Evaluating Jesus and other "heroes"

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Language, Context and Text

Evaluating Jesus and other "heroes": An application of appraisal analysis to Hellenistic Greek texts in the "Lives" genre

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Abstract

We apply aspects of the appraisal framework developed by Martin and White and others in a quantitative analysis of three Hellenistic Greek texts often categorized with the genre "Lives". We focus on the *Judgement* that the texts' authors make of their central characters ("heroes"), how this is *amplified* and how they *engage* with different "voices". Results show notable differences in the *Judgement* the authors make and presumably wish their readers to share. We consider the appropriateness of the "Lives" genre for one of these texts, the *Gospel of John*, and also a number of methodological issues arising from an area of application that has not previously received attention, but which may have wider relevance for other applications of appraisal.

1. Introduction

"Biography starts from a very simple concept, the life of an individual from cradle to death (or at least a considerable part of this time span), and is probably represented, in oral or written or visual form, in every culture and throughout history" (Hägg 2012: 2). However, biography is not the neutral representation of a person's life, even if that were possible. Rather, central to biography is an author's *evaluation* of the subject: the expression of feelings, the judgement of character, the appreciation of achievements. The focus of this study is on comparing how the "heroes" of some ancient "Lives" are evaluated and considering the applicability of modern linguistic theory, specifically the *appraisal framework*, to such texts and also whether an analysis using this framework can contribute to determining the *genre* of a work.

Among the many methods of addressing the ways of evaluating people in texts systematically, appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005; Martin and Rose 2007; White 2015) stands out as allowing for an in-depth, multi-layered and SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014)-based analysis. We apply this theory to an area that is not frequently linked with an SFL approach, namely an appraisal analysis of the representation of central characters in Hellenistic (Koine) Greek texts written in in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD/CE.

The motivation for this is three-fold. First, while appraisal theory may well be sufficiently flexible and well-designed to be applied to a wide range of different contexts, there are various ways in which this still needs to be put to the test. Oteíza (2017: 469) and White (2015: 54) both observed a heavy bias towards English as the language for which the theory was developed, and also noted a need to expand the range of contexts.

While some researchers have applied aspects of appraisal theory to languages other than English (Wei, Werrity and Zhang 2015; Oteíza 2017), we are aware of only one attempt to systematically apply it to an ancient written document, a very recent dissertation that addresses the discourse semantic resources used for interpersonal concerns in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (Dvorak 2021). Our current study, therefore, raises a number of methodological issues concerning appraisal analysis, while further demonstrating its value through a new area of application.

Second, one of the main tenets in SFL is that linguistic features of texts are intricately related to their meanings, rooted in societal contexts and expressed in systematic genre features realised through field, tenor and mode (Martin 1992). It follows that if different texts are associated with the same genre in a similar societal context, than it can be assumed that basic features should be comparable, possibly following similar patterns. In this study, we ask if the evaluation of Jesus in the New Testament *Gospel of John* is indeed similar to that of the "heroes" of two other Hellenistic Greek "Lives": Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Younger*, one of a series of "Parallel Lives" comparing famous Greek and Roman historical figures, and Lucian of Samosata's *Life of Demonax*, the account of a contemporary Greek philosopher and a collection of his sayings. The "Lives" of Cato the Younger and Demonax were chosen as they are written in similar Greek to that of the *Gospel of John*; all three were composed within a period of less than a century of each other; all have a similar purpose in providing descriptions of characters seen as worthy of imitation; and examples of Plutarch and Lucian's "Lives" have been included in previous studies of the literary genre of the *Gospel of John* (Burridge 2018; Smith 2015). In particular, Burridge (2018), uses an analysis of "generic features" of these three texts, as well as the other New Testament Gospels and a selection of other Graeco-Roman

biographies, to claim that the Gospels, including the *Gospel of John*, all belong to the same genre of *bioi* ("Lives") (235-36). We note that Burridge's use of genre here is a category derived from literary theory rather than Martin and White's broader "working definition of genre as staged, goal oriented social process" (2005: 32). Eggins (2004) treats literary genres as just one type of this SFL-based understanding of genre as an aspect of social activity (55-56).

Our third motivation is directly concerned with the discourse semantic aspect of appraisal. If people are conceived of and represented as special, then appraisal analysis highlights how linguistic features are used to demonstrate this "specialness". While the three "heroes" in our chosen texts are certainly all noteworthy historical characters, they nevertheless differ fundamentally in the extent to which, and the ways in which, they are perceived and conceived of as special. All three source texts may be classified in the same literary genre of Hellenistic Greek biographies (Burridge 2018), but only one of them, the *Gospel of John,* presents its central character, Jesus, as someone who is more than just a human being, but also "the Son of God" and, consequently, the object of faith and devotion for the Christian church in the period covered by our three source texts and beyond. Hence, our study addresses how the texts' authors portray their "hero", and how differences in the authors' appraisals highlight the attitude each author displays towards their central character and the attitude that they wish their readers to share. Particular attention is given to the *Judgement* aspect of Attitude and to its *Amplification*,[1] as well as to the question of *Engagement*, that is, considering the different "voices" the authors interact with and how these are presented to the reader.

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[1] Martin and his colleagues employ the term "*Graduation*" rather than "gradation", which is the more usual lexis for "measuring degrees of progression". In view of the possible confusion with the more common definition of graduation (i.e., completing an academic degree), the term *Amplification* is preferred here.

In a nutshell, then, our study addresses two basic research questions:

First, to what extent, and how, can appraisal theory be applied to ancient Hellenistic Greek texts? To address this question, our representation will include systematic discussion of a range of methodological concerns.

Second, to what extent does appraisal analysis highlight systematic patterns of evaluating the main characters in the three Hellenistic Greek texts, in terms of *Judgement*, *Amplification* and *Engagement* and how do these relate to the genre of these texts? Previous claims that all three texts belong to the same genre suggest that appraisal analysis may primarily highlight joint patterns. However, systematic differences may be found as a consequence of the difference in status of the three characters represented in the texts, along with a difference in status or function of the texts themselves. In the latter case, this also raises the issue of the genre of the three texts under consideration and whether appraisal theory can play a role in determining genre in this context.

A systematic appraisal analysis was carried out on a sample of approximately 1000 words from each text as a basis for comparison, complemented by reference to other relevant examples from the remainder of the texts. Attention was given to the definition of the categories for analysis, which generally follows the terminology of Martin and White (2005), but with some modifications, the motivation for which will be discussed along the way.

In the following, we start by outlining in some detail the Appraisal framework that we use, with specific discussion of how we apply the aspects of *Judgement*, *Amplification*, and *Engagement* to our three texts. Section 3 provides further methodological details including unitization as well as identification and representation of analysis categories, with some discussion of challenges and ambiguities arising from the data, and how they

were dealt with. Section 4 presents the results on a quantitative, comparative basis, using visual charts where appropriate to highlight any systematic differences between the three texts. Section 5 adds further insight by a brief overview of the remainder of the three texts, beyond the 1,000 words that were systematically compared, placing our analysis in a wider context. In Section 6, we critically discuss a range of methodological aspects of concern for our analysis, with the aim of enhancing understanding of the possible pitfalls and the ways in which they were tackled here, with potential for improvement in future studies. This is followed, in Section 7, by a brief discussion of our findings in light of the three-fold motivation outlined above, and finally by our conclusion.

2.   Aspects of Appraisal Theory

"[E]valuation is a broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 5).

In their overview of *Evaluation*, Thompson and Hunston (2000) indicate a range of methodologies and terminologies used by linguists (2). We also note that there is some overlap with literary theorists' concepts of the "narrator" and "point of view" or "focalization" (Fowler 1996: 160-84; Cortazzi and Jin 2000: 103-4). However, our emphasis is on the method developed from within SFL under the title of *Appraisal Theory.* Outlines of this are provided by White (2015) and Orteíza (2017: 460-64), complementing the foundational work of Martin and White (2005) and Martin and Rose

(2007: 25-71). Here explanation is limited to the main categories used in this study: *Judgement*, *Amplification* and *Engagement*.

2.1 Judgement

Martin and colleagues have designed a framework (*Attitude*) for analysing the linguistic resources for the presentation of feelings, which is divided into three categories: *Affect*, *Judgement*, and *Appreciation*, roughly corresponding to the traditional divisions of "emotion, ethics and aesthetics" (Martin and White 2005: 42). *Judgement* and *Appreciation* can be considered "institutionalised feelings", in that they take personal emotional responses and transfer them to the "worlds of shared community values" (45). This is an important observation to bear in mind as we seek to analyse texts from ancient cultures with different value systems from contemporary Western culture. As, Martin and Rose (2007) note, their appraisal system "represents a western construction of feeling" and other cultures may observe things differently (42).

White (2015) further defines *Judgement* as the "assessment of human behaviour and/or character by reference to ethics and other social norms" (3). Our own analysis will take account of the description of behaviour alongside more overt description of character.

2.2 Amplification

A major element of all three categories of *Attitude* is the intensification (or mitigation) of an attribute or process with the effect of strengthening (or lessening) the writer's evaluation and how that evaluation is perceived by the reader.

Martin and White (2005: 137) propose that this aspect of *Evaluation* "operates across two axes of scalability – that of grading according to intensity or amount, and that of grading according to prototypicality and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn". The first axis they describe as *Force* and the second as *Focus.*

Examples of the use of *Force* from our texts are:

(1) Demonax revealed . . . 'a mind of the **highest** intelligence'

γνώμην **ἄκρως** φιλόσοφον (Lucian, *Demonax*, 1)

(2) Cato. . . 'was **even more** forceful with those who tried to frighten him'

ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐκράτει τῶν ἐκφοβούντων (Plutarch, *Cato*, 1.2)

Examples of *Focus*, that is the use of "resources for making something that is inherently non-gradable gradable" (Martin and Rose 2007: 46), from our texts are:

(3) Jesus. . . 'was the **true** light'

ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ **ἀληθινόν** (*Gospel*, 1.9)

(4) 'by. . . an **innate** love of philosophy'

ὑπ᾽. . . **ἐμφύτου** πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν ἔρωτος (Lucian, *Demonax*, 3).

Martin and White (2005) also provide a series of sub-classifications, particularly of *Force*, that reflect the various lexicogrammatical categories of the SFL interpersonal system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). In our own analysis, we have adopted a simplified scheme, only noting where *Force* is intensified or mitigated and highlighting instances of *Maximum* amplification, as in Example 1, where Demonax reveals 'a mind of the **highest** intelligence'.

2.3 Engagement

This is the most complex area of analysis, which has been influenced by the notions of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia* proposed by Bakhtin and Voloshinov (Martin and White 2005: 92-93; White 2015: 5-6). They emphasized that all utterances are in some way connected to other previous and anticipated utterances, so that, "to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners" (Martin and White 2005: 92).

For the purposes of analysing *Engagement* with other "voices", Martin and White (2005) make a broad distinction between two types of utterance: *Monoglossic*: "when they make no reference to other voices and viewpoints" (99), and *Heteroglossic*: "when they do invoke or allow for dialogistic alternatives" (100). The most straightforward

aspect of *Heteroglossic* utterances is the attribution of propositions to external sources, which are either presented neutrally by the author or given a positive or negative valuation. These sources may be named or may remain anonymous or general. So, for example, in Lucian's comment on Sostratus, the source of information is attributed to "the Greeks" (Lucian, *Demonax,* 1); whereas, Plutarch makes reference to anonymous sources, with phrases such as, "it has been written" (γέγραπται) (*Cato*, 1.1), "it is said" (λέγεται) (1.2) or "they say" (λέγουσι) (1.5).

In our texts, other "voices" are frequently represented by the words of the various characters in the narrative, including those of the central character, although the authors' acceptance or rejection of these *internal* evaluations is not made explicit.

Martin and colleagues also indicate that *Heteroglossia* can be expressed without any explicit reference to a source, for example, by means of modality, where the author *entertains* the likeliness of alternative positions (Martin and White 2005: 104-11; Martin and Rose 2007: 53-56). Propositions may be presented with the use of modal forms to indicate the degree of the author's conviction and, consequently, the reader's own expected conviction. In English, this is most often done with modal auxiliaries such as *may, might, must*, but can also be indicated by the use of modal adjuncts and attributes and mental process verbs (*I think*, etc.). The analysis of modal auxiliaries illustrates one of the differences between modern English and Hellenistic Greek: for, whereas in English the majority of verb forms are periphrastic, in Hellenistic Greek, periphrastic forms are comparatively rare, so that it is not usually possible to isolate the Finite and Predicator (Lamb 2014: 97). Another significant difference is that the Greek subjunctive and optative tenses, usually translated into English with a modal auxiliary, cover a wide semantic

range, from possibility to probability to obligation, and the precise nuance cannot always be determined from the context (Lamb 2014: 97-98).

3. Methodology used for systematic analysis

The analysis framework as just sketched is clearly non-trivial and analysing any extended amount of texts systematically and thoroughly comes with considerable challenges. Fuoli (2018) highlights a range of pitfalls for such analysis, and suggests a systematic procedure specifically for *Appraisal*, corresponding to a large extent to the more general discourse analysis procedures described by Tenbrink (2020). However, any general methodology needs to be adopted to the specific data at hand, especially if a different language and/or text type is concerned. Here we represent and motivate the main elements of the approach adopted here, and discuss several challenges specific to the present analysis of ancient Hellenistic Greek texts. We will return to a critical post-hoc discussion of our present approach in section 6.

The three texts under consideration vary in length: the shortest is Lucian's *Life of Demonax*, just over 3000 words; the longest is Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Younger*, about 16,500 words, and the *Gospel of John* is about 15,500 words. They all combine *comment* by the author with *speech* and *narrative*. *Comment* is used of those instances where the author appears to address the reader directly in order to offer explanations of or insights into the narrative and its characters; *speech* is used of words spoken by the characters in the text, in either direct or indirect speech; and *narrative* of the description of actions and events. We labelled these three categories as "sub-genres", although aware that *comment*

and *speech* are not normally treated as aspects of genre. "Voices" may be a preferable term as it reflects how the authors have chosen to use different ways of communicating within the text. However, we thought that this would lead to confusion in our discussion of *Engagement*. These "sub-genres" do not appear evenly throughout the texts. For example, Lucian, *Demonax* contains a large section (over 50% of the text) of anecdotes relating to Demonax, which includes most of the *speech* of the text in the form of the philosopher's "sharp and witty remarks" (*Demonax*, 12). Similarly, the *Gospel of John* contains a large *speech* section comprising Jesus' teaching to his disciples (chapters 13-17), material often referred to as 'The Farewell Discourse'. Choosing a representative sample for analysis is therefore problematic, especially as *Evaluation* depends on a reading of the whole text, as Macken-Horarik and Isaac (2014) stress. However, given the importance of the openings of texts in seeking to align the reader (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 13), it was decided to carry out a systematic appraisal analysis on the first 1000 words (+/- 0.2% to avoid cutting off mid-sentence) of each of the three "Lives" as a basis for comparison. These samples were divided into units of analysis under the three broad headings of *Judgement*, *Amplification* and *Engagement*.

3.1 Units for analysis

We segmented the texts into numbered units and also indicated how they are labelled in the source texts (by chapter and verse, or by section). The selection of each unit for analysis was, in the majority of cases, an individual main clause with associated subordinate clauses where these were present, such that the words expressed one idea for potential appraisal. In a few cases, main clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction

were taken together in order to provide a unit that expressed one idea for evaluation. For example, our unit 8 in the *Gospel of John* reads:

(5) καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

'and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'

(*Gospel*, 1.5)

Here two main clauses are linked by καί ('and'), but both clauses were taken together as they express one idea for appraisal: the darkness has not overcome the light.

It should be noted that Hellenistic Greek has a tendency to long, complex sentences, with much use of participles and subordinate clauses. This can make it difficult to break down sentences into discrete clauses for analysis, in contrast, for example, to the analysis of casual conversation in English carried out by Eggins and Slade (1997: 124-43). This was particularly the case for the narrative sections of our texts and resulted in a few units that were much longer than the average number of words per unit for each text. For example, one of our units in Plutarch, *Cato* reads:

(6) Οὕτω δ᾽ ἦν περιβόητος ὥστ᾽, ἐπειδὴ Σύλλας τὴν παιδικὴν καὶ ἱερὰν ἱπποδρομίαν, ἣν καλοῦσι Τροίαν, ἐπὶ θέᾳ διδάσκων καὶ συναγαγὼν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς παῖδας ἀπέδειξεν ἡγεμόνας δύο, τὸν μὲν ἕτερον οἱ παῖδες ἐδέξαντο διὰ τὴν μητέρα (Μετέλλης γὰρ ἦν υἱός, τῆς Σύλλα γυναικός), τὸν δὲ ἕτερον, ἀδελφιδοῦν ὄντα Πομπηΐου, Σέξτον, οὐκ εἴων οὐδὲ ἐβούλοντο μελετᾶν οὐδὲ ἕπεσθαι, πυνθανομένου

δὲ τοῦ Σύλλα τίνα βούλοιντο, πάντες ἐβόησαν "Κάτωνα," καὶ ὅ γε Σέξτος αὐτὸς

εἴξας παρῆκεν ὡς κρείττονι τὴν φιλοτιμίαν.

'[Cato] was so well-know that, when Sulla was preparing the spectacle (of) the boys'

sacred chariot-race, which they call 'the Trojan (Games)', and he was gathering

together the well-born children, he appointed two leaders: one the boys accepted

because of his mother (for he was a son of Metella, Sulla's wife); the other, Sextus, a

nephew of Pompey, they did not permit: they were not willing to practise with him

or follow him, and when Sulla asked who they did want, they all shouted, 'Cato,'

and then Sextus himself gave way and yielded the honour as if to one greater.'

(Plutarch, *Cato*, 3.1)

Here, one long sentence in Greek (76 words) is taken as a whole as it conveys one

idea for appraisal: the honouring of the boy Cato by the other boys. However, this is

exceptional and the average number of words per unit for each text are: *Gospel of John*:

10; Plutarch, *Cato*: 13; Lucian, *Demonax*: 13. An English translation for each unit was

provided, which aimed to follow the Greek word order as closely as possible given the

different grammatical structuring of the two languages.

3.2 Categories of analysis

Each unit was categorized into one of the three broad "sub-genres": *Comment*, *Speech*

and *Narrative*. Evaluation analysis was then carried out under the three headings of

Judgement, *Amplification* and *Engagement* as described in detail below. All analysis was

carried out manually by the first author, who has the necessary knowledge of Hellenistic Greek, and discussed in as much depth as necessary for agreement with the second author (based on the English translation). Establishing inter-coder reliability with an independent rater, as recommended widely for annotation procedures of this kind (including Fuoli 2018 and Tenbrink 2020), was considered but deemed impractical as it would have required in-depth knowledge of Hellenistic Greek as well as appraisal theory, including a clear understanding of the associated challenges as discussed here. Credibility and reliability of our annotation is, we hope, substantiated by the detailed representation of operationalized annotation criteria and the discussion of problematic cases and challenges which we offer.

3.3 Judgement

The focus was on judgement of the central character ("hero") of each text by its author. Where the author makes judgements of other characters, this was indicated on the spreadsheet, but not further analysed. We thought it was important to note these as part of the overall use of judgement in each text, which could then be considered in future research. For those units that contained judgement of the central character, the following categories, proposed by Martin and White (2005), were used:

Positive/Negative

Direct/Indirect

Esteem/Sanction

Sub-Categories of *Esteem* and *Sanction*:

Esteem: *Normality, Capacity, Tenacity*

Sanction: *Veracity, Propriety*

We discussed whether all the text in a given unit should be labelled with these categories/sub-categories or whether to highlight particular words that indicate judgement. This issue of whether to operate with particular words or larger units is discussed by Tupala (2019), who concludes, "more often than not an evaluation is carried by a longer unit within which it is not possible to identify only one evaluative lexical item but in which the whole sentence, for example, conveys an evaluative stance" (8). We decided to label whole units as, particularly in the case of accounts of behaviour, it was not possible simply to highlight certain words.

Although the identification of a judgement as *Positive* or *Negative* was straightforward in most cases, there was sometimes uncertainty as to the author's stance, relating to whether or not a value system was approved. For example, Plutarch, says of the young Cato:

(7) Λέγεται δὲ Κάτων εὐθὺς ἐκ παιδίου τῇ τε φωνῇ καὶ τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ ταῖς περὶ τὰς παιδιὰς διατριβαῖς ἦθος ὑποφαίνειν ἄτρεπτον καὶ παιδιὰς καὶ βέβαιον ἐν πᾶσιν.

'It is said that Cato, straight from being a child, showed in his way of speaking and appearance and childhood pastimes a temperament unmoved and disciplined and firm in all things.'   (Plutarch, *Cato*, 1.2)

From a modern perspective, the child Cato may be regarded as lacking in healthy spontaneity and empathy for other children. However, Cato's temperament would be

viewed more positively from the viewpoint of ancient Greek and Roman Stoicism. Indeed, some writers regarded Cato the Younger as an exemplar of Stoicism. However, as Plutarch tended towards a more pragmatic approach to life, he may be regarded as ambivalent about Cato's stubbornness: it is at best seen as a mixed virtue (Duff 1999: 155-58; Frost 1997). We decided that where there was uncertainty as to whether the author's judgement was *Positive* or *Negative*, units would be marked with a question mark as follows:

Positive?: where it was regarded as *probably* positive;

Positive/Negative?: where there was considerable uncertainty as to how to label the unit;

Negative?: where it was regarded as *probably* negative.

Another distinction Martin and colleagues make regarding categories of *Attitude*, including *Judgement*, is whether they are expressed directly/explicitly or indirectly/implicitly. In the case of *Affect* they illustrate, through examples, a basic distinction between a description of emotional states and their physical expression as *direct* and "extraordinary behaviour" and the use of metaphor as *implicit* (Martin and Rose 2007: 32). Given that there is a measure of ambiguity in these definitions (what comprises "extraordinary behaviour" rather than the normal outworking of an emotion?), we adopted a more basic distinction in our classification of *Judgement*. We used the label *Indirect* of a judgement: that is found in the *speech* of the "hero" or another character; that is attributed to an *external source* without indication of whether the author endorses

or denies the judgement; or that is indicated by the *behaviour* of the central character or that of others towards him. In all other instances, the evaluation was labelled as *direct*.

The categories of *Esteem* and *Sanction* are used to distinguish between evaluations that relate to a (usually written) legal code that is widely accepted in the "worldview" of the text (*Sanction*) or else those that are more informal and found in oral culture (*Esteem*) (Martin and White 2005: 52). Martin and White (2005) further divide *Esteem* into the sub-categories of *Normality* (how special?), *Capacity* (how capable?), *Tenacity* (how dependable?); and *Sanction* into the sub-categories of *Veracity* (how honest?) and *Propriety* (how far beyond reproach?) (52-53). Whether *Veracity* should always be in the *Sanction* group, and therefore involve the possibility of some sort of literal sanction, would seem to depend on the circumstances involved.

Examples of *Judgement* that are typical of our three texts are:

(8) ὁ μὲν οὖν Καιπίων διαμειδιάσας ἐπένευσε, τοῦ δὲ Κάτωνος οὐδὲν ἀποκριναμένου καὶ βλέποντος εἰς τοὺς ξένους ἀτενὲς καὶ βλοσυρόν.

'So, Caepio agreed with a smile, but Cato did not reply at all and looked at the guests in a fixed and stern way.'   (Plutarch, *Cato*, 2.2)

Positive/Negative?   *Indirect*   *Esteem: Tenacity*

(9) οὐδεπώποτε γοῦν ὤφθη κεκραγὼς ἢ ὑπερδιατεινόμενος ἢ ἀγανακτῶν, οὐδ᾽ εἰ ἐπιτιμᾶν τῳ δέοι

'He was certainly never seen shouting or going over the top or getting annoyed, even if it was necessary (for him) to rebuke someone.'   (Lucian*, Demonax*, 7)

Positive   *Direct*   *Sanction: Propriety*

(10) ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ Ναθαναήλ, Ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, σὺ βασιλεὺς εἶ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ.

'Nathanael replied to him, "Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the king of Israel."'

(*Gospel*, 1.49)

Positive   *Indirect*   *Esteem: Normality*

3.4 Amplification

In contrast to our procedure for indicating *Judgement*, we highlighted particular words used for the *Amplification* in the Greek text and parallel translation. The following categories and sub-categories were employed:

Force/Focus

Force: Intensify/Mitigate

Force: Maximum

Focus: Sharpen/Soften

In the case of *Force*, we made no distinction between Martin and White (2005)'s sub-classifications of intensification and quantification or, in the case of intensification, between quality and process (141-53). However, we did highlight instances of *Maximum* intensification in the presentation of the "hero" of each text.

In the case of *Focus*, used to label terms normally considered as "not scalable", a simple distinction is made by Martin and White (2005) between *sharpening* and *softening* (138-40) and we followed this distinction in our labelling.

3.5 Engagement

The main categories used here are *Monogloss*, where evaluation is made with no overt reference to other 'voices' or alternative positions and *Heterogloss*. We further categorized Heterogloss with the following labels:

Attribute: *External*/*Internal*

Proclaim, *Entertain* and *Disclaim*

In the case of *Attribute*, which deals "with those formulations which disassociate the proposition from the text's internal authorial voice by attributing it to some external source" (Martin and White 2005: 111), we decided that it was necessary to distinguish between "voices" from outside of the narrative framework and the "voices" of characters within the narrative. The latter, given the label *Internal*, should be distinguished from the author's own voice.

We did not include Martin and White's further distinction of *Attribute* into the sub-categories of *Acknowledge* and *Distance*, where the writer is either positive (or neutral) about the source (*Acknowledge*) or else negative about it (*Distance*). Where another "voice" was evaluated positively by the writer, we included this under the heading of *Proclaim*: *Endorse*. If the other "voice" was evaluated negatively, we would have included this under the heading *Disclaim*: *Deny*, although there were, in fact, no examples of this in our text samples. If the author wished to counter a proposition by, for example, the use of words such as "however" or "although", we included this under the heading *Disclaim*: *Counter*.

So, in our study, as well as the *Attribute* category, *Heterogloss* was also indicated with the following categories and sub-categories:[2]

Proclaim: *Pronounce, Endorse*

Entertain: *Modal Verb*, *Modal Adjunct* or *Modal Attribute*; *Mental Verb*

Disclaim: *Deny*, *Counter*

As Hellenistic Greek uses the subjunctive or optative tenses rather than modal auxiliaries, we used the term *Modal Verb* as one of the sub-categories of *Entertain*, the category in which the author acknowledges that there is a range of possibilities. The category of *Proclaim*: *Pronounce* "covers formulations which involve authorial emphases or explicit authorial interventions or interpolations" (Martin and White 2005: 127). Examples of *Engagement* that are typical of our three texts are:

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[2] This is a modified version of the categories used by Martin and White (2005).

(11) καὶ τᾰλλα τὰ περὶ τὴν δίαιταν ἦν ἀκριβὴς καὶ σύντονος.

'And in other things concerning his way of life he was strict and serious .'

(Plutarch, *Cato*, 4.1)

Monogloss

(12) **ἐῴκει** δὲ τῷ Σωκράτει μᾶλλον ᾠκειῶσθαι

'**It seemed that** with Socrates he was most at home' (Lucian*, Cato*, 5)

Heterogloss   Entertain: Modal Attribute

(13) [ὁ Ἰωάννης. . . **λέγει**. . .] Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

'[John. . . **said**. . .,] "Look, the lamb of God."' (*Gospel*, 1.36)

Heterogloss   Attribute: Internal

4. Results

Researchers have employed different ways of representing the results of their appraisal analysis of texts, such as using some form of table (Eggins and Slade 1997: 117, 141; Martin and White 2005: 232-34). Following the procedure recommended by Tenbrink

(2020), we made use of Excel spreadsheets: "a simple example for how standard software can be used for systemic analysis" (212). Separate spreadsheets were produced for each of the three texts and the results of our analysis were combined into another spreadsheet, so that patterns could be observed for the various categories. The Excel software was then used to generate charts to make the results clearer.

4.1 Sub-Genres

The *Gospel* is relatively evenly balanced between the three "sub-genres", *Comment*, *Speech* and *Narrative*, with a tendency towards *Speech* (44%). By comparison, Plutarch, *Cato* tends towards *Comment* (50%), with comparatively little *Speech* (15%); Lucian, *Demonax* comprises mainly *Comment* (83%). (See Figure1.)
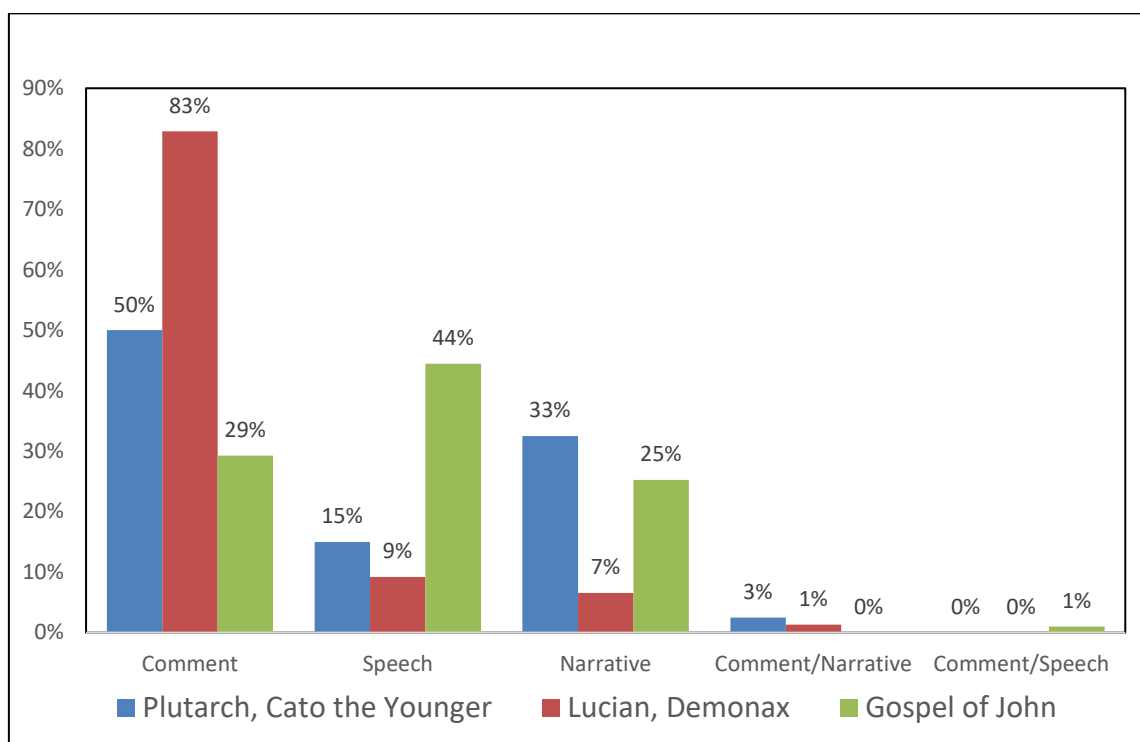

Figure 1: Sub-genres as a percentage of total number of units

4.2 Judgement

The *Gospel* has the least percentage of units where *Judgement* of the central character is made (43%). *Cato* has 54%. *Demonax* has the highest percentage (91%). (See Figure 2.)
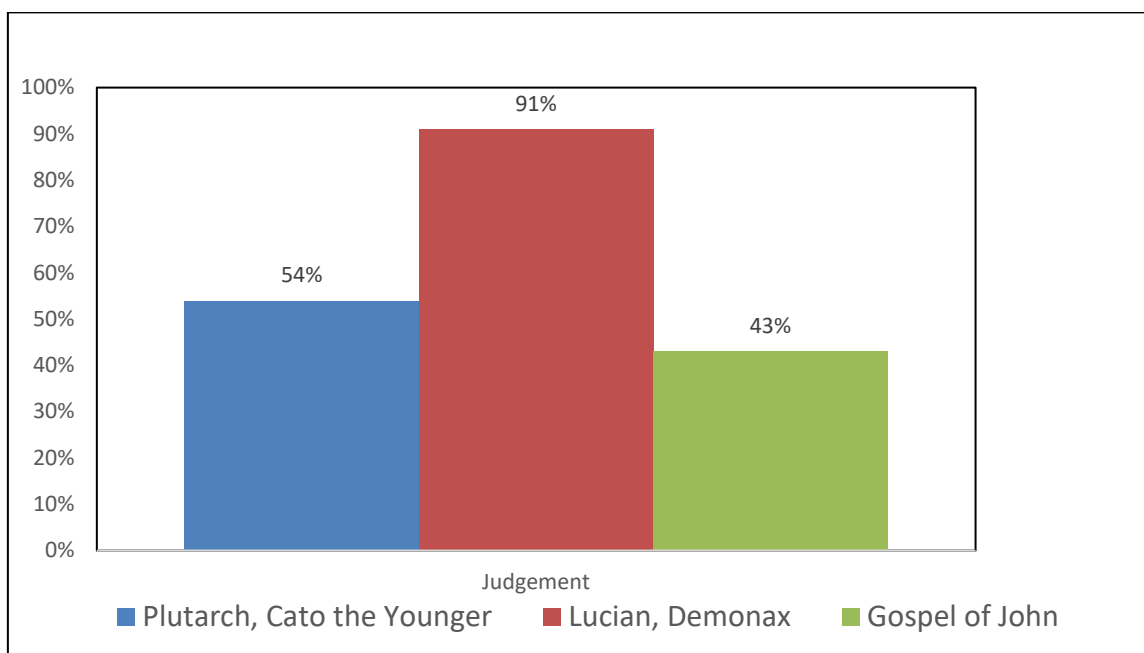

Figure 2: Units containing judgement of central character as a percentage of total number of units

Regarding the categories of judgement, the *Gospel* is extremely positive (93%). *Demonax* is also strongly positive (71% with a further 14% in the category of *Positive?*). *Cato* is less positive (44%), although there is considerable uncertainty about the categorization of some of the units (*Positive?* 23%, *Positive/Negative?* 16%, *Negative?* 5%). (See Figure 3.)
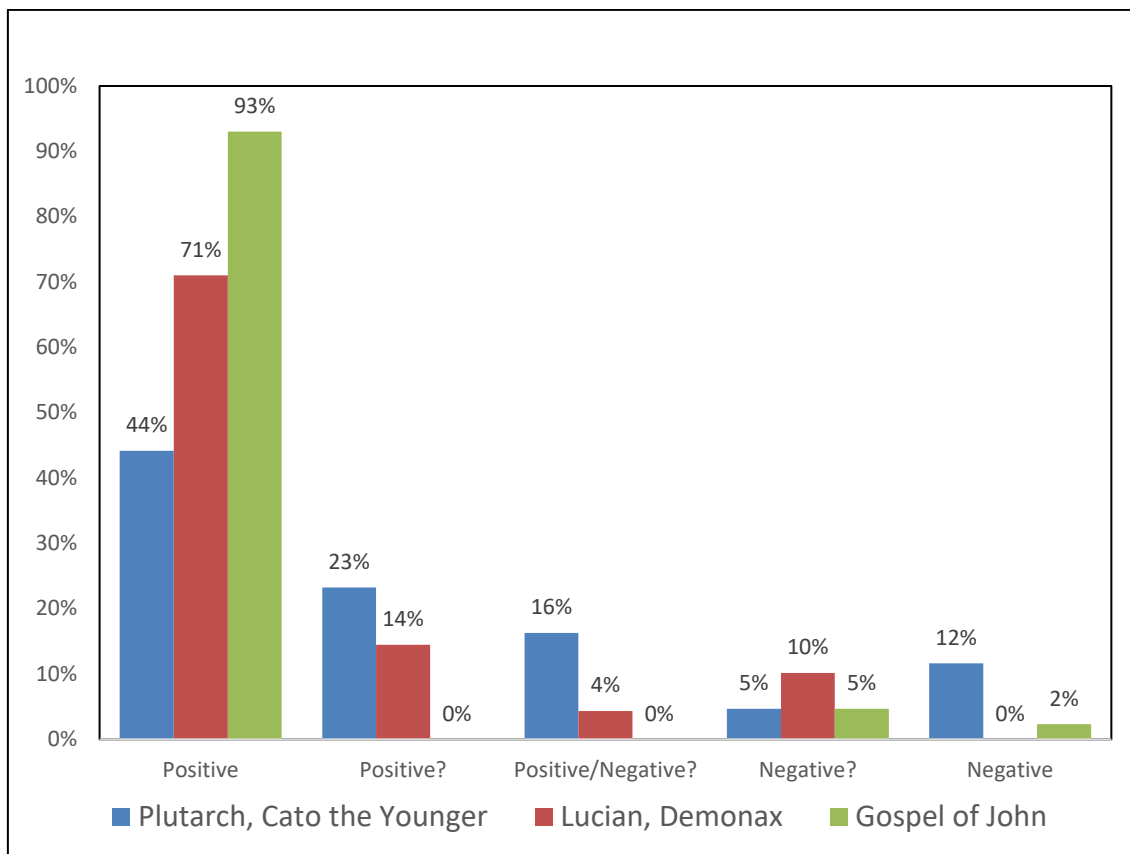
Figure 3: Positive and negative evaluations as a percentage of units containing judgement

Demonax is the most direct in its judgement (77%). *Cato* has the least direct judgement (28%). The *Gospel* has 40%. (See Figure 4.) It should be noted that 16 of the 17 instances of direct judgement in the *Gospel* occur in the opening 18 verses (24 units in our analysis), which corresponds to the bulk of *Comment* units (29) in the analysed text.
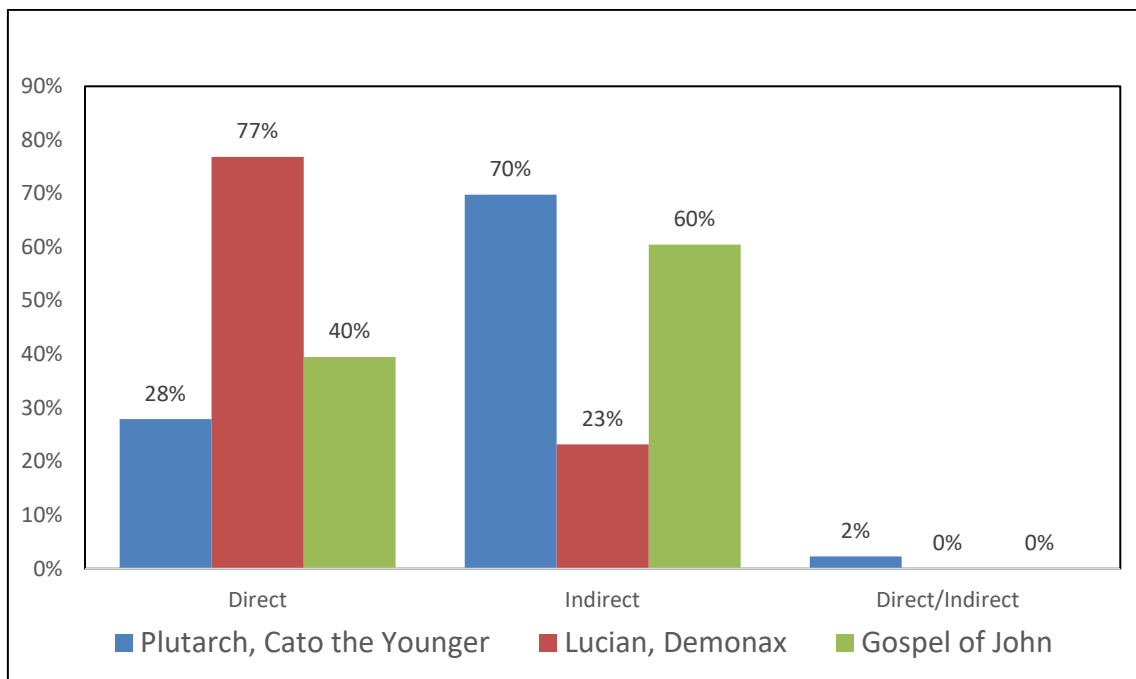
Figure 4: Direct and indirect evaluations as a percentage of units containing judgement

Partly as a consequence of our decision to annotate whole units rather than individual words, some of our annotation variables are not mutually exclusive. This is seen particularly in the categories and sub-categories of *Esteem* and *Sanction*, where we decided it was necessary to label a number of units with two categories and/or sub-categories. For example, one unit from the *Gospel* reads:

(14) Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου.

'Look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.' (1.29)

This utterance, directed at Jesus, contains words describing both "how special" and "how capable" he is. So, this unit was labelled: *Esteem: Normality/Capacity.*

There is also the issue of how to interpret Greek words in making decisions as to which category/sub-category to assign them. Martin and White (2005) provide a comprehensive list of adjectives in English as illustrations of the various sub-categories of both *Esteem* and *Sanction* (53), while acknowledging that this is not an exhaustive list (50). They also link these sub-categories to the Hallidayan system of modalization (54). In this regard it is important to note Halliday and Matthiessen's statement, "The system of modality is highly grammaticalized in English, but when we move around the languages of the world, we find a great deal of variation in the grammaticalization of modality and other types of interpersonal judgement" (2014: 183).

An example of the challenge of interpreting interpersonal judgement in other languages/cultures is the use of the term δόξα, which is found in our *Gospel* and *Cato* texts. Montari (2015) expresses the word's broad semantic range, from "opinion, belief, expectation" to "reputation. . . good name, renown, honor" to the more specific use found in Hebrew and Christian scriptures of "glory, power, as the essence of God and manifestation of his presence" (548). In our analysis, we have translated and categorized δόξα as: "glory"/*Esteem: Normality* in the *Gospel* (1.14) and "reputation"/*Esteem: Capacity* in Plutarch, *Cato* (1.1). Further work needs to be done on the categorization of the terminology of interpersonal judgement in Koine Greek, similar to Goddard, Taboada and Trnavac's (2019) application of Natural Semantic Metalanguage to English evaluative adjectives. This could draw on resources such as Louw and Nida (1989), who classify Greek words into broad semantic categories.

There is also the problem of applying category distinctions when the evaluation is made indirectly by description of the protagonist's behaviour. For example, is Cato's refusal to wear scent, unlike his beloved brother, Caepio, (Plutarch, *Cato*, 3.6) a case of

his being "powerful, vigorous, robust", to use the terminology of Martin and White (2005: 53), and so in the category of *Esteem: Capacity*? Or is Cato being "cautious" or "wary" and, thus, further exhibiting his *Tenacity*? We chose to label the relevant unit: *Esteem: Capacity/Tenacity*.

However, whatever the complexities of classification, the bulk of units in the three texts were assigned to one category/sub-category and we were able to indicate differences in the *Judgement* of Jesus and the other "heroes". (See Figures 5 and 6.) In the *Gospel* 95% of the judgement units are *Esteem*, compared to 74% for *Cato* and 65% for Demonax. Moreover, 67% of the units in the *Gospel* are labelled *Normality* (with a further 5% for units where *Normality* is combined with other sub-categories), compared to 7% for *Cato* (plus 12% combined) and 4% (plus 8% combined) for *Demonax*. This would suggest that it is Jesus' status that is being highlighted, rather than "how capable" he is (*Capacity* forms 23% of the units in the *Gospel*). By contrast, the emphasis in *Cato* is on the *Tenacity* of the central character (33% plus 38% combined, compared to 0% for Jesus and 22% plus 6% for Demonax). Demonax and Cato are commended more for their *Propriety* than Jesus is: *Demonax*: 25% plus 8% combined; *Cato*: 5% plus 21% combined; *Gospel*: 2%.
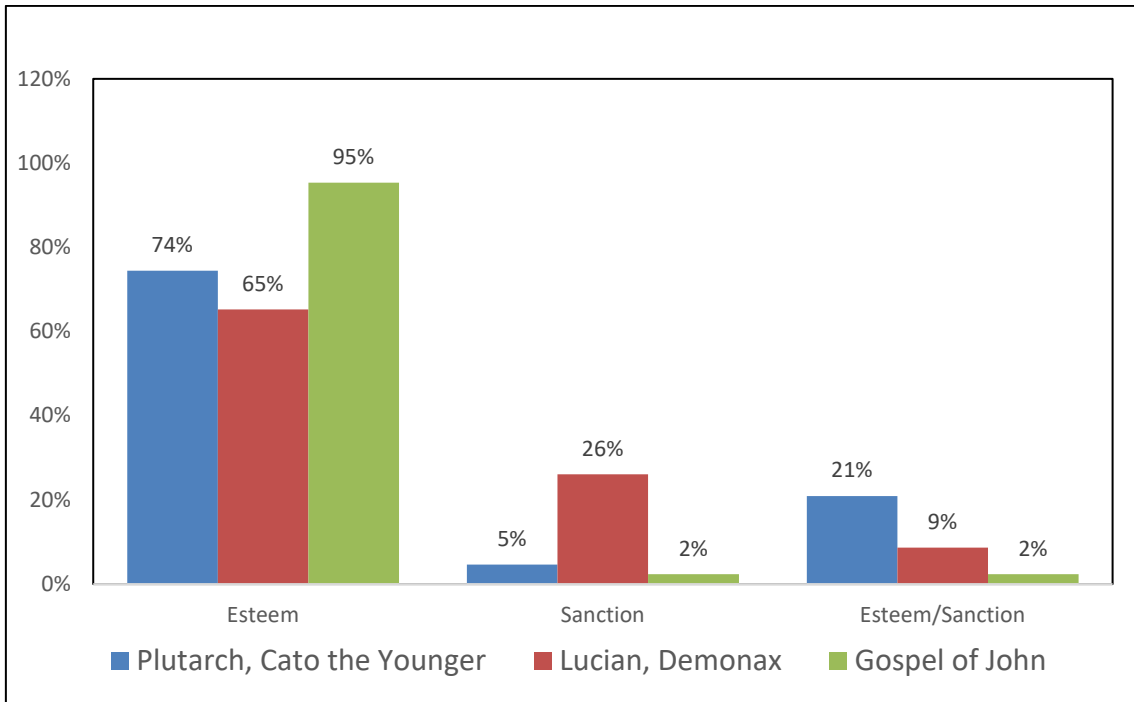
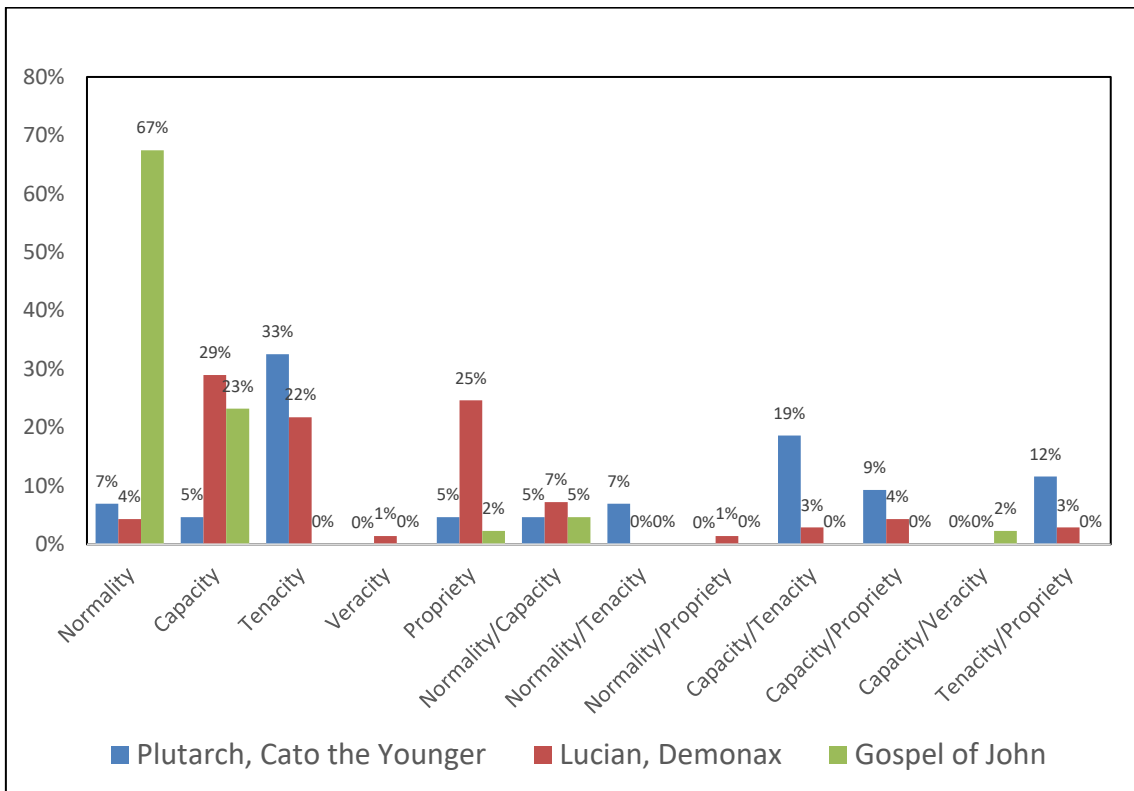Figure 5: Esteem and sanction evaluations as a percentage of units containing judgement

Figure 6: Sub-categories of esteem and sanction evaluations as a percentage of units containing judgement

4.3 Amplification

The *Gospel* has only a few instances of *Force: Intensify* (16% of the units containing judgement) compared with *Cato* (42%) and *Demonax* (46%). It also has fewer instances of *Maximum* amplification (9% of the units containing judgement) compared with *Cato* (21%) and *Demonax* (33%). (See Figures 7 and 8.) This would suggest that the author of the *Gospel*'s evaluation of Jesus is more understated than that of the other authors' evaluations of their 'heroes'. None of the texts makes much use of *Force: Mitigate* (one example in Cato and four in *Demonax*) or of *Focus* (one example each in *Gospel* and *Cato* and three in *Demonax*). All the instances of *Focus* are *Sharpen*, there are none of *Focus: Soften*.

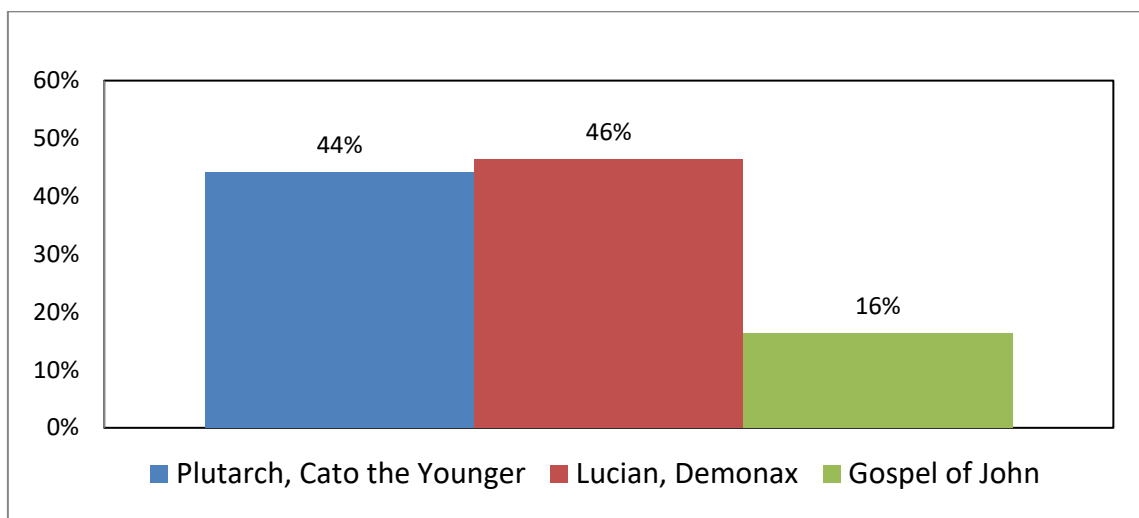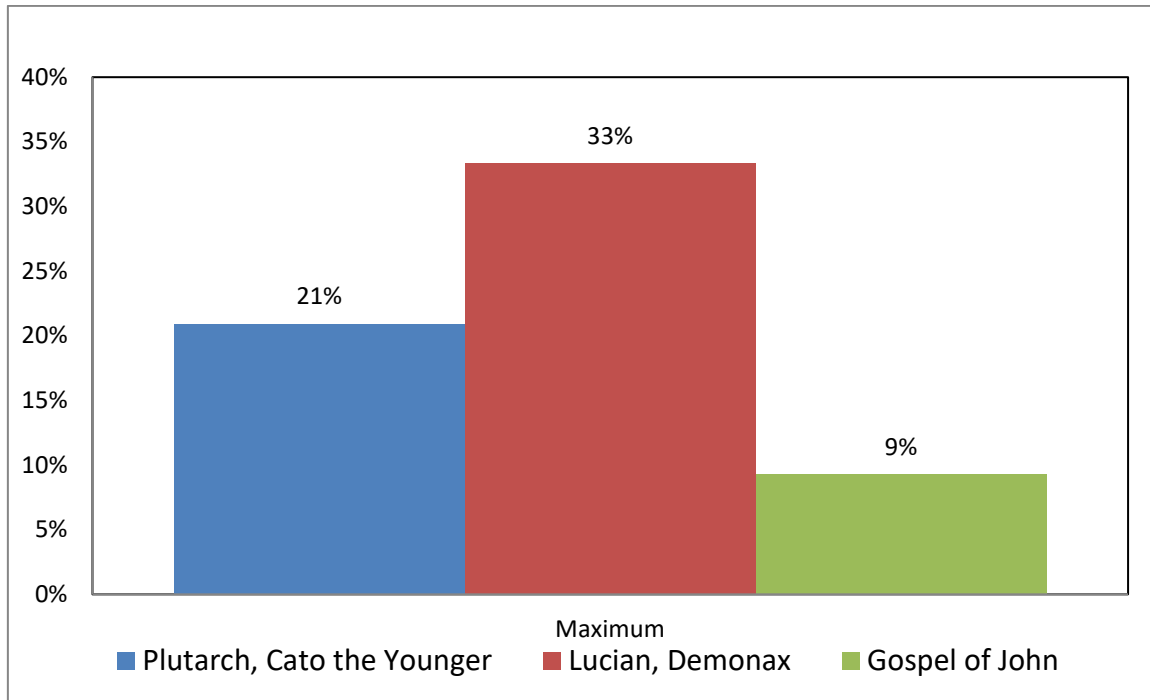Figure 7: Amplification: force: intensify as a percentage of units containing judgement

Figure 8: Amplification: Force: Maximum as a percentage of units containing judgement

4.4 Engagement

All the units containing judgement of the central character were categorized as either *Monogloss* or *Heterogloss*. The *Heterogloss* units were further analysed into various sub-categories. (See Figures 9 and 10.)
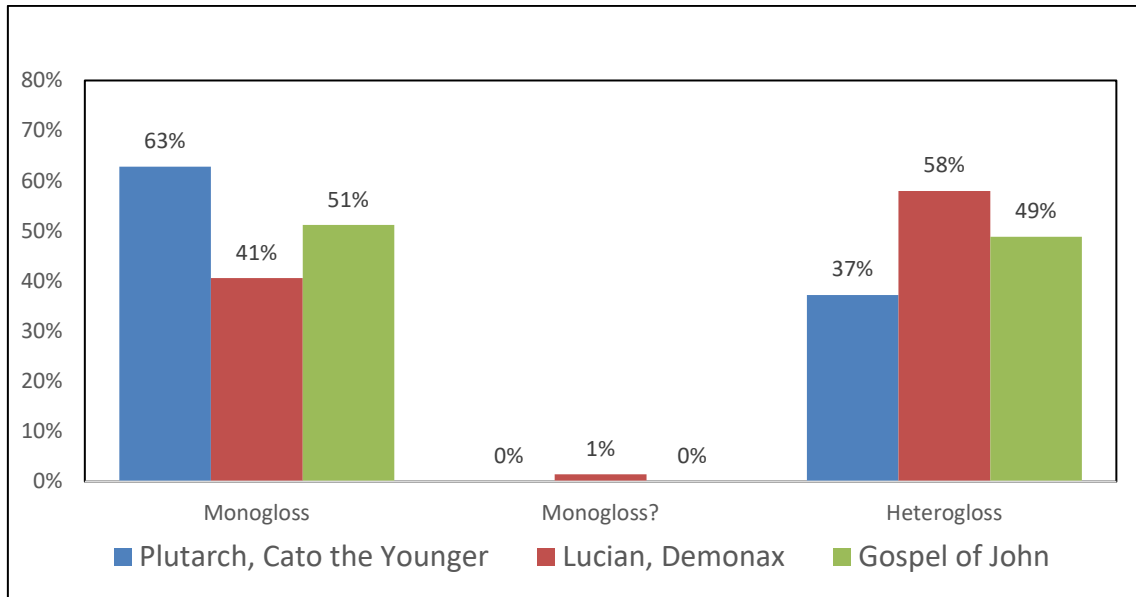
Figure 9: Monogloss and heterogloss evaluations as a percentage of the units containing judgement
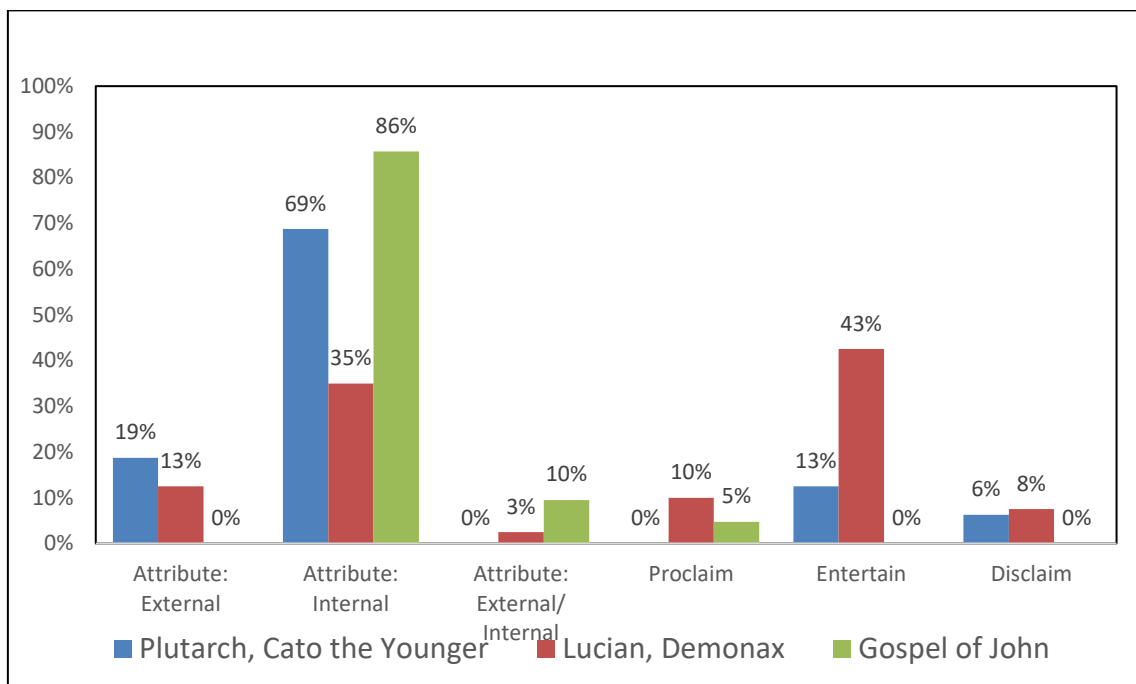

Figure 10: Categories of heterogloss as a percentage of the units containing heterogloss

The judgement units in the *Gospel* are evenly divided between the categories of *Monogloss* and *Heterogloss*. Of the 21 *Heterogloss* units, 86% are attributed to *Internal* "voices", that is of characters within the narrative, including Jesus himself; 10% are

attributed to both *External* sources and *Internal* "voices"; and 5% to *Proclaim: Pronounce*, that is one unit where the author brings his own voice directly to bear on the evaluation. The two *External* sources are both from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: although these are not directly endorsed by the author, we assume that these scriptures would carry authority for both the author and at least some of his potential readers. However, the preponderance of evaluation is not through such external sources or directly from the author, but through the characters within the narrative.

The judgment units in *Cato* are divided between 63% *Monogloss* and 37% *Herterogloss*, which suggests that the author is generally presenting one authoritative 'voice' in his account. Of the *Herterogloss* units, 19% refer to *External* sources, but none of these sources is named; 69% are *Internal* "voices" of characters, including Cato himself. There are also two units (13%) which we labelled *Entertain*, in that alternative positions are countenanced through the use of modal attributes, and one unit (6%) that we labelled *Disclaim*, where a statement is introduced with "However. . .".

In *Demonax*, 41% of the units are labelled *Monogloss* (plus another unit labelled *Monogloss?* as it is unclear if the words are those of Demonax or the author); 58% are *Herterogloss*. Of the *Herterogloss* units, 13% refer to *External* sources and 35% to *Internal* "voices". There are 10% of units in the category of *Proclaim* and a noticeable 43% in the category of *Entertain* (employing modal verbs, attributes and adjuncts as well as mental processes), and 8% of units under the heading of *Disclaim*: all of which suggests that although Lucian's portrayal of the philosopher Demonax is strongly positive, he is aware of alternative interpretations.

The *External* sources acknowledged by Lucian are "the best of the Greeks" (*Demonax*, 4), "the whole Athenian people, along with those in high office" (11), an

account of the trial of Socrates (11), and an anonymous "someone" (12). There is also a reference to "that comic poet" (10), citing the 5th Century BC/BCE Athenian comic playwright Eupolis: this is the only externally attributed "voice" that seems to be endorsed in our sample texts.

Overall, we conclude that a high proportion of the *Heterogloss* engagement in the *Gospel* is through the *Internal* 'voices' of characters within the narrative. In *Cato* the emphasis is on *Monogloss*: the author's evaluation is authoritative and *External* sources remain anonymous. In *Demonax*, there is more use of *Heterogloss*, with a noticeable tendency to *entertaining* alternative viewpoints through the use of modality.

5. Comparison with examples from outside systematic analysis

The quantitative appraisal analysis of our sample texts highlights certain aspects of the *Attitude* their authors display towards their "heroes" and presumably wish their readers to share. We present here a summary of the quantitative patterns found in each of our text samples and then compare them with the remainder of the texts, which were not analysed systematically.

The author of the *Gospel of John* makes the least *Judgement* of his central character, Jesus, but it is overwhelmingly *Positive*. The only definitely *Negative* evaluation is made through the 'voice' of one of the other characters in the narrative (Nathanael in *Gospel* 1.46). Almost all *Direct* judgement is made in the opening section of the *Gospel*, corresponding to the *Comment* "sub-genre". Elsewhere the judgement is *Indirect*, particularly through the *Internal* "voices" of characters within the text and, in a few cases,

through the actions of Jesus and others. A high proportion of this judgement is in the category of *Esteem: Normality*, implying that the author is concerned with "how special" Jesus is. There are only a few instances of *Amplification: Intensify* and even fewer of *Maximum* amplification: the appraisal of Jesus is relatively understated. The only engagement with *External* sources is the Hebrew scriptures, although these are not directly endorsed or denied.

Plutarch makes more *Judgement* of his "hero", Cato, but this is less *Positive* than the other texts, although there is considerable uncertainty about the categorization of some of the units. This judgment is mainly *Indirect*, which may be related to the higher proportion of *Narrative* in this text. Stress is made on Cato's *Esteem: Tenacity*, that is "how dependable" he is. There is a higher proportion of *Amplification: Intensify* and *Maximum* amplification than in the *Gospel*. In terms of *Engagement*, the emphasis is on *Monogloss*: the author's evaluation is presented as authoritative. *External* sources remain anonymous and are not directly endorsed or denied.

Lucian makes by far the most *Judgement* of his "hero", Demonax, mostly through direct *Comment* by the author. He is strongly *Positive*, with relatively more emphasis on *Sanction: Propriety* ("how far beyond reproach") than the central characters in the *Gospel* and *Cato*. Lucian makes the most use of *Intensification* and *Maximum* amplification: if the author of the *Gospel* understates, Lucian does not. However, we have also drawn attention to the greater proportion of *Heterogloss* in *Demonax*, with the use of modality to *entertain* other "voices": for example, "*it seemed* (ἐῴκει) that with Socrates he was most at home (5); "*as if he considered* (ὡς ἂν. . . ἡγούμενον) friendship the greatest of human virtues" (10). Maybe Lucian's positive presentation of Demonax is more nuanced

than first appears. There is some reference to *External* sources, one of which seems to be endorsed.

When we compare these quantitative analysis results with broader insights from reading the whole of the texts, we observe support for our findings.

In the *Gospel*, there is little *Direct Judgment* made by the author through *Comment*. The instances that exist are all *Positive* and relate either to Jesus' *Esteem: Normality*, such as the revealing of his "glory" (δόξα) through a miracle (2.11) or the statement that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God" (ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) (20.31); or else to his *Esteem: Capacity* in respect of his "supernatural" knowledge (2.25; 6.64; 13.1, 3, 11; 16.19; 18.4), although these too could be categorized as *Esteem*: *Normality*.

Indirect Judgement is far more prevalent, either through the "voices" of other characters or through the actions of Jesus in his miracles. This is mostly *Positive*, although *Negative* judgements are made by those opposing Jesus for religious or political reasons. These judgements are often extreme, such as accusations that Jesus is insane or possessed by a demon (7.20; 8.48, 52; 10.20). Opposition to Jesus is also made in terms of *Sanction*: *Propriety*: accusations that he has broken Jewish Law (5.10-16; 7.23; 19.7).

There are few instances of *Intensification* and *Maximum* amplification.

In terms of *Engagement*, there are only a few references to *External* sources. These are mostly the Hebrew Scriptures, which are narrated as being "fulfilled" in the actions of Jesus and people's response to these actions (12.38-40; 13.18; 15.25; 17.12; 19.24, 28, 36-37).

Overall, we can say that the author's *Judgement* of Jesus in the *Gospel of John* is restrained but *Positive*, although he is aware that some do not share that evaluation. This judgement is mostly made *Indirectly*, with little use of *Intensification.* It relates primarily

to Jesus' *Normality*, "how special" he is, and this is summed up in the author's explicit statement of his purpose of writing: "these things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20.31). We may detect a reluctance on the part of the author to make an evaluation of someone he regards as so special.

The *Life of Cato the Younger* does not contain an explicit purpose for its writing, as the *Gospel* does, although this can be found in other of the "Parallel Lives", where Plutarch sets out his aim to provide good moral examples for himself and his readers to imitate or, in some cases, bad examples to avoid (Hägg 2012: 272-77). It is with this aim in mind that we can see ambivalence in Plutarch's appraisal of Cato the Younger. Is Cato showing immense courage and resolution in trying to oppose Pompey and Caesar's perceived attempt to overthrow the Roman republic or else obstinacy and a lack of pragmatism? Plutarch seems divided in his opinion: while he admires Cato's tenacity and passion for justice, he believes that his actions do not always have the best consequences. For example, Cato opposes Pompey's desire to marry one of Cato's nieces (or daughters?) in order to establish a marriage connection between their two families (Plutarch, *Cato* 30.2-3), doing so "without pause or deliberation". Plutarch concludes that "if we are to judge by results, it would seem that Cato was wholly wrong in not accepting the marriage connection" (30.6). This is a rare example of Plutarch making a *Direct* judgement of his central character, although the use of modality ("it would seem") indicates that this judgement is *entertained* by the author: other positions are possible.

In our quantitative analysis of *Cato*, 50% of the *Positive*/*Negative* categories of the *Judgement* units were given a question mark, compared with 33% for *Demonax* and 5% for the *Gospel*. At first sight this high proportion may suggest that we need a clearer lexico-grammatical basis for making decisions. However, it may also be the case that the

author himself is uncertain about how to categorize Cato's character and behaviour in seeking to provide a moral example for his readers. This would seem an important factor to take into account more generally in the process of evaluation.

Like the *Gospel*'s author, Lucian provides an explicit purpose for writing his *Life of Demonax*: "so that he might be remembered by the best people (as far as I am able); and so that the most high-minded of young people, who are keen on philosophy, might not have to educate themselves with ancient precepts alone for their examples" (1.2). Certainly, in our analysed text, Demonax is presented in strongly positive terms, although we noted some nuance in this judgement through the use of modality to *entertain* other "voices". When we come to the next main section of *Demonax*, the anecdotes relating to the philosopher's "sharp and witty remarks" (12), we find a somewhat different presentation. The emphasis here is on Demonax's ironic humour, which can often be cruel and crude. As Beck (2016) has argued, regarding Lucian's construction of Demonax's personality, "the quality of being humorous or witty is usually dissociated from the moralizing or ethically affirmative viewpoint", although it may be "a function of intelligence and creativity" (87). Martin and White (2005) include being "witty, humorous, droll" in their positive categorization of *Social Esteem: Capacity* (53) and this is the main aspect of judgement that we find in the anecdotes section of the text. Whether humour should be perceived as a positive quality, as Martin and White suggest, may depend on who is at the receiving end of such humour. Presumably the philosophers and others mocked by Demonax would not see it as positive. However, as wit is a feature of Lucian's writings generally, he would evaluate Demonax's "sharp and witty remarks" positively, even if he did not necessarily want his readers to imitate them. What we can say is that the judgement of Demonax in this section is *Indirect*, in the form of narrative

and speech, whereas the concluding narrative section, which deals with his death and the "magnificent public funeral" given to him by the Athenians (Lucian, *Demonax*, 67) contains both *Direct* and *Indirect* appraisal, which is entirely *Positive* with the use of *Maximum Amplification*, as in the statement, "There was no-one who did not go to his funeral" (67).

We can conclude that the portrayal of Demonax is a complex one, where some of his positive attributes and actions appear to be countered by his words.

6. Critique of methodology

We are aware that there are a number of areas in which our study is open to potential criticism and we briefly address some of these here.

It could be argued that we have used too small a corpus for our quantitative analysis and that the 1000-word samples are unrepresentative of the various "sub-genres" of the texts. Regarding the latter point, we were aware that the opening 18 verses of the *Gospel* (our units 1-24), often described as "The Prologue", are exceptional compared with the rest of the text in comprising almost entirely *Comment*. Similarly, only a small proportion of the units from our sample from *Demonax* (six in total), come from the large section of anecdotes relating to the philosopher, which contain comparatively little *Comment*. However, given that the whole analysis was annotated manually, we limited our size of corpus and sample, while being conscious that evaluation involves reading whole texts (Macken-Horarik & Isaac 2014: 80). It might have helped if we could have made use of automated corpus analysis programmes, such as the UAM (Universidad Autónoma de

Madrid) Corpus Tool employed by Tupala (2019) or those outlined by Read and Carroll (2012) in their discussion of a methodology for *Appraisal* in English that allows for statistical analysis (429-30). However, we are not aware that such a programme exists for the annotation of Hellenistic Greek.

Another potential criticism is of our focus on one category of *Attitude*, that of *Judgement*. As we are concerned with the authors' presentation of their "heroes", it might seem necessary for us to examine the use of *Affect* in relation to how the author "feels" about the central character. However, in our analysed samples the only definite example we could find is when Lucian expresses his feelings towards both Demonax and Sostratus (a man commended for his physical strength):

(15) οὓς καὶ εἶδον αὐτὸς καὶ ἰδὼν ἐθαύμασα

'And I myself saw them and when I saw them, I marvelled' (*Demonax*, 6)

In fact, there are few such examples of *Affect* in the whole of our texts, which may relate to the authors' perception of their task as presenting their portraits dispassionately or a general distrust of feelings as a basis for analysing character.

We also noted that there is a subjective element in deciding which categories and sub-categories to use for our units of analysis. Consistent analysis is not always straightforward as appraisal inevitably involves some subjective choices: we are dealing with the complexities of human nature. As Martin and White (2015) recognize concerning their classifications of *Attitude*:

our maps of feeling. . . have to be treated at this stage as hypotheses about the organisation of the relevant meanings – offered as a challenge to those concerned with developing appropriate reasoning, as a refence point for those with alternative classifications and as a tool for those who need something to manage the analysis of evaluation in discourse (46).

Similarly, Macken-Horarik and Isaac (2014) state that we should "put indeterminacy at the centre of the task and. . . make this a feature of the account rather than something to be pushed to the margins (as an embarrassment in the analysis)" (78).

In determining the categories of *Attitude*, including *Judgement*, we must be aware of the values of different cultures and times. Even at the most basic level of *Judgement*, that is whether it is *Positive* or *Negative*, we need to determine as far as we can what these underlying values are, such as a development of Jewish thinking or Platonism or Stoicism, and not jump too quickly to our own biases. As Macken-Horarik and Isaac (2014) suggest, "Evaluation is a profoundly culturally sensitive business" (84).

This issue also raises the problem of using existing data without precise information about the situational context in which it was written (Tenbrink 2020: 196). In the case of our three texts, we cannot do follow-up studies to ask the authors to define more precisely the nuances of their lexical choices. We lack contextual factors such as gestures, body posture and volume (Martin and White 2005: 63; Tenbrink 2020: 75). If we could see Plutarch shaking his head as he described yet another instance of Cato's stubbornness or else an affirmative nod, then it would be easier to decide if he was being *Positive* or *Negative*. However, we believe that such limitations do not make our application of appraisal theory to ancient written documents invalid. Rather it raises important issues

for further consideration, such as the development of a systematic classification of evaluative terms in Koine Greek.

7. Discussion

We aimed to identify to what extent appraisal theory can be applied to ancient Hellenistic Greek texts, and whether systematic patterns could be found in the evaluation of main characters in these texts. Concerning the first question, this study has raised a number of significant issues regarding the methodology of appraisal theory. These are particularly concerned with its application to ancient written documents, but may also have a wider relevance.

Regarding its application to ancient written documents, in this case Hellenistic Greek, we noted problems with the categorization of individual words that have a wide semantic range, such as δόξα, and also the differing and complex value systems of ancient cultures. We suggested the need for the development of a systematic classification of evaluative terms in the source language. If possible, this could then be used in a computer-based corpus tool to allow for more extensive appraisal of texts. The same would apply to other languages, ancient and modern.

We also noted the difficulty in fitting certain words and phrases into discrete categories and sub-categories of *Judgement*. For example, we questioned whether aspects of *Veracity* should be in the *Sanction* group, involving the possibility of some sort of literal sanction, or whether they could also be part of the *Esteem* category.

Moreover, we pointed out that the overlap of categories and sub-categories of *Judgement* may be due not simply to a failure on our part to provide discrete lexico-grammatical classifications, but rather the result of deliberate ambiguity on the part of the author. We saw this particularly in Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Younger*, where the author seems uncertain about how to categorize Cato's character and behaviour in seeking to provide a moral example for his readers. This would seem an important factor to take into account more generally in the process of evaluation.

In spite of these lessons learnt, we cautiously conclude that there were no fundamental issues associated with applying appraisal analysis to these ancient texts that would call the entire operation into question. The challenges as outlined were well within the range of typical challenges associated with complex discourse analysis (Fuoli 2018; compare also Nacey et al. 2019 for an entire volume on annotating metaphor across different languages, as a different complex discourse analysis aspect).

Building on the confidence that our application of appraisal theory was successful within its limitations as outlined, we are now in a position to consider patterns of appraisal as compared between the three texts. Our analysis highlighted variations in the amount of *Direct* and *Indirect* judgement, in the *Positive* and *Negative* aspects of this judgement, and in the various categories and sub-categories of *Esteem* and *Sanction*. There were also variations in the degree of *Amplification* of these judgements and in the amount of *Engagement* with actual or potential sources of evaluation. This quantitative analysis appeared to be supported by examples from elsewhere in our three texts. In summary, there are differences in the authors' *Judgement* of their central characters, which highlights the attitude each author displays towards their subject and which they wish readers to share.

In particular, while the *Gospel of John* has notably fewer instances of *Judgement* than the other two texts, the proportion of positive *Judgement* is decisively higher. Also, there is a striking near-absence of *Amplification* that is not mirrored by the other two texts, and unclear cases as to whether a judgement is positive or negative are much rarer. Taken together, the appraisal analysis thus demonstrates how the *Gospel* represents a distinctive picture of its hero compared with the other two biographies. The positive message is clear, but remains restrained and factual, avoiding *Amplification* in a way that appears to be uncharacteristic of other character descriptions of the time. Although many writers believe that the three texts all belong to the same genre, that of Hellenistic Greek "Lives" (see, especially, Burridge, 2018), there are thus notable differences in the way their central characters are evaluated. The author of the *Gospel* makes a *Judgement* of Jesus that is overwhelmingly positive, but perhaps surprisingly understated. It is true that there are two references to Jesus as "God" in the text (1:1; 20:28), although this is a difficult term to evaluate using Martin and White's appraisal framework. We note that in the first of these Jesus is referred to as ὁ λόγος ('the word') rather than by name, so this could be considered as somewhat *Indirect*; the second reference is *Indirect* though the voice of Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples. Above all, the author focuses on "how special" Jesus is and we suggested that there may have been a reluctance to evaluate someone regarded as so special. This may indicate that the *Gospel* does not belong in the same genre category as other contemporary "Lives" which are more explicit in the evaluation of their "heroes". At the same time, it may also be a reflection of the specific "divine" status of Jesus in the Bible and in the early Christian church, in contrast to the other two whose status in general does not exceed that of a human being, in spite of the praise evident in the biographies. The extent to which the observed patterns reflect a genuine genre difference rather than

being primarily based on the status of its "hero" is clearly subject to further study, addressing discourse semantic systems and register features beyond the realm of *Appraisal*.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to consider the suitability of applying the *appraisal framework* developed within SFL by Martin and colleagues in an area that has not previously received attention, namely the evaluation of ancient written documents, in this case three "Lives" written in the Hellenistic Greek of the first two centuries. We also wanted to see if an analysis using this framework could contribute in some way to determining the *genre* of such works. Our comparative analysis has highlighted a number of critical issues associated with the use of a primarily English-focused methodology, such as the need for a culturally sensitive classification of terms in the source language. We further noted the difficulties of making clear-cut evaluation choices where authors themselves may be ambivalent about those they are describing. However, we did observe important differences in the evaluation of the central characters of our texts, notably the "special" nature of Jesus in the *Gospel of John*, which seemed to us sufficiently marked as to question whether this text should be included in the same genre as the other "Lives". Overall, we suggest that the appraisal framework is sufficiently flexible and well-designed to be used in the way we have outlined, while acknowledging the need for further studies addressing its wider application across languages and historical texts. We also suggest that this framework can make a valid contribution to the question of the genre

of literary works, in this case the ongoing debate about the genre of the New Testament *Gospel of John* compared with Graeco-Roman "Lives".

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