

This paper proposes to address the question of the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy not simply as a current phenomenon of the Second Sophistic, but by relating it to one of the foundational texts of the philosophical discussion of rhetoric.

In Lucian, *philosophein* sometimes means not more than „to treat“ (*Disowned* 26), and *prophilosophein* and *sumphilosophein* generally amount to „conversing with.“ A philosopher in action is a talking philosopher; a silent philosopher would hardly have caught Lucian's attention. But while it is characteristic of all philosophers to talk, there are great differences in the style and function of their *logoi*. The philosopher is often credited with the ability to expound hidden meanings and to disclose the truth (*Hercules* 4; *Images* 12). However, more often than not philosophers betray this expectation by offering nothing but futile arguments, outlandish doctrines, and vociferous quarrels (*Icaromenippus* 5-9; *Symposium*). Others, among them Nigrinus and Demonax, neither possess any obscure knowledge nor talk displeasingly. Instead their teachings reflect the *topoi* of contemporary diatribe, their style is entertaining, their character friendly and bland.

Usually this diverse picture is explained by referring to a distinction between genuine and false philosophers, the genuine philosophers being located in the last group. The impeccable way of life of these philosophers authenticates their teachings and distinguishes them not only from the litigious lot of pseudo-philosophers, but also from any other orator dwelling on similar moral commonplaces. However if it is the way of life that marks the true philosopher, it is surprising that in the account we get through his interlocutor, the content of Nigrinus' speech stretches over almost twenty paragraphs, whereas his life occupies only three (*Demonax* presents a similar situation). The fact that Nigrinus leads a philosophical life seems to be rather accessory; it is through his rhetorical skill that he makes an impact on the listener. As for the latter, who is apparently converted to philosophy, we learn that he is deeply affected by Nigrinus' speech, but don't hear of a concrete change in his way of life; all we know is that he is busy rehearsing the speech and reproduces it upon request.

Recent scholarship on *Nigrinus* has been dominated by the interest in the eponymous protagonist (Schroeder, Hermes 2000) and the complex layering of voices modeled on Plato's *Symposium* (Whitmarsh 2001). My paper focuses instead on the presence of Plato's *Phaedrus*, to which *Nigrinus* owes more than a few sparse echoes (noted by Anderson 1976). Indeed the work is framed by motifs from *Phaedrus*: The way Nigrinus is said to examine the soul of the addressee and to shape his speech accordingly (§ 37) appears to parody what Socrates demands of the orator in *Phdr.* 270e-272b. And the very phrase that describes the impact of Nigrinus' *logoi* (§ 1: *hoti mē parergōs eilēmmai*) recalls, and subverts, Socrates' claim about rhetoric at the end of *Phaedrus* (274a: *ou ... homodoulois dei kharizesthai meletān ... hoti mē parergon*). So I argue that if Lucian in *Nigrinus* stages the failure of philosophical teaching, he shapes his critique as a reply to Plato, the recognized master of philosophical rhetoric.