of mother in the entire Greek corpus (*Dial. Meret.* 6.1 and 7.4, mentioned at C. Mras 1930, 3 as an example of Lucian using sub-literary, modern vocabulary). The maternal lines are emphatic even on the level of unique vocabulary.

¹² The themes of Dialogue 15 are also present in Dialogue 13, where a braggart soldier turns a courtesan off with his false tales of blood.

Two other dialogues that centre around a mother-daughter pair are Dialogue 3 and Dialogue 7. Although the “mother” relationships in Dialogue 5 was biological, the relationships in these two dialogues could just as easily be professional rather than biological. Dialogue 3 depicts a conversation between Musarion and her unnamed “mother”. Once again, the mother takes the ‘professional’ view and encourages her ‘daughter’ to forgive a slight from her lover in order to keep the advantageous economic arrangement. Dialogue 7 shows another business-minded ‘mother’ pushing against the romantic notions her daughter. This time, instead of encouraging the hetaera to keep to her man, she encourages her to abandon a poor lover in hopes of getting a wealthier one.

The prevalence of mothers of hetaerae is matched by the more shadowy, but still pervasive, image of the fathers (and sometimes mothers) of the clients of the prostitutes. An illuminating pair of dialogues on this point is Dialogue 7 and Dialogue 8. In both, there is a hope that when the father dies, the son will give more to the courtesan. But the difference comes in who is holding out the hope.

Dialogue 7 features a faithful hetaera, who stays with her man even though he fails to give presents, and even requires financial support himself. She does so because she believes in his stated hopes that once his father dies, he will be in control of a large number of assets. The unnamed mother in this dialogue counsels her daughter Musarion to leave him and find someone who can work the system better even when he is in a subordinate place.

He is the only one who hasn't found some trick to work on his father, nor set up some slave to obfuscate, nor asked his mother for something, threatening to sail away to become a soldier if he didn't get it? (*Dial. Meret.* 7.4)

Μόνος οὗτος οὐ τέχνην εὗρηκεν ἐπὶ τὸν πατέρα, οὐκ οἰκέτην καθῆκεν
ἐξαπατήσοντα, οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς μητρὸς ἤτησεν ἀπειλήσας ἀποπλευσεῖσθαι
στρατευσόμενος, εἰ μὴ λάβοι.

The mother knows that Musarion's holding out hope for the death of her lover's father is misplaced. Even when his father is dead, her lover will not be able to act with absolute freedom. To be a good lover, he must learn how to manipulate his present state of powerlessness, which will some sense be his perpetual status.

Dialogue 7 is in fact about two sets of mothers—the courtesan's and the young man's. The lover's mother is so important that Chaereas is named by both his matronymic and patronymic: he's the son of Dinomache and Laches, the Areopagite (καὶ Δεινομάχης καὶ Λάχητος υἱὸς ἐστὶ τοῦ Ἀρεοπαγίτου, *Dial. Meret.* 7.2). Intriguingly, Chaereas shares the same matronymic with Alcibiades, which Plato uses in one of our rare Classical examples of a matronymic used by itself without a patronymic (ὁ Δεινομάχης υἱός, Plato *Alc.* 123c). Musarion's mother also alerts us to the agency of Dinomache in arranging a suitable marriage for her son in the future, pushing out Musarion's hopes (“His mother will find him a match worth many talents,” ἡ δὲ μήτηρ γάμον πολυτάλαντον ἐξεύρη αὐτῷ; *Dial. Meret.* 7.4). Musarion's ‘mother’ attributes a great amount of power and savvy to her parallel, Chaereas' mother.¹³

In Dialogue 8 Lucian flips the story. The older courtesan instructs the younger one to play the long game and try to keep the rich young man devoted to her because some day

¹³ Another moment of greater sympathy between the parallel ‘mothers’ happens in *Dial. Meret.* 11. There, a prostitute recommends a lover ask his *mother* to look at her rival prostitute in the baths to see what she really looks like. In a complicating moment, the mother here could serve as an ally to one courtesan at the expense of another.

his father will die (ἦν τι ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ πάθη. *Dial. Meret.* 8). The contiguous placement of the two contrasting sets of advice highlights Lucian's facility in the pleasures of variation. In both Dialogue 7 and 8, the older courtesan has insight into the client's relationship with his parents' money—an ever-present concern for the courtesans.

In these dialogues, it first seems that the clients, then, are the ones in control. It is their ability to give gifts that comprise the courtesan's livelihood. But Lucian shows us that rich young clients are just as much under a thumb as anyone else. They can only succeed in supporting a courtesan if they are skilled in "managing up," or swindling their parents of money. Everyone is controlled, as has been so elegantly outlined by Kathleen McCarthy for Plautus' version of similar narratives: slaves are the ciphers for the powerless sons in the audience, as well as the powerless grown men in their political world (McCarthy 2004). Here, the scheming and relatively powerless courtesans parallel the situation of the underaged lovers.

Even hetaerae are superior to others, after all. Just as the rich young men are under the authority of their fathers and therefore also in a sort of temporary slave status, so too there are those who are lower than the courtesan. In Dialogue 15 we see this dynamic through the narrating flute-girl, Parthenis. While the courtesan can escape off-stage into the safety of a neighbour courtesans' house, the slave flute-girl must stay in the violent situation and must then return to her master to tell him about the broken flutes (καὶ νῦν ἀποτρέχω φράσουσα ταῦτα τῷ δεσπότῃ, *Dial. Meret.* 15.2).

Mother-daughter relationships are omnipresent in short Lucianic dialogues. But they are not the only power structure. Everyone is in a power structure, with someone above and someone below. The mother-daughter structures of the courtesans' life are parallel to the father-son structures in the client's life. This is not some fantasy of the weak becoming powerful against the patriarchy through solidarity, but a realistic reflection of the societal reality of restricted power, even for the relatively powerful and free. The trick for courtesan, client and reader alike is to learn the manifold responses required to make the weak situation profitable. To learn when to stick, and when to leave, when to please, and when to enrage.

IV. Naming Women and Speaking Women

While the last two sections were on the possibility of male readers identifying with the courtesans' narratives, the next two sections move to the other side of the oscillation, looking to how the courtesans are distanced from their male readers by Lucian in two specific ways. The first is their manner of speech and range of diction, which is marked as particularly feminine one. The second is in their uniquely feminine religious practices of attending all-female festivals and using magic in some distinctly feminine ways.

The female characters in Lucian's short dialogues have more autonomy and personhood relative to other women in the Greek literary tradition in a few important ways: they are *named* characters who initiate conversations about their own concerns and carry on those conversations sometimes alone with other women and sometimes with men. Dialogue 1 is an intense example of the naming of courtesans in the collection. In this short dialogue, there are five women who are named: Thais, Glykera/Glycerion, Gorgona, Abrotonon, Chrysarion. In contrast, the soldier whom they are fighting over is never given a name, only a profession. As I argued in Section III, Lucian inverts the typical argument about courtesans here: the *client* rather than the *courtesan* is the truly exchangeable commodity. Dialogue 1 is only an intense version of the trend in the rest of the collection. The foundational study of Mras and an appendix in Hayes and Nimis have explored the fifty-two female names in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, their links with female names in comedy and

other sources, and their allegorical meanings (K. Mras 1916; Hayes and Nimis 2015, 125–29).¹⁴

Laura McClure has analysed the prevalence of naming prostitutes as part of the male control over their unusual stories, centring her discussion on Book 13 of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (McClure 2013, 59–78). McClure concludes that the focus on courtesans' names does not reveal an increased sympathy for their subjectivity, but instead “stigmatized and fictionalized hetaeras” (McClure 2013, 78). On this point, there is an important difference between Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* and Book 13 of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. The discourse on courtesans in Athenaeus takes place as a dialogue between men. Therefore, the control of the grammarian speaker over the antiquarian names he collects supports McClure's argument that the naming is here a male strategy of fetishization. Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, on the other hand, privilege the female voice, and the naming of women is predominantly done by other women. The removal of the silence around women's names seems less about their lack of respectability and desire for notoriety, than the fact that many of these dialogues (including Dialogue 1) are spoken by women, to women, settings where publicizing names would not have been shameful.

The prevalence of names is only one aspect of the feminine diction used in these dialogues. There are other verbal patterns that show that Lucian knows how to “speak like a woman.” Ancient authors used a range of verbal and semantic patterns to reproduce “female speech,” especially in dramatic genres. There has been a buzz of literature about female diction in ancient Greek and Latin, much of it inspired by twinned articles in a special issue of *Antichthon* 18 (1984) that focusing on female speech in Latin and Greek comedy (Adams 1984; Bain 1984). Laura McClure, Judith Mossman and K. O. Chong-Gossard expanded on these works for Greek tragedy, and Dorota Dutsch for Latin comedy (McClure 1999; Mossman 2001; Chong-Gossard 2008; D. M. Dutsch 2008). Laura McClure lists feminine-gendered speech traits in Greek literature to be “exclamations, polite modifiers, forms of oaths, imperatives, forms of address, and self-reflexive adjectives” (McClure 1999, 38). The earlier scholarship of David Bain for feminine speech in Menander focused more concretely on smaller units of “female speech”, revealing that for Menander “there exists a limited number of expressions, mostly classifiable as vocatives or exclamations, which appear to serve as markers of female speech” (Bain 1984, 32). Since Lucian's scenes and diction rely so heavily on New Comedy, Bain's analysis of Menander forms a ready model with which to analyse the perceived femininity of the voices in Lucian's dialogues. There are a number of pertinent examples of “female speech” in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. Lucian also shows his women using feminine speech patterns such as matronymics, diminutives, gender-specific oaths and specific feminine interjections.

Marilyn Skinner made an influential argument that the use of matronymics are marks of a female idiom in ancient Greek literature. In her work on prostitute names, McClure mentions, but quickly passes over, Skinner's suggestion to focus instead possible links between matronymics and prostitution with its concomitant uncertain male parentage (McClure 2013, 77). However, in line with my suggestion that the prevalence of names in Lucian might have more to do with the intra-female dynamic of many of these dialogues, I also suggest that the use of courtesan matronymics, like those we observed above for the conversation between Crobyle and Corinna in Dialogue 6, would have been seen as part of “women's speech”. Crobyle, after all, cares about those *women* who will point to Corinna and call her Crobyle's daughter, just as she points to Lyra and calls her the daughter of her mother Daphnis as part of what Gilhuly calls “Krobyle's fantasy of a world of women” (Gilhuly 2007, 82 n. 51).

¹⁴ McClure presents a similar list for courtesan names and their meanings for Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* Book 13 (McClure 2013, 71).

Women in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* commonly use the diminutive of personal names and titles. For instance, in *Dialogue 1*, Thais calls Glycera by the diminutive "Glykerion" twice. Chrysis calls Amphelis by a diminutive (ὄ Ἀμπελίδιον, *Dial. Meret.* 8). The courtesans in friendly situations call each other by diminutives of their names. Eleanor Dickey has suggested that diminutive forms of address for parents tended to be a feminine speech characteristic (Dickey 1996, 242). As discussed above, we see this in Lucian's dialogues with the unique diminutive of 'mother' (μαννάριον) used twice. Bain noted that the use of the parallel diminutive for father (πάππα), when not used by a child, is most frequently used by women (Bain 1984, 37–38).

Lucian also correctly uses gender-specific oaths in his dialogues.¹⁵ Perhaps most expectedly, we get one courtesan, Tryphanis, swearing by Aphrodite (Μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην *Dial. Meret.* 11.3). *Dialogue 6* has Crobyle make an oath to the female avenging goddess, "dear Adrasteia" (ὄ φίλη Ἀδράστεια) twice (*Dial. Meret.* 6.2 and 6.3). The gender-specificity works in the other direction too. In *Dialogue 14*, Dorio the sailor makes two oaths both appropriate to his profession ("by Poseidon and by the Dioscoroi", *Dial. Meret.* 11.4). His female interlocutor, the courtesan Myrtale, refrains from making any oaths whatsoever, which fits with the trend observed for other Greek literature that men swear more commonly than women (Bain 1984, 42).

Calling someone "wretched" (τάλαν) is a gender specific vocative in Menander.¹⁶ Both of our examples in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* are spoken by women, and in fact these are the only two times that Lucian uses this particular vocative in his entire surviving corpus. At *Dialogue 10.3*, the courtesan Drosis uses it to speak about a man, and in *Dialogue 12.2* Pythias uses it to speak about her friend Joessa. The gender specificity of this word seems to play into the idea that sympathetic language is feminine (Bain 1984, 33–35). In the context of the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, such usage plays a role in the negotiation between feminine sympathy and the hard-nosed realism of working girls.

The subjective stance of female speakers is revealed in these dialogues through Lucian's attempt to speak like a woman, and his profligate use of female personal names. These courtesans are allowed more voice and individualization than other women in the literary canon. As Hanna Roisman has argued, the very fact of Lucian presenting the narrative from the female perspective increases our sympathies with their plight. And Lucian's characterization of these women, especially in contrast to how he treats hetaerae in other works, is generally very positive: they are presented as sympathetic characters, often loyal, and having a range of their own pressures and concerns (Roisman 2015). Yet marking these women as women, speaking in ways that were socially recognizable as feminine, reproduces their cultural placement *as women*, both through maintaining an intra-female dialect that was distinct from public diction (matronymics) as well as furthering the social characterization of women as sympathetic (τάλαν) and maternal (babyisms/diminutives). These speech patterns match expected female social roles and serve to set the courtesans apart as different from their male readers.

V. Women's Festivals and Women's Magic

Lucian's women are religious practitioners, and his play with female subjectivity also plays with women's relationships to gods and cults. In particular, Lucian's courtesans

¹⁵ An exception to this rule is that Musarion says her male lover swore by "the twin goddesses and Athena Polias" ("Ὁμοσε γάρ, ὄ μητερ, κατὰ ταῖν θεοῖν καὶ τῆς Πολιάδος, *Dial. Meret.* 7.1). Bain states that swearing by the twin goddesses is the most unambiguous feminine-marked oath (Bain 1984, 39). Either Lucian has a different sense of the gendered nature of this oath, or he is playing with Musarion's female ventriloquism of her lover by coding her retelling as feminine.

¹⁶ "If there is one word that characterizes women in Menander, it is τάλαν. It is not a word used exclusively by women, but there are some ways of using it that are avoided or virtually avoided by men" (Bain 1984, 33–35).

reference two all-female festivals, for which we have precious little evidence in general. As mentioned earlier, the Haloa is referenced Dialogue 1.1 as the place where the interlocutor first met the soldier in question, where they say they were drinking together (καὶ συνέπιε μεθ' ἡμῶν πέρυσιν ἐν τοῖς Ἀλώοις). The Haloa is referred to again at Dialogue 7.4, when the 'mother' asks what her 'daughter' had gotten from her client for the Haloa festival today (τῆμερον Ἀλώά ἐστι. τί δέ σοι δέδωκεν ἐς τὴν ἑορτήν;., *Dial. Meret.* 7.4). Lucian's "all-female" festivals have decidedly mixed-gender participants.

In 1870, Erwin Rohde discovered and published two scholia on these two passages (now found at Rabe 1906, 279–80), which give uniquely detailed accounts about the rituals at the Haloa and the Thesmophoria festival (Skov 1975; Lowe 1998).¹⁷ From the evidence of these scholia, the Haloa was an all-female harvest festival for the agricultural gods Demeter and Dionysus. Lucian links the Haloa to its traditional etymology as stemming from the word for threshing-floor (ἄλωά/*halōa*), ending *Dial. Meret.* 1 with the courtesans consoling themselves that they will 'harvest' other clients. Intriguingly, although the scholion says that it is a women's festival, Dialogue 1 explicitly mentions that a male client had been drinking with them at the Haloa (Burton 1998, 151, 154–55), nicely anticipating Dialogue 3 which also features a symposium with courtesans and clients, although not at any specific festival. The celebration of the Haloa by these women, then, seems distinct the respectable women's participation in condoned civic ritual as evidenced in the scholion, complicating the standard idea of the Haloa and Thesmophoria as *women-only* mystery rituals.¹⁸ The scholion to these perfectly match Lucian's own project of transgressing sacred gender boundaries. The scholion offers the hope that all (especially men) can finally know what is going on when women are left to themselves, a frisson familiar for readers of Aristophanes. Yet he also suggests that *men were already involved* in some way unknown to us from other sources. Courtesans present a female society that is particularly open to men, and is a site where mixture, in all its forms, can most frequently and comfortably happen.

In contrast to courtesans mixing with men at the female-focussed festival, Dialogue 2 reveals how a *respectable* woman was expected to behave at public festivals. Myrtium says that she saw the presumed bride-to-be of her client Pamphilus at the Thesmophoria where she was attending with her mother (εἶδον γὰρ αὐτὴν ἑναγχος ἐν τοῖς Θεσμοφορίοις μετὰ τῆς μητρός, *Dial. Meret.* 2.1). The unnamed bride, who is identified later with her patronymic, is chaperoned by her mother. She is only seen by other women, namely Myrtium herself, who trades on this privileged access by breaking it to Pamphilus (not very gently) that she is quite ugly. Myrtium further says that since Pamphilus has seen the young girl's ugly father, he can imagine what his daughter must look like—even if he has not seen her yet himself. Myrtium can convey information about a respectable woman to her client only because of her privileged access as a woman herself.

The final dialogue that mentions a festival location is *Dial. Meret.* 11, where Charmides says that he fell in love at first sight with Philematium at the Dionysia (*Dial. Meret.* 11.2). The relative seclusion of respectable women in Classical Athens meant that the festivals were one of the few moments when they could be seen and fallen in love with. A parallel from the novels is instructive here: in Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Callirhoe and Chaereas first catch a glimpse of each other at a public festival in Syracuse. The author states that Callirhoe never left the house except for this event and that she was attended by her mother (Chariton *Callirhoe* 1.1). However, in the situation described in Dialogue 11, we quickly

¹⁷ Nick Lowe has called these scholia collectively "the single most extraordinary and challenging document in our entire corpus of literary evidence for the interpretation of Greek religion" (Lowe 1998, 120).

¹⁸ Brumfield mentions that this passage is the only one that includes men in the celebration of the Haloa, suggesting that Glycerion is referring to a separate, private symposium that happened at the same time as the Haloa (Brumfield 1981, 115).

discover that Philematium is far from a respectable lady, open to discussing with Charmides her supposed age and her price (*Dial. Meret.* 11.3).

The dialogues might provide precious evidence for the Athenian cults of Haloa, Thesmophoria and Dionysia, but, for our purposes, the fact of their prevalence in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* gives pause in and of itself. Lucian scripts female-centric festivals as sites of increased activity in the lives of ancient sex-workers as they would have been for respectable citizen women. Yet they experience them radically differently, and Lucian enjoys showing his women using the festivals as especially high-visibility moments to secure more clients, opportunities for ask for more financial support, and chances for mixed gender symposia. Since prostitutes did not face the same restrictions as respectable women, the continued prominent of festivals is intriguing. It allows Lucian to play with the question of male access to feminine realms via the intermediary of courtesans.

In addition to participation in civic cults, Lucian's women in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* are also eagerly use magic and speak about engaging female magical practitioners (a φαρμακίς at *Dial. Meret.* 1 and 4.4), whom they do not treat with disdain or censure.¹⁹ Already in Dialogue 1, the use of magic is mentioned as a regular tool of the courtesan:

Don't you know that the witch Chrysarion is her mother? She knows certain Thessalian spells and brings down the moon. They say that she flies during the night; and she drove him mad, pouring out her potions for him to drink, and now they harvest him! (*Dial. Meret.* 1)

οὐκ οἶσθα ὡς φαρμακίς ἢ Χρυσάριόν ἐστιν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῆς, Θεσσαλάς τινας ᾧδὰς ἐπισταμένη καὶ τὴν σελήνην κατάγουσα; φασὶ δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ πέτεσθαι τῆς νυκτός· ἐκεῖνη ἐξέμηνε τὸν ἄνθρωπον πιεῖν τῶν φαρμάκων ἐγγέασα, καὶ νῦν τρυγῶσιν αὐτόν.

Here, the magic is being practiced against the speaker, and so the valence is negative, but there is no hint that it is ineffective. In *Dial. Meret.* 4 the interlocutors are eager to engage the services of a competent witch, with no negative valence whatsoever (*Dial. Meret.* 4.1 and 4.4-5). During the exchange between Bacchis and Melitta, they explain the details of multiple magical practices that use the targeted man's clothing, magic wheels, incantations, and a special spell that instructs you to replace your rival's footprints with your own (*Dial. Meret.* 4.4).

Christopher Faraone has written about the way that magic and gender interact in other ancient magical evidence, and how Lucian's courtesans overturn the typical gendered expectations. Faraone alerts us to the fact that the courtesans can use both 'female' and 'male' version of erotic magic depending on the circumstance. When they hope to retain a lover, they use 'female'/'wife' magic, but when they hope to draw new lovers, they utilize male 'drawing' magic (Faraone 2001, 159-60). The courtesan's use of "male" versions of erotic magic is part of their more active, 'masculine', social roles, which also helps explain the form of Simaetha's magic in Theocritus' *Idyll* 2 (Faraone 2001, 146-60; 2020). Erotic magic was frequently attributed to courtesans, who, of course, made their living through being able to attract and hold the attention of men. But Lucian does not simply reference the common connection between courtesans and magic; he uses details of their magical practice as a form of characterization. Faraone's insights also allows us to see further how Lucian uses the unique position of the courtesan to construct characters that are both distant from their male readers but also identifiable.

¹⁹ In both *Dial. Meret* 1 and 4 these witches are connected with Thessaly. The courtesan in *Dial. Meret.* 1 says that the witch knows Thessalian spells, while in 4.1, a courtesan asks for a Thessalian witch, even though in the end the recommended woman is a Syrian (πολλὰι Θετταλαί, *Dial. Meret.* 4.1) (Anderson 1976a, 97).

VI. Same-sex Relationships

We come at last to the dialogue mentioned at the opening. Dialogue 5, with its description of lesbian sex, is the dialogue in the collection contemporary scholars focus on the most. I will summarize some of the scholarship on this interesting episode in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, before expanding our view of Dialogue 5 by bringing into the discussion two other dialogues that feature elements of the theme of same-sex eroticism: Dialogue 10 which is about male pederastic relationships from the courtesan's perspective, and Dialogue 12 which features a situation that looks strikingly like Dialogue 6, with two women sharing a bed, one with her head shaved.

Dialogue 5 is scripted as the curious enquiry of Clonarium into Leaena's current erotic relationship with a rich woman from Lesbos named Megilla. Clonarium keeps pressing for further details about a symposium to which Megilla invited Leaena. Leaena says that after she finished playing the cithera, Megilla invited her into bed with her fellow female symposiast Demonassa. After much kissing, Megilla removes her wig and declares that she is actually Megillos, the young man, 'married' to Demonassa (*Dial. Meret. 5.3*). After further probing questions from Leaena, Megilla/Megillos says that although born a woman, she has "the mind, the desire and everything else of a man" (ἡ γνώμη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία καὶ τὰλλα πάντα ἀνδρός ἐστὶ μοι, *Dial. Meret. 5.3*). Leaena at last accepts the situation and Megilla, Demonassa and Leaena spend the rest of the night in bed, although the details of their sexual activity remains hidden by Leaena's protestation of shame in speaking about the details to Clonarium.

Bernadette Brooten's field-defining work on early Christian lesbianism treated Dialogue 5 at some length (Brooten 1996, 51–53), although she erroneously says that Megilla and Demonassa are courtesans like Lenaea. Brooten argues that Lucian follows the broader ancient construction of women who desire women as strange and shameful, but that this passage might also be precious evidence of formalized erotic relationships between women in the ancient world (Brooten 1996, 51, 53). Further, she says that Megilla/os declares her gender as male, which is a way that Lucian reduces the sexual ambiguity of the situation (Brooten 1996, 236). Alan Cameron argues, against Brooten, that the γαμέω of this passage should be understood not as "marry" but as "take the male role in sex" (Cameron 1998, 142–44). A sustained interest in what exactly Dialogue 5 had in its sights has been active ever since.²⁰

Shelley Haley further probed how Lucian constructs the gender of this threesome of Megilla, Demonassa and Leaena. She pushes against a simple dichotomy between "butch" and "femme" in these roles, arguing that Lucian is presenting a more gender-fluid situation (Haley 2002). Errietta Bissa follows in the same line of inquiry as Haley and provides an in-depth look at the treatment of female-female sex in the dialogue in the context of current debates about sexuality. Her conclusions are largely positive, claiming that Lucian's Megilla/os is a sensitive portrayal of transgender subjectivity rather than a stereotypical Roman understanding of a "manly women" (Bissa 2013, 100).

Kate Gilhuly's two important articles on the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* have helped reorient this discussion away from ancient evidence for lesbianism and back onto the *Dialogues of the Courtesans* as works of literature. In the first, she deals with Dialogue 5 explicitly, reinterpreting Lucian's interest in lesbianism as a witness to Lucian's self-presentation as a sophist working in the post-Classical tradition (Gilhuly 2006). She argues that by reusing a singularly Platonic word, *hetairistria*, and elaborating it into a taboo scene, Lucian reflects his own persona as both an insider (Platonic word) and outsider (taboo scene). Gilhuly expands this argument in her second article, arguing that Lucian's use of the

²⁰ Boehringer rightly points out that Cameron's interpretation fails to account for the use of the perfect tense (Boehringer 2015, 261).

courtesan figure more broadly in these dialogues is to “unmoor” the common glamorization of the Attic past during the Second Sophistic (Gilhuly 2007, 68). The courtesan functions as “a sort of hologram for the sophistic performer or, more specifically, as Lucian’s own self-parody” (Gilhuly 2007, 83). Gilhuly’s scholarship is illuminating because it looks at *why* Lucian would care to construct the scene as he did, rather than the previously more popular mode of investigating *what* Lucian’s scene tells us about ancient views of lesbianism.

The foregoing scholarship predominantly looks at Dialogue 5 in isolation as complicated evidence for ancient lesbian practice. A few scholars, especially Gilhuly, have tried to contextualize Dialogue 5 into the rest of Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. But even more insights can be gained from such a task that have hitherto been mined.

Blondell and Boehringer go some way towards greater contextualization in comparing Dialogue 5 with Dialogue 10, linking both with Platonic discussions about pederasty (Blondell and Boehringer 2014). Dialogue 10 features two courtesans discussing a youth whose father has turned him over to a philosopher. This philosopher, Aristaenetus, forbids the boy to continue his relationship with the courtesan Chelidonium because he should pursue virtue rather than pleasure (*Dial. Meret.* 10.3). But the two courtesans claim that this argument is just a ruse for Aristaenetus’ own sexual desire for the boy.

Aristaenetus is a known lover of boys (παιδεραστήν, *Dial. Meret.* 10.4), who sexually grooms the youths in his charge with arguments drawn from philosophy without the knowledge of their fathers. She and her friend concoct a plan to spread graffiti around the city that Aristaenetus is “corrupting” the youth—the same crime for which Socrates was tried (Blondell and Boehringer 2014, 243–44). Part of the humor in the story is in seeing a philosopher not through the sympathetic lens of the devoted follower, but from the perspective of a courtesan—a rival professional.²¹

If Dialogue 10 explored the same-sex relationship of lover (*erastes*) and beloved (*eromenos*) familiar to the ancient world, Dialogue 12 features (perhaps) a threesome of lovers with some more direct echoes of Dialogue 5. The scene opens with the courtesan Joessa tragically lamenting the loss of the affection of Lysias. She calls her female friend Pythias to be the judge between them. Lysias explains to Pythias that he caught Joessa in bed with another man. But the other man turns out to have been Pythias herself, who has recently shaved her head because of a sickness. All three enter the house to enjoy a happy reconciliation banquet. Graham Anderson brought up the similarities in the plot of Dialogue 5 and Dialogue 12.²² His interest was to find predecessors to the mistaken identity of sleeping people as well as showing Lucian’s ability to vary a similar set-up in the two dialogues for different endings (Anderson 1976a, 1996). Sandra Boehringer has a short discussion of Dialogue 12 in relationship to Dialogue 5, specifically linking their terminology of shaved heads, which Anderson had also noted (ἀποκεκαρμένη *Dial. Meret.* 5.3; κεκαρμένος *Dial. Meret.* 12.5) (Boehringer 2015, 267 n. 52). But there are even more similarities that neither Anderson nor Boehringer state explicitly. Both women wear wigs to cover their shaved heads (τὴν πηνήκην, *Dial. Meret.* 12.5; τὴν μὲν πηνήκην *Dial. Meret.* 5.3), wigs which they remove at dramatic moments that seem to echo recognition scenes. Even more strikingly, both women get the title “young man” (καλὸν νεανίσκον *Dial. Meret.* 5.3; ὃ γενναιότατε νεανίσκων Πυθίας. *Dial. Meret.* 12.5).

Boehringer’s footnote rightly suggest that it would not take a huge stretch of the imagination to think that Joessa was finding additional levels of comfort in the presence of her

²¹ In this, Lucian was anticipated by Xenophon’s *Mem.* 3.1, where Socrates describes his own skills of seduction as parallel to/in competition with those of the courtesan Theodote. You can see a similar link between prostitutional seduction and philosophy in Lucian’s *Bis Accusatus* 31 (cf. Gilhuly 2007, 86).

²² Shelley Haley also links the two, but unfortunately does not explain further what she means by her statement that “Dialogue 5 and Dialogue 12, each in different ways, deal with woman-to-woman relationships” (Haley 2002, 294).

manly friend in her bed at night. The arch of the dialogue as a whole opens up the possibility of adding Dialogue 12 as a sexual threesome akin to that described in Dialogue 5. After Pythias helps reconcile Joessa and Lysias by standing in as a more neutral interlocutor for Joessa, the threesome decides to drink together as a group. It is here that Joessa calls her female ‘friend’ Pythias “the most noble of the young men” (ὃ γυνναϊότατε νεανίσκων Πυθίας *Dial. Meret.* 12.5). Pythias then asks that her shaved head be kept secret by Lysias, welcoming him into the intimate knowledge shared by Pythias and her friend Joessa. Here is another playful version of the erotic threesome with a form of gender bending which “hints at a sexual *ménage à trois*” (Dorf 2009, 297). The dialogue begins from a context of jealousy, but does not seem to stay there, and the two courtesans (one who could ‘switch’ to look like a man) and one client are content to go inside for more communal entertainment.

Dialogue 5 is striking, but not unique, among the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. Lucian is interested in all sorts of erotic permutations: female-female, male-male, male-female-female- and “male”-female-female. Dialogue 5 becomes more richly contextualized as part of this spectrum when read in the light of Dialogue 10 and 12. By expanding the reading list beyond the first six dialogues of the set, even the earlier dialogues are further illuminated. Just as Dialogue 1 found an inversion in Dialogue 15, so too does the infamous Dialogue 5 find echoes in the later Dialogues 10 and 12. When Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Courtesans* are read as a whole rather than selectively, even the hot-button issues that it addresses can get a richer treatment.

XI. Conclusions

I have argued in this chapter that Lucian constructs his short dialogues to reflect on themes broader than the courtesans’ profession. In this, I follow in the tradition of Kate Gilhuly, Ruby Blondell and Sandra Boehringer who have investigated these dialogues as subtle writings of Lucian rather than as a mine for social history. This dialogic collection, which seems to inhabit the subjectivity of marginalized women, has been used primarily as evidence for some correspondingly hidden areas of the ancient world, such as ancient lesbianism and all-female festivals like the Haloa and Thesmophoria. But Lucian’s courtesan knows how to exit the stage when things start getting violent (Dialogue 15). And when she leaves the stage, she leaves her story to be told by others. The women put front and centre in these dialogues also seem to escape our final grasp. In these fascinating short dialogues, the play with female subjectivity is always the play of the male author Lucian.

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