‘Becoming Nigrinus, staying Lucian’ Exploring the dialectic formulation of Roman identity through philosophical satire

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Master Thesis for Ancient History
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Leiden 2013

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March 29, 2013

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"Will the man never have done with his masks and his stages?"
Lucian of Samosata[1]

Introduction

The post-modern historian has gained a reputation for possessing a somewhat supercilious character, a habit of standing aloof from his peers. Having detached himself from his brethren and escaping the pitfalls of positivist science, he now enjoys an almost Olympian view of the world's past. From there he is able to clearly discern the subtle mechanics and varied dynamics of change, appreciating every little detail of the lives of those below, of choices being made by these actors, and how these choices reflect the contending force fields that interplay, and by chance move history in the direction we know it to have travelled. Forces that remained invisible to the eyes of his absolutist predecessors, who spent their academic lives vainly musing how neatly history mirrored their present concerns, unwittingly studying nothing but their own reflections. Instead, the post-modern historian has drunk from the pool of metaphysics, and is inebriated with the knowledge of his own unavoidable subjectivity. Liberated from the imperialistic paradigms which previously enslaved him, he now relishes in the realization that neither he or anyone else will ever grasp the truth of history in its entirety, and by realizing this - in a twist of irony - accomplishes to do exactly that. This happy change in scholarly demeanour must surely be the work of Fortune.

Satire is notoriously resistant to historical analysis.[2] This is because the genre works on the basis of employing recognizable vocabulary in a credible manner while subtly inserting elements that work against this air of credibility. The author tricks the receiving party into interpreting the message to reflect his intentions one way at first, and then slowly allowing stylistic noise to cause the audience to doubt their initial interpretation. The more subtle this increase in noise, the longer it takes for the reader to recognize the message as satire. Depending on the ability and intelligence of both author and audience, this turning-point won't be reached until the very last moment – in some cases it won't be reached at all. Even more problematic, the best of satire doesn't deceive by just inserting false sentiments into a text, but by inserting sentiments that in a way ring true to the author as well.

The *Wisdom of Nigrinus* stands as one of the most problematic works by Lucian.[3] The short dialogue has attracted a slightly underwhelming amount of scholarly attention over the last hundred and fifty years or so, precisely because of the unsettling feeling that one gets when reading it all the way through.[4] While it is in fact highly entertaining, it still deals with serious social issues in a critically charged language.[5] Most alarmingly, after building up tension with a rousing display of earnest enthusiasm, ultimately Lucian decides to pull the rug from underneath our feet in a rather puzzling anti-climax – a firm favourite of his.[6] This enigmatic juxtaposition of literary devices has left scholars to debate how *Nigrinus* should be read[7], and in disagreement over which genre it fits in most comfortably - with no one interpretation deserving much preference above another. To my mind, this only adds to its appeal.

The Nigrinus dialogue shows us Lucian's well-attested affinity with cynic philosophy at its fullest,[8] with the dialogue serving as a narrative frame for a philosophical treatise, in which Lucian authentically reproduces

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[1] Nigrinus 1, *The works of Lucian of Samosata*, Vol. I, translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford 1905) 15. I will rely on the Loeb edition of the *Nigrinus* dialogue, translated into English by A.M. Harmon, from 1913, unless otherwise noted. See: The Wisdom of Nigrinus, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes,* Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 14, London-Harvard 1913, 2012). The Greek original transcript forms the appendix to this essay.

[2] Bracht Branham, R., *Unruly eloquence. Lucian and the comedy of traditions* (Cambridge-London 1989), 6.

[3] Smith, Emily J., 'On Lucian's Nigrinus', in: *The American Journal of Philology*. Vol. 18, No. 3 (1897), 339-340. Whitmarsh, T., *Greek literature and the Roman empire. The politics of imitation* (Oxford 2001) 265.

[4] Goldhill, S, *Who needs Greek? Contests in the cultural history of Hellenism* (Cambridge 2002) 61.

[5] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 22, 26-27.

[6] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence,* 57.

[7] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 13. Smith, E.J., 'On Lucian's Nigrinus', in: *The American Journal of Philology*, 339-341.

[8] Smith, 'On Lucian's Nigrinus', 340.

all the trademarks of cynicism. The dialogue centres on the fictional character of the philosopher Nigrinus,[9] a learned man living in the city of Rome, who imparts his words of wisdom on a young man who has travelled to the city to have his eyes examined.[10] The visitor gets more than he bargained for when the philosopher convinces him that it is in fact his spiritual vision which has blinded him from the truth around him. The declared 'Platonist'[11] goes into a rant about how Roman society as a whole appears fixated on the acquisition of wealth and power, with people everywhere spending their lives dreaming of luxury and pursuing pleasure as an aim in itself, while neglecting their spiritual well-being.[12] In his eyes, the city of Rome is perfectly suited for those who wish to enjoy every variety of vice and relish in debauchery.[13] Conversely, the well-travelled Nigrinus points to the innate moderation of the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, and their love of sobriety and wisdom which they instinctively cultivate among themselves, as well as share selflessly with ignorant strangers in need of reform.[14] While he himself immeasurably favours the company of the Greeks above his present surroundings, Nigrinus seeks to live in accordance with natural virtue in the face of wicked and tempting decadence - as a test of character, like Odysseus intent on witnessing the song of the Sirens instead of plugging his ears to it - and encourages his pupils to do the same.[15] As much as Nigrinus disapproves of common men shamelessly scrambling for crumbs of the table of the wealthy and powerful of Rome, Nigrinus has no redeeming word to spare for those who dare call themselves philosophers while selling their talents to rich patrons, providing nothing but cheap parlour tricks and lip-service to their masters, degrading themselves for petty favours like no man of their profession ever should.[16]

Lucian puts this cynic treatise in the mouth of the aforementioned visitor, who feels himself transformed by the power and truth of the words of Nigrinus, and now spends his days dreaming of his master, being too enthralled by his newfound philosophy to hold further communion with his friends, preferring to enjoy his love-sick solitude instead of their company.[17] When one of his friends scolds him for his remoteness, the two speak of what has happened to him, setting the stage for a discussion on whether the teachings of Nigrinus lead a man to wisdom or madness.[18] In the end, both men confess to being sweetly stricken by the divine words of Nigrinus, leaving them to debate whether they should seek the philosopher's counsel in finding a way to heal their skilfully wounded souls.[19]

A testament to Lucian's talents in creating new and disorientating forms of literature while still paying homage to the venerated works of classical Greece, the Nigrinus dialogue stands as a sublime example of the Greek cultural renaissance movement we have come to recognize as the Second Sophistic.[20] The dialogue throws the cultural opposition between the Greek and Roman world into a particularly sharp relief,[21] as Lucian

[9] Although there is some discussion as to whether Lucian did in fact refer to an actual philosopher named Nigrinus - there being no definite evidence to the contrary -, the consensus is that the character is fictional, instead drawing from familiar images of Platonic sages who were active in imperial Rome as well as in the East. See: Swain, *Hellenism and empire. Language, classicism, and power in the Greek world*. AD 50-250 (Oxford 1996) 316, Whitmarsh, T., *Greek literature and the Roman empire The politics of imitation*, 266.

[10] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 2, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*. Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 14, London-Harvard 1913, 2012), 101.

[11] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 2, *Lucian.* Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon, 101.

[12] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 3-4, *Lucian*. Volume I, 103, 105

[13] The Wisdom of Nigrinus, 15-16. *Lucian*. Volume I, 115, 117.

[14] The Wisdom of Nigrinus, 12-14. *Lucian*. Volume I, 111, 113, 115.

[15] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 17-19. *Lucian*. Volume I, 117, 119.

[16] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 22-25. *Lucian*. Volume I, 121, 123, 125.

[17] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 1, 5, 7. *Lucian*. Volume I, 101, 105, 107.

[18] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 1, 6, 8. *Lucian*. Volume I, 101, 107, 109.

[19] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 38. *Lucian*. Volume I, 139.

[20] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence,* 2-5. Goldhill, S., 'Introduction. Setting an agenda', in: Simon Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural identity, the Second Sophistic and the development of empire* (2001) 14-15. Alcock, Susan E., *Archaeologies of the Greek past. Landscape, monuments, and memories* (Cambridge 2002) 38, 39.

[21] In recent years, the apparent hostility between Greek and Roman culture during the imperial period have at times become somewhat exaggerated by historians focussing on cultural identity. Christopher Jones for one feels the need to mitigate this tendency in order to arrive at more than generalized conclusion. See: Jones, C.P., 'Multiple identities in the age of the Second Sophistic', in: Barbara E. Borg (ed.), *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic* (Berlin/New York 2004) 13-14., I agree with his call for caution without reservation.

sets both up to vie for ownership of true civilization.[22] In doing so, he is taking part in a literary experiment that typified literature from the Second Sophistic, which can be described as trying to reinvent and revalue Greek culture in the face Roman hegemony,[23] or at the very least to realign Greek culture, to imbue it with a new purpose within a world that had become thoroughly rearranged according to a Roman sense of destiny.[24] The main question that sparked the creativity of writers of the Greek East in the imperial period was this: What is the proper place of Greek civilization in a world dictated by Rome?[25] The breadth of answers to this question varied from authors enthusiastically accommodating to the new order - exemplified by Aristides' swooning *Roman Oration*[26] - or offering a balanced perspective on the affairs of empire from a Greek point of view - such as the rather neutral tone found in the writings of Plutarch[27] - to venomous polemics against Roman culture - such as Lucian seems to at least rhetorically reference in the Nigrinus text. Moreover, this reappraisal of Greek civilization was not an exclusively Greek affair. Already during the Roman Republic, we recognize a tradition of trying to evaluate the standing of Greek culture from a Roman point of view.[28] As a relatively new player on the international field of empire-building, Roman appreciation of their Greek neighbours had ranged from veneration and emulation, to pity, utter contempt and even disgust.[29] Looking at the bigger picture it can be argued that both Greeks and Romans shared a longstanding cultural insecurity and inferiority complex, leading to a strange combination of mutual cultural anxiety and curiosity. In turn, this resulted in a rich amount of literature devoted to resolving the tension that existed between the two cultures as their initial contact turned into a lasting union of empire. Broadly speaking, this literary attempt to find such a resolution finds its expression in the Nigrinus dialogue as well, be it in a decidedly seriocomic mode.[30]

I have chosen to title this essay *'Becoming Nigrinus, staying Lucian'* for two reasons. Firstly, it is meant as a recognizable reference to the work of Greg Woolf on the creation and evolution of Roman culture on various levels of both geography and psychology of the inhabitants of the empire, from which I admittedly draw much inspiration in the composition and focus of this essay.[31] Secondly, it is meant to evoke the tension between the author and his literary personae, of the writer and his voice. By extension, it serves to remind one of what is arguably the chief challenge of a study such as this; to remain conscious of the divide between the in-universe of a certain body of writing, and the universe in which it is composed. To enlarge our insight into historical reality, we are in the limited yet privileged position to study the silent remains of long-vanished cultures, including the written deposits of the life and thoughts of someone such as Lucian. Still, the voice which speaks to us from his work can only tell us so much about the man. So, heuristically, we can try all we want to learn to know Lucian through questioning his persona of the philosopher Nigrinus, to see how much the two eclipse each other, in a sense. Yet, Lucian himself will always remain unavailable for interviews. Moreover, the way in which he chose to present himself to his empire-wide audience, creating a personal

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However, in the case of Lucian's Nigrinus this exaggeration is historically attested and a deliberate literary device - which promises for an interesting study case.

[22] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman empire*, 266.

[23] Swain, S., *Hellenism and Empire. Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World,* 2. Anderson, G., *The Second Sophistic. A cultural phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London/New York 1993) 8. Jones, C.P., 'Multiple identities in the age of the Second Sophistic', in: Borg, B.E. (ed.), *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic* (Berlin/New York 2004) 14. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 7.

[24] Goldhill, S., 'Introduction. Setting an agenda', in: Simon Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural identity, the Second Sophistic and the development of empire* (2001), 5, 8, 21-22. Elsner, J., 'Pausanias. A Greek pilgrim in the Roman World', *Past and Present* no. 135 (1992) 19. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 2-3. Alcock, S.E., *Archaeologies of the Greek past*, 40.

[25] Preston. R., 'Roman questions, Greek answers', in: Simon Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural identity, the Second Sophistic and the development of empire* (2001) 90-91. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 5.

[26] Whitmarsh, T., 'Think local', in: Tim Whitmarsh (ed.), *Local knowledge and microidentities in the imperial Greek world* (Cambridge 2010) 1.

[27] Preston. R., 'Roman questions, Greek answers', in: Goldhill, S. (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural identity, the Second Sophistic and the development of empire* (2001) 91-92.

[28] Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek past*, 39.

[29] Woolf, G., 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek: culture, identity and the civilizing process in the Roman East', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 10 (1994) 120-121. Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek past*, 37-38.

[30] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 5-6.

[31] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge/New York 1998) 7, 11.

image which could translate itself to many experiences and situations through the reading of his work, was a conscious mental exercise, while Lucian as a person - like any author - remains distinct from this particular presentation.[32] In short, as much as we want to see Lucian as we see him becoming this character Nigrinus, he will always have stayed Lucian - and as such remains unfathomable. Instead of letting such an overstated truism hinder our scholarly curiosity, it is better to use this fact to turn our gaze in the right direction. To realise that something is ultimately unknowable does not exclude the possibility of learning about it. Arguably, this is the all-important first step towards true knowledge.

That being said, we can assume to know a reasonable amount about Lucian. We know him to be born somewhere between 115 and 125 C.E. in the formerly independent Hellenized kingdom of Commagene at the eastern edge of the Roman Empire, which had been a minor province since 72 C.E., and that he himself claimed to be of Syrian stock.[33] The rest of what we assume to know stems from what he obliquely alludes to throughout his oeuvre. For any sort of early biographical information, we have only *The Dream* to rely on - a fantastical piece which casts his own successful career in a quasi-mythological light, ascribing his fortune to the divine personification of Culture, who snatched Lucian from a life as a provincial and impoverished sculptors' pupil in a contest with crude Craft, carrying him off in a flying chariot to a bright future in the art of rhetoric.[34] This is of course, a rather heroic and self-aggrandising way for Lucian to advertise his own talents.[35] Still, it does tell us that in hindsight he personally regarded his choice to pursue a career in the liberal arts as a very fortunate one, taking him across the empire, trading in obscurity and poverty for wealth and fame by enthusiastically making full use of the opportunities the larger world presented to him.[36] In truth, it was he who - like many others - took up a life of culture to escape his humble existence.[37]

Yet ultimately, this essay isn't actually about uncovering Lucian. Instead, his work may serve us to give us a clearer perspective on the issues central to the present debate on Roman culture, on what we now perceive to be the multitude of *discrepant experiences of empire*.[38] In the last two decades, the efforts to deconstruct the longstanding paradigm of Romanization have resulted in a variety of new models which each try to compensate for the inherent weaknesses of its cumbersome predecessor. At the forefront of this movement stand scholars such as David Mattingly, Greg Woolf, and Jane Webster, who each in their own way have influenced the formation of a new paradigm, offering fresh perspectives on the Roman Empire. Instead of pretending to construct a unifying theory, these scholars are joined by a similar mindset, acknowledging that any investigation into Roman culture will yield the most fruitful results only if there remains room for different, sometimes contradicting approaches.[39] In a fashion that is quintessentially post-modern, Webster states that in the study of Roman imperialism, "*...there will never be a single 'appropriate' approach- indeed, it is probably eclecticism which will prove to be the most creative and stimulating way forward."*[40] It is this spirit of eclecticism that will remain at the centre of my essay. At the same time, I think it possible to arrive at a consistent theoretical framework that incorporates the best of what these scholars have to offer, perhaps filling in some of their separate lacunas.

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[32] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 67-69, 81-82. Jones, C.P., *Culture and society in Lucian* Cambridge-London 1986) 12, 23.

[33] Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 298-299.

[34] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 28, 29.

[35] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 28 Jones, C.P., *Culture and society in Lucian*, 9.

[36] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?,* 67-69.

[37] For example Favorinus, who declared of himself that he was a *Hellenized Gaul*. See: Goldhill, S., 'Introduction. Setting an agenda', in: Simon Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome,* 13-14. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 75.

[38] Mattingly, D.J., 'Introduction. Dialogues of power and experience in the Roman Empire', in: D.J. Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman imperialism: power, discourse, and discrepant experience in the Roman Empire* (Journal of Roman archaeology. Supplementary series 23) (Portsmouth (R.I.) 1997) 11-12.

[39] Webster J., 'Introduction. Roman imperialism and the 'post imperial age'', in: J. Webster and N. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives* (Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3) (1996) 2. Mattingly, 'Introduction. Dialogues of power and experience in the Roman Empire', in: D.J. Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman imperialism. Power, discourse, and discrepant experience in the Roman Empire* (1997) 7. Bowman, A.K. and Woolf, G., 'Literacy and power in the ancient world', in: Bowman and Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and power in the ancient world* (Cambridge 1994) 2.

[40] Webster, 'Introduction', 2.

This relatively young approach to the complex history of cultural developments which underscored the political unification of the Mediterranean world by the Romans owes much to the work of individuals from outside of the field of ancient history – and indeed many outside of the field of history entirely. In her introduction to the joined publication *Roman Imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives* from 1996, Webster credits scholars like Edward Said, whose drastic evaluation Eurocentric tendencies in contemporary anthropology and history in his monograph *Orientalism,* written in the wake of the dismemberment of Europe's colonial empires provided an impetus within the discipline of ancient history to acknowledge the need for a similar deconstruction of the Romanocentric bias in the theoretical treatment of the Roman Empire.[41]

Although this practice at first might be seen as going against the Rankian maxim to always appreciate each century in terms of its own unicity, the fact remains that many of our received notions about the Roman Empire have already been shaped by *our* modern European experience of empire-building.[42] This negates such criticism to a significant extent.[43] Furthermore, because modern historical interpretations of the condition of the Roman Empire have been shaped by the colonial experience, previous generations of historians have felt the natural tendency to favour a Roman perspective, consciously or subconsciously equating it with their own outlook on the civilizing missions of the great European empires.[44] To put it bluntly, post-colonial ancient historians have taken up the task of untangling the concept of Romanization from the concept of Kipling's *white man's burden*.[45] As summed up by Jane Webster, four thematic strategies derived from post-colonial theory may aid in this task, namely:

> -"*The **decentring** of Western categories of knowledge,... to repudiate the domination of the 'centre', and to articulate the history of the margins*"[46], which relates to the growing need to critically set aside Roman notions of *Romanitas, humanitas,* barbarity, as well as the discursive system that was based on this semantic opposition,[47] realizing the detrimental effect its modern incarnation has had on our understanding of Roman history, and to focus on those *Romans* who lived on the geographical or social edge of imperial society, and the source material which tells us about their lives and experiences.
>
> -"*The articulation of the **active** history of colonized peoples, including their capacity for subtle forms of overt and covert **resistance**.*"[48], which in turn prompt us to investigate a similar approach to the peoples of the empire.
>
> -"*The **deconstruction** of the binary models by which the West has categorized its Others, and in so doing defined itself.*"[49] By identifying these opposing categories which defined and perpetuated imperial Roman culture, we can discover what discrepant experiences were obscured by dominant strands of discourse.
>
> -Lastly, "*The critique of the imperialism of **representation**: that is, of the relationship between power and knowledge in the production of the colonial Other. The investigation of power-in-representation of colonial images and language is also known as **colonial discourse analysis.***"[50] The first step in avoiding

[41] Ibidem, 8.
[42] Hingley, R., *Globalizing Roman culture. unity, diversity and empire* (London 2005) 21.
[43] Ibidem, 8, 9. Compare: Mattingly, David, *Imperialism, power, and identity*, 5-6.
[44] Hingley, R., 'The 'legacy' of Rome. The rise, decline, and fall of the theory of Romanisation', in: J. Webster and N. Cooper (eds.), *Roman imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives* (Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3) (1996) 36-40.
[45] Hingley, 'The 'legacy' of Rome' in: Webster and Cooper (1996) , 40-44.
[46] Webster , 'Introduction', 7.
[47] Amory, P., *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (Cambridge 1997) 19-21.
[48] Webster , 'Introduction', 7.
[49] Ibidem.
[50] Ibidem.

uncritical acceptance of Roman images of representation as historical reality, is to recognize this sort of images when we see them.

When taken together, the post-colonial studies' concern with exploring experiences of empire in a way that highlights the life of the less visible masses instead of privileging the already conspicuous world of elite minorities, lends itself to being applied to develop a deeper understanding and more complete vision of the Roman Empire - and the personal and collective experiences it provided.

The contents and form of the Nigrinus text answer the line of questioning set by the agenda of post-colonial studies quite nicely, providing ample opportunity to try and uncover different perspectives on Roman imperial culture. It lends itself to exploring ways in which the dominant image of empire could be subverted, creatively imagining a resistant language and narrative that reflects a different, far more critical experience of Roman culture and imperialism than the one that we are overall accustomed to. This language and narrative can indeed be regarded as a literary experiment in upturning those binary models under which Roman imperialism tended to operate, in itself offering a critique against Roman images of power and its representation of civilization. Arguably, the *Wisdom of Nigrinus* is uniquely suited to allow us to decentre our own categories of knowledge about imperial culture, which are still too often prone to accepting dominant Roman perspectives - offering a chance to distance ourselves from them. Lastly, while the famous and laurelled Lucian - a prestigious Roman citizen after all[51] - can hardly be taken to represent *the history of the margins*, the fact that he did rise through the ranks of Roman society in spite of his peripheral background is in itself an interesting account of the myriad opportunities the empire presented.[52] It facilitating a stellar career to anyone who was willing and able to negotiate the variety of roles, identities and cultural labels creatively enough. In this respect, Lucian doesn't stand alone. In reality, the days of the high empire saw the rise of many provincial talents to a high standing, enjoying a privileged position at the centre of Roman society and culture. With their advent, it was Roman culture itself that continually underwent change and often tense re-evaluation, and in the end was enrichment by their travails.[53]

It is the general aim of this essay to map the multiple avenues available to construct a cohesive sense of identity within the structure of the Roman Empire in the second century C.E., specifically as they are explored in the Nigrinus dialogue. Aside from evaluating its subject-matter, I will seek to dissecting the lineage and effect of the form and style which Lucian used in its composition. To this end, I will draw from the various theoretical models that have been formulated in an attempt to reinvigorate the recent debate on Roman culture and the conterminous formulation of identity. By applying such a varied body of theory in a unified fashion, I will endeavour to analyse the dialogue, to try and illuminate how its specific composition reflects its mixed literary heritage, to recognize in what ways Lucian has chosen to comment on his surroundings, and in what sense his commentary reflects his own part in imperial society - his role in the transformation of Roman culture.[54] I anticipate that we can not only learn more about Lucian and his time by applying fresh theoretical models to his work, but that Lucian can in return teach us more about the validity of these models in the process, perhaps giving us an opportunity to adjust our newest assumptions, and further refine our perception of the Roman world.

[51] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 17.
[52] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 62.
[53] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 240-245.
[54] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 1.

I Definitions and method - Eclectic approaches to imperial culture

Yet, while borrowing from other scientific fields provides us with a much wider array of useful hermeneutic tools, it is important to refrain from simply adopting jargon from other disciplines and peppering one's work with fancy buzz-words. To advance the debate on the formulation of cultural identity in the Roman Empire in any meaningful direction, we should be willing and able to offer definitions for the terms we all too often take for granted. Let us start by defining *culture*. In the widest sense, it is employed to account for the diverse range of features and appearances that distinguish human societies - as well as their constituent members subcultures - from one another, which cannot be accounted for exclusively by biological variation.[55] When defined in opposition to the term *civilization* –a firm favourite of historians for most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries[56] -, it compels us to think about the characteristics of different societies without comparing them in terms of relative worth by subjectively describing one group of people as more developed, or advanced than another.[57] Such reasoning would deceptively imply that humanity is travelling in one specific direction, racing towards some sort of utopian finish line, with some runners being ahead, some behind, and others having missed the starting gun all together. Instead, *culture* allows for the reality that different societies have different trajectories as a result of their unique internal dynamics – being neither intrinsically better or weaker.

For the time-being, let us turn to Greg Woolf for his definition of Roman culture as "*the range of objects, beliefs and practices that were characteristic of people who considered themselves to be, and were widely acknowledged as, Roman.*"[58] Although such a definition appears rather circular, this exactly the point: Culture is always a matter of perception, both by those who appropriate it for themselves, as well as by those who do not. This sometimes results in confusing situations, with one group of people perceiving another group to be a culture, while the latter don't necessarily share that view. This is the problem with *ethnography*, with endonyms and exonyms often reflecting a very different perception of the same cultural reality.[59] *Acculturation* takes place when such cultures meet. Even when this rendezvous is competitive or forceful by nature, the mere knowledge of the other subtly changes the internal dynamics of each culture, slightly altering each other's features and appearance. When elements of culture are emanated and received between cultures by choice – be it consciously, reluctantly or enthusiastically – there is the potential for the formation of hybrid cultures.

What then do we mean when speaking about *identity*? I would like to define it as the way members of one culture view themselves as a contained group, which is invariably formulated in terms of opposition to *others*. Moreover, this formulation is often based on how these outsiders are thought to perceive them. From such interplay complex systems of cultural self-awareness are developed. Rather than forming neat immutable blocks of culture, these systems are relatively open to new beliefs, new practices, even new members. As long as a culture offers a stable core of traits, its members will identify themselves as belonging to it. These systems and the corresponding cultural labels form what we may call *identities*. They exist apart from *culture*, because while *identity* can remain fixed, the *culture* to which it refers can change. Also, within one *culture*, let's say Roman culture, individuals perceived as belonging to it can label themselves with multiple *identities*, allowing them to put together what Woolf alludes to as being a *cultural package*.[60] When a culture is transformed to the point that its participants can no-longer recognize themselves in the labels that correspond to its core, *identity* will become non-functional, essentially either disappearing or being transferred to other people.

Within the specific branch of history which concerns itself with the formulation of cultural identities, *power* is habitually mentioned as a historical driving force. Rather than signifying power as the currency of the realm of politics, we may define *power* in a wider sense, as the authority and force which a hegemonic culture is perceived to have to impose its dominance over a certain geographical or social area, regardless of its actual

[55] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 11.

[56] Hingley, 'The 'legacy' of Rome', in: Webster and Cooper, 39.

[57] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 11. Webster, J., 'Ethnographic barbarity. Colonial discourse and 'Celtic warrior societies'' in: in: J. Webster and N. Cooper (eds.), Roman imperialism. Post-colonial perspectives (Leicester Archaeology Monographs 3) (Leicester 1996) 111-113.

[58] Woolf, *Becoming* Roman, 11.

[59] Amory, P., *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (Cambridge 1997), 17.

[60] Woolf, *Becoming Roman,* 11.

force, which is its political, diplomatic and military capability to impose this dominance in reality. Following from this, *empire* is used to describe the maximum extent to which a hegemonic culture is perceived or perceives itself to have power over other cultures, and by extension the geographical area which this maximum extent covers, the political institutions which are associated with it, as well as (in a historiographical sense) the period of time over which this power was felt to exist.[61]

Hegemony denotes the unbalanced relationship between two cultures which are involved in some form of *acculturation* in which the discourse of the dominant culture is either imposed on the other, or emulated by it, or a combination of both.[62] *Discourse* is central to our current discussion on Romanisation: Originally coined by Michel Foucault,[63] the term refers to the repository of knowledge,[64] language and symbols that forms the aforementioned core around which a culture coalesces, and in which it expresses itself, most recognizably in all statements of government, literature, architecture, art, music that is accepted as expressing shared values, giving rise to a dominant ideology.[65] Those expressions which are in line with the discursive ideology is what James Scott called *public transcripts*.[66] Concurrently, *resistance* is the active or passive counterforce by which a subjected culture in a hegemonic relationship continues to adhere to its own *discourse* and *identity*, or is perceiving itself to do so, denying or reverting change.[67] This either takes the form of open, forceful resistance, or privately and secretly, in the form of humour, dissimulation and satire. The expressions thereof fits in with what Scott has dubbed *hidden transcripts*.[68]

Creolizing the Roman Empire - Lucian's lexicon of culture

For our present discussion, there are three models which I feel will - when used in unison - prove instrumental in using the Nigrinus dialogue to further our understanding of cultural interaction within the space of the Roman Empire. Separately, they can be applied with varying levels of success to either the text or to the historical reality in which it was composed. While the theoretical models of Webster and Woolf are instrumental to understanding the Nigrinus dialogue and the ways in which it has been formed by the cultural forces that pervaded the Roman Empire, they were designed primarily with material culture in mind - to uncover patterns of meaning from anything from household objects and shrines to urbanisation and civil organisation.[69] When it comes to uncovering patterns of resistant adaptation when dealing with literary culture, their models can only be applied to a limited – although informative – extent. Concurrently, the more literary oriented approach to Roman culture as spearheaded by such scholars as Tim Whitmarsh and Simon Goldhill allows us to bridge the gap between a correct understanding of the material culture of the empire and deeper insight into the mental state of its consumers, focussing more on the development of a Roman *history of ideas*. Naturally, both strands of research are intimately linked, overlapping and complementing each other, creating a rather multidimensional picture of the Roman Empire. Therefore, I hope their combined application will afford us the proper set of tools to fully comprehend Lucian's work on both a literary and a historical level.

The work of Jane Webster is well equipped to translate the results of a textual analysis of the *Nigrinus dialogue*, and take them from the level of literary studies to the level of cultural history. Within the emerging school of new Romanisation studies, Webster has appropriated the term *Creolization* for her own theoretical framework to further advance Woolf's new approach "*of focusing on the capacity to find their own way of "becoming Roman" or not.*"[70] More commonly used in the fields of Caribbean and American archaeology, *creolization* is originally not so much a signifier of cultural developments, as it is used to indicate the merging of

[61] Mattingly, D.J., *Imperialism, power, and identity. Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton-Oxford 2011) 6-7.
[62] Webster , 'Introduction', 8. Mattingly, 'Introduction. Dialogues of power and experience in the Roman Empire', in: Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman imperialism*, 10-11.
[63] Mattingly, 'Introduction', 8.
[64] idem.
[65] Webster , 'Introduction', 8.
[66] Scott, James C., *Domination and the arts of resistance. Hidden transcripts* (New Haven-London 1990) 1-3.
[67] Mattingly, 'Introduction', 10. Webster , 'Introduction', 6.
[68] Scott, J.C., *Domination and the arts of resistance*, 4-5. Mattingly, 'Introduction', 13.
[69] Woolf, *Becoming* Roman, 16. Webster, J., 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', in: *American Journal of Archaeology* 105 (2001) 220-223.
[70] Webster, J., 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 209.

two languages into a blended dialect. In broader usage however, it has come to be used in the context of describing the processes of multicultural adjustment through which African-American and African-Caribbean societies were created and shaped by the interaction between Europeans, native Americans, and displaced Africans.[71] More so than arguably any exponent of the post-Romanization scholarly movement, she has sharply emphasized the formative role of personal contact and active choice, seeing basic one-on-one interaction on the grass-roots level of cultural contact as the starting point of investigation, the acute historical reality of the creation of actual *Roman culture*.[72] For her, the only way to make sense of more general, macrosocietal patterns of culture and acculturation is to first and foremost look not at those patterns themselves, but to delve into the material evidence - and literary sources – which allow insight into those concrete situations which witnessed the creation of these patterns.

Consequently, we should regard the result of creolization between the inhabitants of the Roman empire not as one general culture with several derivative provincial dialectic forms. Instead, the acute instances of contact at the lowest level, create situations in which out of several options to understand one another, a particular choice is made – one word over another, one literary reference over another, a certain way of making pottery, buying a certain article of pottery instead of another, what to eat for dinner today, what to wear to the festival tomorrow, how to treat a friend or a relative, how to pray, to which deity you should pray instead of another, to pay your taxes or not, to attack the local garrison, or to enlist there -. Let us imagine this process of seemingly inconsequential choices occurring time after time, leading to different reactions – offense, acceptance, praise - which in turn influence the choices of others. Now imagine these moments of interaction as they are repeated many times – like sparks between nerves inside the human brain - over larger areas of the villa's, the towns, the cities, the Roman roads between them, the province at large, and finally the empire as a whole. It then becomes apparent that what we call Roman culture is nothing more than an overwhelming collection of connections being made in a modestly coherent yet highly contingent manner, being unpredictable and fleeting in occurrence. Consequently, there is no single Roman culture - or even a hundred Roman cultures, for that matter. What we call Roman culture is the by-product of uncountable instances of meaningful contact between every individual subject of Roman power, shifting ever so slightly with each new instance in one direction or another, over the course of more than a thousand years. Only with the luxury of hindsight are we able to discern historical patterns which we use to make sense of their collective history.[73]

Crucial to Webster is that we recognize that creolization processes take place in the context of asymmetrical power relations,[74] typically found in colonial contexts.[75] Although these processes take their form in a multicultural setting which necessitates adjustment, and worked through active choice, the trajectory of these adjustments is by definition one of *resistant adaptation*. [76] Concretely, the process of creolization demands far more *adjusting* from the dominated that is required from the dominant. Creolized culture allows the less privileged participants of hegemonic power relations to communicate with their superiors and those among themselves who speak a different language[77] in their specific and rule-bound arena's of contact, while retaining as much of their own traditional way of life as was allowed, or expected.[78] The dominating and the dominated, while both familiar with the same hegemonic discourse, do not necessarily embrace the same ideal, resulting in the latter picking and choosing from the former's cultural lexicon in ways that are not necessarily intended, foreseen or recognized by either party. [79] In such hegemonic power relations, the

[71] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 217.

[72] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 209-218, 220, 223.

[73] Similar macro-historical themes are explored by Woolf. See: Woolf, G., 'Afterword. the local and the global in the Graeco-Roman east', in: Tim Whitmarsh (ed.), *Local knowledge and microidentities in the imperial Greek world* (Cambridge 2010) 189-194.

[74] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 218.

[75] Ibidem, 219.

[76] ibidem, 220.

[77] For example, we should keep in mind that among a large group of slaves or servants there would be many of diverse origins, tribes, cultures, etc..

[78] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 218.

[79] Ibidem, 220.

discourse taught does not have to correspond with the discourse that is learned. It is often a case of adaptation rather than adoption of new beliefs and practices.[80]

Within the sphere of the Roman empire, for these processes of *creolization,* there existed a substantial *lexicon of culture*,[81] offering ample opportunity to either connect with one-another in a way which was mutually intelligible to both and conforming to normative imperial society, or to disconnect from the established cultural koine and formulate divergent identities of resistance. In most cases of contact, it is not a question of the first or the latter trajectory, but the negotiation of a semantic scale between these two extreme positions. By manifold instances and repetitive patterns of interaction, this led to the development of what we now recognize as Romano-Celtic culture, to follow Webster's example. As Webster suggests:

> *"In the same way that European artifacts could be used by slaves – not because they aspired to become European but according to an underlying set of non-European rules – provincial artifacts in the Roman world may likewise appear Romanized, but can in certain contexts likewise operate according to a different , indigenous, set of underlying rules. As creole artifacts, they can negotiate with, resist, or adapt Roman styles to serve indigenous ends, and ultimately, they are part of the emergence of creole societies."*[82]

She stresses how it would be an error if we would interpret ambiguity in an artefact of intercultural contact as simply the result of incomplete acculturation or as the imperfect emulation of perfect models. Rather, she insists that it is precisely this ambiguity, this uneasy mix of ill-defined elements in a single representation, that tells a story about cultural reality in itself. Rather than pointing to the character of the artisan or consumer of such an article of culture as being rustic, confused or even schizophrenic, we should instead seriously recognize them as having a relatively unified, clear sense of purpose and identity. Through visual or literary representations of culture, they actively sought to underline and express their own perceptions of an evolving culture, be it at a conscious or a subconscious level. The resulting artefact of creole culture exemplifies the broadening range of influences that make up a person or group's lexicon of culture, creating new, enriched avenues of expression.[83]

I would argue that Lucian's *Nigrinus* is precisely such an artefact of creole culture. Lucian himself is very much what we might now call a creole, in more ways than one, stemming from a Hellenized Semitic background, communicating through Greek media while functioning in a world dominated by Rome.[84] Most importantly, he was certainly not unique. In fact, as the empire progresses into the second century C.E. into a stable Mediterranean context, we see an increased tendency to incorporate imperial subjects from various provincial backgrounds into an elite that defined itself as truly Roman[85], actually defining and guarding the essence of what they considered Roman, ranging from people like Lucian and the Gallic rhetorician Favorinus, to emperors such as the cosmopolitan Hadrian.[86]

In this sphere of multiculturalism, Webster makes an important point about Gallo-Roman culture that sets the tone for a more relativistic discussion on imperial culture as a whole:

> "*...To regard Romano-Celtic religion – or its visual expression – as Celtic religion expressed in non-Celtic ways is not simply an error; it is a failure to recognize the emergence not of a problem-free syncretism, but of a creole religion...*"[87]

Likewise, the Nigrinus dialogue is not the literary expression of a problem-free synthesis of Greek genres applied to Roman subjects by a Syrian, but should be recognized as the product and reproduction of an

[80] Idem.
[81] ibidem, 218.
[82] Ibidem, 219.
[83] Ibidem, 223.
[84] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 61.
[85] Woolf, *Becoming Roman.* 18.
[86] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74-75.
[87] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 219.

emergent creolized imperial culture. It offers insight into the complicated heritage, - the diffuse etymology of the elements that made up the enriched cultural lexicon at the disposal of imperial subjects, if you will – that shaped *Roman* culture in the second century. The increasingly cosmopolitan nature of what encompassed Roman culture makes it difficult to recognize the cultural origin of modes of thought, and of literary artefacts. Instead of trying to make neat distinctions between what is Roman, what is Greek, or what comes from elsewhere in Lucian's work, the idiosyncratic and seemingly ambiguous Nigrinus text illuminates exactly how radically integral this disjointed lineage was to the formation and ongoing development of imperial culture as a whole. Here it is negotiation, not emulation, that is the key to understanding it.[88]

Becoming Roman - Lucian as a producer of Roman culture

As discussed above, Webster considers *power* - or rather inequality - the driving force behind the ongoing cultural changes that make up the various experiences of the Roman Empire, and not some inherent superiority and allure of Roman civilization. Greg Woolf similarly expresses that the linkage between empire and culture is the key to understanding the processes usually termed Romanization. For him, one important feature of this linkage was the role played by Roman culture in bringing together the local elites of the empire into a unified ruling class."[89] An important part in the pacification of the provinces didn't actually take place through military action, but was accomplished through the enfranchisement of the newest members of the empire, giving provincial communities a stake in the rewarding business of empire-building. Although this did not always happen wholeheartedly, the many emperors who are not of unquestionable Italian descent illustrates the relative success of this inclusive tendency.[90] In Woolf's study on the origins of Roman culture in the province of Gaul, he posits that while the conquering Romans had a strong hand in recreating Gaul in Rome's image, the conquered Gauls themselves recreated Roman culture as a whole on their own terms. Similar to Webster, Woolf has tried to bring attention to the tendency in the debate on Romanisation to simplify the character of artefacts of Romanized culture by positioning them along a two-dimensional scale from primitive barbarism to proper *romanitas*, while similarly describing the significance of these artefacts for the culture in which they appear in terms of linear influences – being created either in a native provincial context or in which Roman models were emulated.[91]

Instead, Woolf imagines a Roman Empire where the military conquest made during the Republic was accompanied by a rapid introduction of Roman ideas, concepts, products, tastes and styles throughout the newly annexed provinces, which radically transformed regional material culture, engendering the gradual development of provincial variants of perceived Roman culture. Again, rather than these representing inferior approximations of *pure* Roman ideals, there variants were in themselves unique visions of Roman culture, and as provincials from Gaul, Britain, Hispania and Greece found new, locally meaningful ways of becoming Roman themselves, they recreated equally valid visions of Roman culture, which as a whole was transformed and diversified by their values and tastes.[92]

At the same time, these various processes of becoming Roman had the side-effect of establishing native identities, which were formulated in accordance with Roman categories of thought. In short, the Caesarean conquest of the many tribes living across the Alps and Pyrenees, locked by the river Rhine in the west, and their incorporation into Roman power relations and social structures resulted in those people coming to understand themselves to be Gauls, creating in their collective local knowledge the idea of Gallic culture. In a way, their traditional sense of self became influenced by stereotypes originating in Roman ethnography, and as they become to identify themselves as Romans, this stereotype is retroactively applied to signify a more traditional, tribal (i.e. non-urban) way of life. As with Webster, Woolf emphasises the active creativity displayed by some elements within provincial society to negotiate the various possibilities presented by this radical

[88] idem
[89] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 18.
[90] Ibidem, 241.
[91] Woolf, G., 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek: culture, identity and the civilizing process in the Roman east', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994) 117.
[92] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 138-139

restructuring of local society within the context of the empire. By adroitly positioning themselves to conform with Roman institutions of exploitation and control over the provinces, and the civic expectations that accompanied them, they could use these Roman structures to their advantage, extracting prestige, wealth and power from them.[93]

While these benefits could consist of outwardly, visual signs of change, such as the local adaptations of Roman material culture through fashion, food, consumer goods, architecture and forms of entertainment, equally important were the internalized attitudes which accompanied their use, as well as the spread of Roman models of economy, legalism and education.[94] One of the most transformative markers of the act of becoming Roman was of course the award of Roman citizenship, which placed a provincial's sense of self in a clear legal context in which he was recognized as being Roman in every way that counts, opening up an entire of range opportunities within Roman society from which those who are not enfranchised were barred from enjoying.[95] By this status, they are given a very tangible stake in the exploitation and control of the provinces, as well as a potentially powerful role in the affairs of the empire at large.[96]

However, it remains important to acknowledge that while Roman enfranchisement entailed such marvellous prospects, the individual alignment of identity with Roman values did not necessarily exclude the possibility of those new Romans bringing their traditional values and customs along with them. In their ambition to enjoy the fruits of the empire, they developed their own views on what being Roman actually meant, drawing from local traditions to provide purpose to new modes of life and the conspicuous expressions thereof through material culture. For example, as the politically prudent and economically successful echelons of the province of Gaul came to regard and present themselves as true Romans, we see the emergence of Gallo-Roman culture, which featured elements from new Mediterranean models as well as local media of traditional representation. As the formative period of the Caesarean and Augustan era segued into the second century, the provinces of Gaul and their inhabitants became powerful producers of imperial culture in their own right.[97]

By the time of Lucian, which in many represents the height of Roman peace and prosperity, while common Roman subjects where still largely divided by their respective traditions and distant lives, the imperial system of incorporation of provincial elites had resulted in the creation of a cultural continuum based on Roman power - and power sharing. It was supported by an empire-wide, influential league of men whose cultural differences were eroding while they defined Roman culture in their dealings with each other - sharing Roman identity while competing for ownership of Roman hegemonic discourse. It is true that within the *imperial geography of civilization*[98] the city of Rome occupied the true political, economic and social centre of the empire. Yet, it is the power of the very idea of Rome, as the focal point of cultural identity and loyalty of Roman subjects, which played an equally central role in the maintenance of the tangible empire, as a more symbolic heart of an empire of the imagination.[99] Arguably, it is this emotional attachment to the Roman ideal which bound the aristocrats of all provinces together - in a sense, taking Rome with them wherever they travelled.[100]

This mentality of moral culture in turn informed material culture, transforming the provinces into highly differentiated landscapes, rife with regional variation. Those regions which had been taken up in the imperial network showing higher levels of urbanisation, and the sophisticated lifestyle it became synonymous with. Simultaneously, these societies became separated from more rural areas where life continued to follow more closely to pre-existing ideals now associated with traditional culture - although these too were now

[93] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 139.
[94] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 139.
[95] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 82.
[96] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 239
[97] Idem.
[98] Idem.
[99] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 241.
[100] Idem.

marginalised in relation to the distant centre of Rome, becoming a periphery.[101] On the whole, while becoming Roman did entail aligning one's self to a Roman ideal, the provincial experience of empire provided a variety of possible ways to become Roman, with provincial residents not assimilating to an ideal type, but taking their respective place in the *complex of structured differences in which Roman power resided*.[102]

While the historically contingent dynamics in which Roman culture came into contact with those of the provinces showed significant internal variation throughout the development of the empire, Woolf acknowledges that the *sequence* of cultural change was strikingly similar across the Western provinces. Without resorting to a modified version of the more mono-directional argument of classic Romanisation, he merely concedes - as does Webster - that on the whole, provincial cultures in the west were artefacts of Roman imperial power.[103] Contrary to developments in the west, the impact of Roman culture on the Greek, eastern experience of empire is a markedly different story.[104] When speaking about the Romanization of the eastern half of the empire – or rather the comparative lack thereof – it becomes apparent that there are forces at work here that complicate our perception of acculturation in the Roman world. Cautiously, Woolf seeks to explains this difference in rate and degree of becoming Roman primarily in terms of Roman psychology and their appreciation of provincial culture: The special status which the Romans accorded Greek culture within their own conceptualization of *humanitas* resulted in an equally exclusive treatment of Greek subjects.[105] Throughout the history of Roman Greece, Greek culture proved more resilient to Roman influence because the Roman ruling class was consciously though reluctantly aware of their perceived cultural debt to the Greek East.

In haphazardly developing a moral perspective to accompany their military and political efforts to build an empire, Roman imperial discourse had come to include the notion that it was the duty of conquering Rome to spread *humanitas* to the ends of the earth.[106] In response to their surprisingly successful conquest of the Greek world, the Roman literary elite – which was largely coterminous with its ruling class – developed a special opinion of the Greeks which developed out of their own feelings of cultural inadequacy. Throughout the works of Juvenal and Tacitus, the Greeks are described as a once mighty people who have lost the very notion of civilization which they themselves exported to the Romans and others.[107] The Greeks of the Roman province are attributed characteristics such as being volatile, inept, insincere, arrogant, impudent and fickle, quick to flatter, sexually perverse, flowery in speech and overall lacking moral weight. From this perspective, it was easy to explain how these people, as they were prone to constant internal discord, were so easily overthrown by the just Romans, whose moral duty it was to bring order to such a chaotic world.[108]Because they had come to consider the very idea of civilization a Greek invention, this sense of duty was complicated as they conquered the Greeks themselves, reintroducing civilization to a proud culture in obvious decline. As Cicero advised his brother Quintus on how to conduct himself as governor of Asia, reflecting on how his people had come to hold sway over the Greek world:

> *"...Seeing as how we rule that very race of men in which not only is true humanitas found but from who it is believed to have spread to others, we are at the very least obliged to give them what they have given us..."*[109]

As Cicero's republic evolved into the cosmopolitan empire of the second century, this sense of obligation translated itself in a variety of ways: At one end of the spectrum, contemporary Greeks were held in contempt, as a people fallen from grace, superseded by a superior empire, deserving only to be kept in check. In this

[101] Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 242.
[102] Ibidem, 245.
[103] Ibidem, 245.
[104] Ibidem, 245.
[105] Woolf, Gaul, 245.
[106] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 119.
[107] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 199, 122.
[108] ibidem 121.
[109] Woolf, G., 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek: culture, identity and the civilizing process in the Roman East', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 10 (1994) 119. (Ad Quintum fratrem 1.1.27)

context, Woolf posits that Roman imperialism and their victory over the inventors of civilization had instilled a certain discourse in the hearts and minds of the Roman Empire's elite:

> *"...A belief that, in some sense, Rome had civilized the west was compatible with, and in some sense necessitated, the notion that Greeks were overly civilized, and that the Romans were balanced between barbarism and decadence..."*[110]

Throughout their long history of contact, the relationship which evolved between Rome and the Greek East was patently unique within the empire. While these power relations were very much underpinned by a political balance which undeniably weighed in favour of the Roman Empire, the cultural relationship that have made their mark on the literary sources has a very different story to tell. From the Republican era onward, the Roman ruling and literary class had reserved special treatment of their Hellenistic subjects, which was characterized by what could be described as a curious mix of fascination, reference, cultural insecurity and pity.[111] First of all, Rome's historical memory of Greek culture had largely been formed in times when power relations were to a degree reversed, during which time, republican Roman culture had at several stages acquired and adopted large portions of what it perceived to be Greek discourse,[112] informing Roman thoughts on *humanitas* and barbarianism, making an immutable impact on Roman tastes, values, beliefs and customs.[113] Among the elite, this led to the formulation of an overall Roman identity which incorporated many elements from Hellenism – to an extent, Roman high society had *become Greek,* while *staying Roman*.[114] With the rise of Roman at the expense of *Greek* independence, this not only left members of Greek culture in a predicament necessitating re-evaluation of their own worth, but also left Rome's high society to re-examine the significance of their own debt to Hellenism.

In turn, this mental debt to classical Greece afforded imperial Greeks a somewhat favourable position to become Roman on Greek terms, along lines that were dictated more by classical tradition, with the Hellenistic elite of the east and the language, cult and mythology through which they chose to define themselves proving singularly resilient to Roman influence.[115] While Roman political superiority necessitated reforms of the political organisation throughout the province of Achaea, on the whole provincial culture and the modes of expressing it proved highly resistant to change – contrary to the provinces of the west. While Roman influences in the areas of dining, domestic heating and decoration, as well as monumental architecture and governmental reforms did make some definite impact on the Greek cultural skyline,[116] classical traditions still dominated public and private life in the east. Especially in mainland Greece, the classical heritage sustained perceived Greek identity as something to be celebrated,[117] providing the Greek elite with a very conscious continuity with the past. Above all, Greek language and literary culture had bound together the Greek ruling elites and the citizenry through civic organisation in ways that were unprecedented in the west – apart from Rome.

Still, the incorporation of the Greek East and the concurrent loss of political freedom did necessitate a re-evaluation of Greek identity, and did in fact have the paradoxical result of actually creating a general feeling of 'being Greek'. By being forced into an asymmetrical yet durable power relation with Rome, the formerly free Greek states became increasingly aware of their common history and perceived cultural unity.[118] The Romans had brought a singular political order after centuries of infighting between the cities of the Greek peninsula, quite rapidly replacing this agonistic environment with a system based on direct and equal subjugation to

[110] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 121.
[111] ibidem, 120.
[112] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74.
[113] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 119.
[114] Whitmarsh, T., 'Think local', in: Tim Whitmarsh (ed.), *Local knowledge and microidentities in the imperial Greek world*, 8
[115] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 245, 248. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74.
[116] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 117, 123.
[117] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 117,130. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74.
[118] Elsner, 'Pausanias', *Past and Present* no. 135 (1992) 19.

Rome. In doing so, Roman rule unwittingly created the basis for sentiments of pan-Hellenism. In the first century of our era, these sentiments would congeal into political reality, instigated by the Roman emperor himself. Hadrian, the avid globe-trotter and renowned Philhellenist, translated his special liking of Greek history and heritage into the creation of the Panhellenion, a regional political league within the structure of the empire allowing those Eastern cities which presented themselves as having a proper classical pedigree to garner imperial favour, privileges and limited autonomy. Although its creation was certainly motivated to soothe Hadrian's antiquarian tastes, it shows that within the hegemonic power relation that existed between Rome and the Greek East, the legacy of Hellenism served as a potential and real counterbalance, with Roman *hard imperial power* somewhat softened by the unique position Greek culture held in Roman hegemonic discourse. The efforts of various eastern cities to be admitted into the Panhellenion, with communities vying with each other to be sufficiently Greek to be eligible for imperial sponsorship, are an interesting case in point: Here is a Roman emperor who has invested himself in the adoption of all the hallmarks of what is recognized as Greek culture, being asked as an authority on culture, being perceived as being in a position to mediate and judge the level of Greekness of far-flung communities who consciously try to present themselves as such to gain local power within the hegemonic structure of a Roman empire. Clearly, as a historiographical model, *Romanization* fails to account for the complexities of cultural affiliation in the Roman Empire. As Woolf himself states:

> *"...The experience of the east illustrates the drawbacks of viewing Roman culture as essentially a side effect of Roman power. Greek remained, after all, the language of power in the East, and Roman culture in the West cannot be understood without some explanation being offered for the success of Latin over other languages and Roman over other cultures..."*[119]

Clearly, political hegemony did not necessarily equal cultural hegemony, and military subjugation did not necessarily result in slavish adoption of superior Roman civilization. In fact, Roman conquest of the Greek East emboldened Greek culture, even resulting in imperial sponsorship, and intensifying the process by which imperial culture reflected the cosmopolitan nature of its extensive sphere of influence. Evidently, an authentic connection to Greek culture offered a certain level of freedom and even power, and when adroitly employed could offer important opportunities within the empire. At the same time, the Roman Empire facilitated the articulation of Greek identity; arguably, the classical renaissance in Roman Achaea could be considered a Roman export, a brand of philhellenism typical to Roman Greece. Its renewed interest in what was perceived to be the heritage of a mighty and free Greece was a kind of '*invention of tradition*', partly arising from internal dynamics , yet heavily influenced by Roman intercession.

Mediating Greek knowledge in a hyperspace empire

Continuing this theme of dialectic formulation of identities and negotiation, Tim Whitmarsh has addressed the parallel between how we have now come to view the Roman Empire as a unifying, equalising force in the Mediterranean region while refocusing local dynamics throughout, and how in our time we experience the increased interconnectivity and heightened localism in the modern, post-colonial world: Mirroring the preoccupations of both Woolf and Webster, his ideas about *glocalisation* of the Graeco-Roman world highlight the way in which that which is local can only be formulated and conceived of within a concurrent context of unification.[120] Yet whereas both Woolf and Webster see local variation of culture as the product of power relations, Whitmarsh downplays the role of political domination and resistance. He relates his view of the empire to modern studies on the mediation of the local and the translocal in the context processes of *globalisation* - describing the empire as a *hyperspace*, as a sprawling collection of social sites where the local and the global interconnect - where people initiate negotiations between both spheres based on possibilities presented by both.

[119] Woolf, G., *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 19.

[120] Whitmarsh, T., 'Think local', in: Tim Whitmarsh (ed.), *Local knowledge and microidentities in the imperial Greek world*, 2.

While I am certainly not against prosaic descriptions of theory, the description which Whitmarsh borrows on what constitutes a hyperspace - "*where the bounded space of a local community is punctured by lines joining them to myriad others*."[121] - could do with some critical explication. While generally presented as a rather neutral utterance of the reciprocal nature of culture-building in both the modern and the ancient world, one has to wonder who is doing the *puncturing*. To my mind, this still implies an element of force in the development of said hyperspace. Furthermore, how should we envision these *lines*? What fixes them, and how do they produce the experience of being *joined*?

Envisioning this Roman hyperspace implies that imperial citizens are both the recipients of globalised culture as well as its transmitters. As with Woolf's *becoming Roman*, they are reproducing ideals of Roman culture, while being products of their own cultural matrix. In a sense, Roman hyperspace works through them, with Roman culture being transformed in the process. Whitmarsh offers his particular effort to properly describe this dual nature of cultural negotiation, this ambiguous process of recycling traditions in new hybrid forms. His effort is complementary to those of Woolf and Webster, as he intends to focus more on the intersection between local interests and imperial possibilities, and how at their crossroads all manners of avenues for negotiation and identifications spring to life. It is not so much about creatively resisting power, but about applying local knowledge to tackle imperial pursuits.

Then again, while a culture with global pretentions such as that of the Roman Empire has the capacity and means to express itself locally - in the form of enfranchisement,[122] political and legal reforms,[123] bilingual public decrees,[124] coinage[125] and epigraphy, as well as imperial cults tailored to fulfil local needs[126] -, local identity can in turn be produced, articulated and distributed through global mediums.[127] These mediums may sometimes be manipulated to reclaiming local tradition as a site of resistance against the top-down imposition of change. Whitmarsh cites the Greek writer Pausanias as having become the historiographical representative of the ways in which local knowledge could be formulated both within the context of imperial dominion, as well as against it.[128] However, having said that, Whitmarsh feels the need to resist the polarising tendency which has dominated 21st century scholarship on Graeco-Roman relationships in the empire. Instead of writing about the confrontation between centre and periphery, elite and sub-elite, imperialism and resistance, literature and material culture, he advocates a different, more relational approach to the formulation and articulation of identity. Paralleling the concerns of Woolf and Webster, Whitmarsh emphasises the need to acknowledge how local identities were in constant dialogue with the translocal, with neither being immutable or static.[129]

Like Woolf, Whitmarsh acknowledges the complications to the classic notion of Romanisation presented by the indistinct relationship between Hellenism and Romanism - which he agrees are so significantly convergent and interdependent that acculturation cannot be simply explained in mono-directional terms of homogenisation.[130] Illustratively, republican traditions of Roman literature hinged on a conscious manipulation of prestigious Hellenistic models, as a way of expressing a closer connection to notions of *humanitas* than other Italic states who themselves were undergoing varying degrees of Hellenisation.[131]

As the Greek East was drawn into the Roman sphere through military conquest and political domination, the mixed Roman appreciation of contemporary Greek culture resulted in a implicit division of labour between the two cultures, which Whitmarsh efficiently summarizes as the idea that Greeks were best suited *do culture* and apply themselves to literary pursuits while the Romans concern themselves primarily with

[121] Whitmarsh, 'Thinking local', 6.
[122] ibidem, 10
[123] ibidem 4.
[124] ibidem, 6.
[125] ibidem, 10.
[126] ibidem, 9.
[127] ibidem, 7
[128] ibidem, 1, 3.
[129] ibidem, 3.
[130] ibidem, 8
[131] ibidem, 9.

power and politics.[132] While the Second Sophistic is generally portrayed as a movement generated in opposition with Roman dominance, it actually follows this division prescribed by Roman imperial thought - and reveals a lot about the ways in which Greek writers of the imperial age used their Greekness as a way to mediate between the local and the translocal.[133] Mirroring the arguments of Woolf and Webster, Whitmarsh perceives the development of the Roman world as a hyperspatial empire, not as a reflex of Roman imperialism, but emerging from a variety of long and complex historical contingencies.[134]

The result of these processes is the formation of a Mediterranean system which is underwent varying, turbulent degrees of globalisation, underscoring the tangible extent of Rome's imperial power across *their sea*.[135] When looking at these globalising tendencies, we are able to recognize two antithetical movements, one centripetal ,- describing the unifying pull towards convergence, in which the imperial aristocracy increasingly experienced a common sense of identity and shared values[136] - and one centrifugal, which entails the drive towards regional differentiation which belied all provincial travails to become Roman.[137] Through mediation, these two forces did not necessarily engender tension and antagonism, but became manifested through the formulation of local and translocal identities, as products of an interconnected world. The Second Sophistic was one such manifestation, a semi-conscious effort of cultural mediation within the empire. In neat symmetry to modern experiences of *glocalisation*, the Roman unification of the Mediterranean fostered an increased sense of regional diversity.[138] Whitmarsh posits that both in modern as well as in ancient history:

> "*A phase of rapid globalisation will also see an intensification of consciousness of localism; and perhaps also an increased awareness of, even questioning of, the power dynamics between the local and non-local.*"[139]

The Greek intellectuals of the imperial era manipulated their self-image throughout their literature, creating complex and multi-layered systems of identification, inserting themselves in a variety of cultural contexts, ranging from Roman to Greek, even incorporating barbarian elements at times.[140]

In such a multi-cultural context, mediating between cultures from a local to a translocal level through the process of writing invariably involved a form of self-positioning.[141] Instead of transcending localism mentalities, Whitmarsh sees the literary aristocracy of the Roman East as *shuttling* between local mentalities, showcasing their ability to credibly implicate themselves in different cultures simultaneously - sometimes placing themselves within the Greek world of *paideia*, sometimes outside of it.[142]

These exercises in translocal shuttling are categorically linked to the fascination of imperial Greek writers with the concept of *exile*, as a way of transcending the confines of both local knowledge and imperial power.[143] Said already recognized a sense of exile as the default condition of the modern intellectual, as a by-product of his worldly cosmopolitan attitude.[144] Whitmarsh suggests the same about ancient intellectuals of the Graeco-Roman world, struggling with a sense of disjointedness and alienation within a vast and interlinked world of myriad opportunities and uncertainties. Through their literary exploits, they not only provided commentary to imperial society, but also found new ways to construct meaningful personal identities within this bewildering translocal world.[145] These constructed identities were in a sense guises, as they staged themselves to consciously connect with others in the empire, filtering their own experiences of empire and

[132] ibidem, 9.
[133] idem.
[134] idem.
[135] ibidem, 4
[136] ibidem, 10.
[137] ibidem, 4. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 82.
[138] Whitmarsh, 'Thinking local', 10
[139] ibidem, 2.
[140] ibidem, 10.
[141] ibidem, 13
[142] ibidem, 11-12. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 87.
[143] Whitmarsh, 'Thinking local', 13.
[144] idem, 13.
[145] ibidem, 10-13.

translating them for the benefit of a translocal audience.[146] This translation is invariably accompanied by the problem of *authenticity*;[147] the difficulty in preserving a credible sense of self while trying to implicate the self in a broader, translocal context. As such, translocal representations are always *inauthentic* to a certain degree,[148] because some idiosyncrasies are bound to be 'lost in translation'.

This delicate balancing act in literary representation is also implied in discussions on cultural negotiation of identity - and so thematically linked to both Woolf's views on the art of becoming Roman as well as the active process of selection which drives Webster's theories on creolization. The general framework which can be extracted from their separate focuses on Roman acculturation lend themselves to an in depth analysis of self-positioning in imperial Greek literature, and help to appreciate the facetted nature of the motifs and themes employed to achieve such literary representations of identity, and how this active selection of themes tells us more about the rich and diverse cultural universe which produced both these works of literature, as well as the authors themselves. In the next chapter, we will zoom in on the Nigrinus dialogue, and seek to at least partially illuminate the vivid culture tapestry it forms, and how its composition reflects Lucian's particular experience of the empire - himself shuttling between the tense reality of the present and the possible answers provided by its past heritage.[149]

[146] ibidem, 11.
[147] idem, 11.
[148] idem, 11.
[149] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 159.

II Seeing the *Nigrinus* dialogue in context

Now that we have assembled a provisional framework of theory, let us proceed by taking a thorough look at the dialogue itself. With the Nigrinus text, Lucian treats us to a succinct, contained story which is nonetheless brimming with classical references, familiar tropes and genre characteristics. Yet for all that is familiar about the text, its originality lies in the way he uses these conventional elements and forms in unconventional ways to jarring effect. On the whole, nothing defines the work of Lucian as does the combining of the theatrical and the rhetoric with the style of dialogue - genres that would have usually have been considered as discreet units by his contemporaries.[150] In his *Prometheus in Words*, Lucian grants us a rare opportunity to glimpse the way his audience reacted to his works - which were meant to be performed as well as read[151] -, and how he himself was conscious of those reactions:

> *"...Ptolemy the son of Lagus brought two novelties to Egypt—a completely black Bactrian camel and a man of two colours, half jet-black and half dazzlingly white, the colours equally divided. He assembled the Egyptians in the theatre, where he put on a lot of other shows for them and lastly this, the black camel and the half-white man, thinking to amaze them by the spectacle. The spectators however took fright at the camel and all but jumped up and ran away—and that though the camel was adorned all over with gold and draped in sea-purple and the bridle was set with gems... As for the man, most of them laughed, but some were disgusted as at a monstrosity. So when Ptolemy realised that he got no credit in their eyes and the Egyptians did not admire the novelty but set more store on beauty of form and line, he sent them away and esteemed them no longer as before... I am afraid that my work too is a camel in Egypt and people admire its bridle and its sea-purple, since even the combination of those two very fine creations, dialogue and comedy, is not enough for beauty of form if the blending lacks harmony and symmetry. The synthesis of two fine things can be a freak... Well then, can nothing beautiful come from the synthesis of two things of high quality, as the mixture of wine and honey is exceedingly pleasant? Yes, certainly. But I cannot maintain that this is the case with my two: I'm afraid that the beauty of each has been lost in the blending. Dialogue and comedy were not entirely friendly and compatible from the beginning. Dialogue used to sit at home by himself and indeed spend his time in the public walks with a few companions; Comedy gave herself to Dionysus and joined him in the theatre, ...Nevertheless I have dared to combine them as they are into a harmony, though they are not in the least docile and do not easily tolerate partnership...Whom could I steal from? Unless someone has invented such fish-horses and goat-stags independently without my knowing. But what could I do? I must abide by what I chose once and for all. To change one's plan is the work of Epimetheus, not Prometheus..."*[152]

It would seem our Lucian took professional pride in presenting his audience - attuned to harmony and unity of style - with something bizarre and two-faced, celebrating ambiguity over clarity.[153] Comfortingly, if we have trouble distinguishing between both sides of Lucian's seriocomic style from a scholarly standpoint, we are safe in the knowledge that this was indeed the author's intention, and not necessarily the result of our own shortcomings.[154]

In short, Lucian consciously endeavoured to create hybrid modes which employed the manner and matter of both contemplative literature as well as comical writing - trying to find new, more challenging harmonies. In what Branham called the *rhetoric of laughter* lies the key to better understand Lucian's reasons for this generic combination, namely to examine human nature - in a manner reminiscent of Plato - by running it through humorous, fictional situations, so that his audience is challenged to explore the absurdity of what would otherwise be taken for granted and accepted as normal.[155] Lucian's application of humour on serious subjects is a way of offering a satirical perspective on the social state of his world. In drawing a skewed perspective on things by using traditional phrasings and classical references, he is playing with the fossilized expectations of his learned audience in ways which were unprecedentedly novel, and probably quite shocking

[150] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 13.

[151] ibidem, 18.

[152] To one who said: "You're a Prometheus in words" 4-7, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes,* Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 14, London-Harvard 1913, 2012) 423, 425, 427.

[153] Bracht Branham, *Unruly* eloquence, 42-43.

[154] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 79.

[155] Bracht Branham, *Unruly* eloquence, 26-28. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 85

to them.[156]

In Nigrinus, Lucian again employs classical models and references, combining them in such a satirical way that they paint a rather unique picture. In each case he does so to toy with the expectations of his audience - sometimes he employs them to signal that there is more the general plot than meets the eye, other times he employs them to obscure. By examining them within their broader context, we can perhaps improve our reading of the dialogue as a whole. To this end, I will try to follow Lucian as he draws from the corpus of classical literature known to him and his audience, as well as from more contemporary pieces of literature - including Lucian's broader oeuvre.

Setting the stage - The narrative framing of the *Nigrinus* dialogue

Breaking down the text into separate units, we first are presented with a rather curious Sophistic prologue - a somewhat rare feature in Lucian's works:[157]

> *"Best wishes to Nigrinus from Lucian!... The proverb says "An owl to Athens!" meaning that it would be ridiculous for anyone to bring owls there, because they have plenty in the city. If I wanted to display my command of language, and were sending Nigrinus a book written for that purpose, I should be exposing myself to ridicule as a genuine importer of owls. But it is only my state of mind which I wish to reveal to you, how I feel now, and how deeply I have been moved by your discourse. So I may fairly be acquitted even of the charge contained in Thucydides' saying that ignorance makes men bold, but discourse cautious, for clearly this great hardihood of mine is not due to ignorance alone, but also to fondness for discourse! Good health to you!..."*[158]

It may seem somewhat curious that Lucian chose to first create the character of the philosopher Nigrinus, and then to address this character directly in his prologue to the dialogue - as if he were a living person, with Lucian presenting its composition as a humble expression of his admiration.[159] This literary device accomplishes two things. Firstly, in the matter of framing, this formal heading frames the coming dialogue within the form of a philosophical letter. Within both Greek and Roman literary conventions, this type of heading has been known to signal an upcoming discussion on how to conduct oneself with care, and how this stands in relation to how one conducts oneself in interpersonal relationship. While Lucian employs the convention in his habitual sarcastic style, the ensuing discussion will indeed centre on the tension between personal considerations and social performance.[160] Secondly, it adds a quality of credibility to the dialogue, as if the words in which it is written are an authentic version of a real philosopher's doctrine, instead of the fancy of a satirical composer. Moreover, it creates a literary space in which Lucian's own narration becomes dramatized to the point where the authenticity of his voice is obscured.[161] In doing so, Lucian creates a space wherein he can acquit himself from direct responsibility, and distancing oneself from the narrative and the effect that it might have. This was common practice in both Roman as well as Greek literary traditions.[162] Similarly, Lucian is merely freeing himself from the responsibility of being the producer of what is to follow - if only artificially and superficially. Foremost, it adjusts the audience's expectations and slightly orchestrates their reactions, asking them to suspend their initial judgement. Conversely, while denying to want to offer a display of his literary skill - which of course he most certainly *does*, seeing as it is his livelihood - Lucian is actually associating himself more closely with the dialogue's main character, Nigrinus' pupil - identifying himself with him.[163] Mirroring the pupils

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[156] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence,* 5-7.

[157] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 64

[158] Letter to Nigrinus 1, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*, Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 14, London-Harvard 1913, 2012), 99.

[159] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman empire*, 266.

[160] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 64

[161] idem.

[162] Alston, Richard, 'Conquest by text. Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt' in: Jane Webster and Nicholas J. Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism. Postcolonial perspectives. Proceedings of a symposium held at Leicester University in November 1994* (Leicester 1996) 102. Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 43-44.

[163] Although the original Greek transcript of the *Nigrinus* dialogue does not name its protagonists, both characters have been alternately been rendered as *Lucian* in various translations of the text into English, as well as in subsequent scholarly work. While from the Fowler and

words further on, he conveys his lack of confidence in expressing the effect Nigrinus' wisdom and eloquence has had on him in a worthy manner.[164] He says that he is well aware that he cannot dream to match the philosopher's style, cautioning his audience to consider this throughout - pre-empting the pupil's predicament as he cautions his friend to consider his ineptitude in correctly communicating Nigrinus' philosophy.[165] Furthermore, he subtly establishes a connection between the city of Athens and wisdom: It is as foolish to send owls - symbols of wisdom - to Athens as it is to send words of wisdom to Nigrinus.[166] This metaphor sets the stage for the further portrayal of both Nigrinus as well as this particular version of Athens.[167]

After this prologue, we are immediately transported to a scene where the two main characters strike up a conversation:

> *"...**A.** How very lordly and exalted you are since you came back! Really, you don't deign to notice us any more, you don't associate with us, and you don't join in our conversations: you have changed all of a sudden, and, in short, have a supercilious air. I should be glad to find out from you how it comes that you are so peculiar, and what is the cause of all this?*
>
> ***B.** Nothing but good fortune, my dear fellow.*
>
> ***A.** What do you mean?*
>
> ***B.** I have come back to you transformed by the wayside into a happy and a blissful man—in the language of the stage, "thrice blessed."*
>
> ***A.** Heracles! in so short a time?*
>
> ***B.** Yes, truly.*
>
> ***A.** But what is the rest of it? What is it that you are puffed up about? Let us enjoy something more than a mere hint: let us have a chance to get at the facts by hearing the whole story..."*[168]

This *in media res* opening sets the stage for a flashback to earlier events, indicating that we are going to join the two friends as one takes the other through his transformative journey - preferably step by step. On a more discursive level, this narrative structure is a variation on the familiar topos of the hero's journey, about leaving home on a Herculean quest for material treasure, or in this case spiritual enlightenment, about the hero being transformed by the experience as if it were a rite of passage, and upon coming home finds himself not being recognized by his peers.[169] In *Nigrinus*, we find our hero at the end of his travels, and it is through relating the details of his exploits that we - the audience - undertake the journey as well.

Even at this early stage we are given a clue to the nature of the sudden change that has befallen the man. Lucian's description of his main character - standing aloof and arrogant, neither speaking nor even looking at his friends - is particularly reminiscent of another seriocomic work of his, *The Sale of Creeds*. In this

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Fowler translation from 1905 onward it has been customary to render the pupil as the voice of Lucian - as he is the main narrator - there is equal, some would say greater merit to recognizing his guarded, level-headed companion as the voice which most closely captures the author's usual spirit. The heading of the letter does not give a clear answer either. Ultimately, I take the somewhat unorthodox position of declaring the issue largely irrelevant, at least for our present discussion: In any work of fiction, the different voices within represent different aspects of the writer, while also remaining crucially separate from him. I believe Lucian's work to be no different. For this reason, I have chosen to consistently maintain a distinction between the writer and his characters for the purpose of this essay, and have stuck to their rendering as 'A' and 'B', as in the Loeb edition. I believe that to equate the creator with his creation will only obscure the conscious fiction which Lucian is crafting, clouding our understanding of his composition. A similar decision was made by Robert M. Royalty, who solved the problem by distinguishing between the author Lucian and the character *Lykianos*. Compare: Royalty, R.M., *The streets of heaven. The ideology of wealth in the apocalypse of John* (Mercer University Press 1998) 120. Compare: Jones, C.P., *Culture and society in Lucian*, 84. Swain, *Hellenism and* empire, 316.

[164] Letter to Nigrinus 1. *Lucian*, Volume I, 99.

[165] The Wisdom of Nigrinus, 8-9. *Lucian*, Volume I, 109.

[166] Letter to Nigrinus 1, *Lucian*. Volume I, 99.

[167] The Wisdom of Nigrinus, 12, *Lucian*. Volume I, 111, 113, 115.

[168] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 1, *Lucian*. Volume I, 99, 101. Whitmarsh, T., *Greek literature and the Roman empire*, 266.

[169] Campbell, Joseph, *The hero with a thousand faces* (Princeton, 2008 - 1st edition 1949) 17, 23, 28-29.

sublime - almost pythonesque - piece, Lucian gives a satirical portrayal of the different philosophical schools, as their personifications are sold as slaves to the highest bidder. When a customer shows his interest in the scruffy-looking cynic - represented by the archetypal Diogenes[170] - he describes himself as follows:

> *"...**Buyer.** First of all, my friend, where are you from?*
> ***Cynic.** Everywhere.*
> ***Buyer.** What do you mean?*
> ***Cynic.** You see in me a citizen of the world.*
> ***Buyer.** Whom do you take for your pattern?*
> ***Cynic.** Heracles.*
> ***Buyer.** Then why don't you wear a lion's skin? For as to the cudgel, you are like him in that.*
> ***Cynic.** This short cloak is my lion-skin; and I am a soldier like him, fighting against pleasures, no conscript but a volunteer, purposing to make life clean.*
> ***Buyer.** A fine purpose! But what do you know best, and what is your business?*
> ***Cynic.** I am a liberator of men and a physician to their ills; in short I desire to be an interpreter of truth and free speech.*
> ***Buyer.** Very good, interpreter! But if I buy you, what course of training will you give me?*
> ***Cynic.** First, after taking you in charge, stripping you of your luxury and shackling you to want, I will put a short cloak on you... As for your money, in case you have any, if you follow my advice you will throw it into the sea forthwith … Put off modesty, decency and moderation… Frequent the most crowded place, and in those very places desire to be solitary and uncommunicative, greeting nor friend nor stranger; for to do so is abdication of the empire... That is the bliss we vouchsafe you.*
> ***Buyer.** Get out with you! The life you talk of is abominable and inhuman..."*[171]

While the dialogue marks out Nigrinus as a Platonist, in content and effect his philosophy seems to have stronger leanings towards Cynicism; to the attentive listener the possibility of the main character of *Nigrinus* having recently become a follower of some sort of cynic philosophy should have now occurred. This will only be confirmed later on.

While the main character conveys his feeling of being thrice-blessed - like Hercules, the aforementioned model of cynicism - by the effect of his meeting with Nigrinus, soon we are carefully alerted to the possibility that this might be something of a mixed blessing. To start with, the words of Nigrinus are framed as something wonderful, divine even. The disciple calls it a feast of ambrosia, comparing its effects superior to the song of the sirens - whose existence is called into question - and the lotuses both from the story of Odysseus.[172] Although such a description attributes Nigrinus with almost mythical powers of persuasion, immediately it should be apparent that neither the lure of the sirens or the lotuses should be seen as positive; both would have been familiar to Lucian's audience as negative images of magical entrancement and sensory seduction, leading the unwary astray. And so, from the very beginning, this alerts us to the fact that - although the disciple feels himself thrice-blessed by Fortune - we should beware of what is to follow. As the dialogue progresses, we are presented with more clues that Nigrinus' philosophy might not be supposed to be seen as something positive - the amount of which increases steadily but subtly.

Continuing, we are treated to a short summary of the object and effect of the speech made by Nigrinus, foreshadowing the actual treatise:

> *"...For he went on to praise philosophy and the freedom that it gives, and to ridicule the things that are popularly considered blessings—wealth and reputation, dominion and honour, yes and purple and gold—things accounted very desirable by most men, and till then by me also. I took it all in with eager, wide-open soul, and at the moment I couldn't imagine what had come over me; I was all confused. Then I felt hurt because he had criticised what was dearest to me—wealth and money and reputation,—and I all but cried over their downfall;... and then I thought*

[170] Compare: Sale of Creeds 7, *The works of Lucian of Samosata*, Vol. I, translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford 1905) 193n1.
[171] Philosophies for Sale 8-11, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*, Volume II, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 54, London-Harvard 1915, 2012) 465, 467, 469.
[172] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 3, *Lucian*, Volume I, 103.

them paltry and ridiculous, and was glad to be looking up, as it were, out of the murky atmosphere of my past life to a clear sky and a great light. In consequence, I actually forgot my eye and its ailment—would you believe it?—and by degrees grew sharper-sighted in my soul; which, all unawares, I had been carrying about in a purblind condition till then. I went on and on, and so got into the state with which you just reproached me: what he said has made me proud and exalted, and in a word, I take no more notice of trifles..."[173]

Here, it becomes evident that we are dealing with a cynic philosophy. The revelation that has so struck the narrator is one of disregard for worldly and transient matters such as power, wealth, fame and luxury, and how such things blind so many to higher and nobler thoughts and action in accord with natural life. These words of wisdom echo those of the cynic Demonax, whom Lucian himself describes as follows:

"...It is now fitting to tell of Demonax... that young men of good instincts who aspire to philosophy may not have to shape themselves by ancient precedents alone, but may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world and to copy that man, the best of all the philosophers whom I know about... even from his boyhood felt the stirring of an individual impulse toward the higher life and an inborn love for philosophy, so that he despised all that men count good, and, committing himself unreservedly to liberty and free-speech, was steadfast in leading a straight, sane, irreproachable life and in setting an example to all who saw and heard him by his good judgment and the honesty of his philosophy..."[174]

It is from his treasured teacher that Lucian has acquired his familiarity with cynicism, which crops up every now and again throughout his oeuvre. Yet, while Lucian is shown to be quite capable of turning out fine examples of authentic cynic discourse, we know from his writing that he himself might not have had a particularly lofty opinion of cynicism or any other philosophical school for that matter - at least not of philosophy as an end in itself. In his *Menippus*, his lead character explains how he was searching for someone who could tell him what is just and lawful if even the gods relish in vice and treachery - and so seeks the advice of many a wise man. Unfortunately, he is saddened to see that even philosophers have no clear view on the matter of virtue:

"...Since I was in a dilemma, I resolved to go to the men whom they call philosophers and put myself into their hands, begging them to deal with me as they would, and to show me a plain, solid path in life. That was what I had in mind when I went to them, but I was unconsciously struggling out of the smoke, as the proverb goes, right into the fire! For I found in the course of my investigation that among these men in particular the ignorance and the perplexity was greater than elsewhere, so that they speedily convinced me that the ordinary man's way of living is as good as gold. For instance, one of them would recommend me to take my pleasure always and to pursue that under all circumstances, because that was happiness; but another, on the contrary, would recommend me to toil and moil always and to subdue my body, going dirty and unkempt, irritating everybody and calling names; and to clinch his argument he was perpetually reciting those trite lines of Hesiod's about virtue, and talking of "sweat," and the "climb to the summit." Another would urge me to despise money and think it a matter of indifference whether one has it or not, while someone else, on the contrary, would demonstrate that even wealth was good... And the strangest thing was that when they expressed the most contradictory of opinions, each of them would produce very effective and plausible arguments, so that when the selfsame thing was called hot by one and cold by another, it was impossible for me to controvert either of them, though I knew right well that nothing could ever be hot and cold at the same time..."[175]

Just as his Menippus, Lucian shows a vast interest in all kinds of philosophy throughout his works - yet never without a certain humorous irreverence, reluctant to attach too much authority to a single idea. Likewise, in describing Demonax, Lucian praises the cynic satirist for his conscious choice not to limit his outlook on life:[176]

[173] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 4-5, *Lucian*, Volume I, 103, 105.

[174] Demonax 2-3, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*, Volume I, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 14, London-Harvard 1913, 2012), 143, 145.

[175] Menippus 4, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*, Volume IV, translated by A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library no. 162, London-Harvard 1925, 2012), 81.

[176] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 59.

> *"...He did not mark out for himself a single form of philosophy but combined many of them, and never would quite reveal which one he favoured. Probably he had most in common with Socrates, although he seemed to follow the man of Sinope in dress and in easy-going ways..."*[177]

In his tribute to Demonax, in which Lucian seems to speak from much closer to his heart than usual, he expresses how the most noble and admirable of philosophers keep an open mind, preferring to gather wisdom from all schools of thought. So it would appear that Lucian did not approve of philosophy as an end in itself, but only as medium through which to gain knowledge and to direct a man to the best way of living a virtuous life. In any case, we should refrain from seeing Lucian as an exclusively cynic satirist, as he evidently is quite capable of changing perspectives. However, his character Nigrinus does fit this cynic mould, seeming to be based in no small amount on Lucian's perception of Demonax:

> *"...Leading such a life, he wanted nothing for himself, but helped his friends in a reasonable way. Some of them, who were seemingly favoured by fortune, he reminded that they were elated over imaginary blessings of brief span. Others, who were bewailing poverty, fretting at exile or finding fault with old age or sickness, he laughingly consoled, saying that they failed to see that after a little they would have surcease of worries and would all soon find oblivion of their fortunes, good and bad, and lasting liberty... committing himself unreservedly to liberty and free-speech,* [he] *was steadfast in leading a straight, sane, irreproachable life and in setting an example to all who saw and heard him by his good judgment and the honesty of his philosophy"*[178]

The character of Nigrinus seems to have inherited Demonax' cynic bent through his author Lucian, as they share a common concern with leading a simple, uncomplicated life in accordance with principles which are directed at transcending trivial and earthly troubles of brief life and instead recognizing the *lasting liberty* gained in death, making even questions of ethics irrelevant. Both Demonax and Nigrinus are mostly concerned with intellectual and spiritual independence and the necessity of free speech that comes with it, and to always lead by example, teaching others about virtue by living irreproachably themselves. Of Nigrinus, the dialogue says:

> *"...*[H]*e maintained that one who intends to teach contempt for wealth should first of all show that he is himself above gain. Certainly he used to put these principles into practice consistently, not only giving instruction without recompense to all who desired it, but helping the needy and holding all manner of superfluity in contempt. So far was he from coveting the property of others that even when his own property was going to rack and ruin he did not concern himself about it. Although he had a farm not far from the city, he did not care to set foot on it for many years. More than this, he used to say that it was not his at all. His idea was, I take it, that we are not "owners" of any of these things by natural law, but that we take over the use of them for an indefinite period by custom and inheritance, and are considered their proprietors for a brief space; and when our allotted days of grace are past another takes them over and enjoys the title...He likewise sets no mean example for those who care to imitate him in his simple diet, his moderate physical exercises, his earnest face, his plain clothes and above all, his well-balanced understanding and his kindly ways..."*[179]

Throughout the dialogue, Nigrinus virtuous way of living and gentle demeanour is contrasted with the way the society in which he lives conducts itself. To make matters interesting, Lucian places this paragon of virtue in a rather dystopian setting - offering a very bleak perspective on the city of Rome:

> *"..."For my part," said he, "when I first came back from Greece, on getting into the neighbourhood of Rome I stopped and asked myself why I had come here, repeating the well-known words of Homer: 'Why left you, luckless man, the light of day'—Greece, to wit, and all that happiness and freedom—'and came to see' the hurly-burly here—informers, haughty greetings, dinners, flatterers, murders, legacy-hunting, feigned friendships? And what in the world do you intend to do, since you can neither go away nor do as the Romans do?" "After communing with myself in this vein and pulling myself out of bowshot as Zeus did Hector in Homer, from out the slaughter, blood,*

[177] Demonax 5, *Lucian*, Volume I, 145, 147.
[178] Demonax 3, 8, *Lucian*, Volume I, 145, 147.
[179] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 26, *Lucian*, Volume I, 125, 127.

and battle-din, I decided to be a stay-at-home in future. Choosing thereby a sort of life which seems to most people womanish and spiritless, I converse with Plato, Philosophy and Truth, and seating myself, as it were, high up in a theatre full of untold thousands, I look down on what takes place, which is of a quality sometimes to afford amusement and laughter, sometimes to prove a man's true steadfastness. "Indeed (if it is right to speak in praise of what is bad), don't suppose that there is any better school for virtue or any truer test of the soul than this city and the life here"..."[180]

Here is a man who is out of sync with his environment. Lucian portrays his philosopher as not only being caught between Homeric antiquity - primordial Greece - and life in imperial Rome, but also as someone who stands out from his surroundings because of his lifestyle. There is tension between the Roman way and Nigrinus' philosophical and typically Greek outlook. While he himself candidly scolds the Romans for their lack of virtue resulting from their ignorance, he is well-aware that they in turn would call him unmanly exactly because of his preoccupation with philosophy and truth. Here, Lucian tries to examine the opposition and cultural tension belying the union of imperial society. As much as Roman obsession with political power and their unabashed materialistic outlook doesn't sit well with existing Greek ideas about modesty and propriety, Greek ideals about virtue and notions of manhood were equally offensive to Roman sensibilities.[181] Lucian knows this, acknowledges both viewpoints, and uses the character of Nigrinus to explore this to some depth - encouraging his empire-wide audience to do the same.

While the disciple of Nigrinus is clearly speaking about the more present concerns of the contemporary Greek East of the Roman Empire, Lucian subtly slips in enough references to classical times to endow his depiction of Roman Athens with a level of cultural autonomy and an almost legendary quality.[182] As an exponent of the Second Sophistic and its literature, Lucian tries to trick his readership into subliminally accepting an idealized vision of an Athens that is no longer there. Concurrently, the dialogue casts Rome as a dystopian urban landscape that is described in terms of hard and current reality. The result is that in the mind of the reader the distance between Rome and Athens as Lucian wants us to perceive is greatened - not only in terms of geography and lifestyle, but also in time. By name-checking and referencing Plato,[183] Pericles,[184] Pythagorean mathematics,[185] Homer's Iliad and Odyssey,[186] our perception of Nigrinus and Athens shifts, as we are constantly distracted from the fact that this is Roman Athens. Lucian wants us to forget this, asking the audience to temporarily suspend their rational experience of time and space. Nigrinus' secluded home exists on a different plain than the city of Rome in which it stands. Once the main character - and the reader - is allowed entrance into his chamber, he is swept away from the hustle and bustle of contemporary Rome to be transported to this forgotten corner of the classical world, where it still exists, unaffected by more recent history. From this vantage-point, Lucian takes the chance to offer us a different, critical perspective on imperial society - looking out from within.[187]

As Lucian finishes his description of his ideal Athens, he reverses the process by having the main character spirited away from Athens like Homeric Hector only to descend into the utter moral depths of Rome here-and-now. Both times, there is a threshold that is crossed, a boundary created to consciously separate two halves of Lucian's in-text universe, between two distinctly different experiences of *humanitas*. It is only later that Nigrinus admonishes to strict a division between living in one world or the other, saying that true virtue can only be achieved by resisting the temptations of the sensual outside world:

[180] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 17-18, *Lucian*, Volume I, 117, 119.
[181] Woolf, G., 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 120-121.
[182] Bracht Branham makes a similar observation about the portrayal of Athens in Menippus' work. Compare: Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 15.
[183] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 18, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119
[184] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 7, *Lucian*, Volume I, 107
[185] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 2, *Lucian*, Volume I, 101.
[186] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 3, 17-19, 35, 37-38, *Lucian*, Volume I, 103, 117, 119, 135, 137, 139.
[187] Goldhill observes a similar artificial change in temporal perspective being inserted by Lucian into his *Anacharsis*. See: Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 89.

> *"...it is no small matter to make a stand against so many desires, so many sights and sounds that lay rival hands on a man and pull him in every direction. One must simply imitate Odysseus and sail past them; not, however, with his hands bound (for that would be cowardly) nor with his ears stopped with wax, but with ears open and body free, and in a spirit of genuine contempt..."*[188]

While acknowledging other people's perception of him, Nigrinus knowingly places himself in the position of *outsider*: He looks down on the affairs of men from on high - glancing over the shoulder of distant Fortune, as it where. This is important: Nigrinus has consciously chosen not to conform to the culture by which he is surrounded, instead resisting it as he holds on to ideals that he admits are antiquated and out of fashion - in the certainty that it is he who has made the superior choice. All the while, Lucian has his character express how integral this resistance is to his outlook on culture. To Nigrinus, it is the mark of a virtuous man to willingly resist the temptations of mainstream life, to remain faithful to ancient Greek ideals amidst the sins of the modern city.

Creeds for sale, philosophers for hire

As Lucian has his fictional philosopher teach, wisdom comes not just with knowledge of truth, but also with action, in accordance with it. In effect, this is exactly the criticism Nigrinus - and Lucian - directs at the dependant sophists; instead of showing contempt for transient wealth and fame, they revel in both, in disregard of spiritual truth.

> *"...But that many self-styled philosophers should act still more ridiculously than they—this is the surprising thing! How do you suppose I feel in spirit when I see one of them, especially if he be well on in years, among a crowd of toadies, at the heels of some Jack-in-office, in conference with the dispensers of his dinner-invitations? His dress only marks him out among the rest and makes him more conspicuous. What irritates me most is that they do not change their costume: certainly they are consistent play-actors in everything else. Take their conduct at dinners—to what ethical ideal are we to ascribe it? Do they not stuff themselves more vulgarly, get drunk more conspicuously, leave the table last of all, and expect to carry away more delicacies than anyone else?... All this, he thought, was ridiculous: and he made special mention of people who cultivate philosophy for hire and put virtue on sale over a counter, as it were: indeed, he called the lecture-rooms of these men factories and bazaars. For he maintained that one who intends to teach contempt for wealth should first of all show that he is himself above gain..."*[189]

Lucian's polemical treatment of flattering philosophers in Nigrinus - which he visits in his *Salaried Posts* as well - must be understood as part of a broader development. This negative attitude towards sophists who sell-out to their patrons, mouthing their employers' opinions and serving them rhetorical parlour tricks, was to remain a mainstay of Second Sophistic literature, and is shared by several of its exponents. Plutarch and Philostratus are both known to have expressed their criticism on learned and cultivated men who debase themselves and their art by dancing to the tune of the wealthy and powerful - the imperial ruling class and court - in an attempt to become rich and influential by association. [190] In his essay on *How to distinguish a flatterer from a friend*, Plutarch asserts the following:

> *"...Now if Truth is a thing divine, and, as Plato puts it, the origin "of all good for gods and all good for men," then the flatterer is in all likelihood an enemy to the gods and particularly to the Pythian god. For the flatterer always takes a position over against the maxim "Know thyself," by creating in every man deception towards himself and ignorance both of himself and of the good and evil that concerns himself; the good he renders defective and incomplete, and the evil wholly impossible to amend... we observe that flattery does not attend upon poor, obscure, or unimportant persons, but makes itself a stumbling-block and a pestilence in great houses and great affairs, and oftentimes overturns kingdoms and principalities. Wherefore it is no small task, nor a matter requiring*

[188] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 19, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119.
[189] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 24-25, *Lucian*, Volume I, 125.
[190] Flinterman, Jaap-Jan, 'Sophists and emperors. A reconnaissance of sophistic attitudes', in: Barbara E. Borg (ed.), *Paideia. The world of the Second Sophistic* (Berlin-New York 2004) 363.

but slight foresight, to subject it to examination, so that, being thoroughly exposed, it may be prevented from injuring or discrediting friendship. Vermin depart from dying persons and forsake their bodies, as the blood, from which the vermin derive their sustenance, loses its vitality; and so flatterers are never so much as to be seen coming near where succulence and warmth are lacking, but where renown and power attend, there do they throng and thrive; but if a change come, they slink away quickly and are gone..."[191]

As such, Lucian is partaking in a literary theme which had its antecedents in Greek literature, with both him and Plutarch bridging an ideological gap between classical treatises on sincerity and falsehood and the context of imperial power relationships in which these Greek considerations find a new, pressing relevance.

Lucian comments further on the degrading effects of power relations and how new ways are invented to underscore the distance between a rich man and his sycophantic clients:

"...are not the rich ridiculous? They display their purple gowns and show their rings and betray an unbounded lack of taste. Would you believe it?—they make use of another man's voice in greeting people they meet, expecting them to be thankful for a glance and nothing more, while some, lordlier than the rest, even require obeisance to be made to them: not at long range, though, or in the Persian style. No, you must go up, bow your head, humbling your soul and showing its feelings by carrying yourself to match them, and kiss the man's breast or his hand, while those who are denied even this privilege envy and admire you! And the man stands for hours and lets himself be duped! At any rate there is one point in their inhumanity that I commend them for—they forbid us their lips!..."[192]

Again, Lucian comments on the detestable extremes of power relations between the rich and the poor. He explicitly classifies such debasing behaviour as not only un-Roman, but un-Greek: He relates it to the manner of the Persians - a people who have been characterized by both Romans and Greek as the most contemptible example of despotism and slavery, a byword for decadence and effeminacy.[193] Furthermore, he implicitly connects such levels of flattery to even worse acts of unmanliness, by jokingly inferring an image in which such actions between men come dangerously close to physical, sexual domination.

Interestingly enough, Lucian does not make an effort to widen the chasm between Roman and Greek culture. Instead, he directs his criticism at *our rich men*, thereby making the issue of culture secondary. It is fact the general behaviour between the elite and the non-elite and its social ramifications that is at issue. This is a matter that transcends ethnicity; it is about a loathsome trend that is relevant to the empire as a whole.

On the other end of the spectrum, Lucian's philosopher decries the sycophantic behaviour of the *toadies*, the clients who to their own chagrin jostle for the attention and favour of their patrons:

"...Far more ridiculous, however, than the rich are those who visit them and pay them court. They get up at midnight, run all about the city, let servants bolt the doors in their faces and suffer themselves to be called dogs, toadies and similar names. By way of reward for this galling round of visits they get the much-talked-of dinner, a vulgar thing, the source of many evils. How much they eat there, how much they drink that they do not want, and how much they say that should not have been said! At last they go away either finding fault or nursing a grievance, either abusing the dinner or accusing the host of insolence and neglectfulness... "For my part I hold that the toadies are far worse than the men they toady to, and that they alone are to blame for the arrogance of the others. When they admire their possessions, praise their plate, crowd their doorways in the early morning and go up and speak to them as a slave speaks to his master, how can you expect the rich to feel?..."[194]

Here we find Lucian in his role as an engaged critic of society - having Nigrinus treat the ridiculous nature of his time with Socratic disdain. As we have seen at the start of the dialogue, the disciple summarizes Nigrinus' philosophy as dealing with the love of virtue and wisdom which confers freedom to those who enjoy it, as opposed to those who suffer the dominion of gold and purple, the familiar symbols of wealth and power which

[191] Moralia. How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend 1-2, *Plutarch*, Volume I, translated by Frank Cole Babbitt (Loeb Classical Library no. 197, London-Harvard 1927, 2012) 265, 267, 269.
[192] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 21, *Lucian*, Volume I, 121.
[193] Halsall, B., *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West*, 376-568 (Cambridge 2007) 46-47.
[194] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 22-23, *Lucian*, Volume I, 121, 123.

pervade Roman life, seducing many, including the disciple before his encounter with Nigrinus. Like a Socratic character, Nigrinus' draws attention to the idiocy that belies common practice, calling the pursuit of riches and status delusional, for all these things are transient, instead preaching more a spiritual and moral life, consisting of a search for wisdom, virtue and sobriety. In fact, the futility of spending a mortal life in the pursuit of material wealth is a recurrent theme throughout Lucian's work:

> *"...one has cause to admire philosophy when he beholds so much folly, and to despise the gifts of fortune when he sees on the stage of life a play of many roles, in which one man enters first as servant, then as master; another first as rich, then as poor; another now as beggar, now as nabob or king; another as So-and-so's friend, another as his enemy; another as an exile. And the strangest part of it all is that although Fortune attests that she makes light of human affairs and admits that there is no stability in them, and in spite of the fact that men see this demonstrated every day, they still yearn for wealth and power, and go about every one of them full of unrealised hopes..."*[195]

Let us compare these lines to one of Lucian's other works, *Menippus*, in which he has the cynic satirist - whom has influenced his work - descend to Hades on a quest to discover the best way to live a good and virtuous life. There Menippus is faced with a curious scene:

> *"...So as I looked at them it seemed to me that human life is like a long pageant, and that all its trappings are supplied and distributed by Fortune, who arrays the participants in various costumes of many colours. Taking one person, it may be, she attires him royally, placing a tiara upon his head, giving him body-guards, and encircling his brow with the diadem; but upon another she puts the costume of a slave. Again, she makes up one person so that he is handsome, but causes another to be ugly and ridiculous. I suppose that the show must needs be diversified. And often, in the very middle of the pageant, she exchanges the costumes of several players; instead of allowing them to finish the pageant in the parts that had been assigned to them, she re-apparels them...* [W]*hen the time of the pageant is over, each gives back the properties and lays off the costume along with his body, becoming what he was before his birth, no different from his neighbour. Some, however, are so ungrateful that when Fortune appears to them and asks her trappings back, they are vexed and indignant, as if they were being robbed of their own property, instead of giving back what they had borrowed for a little time. I suppose you have often seen these stage-folk who act in tragedies...*[W]*hen at length the play comes to an end, each of them strips off his gold-bespangled robe, lays aside his mask, steps out of his buskins, and goes about in poverty and humility...That is what human affairs are like, it seemed to me as I looked..."*[196]

In this portion of *Menippus*, Lucian explores the theme of transient life and the reversal of fates more deeply than in *Nigrinus*. There are some very direct parallelisms: The lives of men are simplified to an orchestrated performance lorded over by a distant personification of Fortune, with men being revealed as ultimately powerless over their lot in life, despite outward signs to the contrary: Wealth is lost as easily as it is gained, the powerful will be reduced to slavery, beauty will fade. Then again, the lowly and downtrodden may return highborn and mighty just as easily. To Lucian - in a cynical manner befitting his time - we are nothing but actors on a stage, clinging too tightly to roles we are accorded only temporarily.[197] Such fantasies of reversal of societal roles are again explored further on in Nigrinus, but this time not in the form of a mythological scene, but cast in a more realistic mode of social critique:

> *"...If by common consent they refrained but a short time from this voluntary servitude, don't you think that the tables would be turned, and that the rich would come to the doors of the poor and beg them not to leave their happiness unobserved and unattested and their beautiful tables and great houses unenjoyed and unused? It is not so much being rich that they like as being congratulated on it. The fact is, of course, that the man who lives in a fine house gets no good of it, nor of his ivory and gold either, unless someone admires it all. What men ought to*

[195] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 19-20, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119, 121.
[196] Menippus 16, *Lucian*, Volume IV, 99, 101.
[197] Compare: Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 24-25.

do, then, is to reduce and cheapen the rank of the rich in this way, erecting in the face of their wealth a breastwork of contempt. But as things are, they turn their heads with servility..."[198]

Again taking a look at other works of Lucian, we shouldn't be too ready to interpret his unfavourable portrayal of Rome in comparison to Athens as indicative of Lucian's private opinion. While *Nigrinus* directs considerable criticism to the Roman - or at least imperial - way of life, in *Menippus* the same author shows himself capable of portraying Athens in equally damning colours. After returning from the aforementioned trip to Hades, Menippus enquires about news from Athens:

*"**Menippus.** ...But tell me, how are things going on earth, and what are they doing in the city* [of Athens]*?*

***Friend.** Nothing new; just what they did before—stealing, lying under oath, extorting usury, and weighing pennies.*

***Menippus.** Poor wretches! They do not know what decisions have been made of late in the lower world, and what ordinances have been enacted against the rich; by Cerberus, they cannot possibly evade them!..."*

Throughout the dialogue, Lucian lets his characters speak of the way in which man dislocates himself from truth and his fellow man by pursuing power and wealth. The rich man looses contact with his own faculties, relying on the directions of fawning retinue, while those who seek to meet his approval forego their own independence of thought and action.[199] The oft-mentioned gold and purper reduce men to mindless, empty shells, while temperance and philosophy fill them with real purpose and self-awareness.

Cause and effect - Comparing *Nigrinus* to Plato's *Phaedrus*

Aside from the main discourse that stands at the centre of the dialogue, an important part consists of the reaction it elicits from its main character, Nigrinus' pupil, and the dynamics between him and his worried friend. After giving his summary of Nigrinus' divine discourse, the two discuss the following about his experience:

*"**B.** ...I suppose I have had the same sort of experience with philosophy that the Hindus are said to have had with wine when they first tasted it. As they are by nature more hot-blooded than we, on taking such strong drink they became uproarious at once, and were crazed by the unwatered beverage twice as much as other people. There you have it! I am going about enraptured and drunk with the wine of his discourse.*

***A.** Why, that isn't drunkenness, it is sobriety and temperance!..."*[200]

Here, Lucian engages in referencing a theme with a particular resonance to the two well-known classical tropes. On the one hand, he is referring to the episode in Greek mythology where Dionysus introduces wine to the people of India, who in their intoxication enter a Bacchic state. The god is generally associated with inspired ecstasy and divine madness. On the other hand, we are reminded of Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which he discusses the different of madness and their separate origins and effects:

*" **Socrates.** ...but in reality the greatest of blessings come to us through madness, when it is sent as a gift of the gods. For the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona when they have been mad have conferred many splendid benefits upon Greece both in private and in public affairs, but few or none when they have been in their right minds... And it is worthwhile to adduce also the fact that those men of old who invented names thought that madness was neither shameful nor disgraceful; otherwise they would not have connected the very word mania with the noblest of arts, that which foretells the future, by calling it the manic art. No, they gave this name thinking that mania, when it comes by gift of the gods, is a noble thing... The ancients, then testify that in proportion as prophecy (mantike) is superior to augury, both in name and in fact, in the same proportion madness, which comes from god, is superior to sanity, which is of human origin... And a third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses. This takes hold upon a gentle and pure soul, arouses it and inspires it to songs*

[198] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 23, *Lucian*, Volume I, 123, 125.
[199] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 34, *Lucian*, Volume I, 133, 135.
[200] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 5-6, *Lucian*, Volume I, 105.

and other poetry... the poetry of the sane man vanishes into nothingness before that of the inspired madmen... Therefore let us not be afraid on that point, and let no one disturb and frighten us by saying that the reasonable friend should be preferred to him who is in a frenzy..."[201]

In his own way, Lucian is taking part in a debate on the nature of madness in relation to revelation that was already ancient and widely-known in his time. Throughout the rest of *Nigrinus*, Lucian maintains a certain tension between the concepts of wisdom and madness, shifting our appreciation of the teachings of Nigrinus to tip in favour of one or the other, performing a literary balancing act - which ultimately collapses in a very conscious fashion.[202] We will return to this theme later. For now, it is sufficient to note that there is disagreement between the pupil and his friend whether the words of the philosopher Nigrinus induce a state of wisdom or madness, and whether this state should be desired or not.

Continuing, the *amicus* presses on to hear the actual words of Nigrinus that have caused such excitement in his companion. Here as in other instances, the pupil's friend acts as a prompter[203], an interlocutor in the Platonic tradition[204], a character that both adds an alternative and critical voice to that of the main narrative, and as an observer with which the audience is meant to identify.[205] As the *amicus* urges his friend to reproduce Nigrinus' speech and propel the dialogue forward, the story actually digresses. The pupil's friend has to interrupt him four times before the man will stop acquitting himself of any blame for misrepresenting Nigrinus and his philosophy, and actually starts to speak of its content.[206] Each time, while the pupil promises to be to the point, the digressions become increasingly grand displays of composition, dabbling with notions of romance and distant love,[207] then segueing into a comparison with theatrical performance,[208] which the *amicus* recognizes as a *professional exordium* one would expect in a court of law.[209] These digressions are in themselves what they address; they are miniature performances contained within the dialogue, inserted not only to build up tension and expectations, but also to satirize the particular modes of performance. The topos of the absent lover is inserted into the relationship between a philosopher and his pupil, the failed performance of an actor is conferred onto the failed representation of a cynic doctrine, which in turn is projected as the topos of a lawyer fooling the court in thinking that any misrepresentation of his client should not cloud their judgement. Through his character, Lucian is playfully experimenting with well-known elements of classical literature and performance, simultaneously adopting and deconstructing them. With each time that the *amicus* reacts less patiently, the character is voicing the sentiments of the crowd - or at least as Lucian would have them react. The *amicus* seems to represent Lucian's own ennui with these stale modes of performance, all perfect targets for satire.[210]

At the same time, Lucian's audience - well-versed in the classics[211] - would have recognized this tedious manner of putting off the main discourse by inserting several evasive sentences as a mainstay of Platonic dialogues, successfully satirized by Lucian. His execution of this parody is particularly reminiscent of Plato's *Phaedrus*, where the eponymous character expresses some trepidation about delivering his speech, fearing that he will not be able to do justice to the original discourse by his hero-rhetorician Lysias:

*"**Socrates**.... I am so determined to hear you, that I will not leave you, even if you extend your walk to Megara, and, as Herodicus says, go to the wall and back again.*

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[201] Phaedrus 22-23, *Plato*, Volume I, translated by Harold North Fowler (Loeb Classical Library no. 36, London-Harvard 1914, 2012) 465, 467, 469.

[202] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 5-6, 37-38, *Lucian*, Volume I, 105, 107, 137, 139.

[203] Goldhill, S., *Who needs Greek?*, 70. Whitmarsh, T., 'Greek and Roman in Dialogue: The Pseudo-Lucianic Nero', in: *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 119 (1999) pp 142-60, 42.

[204] Goldhill, S., 'Introduction. Setting an agenda', in: Simon Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome*, 11.

[205] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 19.

[206] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 6-12, *Lucian*, Volume I, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113.

[207] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 7, *Lucian*, Volume I, 107.

[208] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 8-9, 11, *Lucian*, Volume I, 109, 111.

[209] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 10, *Lucian*, Volume I, 111.

[210] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 5, 6.

[211] Goldhill, S, *Who needs Greek?*, 74. Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 8.

> ***Phaedrus.*** *What are you saying, my dear Socrates? Do you suppose that I, who am a mere ordinary man, can tell from memory, in a way that is worthy of Lysias, what he, the cleverest writer of our day, composed at his leisure and took a long time for? Far from it; and yet I would rather have that ability than a good sum of money... Truly it is best for me to speak as I may; since it is clear that you will not let me go until I speak somehow or other.*
>
> ***Socrates.*** *You have a very correct idea about me.*
>
> ***Phaedrus.*** *Then this is what I will do. Really, Socrates, I have not at all learned the words by heart; but I will repeat the general sense of the whole, the points in which he said the lover was superior to the non-lover, giving them in summary, one after the other, beginning with the first.*
>
> ***Socrates.*** *Yes, my dear, when you have first shown me what you have in your left hand, under your cloak. For I suspect you have the actual discourse. And if that is the case, believe this of me, that I am very fond of you, but when Lysias is here I have not the slightest intention of lending you my ears to practise on. Come now, show it..."*[212]

This evasive banter goes on for quite a while, including an entire exposé on the origin of a tradition surrounding a local sanctuary, as the two slowly walk towards a shady spot by the river that Phaedrus deems appropriate for his speech. Lucian seems to have been familiar with this topos, and chose to pay homage to the great Athenian philosopher by satirizing him. The comic effect of this must have been quite effective.

On the matter of the frenzied effect of Nigrinus' words, Lucian decides to again reference *Phaedrus* at the end of *Nigrinus*, imitating the line given to Socrates after having heard Lysias' speech as delivered by Phaedrus:

> *"**Phaedrus.**...What do you think of the discourse, Socrates? Is it not wonderful, especially in diction?*
>
> ***Socrates.*** *More than that, it is miraculous, my friend; I am quite overcome by it. And this is due to you, Phaedrus, because as I looked at you, I saw that you were delighted by the speech as you read. So, thinking that you know more than I about such matters, I followed in your train and joined you in the divine frenzy..."*[213]

Whereas it becomes apparent that Plato's Socrates is only ridiculing his companion, Lucian decides to let his characters actually succumb to this ecstasy, being not merely affected by Nigrinus' discourse, but even afflicted by it. In the end, they speak of it as a skilfully administered poison that spreads through the body:

> *"...When he had said this and much more of the same sort, he ended his talk. Until then I had listened to him in awe, fearing that he would cease. When he stopped, I felt like the Phaeacians of old, for I stared at him a long time spellbound. Afterwards, in a great fit of confusion and giddiness, I dripped with sweat, I stumbled and stuck in the endeavour to speak, my voice failed, my tongue faltered, and finally I began to cry in embarrassment; for the effect he produced in me was not superficial or casual. My wound was deep and vital, and his words, shot with great accuracy, clove, if I may say so, my very soul in twain. For... my conception of the matter is that the soul of a well-endowed man resembles a very tender target...* [A] *good bowman like Nigrinus first of all scans the target closely for fear that it may be either very soft or too hard for his arrow—for of course there are impenetrable targets. When he is clear on this point, he dips his arrow, not in venom like those of the Scythians nor in vegetable poison like those of the Curetes, but in a sweet, gently-working drug, and then shoots with skill. The arrow... then sticks fast and gives off a quantity of the drug, which naturally spreads and completely pervades the soul. That is why people laugh and cry as they listen, as I did—of course the drug was quietly circulating in my soul. I could not help quoting him the well-known line: "Shoot thus, and bring, mayhap, a ray of hope!"*[2] *...*[N]*ot all who listen to*

[212] Phaedrus 1-3, *Plato*, Volume I, translated by Harold North Fowler (Loeb Classical Library no. 36, London-Harvard 1914, 2012) 415, 417, 419.
[213] Phaedrus 10, *Plato*, Volume I, 435.

philosophers go away enraptured and wounded, but only those who previously had in their nature some secret bond of kinship with philosophy..."[214]

Here too, Lucian is playing with ideas that originated in Plato's work - elaborating on them. Again in Phaedrus, Plato similarly employs the work of a physician as a metaphor for that of a rhetorician:

*"**Socrates.** The method of the art of healing is much the same as that of rhetoric.*

***Phaedrus.** How so?*

***Socrates.** In both cases you must analyse a nature, in one that of the body and in the other that of the soul, if you are to proceed in a scientific manner, not merely by practice and routine, to impart health and strength to the body by prescribing medicine and diet, or by proper discourses and training to give to the soul the desired belief and virtue..."*[215]

Lucian has his two friends discuss the impact of the words of Nigrinus on the soul by comparing it to physical impact. Only this time the skilful physician is turned into a keen-eyed marksman, with not healing being his trade and objective, but wounding. Here again, we are alerted to the possibility that we should interpret the wisdom of Nigrinus as something harmful rather than wholesome.

At the very end of the pupil's rather longwinded metaphor, his friend has suddenly undergone the same curious transformation he had recognized in the main character at the beginning of the dialogue. Since then, the friend has gone through a process of conversion in several stages. At first he is troubled by his companion's new attitude, and demands an explanation. Then, he shows his concern for his wellbeing. Little by little, he becomes more and more curious about the subject of Nigrinus' philosophy that has so enthralled his friend. Reasoning with him, the secondary character commends him for his enthusiasm, but urges him to give a coherent and timely account. When at last the primary character has finished reiterating Nigrinus' words, the second character admits to have undergone a similar spiritual transformation, a sort of conversion to the philosophy of Nigrinus. Climatically, as the second one - adopting much of the same crazed, inspired language - wonders at how to proceed now that both are at the mercy of this Bacchic state, the first one cryptically suggest that they should together seek the counsel of the one who has caused their current predicament:

*"...**A.** What a noble, marvellous,—yes, divine tale you have told, my dear fellow! I did not realise it, but you certainly were chock-full of your ambrosia and your lotus! The consequence is that as you talked I felt something like a change of heart, and now that you have stopped I am put out: to speak in your own style, I am wounded. And no wonder! for you know that people bitten by mad dogs not only go mad themselves, but if in their fury they treat others as the dogs treated them, the others take leave of their senses too. Something of the affection is transmitted with the bite; the disease multiplies, and there is a great run of madness.*

***B.** Then you admit your madness?*

***A.** Why, certainly; and more than that, I ask you to think out some course of treatment for us both.*

***B.** We must do as Telephus did, I suppose.*

***A.** What's your meaning now?*

***B.** Go to the man who inflicted the wound and beg him to heal us!"*[216]

[214] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 35, *Lucian*, Volume I, 135.
[215] Phaedrus 54, *Plato*, Volume I, 547, 549.
[216] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 38, *Lucian*, Volume I, 139.

The dialogue ends on another allusion to Homeric prose; Telephus, Greek king of the Mysians, was wounded by the hero Achilles in battle, and although he survived the wound would not heal. Telephus learned through the oracle at Delphi that he could only be healed by that which had wounded him. This only came to pass when Odysseus surmised that Telephus could only heal by scraping rust from Achilles' spear into the wound, as a homeopathic kind of sympathetic magic. Lucian likewise lets his two characters suggest that only he who has inflicted such an injury of the soul on them may be able to bring them relief. But as we should have come to expect of him, Lucian's choice of reference works on another level as well. In referring to the philosopher's teachings as a maddening disease transmitted through a dog's bite, consequently spreading among many men, Lucian is again giving us a final clue as the wisdom of Nigrinus is revealed to be an evil. Playing with the word for *dog* (the origin of the name *Cynic*), Lucian seems to recycle the cynic maxim of his inspirer Diogenes[217], who is reported as saying of himself that while *"other dogs bite their enemies, I bite my friends to save them."*[218] By this allusion, Lucian is again capitalizing on the ambiguous nature of cynic philosophy; a school of thought which is typified both by a love of virtuous life for the betterment of humanity as well as a somewhat anti-social method. As we have seen repeatedly, there remains a thin line between wisdom and madness, spiritual inspiration and human folly. Even in the end, Lucian leaves it to his audience - and to us - to judge the dialogue's meaning based of our own understanding, choosing not to provide a clear moral message.

In the Nigrinus dialogue, the traditional relationship between characters in a Socratic dialogue has been turned on its head; Instead of the philosopher asking the questions about the curious conduct of a man who claims to know his business to the point of confusion, in Nigrinus we have a man who is stead-fast in his belief in the teachings of Nigrinus, and his friend who takes a critical stand-point, only to culminate in a stage at which both of them have reached some madly confused agreement. In essence, Nigrinus is Lucian's playful exercise in composing Platonic dialogue for the Roman era, addressing modern concerns relevant to the empire using traditional tropes from the classical era of Greek culture.[219]

Giving precedence to Athens - Comparing Nigrinus to Plato's *Critias*

Let us return to an earlier point in the narrative: When the pupil finally commits to giving his so-called inferior rendition of Nigrinus' words, we are treated to a rather favourable picture of Greek culture:

> *"...The talk began with praise of Greece and of the men of Athens, because Philosophy and Poverty have ever been their foster-brothers, and they do not look with pleasure on any man, be he citizen or stranger, who strives to introduce luxury among them, but if ever anyone comes to them in that frame of mind, they gradually correct him and lend a hand in his schooling and convert him to the simple life... Well, he praised all this, and also the freedom there and the blamelessness of their mode of living, their quiet and leisure; and these advantages they certainly have in plenty. He declared, for instance, that a life like theirs is in harmony with philosophy and can keep the character pure; so that a serious man who has been taught to despise wealth and elects to live for what is intrinsically good will find Athens exactly suited to him..."*[220]

Nigrinus' praise of the Athenians for their natural predisposition to sobriety, temperance and philosophy echoes a rather ancient trope. Already in Plato's *Critias*, we find a similarly toned description of the ancient, mythical Athenians, as they wrested themselves from a fictional dominion of the over-proud and corrupted Atlanteans. - who Plato imagined as part of an extended allegory on the strength of moral character over military might, and the fate of those who allow themselves to slip into a state of decadence. About the creation of this fictional, antediluvian Athens, Plato says the following:

> *"...And of these two we must give the priority in our account to the state of Athens....* [I]*nasmuch as Hephaestus and Athena were of a like nature, being born of the same father, and agreeing, moreover, in their love of wisdom and of craftsmanship, they both took for their joint portion this land of ours as being naturally congenial and*

[217] Bracht Branham, *Unruly* eloquence, 56-57.
[218] Diogenes of Sinope, quoted by Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, iii. 13. 44.
[219] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 63. Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 152.
[220] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 12, 14, *Lucian*, Volume I, 113, 115

adapted for virtue and for wisdom, and therein they planted as native to the soil men of virtue and ordained to their mind the mode of government... [T]*hey regarded all they had as the common property of all..., and... were also men of taste and of native talent...their public dwellings and winter mess-rooms, and all the arrangements in the way of buildings which were required for the community life of themselves and the priests; but all was devoid of gold or silver, of which they made no use anywhere; on the contrary, they aimed at the mean between luxurious display and meanness, and built themselves tasteful houses...So it was that these men, being themselves of the character described and always justly administering in some such fashion both their own land and Hellas, were famous throughout all Europe and Asia both for their bodily beauty and for the perfection of their moral excellence, and were of all men then living the most renowned..."*[221]

The similarity in tone and general outlook is clear: The Athenians are naturally adapted to living a life of virtue and harmony, in accordance with philosophy, valuing temperance and sobriety above material wealth.[222] Against this idyllic picture of primordial Athens, Plato sets the mighty empire of Atlantis, which for all its natural resources, divine blessings, power and wealth succumbs to the complacency and corruption:

"...For many generations, so long as the inherited nature of the God remained strong in them, they were submissive to the laws and kindly disposed to their divine kindred. For the intents of their hearts were true and in all ways noble, and they showed gentleness joined with wisdom in dealing with the changes and chances of life and in their dealings one with another. Consequently they thought scorn of everything save virtue and lightly esteemed their rich possessions, bearing with ease the burden, as it were, of the vast volume of their gold and other goods; and thus their wealth did not make them drunk with pride so that they lost control of themselves and went to ruin; rather, in their soberness of mind they clearly saw that all these good things are increased by general amity combined with virtue... But when the portion of divinity within them was now becoming faint and weak through being ofttimes blended with a large measure of mortality, whereas the human temper was becoming dominant, then at length they lost their comeliness, through being unable to bear the burden of their possessions, and became ugly to look upon, in the eyes of him who has the gift of sight; for they had lost the fairest of their goods from the most precious of their parts; but in the eyes of those who have no gift of perceiving what is the truly happy life, it was then above all that they appeared to be superlatively fair and blessed, filled as they were with lawless ambition and power..."[223]

Against this segment we can again place the phrasing employed by Lucian in *Nigrinus*, as he contrasts his concept of virtuous life and its home in an idealized Athens with the city of Rome as a market of vice, as the natural abode for those who seek a hollow and debased existence:

"...But a man who loves wealth and is enthralled by gold and measures happiness by purple and power, who has not tasted liberty or tested free speech or contemplated truth, whose constant companions are flattery and servility; a man who has unreservedly committed his soul to pleasure and has resolved to serve none but her, fond of extravagant fare and fond of wine and women, full of trickery, deceit and falsehood; a man who likes to hear twanging, fluting and emasculated singing—"Such folk," said he, "should live in Rome..""[224]

And so the language with which Plato drew his allegoric tale of virtuous Athens and mighty corrupt Atlantis is transferred to a tale in which a conflict between Athens and Rome stands at its centre. While it might be going to far as to say Lucian consciously looked to *Critias* in composing this particular part, I think it is evident that the Samosatian is indeed consciously placing himself within the same tradition of classical Attic literature - intending to emulate Platonist style and reinvigorate the genre for his own age. Using Plato as a model for a cultured discussion on virtue and ethics, this part of the dialogue is a very deliberate exercise by Lucian to compose novel literature while showing off his skill in conforming to classical genres.

[221] Critias 109-112, *Plato*, Volume IX, translated by R.G. Bury (Loeb Classical Library no. 234, London-Harvard 1929, 2012) 267, 269, 271, 275, 277.
[222] Compare: Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman empire*, 8.
[223] Critias 120-122, *Plato*, Volume IX, 303, 305.
[224] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 15, *Lucian*, Volume I, 115, 117.

Syrian Orontes flowing into the Tiber - Comparing *Nigrinus* to Juvenal's *Third Satire*

Returning to *Nigrinus'* damning portrayal of Rome and its general urban culture, we do not only have the classics to turn to in order to find useful equivalents. In fact, there are several contemporaries of Lucian to which we can and should relate the *Nigrinus* dialogue. Some scholars have addressed the possibility that Lucian was partly inspired in his subject and phrasing by his possible acquaintance with Juvenal's *Third Satire* - even going so far as to seeing the dialogue as a direct reply to it.[225] I believe there is merit to such an interesting conclusion. As a whole, Juvenal's piece is characterized by a particularly aggressively voiced xenophobia from an urban, Roman standpoint. However, this standpoint is not straightforward, but is in itself an example of intricate self-positioning. Like Lucian, Juvenal chooses not to speak in his own voice, but puts his coarse satire in the mouth of an *amicus* named Umbricius, an indignant fellow whose very name reflects his *shady* or *ghostly* character. While spitting out his bile at how the city of the Romans has fallen into disrepute, we cannot shake the feeling that this disgruntled Roman has nothing to be proud of himself - only harbouring resentment and bitter jealousy, instead of the noble *romanitas* he longs for.[226] In his long complaint against the state of things, Umbricius directs his impotent anger at the influx of people from the Greek east and the ideas and customs that they have brought to the imperial capital:

> *"...I cannot stand a Greekified Rome. Yet how few of our dregs are Achaeans? The Syrian Orontes has for a long time now been polluting the Tiber, bringing with it its language and customs, its slanting strings along with pipers, its native tom-toms too, and the girls who are told to offer themselves for sale at the Circus. Off you go, if your taste is a foreign whore in her bright headdress. Ah, Quirinus, that supposed rustic of yours is putting on his chaussures grecques and wearing his médaillons grecs on his neck parfumé à la grecque. They come - this one leaving the heights of Sicyon, this other from Amydon, this one from Andros, that one from Samos, this one from Tralles or Alabanda - heading for the Esquiline and the hill named from the willow, to become the innards and the masters of our great houses. They have quicksilver wit, shameless presumption, words at the ready, more gushing than Isaeus. Say what you want him to be. In his own person he has brought anyone you like: school teacher, rhetorician, geometrician, painter, masseur, prophet, funambulist, physician, magician - your hungry Greekling has every talent. Tell him to go to heaven and he will. In short, it wasn't a Moroccan or a Sarmatian or a Thracian who sprouted wings, but a man born in the centre of Athens..."*[227]

Apparently, intercultural contact was not only putting tension on those now dominated by Rome, but also caused much anxiety for those who witnessed it from the *winning* side. In fact, Juvenal paints a picture that is not as much the polar opposite of Lucian's Nigrinus, but actually its negative image. Both times Rome is depicted as the capital of vice, a world market of wickedness; yet here it is not Roman culture that is at fault, but the Greeks and their kind that are turning the Romans away from their natural virtues, endangering their very future. How the conquerors are conquered, indeed.[228] As a group, the Greeks are described as pretentious know-it-alls, being bold in speech, lustful, insincere flatterers and liars:

> *"...They're the race that's cleverest at flattery. They can praise the utterance of a friend who's illiterate and the looks of a friend who's ugly. They can liken a weakling's scrawny neck to the muscles of Hercules when he's holding Antaeus far above the earth. They can admire a squeaky voice that sounds as bad as the cock's when he pecks his hen as he mates her... He's always ahead because, day or night, he can take his expression from someone else's face... Besides, nothing is sacred to him or safe from his crotch..."*[229]

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[225] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 80-81. Sherwin-White, A.N., *Racial prejudice in imperial Rome* (Cambridge 1967) 71-73. Royalty, R.M., *The streets of heaven: The ideology of wealth in the apocalypse of John* (Mercer University Press 1998) 120. Leoussi, A.S. and Grosby, S., *Nationality and nationalism.* Vol. II (2004) 92.

[226] Note on Satire III, *Juvenal and Persius, Collected satires*, translated by Susanna Morton Braund (Loeb Classical Library no. 91, Harvard 2004, 2012), 164-165.

[227] Satire III l. 60-80, *Juvenal and Persius, Collected satires*, 171,173.

[228] "*Graecia capta ferum uictorem cepit et artis*", in: Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman* empire, 11.

[229] Satire III l. 86-91, 104-106, 109, *Juvenal and Persius*, *Collected satires*, 173, 175.

Interestingly enough, we see how both Nigrinus and Umbricius comment on a figure who intends to play the role of a strong virile Hercules, but actually fails to live up to the part, appearing to the crowd as a shrill-voiced weakling instead:

> *"...Time and again when they have assumed the role of Agamemnon or Creon or even Heracles himself, costumed in cloth of gold, with fierce eyes and mouths wide agape, they speak in a voice that is small, thin, womanish, and far too poor for Hecuba or Polyxena..."*[230]

In the case of Juvenal, the matter of apt performance is touched upon to criticize the Greeks who will applaud someone who deserves none if it suits their needs, while Lucian - in Platonic mode - actually chose to address a very classical concern with correct performance and delivery of discourse. It would seem that tastes differ, and while Juvenal's character implies that Greeks lack judgement or feign praise, Lucian acknowledges the importance of fair and proper judgement. Whether it be true that Lucian meant to rebuke Juvenal directly or not, we are obviously witnessing a real culture clash - with all the preconceptions and misunderstandings one would expect.[231]

Similar to Lucian's philosopher, Juvenal's Umbricius addresses the hypocrisy behind which Greek philosophers can - and arguably will - hide:

> *"...And since I've started on the Greeks, leave off the gyms and listen to a crime of a greater cloak. The elderly Stoic who was raised on that riverbank where the feather from the Gorgon's nag landed—he killed his friend and pupil Barea by informing on him. There's no room for any Roman here in Rome. This is where some Protogenes or Diphilus or Hermarchus is king. He never shares a friend—it's his national defect—but monopolises him..."*[232]

With the example of the murdering Stoic, Juvenal is implying that we should ask ourselves a question: If even one who professes to aspire to moral perfection and the suspension of destructive emotions through rational thinking can still kill his own friend, then why should anyone trust a Greek? And these are the men who encroach upon Roman land, occupying it like usurping tyrants, leaving no room for true Romans. However, Lucian's character also shows his concern for how men who otherwise wear *a greater cloak* can stoop to such low levels unbefitting their professed wisdom:

> *"...That common men who unreservedly admit their want of culture should do such things might fairly be thought reasonable; but that many self-styled philosophers should act still more ridiculously than they—this is the surprising thing! How do you suppose I feel in spirit when I see one of them, especially if he be well on in years, among a crowd of toadies, at the heels of some Jack-in-office, in conference with the dispensers of his dinner-invitations? His dress only marks him out among the rest and makes him more conspicuous. What irritates me most is that they do not change their costume..."*[233]

In both cases, we are confronted with the idea that one should take heed that the appearance of wisdom will often disguise a degenerate soul. While it is evident that the difference lies in the cultural perspective of the respective authors, the similarity of language, setting and knowledge betrays that both works offer commentary on the same social reality, as both authors and their audience anxiously share the same world. Paradoxically, by berating each other's culture and social behaviour, they actually show how much they have in common.

We again get a sense of this reluctant communality when comparing Juvenal's satirical remarks about the expenditure which comes with the obsession with luxury which has Rome in its grip:

> *"...It's not easy anyway to climb the ladder when cramped personal resources block your talents, but at Rome the effort is harder still. Pathetic lodgings cost a lot, slaves' bellies cost a lot, a meagre supper costs a lot. You're*

[230] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 11, *Lucian*, Volume I, 111.
[231] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74-75.
[232] Satire III l. 114-122, *Juvenal and Persius,* Collected satires, 175-177.
[233] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 24, *Lucian*, Volume I, 125.

> *embarrassed to dine off earthenware plates, but you'd not call it disgusting if you were suddenly whisked off to a Marsian or Sabellan table, happy there with a rough, dark blue hood. In much of Italy, to tell the truth, no one puts on a toga unless he's dead... Here at Rome the smartness of our clothes is beyond our means. Here at Rome that little bit extra is sometimes borrowed from someone else's treasure chest. It's a universal failing: here at Rome we all live in pretentious poverty. Why say more? At Rome everything comes with a price tag..."*[234]

We encounter the same sort of social commentary in *Nigrinus*:

> *"...*[H]*e censured those who wear garlands for not knowing where they should go. "If it is the scent of their violets and roses that they like," he said, "they certainly ought to put their garlands under their noses, as close as may be to the intake of the breath, so as to inhale the greatest possible amount of pleasure." Another thing, he ridiculed the men who devote such a surprising degree of energy to dinners in the effort to secure variety in flavours and new effects in pastry. He said that these underwent a great deal of inconvenience through their devotion to a brief and temporary pleasure. Indeed, he pointed out that all their trouble was taken for the sake of four finger-breadths, the extent of the longest human throat. "Before eating," said he, "they get no good out of what they have bought, and after eating, the sense of fullness is no more agreeable because it derives from expensive food; it follows, then, that it is the pleasure of swallowing which has cost them so dear." And he said that it served them right for being uneducated and consequently unfamiliar with the truer pleasures, which are all dispensed by philosophy to those who elect a life of toil..."*[235]

Both the characters of Lucian and Juvenal agree that the realities of empire have created a ridiculous situation at its capital; with wealth becoming a desirable end in itself, leaving the poor masses to scramble for every form of luxury in misguided imitation of the Roman elite. Even Juvenal's character has to concede that even if the hungry newcomers are to blame for such despair, Roman citizens themselves are also a victim of their own behaviour:

> *"...Nowhere is the ditching of a client more casual. Besides, not to flatter ourselves, what duty or service is there left for a poor man here in Rome, even if he takes the trouble to put on his toga and race along in the dark, only to find the praetor hurrying his lictor and telling him to go full speed because the childless have been awake for hours, to prevent his colleague delivering the morning greeting to Albina or to Modia first? Here in Rome the son of freeborn parents escorts a rich man's slave..."*[236]

Here, Umbricius decries how the influx of ambitious immigrants has driven true Romans to beg to attend the whims of their wealthy compatriots, disrupting social cohesion and chances for traditional Romans to make an honest living. Amusingly, Lucian's Nigrinus can only agree with Juvenal's disgruntled Umbricius: The Romans have only themselves to blame for their lot:

> *"Far more ridiculous, however, than the rich are those who visit them and pay them court. They get up at midnight, run all about the city, let servants bolt the doors in their faces and suffer themselves to be called dogs, toadies and similar names. By way of reward for this galling round of visits they get the much-talked-of dinner, a vulgar thing, the source of many evils. How much they eat there, how much they drink that they do not want, and how much they say that should not have been said! At last they go away either finding fault or nursing a grievance, either abusing the dinner or accusing the host of insolence and neglectfulness. They fill the side-streets, puking and fighting at the doors of brothels, and most of them go to bed by daylight and give the doctors a reason for making their rounds... For my part I hold that the toadies are far worse than the men they toady to, and that they alone are to blame for the arrogance of the others..."*[237]

In all these cases, we are looking through different eyes at the same social reality. While Juvenal uses his *Third Satire* to create a delightfully crude vision of a disgruntled xenophobe, who decries the way in which the East

[234] Satire III l. 164-172, 180-184, *Juvenal and Persius, Collected satires*, 181.
[235] The Wisdom to Nigrinus 32-33, *Lucian*, Volume I, 131-133.
[236] Satire III l. 126-132, *Juvenal and Persius, Collected satires*, 177.
[237] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 22-23, *Lucian*, Volume I., 121, 123.

has pushed the Romans out of Rome, Lucian creates a character which praises Greeks as superior in their independence, naturally adept at disregarding the follies of wealth in their characteristic sobriety and temperance - whose discourse ultimately turns out to be more trouble than it's worth. As such, both works are critical of the moral bankruptcy which has infected the Roman city and its empire. Yet, their criticism is not one-dimensional: While Juvenal's character is not above blaming his countrymen for their own sorry state, Lucian's Nigrinus asks his followers - regardless of whether they be Greek or Roman - to actively resist temptation, to take care of their independence precisely because the trap into servitude is not easily evaded. In short, while both works stand as polemic criticisms of a foreign culture and try to fictionally secure a privileged position their own culture, they also consist of a fair dose of self-critique, acknowledging that every participant of imperial society has something at stake, and that regardless of colliding national characters, positive change requires a certain level of collective introspection.[238] In my mind, both the *Third Satire* as well as *Nigrinus* are literary examples of such introspection.

A single harmonious union - Comparing *Nigrinus* to Aristides' *Roman oration*

Yet, we can look beyond Juvenal's work for a contemporary context in which to place the *Nigrinus* dialogue. As mentioned earlier, we are also familiar with a range of very diverse literary reactions to imperial rule from a Greek perspective. One which has received a lot of academic attention of late, is the panegyric Aelius Aristides composed in honour of the city of Rome, its empire and its emperor on the occasion of his visit during the reign of Antoninus Pius.[239] Like Lucian, Aristides hailed from Asia Minor, and had been awarded Roman citizenship, was a student of Greek writing and thought, and as an orator travelled to Rome.[240] In his ode to the metropolis - which stands in stark contrast to *Nigrinus* vitriolic nature and Lucian's sharp tongue in general - Aristides breaks off his aubade to express his gratitude for having the honour of calling himself a Roman citizen.

> *"...I mean your magnificent citizenship with its grand conception, because there is nothing like it in the records of all mankind. Dividing into two groups all those in your empire - and with this word I have indicated the entire civilized world - you have everywhere appointed to your citizenship, or even to kinship with you, the better part of the world's talent, courage, and leadership, while the rest you recognized as a league under your hegemony. Neither sea nor intervening continent are bars to citizenship, nor are Asia and Europe divided in their treatment here. In your empire all paths are open to all. No one worthy of rule or trust remains an alien, but a civil community of the World has been established as a Free Republic under one, the best, ruler and teacher of order; and all come together as into a common civic center, in order to receive each man his due..."*[241]

Although it should be kept in mind that flurries of enthusiasm and hyperbolic clichés are an integral part of panegyrics as a genre, on the matter of identity Aristides makes a rather curious statement here. Conceptually, he finds himself capable to authentically divide the populous of the entire Roman Empire into two categories: Those who are citizens, and those who are not. He is quite clear as to the logic behind such a distinction - it is a distinction to be deserved through personal excellence and noble qualities which makes some naturally superior to their countrymen - yet it can be attained by all. To be Roman - to Aristides - is to be better, to be ambitious, loyal, and more equipped to hold power over others. Equally interesting, once citizenship has been awarded, there is nothing to further distinguish Roman citizens from different parts of the empire; they are all equal despite of their manifold backgrounds. Thus, Aristides describes an international league of the best and brightest under guidance of the Roman emperor, a league to which he himself so humbly belongs. By framing the awarding of citizenship as an extension of kinship, he consciously erases the importance of ethnic identity: No one is a foreigner who is worthy of trust.

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[238] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 81.

[239] Swain, S., *Hellenism and empire*, 274-280. Jones, 'Multiple identities', in: Borg (ed.), *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic*, 13-15.

[240] Swain, *Hellenism and* empire, 256-257.

[241] Translation of *Roman oration* 59-60, in: Oliver, James, H., 'The ruling power. A study of the Roman Empire in the second century after Christ through the Roman oration of Aelius Aristides', transactions of the *American Philosophical Society*, New series, Vol. 43, No. 4 (1953), 871-1003, 901.

On the subject of dominance and resistance, Aristides holds an equally positive, though somewhat rosy picture of imperial affairs:

> *"...*[Y]*ou sought its expansion as a worthy aim, and you have caused the word Roman to be the label, not of membership in a city, but of some common nationality, and this not just one among all, but one balancing all the rest. For the categories into which you now divide the world are not Hellenes and Barbarians,... The division which you substituted is one into Romans and non-Romans. To such a degree have you expanded the name of your city. Since these are the lines along which the distinction has been made, many in every city are fellow-citizens of yours no less than of their own kinsmen, though some of them have not yet seen this city. .... No envy sets foot in the empire, for you yourselves were the first to disown envy, when you placed all opportunities in view of all and offered those who were able a chance to be not governed more than they governed in turn. Nor does hatred either steal in from those who are not chosen. For since the constitution is a universal one and, as it were, of one state, naturally your governors rule not as over the property of others but as over their own. ... Thus the present regime naturally suits and serves both rich and poor. No other way of life is left. There has developed in your constitution a single harmonious, all-embracing union; and what formerly seemed to be impossible has come to pass in your time: <maintenance> of control over an empire, over a vast one at that, and at the same time firmness of rule <without> unkindness..."*[242]

Here Aristides plays with the idea of power and space: Rome is so successful at creating such a harmonious union because it is both a city-state - in the Greek sense of a confined polity - as well as a universal entity - a boundless power. Again, he erases both distance and distinction when he describes Roman provincial stewardship not as foreign, but as autonomous - by virtue of the high position of those who enjoy citizenship. He even erases his own Greekness, along with all other ethnicities, ceding everything to the Roman way - there is no life apart from becoming one sort of Roman, or staying behind with other *barbarians*. Significantly informing future Western scholarship, Aristides portrays the rise of Roman civilization as antiquity's equivalent of the *end of history*,[243] collapsing any sense of development or time, depicting a benevolent empire as an eternal condition in which every semblance of diversity is subsumed'.[244] This is where Aristides and Lucian in his *Nigrinus* dialogue both take an opposite approach to the experience of empire: Whereas Aristides experiments in trying to cancel out cultural and social differences throughout the empire - overemphasising union -, Lucian experiments in using the same literary conventions to tentatively heighten those same differences - overemphasising tension.

Furthermore, in his *Oration*, Aristides crafts an almost mythical depiction of the Roman Empire:

> *"...Some chronicler, speaking of Asia, asserted that one man ruled as much land as the sun passed, and his statement was not true because he placed all Africa and Europe outside the limits where the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. It has now however turned out to be true. Your possession is equal to what the sun can pass, and the sun passes over your land...* [N]*or do you reign within fixed boundaries, nor does another dictate to what point your control reaches; but the sea like a girdle lies extended, at once in the middle of the civilized world and of your hegemony. Around it lie the great continents greatly sloping, ever offering to you in full measure something of their own. Whatever the seasons make grow and whatever countries and rivers and lakes and arts of Hellenes and non-Hellenes produce are brought from every land and sea, so that if one would look at all these things, he must needs behold them either by visiting the entire civilized world or by coming to this city. For whatever is grown and made among each people cannot fail to be here at all times and in abundance. And here the merchant vessels come carrying these many products from all regions in every season and even at every equinox, so that the city appears a kind of common emporium of the world. Cargoes from India and, if you will, even from Arabia the Blest one can see in such numbers as to surmise that in those lands the trees will have been stripped bare and that the inhabitants of these lands, if they need anything, must come here and beg for a share of their own. Again one can see Babylonian garments and ornaments from the barbarian country beyond arriving in greater quantity and with more ease than if shippers from Naxos or from Cythnos, bearing something from those islands, had but to enter the port of Athens. Your farms are Egypt, Sicily and the civilized part of Africa. ... And just as Hesiod said about the*

[242] Translation of *Roman oration* 63-66, in: Oliver, James, H., 'The ruling power', 902.

[243] Fukuyama, F. 'The end of history?', in: *The National Interest* (1989).

[244] Webster, J., 'Ethnographic barbarity. Colonial discourse and 'Celtic warrior societies'' in: Webster and Cooper, 111-113.

ends of the Ocean, that there is a common channel where all waters have one source and destination, so there is a common channel to Rome and all meet here, trade, shipping, agriculture, metallurgy, all the arts and crafts that are or ever have been, all the things that are engendered or grow from the earth. And whatever one does not see here neither did nor does exist. And so it is not easy to decide which is greater, the superiority of this city in respect to the cities that now are or the superiority of this empire in respect to the empires that ever were..."[245]

Aristides clearly intends to create an image of the world being centred on Rome, as if everything that happens throughout the known world revolves around the imperial city. Again, he takes a stance opposite of Lucian's Nigrinus: In the microcosm presented in *Oration*, the empire and its many provinces are reduced to the position of *local* - as blissfully peripheral to Roman power and interests. In doing so, Aristides - himself a provincial who has become Roman - is perpetuating and reproducing a binary opposition central to Roman discourse on identity, marginalizing *native* (i.e. local) perspectives on empire. Conversely, Lucian is playfully challenging images such as this, experimenting with upturning such perspectives on power as Aristides so enthusiastically ascribes to. In *Nigrinus*, he creates a very different microcosm in which there is a contest between two centres, Rome and Athens, where power and civilization are not implicitly linked but rather two mutually exclusive properties. In the dialogue, Rome embodies power without civilization, ambition without spirit, while Athens is presented as the capital of civilization where Roman power is nullified.

Elsewhere, Aristides makes an equally brash statement when he perpetuates the thoroughly Roman moral perspective on their dominion over the Greek world: For all their so-called wisdom, the Greeks are not capable of ruling themselves, needing others to establish law and order:

"...For it might well be true if one were to say about the Hellenes as a whole what has already been said in the case of the Athenians, that they were good at resisting foreign rule and defeating the Persians and at expending their wealth in public service and enduring hardships, but were themselves still untrained to rule, and in the attempt they failed..."[246]

Whereas Aristides depiction of Roman rule and its ruling elite is highly positive, Lucian in turn has his philosopher ridicule a powerful Roman citizen's manifest inability to even rule himself on a personal level:

"...There is one practice, however, which he appeared to detest above all others, a wide-spread custom in the city and in the baths. It is the duty of certain servants, going in advance of their masters, to cry out and warn them to mind their footing when they are about to pass something high or low, thus reminding them, oddly enough, that they are walking! He was indignant, you see, that although they do not need the mouths or the hands of others in eating or the ears of others in hearing, they need the eyes of others to see their way in spite of the soundness of their own, and suffer themselves to be given directions fit only for unfortunates and blind men. "Why," said he, "this is actually done in public squares at midday, even to governors of cities!"..."[247]

Indeed, this is a far cry from the picture of accomplishment and graceful nobility with which Aristides wants to present us.

The point of this comparison is that neither perspective is historically valid nor invalid, and that neither literary construct can be understood as encapsulating either writer's true sentiments toward Roman power.[248] Rather, both present us with a different side of the same medallion: Both recognized the discursive possibilities of a world of such concurrent unification and conflict. On account of their own personalities and styles, Aristides seems more inclined to craft an enthusiastic representation of reality, while Lucian was more disposed to injecting that same reality with a dose of social criticism and wit. In composing their respective works, they chose to take their points of view to their extremes, to such limits that both touch the line between

[245] Translation of *Roman oration* 10-13,in: Oliver, James, H., 'The ruling power', 896-897.
[246] Translation of *Roman oration* 51, in: Oliver, James, H., 'The ruling power', 900.
[247] The Wisdom to Nigrinus 34, *Lucian*, Volume I, 133, 135.
[248] Jones, 'Multiple identities', 13-14, 21.

what would have credible to their audience. Also, the audience and situation of Aristides' oration would have been markedly different than Lucian's; not in the least on account of their very different genres and audience.

A golden collar - Comparing *Nigrinus* to Lucian's *Apology for 'On Salaried Posts'*

Until now, we have tried to tie in the ideas expressed by Lucian in his *Nigrinus* with a surrounding literary context, taking cues from both his own works as those of others. Obviously, the fictional, seriocomic nature of a text such as the Nigrinus dialogue limits us in gauging the author's own opinions on the matter. For us in the twenty-first century to try and correctly gauge what Lucian intended to be humorous or is to be taken seriously - or in what precise admixture - is no mean feat.[249] Although this remains a heuristic problem, we are fortunate enough to have another work by Lucian that puts his thoughts on flattery, servitude and philosophy in a far more personal, nearly autobiographic light. In his *Apology for 'The Dependant Scholar'*, an older, more seasoned Lucian reflects upon the choices he has made in life, feeling the need to defend his actions to one Sabinus, who scolds Lucian for receiving the emperors pay for his services, while all remember how he famously and repeatedly denounced such a degrading life of servility in the presence of '*gold and purple*' in his younger days:[250]

> *"...To think that anyone could write that and work up such a devastating indictment against that sort of life, then, when the die falls the other way up, completely forget it and himself of his own free will rush headlong into a slavery so manifest and conspicuous! How many Midases and Croesuses and whole Pactoluses have persuaded him to throw away his liberty, the object of his care and companion of his nurture since childhood? Already within sight of Aeacus himself, with one foot almost in the ferry-boat he lets himself be dragged and pulled along as though by a golden collar fastened round his throat![1] What bracelets and necklaces the idle rich must have! There is much inconsistency here between his present life and his essay... you gave a precise description in your essay of the slavishness of a life of that sort and added your condemnation of the thousand unpleasant things a man suffered and did once he fell into a rich man's power and put himself in chains, yet in extreme old age you chose such an ignoble service when you were almost over the threshold into death, and furthermore you all but plumed yourself on entering that service. At any rate the more distinguished a person everyone thinks you, the more ridiculous you will seem if your present life contradicts your essay..."*[251]

Apart from directly referencing *On Salaried Posts in Great Houses*, this representation of Sabinus' case clearly reflects Lucian's considerations in *Nigrinus*.[252] Lucian, feeling compelled to address the criticism lobbed at him, first questions whether he should plead guilty or offer some mitigating exordium - always one to reference the manner of the courts of law - he finally takes the philosopher's route by examining the categorical difference between his present life as part of the imperial establishment, and his own criticism of the paid sophist:

> *"...But realise this: there is a very great difference between entering a rich man's house as a hireling, where one is a slave and endures what my essay describes, and entering public service, where one administers affairs as well as possible and is paid by the Emperor for doing it... You are paid in both cases and are under a master's orders, but there is a world of difference. In the one case the slavery is obvious, and those who enter on these conditions are not much different from slaves, whether bought or bred at home, while those who handle public business and make themselves of service to states and whole provinces cannot rightly be criticised merely because they are paid... Otherwise you must post-haste abolish all offices of this kind: neither administrators of all the provinces nor governors of cities nor commanders of corps or whole armies will please since they are paid for their work. No, you must not, I fancy, overturn everything because of an isolated example, or lump all wage-earners together.*
> *In short I did not say that all wage-earners lived a mean and petty existence: no, it was those in private houses who endured slavery under the pretext of education that I pitied. My present situation, my friend, is altogether*

[249] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 79.
[250] ibidem, 69, 70.
[251] Apology for the "Salaried Posts in Great Houses" 1, 4, *The works of Lucian in eight volumes*, Volume VI, translated by K. Kilburn (Loeb Classical Library no. 430, London-Harvard 1959, 2012), 193, 197, 199.
[252] For an in-depth discussion on the social commentary provided by Lucian in 'Salaried Posts in Great Houses', see: C.P. Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 78-84.

different. My private standing is not reduced, and in public life I take a share and play my part in the mightiest of empires. If you consider the matter you will realise that my personal responsibility in this administration of Egypt is not the least important... my salary not from any private person, but from the emperor... For the future I have no small hopes, if what is likely comes about—the supervision of a province or some other imperial service..."[253]

And so we are confronted with a very different side to Lucian than the one we are exposed to through the character of Nigrinus. It shows the delicate balance that could be attained between individual autonomy and relating oneself to *Roman* power. Not only do *Nigrinus* and *Apology* both catch Lucian at a specific time in his life, they also show two facets of the same person, two ways of looking at a similar type of social behaviour - which we might call negotiation. In *Nigrinus,* Lucian invents a mock discourse that shows how a person can unwittingly become trapped in the *great imperial machine*[254] as one tries to gain proximity to power at the lower levels, instead becoming a free slave of an ignorant patron, losing individual autonomy and betraying oneself. Conversely, in *Apology*, Lucian clarifies his position, not by insisting that he had been mistaken earlier or is now acting hypocritical, but that to be gainfully employed without a loss of personal responsibility is no transgression of a philosophical life, and that to play a meaningful part in the grand scheme of the empire is no sin, but rather something to take pride in. This is identity negotiation at its most concrete. For Lucian, personal freedom is about authenticity, and power in itself is nothing to detest - rather the unabashed flattery to which learned men stoop to associate themselves with that power. While Lucian subscribes to the generally excepted pattern that in the empire Greeks should do culture while Romans do politics,[255] these works tell us that the two activities did meet each other at a rather specific junction - the imperial ruling class. Here, there was place for cultured Greeks to make a difference in the affairs of the world - what to him seemed be no small hope.

For our discussion, a comparison between these two perspectives embodied by the same individual is particularly enlightening. Evidently, the formulation of identity was neither a wholly cultural nor a political affair, but invariably took place where the two converge - where traditional ways of life are realigned to access newly formed or changing structures of power. Furthermore, negotiation of identity is not instigated by either *domination* or *resistance*, not authentically framed by *Romanisation* or *creolization*. If we are to believe Lucian, negotiation was a very personal business, with each individual participant having a lot at stake, as well as a lot to gain. One had to know how and when to pick a battle, so to speak. Acculturation in the Roman Empire was a hit and miss ordeal. It was not a matter of subscribing to either one ideal of culture or another, but a flexible game of mixing and matching - with varying levels of success depending on one's talents as well as chance encounters. Crafting an identity was - naturally - a combination of knowing how people will perceive you and knowing what possibilities are at your disposal to remain authentic as well as believable. For Lucian, this meant that he could be a Syrian who stood firmly in the classical tradition cultivated by the outspoken Greek pepaideumenoi, and be part of imperial society in a way that was not slavish, while still being able to function so well within its hierarchy so that he could work close to the centre of Roman power while still defining himself as being integral and distinct from Roman power. Clearly, Lucian's life is not just a multi-facetted experience of empire, but an almost fluid one.

Concluding thoughts

When looking at the eclectic nature of this chapter, it might look as though we can the interpret *Nigrinus* dialogue in so many different ways, selecting and accentuating different elements every time, and relate them to a wide array of surrounding literature - to the point where it becomes hard to make out a well-defined context into which we can neatly fit Lucian's short piece. I would argue that this is precisely the point. Its composition hinged on creating this stylistic junction of cultural influences. Both the writing and the writer were products of this enlarged and diffuse matrix in which so many traditions came together to engender new ideas - and so too was the audience which received it. This is exactly why the Nigrinus text has something to tell

[253] Apology for the "Salaried Posts in Great Houses" 11-12, *Lucian*, Volume VI, 205, 207, 209.
[254] Phrasing lifted from the 1905 translation. Compare: Apology for 'The Dependent Scholar' 12, *The works of Lucian of Samosata*, Vol. II, translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford 1905) 32.
[255] Whitmarsh, T., 'Think local', 9.

us about processes of acculturation in the Roman Empire. We already know that these processes where far from one-directional and that they didn't produce the same result every time or in every place. Only now are we starting to appreciate how broad the possibilities where, and how fluidly contexts and perspectives could be switched or even combined.[256] The Nigrinus dialogue doesn't have to be about any one thing; in fact, even one snippet can be read in a number of credible contexts, simultaneously. That is what made Lucian's work relevant to his age, and in turn relevant to our understanding of his era.

The *Nigrinus* dialogue has a lot going on: Novel and uneasy experiments in Platonic styles, treating serious matters through the application of humour, addressing the hypocrisy of certain members of society and the power relations which connect them while rebuking and mirroring other contemporary writers in their tone and concern. It is all there, and instead of these interpretations excluding one another, they create a very exciting and unusual harmony - just as Lucian says is his intention. In doing so, he is consciously drawing in so many different cultural strands of tradition and innovation - Greek as well as Roman - tying them together with the ease which only someone who himself stands at the crossroads of such a diversity can hope to accomplish.

With *Nigrinus*, Lucian has created a piece that succeeds at uniting the personal with broader societal developments, offering a uniquely forced perspective on two very different cultures to great effect, asking his audience to make up their own mind on matters of independence, morality and civilization. While setting up a literary and fictional confrontation between the world of the Romans and the world of the Greeks, he does so while consciously standing in both, as well as taking a privileged position outside of them[257] - as an engaged participant as well as a detached referee to this culture clash.[258] We as ancient historians are presented with a valuable opportunity by taking note of Lucian's careful and thoughtful self-positioning to learn a great deal about his world, as well as about our own science.

[256] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek*?, *71*.
[257] Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 22, 24.
[258] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 75.

III The implications of *Nigrinus* for post-Romanisation studies

The juxtaposing of the ideals and virtues put forward by Lucian's character Nigrinus, along with their counterparts in examples of vice, are part of a long literary legacy - originating in classical Greece, but long since shared by non-Greeks. Lucian, in his guise of a Greek rhetorician, succeeds in applying these time-honoured categories of thought to the concerns of a new age. By adapting them in challenging ways, playing with sincerity and comedy to great effect, he creates a complicated vision of imperial society. What we are left with is a rather diffuse and intricate picture of *identity politics* in the Roman Empire. By the time in which the *Nigrinus* was composed, while the literary contest between Roman and Greek ethnicity had reached a high point, the underlying cultural opposition had actually dissolved significantly. The imperial hierarchy - both in terms of political participation and social mobility - had become relatively open, successfully enfranchising the more ambitious members of provincial society, leading to the development of an elite ruling class consisting of a relatively broad reflection of an increasingly cosmopolitan empire.[259] On the one hand, this openness resulted in an intensified debate on proper *Romanitas* and a sometimes greater need for identification and self-definition. On the other hand, both from *Roman* Juvenal and *Greek* Lucian, we get the impression that the labels involved could be applied in varying degrees of self-referential irony and conscious ambiguity.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. Roman and Greek perspectives on imperial society, while constructed in a way that conveys antagonism, where ultimately not linked to ethnicity in any obvious sense, and could be employed to express rather universal sentiments of anxiety, estrangement or idealism. By this time, the distinction between the two is as crucial as it is artificial. In the following centuries, Roman identity and its various ways of being formulated would undergo ongoing development, evolving to a point where the cultural labels of Roman and Greek would almost eclipse each other, ultimately becoming subsumed by Christianity, leading to their affiliation with different religious perspectives as well as political affiliations, largely becoming devoid of its original ethnographical significance.[260]

As a consequence, we should be careful to read too much into the literary posturing of imperial authors on the basis of a modern understanding of ethnicity and cultural identity. At least, we should refrain from jumping to conclusions on the basis of a simplified, face-value reading of their work. Instead, we should recognize the actual significance of the categories of thought and identity explored by exponents of the Second Sophistic and their latinographic counterparts. They provided them with various strategies of self-positioning in relation to certain traditional models and composite ideals, emphasizing the importance of some virtues, appropriating them for one group of persons while contrasting them to the behaviour of others. By designating such a model as *Greek*, these ideals are specifically positioned outside of Roman power and all that it stands for, as a comment on imperial power relations. In the same way, by designating these often overlapping attributes of virtue as *Roman*, these ideals are placed outside of Greek influence on imperial society and culture, as a comment on cultural capital. In the most general sense, we can discern the contours of a contest of culture, with the ideal of proper civilization hanging in the balance.[261] That these apparent literary outbursts of *patriotism* turn out to be ironic and highly ambiguous upon closer inspection, teaches us that this contest, while taken very seriously in terms of performance and virtuosity, always possessed a distinctly agonistic quality. To all intents and purposes, it is a literary war game within a more or less united sphere of the Roman Empire, in which conflict is simulated, and sides are sometimes easily switched.

As for our understanding of Lucian; when perceived in this light, he and his work are revealed to be nor exclusively Greek, nor Roman. In effect, they exist and function in both contexts at once. While the literary and cultural tradition in which Lucian chose to operate was thoroughly grounded in classical Athens, his work is just as much based on his experience of the Roman Empire in all its modernity. Through it, he tried to appeal to the tastes of an audience that was likewise both orientated towards Roman life and the ideals and concerns which pervaded it, as well as being well-attuned to the contents and focus of Greece's cultural heritage. While some of his work emphasizes a conscious connection to a contained Greek fantasy world playfully based on

[259] Woolf, *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 245. Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 82.
[260] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 131. Woolf, *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 249.
[261] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74-75. Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 5.

antiquated literature, other pieces like the *Nigrinus* dialogue seek to bridge the gap between contemporary society and an idealized Greek past.[262] It is this act of creating an artificial connection between two worlds that is the source of much comedy, as well as a jumping-off point for serious discussions on morality, civilization and social order. In this respect, it offers us a similar experience of Roman history, where there is room for both the humorous irony which sometimes accompanies earnest self-positioning as well as an opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the gravity of intercultural contact for those involved in it.[263]

All satire put aside, the picture Lucian creates of Roman society is one of many absurdities, which left men who like Lucian felt a certain *kinship with philosophy*[264] to worry about the state of imperial affairs. Apart from all the comedy, the dialogue contains a sincere expression of alienation and uncertainty about the moral implications of living in a world where decadent worldliness, where flattery and empty ambition run rampant, where the wealthy yet morally bankrupt decide the fate of untold thousands, and where the gentle and humble are looked down upon as weak and feeble-minded.[265] As a Roman citizen of the East, Lucian could draw from a long tradition which dealt with those very issues. The moral decay that accompanies urban life was far from a foreign concept to classical Greek literature; now, the idealized answers to Athenian decadence formulated by men like Plato could be tentatively applied to a very different context. In *Nigrinus*, the classical vision of the ideal state is superimposed firmly upon Athens and the Greeks, while the stark Athenian reality against which it was originally formulated is now tentatively superimposed upon Rome and the Romans. To appreciate what a radically multicultural representation of imperial society this is, we need only to remind ourselves that this literary experiment is being performed by a native Syrian, whose affiliation to either Roman or Greek identity is not to be taken for granted.[266]

The way in which Lucian chooses to position his character of Nigrinus is equally complicated. Sharply at odds with his surroundings, Nigrinus is a man who does not belong. Arguably, in this capacity the character represents that part of Lucian which does not belong anywhere either.[267] It was a mainstay of Greek literature of the empire to explore the classical theme of exile. While historically a method for repression employed by the emperor, the idea of exile acquired a positive status for philosophers and free-thinking writers, actually strengthening their reputation.[268] In literary self-presentation, it embodied a sense of universal isolation lending a counter-civic status.[269] Like the fictional Nigrinus, real-life philosophers both Roman and Greek who presented themselves in an exilic state did so to underscore their independence from mainstream culture and their remoteness to imperial power. In terms of political identity, the theme of exile had always served to explore the human condition in relation to city life. While exile from the community of the *polis* represented a loss self and a veritable social death, the larger outside world represented a chance to take more a heightened philosophical view on the human condition, free from worldly distractions.[270] From the archetypical exile of Socrates, several strands of Greek philosophy, namely Stoicism and Cynicism, developed.[271] In his dialogues, Nigrinus is only one example of such an archetypal character fashioned by Lucian. True as it may be that *Nigrinus* does not feature any explicit mention of exile, the elected remoteness with which Lucian has imbued his rather anti-social philosopher creates the same kind of narrative. The fact that he places the exilic philosopher in the heart of metropolitan Rome is striking, as the opposition between civil worldliness and cosmic transcendentalism is all the more tense because of this reversal in spatial relation.[272] Moreover, Nigrinus has elected his exile from society as a test of his wisdom and virtue[273] - in keeping with the sophistic

[262] Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 101.
[263] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 107.
[264] The Wisdom to Nigrinus 37, *Lucian*, Volume I, 137.
[265] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 17-20, 34, *Lucian*, Volume I, 117, 119, 121, 133.
[266] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 81.
[267] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 178.
[268] ibidem, 135.
[269] ibidem, 136
[270] ibidem, 138.
[271] ibidem, 138-139.
[272] The Wisdom of Nigrinus, 17-18, *Lucian*, Volume I, 117, 119.
[273] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 18-19, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119.

assertion that exile breeds strength, character and health, while city life weakens, corrupts and sickens.[274] That these opposing themes are echoed throughout the dialogue is no surprise, then, with the eponymous philosopher looking down laughing at the trivial nature of imperial society from his splendid isolation in the midst of chaos, at one with the cosmos.[275] Here, in his private recreation of ancient Athens, though scorned by his fellow man, he enjoys the freedom to philosophise with moral integrity, out of reach of Roman power and social convention, resisting both as a matter of principle, choosing to live in search of philosophical truth.[276] The cosmopolitanism that accompanies exile is further enhanced by his travels to Greece, engendering wisdom.[277] Lucian creates two axes by which he distances his character from the world, one horizontally - by emphasizing the geographical and moral distance between a the centre of Rome and the periphery of Greece and Athens -, and the other vertically - from the moral depths of the social theatre which is Rome to Nigrinus' vaunted position alongside divine Fortune, looking down on the scene with amusement.[278] In both cases Lucian is engaging in familiar themes of metaphorical exile.[279] As Whitmarsh has noted in the case of the Hellenized Gaul Favorinus, so too Lucian is in the process of using the trope of exile to dramatically convey his own sense of alienation.[280] Like his character Nigrinus, Lucian has chosen a life of philosophy on the road, travelling throughout the empire, exploring a new fatherland and adopting its heritage, yet belonging nowhere and everywhere, a self-elected citizen of the cosmos. Perhaps more generally, it was typical for exponents of the movement of the Second Sophistic to use classical notions of exile and cosmopolitanism to express their own sense of cultural alienation and elected isolation in an artful manner. By constructing their literary identity as a representation of exile, they managed to attain a similar level of distance to society and independence from censorship by either political powers or common conventions. In this light, their active choice to narrate themselves as Greek becomes an extension of both their need to distance themselves from imperial society and their desire to engage with it in meaningful ways from a favourable position.[281]

In the way of studying history through literary analysis, Lucian's *Nigrinus* is an artful expression of what Whitmarsh identifies as the literary process of self-making that is so central to our understanding of Second Sophistic literature.[282] The ironic authority which the figure of Nigrinus exudes in Lucian's composition shows just how radically ambivalent imperial Greek literature could be, defying Bowersock's axiom that it could either comply to Roman power or resist it.[283] Throughout the dialogue, Lucian succeeds in underscoring his main narrative with a contradictory subtext, leaving several moments in which statements which are voiced in an enthusiastic or authoritative manner ring with subliminal warnings and irony. By consciously layering his work with such subtexts, the point of the narrative becomes obscured significantly, leaving his ancient audiences and modern scholars guessing his true intentions.[284] Ultimately, it is this guessing game itself that Lucian was probably aiming at - in keeping with his ludic style. In a sense, Lucian uses the space in between his narrative and the ultimate reception to constantly subvert expectations and conventions. Having styled himself as a Greek rhetorician, he gleefully complies with the accompanying expectation of showcasing his intimate knowledge of Platonic philosophy and Homeric prose, but continues to insert them in uncomfortably novel ways. By extension, he is creating equally novel ways of Greekness, playing with what was stereotypically understood to be Greek.[285] When trying to use the dialogue to understood "*How a Greek felt about Rome*",[286] we similarly encounter a number of problems. Because the social criticism against imperial society is framed in

[274] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 148
[275] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 18, 20, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119, 121. Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 139 ,145.
[276] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 18-19, *Lucian*, Volume I, 119. Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 145
[277] ibidem, 147.
[278] The Wisdom of Nigrinus 21 , *Lucian*, Volume I, 121.
[279] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 173.
[280] ibidem, 177.
[281] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74. Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 179-181.
[282] ibidem, 2.
[283] idem.
[284] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 1-8.
[285] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 89
[286] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 3.

a discussion with highly satirical overtones, Lucian creates a space for himself in which he can freely attack Rome without having to take responsibility, as he has distanced himself sufficiently from its voice.[287]

Because of this, the ensuing portrayals of Athens and Rome are to be understood as self-ironizing. Lucian consciously creates an artificial dichotomy by drawing from classical visions of the archetypal city and then separating the idyllic, utopian state which Plato envisioned in his dialogues from the worst of what urban life could entail, and placing both cities on either extreme end of this spectrum.[288] In this literary microcosm, Athens with its *paideia* is given its time-honoured role as educator of the world,[289] while Rome is cast into a dystopian shadow, which serves to bolster Greek persistence in testing their character and sharing their inborn virtue. In the midst of this Roman hell-hole, Lucian places a Greekling who has carved out a small abode where Athenian virtue can thrive, *a stronghold of Indifference*,[290] leaving some small hope that even this empire of vice and folly can be overturned by civilizing Rome with Greek wisdom and philosophy.[291] In effect, Lucian is portraying a very personal struggle: As a loyal Roman citizen engrossed in Hellenism, yet originating in neither world, what path am I to follow?[292] In response to the enshrined Roman discourse which equated Hellenism simultaneously with both civilization and luxurious decline,[293] his *Nigrinus* dialogue challenges to examine the fallacies belying such a decidedly Roman representation. In his personal re-invention of Greek cultural primacy, Lucian takes the Second Sophistic debate on ideal education to both its most universal as well as personal extreme: He pits Rome and Greece against each other in a contest to see which truly represents the best way of living life as it should be lived,[294] while pedagogically prescribing such a life in very personal terms of moral rectitude, consistency of conscience, social independence and cynic indifference. It is Lucian's own cynicism which ultimately sweeps Athens' landslide victory aside as the entire fictional contest is revealed to be in itself a foolish game of rhetoric.

When appreciating its diverse lineage of traditions concerning style and content, *Nigrinus* does answer significantly to the emphasis Webster has put on *creolization*, which I believe the dialogue to be a clear example of - to a certain extent. Indeed, we have seen that both the dialogue and its composer are manifestly products of an enlarged cultural, social and political matrix formed by the Roman Empire, with Lucian taking part in the creation of a literary language that transcends Roman or Greek ideal models, resisting qualification as an exponent of either world.[295] In effect, both worlds come together in his work, resulting in the creation of a novel hybrid which draws from a variety of images that have their origin in multiple places throughout the empire, which could only coalesce in the multicultural context that it provided. And yet, Lucian and his dialogue have shown that *creolization* does not have to follow the socio-political lines set out by Webster.[296] Lucian shows no sign of being part of a dominated culture; yes, the Greek world had been subjugated by Rome, but still Greek identity offered far more than merely a rallying point for some downtrodden caste within the empire. Greek culture kept its credentials to the point where it could compete with Rome on a literary level. There were no straightforwardly asymmetrical power relations reminiscent of the modern colonial experience. The pepaideumenoi where no underdogs in imperial society; they were in fact privileged members who could and did attain power within the hierarchy of an *imperialist* society without forfeiting their Greek identity, or even diluting it. Recognizing this, Lucian has shown us that it is necessary to amend our assumption that a dialectic formulation of identity within an imperial context *must* take place between a dominant, powerful group and a dominated, powerless group. In fact, an ad hoc division of labour appears to have been formed: enfranchised *Greeks* were to some extent expected to produce their own challenging representations of

[287] idem.
[288] ibidem 136.
[289] ibidem, 7-9.
[290] Phrasing lifted from the 1905 translation. Compare: Nigrinus. A dialogue 24, *The works of Lucian of Samosata*, Vol. I, translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford 1905) 20.
[291] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 9-17.
[292] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 81.
[293] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 9.
[294] ibidem, 5.
[295] Webster, J., 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 221.
[296] ibidem, 218.

Roman society and civilization, with no orchestrated effort being made by the upper echelons of Rome to monopolize the creation of imperial discourse after it was initially developed in the Augustan era.[297] Rome's firm grasp on power and relative political stability in the second century afforded them the luxury of allowing alternative representations and discourses on imperial relations, even valuing them as a rather harmless form of entertainment.[298]

As much of a successful hybrid as the *Nigrinus* dialogue is, it is neither an artefact which belongs to a dominant or a dominated group. It is a product of an empowered member of a society which has appeared from its very margins - both geographically and socially.[299] In this respect, Lucian's life defies Webster's model to a large degree - leaving us to modify its tenets considerably. We need to recognize that while both modern and ancient imperial societies are characterized by marked and institutionally prescribed systems of inequality,[300] with a consciously large gap between rulers and ruled - the degree to which this gap could be bridged will vary considerably. Moreover, the means by which social mobility can be achieved are highly historically congruent. Through historical circumstances, the general perception of Greek culture and literature had acquired a favourable status within the Roman Empire, making the act of writing *as a Greek*[301] an attractive vocation; by consciously adjusting common perception of himself, Lucian had successfully constructed a new identity, believably identifying himself with what was considered the archetypical classical Greek rhetorician, faithfully recreating the philosophical outlook and traditional language which was so universally associated with that archetype. He consistently honed this performance throughout his work, and by conforming to society's expectations of such a prescribed performance in his own creative way, he was able to thrive.[302] For the sake of argument, let us briefly indulge in some alternative history. If young Lucian had indeed chosen to follow the path which *crude craft* had set out for him, he would have worked with very different expectations from society, and in turn should have had equally different expectations of what he could achieve in his time. He would have to have forgone fame and fortune, leading an obscure life and dying an obscure death. But, as Webster has formulated, one such as he could use the very cultural and discursive structures of imperial society to his advantage, and consciously select certain elements this larger world presented to fashion something excitingly new, recycling traditional signifiers of status in imperial Roman culture - which apart from Roman *mores* also included Greek *paideia* - to create a favourable position for negotiation. Through this, he fulfilled the object of all social ambition: "*To be on the lips of all.*"[303] However, Lucian's case amends Webster's model regarding the assumed criterion for durable inequality: Through the empire's complex cultural lexicon, both cultural and social division between the Roman ruling centre and the provincial margins could be overcome from the bottom-up: In the Roman Empire, Greek learning could be a ticket to citizenship and beyond. Lucian shows that *creolization* is not necessarily the prerogative of the marginalised, but could be a mode of operation for those on their way to the top.[304]

When looking at how Webster's cues from post-colonial theory hold up to our discussion of the dialogue, a number of assumptions could do with some critical reconsideration. Firstly, *Nigrinus* in itself contains a drastic repudiation of dominant Roman categories of knowledge,[305] to which purpose the form of satire was effective. Lucian's philosopher challenges common notions of what it is to be a good Roman, and whether these notions are incompatible with being a good man. To this end, the writer applies a highly selective version of traditional Greek discourse on the subject of virtue and vice within an urban society, artfully applying them to a contemporary Roman context. Secondly, he similarly adopts the critical language

[297] Wallace-Hadrill, A., 'Mutatas Formas. The Augustan transformation of Roman knowledge', in: Galinsky, K. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 2007) 57.
[298] Woolf, 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 128.
[299] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 9.
[300] Webster J., 'Introduction', in: Webster and Cooper (eds.), *Roman Imperialism*, 2-3.
[301] Whitmarsh, *Greek literature and the Roman Empire*, 2.
[302] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 82. Also, Simon Goldhill applies a similar logic to the career of Favorinus. See: Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 77.
[303] Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?* 60.
[304] ibidem 62. Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 17.
[305] Webster, 'Introduction', 7.

and images with which Roman writers have typically approached Greek culture and uses them to approach Roman culture instead, offering an effective critique on imperial representations of the provincial *Other*, briefly cancelling the real dynamics between Roman power and Greek culture within the safe confines of literary experimentation. Lucian thereby challenges his audience - both then and now - to rethink its uncritical acceptance of Roman images of representation as historical reality.[306]

Yet, it is precisely his choice for satire which makes the lesson learned from *Nigrinus* so valuable: The way in which binary models of opposition[307] are ultimately framed throughout the text, results in their deconstruction being operative on more than one level. On the one hand, Lucian reveals cultural stereotypes and labels to be interchangeable, being equally applicable to Roman and Greek culture. On the other hand, this very act of discursive deconstruction results in the actual collapse of the binary opposition between those models: The dialogues satirical framing and the ultimate climactic twist result not in a heightened tension between Roman and Greek models of identity, but in their mutual annihilation. Through Lucian's experimentation, traditional sense is unveiled and revealed to be nonsense.[308] If we as historians should take a cue from this, we are compelled to admit to what extent our understanding of cultural opposition - focussing either on a Romanocentric or nativist version of history - is in essence artificially constructed, and ultimately has only limited epistemological value outside of the corpus of ancient literature from which these notions of opposition ultimately sprang. Lucian, at his most nihilistic, encourages an equally nihilistic understanding of history.[309]

And yet, works such as *Apology* offer some repose: Overall, Lucian's intention is not to attack anyone on grounds of ethnicity or culture, but to ridicule a lack of culture, and to encourage the sort of behaviour that befits a cultured man - regardless of whether he be called Roman or Greek.[310] The defiant tone of the *Nigrinus* dialogue demonstrates a definite *capacity* for the articulation of an alternative, resistant view on contemporary history.[311] However, in this case, a creative capacity for resistance should not be confused with actual resistance. While certain passages could be read as a pamphlet against the decadence pervading imperial society, the irony and comedy which surrounds the authoritative voice of Nigrinus make such a reading impossible. Lucian's satire is a subtle form of resistance, but not aimed at any kind of political revolution. Rather, through Nigrinus and his other cynic personae, he seems to aim at a brief suspension of received wisdom, to direct his own audience to a slightly different way of looking at society, and asking its members to alter their demeanour accordingly. Through his satire, Lucian makes a powerful point - gently.[312] After all, outside his work - unlike his character Nigrinus - Lucian was an enthusiastic participant of the Roman world, whose sense of Greekness did not exclude his participation, but rather facilitated it.

In turn, we should acknowledge that Greek identity in the Roman Empire was not exclusively a matter of antagonism or native resistance, but in itself a vehicle for creative, active acculturation and cross-cultural understanding. As such *Nigrinus* corroborates Woolf's model: The dialogue is both a product of an enlarged and enriched Roman culture, composed within the context of a multi-cultural empire, as well as it is in itself reproducing Roman culture. In fact, there is sufficient merit to the idea that the vitality of Hellenism at the geographical margins of the empire was actually enhanced by its absorption into the Roman sphere.[313] Seen this way, Lucian's work is as much a product of Roman *philhellenism* as it is of traditional classical Greek culture. This conclusion can be projected onto the literature of the Second Sophistic in general. Boldly stated, the Second Sophistic was a decidedly Roman phenomenon, despite its obvious celebration of Greek culture. In fact, *Greek culture* as an autonomous, defined concept could only come to fruition in an overarching non-Greek

[306] idem.
[307] idem.
[308] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 89.
[309] Bracht Branham, *Unruly eloquence*, 13.
[310] Jones, *Culture and society in Lucian*, 149.
[311] Webster J., 'Introduction' 7.
[312] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 107.
[313] Ando, C., 'Imperial identities', in: Whitmarsh, T. (ed.), *Local knowledge and microidentities in the imperial Greek world* (2010) 18.

context.[314] The *Nigrinus* is a valuable illustration of this. Behind its Greek exterior of Attic language and classical references, it is a Roman dialogue at heart. The ideas and themes explored within, while tributary to classical Greek philosophy and literature, were by this stage an integral part of an international language, a discursive koine which was intelligible to an empire-wide audience. Their application by Lucian to his vision of Roman society showcases his intention to participate in an insider's debate on ideal forms Roman identity.[315]

The flexibility which Lucian displays in adopting classical Greek culture as a medium of expression for his contemporary experience of the Roman Empire complies with Greg Woolf's general notion of the (re)creation of Roman culture in the particular image of provincial society. What is striking is that Woolf contends that the main difference between self-definition among the Greeks and the Romans was that while the former emphasised their common language, religious and social customs and a notion of common descent, the latter defined themselves on the basis of material culture and morality.[316] The emphasis Lucian's *Nigrinus* places on morality as an indicator of culture can mean two things: Either this statement is falsified and Greek culture had by this stage come to define itself through a common view on morality, or Lucian is engaged in a very Roman affair, defining Greek culture on Roman terms. I think the previous chapter has shown that both conclusions have equal merit, seeing how Lucian engages in a literary contest with Roman authors like Juvenal over the cultural value of Greek culture as opposed to Roman culture. The way in which Lucian draws from a faithfully preserved corpus of Greek thought on the matter of virtue and *paideia* to strengthen his argument for *the Greek cause*, shows how far acculturation had actually progressed in the empire. For a Syrian like Lucian, conscious identification with what was perceived as *Greek culture* was a means of engaging in discussions on culture on an imperial level, with *paideia* forming a point of reference not for simple *resistance* to Roman culture, but to engage in it in a meaningful way, without loss of self. The *Nigrinus*' emphasis on resistance through close contact as well as independence without isolation is relevant to this. Therefore, I do not feel the need to subscribe to Woolf's self-confessed static argument that "*Romans were never wholly reconciled to Greek culture, and Greeks never stopped being Greek.*"[317] I would say that Romans and Greeks stood in such close contact for such a formative period of time, that when we arrive in the empire of the second century, they had become so reluctantly yet intimately entangled that what at first appears to be an antagonistic contest of culture is one cultural entity trying to come to terms with its mixed and often conflicting heritage.[318] Lucian is a reflection of this empire, a child of a world in which both Roman and Greek thought had entered a stage of turbulent synergy.

Following Webster's work, a significant portion of Lucian's oeuvre - including *Nigrinus* - is an artefact of this emerging synergy, a literary expression of *creolization*. As such an artefact, *Nigrinus* exhibits a certain hybrid form of literature which functioned on an underlying set of values which are envisioned as Greek, yet served a purpose of examining imperial Roman culture.[319] In its literary language Lucian semi-consciously fashions a dialectic discourse on matters which transcend the traditional confines of either culture. In its composition, the need for self-definition and a desire for cross-cultural engagement go hand in hand - defying characterizations of *resistance* or *accommodation* in any undiluted sense.[320] Whereas Webster stipulates that any *creole synthesis* is bound to be oriented toward the politically dominant culture,[321] the unique position of Hellenism within the Roman Empire allowed for a reversed situation. All in all, it would seem that the literature of the Second Sophistic was part of the formation of a Graeco-Roman counterculture which was oriented on a vision of Greek culture, seeking to associate itself more closely with the cultural capital of Greece rather than to identify itself with the imperial power of Rome.[322]

[314] Elsner, 'Pausanias', 19.
[315] Woolf, *Becoming Roman. The origins of provincial civilization in Gaul*, 11.
[316] Woolf, G., 'Becoming Roman, staying Greek', 30.
[317] ibidem, 30
[318] Goldhill, *Who needs Greek?*, 74-75.
[319] Webster, 'Creolizing the Roman provinces', 218.
[320] ibidem, 219.
[321] ibidem, 220.
[322] ibidem, 221.

As for Lucian's part in all this, it seems to have been consciously in the business of mediating between the realm of classical Greece and the experience of the Roman Empire, using a complex array of references in bizarrely unfamiliar ways, to create a unique presentation of self, a performance which paid homage to his own multiplicity of cultural identity, a literary actor involved in what was indeed an Intricate game of masks.[323]

[323] Goldhill,*Who needs Greek?*, 82.

Conclusion

While its double-edged and enigmatically satirical style might seem conflicting and diffuse at first, the varied concerns and lineages of form and genre that characterize the Nigrinus dialogue actually showcase how deeply Lucian was invested in contemporary Roman culture. His unique way of combining Homeric allusions with contemporary social commentary, mixing philosophy with rhetoric, while playing with accepted notions of gravity and irony, not only highlights his own talent as a composer of literature, but also reveal much about the tensions of tradition within imperial culture. Yet, these tensions do not so much work to divide separate worlds of Greek and Roman culture. Instead, they represent a creative force, as they illustrate how far these worlds had already successfully coalesced into a reluctant harmony, offering creative new ways of life. As much as the dialogue speaks in tones of antagonism and cultural localism, it cannot be read without recognizing that it spoke to a universal, empire-wide audience; clearly, it was designed by Lucian to be experienced and understood within a context that was as much Roman as it was Greek. The juxtaposition of cultural elements which Lucian presents throughout is only conceivable in light of a certain union. The philosopher and his pupil speak not to criticize some distant *Other*, but to refine the habits and outlook of the *Self*. The ways in which Lucian shifts perspectives between Rome and Athens, asking his readership to choose which one is the true moral capital of the empire, is a literary exercise in questioning our understanding of the discourses embodied by both. In a sense, the Nigrinus dialogue seeks to resolve the tension between Greek notions of *paideia* and Roman notions of *virtus* by artificially heightening their differences. Lucian experiments with upturning the logic of both, questioning what is masculine and what is feminine, what is wisdom and what is folly, what is sobriety and what is madness, what is empowering and what corrupts. Lucian's anticlimactic end serves to show us that the choice is ultimately moot, because it is only a matter of perspective, and perspectives are shown to be interchangeable. In the end, in a rather Socratic twist, one man's revelations are shown to be another man's delusions.

To my mind, this manner of shifting literary perspectives with such studied ease is a side-effect of Lucian's own experience of a cosmopolitan empire, of living in a world of outsiders looking in - subconsciously united in their alienation. Lucian - being himself from a culturally rich though marginal background - was very familiar with the advantages of being able to choose a guise under which to operate within imperial society, attuned to crafting an identity out of a varied assortment of cultural elements and labels. Like many, he saw the opportunities presented by the Second Sophistic, and he chose to sculpt himself in the image of Greek rhetoricians and satirists of classical, Attic Greece. This consciousness of choice in itself stands at the centre of the Nigrinus dialogue - as it does in the rest of his oeuvre. Moreover, this active choice between identities implies an ambiguity: It represents the freedom of self-definition, but then again the inconsequential irrelevance of it can just as easily result in either cynicism or self-delusion. Lucian is very much concerned with both the possibilities and the dangers involved in acting a role, staging a play, playing a part instead of living a life. This is the central issue of the Nigrinus. In the face of power and wealth, who do I choose to be? How do I conduct myself in relation to those with power and to those without? Do I embrace the expectations of a society ruled by ambition and material pursuits, or do I live my life as my own man, risking ridicule and poverty, but perhaps gaining wisdom and true happiness? And ultimately, does my choice actually mean anything relevant in the scope of such a grand world, or are all my personal reflections and doubts of no consequence? Lucian challenges his audience - then and now - to ask itself these questions, and to think critically about the answers we are so accustomed to. Perhaps, in his cynical twist, Lucian intends to say that the answers are not that important, and that he himself does not purport to have any answers that are of any use to us. For all of his satire, Lucian seems to imply that it is the business of asking questions that is the age-old path to wisdom.

Returning to the question of Romanisation: While the eclectic new approaches to Roman culture and identity have been formulated to account for far more sophisticated and problematic personal behaviour and patterns of cultural identification in the face of Roman imperialism, if anything the Nigrinus dialogue and its author serve to reveal just how multi-facetted and layered the cultural reality of the Roman Empire could actually be. As the post-modern generation of historians, we subscribe to the possibility of Roman citizens possessing a variety of loyalties and vested interests in the empire, which might be described as conflicting. We

know that this will lead to those individuals having to select various roles in various situations in relation to power - sometimes embracing imperial structures of hierarchy, sometimes exploiting them, or even resisting them. Yet, it is still striking and fascinating to see this theoretical possibility actually unfolding before our eyes through reading an actual individual's work, to actually appreciate the real lives involved in negotiating the world in a transformative period of history. Lucian witnessed the Roman Empire at a time when the possibilities for making a name for oneself where arguably at their greatest. And he did, with gusto. As such, reading the Nigrinus catches him at a moment of time, in which he at least witnessed the disillusion and disappointment some of his contemporaries felt towards Roman society, expressing criticism towards the corrupting and debilitating effects wrought by this perceived collective obsession with the acquisition of power and wealth. The Nigrinus text in itself does not provide a clear answer as to whether Lucian himself felt this disillusionment; however, his tendency towards social criticism which runs throughout his oeuvre does seem to point towards a consciously engaged individual who employed artful satire and sophistic oratory to bring his worldly concerns to the attention of a wider audience. That he wasn't above satirising those contemporaries who embraced popular philosophies as a way of escaping the moral bankruptcy of imperial society - as he does in Nigrinus, as elsewhere - does not undermine his social engagement.

At another level, the Nigrinus text stands as a testament to Lucian's skill in imitating and experimenting with classical formats of literature, tying his reflections on high imperial society to the large repository of images of the classical world, creating a narrative universe in which contemporary satire is injected with a dose of cultural heritage that adds a sense of purpose and history to it. In fact, he is so successful at presenting us with literary masterpieces that embody the epitome of classicizing Greek literature from the Roman period, that he makes it hard to remember that he is only able to write so convincingly within Greek traditions because he has immersed himself in classical culture, having worked so hard at blending in with the *pepaideumenoi* and their *paideia*, that even we tend to forget that he was in fact a Syrian. Then again, it only goes to show that culture is never someone's natural property, that no-one is bound to a certain tradition by birthright. Instead, the case of Lucian serves to remind us that culture is for the most part something that is acquired, appropriated to a great extent through conscious action and artful negotiation. While the breadth of authentic identities at his disposal was of course not limitless, whether Lucian became Roman, Greek, or stayed Syrian was a matter of choice, the product of a lifelong study and tremendous effort to improve himself.

Most importantly, Lucian represents a multitude of other subjects of the Roman Empire who strove to gather a similar amount of attention and renown - most of whom are probably not even known to us. Each of them in their own way undertook a similar process of cultural negotiation, seeking to take part in an exciting world, trading in the language and traditions of their ancestors for a personal style which could translate itself throughout the empire, modelling themselves on prestigious classical Greek or traditional Roman models. In doing so, while reinventing themselves they also reinvented those models themselves. As a result, while for example Greek and Roman ideal types where employed to underscore difference and conscious opposition, this same exercise resulted in Greek and Roman culture standing in closer and deeper contact with one-another, with the gap between both often ending up being bridged in the process, reluctantly and haphazardly creating a lexicon of culture that ironically drew from both worlds. The Nigrinus dialogue is only one striking example, a manifestation of the creation of the creolized, globalising culture that made the height of the Roman Empire so interesting.

So, what have we learned here? I think the most important thing that a study such as this has to offer is the realisation that historical reality can hardly be adequately captured by employing phrases such as *resistant adaptation* or *discrepant experiences*. Of course, human nature always has a way of defying classification or qualification. Still, the recent development within the entire spectrum of methods and approaches to what used to be just referred to as Romanisation has at least opened up the field of ancient history to allow for more detailed and inclusive perspectives on the complexities of cultural history. In this respect, the mere impetus towards a more open mindset is exceedingly more valuable than the formulation of another unified paradigm that purports to pinpoint and exhaustively explain the entire reality of life in the Roman Empire. In fact, one would almost hope that this transformative, eclectic period in the study of ancient

history might last a while longer before in turn becoming a petrified institution in its own right. For the time-being, the theoretical framework provided by the generation of scholars Woolf and Webster are part of provides enough avenues of investigating new insights into the Roman world for years to come, shedding light on issues thought resolved long ago. While not pretending to offer any definite conclusions, I sincerely hope that this particular study of Lucian and the Nigrinus dialogue has something to add to this generation's considerations of how culture and identity interfaced and created new opportunities for life within imperial society.

Having said that, even post-modern historians - myself included - would do well to realise that we are just as vulnerable to projecting our own very post-modern concerns and fantasies onto ancient history. We ought to be careful, and continue to ask ourselves; when we speak of feelings of *exile* and *alienation*, *resistance* and *creative adaptation* in the face of an increasingly globalised world of remote power and impersonal forces, are we still talking about Lucian's world? In a sense, the fact that the focus and message of Romanization has shifted from absolutist security about civilization to a far more critical, almost anxious reappraisal of the ambiguities involved in the creation of globalized culture says a great deal about our experience of the twenty-first century. While offering fresh perspectives and valuable conclusions about antiquity, this exercise reveals just as much about how we see ourselves and our conventional understanding of local culture and tradition confronted by overwhelming global structures, as we are faced with increasingly confusing societal patterns of behaviour. If so, even we are not entirely immune to the perceived weaknesses of our nineteenth century predecessors. Consequently, we should at least remain conscious of this seemingly indomitable tendency to project our own hopes and anxieties onto the past, and recognize that our efforts to lend a voice to men and women long forgotten reflect our own wish to reinvest our uncertain future with a sense of individual purpose and the power to make an active choice. After all, it would appear that even the wisest of men can offer no cure against human nature.

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Appendix: Loeb edition of Lucian's *Nigrinus* in Greek

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ΠΡΟΣ ΝΙΓΡΙΝΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

Λουκιανὸς Νιγρίνῳ εὖ πράττειν. Ἡ μὲν παροιμία φησίν, Γλαῦκα εἰς Ἀθήνας, ὡς γελοῖον ὂν εἴ τις ἐκεῖ κομίζοι γλαῦκας, ὅτι πολλαὶ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς εἰσιν. ἐγὼ δ᾽ εἰ μὲν δύναμιν λόγων ἐπιδείξασθαι βουλόμενος. ἔπειτα Νιγρίνῳ γράψας βιβλίον ἔπεμπον, εἰχόμην ἂν τῷ γελοίῳ γλαῦκας ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐμπορευόμενος· ἐπεὶ δὲ μόνην σοι δηλῶσαι τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην ἐθέλω, ὅπως τε νῦν ἔχω καὶ ὅτι μὴ παρέργως εἴλημμαι πρὸς τῶν σῶν λόγων, ἀποφεύγοιμ᾽ ἂν εἰκότως καὶ τὸ τοῦ Θουκυδίδου λέγοντος, ὅτι ἡ ἀμαθία μὲν θράσος, ὀκνηροὺς δὲ τὸ λελογισμένον ἀπεργάζεται· δῆλον γὰρ ὡς οὐχ ἡ ἀμαθία μοι μόνη τῆς τοιαύτης τόλμης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ πρὸς τοὺς λόγους ἔρως αἴτιος. ἔρρωσο.

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ΝΙΓΡΙΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ

Ὡς σεμνὸς ἡμῖν σφόδρα καὶ μετέωρος ἐπανελήλυθας.1 οὐ τοίνυν προσβλέπειν ἡμᾶς ἔτι ἀξιοῖς οὔθ᾽ ὁμιλίας μεταδίδως οὔτε κοινωνεῖς τῶν ὁμοίων λόγων, ἀλλ᾽ ἄφνω μεταβέβλησαι καὶ ὅλως ὑπεροπτικῷ τινι ἔοικας. ἡδέως δ᾽ ἂν παρὰ σοῦ πυθοίμην, ὅθεν οὕτως ἀτόπως ἔχεις καὶ τί τούτων αἴτιον.

Τί γὰρ ἄλλο γε, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ἢ εὐτυχία;

Πῶς λέγεις;

Ὁδοῦ πάρεργον ἥκω σοι εὐδαίμων τε καὶ μακάριος γεγενημένος καὶ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς ὄνομα, τρισόλβιος.

Ἡράκλεις, οὕτως ἐν βραχεῖ;

Καὶ μάλα.

Τί δέ, τὸ μετὰ[1] τοῦτο, ἐστὶν ἐφ᾽ ὅτῳ καὶ κομᾷς; ἵνα μὴ ἐν κεφαλαίῳ μόνῳ εὐφρανώμεθα, ἔχωμεν δέ τι καὶ ἀκριβὲς εἰδέναι τὸ πᾶν ἀκούσαντες.

Οὐ θαυμαστὸν εἶναί σοι δοκεῖ πρὸς Διός, ἀντὶ μὲν δούλου με ἐλεύθερον, ἀντὶ δὲ πένητος ὡς ἀληθῶς πλούσιον, ἀντὶ δὲ ἀνοήτου τε καὶ τετυφωμένου γενέσθαι μετριώτερον;

Μέγιστον μὲν οὖν· ἀτὰρ οὔπω μανθάνω σαφῶς2 ὅ τι καὶ λέγεις.

Ἐστάλην μὲν εὐθὺ τῆς πόλεως βουλόμενος ἰατρὸν ὀφθαλμῶν θεάσασθαί πινα· τὸ γάρ μοι πάθος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ μᾶλλον ἐπετείνετο.

Οἶδα τούτων ἕκαστα, καὶ ηὐξάμην σέ τινι σπουδαίῳ ἐπιτυχεῖν.

Δόξαν οὖν μοι διὰ πολλοῦ προσειπεῖν Νιγρῖνον τὸν Πλατωνικὸν φιλόσοφον, ἕωθεν ἐξαναστὰς ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφικόμην καὶ κόψας τὴν θύραν τοῦ παιδὸς εἰσαγγείλαντος ἐκλήθην· καὶ παρελθὼν εἴσω καταλαμβάνω τὸν μὲν ἐν χερσὶ βιβλίον ἔχοντα,

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πολλὰς δὲ εἰκόνας παλαιῶν φιλοσόφων ἐν κύκλῳ κειμένας. προὔκειτο δὲ ἐν μέσῳ καὶ πινάκιόν τισι τῶν ἀπὸ γεωμετρίας σχημάτων καταγεγραμμένον καὶ σφαῖρα καλάμου πρὸς τὸ τοῦ παντὸς μίμημα ὡς ἐδόκει πεποιημένη. σφόδρα οὖν με3 φιλοφρόνως ἀσπασάμενος ἠρώτα ὅ τι πράττοιμι. κἀγὼ πάντα διηγησάμην αὐτῷ, καὶ δῆτα ἐν μέρει καὶ αὐτὸς ἠξίουν εἰδέναι ὅ τι τε πράττοι καὶ εἰ αὖθις αὐτῷ ἐγνωσμένον εἴη στέλλεσθαι τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος.

Ὁ δὲ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἀρξάμενος,[1] ὦ ἑταῖρε, περὶ τούτων λέγειν καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην διηγεῖσθαι τοσαύτην τινά μου λόγων ἀμβροσίαν κατεσκέδασεν, ὥστε καὶ τὰς Σειρῆνας ἐκείνας, εἴ τινες ἄρα ἐγένοντο, καὶ τὰς ἀηδόνας καὶ τὸν Ὁμήρου λωτὸν ἀρχαῖον ἀποδεῖξαι· οὕτω θεσπέσια ἐφθέγξατο. προήχθη γὰρ αὐτήν τε4 φιλοσοφίαν ἐπαινέσαι καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ ταύτης ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τῶν δημοσίᾳ νομιζομένων ἀγαθῶν καταγελάσαι, πλούτου καὶ δόξης καὶ βασιλείας καὶ τιμῆς, ἔτι τε χρυσοῦ καὶ πορφύρας, τῶν πάνυ περιβλέπτων τοῖς πολλοῖς, τέως δὲ κἀμοὶ δοκούντων. ἅπερ ἔγωγε ἀτενεῖ καὶ ἀναπεπταμένῃ τῇ ψυχῇ δεξάμενος αὐτίκα μὲν οὐδὲ εἶχον εἰκάσαι ὅπερ ἐπεπόνθειν, ἀλλὰ παντοῖος ἐγιγνόμην· καὶ ἄρτι μὲν ἐλυπούμην, ἐληλεγμένων μοι τῶν φιλτάτων, πλούτου τε καὶ ἀργυρίου καὶ δόξης, καὶ μόνον οὐκ ἐδάκρυον ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς καθῃρημένοις, ἄρτι

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δὲ αὐτὰ μὲν ἐδόκει μοι ταπεινὰ καὶ καταγέλαστα· ἔχαιρον δ᾽ αὖ ὥσπερ[1] ἐκ ζοφεροῦ τινος ἀέρος τοῦ βίου τοῦ πρόσθεν ἐς αἰθρίαν τε καὶ μέγα φῶς ἀναβλέπων· ὥστε δή, τὸ καινότατον, τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ μὲν καὶ τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν ἀσθενείας ἐπελανθανόμην, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ὀξυδερκέστερος κατὰ μικρὸν ἐγιγνόμην· ἐλελήθειν γὰρ τέως αὐτὴν τυφλώττουσαν περιφέρων. προϊὼν δὲ ἐς τόδε περιήχθην,5 ὅπερ ἀρτίως ἡμῖν ἐπεκάλεις· γαῦρός τε γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου καὶ μετέωρός εἰμι καὶ ὅλως μικρὸν οὐκέτι οὐδὲν ἐπινοῶ· δοκῶ γάρ μοι ὅμοιόν τι πεπονθέναι πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν, οἷόνπερ καὶ οἱ Ἰνδοὶ πρὸς τὸν οἶνον λέγονται

παθεῖν, ὅτε πρῶτον ἔπιον αὐτοῦ· θερμότεροι γὰρ ὄντες φύσει πιόντες ἰσχυρὸν οὕτω ποτὸν αὐτίκα μάλα ἐξεβακχεύθησαν καὶ διπλασίως ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀκράτου ἐξεμάνησαν. οὕτω σοι καὶ αὐτὸς ἔνθεος καὶ μεθύων ὑπὸ τῶν λόγων περιέρχομαι.

Καὶ μὴν τοῦτό γε οὐ μεθύειν, ἀλλὰ νήφειν**6** τε καὶ σωφρονεῖν ἐστιν. ἐγὼ δὲ βουλοίμην ἄν, εἰ οἷόν τε, αὐτῶν ἀκοῦσαι τῶν λόγων· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ φθονεῖν[2] αὐτῶν οἶμαι θέμις, ἄλλως τε εἰ καὶ φίλος καὶ περὶ τὰ ὅμοια ἐσπουδακὼς ὁ βουλόμενος ἀκούειν εἴη.

Θάρρει, ὦγαθέ· τοῦτο γάρ τοι τὸ τοῦ Ὁμήρου, σπεύδοντα καὶ αὐτὸν παρακαλεῖς, καὶ εἴ γε μὴ ἔφθης, αὐτὸς ἂν ἐδεήθην ἀκοῦσαί μου διηγουμένου· μάρτυρα γάρ σε παραστήσασθαι πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐθέλω, ὅτι οὐκ ἀλόγως μαίνομαι· ἄλλως

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τε καὶ ἡδύ μοι τὸ μεμνῆσθαι αὐτῶν πολλάκις, καὶ ταύτην ἥδη μελέτην ἐποιησάμην· ἐπεὶ κἄν τις μὴ παρὼν τύχῃ, καὶ οὕτω δὶς ἢ τρὶς τῆς ἡμέρας ἀνακυκλῶ πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν τὰ εἰρημένα. καὶ**7** ὥσπερ οἱ ἐρασταὶ τῶν παιδικῶν οὐ παρόντων ἔργ᾽ ἄττα καὶ λόγους εἰρημένους αὐτοῖς διαμνημονεύουσι καὶ τούτοις ἐνδιατρίβοντες ἐξαπατῶσι τὴν νόσον, ὡς παρόντων σφίσι τῶν ἀγαπωμένων[m dash]ἔνιοι γοῦν αὐτοῖς καὶ προσλαλεῖν οἴονται καὶ ὡς ἄρτι λεγομένων πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὧν τότε ἤκουσαν, ἥδονται καὶ προσάψαντες τὴν ψυχὴν τῇ μνήμῃ τῶν παρεληλυθότων σχολὴν οὐκ ἄγουσιν τοῖς ἐν ποσὶν ἀνιᾶσθαι—οὕτω δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς φιλοσοφίας οὐ παρούσης τοὺς λόγους, οὓς τότε ἤκουσα, συναγείρων καὶ πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἀνατυλίττων οὐ μικρὰν ἔχω παραμυθίαν, καὶ ὅλως καθάπερ ἐν πελάγει καὶ νυκτὶ πολλῇ φερόμενος, ἐς πυρσόν τινα τοῦτον ἀποβλέπω, πᾶσι μὲν παρεῖναι τοῖς ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ πραττομένοις τὸν ἄνδρα ἐκεῖνον οἰόμενος, ἀεὶ δὲ ὥσπερ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ τὰ αὐτὰ πρός με λέγοντος· ἐνίοτε δέ, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ἐνερείσω τὴν ψυχήν, καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ μοι φαίνεται καὶ τῆς φωνῆς ὁ ἦχος ἐν ταῖς ἀκοαῖς παραμένει· καὶ γάρ τοι κατὰ τὸν κωμικὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐγκατέλιπέν τι κέντρον τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.[1]

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8 καὶ λέγε ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀναλαβὼν ἥδη τὰ εἰρημένα· ὡς οὐ μετρίως με ἀποκναίεις περιάγων.

Εὖ λέγεις, καὶ οὕτω χρὴ ποιεῖν. ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνο, ὦ ἑταῖρε—ἤδη τραγικοὺς ἢ καὶ νὴ Δία κωμικοὺς φαύλους ἑώρακας ὑποκριτάς, τῶν συριττομένων λέγω τούτων καὶ διαφθειρόντων τὰ ποιήματα καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον ἐκβαλλομένων, καίτοι τῶν δραμάτων πολλάκις εὖ ἐχόντων τε καὶ νενικηκότων;

Πολλοὺς οἶδα τοιούτους. ἀλλὰ τί τοῦτο;

Δέδοικα. μή σοι μεταξὺ δόξω γελοίως αὐτὰ μιμεῖσθαι, τὰ μὲν ἀτάκτως συνείρων, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ὑπ᾽ ἀσθενείας τὸν νοῦν διαφθείρων, κἄτα προαχθῆς ἠρέμα καὶ αὐτοῦ καταγνῶναι τοῦ δράματος. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐμόν, οὐ πάνυ ἄχθομαι, ἡ δὲ ὑπόθεσις οὐ μετρίως με λυπήσειν ἔοικε συνεκπίπτουσα καὶ τὸ ἐμὸν μέρος ἀσχημονοῦσα. τοῦτ᾽**9** οὖν παρ᾽ ὅλον μέμνησό μοι τὸν λόγον, ὡς ὁ μὲν ποιητὴς ἡμῖν τῶν τοιούτων ἁμαρτημάτων ἀνεύθυνος καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς πόρρω ποι κάθηται, οὐδὲν αὐτῷ μέλον τῶν ἐν θεάτρῳ πραγμάτων. ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ σοι πεῖραν παρέχω, ὁποῖός τίς εἰμι τὴν μνήμην ὑποκριτής, οὐδὲν ἀγγέλου τὰ ἄλλα τραγικοῦ διαφέρων. ὥστε κἂν ἐνδεέστερόν τι δοκῶ λέγειν, ἐκεῖνο μὲν ἔστω πρόχειρον, ὡς ἄμεινον ἦν, καὶ ἄλλως[2] ὁ ποιητὴς ἴσως διεξῄει· ἐμὲ δὲ κἂν ἐκσυρίττῃς, οὐ πάνυ τι λυπήσομαι.

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10 ῥητόρων νόμον πεπροοιμίασταί σοι· ἔοικας γοῦν κἀκεῖνα προσθήσειν, ὡς δι᾽ ὀλίγου τε ὑμῖν ἡ συνουσία ἐγένετο καὶ ὡς οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸς ἦκες πρὸς τὸν λόγον παρεσκευασμένος καὶ ὡς ἄμεινον εἶχεν αὐτοῦ ταῦτα λέγοντος ἀκούειν· σὺ γὰρ ὀλίγα καὶ ὅσα οἷόν τε ἦν, τυγχάνεις τῇ μνήμῃ συγκεκομισμένος. οὐ ταῦτ᾽ ἐρεῖν ἔμελλες; οὐδὲν οὖν αὐτῶν ἔτι σοι δεῖ πρὸς ἐμέ· νόμισον δὲ τούτου γε ἕνεκα πάντα σοι προειρῆσθαι· ὡς ἐγὼ καὶ βοᾶν καὶ κροτεῖν ἕτοιμος. ἢν δὲ διαμέλλῃς, μνησικακήσω γε παρὰ τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ ὀξύτατα συρίξομαι.

Καὶ ταῦτα μέν, ἃ σὺ διῆλθες, ἐβουλόμην ἂν**11** εἰρῆσθαί μοι, κἀκεῖνα δέ, ὅτι οὐχ ἑξῆς οὐδὲ ὡς ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε, ῥῄσίν τινα περὶ πάντων ἐρῶ· πάνυ γὰρ τοῦθ᾽ ἡμῖν ἀδύνατον· οὐδ᾽ αὖ ἐκείνῳ περιθεὶς τοὺς λόγους, μὴ καὶ κατ᾽ ἄλλο τι γένωμαι τοῖς ὑποκριταῖς ἐκείνοις ὅμοιος, οἳ πολλάκις ἢ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἢ Κρέοντος ἢ καὶ Ἡρακλέους αὐτοῦ πρόσωπον ἀνειληφότες, χρυσίδας ἠμφιεσμένοι καὶ δεινὸν βλέποντες καὶ μέγα κεχηνότες μικρὸν φθέγγονται καὶ ἰσχνὸν καὶ γυναικῶδες καὶ τῆς Ἑκάβης ἢ Πολυξένης πολὺ ταπεινότερον. ἵν᾽ οὖν μὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐλέγχωμαι πάνυ μεῖζον τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ κεφαλῆς προσωπεῖον περικείμενος καὶ τὴν σκευὴν καταισχύνων, ἀπὸ γυμνοῦ σοι βούλομαι τοὐμοῦ προσώπου προσλαλεῖν, ἵνα μὴ συγκατασπάσω που πεσὼν τὸν ἥρωα ὃν ὑποκρίνομαι.

Οὗτος ἀνὴρ οὐ παύσεται τήμερον πρός με πολλῇ**12** τῇ σκηνῇ καὶ τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ χρώμενος.

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Καὶ μὴν παύσομαί γε· πρὸς ἐκεῖνα δὲ ἤδη τρέψομαι. ἡ μὲν ἀρχὴ τῶν λόγων ἔπαινος ἦν Ἑλλάδος καὶ τῶν Ἀθήνησιν ἀνθρώπων, ὅτι φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ πενίᾳ σύντροφοί εἰσιν καὶ οὔτε τῶν ἀστῶν οὔτε τῶν ξένων οὐδένα τέρπονται ὁρῶντες, ὃς ἂν τρυφὴν εἰσάγειν εἰς αὐτοὺς βιάζηται, ἀλλὰ κἂν τις ἀφίκηται παρ᾽ αὐτοὺς οὕτω διακείμενος, ἠρέμα τε μεθαρμόττουσι καὶ παραπαιδαγωγοῦσι καὶ πρὸς τὸ καθαρὸν τῆς διαίτης μεθιστᾶσιν.

Ἐμέμνητο γοῦν τινος τῶν πολυχρύσων, ὃς ἐλθὼν13 Ἀθήναζε μάλ᾽ ἐπίσημος καὶ φορτικὸς ἀκολούθων ὄχλῳ καὶ ποικίλῃ ἐσθῆτι καὶ χρυσῷ αὐτὸς μὲν ᾤετο ζηλωτὸς εἶναι πᾶσι τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις καὶ ὡς ἂν εὐδαίμων ἀποβλέπεσθαι· τοῖς δ᾽ ἄρα δυστυχεῖν ἐδόκει τὸ ἀνθρώπιον, καὶ παιδεύειν ἐπεχείρουν αὐτὸν οὐ πικρῶς οὐδ᾽ ἄντικρυς ἀπαγορεύοντες ἐν ἐλευθέρᾳ τῇ πόλει καθ᾽ ὁντινα τρόπον βούλεται μὴ βιοῦν· ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ κἀν τοῖς γυμνασίοις καὶ λουτροῖς ὀχληρὸς ἦν θλίβων τοῖς οἰκέταις καὶ στενοχωρῶν τοὺς ἀπαντῶντας, ἡσυχῇ τις ἂν ὑπεφθέγξατο προσποιούμενος λανθάνειν, ὥσπερ οὐ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀποτείνων, Δέδοικε μὴ παραπόληται μεταξὺ λουόμενος· καὶ μὴν εἰρήνη γε μακρὰ κατέχει τὸ βαλανεῖον· οὐδὲν οὖν δεῖ στρατοπέδου. ὁ δὲ ἀκούων ἀεί,[1] μεταξὺ ἐπαιδεύετο. τὴν δὲ ἐσθῆτα τὴν ποικίλην καὶ τὰς πορφυρίδας ἐκείνας ἀπέδυσαν αὐτὸν ἀστείως πάνυ τὸ ἀνθηρὸν ἐπισκώπτοντες τῶν χρωμάτων, Ἔαρ ἤδη, λέγοντες, καί, Πόθεν ὁ ταὼς οὗτος; καί, Τάχα τῆς μητρός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ· καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα. καὶ τὰ ἄλλα δὲ οὕτως

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ἀπέσκωπτον, ἢ τῶν δακτυλίων τὸ πλῆθος ἢ τῆς κόμης τὸ περίεργον ἢ τῆς διαίτης τὸ ἀκόλαστον· ὥστε κατὰ μικρὸν ἐσωφρονίσθη καὶ παρὰ πολὺ βελτίων ἀπῆλθε δημοσίᾳ πεπαιδευμένος.

Ὅτι δ᾽ οὐκ αἰσχύνονται πενίαν ὁμολογοῦντες,14 ἐμέμνητο πρός με φωνῆς τινος, ἣν ἀκοῦσαι πάντων ἔφη κοινῇ προεμένων ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι τῶν Παναθηναίων· ληφθέντα μὲν γάρ τινα τῶν πολιτῶν ἄγεσθαι παρὰ τὸν ἀγωνοθέτην, ὅτι βαπτὸν ἔχων ἱμάτιον ἐθεώρει, τοὺς δὲ ἰδόντας ἐλεῆσαί τε καὶ παραιτεῖσθαι καὶ τοῦ κήρυκος ἀνειπόντος, ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἐποίησεν ἐν τοιαύτῃ ἐσθῆτι θεώμενος, ἀναβοῆσαι μιᾷ φωνῇ πάντας ὥσπερ ἐσκεμμένους, συγγνώμην ἀπονέμειν αὐτῷ τοιαῦτά γε ἀμπεχομένῳ· μὴ γὰρ ἔχειν αὐτὸν ἕτερα.

Ταῦτά τε οὖν ἐπῄνει καὶ προσέτι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τὴν ἐκεῖ καὶ τῆς διαίτης τὸ ἀνεπίφθονον, ἡσυχίαν τε καὶ ἀπραγμοσύνην, ἃ δὴ ἄφθονα παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἐστιν. ἀπέφαινε γοῦν φιλοσοφίᾳ συνῳδὸν τὴν παρὰ τοῖς τοιούτοις διατριβὴν καὶ καθαρὸν ἦθος φυλάξαι δυναμένην, σπουδαίῳ τε ἀνδρὶ καὶ πλούτου καταφρονεῖν πεπαιδευμένῳ καὶ τῷ πρὸς τὰ φύσει καλὰ ζῆν προαιρουμένῳ τὸν ἐκεῖ βίον μάλιστα ἡρμοσμένον. ὅστις δὲ πλούτου ἐρᾷ καὶ15 χρυσῷ κεκήληται καὶ πορφύρᾳ

καὶ δυναστείᾳ μετρεῖ τὸ εὔδαιμον, ἄγευστος μὲν ἐλευθερίας, ἀπείρατος δὲ παρρησίας, ἀθέατος δὲ ἀληθείας, κολακείᾳ τὰ πάντα καὶ δουλείᾳ σύντροφος, ἢ ὅστις ἡδονῇ πᾶσαν τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπιτρέψας ταύτῃ μόνῃ λατρεύειν διέγνωκε, φίλος μὲν περιέργων τραπεζῶν, φίλος δὲ πότων καὶ ἀφροδισίων, ἀνάπλεως γοητείας καὶ ἀπάτης καὶ ψευδολογίας,

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ἢ ὅστις ἀκούων τέρπεται κρουμάτων τε καὶ τερετισμάτων καὶ διεφθορότων ἀσμάτων, τοῖς δὴ τοιούτοις πρέπειν τὴν ἐνταῦθα διατριβήν· μεσταὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς τῶν φιλτάτων πᾶσαι μὲν16 ἀγυιαί, πᾶσαι δὲ ἀγοραί· πάρεστι δὲ πάσαις πύλαις τὴν ἡδονὴν καταδέχεσθαι, τοῦτο μὲν δι᾽ ὀφθαλμῶν, τοῦτο δὲ δι᾽ ὤτων τε καὶ ῥινῶν, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ διὰ λαιμοῦ καὶ δι᾽ ἀφροδισίων· ὑφ᾽ ἧς δὴ ῥεούσης ἀενάῳ τε καὶ θολερῷ ῥεύματι πᾶσαι μὲν ἀνευρύνονται ὁδοί· συνεισέρχεται γὰρ μοιχεία καὶ φιλαργυρία καὶ ἐπιορκία καὶ τὸ τοιοῦτο φῦλον τῶν ἡδονῶν, παρασύρεται δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ὑποκλυζομένης πάντοθεν αἰδὼς καὶ ἀρετὴ καὶ δικαιοσύνη· τῶν δὲ ἔρημος ὁ χῶρος γενόμενος δίψης ἀεὶ πιμπράμενος[1] ἀνθεῖ πολλαῖς τε καὶ ἀγρίαις ἐπιθυμίαις.

Τοιαύτην ἀπέφαινε τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοσούτων διδάσκαλον ἀγαθῶν. ἐγῶ γοῦν, ἔφη, ὅτε τὸ17 πρῶτον ἐπανῆιειν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, πλησίον που γενόμενος ἐπιστήσας ἐμαυτὸν λόγον ἀπήτουν τῆς δεῦρο ἀφίξεως, ἐκεῖνα δὴ τὰ τοῦ Ὁμήρου λέγων·

τίπτ᾽ αὖτ᾽, ὦ δύστηνε, λιπὼν φάος ἠελίοιο, τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὴν εὐτυχίαν ἐκείνην καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν, ἦλυθες, ὄφρα ἴδῃς τὸν ἐνταῦθα θόρυβον, συκοφάντας καὶ προσαγορεύσεις ὑπερηφάνους καὶ δεῖπνα καὶ κόλακας καὶ μιαιφονίας καὶ διαθηκῶν προσδοκίας καὶ φιλίας ἐπιπλάστους; ἢ τί καὶ πράξειν διέγνωκας μήτ᾽ ἀπαλλάττεσθαι μήτε χρῆσθαι τοῖς καθεστῶσι δυνάμενος;

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Οὕτω δὴ βουλευσάμενος καὶ καθάπερ ὁ Ζεὺς τὸν18 Ἕκτορα ὑπεξαγαγὼν ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ βελέων, φασίν, ἔκ τ᾽ ἀνδροκτασίης ἔκ θ᾽ αἵματος ἔκ τε κυδοιμοῦ τὸ λοιπὸν οἰκουρεῖν εἱλόμην καὶ βίον τινὰ τοῦτον γυναικώδη καὶ ἄτολμον τοῖς πολλοῖς δοκοῦντα προτιθέμενος αὐτῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ Πλάτωνι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ προσλαλῶ, καὶ καθίσας ἐμαυτὸν ὥσπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ μυριάνδρῳ σφόδρα που μετέωρος ἐπισκοπῶ τὰ γιγνόμενα, τοῦτο μὲν πολλὴν ψυχαγωγίαν καὶ γέλ τα παρεχειν δυνάμενα, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ πεῖραν ἀνδρὸς ὡς ἀληθῶς βεβαίου λαβεῖν.

Εἰ γὰρ χρὴ καὶ κακῶν ἔπαινον εἰπεῖν; μὴ ὑπολάβῃς19 μεῖζόν τι γυμνάσιον ἀρετῆς ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς δοκιμασίαν ἀληθεστέραν τῆσδε τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα

διατριβῆς· οὐ γὰρ μικρὸν ἀντισχεῖν τοσαύταις μὲν ἐπιθυμίαις, τοσούτοις δὲ θεάμασι τε καὶ ἀκούσμασι πάντοθεν ἕλκουσι καὶ ἀντιλαμβανομένοις, ἀλλὰ ἀτεχνῶς δεῖ τὸν Ὀδυσσέα μιμησάμενον παραπλεῖν αὐτὰ μὴ δεδεμένον τῷ χεῖρε—δεινὸν γάρ—μηδὲ τὰ ὦτα κηρῷ φραξάμενον, ἀλλ᾽ ἀκούοντα καὶ λελυμένον καὶ ἀληθῶς ὑπερήφανον. ἔνεστι δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίαν θαυμάσαι παραθεωροῦντα20 τὴν τοσαύτην ἄνοιαν, καὶ τῶν τῆς τύχης ἀγαθῶν καταφρονεῖν ὁρῶντα ὥσπερ ἐν σκηνῇ καὶ πολυπροσώπῳ δράματι τὸν μὲν ἐξ οἰκέτου δεσπότην προϊόντα, τὸν δ᾽ ἀντὶ πλουσίου πένητα, τὸν δὲ σατράπην ἐκ πένητος ἢ βασιλέα, τὸν δὲ φίλον τούτου, τὸν δὲ ἐχθρόν, τὸν δὲ φυγάδα· τοῦτο γάρ τοι καὶ τὸ δεινότατόν ἐστιν, ὅτι καίτοι μαρτυρομένης τῆς Τύχης παίζειν τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων

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πράγματα καὶ ὁμολογούσης μηδὲν αὐτῶν εἶναι βέβαιον, ὅμως ταῦθ᾽ ὁσημέραι βλέποντες ὀρέγονται καὶ πλούτου καὶ δυναστείας καὶ μεστοὶ περιίασι πάντες οὐ γινομένων ἐλπίδων.

Ὃ δὲ δὴ ἔφην, ὅτι καὶ γελᾶν ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις21 ἔνεστι καὶ ψυχαγωγεῖσθαι, τοῦτο ἤδη σοι φράσω. πῶς γὰρ οὐ γελοῖοι μὲν πλουτοῦντες αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰς πορφυρίδας προφαίνοντες καὶ τοὺς δακτυλίους προτείνοντες καὶ πολλὴν κατηγοροῦντες ἀπειροκαλίαν, τὸ δὲ καινότατον, τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας ἀλλοτρίᾳ φωνῇ προσαγορεύοντες, ἀγαπᾶν ἀξιοῦντες, ὅτι μόνον αὐτοὺς προσέβλεψαν, οἱ δὲ σεμνότεροι καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι περιμένοντες, οὐ πόρρωθεν οὐδ᾽ ὡς Πέρσαις νόμος, ἀλλὰ δεῖ προσελθόντα καὶ ὑποκύψαντα[1], τὴν ψυχὴν ταπεινώσαντα καὶ τὸ πάθος αὐτῆς ἐμφανίσαντα τῇ τοῦ σώματος ὁμοιότητι, τὸ στῆθος ἢ τὴν δεξιὰν καταφιλεῖν, ζηλωτὸν καὶ περίβλεπτον τοῖς μηδὲ τούτου τυγχάνουσιν· ὁ δ᾽ ἕστηκεν παρέχων ἑαυτὸν εἰς πλείω χρόνον ἐξαπατώμενον. ἐπαινῶ δέ γε ταύτης αὐτοὺς τῆς ἀπανθρωπίας, ὅτι μὴ καὶ τοῖς στόμασιν ἡμᾶς προσίενται.

Πολὺ δὲ τούτων οἱ προσιόντες αὐτοὶ καὶ22 θεραπεύοντες γελοιότεροι, νυκτὸς μὲν ἐξανιστάμενοι μέσης, περιθέοντες δὲ ἐν κύκλῳ τὴν πόλιν καὶ πρὸς τῶν οἰκετῶν ἀποκλειόμενοι, κύνες καὶ κόλακες καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀκούειν ὑπομένοντες. γέρας δὲ τῆς πικρᾶς ταύτης αὐτοῖς περιόδου τὸ φορτικὸν ἐκεῖνο δεῖπνον καὶ πολλῶν αἴτιον συμφορῶν,

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ἐν ᾧ πόσα μὲν ἐμφαγόντες, πόσα δὲ παρὰ γνώμην ἐμπιόντες, πόσα δὲ ὧν οὐκ ἐχρῆν ἀπολαλήσαντες ἢ μεμφόμενοι[1] τὸ τελευταῖον ἢ δυσφοροῦντες ἀπίασιν ἢ διαβάλλοντες τὸ δεῖπνον ἢ ὕβριν ἢ μικρολογίαν ἐγκαλοῦντες. πλήρεις δὲ αὐτῶν ἐμούντων οἱ στενωποὶ καὶ πρὸς τοῖς χαμαιτυπείοις μαχομένων· καὶ μεθ᾽ ἡμέραν οἱ πλείονες αὐτῶν κατακλιθέντες ἰατροῖς παρέχουσιν ἀφορμὰς περιόδων· ἔνιοι μὲν γάρ, τὸ καινότατον, οὐδὲ νοσεῖν σχολάζουσιν.

Ἐγὼ μέντοι γε πολὺ τῶν κολακευομένων ἐξωλεστέρους23 τοὺς κόλακας ὑπείληφα, καὶ σχεδὸν αὐτοὺς ἐκείνοις καθίστασθαι τῆς ὑπερηφανίας αἰτίους· ὅταν γὰρ αὐτῶν τὴν περιουσίαν θαυμάσωσιν καὶ τὸν χρυσὸν ἐπαινέσωσιν καὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας ἔωθεν ἐμπλήσωσιν καὶ προσελθόντες ὥσπερ δεσπότας προσείπωσιν, τί καὶ φρονήσειν ἐκείνους εἰκός ἐστιν; εἰ δέ γε κοινῷ δόγματι κἂν πρὸς ὀλίγον ἀπέσχοντο τῆσδε τῆς ἐθελοδουλείας, οὐκ ἂν οἴει τοὐναντίον αὐτοὺς ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας τῶν πτωχῶν δεομένους τοὺς πλουσίους, μὴ ἀθέατον αὐτῶν μηδ᾽ ἀμάρτυρον τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν καταλιπεῖν μηδ᾽ ἀνόνητόν τε καὶ ἄχρηστον τῶν τραπεζῶν τὸ κάλλος καὶ τῶν οἴκων τὸ μέγεθος; οὐ γὰρ οὕτω τοῦ πλουτεῖν ἐρῶσιν ὡς τοῦ διὰ τὸ πλουτεῖν εὐδαιμονίζεσθαι. καὶ οὕτω δὴ[2] ἔχει, μηδὲν ὄφελος εἶναι περικαλλοῦς οἰκίας τῷ οἰκοῦντι μηδὲ χρυσοῦ καὶ ἐλέφαντος, εἰ μή τις αὐτὰ θαυμάζοι. ἐχρῆν οὖν ταύτῃ καθαιρεῖν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπευωνίζειν τὴν δυναστείαν ἐπιτειχίσαντας

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τῷ πλούτῳ τὴν ὑπεροψίαν· νῦν δὲ λατρεύοντες εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἄγουσιν.

Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄνδρας ἰδιώτας καὶ ἀναφανδὸν τὴν24 ἀπαιδευσίαν ὁμολογοῦντας τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν, μετριώτερον ἂν εἰκότως νομισθείη· τὸ δὲ καὶ τῶν φιλοσοφεῖν προσποιουμένων πολλοὺς[1] πολλῷ ἔτι τούτων γελοιότερα δρᾶν, τοῦτ᾽ ἤδη τὸ δεινότατόν ἐστι. πῶς γὰρ οἴει τὴν ψυχὴν διατεθεῖσθαί μοι, ὅταν ἴδω τούτων τινά, μάλιστα τῶν προβεβηκότων, ἀναμεμιγμένον κολάκων ὄχλῳ καὶ τῶν ἐπ᾽ ἀξίας τινὰ δορυφοροῦντα καὶ τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰ δεῖπνα παραγγέλλουσι κοινολογούμενον, ἐπισημότερον δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπὸ τοῦ σχήματος ὄντα καὶ φανερώτερον; καὶ ὃ μάλιστα ἀγανακτῶ, ὅτι μὴ καὶ τὴν σκευὴν μεταλαμβάνουσι, τὰ ἄλλα γε ὁμοίως ὑποκρινόμενοι τοῦ δράματος. ἃ μὲν25 γὰρ ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις ἐργάζονται, τίνι τῶν καλῶν εἰκάσομεν; οὐκ ἐμφοροῦνται μὲν ἀπειροκαλώτερον, μεθύσκονται δὲ φανερώτερον, ἐξανίστανται δὲ πάντων ὕστατοι, πλείω δὲ ἀποφέρειν τῶν ἄλλων ἀξιοῦσιν; οἱ δὲ ἀστειότεροι πολλάκις αὐτῶν καὶ ᾄσαι προήχθησαν.

Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὖν γελοῖα ἡγεῖτο· μάλιστα δὲ ἐμέμνητο τῶν ἐπὶ μισθῷ φιλοσοφούντων καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὤνιον ὥσπερ ἐξ ἀγορᾶς προτιθέντων· ἐργαστήρια γοῦν ἐκάλει καὶ καπηλεῖα τὰς τούτων διατριβάς· ἠξίου γὰρ τὸν πλούτου καταφρονεῖν διδάξοντα πρῶτον αὐτὸν παρέχειν ὑψηλότερον λημμάτων. ἀμέλει καὶ πράττων ταῦτα διετέλει, οὐ26 μόνον προῖκα τοῖς ἀξιοῦσι συνδιατρίβων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις ἐπαρκῶν καὶ πάσης περιουσίας καταφρονῶν,

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τοσούτου δέων ὀρέγεσθαι τῶν οὐδὲν προσηκόντων, ὥστε μηδὲ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ φθειρομένων ποιεῖσθαι πρόνοιαν, ὅς γε καὶ ἀγρὸν οὐ πόρρω τῆς πόλεως κεκτημένος οὐδὲ ἐπιβῆναι αὐτοῦ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ἠξίωσεν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ εἶναι διωμολόγει, ταῦτ᾽ οἶμαι ὑπειληφώς, ὅτι τούτων φύσει μὲν οὐδενός ἐσμεν κύριοι, νόμῳ δὲ καὶ διαδοχῇ τὴν χρῆσιν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀόριστον παραλαμβάνοντες ὀλιγοχρόνιοι δεσπόται νομιζόμεθα, κἀπειδὰν ἡ προθεσμία παρέλθῃ, τηνικαῦτα παραλαβὼν ἄλλος ἀπολαύει τοῦ ὀνόματος.

Οὐ μικρὰ δὲ οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνα παρέχει τοῖς ζηλοῦν ἐθέλουσι παραδείγματα, τῆς τροφῆς τὸ ἀπέριττον καὶ τῶν γυμνασίων τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ τοῦ προσώπου τὸ αἰδέσιμον καὶ τῆς ἐσθῆτος τὸ μέτριον, ἐφ᾽ ἅπασι δὲ τούτοις τῆς διανοίας τὸ ἡρμοσμένον καὶ τὸ ἥμερον τοῦ τρόπου. παρῄνει[27] δὲ τοῖς συνοῦσι μήτ᾽ ἀναβάλλεσθαι τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὅπερ τοὺς πολλοὺς ποιεῖν προθεσμίας ὁριζομένους ἑορτὰς ἢ πανηγύρεις, ὡς ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνων ἀρξομένους τοῦ μὴ ψεύσασθαι καὶ τοῦ τὰ δέοντα ποιῆσαι· ἠξίου γὰρ ἀμέλλητον εἶναι τὴν πρὸς τὸ καλὸν ὁρμήν. δῆλος δὲ ἦν καὶ τῶν τοιούτων κατεγνωκὼς φιλοσόφων, οἳ ταύτην ἄσκησιν ἀρετῆς ὑπελάμβανον, ἣν πολλαῖς ἀνάγκαις καὶ πόνοις τοὺς νέους ἀντέχειν καταγυμνάσωσιν, τοῦτο μὲν ψυχρολουτεῖν[1] οἱ πολλοὶ κελεύοντες, ἄλλοι δὲ μαστιγοῦντες, οἱ δὲ χαριέστεροι καὶ σιδήρῳ τὰς ἐπιφανείας αὐτῶν καταξύοντες. ἡγεῖτο γὰρ χρῆναι πολὺ πρότερον ἐν[28]

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ταῖς ψυχαῖς τὸ στέρρον τοῦτο καὶ ἀπαθὲς κατασκευάσαι, καὶ τὸν ἄριστα παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους προαιρούμενον τοῦτο μὲν ψυχῆς, τοῦτο δὲ σώματος, τοῦτο δὲ ἡλικίας τε καὶ τῆς πρότερον ἀγωγῆς ἐστοχάσθαι, ἵνα μὴ τὰ παρὰ δύναμιν ἐπιτάττων ἐλέγχηται πολλοὺς γοῦν καὶ τελευτᾶν ἔφασκεν οὕτως ἀλόγως ἐπιταθέντας· ἕνα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς εἶδον, ὃς καὶ γευσάμενος τῶν παρ᾽ ἐκείνοις κακῶν, ἐπειδὴ τάχιστα λόγων ἀληθῶν ἐπήκουσεν, ἀμεταστρεπτὶ φεύγων ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφίκετο καὶ δῆλος ἦν ῥᾷον διακείμενος.

Ἤδη δὲ τούτων ἀποστὰς τῶν ἄλλων αὖθις[29] ἀνθρώπων ἐμέμνητο καὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταραχὰς διεξῄει καὶ τὸν ὠθισμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ θέατρα καὶ τὸν ἱππόδρομον καὶ τὰς τῶν ἡνιόχων εἰκόνας καὶ τὰ τῶν ἵππων ὀνόματα καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς στενωποῖς περὶ τούτων διαλόγους· πολλὴ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἡ ἱππομανία καὶ πολλῶν ἤδη σπουδαίων εἶναι δοκούντων ἐπείληπται.

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἑτέρου δράματος ἥπτετο τῶν[30] ἀμφὶ τὴν νέκυιάν τε καὶ διαθήκας καλινδουμένων, προστιθεὶς ὅτι μίαν φωνὴν οἱ Ῥωμαίων παῖδες ἀληθῆ παρ᾽ ὅλον τὸν βίον προΐενται, τὴν ἐν ταῖς διαθήκαις λέγων, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολαύσωσι τῆς σφετέρας ἀληθείας. ἃ δὲ καὶ μεταξὺ λέγοντος αὐτοῦ γελᾶν προήχθην, ὅτι καὶ συγκατορύττειν ἑαυτοῖς ἀξιοῦσι τὰς ἀμαθίας καὶ τὴν ἀναλγησίαν ἔγγραφον ὁμολογοῦσιν, οἱ μὲν ἐσθῆτας ἑαυτοῖς

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κελεύοντες συγκαταφλέγεσθαι τῶν παρὰ τὸν βίον τιμίων, οἱ δὲ καὶ παραμένειν τινὰς οἰκέτας τοῖς τάφοις, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ στέφειν τὰς στήλας ἄνθεσιν, εὐήθεις ἔτι καὶ παρὰ τὴν τελευτὴν διαμένοντες. εἰκάζειν οὖν ἠξίου, τί πέπρακται τούτοις[31] παρὰ τὸν βίον, εἰ τοιαῦτα περὶ τῶν μετὰ τὸν βίον ἐπισκήπτουσι· τούτους γὰρ εἶναι τοὺς τὸ πολυτελὲς ὄψον ὠνουμένους καὶ τὸν οἶνον ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις μετὰ κρόκων τε καὶ ἀρομάτων ἐκχέοντας, τοὺς μέσου χειμῶνος ἐμπιπλαμένους ῥόδων καὶ τὸ σπάνιον αὐτῶν καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἀγαπῶντος, τῶν δ᾽ ἐν καιρῷ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ὡς εὐτελῶν ὑπερηφανοῦντας, τούτους εἶναι[1] τοὺς καὶ τὰ μύρα πίνοντας· ὃ καὶ μάλιστα διέσυρεν αὐτῶν, ὅτι μηδὲ χρῆσθαι ἴσασιν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, ἀλλὰ κἀν ταύταις παρανομοῦσι καὶ τοὺς ὅρους συγχέουσι, πάντοθεν τῇ τρυφῇ παραδόντες αὑτῶν τὰς ψυχὰς πατεῖν, καὶ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις τε καὶ κωμῳδίαις λεγόμενον, ἤδη καὶ παρὰ θύραν εἰσβιαζόμενοι. σολοικισμὸν[2] οὖν ἐκάλει τοῦτο τῶν ἡδονῶν.

Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς αὐτῆς γνώμης κἀκεῖνα ἔλεγεν,[32] ἀτεχνῶς τοῦ Μώμου τὸν λόγον μιμησάμενος· ὡς γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ἐμέμφετο τοῦ ταύρου τὸν δημιουργὸν θεὸν οὐ προθέντα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν τὰ κέρατα, οὕτω δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ᾐτιᾶτο τῶν στεφανουμένων, ὅτι μὴ ἴσασι τοῦ στεφάνου τὸν τόπον· εἰ γάρ τοι, ἔφη,

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τῇ πνοῇ τῶν ἴων τε καὶ ῥόδων χαίρουσιν, ὑπὸ τῇ ῥινὶ μάλιστα ἐχρῆν αὐτοὺς στέφεσθαι παρ᾽ αὐτὴν ὡς οἷόν τε τὴν ἀναπνοήν, ἵν᾽ ὡς πλεῖστον ἀνέσπων τῆς ἡδονῆς.

Καὶ μὴν κἀκείνους διεγέλα τοὺς θαυμάσιόν[33] τινα τὴν σπουδὴν περὶ τὰ δεῖπνα ποιουμένους χυμῶν τε ποικιλίαις καὶ πεμμάτων περιεργίαις· καὶ γὰρ αὖ καὶ τούτους ἔφασκεν ὀλιγοχρονίου τε καὶ βραχείας ἡδονῆς ἕρωτι πολλὰς πραγματείας ὑπομένειν· ἀπέφαινε γοῦν τεσσάρων δακτύλων αὐτοῖς ἕνεκα πάντα πονεῖσθαι τὸν πόνον, ἐφ᾽ ὅσους ὁ μήκιστος ἀνθρώπου λαιμός ἐστιν· οὔτε γὰρ πρὶν ἐμφαγεῖν, ἀπολαύειν τι τῶν ἐωνημένων, οὔτε βρωθέντων ἡδίω γενέσθαι τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν πολυτελεστέρων πλησμονήν· λοιπὸν οὖν εἶναι τὴν ἐν τῇ παρόδῳ γιγνομένην ἡδονὴν τοσούτων ὠνεῖσθαι χρημάτων. εἰκότα δὲ πάσχειν ἔλεγεν αὐτοὺς ὑπ᾽

ἀπαιδευσίας τὰς ἀληθεστέρας ἡδονὰς ἀγνοοῦντας, ὧν ἁπασῶν φιλοσοφία χορηγός ἐστιν τοῖς πονεῖν προαιρουμένοις.34

Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν τοῖς βαλανείοις δρωμένων πολλὰ μὲν διεξῄει, τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἑπομένων, τὰς ὕβρεις, τοὺς ἐπικειμένους τοῖς οἰκέταις καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν ἐκφερομένους. ἓν δέ τι καὶ μάλιστα μισεῖν ἐῴκει, πολὺ δ᾽ ἐν τῇ πόλει τοῦτο καὶ τοῖς βαλανείοις ἐπιχωριάζον· προϊόντας γάρ τινας τῶν οἰκετῶν δεῖ βοᾶν καὶ παραγγέλλειν προορᾶσθαι τοῖν ποδοῖν, ἢν ὑψηλόν τι ἢ κοῖλον μέλλωσιν ὑπερβαίνειν, καὶ ὑπομιμνήσκειν αὐτούς, τὸ καινότατον, ὅτι βαδίζουσιν. δεινὸν οὖν ἐποιεῖτο,

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εἰ στόματος μὲν ἀλλοτρίου δειπνοῦντες μὴ δέονται μηδὲ χειρῶν, μηδὲ τῶν ὤτων ἀκούοντες, ὀφθαλμῶν δὲ ὑγιαίνοντες ἀλλοτρίων δέονται προοψομένων καὶ ἀνέχονται φωνὰς ἀκούοντες δυστυχέσιν ἀνθρώποις πρεπούσας καὶ πεπηρωμένοις· ταῦτα γὰρ αὐτὰ πάσχουσιν ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ἡμέρας μέσης καὶ οἱ τὰς πόλεις ἐπιτετραμμένοι.

Ταῦτά τε καὶ πολλὰ ἕτερα τοιαῦτα διελθὼν35κατέπαυσε τὸν λόγον. ἐγὼ δὲ τέως μὲν ἤκουον αὐτοῦ τεθηπώς, μὴ σιωπήσῃ πεφοβημένος· ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἐπαύσατο, τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τῶν Φαιάκων πάθος ἐπεπόνθειν· πολὺν γὰρ δὴ χρόνον ἐς αὐτὸν ἀπέβλεπον κεκηλημένος· εἶτα πολλῇ συγχύσει καὶ ἰλίγγῳ κατειλημμένος τοῦτο μὲν ἱδρῶτι κατερρεόμην, τοῦτο δὲ φθέγξασθαι βουλόμενος ἐξέπιπτόν τε καὶ ἀνεκοπτόμην, καὶ ἥ τε φωνὴ ἐξέλειπε καὶ ἡ γλῶττα διημάρτανε, καὶ τέλος ἐδάκρυον ἀπορούμενος· οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἐπιπολῆς οὐδ᾽ ὡς ἔτυχεν ἡμῶν ὁ λόγος καθίκετο, βαθεῖα δὲ καὶ καίριος ἡ πληγὴ ἐγένετο, καὶ μάλα εὐστόχως ἐνεχθεὶς ὁ λόγος αὐτήν, εἰ οἷόν τε εἰπεῖν, διέκοψε τὴν ψυχήν· εἰ γάρ τι δεῖ κἀμὲ ἤδη φιλοσόφων προσάψασθαι λόγων, ὧδε περὶ τούτων ὑπείληφα· δοκεῖ μοι ἀνδρὸς εὐφυοῦς ψυχὴ μάλα σκοπῷ36 τινι ἁπαλῷ προσεοικέναι. τοξόται δὲ πολλοὶ μὲν ἀνὰ τὸν βίον καὶ μεστοὶ τὰς φαρέτρας ποικίλων τε καὶ παντοδαπῶν λόγων, οὐ μὴν πάντες εὔστοχα τοξεύουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν σφόδρα τὰς νευρὰς ἐπιτείναντες ἐντονώτερον τοῦ δέοντος ἀφιᾶσιν· καὶ ἅπτονται μὲν καὶ οὗτοι[1], τὰ δὲ βέλη αὐτῶν οὐ μένει ἐν τῷ σκοπῷ, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς σφοδρότητος

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διελθόντα καὶ παροδεύσαντα κεχηνυῖαν μόνον τῷ τραύματι τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπέλιπεν. ἄλλοι δὲ πάλιν τούτοις ὑπεναντίως· ὑπὸ γὰρ ἀσθενείας τε καὶ ἀτονίας οὐδὲ ἐφικνεῖται τὰ βέλη αὐτοῖς ἄχρι πρὸς τὸν σκοπόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκλυθέντα καταπίπτει πολλάκις ἐκ μέσης τῆς ὁδοῦ· ἢν δέ ποτε καὶ ἐφίκηται, ἄκρον μὲν ἐπιλίγδην ἅπτεται, βαθεῖαν δὲ οὐκ ἐργάζεται πληγήν· οὐ γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἰσχυρᾶς ἐμβολῆς ἀπεστέλλετο. ὅστις δὲ ἀγαθὸς τοξότης καὶ τούτῳ37 ὅμοιος, πρῶτον μὲν ἀκριβῶς ὄψεται τὸν σκοπόν, εἰ μὴ σφόδρα μαλακός, εἰ μὴ στερρότερος τοῦ βέλους. γίγνονται γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἄτρωτοι σκοποί. ἐπειδὰν δὲ ταῦτα ἴδῃ, τηνικαῦτα χρίσας τὸ βέλος οὔτε ἰῷ, καθάπερ τὰ Σκυθῶν χρίεται, οὔτε ὀπῷ, καθάπερ τὰ Κουρήτων, ἀλλ᾽ ἠρέμα δηκτικῷ τε καὶ γλυκεῖ φαρμάκῳ, τούτῳ χρίσας εὐτέχνως[1] ἐτόξευσε· τὸ δὲ ἐνεχθὲν εὖ μάλα ἐντόνως καὶ διακόψαν ἄχρι τοῦ διελθεῖν μένει τε καὶ πολὺ τοῦ φαρμάκου ἀφίησιν, ὃ δὴ σκιδνάμενον ὅλην ἐν κύκλῳ τὴν ψυχὴν περιέρχεται. τοῦτό τοι καὶ ἥδονται καὶ δακρύουσι μεταξὺ ἀκούοντες, ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔπασχον, ἡσυχῇ ἄρα τοῦ φαρμάκου τὴν ψυχὴν περιθέοντος. ἐπῄει δ᾽ οὖν μοι πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸ ἔπος ἐκεῖνο λέγειν· βάλλ᾽ οὕτως, αἴ κέν τι φόως γένηαι. ὥσπερ γὰρ οἱ τοῦ Φρυγίου αὐλοῦ ἀκούοντες οὐ πάντες μαίνονται, ἀλλ᾽ ὁπόσοι αὐτῶν τῇ Ῥέᾳ λαμβάνονται, οὗτοι δὲ πρὸς τὸ μέλος ὑπομιμνήσκονται τοῦ πάθους, οὕτω δὴ καὶ φιλοσόφων ἀκούοντες οὐ πάντες ἔνθεοι καὶ τραυματίαι ἀπίασιν, ἀλλ᾽ οἷς ὑπῆν τι ἐν τῇ φύσει φιλοσοφίας συγγενές.

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38 ἑταῖρε, διελήλυθας, ἐλελήθεις δέ με πολλῆς ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς ἀμβροσίας καὶ τοῦ λωτοῦ κεκορεσμένος· ὥστε καὶ μεταξὺ σοῦ λέγοντος ἔπασχόν τι ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ παυσαμένου ἄχθομαι καὶ ἵνα δὴ καὶ κατὰ σὲ εἴπω, τέτρωμαι· καὶ μὴ θαυμάσῃς· οἶσθα γὰρ ὅτι καὶ οἱ πρὸς τῶν κυνῶν τῶν λυσσώντων δηχθέντες οὐκ αὐτοὶ μόνοι λυσσῶσιν, ἀλλὰ κἄν τινας ἑτέρους[1] ἐν τῇ μανίᾳ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο διαθῶσιν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔκφρονες γίγνονται· συμμεταβαίνει γάρ τι τοῦ πάθους ἅμα τῷ δήγματι καὶ πολυγονεῖται ἡ νόσος καὶ πολλὴ γίγνεται τῆς μανίας διαδοχή.

Οὐκοῦν καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμῖν μανίαν[2] ὁμολογεῖς;

Πάνυ μὲν οὖν, καὶ προσέτι δέομαί γέ σου κοινήν τινα τὴν θεραπείαν ἐπινοεῖν.

Τὸ τοῦ ἄρα Τηλέφου ἀνάγκη ποιεῖν.

Ποῖον αὖ λέγεις;

Ἐπὶ τὸν τρώσαντα ἐλθόντας ἰᾶσθαι παρακαλεῖν.

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