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Ludvig Holberg's Mobile Novel
Niels Klim's Travels Underground (1741-1745)

A Functionalistic Approach to its Place in European Literary History

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Dutch translation of title:

Ludvig Holbergs beweeglijke roman *De onderaardse reis van Niels Klim* (1741-1745). Een functionalistische benadering tot zijn plaats in de literaire geschiedenis van Europa.

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Acknowledgements

Like the main character in Jules Verne's *Voyage au centre de la Terre*, Axel, I started this marvellous journey as an enthusiastic and motivated young student, though unknown to what would come at me. I went into the underground and back to present my research to the world. The universes Axel and I discovered were not hell, but rather places that both fascinated because of their novelty and posed specific challenges no one had met before. The dangers I faced were considerably more modest than in Axel's case, but allow me to stretch the comparison slightly further to thank my fellow travellers.

Axel's main travel companion is Professor Lidenbrock. The latter's enthusiasm and nose for new things leads him in his research, but, as one of the most important parts of his process, he wants others to come along with him. Lidenbrock discusses with his nephew and pupil which step to take next, appreciates his contribution and values his companionship. At the beginning of Verne's novel, Lidenbrock is Axel's superior, not only in academic experience and knowledge of the topic but also in wisdom of life. By the end, he still is, but Alex appreciates his mentor and his craft more with every meter they descend together into the underground. My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, or better *Doktorvater*, Wim Verbaal who not only encouraged me to start my journey and pass on my research results to the world, but also was present at every step of the way. Largely thanks to him periods of joy and motivation outweighed the moments of desperation and doubt while preparing this thesis.

When following Axel's adventures into the depths, one easily forgets the third travel companion: the Danish-speaking hunter, Hans Bjelke, whom Axel and Lidenbrock picked up in Iceland as a guide. Hans is not a man of many words, but of great strength. To me, Hans personifies a large group of people who supported me along the way. Some of them helped in decisive ways, others were rather silent but unconditionally present. The intellectual and moral support of Lidenbrock would have never been enough to reach the inner earth with his nephew, if this trustworthy figure was not around.

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Finally, we have Axel's dearest, Graüben. Fran, as there is no way to describe your tremendous role in this adventure, I will keep it short. I might (pretend to) be as protean,

whimsical and cosmopolitan as I present Holberg in this thesis, but Holberg stayed single. So, thank you for keeping up with me during these years, supporting me on every step of the way and making me see the purpose of the journey rather than the purpose of this text.

This entire voyage, including research stays abroad and the participation in international conferences, was made possible by the generous financial support of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO). What I found at the end of my journey was a discovery of which the value has yet to be reviewed, but I am already fortunate enough that I could depart on my way to the underground and came back alive, as Axel and so many other fictional or mythical figures have done before me.

Note to the Reader

Several parts of this thesis are an elaboration of what I have written before in one form or the other. Ideas from my master thesis, entitled *Metafiction in Ludvig Holberg's 'Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum'* (Ghent University, 2013), which was a first narratological and structural analysis of *Niels Klim*, found their way into the different parts of the present dissertation, most notably in the narratological chapters 3 and 5. A part of chapter 3, namely the analysis of the preface to Klim's sea voyage, was published as a discussion of unreliability in *Niels Klim* in the European Journal for Scandinavian Studies in 2016.[1] Reworked versions of chapter 2 and 6 are currently in press. They will be chapters in an edited volume on Neo-Latin literature and an interdisciplinary volume on solitude in the long seventeenth century, both planned for 2018.[2] A last article that was accepted for publication, on Holberg's description of his stay in Rome in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*, in the end was not included in the dissertation because I wanted to focus on *Niels Klim*.[3] The relevance of Holberg's *Letters* for my ideas on mobility in Holberg's writings, though, will be hinted at in the conclusion of this thesis.

When citing Holberg's works, I use the online database *Ludvig Holberg's Writings* (*Ludvig Holbergs Skrifter*) by the University of Bergen and the Society for Danish Language and Literature, unless it is stated otherwise. The pagination on this website often corresponds to the first editions. My references to the supplementary, textual commentaries of the database follow the same pagination as Holberg's text.[4]

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[1] Thomas Velle, "Telling True Lies. Metanarration, Intertextuality and (Un)reliability in Holberg's *Iter subterraneum*," *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 46, no. 2 (2016).

[2] Thomas Velle, "Ludvig Holberg's *Niels Klim* (1741) and the Irony of Reading and Writing in Latin," in *The Influence of Vernacular Discourses on Neo-Latin Literature*, ed. Florian Schaffenrath and Alexander Winkler (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). Thomas Velle, "Engagement and Withdrawal through Literary Travels. The Cases of Ludvig Holberg and Erik Pontoppidan," ed. Mette Birkedal Bruun, *Manifesting Solitude in the Long Seventeenth Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming).

[3] Thomas Velle, "Leaving Out Rome. Ludvig Holberg's Comical Presentation of a City and its Travellers," ed. Anna Blennow and Stefano Fogelberg Rota, *Topoi, Topographies and Travellers* (Rome: Swedish Institute, forthcoming).

[4] Ludvig Holberg, "Ludvig Holbergs Skrifter." Society of Danish Language and Literature and University of Bergen, v 2.6, accessed March 22, 2018, http://holbergsskrifter.dk.

As Holberg's works return so often in this thesis, I will refer to them throughout my text and footnotes with titles in English. For this, I use as much as I could the English translations of the titles of Holberg's works (if necessary in abbreviated form) as Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen have rendered them in their recent edited volume on Holberg's writings.[5] In the bibliography at the end, a list of the English titles is included, accompanied by the Latin and Danish titles as they appear on the database.

English translations of quotes are my own, unless stated otherwise. The translations of quotes from *Niels Klim* specifically are based upon the translation by James Ignatius McNelis Jr., but always altered to a greater or lesser degree.[6] McNelis's translation was originally printed in 1960, reissued in 2004, but goes back on the first English translation of 1742.

[5] Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, eds., *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 234-36.

[6] Ludvig Holberg, *The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground*, trans. James Ignatius Jr. McNelis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

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Introduction

A Protean Author, and How to Catch Him

One of our unavoidable shortcomings as readers of historical literature is never to be able to fully grasp the protean nature of literature and its creators. We almost instinctively look for comfort in simplifications. As a result, the Scandinavian author and Enlightenment thinker Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) has over the centuries received titles like the 'Father of Dano-Norwegian literature' or 'the Molière of the North'. Resounding names like these often do their work quite well as marketing tricks or slogans in the process of canonisation. These images of the writer, coloured by nationalism, can be recognised in the way sculptors have portrayed Holberg in different Scandinavian cities. In Copenhagen, the city of his academic career as a professor in metaphysics, history and Latin rhetorics, and also of most of his literary exploits, a statue of Holberg is symbolically placed before the Royal Danish Theatre.[1] A relaxedly seated Holberg gravely gazes over Kongens Nytorv, the heart of the monarchic power. He looks in the direction of the Ny Adelgade (formerly known as Lille Grønnegade), where once most of Holberg's Danish comedies premièred. Travelling north, we find a slightly more good-humoured Holberg, next to the National Theatre in Oslo.[2] There, Holberg is flanked by two characters from his own comical plays, Pernille and Henrik. He gracefully enters the stage while the characters are in awe of their creator, who is almost double their size. The message got across with success; nowadays, the larger Scandinavian public primarily knows him as a playwright, if aware of his existence at all.

Whereas the statues in Copenhagen and Oslo embody Holberg's public legacy, in scholarship, Holberg is remembered as a much more versatile and prolific author. He introduced many genres in Denmark, leaving his mark on a language and a literary tradition to this day. However, scholarship has always been confronted with extreme

[1] Sculpture by Theobald Stein, erected in 1875.

[2] Sculpture by Dyre Vaae, erected in 1962.

interpretational and methological challenges. On the one hand, Holberg is a protean author. As an accomplished Lucretia from one of his own comical plays, *The Vacillating Woman* (*Den Vægelsindende*, 1731), Holberg easily puts on a mask and exchanges it for another at any given time. In his *First Autobiographical Letter* (*Ad virum perillustrem epistola*, 1728), Holberg ascribes this fluid personality to an innate illness. The excess of humours in different parts of his body controls his affections, mood and, indirectly, the way he writes.[3] On the other hand, Holberg's self-ascribed psychology, or his Tigellian nature, as he also calls it after the mythical singer Tigellius, is reflected in many parts of his oeuvre.[4] Because of his manifold interests and literary production, scholarship knows Holberg as a playwright, a historian, an essayist, a monarchist, a fabulist, a philosopher, or a satirist. Some have even made him into a reformist, a social scientist, a poetic warrior and an early feminist.[5]

Despite the multiformity of Holberg's oeuvre and the versatility of his *persona*, another simplification manifested itself throughout the years of scholarly work. For this, we need to travel back to Denmark, to a small town in the middle of Sjælland, Sorø. Besides being Holberg's resting-place, Sorø also represents his academic legacy. At the end of his life, Holberg funded the Academy that is still running there today. In the gardens, a statue of a rather young Holberg was erected in 1898. Holberg is standing on a high pedestal, flanked by Clio and Thalia, the Muses of history and comedy.[6] The Sorø-Holberg hereby demonstrates two dominant trends in the scholarly perception of Holberg. On the one hand, it refers to only two of the many genres Holberg practiced, history and comedy; two genres Holberg both realised in his mother tongue, Danish. The sculpture thus again presents Holberg as a standard bearer for Danish literature and legitimises the position of a Danish author in the broader literary history. On the other hand, the portrayal of the Muses suggests that the Classical tradition profoundly inspired Holberg in his writing. Holberg's vast oeuvre is indeed full of verbal and thematic references to Classical culture and Latin literature. This element makes Holberg into a classicist who inherited a long tradition and claimed his place within this line.

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[3] Holberg, *First Autobiographical Letter,* 207-208.

[4] For a discussion of how Holberg portrays himself as a Tigellius in his *First Autobiographical Letter*, see Johnny Kondrup, *Levned og tolkninger. Studier i nordisk selvbiografi.* (Odense: Universitetsforlag, 1982), 130-35. Holberg also wrote a Danish poem *Apology for the Bard Tigellius* (*Apologie for Sangeren Tigellio*), which he published in his *Four Satiricial Poems* (*Fire Skæmtedigte,* 1722). For Holberg's shifting personality in the *First Autobiographical Letter*, see also Steinar Gimnes, "Kommunikasjonsstrategi og psykologi i Holbergs "Første levnetsbrev"," in *Opplysning i Norden*, ed. Heiko Uecker (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 232-36.

[5] See respectively, Thomas Bredsdorff, "A Reformist's Revolution. Holberg's Radical Ideas in Matters of Education," in *Holberg*, ed. Gunnar Sivertsen and Eivind Tjønneland (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2008). Ragnvald Kalleberg, "Ludvig Holberg as Social Scientist," in *Holberg*, ed. Gunnar Sivertsen and Eivind Tjønneland (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2008). Jens Kruuse, *En poetisk kriger. Ludvig Holberg* (København: Berlingske, 1978).

[6] Sculpture by Vilhelm Bissens, erected in 1898.

Sorø's Holberg might symbolise a more concrete shortcoming of us as readers, or better as scholars; scholarship does not choose just one great accomplishment, as the public memory does, but tends to simplify Holberg's multifaceted oeuvre into a comprehensible opposition, which is anchored in our academic structures and division of scholarly fields. We are inclined to choose sides over and over again, if not explicitly, at least implicitly by way of corpus selection or choice of topics: Holberg as a Modern author, or a classicist; the proud emancipator of the Danish language, or one of the last great Neo-Latinists who skilfully refers to classical literature and culture. As a result, there have formed two general traditions in Holberg scholarship. A vernacular tradition, on the one hand, focuses on his Danish works and the influence of contemporary literature.[7] A tradition of Latinists, on the other hand, foregrounds the influence of classical literature and draws the attention to a relatively small group of Latin writings.[8] Depending on the approach of a study, Latin works can easily be turned into Danish ones, or the other way around.[9]

The present thesis aims at bridging the two scholarly traditions, and I will do so by revaluing the shape-shifting of Holberg and the versatile nature of his writings as such, rather than wanting to choose one side or the other. I will shed light on a Holberg that is perhaps most clearly captured in the following quote from his *First Autobiographical Letter*: "In jocis semper mentior, in rebus seriis rarò."[10] Holberg is an author of whom you never know completely whether he is serious or he is joking, whether is lying or telling the truth, but also an author who plays with different readerships and their expectations. For, in a later edition from 1737, Holberg adjusts the sentence from "in jocis semper mentior,

[7] In the vernacular tradition, a pioneering role was granted to F.J. Billeskov Jensen. He made, amongst many others, a monograph on Holberg as an epigrammatist and essayist, and an English biography of Holberg that introduces Holberg to a broad reading public outside Scandinavia. Frederik Julius Billeskov Jansen, *Holberg som epigrammatiker og essayist*, 2 vols. (København: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1938); Frederik Julius Billeskov Jansen, *Ludvig Holberg* (New York, NY: Twayne, 1974).

[8] More attention for the classical influence on Holberg's oeuvre, and particularly on his few Latin writings, was asked by Aage Kragelund. He raised more awareness to Holberg's Latin writings by editing bilingual editions Holberg's few Latin works: Ludvig Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, 3 vols. (København: Gad, 1970); Ludvig Holberg, *Tre Levnedsbreve 1728-1743*, 3 vols. (København: Gads, 1965); Ludvig Holberg, *Latinske smaaskrifter*, 2 vols. (København: Gad, 1974)., and by focusing on Holberg's use of quotations from works of Pliny, Petronius, Livy, Vergil, and others: Aage Kragelund, *Ludvig Holberg citatkunstneren. Holberg og den yngre Plinius* (København: Gad, 1962); Aage Kragelund, *Holberg og Petronius' Satyrica* (Odense: Universitetsforlag, 1977); Aage Kragelund, *Holbeg og Cicero* (København: Gad, 1978); Aage Kragelund, *Holberg og Seneca* (København: Gad, 1983).

[9] An example might be Mogens Leisner-Jensen's study of Holberg's Danish comedies, which focuses entirely on Holberg's place in the long reception of the Roman comical playwrights Plautus and Terence. Mogens Leisner-Jensen, *Scena er på theatro: studier over Ludvig Holberg og den romerske komedie* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1999). Johnny Kondrup reads the first letter of Holberg's Latin memoirs from the perspective of Nordic autobiographies. Kondrup, 122-39.

[10] *First Autobiographical Letter*, 208. "In jokes I always lie, in serious matters rarely."

in rebus seriis rarò" to "in jocis nunnunqvam mentior, in rebus seriis nunqvam."[11] A first question that might arise from this adjustment is what it teaches us about Holberg as a biographical person? But it might also lead us to more fundamental question about the text: when talking about 'Holberg's *Autobiographical Letters*,' do we actually know which text we are talking about? The one in which he 'always lies' or 'never lies'? When we interpret the quote, do we learn something about Holberg, or rather about ourselves, our expectations and reading attitude when engaging with Holberg's text? I am inclined to think that the adjustment might not primarily indicate a shift in Holberg's character or literary preference, but rather the desire to challenge his readers to perceive his character and his books as a Tigellius or a Protheus.

Instead of looking at who Holberg *is,* we might have to look at how he can be perceived as one *persona* or the other during the act of reading. For, it is one thing to observe that Holberg jokes on one page and is serious on the other, and another thing to understand which effect this might have on the experience of readers. Readers have always been at the centre of Holberg's writing project, amongst others because of his interest in moral philosophy, and will claim their position at the centre of the present study as well. Reading Holberg's oeuvre is a rollercoaster ride, a dizzying experience in the course of which the reader's cart makes unexpected twists and turns. The borders between creation, reading, reception and rewriting, as acts of the literary process, are more than often blurred. It is thus this textual fluidity, exemplified by the quote from his *First Autobiographical Letter*, that will be as important to this thesis as the whimsical mind of its creator.

The work of a protean author might divulge some of its secrets – if there are any - when we embrace his work's multiformity and versatility as such, rather than wanting to grasp one of the stages of its metamorphosing process. To understand how Holberg's shape-shifting plays a decisive role in claiming his own place in European literary history, I will more specifically explore the fluid and paradoxical qualities of Holberg's anonymously published novel *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum* (1741-1745), henceforth *Niels Klim*. This piece of imaginary travel literature tells the adventures of a young Norwegian student after he tumbles down in a cave near Holberg's hometown Bergen, and reaches a subterranean universe with a planet, a sun and various countries inhabited by fabulous creatures. This satire on European politics and culture serves as a perfect case study to test the hypothesis that Holberg's shape-shifting itself can bridge the two dominant scholarly perceptions of his authorship. The issues of *Niels Klim* scholarship are in various respects *mises en abyme* for the scholarly narrative on Holberg's authorship in general. The modern and classicist Holberg clash in this work as it was written in Latin, after Holberg's successes as a Danish playwright, and in a period in which vernacular languages

[11] *First Autobiographical Letter*, 208. "In jokes I always lie, in serious matters rarely." In the edition of 1737: "In jokes I never lie, in serious matters sometimes."

already dominated the production of fictional literature. Few works of Holberg have puzzled scholarship as *Niels Klim* has, and few scholars outside of Scandinavia have fully acknowledged the relevance of this work in European literary history.

In the remaining part of this introduction I will give an overall state of the art of scholarship on *Niels Klim*, elaborate on the suggestion to read *Niels Klim* as a shape-shifting text (like its creator), and propose some methodological steps to tackle the problem of reading and defining such a text. To show the relevance of *Niels Klim* as a lengthy case study, I first need to have a closer look at previous attempts to bridge the gap between the classicist and the modern Holberg. How has he previously been placed within a European context and what are the problems that arise when trying to combine different scholarly traditions?

Holberg and Europe

A way to bridge the two scholarly traditions is to re-evaluate Holberg's authorship as a European authorship rather than a Danish or a Latin one. The most notable contributions in this respect were bundled in the volume *Ludvig Holberg: A European Writer*, edited by Sven Hakon Rossel (1994).[12] Scholars in this volume answered the question of "what made Holberg's oeuvre European" in three ways.

Firstly, it is demonstrated that Holberg was himself a cosmopolitan mind.[13] In his youth, Holberg travelled abroad to the Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany and England. In these extensive travels, which are described in his *First Autobiographical Letter* in a rather anecdotal and comical manner, scholars often see the roots of Holberg's talent for human observation, his wide interest in languages and cultures and his lasting interest in the European Enlightenment. Various methodological issues arise. One seeks Holberg's 'Europeanness' in a travelogue that is extremely literary in many facets, and can hardly be taken serious as a historical source.[14] The text itself, moreover, is written in Latin and

[12] Sven Hakon Rossel, ed. *Ludvig Holberg: A European Writer. A Study in Influence and Reception* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994).

[13] Rossel's introductory contribution is programmatic for this method. Sven Hakon Rossel, "Ludvig Holberg: the Cosmopolitan. A Monographic Sketch," in *Ludvig Holberg: A European Writer. A Study in Influence and Reception*, ed. Sven Hakon Rossel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994).

[14] Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, for example, points to the relevance of Holberg's selectiveness: "Playing with conventions of both letter-writing and historiography, Holberg teasingly reminds us of his power to select and to leave out, to decide what should count as truth and what not." Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, "Holberg's Autobiographical Letters," in *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 51. Nyrnes reads Holberg's *First Autobiographical Letter* topologically, which allows her to approach it as a literary text rather than as a

seems to address the cosmopolitan, European public itself, personified by the *vir perillustris* in the Latin title.[15] It seems rather problematic to infer Holberg's European status as a traveller from a text that is full of irony, shape shifting, comical anecdotes, arguably fictional passages and even literary critique.[16] The boundaries between history, literature, psychology and self-fashioning are vague, perhaps like in no other work of Holberg.

Secondly, the book demonstrates the influence of works from different literatures. Holberg has read and reworked texts from French, Latin, English, Greek, German and Spanish literature, and hereby brought Europe, and with it also Enlightenment ideas, into Denmark. Studying the relation between Holberg's works and Europe in terms of 'influence' and 'reception' has lead to other problems. For one, to this approach, the question of the source text is extremely pressing. As a consequence, Holberg scholars have debated whether Holberg read Greek or English texts in their original form, or in translation. However, it is almost impossible to inquire into historical reading skills, especially when the reader's own statements seem dishonest or ironical.[17] An additional problem lies in the attention for historical authors that are considered influential to Holberg's oeuvre: amongst others, Molière and Plautus for Holberg's comedies, Nicolas Boileau and Vergil for the mock-heroic poem *Peder Paars*, and Jonathan Swift and Petronius for *Niels Klim*. It has been proven difficult to go beyond canonised authors whose influence is assumed and then repeated time and again. In his comedies, for example, as scholarship has sufficiently shown, Holberg repeatedly rewrites French plays by Molière. However, does this make Holberg's comedies European? Not only were they written in Danish, but they also functioned within the Danish cultural sphere. Holberg

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biographical source. Aslaug Nyrnes, ""som om den onde skjebne ei gjaldt meg / men stedet:" Holbergs *Levnedsbrev* lesne topologisk," in *Den mangfoldige Holberg*, ed. Eivind Tjønneland (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005).

[15] For a discussion of the textual instance of the *vir perillustris*, see amongst others Skovgaard-Petersen, 48-51; Gimnes, 230.

[16] In an article that did not make the present thesis, I touch upon Holberg's shape-shifting in a passage that narrates his stay in the city of Rome. See Velle, "Leaving Out Rome. Ludvig Holberg's Comical Presentation of a City and its Travellers." For the passage on Rome, see *First Autobiographical Letter*, 98-112.

[17] Holberg's own statements about his reading skills are rather ambiguous. In his *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 38-39, for example, he says the following about his knowledge of Greek: "In lingva Græca hospitem me plane credunt pleriqve, satis tamen expedite Historicos Græcos lego, & integri 12 Autores, inter qvos Diodorus Siculus, a capite ad calcem a me perlecti sunt. Videor tamen hujus lingvæ ne limina qvidem attigisse, qvoniam Grammaticam ignoro." In English: "I have been supposed to be entirely ignorant of the Greek language; but I read the Greek historians with sufficient facility, and I have perused twelve authors, among whom is Diodorus Siculus, from the beginning to the end. I may be said, however, never to have entered the threshold which leads to knowledge of this language, since I knew nothing of its grammar." Translation is by the hand of Stewart Fraser in Ludvig Holberg, *Ludvig Holberg's Memoirs. An Eighteenth Century Danish Conbribution to International Understanding*, trans. Stewart E. Fraser (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 183. In 1746, however, Holberg publishes a Danish translation of an entire Greek work, namely the *History of Herodianus* (*Herodiani Historie*). Whether Holberg read English texts in French translations is much more debated. See, amongst others, Lars Roar Langslet, *Den store ensomme. En biografi om Ludvig Holberg*, trans. Ida Jessen (Haslev: Gyldendal, 2001), 51-53.

once tried to stage a French translation of one of his comedies in Paris, but this failed miserably because his plays were too Danish to work for a French audience.[18]

Finally, scholars have pointed out Holberg's 'Europeanness' by mapping out literary works published in the following decades and centuries that picked up particular aspects of Holberg's works. They were written in French, English, Dutch and other languages, and in geographical areas ranging from the Anglo-American world to Russia.[19] In some literatures we find traces of Holberg's writings almost immediately, in others we have to wait for a century or more before we can find any. Together with the previously mentioned 'influence'-method, this 'reception'-method shapes a diachronic perspective that runs the risk of turning every piece of literature into 'European' literature. In general, this diachronic approach to the international aspect of Holberg's oeuvre is characterised by a linear view on literature. In such a view, the genre of imaginary voyages, for example, features a progression of canonised figures such as Lucian, Thomas More, Cyrano de Bergerac, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne. Menippean satire also easily jumps from Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* to Rabelais and later Augustinian satire in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. Although this is a simplified portrayal in itself, a linear view on literature almost presumes a priori that literary works have a lasting and recurring influence, and neglects the periodically specific features that problematise such generalisations. Moreover, it facilitates thinking in oppositions of classicist and modern, depending on which line through literary history you put the focus. The texts Holberg received are then considered Latin, English or French, and the texts that imitated him were Dutch, French or English. But does this make Holberg's own works 'European'?

As this general overview might show, the term 'European', in practice, does not always cover the otherwise paradoxical faces of Holberg, but functions all too often as a cloak that conceals approaches similar to other, nationally focused scholarship. The result, which is especially clear in Rossel's book, is a rather romantic image of Holberg as the cosmopolitan traveller that allowed scholarship to sell Holberg to an English readership.[20]

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[18] For Holberg's remark on the reception of his plays in Paris, see *First Autobiographical Letter*, 143. For a discussion Holberg's views on translation and on translation of his comedies in particular, see Lars H. Eriksen, "Ludvig Holbergs Übersetzungskritik. Ein Beitrag zur Übersetzungssituation im Nordeuropa der Aufklärung," *Skandinavistik* 17, no. 2 (1987): 104-5. I will come back on this in chapter 2 of this thesis.

[19] The contribution that most clearly distinguishes between influence and reception, the 'before' and 'after' of Holberg's European status so to speak, is Jørgen Stender Clausen, "Ludvig Holberg and the Romance world," in *Ludvig Holberg: A European Writer. A Study in Influence and Reception*, ed. Sven Hakon Rossel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994). Clausen writes two chapters in one, each with an introduction and summary, respectively 104-20 and 120-30.

[20] In this sense, Rossel's edited volume is not very different from the more nationally oriented studies that were in vogue at the end of the nineteenth- and in the first half of the twentieth century. In that period, multiple countries claimed a piece of Holberg's authorship and influence by studying the relationship between Holberg and their country. A few examples are Karl Warburg, *Holberg i Sverige, jämte meddelanden om hans svenske*

In our enthusiasm in finding lines of heritage through literary history, we seldom pause to go into the most basic question: what does it mean to be European? In the eighteenth century, being European or writing a European text was not as self-evident as it may seem. It is a transition period in which the normativity of the Classical tradition, the centuries-old corner stone of European culture, is being questioned; the vernacular languages win more and more ground in literature at the expense of Latin; and the cultural weight and importance of the vernacular increasingly constitutes a sense of community that is linked to one nation, one territory. Writing in such an unstable and fluctuating context, a writer must reinvent himself to become not just 'as the Ancients'.

The problems with Rossel's edited volume highlight in particular that claiming a work to be European literature is perhaps more problematic than we might assume. It brings us to another fundamental question: what is European literature? In this thesis, I depart from the idea that literature cannot be called 'European' – in contrast to Latin, Danish, or any other adjective for that matter - simply because it was produced in a *lingua franca*, published in a place that was in those days considered geographically European, or – to put it bluntly – because it was rewritten by an unknown author at the other side of Europe, some centuries later. Only by a process of defamiliarisation, we can penetrate to the core of what it means to be a European author; and the vantage point from where we can understand the centre is often the periphery, in this case the writings of Scandinavian author, born in Bergen, Norway.

Svend Erik Larsen has recently shown that looking at Holberg from a European perspective can be extremely fruitful, at least, if we take some precautions. Larsen reassesses Holberg's oeuvre from the perspective of world literature and argues that Holberg was primarily a transition figure that should be placed within the contemporary paradigm of European cosmopolitanism.[21] He proves this in five points that undermine the most common instincts of Holberg scholars, or of modern readers in general: (1) Holberg was not a pre-national writer, which would be "a retrospective projection of the nationalist thinking of later centuries."[22] (2) He was not a national citizen either, but a cosmopolitan who was "more at home in a socially detached metropolitan life."[23] (3)

öfversättare (Göteborg: D.F. Bonniers förlagserpedition, 1884); Viljam Olsvig, *Holberg og England* (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1913); Saskia Ferwerda, *Holberg en Holland* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1939).

[21] Literary theory on world literature seeks to study the characteristics of literature that make it transgress national and linguistic borders, and was especially instigated by the book of David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003). Although still primarily directed towards modern literature, there have been attempts to historicise the insights of world literature. See, amongst others, Alexander Beecroft, *An Ecology of World Literature: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London: Verso, 2015). Larsen's article is part of an edited volume that reassesses Danish literature from this broader perspective. Svend Erik Larsen, "Ludvig Holberg: A Man of Transition in the Eighteenth Century," in *Danish Literature as World Literature*, ed. Dan Ringgaard and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

[22] Larsen, 59.

[23] Ibid., 60.

Holberg was not a rigid rationalist shunning emotions because his educational programme as an Enlightenment figure "only worked through an appeal to all sides of the human mind and life experience." [24] (4) Holberg was not a pre-modern poet celebrating individual originality, which made canonical literature always feel contemporary to Holberg. Models could be used here and now. (5) Holberg was not a revolutionary thinker, but "balanced between a past he could not get out of [...] and a future he did not know but reached out to."[25] Whereas Larsen strengthens his argument in the rest of his article chiefly by looking at Holberg's Danish comedies, his considerations are extremely topical for the present study of *Niels Klim*. They show Holberg as a walking contradiction, at least from a modern perspective. For, the greatest contradiction might lie in our own perception and interpretation of his writings, filtered by more than two centuries in between. Getting to know Holberg thus demands finding a way to deal with contradictions that might arise when reading historical literature. Larsen already hints at an alternative to the linear view on literature that is most common in Holberg scholarship. He considers Holberg as an actor in an extremely dynamic period of literary history. Despite the closeness to the birth of literature as an academic practice in the nineteenth century, literature in the eighteenth century – if not all literature - was in constant flux, and so were the ideas and characters of their creators. In line with Larsen's view on Holberg, I will try to avoid the idea of oppositions, linearity and even hierarchy when studying *Niels Klim* and adapt a dynamic view on literature. Before discussing the necessary methodological steps, I will first elaborate on the specific challenges in reading *Niels Klim*.

Klim, Klimius and European Literature

The two general traditions in literary scholarship on Holberg have their equivalents in the study of his satirical novel *Niels Klim*. The only two monographs that were hitherto written on *Niels Klim* symbolise those traditions. The first, Julius Paludan's monograph *Om Holbergs Niels Klim*, focuses on the tradition of satirical and imaginary voyages from the work of Lucian of Samosata (c. 120-180) onwards, and with even some interest in followers and 'plagiarisers' of Holberg.[26] The thesis from 1878 that gave Paludan the title of Doctor is at times a high-paced sequence of summaries and thematical echoes of other travel texts. As a result, Paludan's overview is wide-ranging and almost all-embracing, which is

[24] Ibid., 62.

[25] Ibid., 64.

[26] Julius Paludan, *Om Holbergs Niels Klim, med saerligt hensyn til tidligere satirer i form af opdigtede og vidunderlige reiser* (Kjøbenhavn: Wilhelm Prior, 1878).

also its greatest relevance for modern-day scholarship; few texts that will be discussed in the present thesis were not already mentioned in his. As a study in the field of literary history and theory, Paludan's work is, however, dated. Perhaps unwillingly, Paludan instigated a tradition that confirmed what the process of canonisation had already realised: that *Niels Klim* was considered to stand in the shadow of the previously mentioned travel texts. Although Paludan discusses a wide range of texts, it is particularly his chapter on the influence of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* on *Niels Klim* that would survive in the work of others in the following century and a half.[27] *Niels Klim* grew into the "Danish *Gulliver's Travels,*"[28] or was referred to as a blend of Swift's text and Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, with a sporadic mention of Lucian or Thomas More's *Utopia*.

Scholarship struggles in particular to study the relation between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Niels Klim* because the very nature of this relation is problematic.[29] We cannot speak of imitation or reception, but rather of a very dynamic and dialogical relation. As Jørgen Sejersted argues, Holberg may have used some motifs, structural traits and themes from Swift, but he still has his own ideas and goals. His tale is much more moralistic, revolving around the moral flaws of its main character, and in many ways less radical than Swift's satire.[30] To Sejersted, therefore, Holberg might have written a parody of Swift's satire.[31] Because of these dynamics, scholars face a difficult task when trying to define the transfer of ideas and motives from *Gulliver's Travels* to *Niels Klim*.[32]

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[27] Paludan devotes an entire chapter to Swift, though remains rather superficial in his interpretations. See ibid., 119-64.

[28] See Sven Hakon Rossel, *A History of Danish literature* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 134.

[29] Scholars often recall that *Niels Klim* and *Gulliver's Travels* are both written in the first person, and the narrators are presented on the title page as the supposed authors. As Karen Skovgaard-Petersen and Peter Zeeberg point out, "[v]i ser de fremmede samfund med Gullivers og Klims øjne – og vi er samtidig i stand til at gennemskue fortællerne når de ligger under for fordomme og svagheder." "We see the foreign societies though the eyes of Gulliver and Klim – and we are simultaneously able to see through the narrators if they succumb to prejudices or weaknesses." Karen Skovgaard-Petersen and Peter Zeeberg, "Verdensfjerne matematikere, blodtørstige anatomer og sexhungrende hustruer: Swifts *Gulliver* og Holbergs *Klim*," *AIGIS* Supplementum III: Festskrift til Christian Marinus Taisbak - 80 år (2014), http://aigis.igl.ku.dk/aigis/CMT80/KSP-PZ.pdf. In many cases – to which the article of Skovgaard-Petersen and Zeeberg is a remarkable exception, scholarship has not been able to surpass the level of general comparisons in introductions to and sketches of *Niels Klim*. Another notable effort to study the relation between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Niels Klim* more in detail is the article by Jørgen Magnus Sejersted, which was published in slightly different version in Norwegian and English. See Jørgen Magnus Sejersted, "Å reise med Gullliver, Niels og Peer – Holbergs *Niels Klims underjordiske reise* lest mellom Swifts *Gulliver's Travels* og Ibsens *Peer Gynt*," in *Den mangfoldige Holberg*, ed. Eivind Tjønneland (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005); Jørgen Magnus Sejersted, "Reflections on Peer Gynt's Forefathers Niels Klim and Lemuel Gulliver," in *Ibsen on the Cusp of the 21st Century. Critical Perspectives*, ed. Pål Bjørby, Alvhild Dvergsdal, and Idar Stegane (Laksevåg: Alvheim & Eide Akademisk Forlag, 2005).

[30] Sejersted, "Reflections on Peer Gynt's Forefathers Niels Klim and Lemuel Gulliver," 156

[31] Ibid., 154.

[32] For brief discussions of thematic borrowings and the relation between Holberg and Swift in general, apart from the once previously mentioned, see the introduction of McNelis to Holberg, *The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground*, xxxvii-xlvi; Jens Kruuse, "Holberg og Swift," in *Fem danske Studier tilegnet Vilh. Andersen den*

A second factor that complicates the study of the relation between the work of Holberg and that of Swift is Holberg's reluctance to speak about it. In the introduction to his *Moral Reflections*, Holberg admits some familiarity with Swift's satirical travelogue:

> De fingerede Rejse-Beskrivelser, som udi vor Tiid giøres af den bekiendte Engelske Doctor Swift er en Sammenblanding af Skiemt og Lærdom, dog saaledes at det første derudi prædominerer. Udi Klims Underjordiske-Rejse ere ogsaa begge Deele, men besynderlig det sidste: thi der indeholdes saa mange Characterer, at man deraf kand forsynes med Materialier til et heelt Moralsk Systema [...].[33]

As Skovgaard-Petersen and Zeeberg note, Holberg downplays his indebtedness to Swift in this passage.[34] Since a two-year stay at Oxford as a young student Holberg had always been well informed about English literature and definitely appreciated Swift. The cautious tone in the passage above and his claim of deviation rather than indebtedness is characteristic for Holberg as he is never fond of discussing his literary sources.[35]

The tradition of *Niels Klim* scholarship that followed Paludan's wide-ranging study in stressing the element of the imaginary voyage has paradoxically treated few authors apart from Jonathan Swift.[36] What this tradition of *Niels Klim* scholarship largely oversees, however, is that Holberg published his novel in Latin. This factor should not be taken lightly as, according to Phillip Gove's annotated list of imaginary voyage in the genre's golden age, the eighteenth century, *Niels Klim* was the only Latin one out of 215 texts.[37] Scholarship therefore compensated the tradition of Paludan by pointing out that *Niels Klim* was a text that was stuffed with verbal references to the Classical tradition. The greatest incentive for this shift in interest was the philological work of Aage Kragelund,

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16. Oktober 1934 (København: Povl Branner, 1934); Peter Fitting, "Preface," in *The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground by Ludvig Holberg*, ed. James Ignatius Jr. McNelis (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), vi-xi; Nils Hartmann, "Swiftian Presence in Scandinavia: Denmark, Norway, Sweden," in *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*, ed. Hermann J. Real (London: Thoemmes, 2005), 152.

[33] *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 2r. "The fictitious travel descriptions that in our days are rendered by the well-known English Doctor Swift are a mixture of jest and learning, yet in such a manner, that the first of these predominates. In Klim's Underground Journey both parts are present as well, but mainly the latter: for it contains so many characters, that one can be provided with material for a whole moral system [...]."

[34] Skovgaard-Petersen and Zeeberg. 1.

[35] The lack of explicit references to Swift in Holberg's work may have led some scholars to believe that the influence of Swift on *Niels Klim* is much exaggerated. See Hartmann, 151. For such opinions, see Kruuse, "Holberg og Swift," 48-67; Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, xl.

[36] Only Peter Fitting places *Niels Klim* in a tradition of stories about the hollow earth theory, which gives occasion to link it with several other imaginary voyages. See Peter Fitting, "Buried Treasures. Reconsidering Holberg's Niels Klim in the World Underground," *Utopian Studies* 7, no. 2 (1996); Peter Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004). Further comparisons between *Niels Klim* and imaginary voyages remain rather shallow.

[37] Philip Babcock Gove, *The Imaginary Voyages in Prose Fiction. A History of Its Criticism and a Guide for Its Study, with an Annotated Check List of 215 Imaginary Voyages from 1700 to 1800* (London: The Holland Press, 1941). For *Niels Klim*, see 303-6.

who in a bilingual edition of *Niels Klim* listed references to Cicero, Ovid, Vergil, Plautus, Petronius, Juvenal and many more.[38] A second monograph gave the interest for *Niels Klim*'s Latin side more power, and was written by the German scholar Sigrid Peters in 1987.[39] Based on a thorough analysis of the Classical references, Peters concluded that *Niels Klim* did not primarily connect to the tradition of imaginary travel literature, but to a more specific genre, the one of Menippean satire.[40] Its roots were again found in the work of Lucian, but the focus lay upon the humanist revival and adaptation of the genre in the Renaissance.[41]

In line with these two examples, Paludan and Peters, later scholars have considered *Niels Klim* as belonging to the oeuvre of a modern writer who happened to use Latin because that was the only way he could broaden his public, or to the oeuvre of a classicist who wanted to practice a genre that had not been practiced for a century. In the present thesis, I would like to avoid this opposition and read *Niels Klim* as neither modern, nor classical, but as a child of its age. I try to look at what makes *Niels Klim* into *Niels Klim* and not into a Latin (or Danish) *Gulliver's Travels*, a late Menippean Satire, a modern *Utopia*, an early science fiction novel, etc.

[38] Kragelund listed the intertextual references in volume 3 of Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*. For other studies of Kragelund on Holberg's way of quoting classical literature in various works, see Kragelund, *Ludvig Holberg citatkunstneren. Holberg og den yngre Plinius*; Kragelund, *Holberg og Petronius' Satyrica*; Kragelund, *Holbeg og Cicero*; Kragelund, *Holberg og Seneca*. For other bilingual editions by Kragelund, see Holberg, *Tre Levnedsbreve 1728-1743*; Holberg, *Latinske smaaskrifter*.

[39] Sigrid Peters, *Ludvig Holbergs Menippeische Satire. Das 'Iter subterraneum' und seine Beziehungen zur antiken Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987).

[40] A more elaborate and nuanced state of the art and explanation of the Menippean satire can be found in chapter 4 of this thesis.

[41] In recent years, the tradition of Kragelund and Peters was held up by Peter Zeeberg and Karen Skovgaard-Petersen. In collaboration with Cecilie Flugt, they wrote the thorough and essential commentary to *Niels Klim* on the online database 'Ludvig Holberg's Writings', which, amongst many other things, incorporates and expands Kragelund's textual findings. See Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, Peter Zeeberg, and Cecilie Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*," *Ludvig Holberg's Writings* v 2.6, www.holbergsskrifter.dk; Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, Peter Zeeberg, and Cecilie Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Niels Klim, Forsvarende Fortale* 1745," *Ludvig Holberg's Writings* v 2.6, www.holbergsskrifter.dk. Further, Skovgaard-Petersen published extensively on *Niels Klim*. Her texts share a common interest in the influence of classical literature on Holberg's novel, in particular of Vergil and Petronius, but are much more careful than Peter's text when it comes to generic claims. Notable in this regard is her aforementioned article with Peter Zeeberg that explores the links with *Gulliver's Travels*. Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Interplay with Roman Literature in Ludvig Holberg's *Iter Subterraneum*," in *Der neulateinische Roman als Medium seiner Zeit*, ed. Stefan Tilg and Isabella Walser (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013); Skovgaard-Petersen, "Journeys of Humour and Satire: *Peder Paars* and *Niels Klim*."

Towards a 'Mobile' Text: Some Considerations

From Linearity to Dynamism

Central to the study of the identity of Holberg and his oeuvre is the question of language. Why does he write one work in Latin, another in Danish and some even in French?[42] The language question is not as self-evident as it may seem at first, and is perhaps the most pressing in the case of *Niels Klim*. It is often stated that *Niels Klim* reached Europe because it was written in Latin. More specifically, the choice for Latin simplified *Niels Klim*'s reception because translators all over Europe could make translations into different European languages. Yet, the fact that it was actually read by many European readers in translation, and not in Latin, has merely been a footnote in Holberg-scholarship compared to the praise of the original.[43] The reality in which both Holberg and his readers were living was one that is characterised by multilingualism: Latin and vernacular languages were used, not interchangeably or randomly, but at least in a complementary manner. The Latin reader who could understand the intertextual references to Classical literature was potentially the same person who read imaginary voyages in French or English, or in Danish and Dutch journals. Every language had its own purposes, functions, expectations or possibilities, and readers and authors chose languages accordingly.[44]

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[42] Holberg wrote three works in French, all published at the very end of his career: *Conjectures sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains* (1752), the short *Lettre qui contient quelques remarques sur les mémoires concernant la Reine Christine* (1752) and a commentary on the work of Montesquieu, *Remarques sur l'esprit des loix* (1753).

[43] A notable exception is the recent doctoral thesis by Cecilie Flugt on the translation history and book history of *Niels Klim* in which she compared translation techniques and motivations in multiple languages, and their visual presentation. Cecilie Flugt, "Niels Klims europæiske rejse - en oversættelseshistorisk undersøgelse af *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*" (PhD diss., Københavns Universitet, 2015).

[44] In recent years, the field of Neo-Latin studies has devoted its attention increasingly to the question of language. The seeds of this shift into the direction of comparative literature were planted with Peter Burke's work on the cultural history of early modern times, which considers Latin and the vernacular as coexisting for centuries in overlapping and mutually influential communities. Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). After Burke, Neo-Latinists have highlighted two important aspects of European literature that help to study the exchange between Latin and vernacular literary production. On the one hand, they pointed out that translation (both to and from Latin) was a constant way of transferring ideas and aesthetics across geographical and linguistic borders. See, amongst others, Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, eds., *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Tom Deneire, *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Jan Bloemendal, *Bilingual Europe: Latin and Vernacular Cultures, Examples of Bilingualism and Multilingualism c. 1300-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Nikolaus Thurn, *Neulatein und Volkssprachen. Beispiele für die Rezeption neusprachlicher Literatur durch die lateinische Dichtung Europas im 15. - 16. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2012). On the other hand, bilingualism and multilingualism is increasingly felt as a pressing reality of early modern author- and readerships. Bloemendal; Thurn. These recent tendencies show the highly complex nature of European literature, and the necessity to approach early modern readership as pluralistic phenomenon.

Combining the two traditions in *Niels Klim* scholarship thus requires a shift in focus. Instead of asking what Holberg's text *is*, I will be interested in how it *functioned* within the contemporary literary field. A theoretical starting point for this approach is the theory on the dynamics between languages, literatures, and cultures, proposed by Itamar Even-Zohar in the late 70s.[45] His so-called polysystem theory argues that literature is a cultural system in which aesthetic values and features are subject to a continuous negotiation between what is considered central and peripheral. This system is again divided into many subsystems, such as geographical areas, regional traditions or genres. The polysystem is notably open and dynamic, by which I mean that it is "always ready to adapt [itself] to new challenges by admitting or rejecting influences from the periphery or from other systems."[46]

In recent years, Neo-Latin scholars such as Tom Deneire and Johanna Svensson, have proposed that the idea of the polysystem as a dynamic and open network of texts is a fruitful way to study the relation between Neo-Latin and vernacular texts.[47] From the Renaissance onwards, or even before, many authors produced a multilingual group of texts, and as the vernacular languages were gaining more and more ground on the field of fiction, we should ask ourselves whether we can say something about the place of a Latin text in literary history without considering the vernacular texts that surrounded it?

This idea of an open network, a system with subsystems, has two interesting advantages when studying *Niels Klim*'s place within European literary history. First of all, Even-Zohar's polysystem theory implies a reappraisal of less canonised works that are often neglected, such as trivial literature or translations.[48] Although these kinds of texts are more peripheral in the literary system, they actively helped shape what we have come to consider as the centre of a system, the canon. The idea behind this aspect of Even-

[45] Itamar Even-Zohar, "Polysystem Theory," *Poetics Today* 1, no. 1/2 (1979); Itamar Even-Zohar, "Factors and Dependencies in Culture: A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 24, no. 1 (1997); Itamar Even-Zohar, "Polysystem Theory (Revised)," *Papers in Culture Research* (2005).

[46] Johanna Svensson, "Exploring the Borderlands. On the Division of Labour between Latin and the Vernacular(s) in the Church in Scania under Danish and Swedish Rule in the Seventeenth Century," in *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer*, ed. Tom Deneire (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 93.

[47] Tom Deneire, "Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: History and Introduction," in *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer*, ed. Tom Deneire (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Tom Deneire, "Methodology in Early Modern Multilingualism," in *Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer*, ed. Tom Deneire (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Svensson.

[48] An increased awareness of the role of translations in the negotiation of literary aesthetics has been present from the start in Even-Zohar's work. Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990); Itamar Even-Zohar, "Translation and Transfer," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990). Moreover, translation studies have also become an integral part of theories on world literature. See, amongst others, Lawrence Venuti, "World Literature and Translation Studies," in *What is World Literature?*, ed. David Damrosch (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Zohar's theory is that the importance, influence or uniqueness of a certain work is not intrinsic, but relative to readers and other authors, and also variable over time.

When facing a text as *Niels Klim*, which reached Europe at least partly through translations, we have to consider these translations as a key factor in the way this work functioned within Europe. Why should we consider *Niels Klim* to be a piece of Neo-Latin literature, when it was immediately translated into four languages and thus immediately received as a multilingual text? Not only translations of *Niels Klim* can be included, also translations of other texts within this system. Why should we, for example, only look for a link between *Niels Klim* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and not for the role of Abbé Desfontaines? The latter is a less known author to modern scholarship, but he translated *Gulliver's Travels* in French and wrote a popular sequel, *Le nouveau Gulliver*, narrating the adventures of Lemuel's son, Jean. Finally, we should realise that non-canonised texts can become canonised over time, and also the other way around, because of the dynamics within the literary polysystem. An example is the relation between Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* and the slightly older Marana's *L'espion turc,* two letter novels that were immensely popular in the eighteenth century. Only the former really survived the canonisation processes active in the nineteenth century, whereas the latter book was republished in seventeen editions in the first half of the eighteenth century alone and thus was at least at the same height as *Lettres persanes* for some time in the centre of the literary polysystem.

The language question further brings us to a discrepancy between aesthetic and generic interpretations of *Niels Klim* and the way it was actually received by European readership, i.e. often not as a Menippean satire. The same goes for 'the imaginary voyage'; as a genre, this category proved to be extremely problematic. What can be called 'imaginary' when scientific knowledge and general belief systems differ regionally, socially and chronologically? What is the value of the element of the journey in relation to utopia, satire, and other 'subgenres'?

Because of its inclination to a linear view on literature, amongst other reasons, scholarship has struggled with labelling *Niels Klim*. This brings me to the second advantage of Even-Zohar theory. In polysystem theory, genre is not restrictive or normative. It rather relates to what Helge Jordheim says about *Niels Klim* in the following extract:

> [T]o use genre as a label doesn't really correspond to the way generic conventions actually manifest themselves historically and textually in the literary work, especially not in the 18th century, before many influential literary genres, including the novel, have won their modern shape. Indeed, no literary work is just an example of one and only one literary genre, but can better be described as a

> scene of negotiations, genre negotiations, through which the author is trying to combine and possibly unite different generic conventions.[49]

As Jordheim points out, in *Niels Klim* many genres collide or connect. This has led to various scholarly tugs-of-war. Jordheim himself distinguishes the utopia, satire and the imaginary voyage. Of the three, the latter might arguably be the most hybrid, and also the most characteristic of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century, literary landscape. Polysystem theory considers the question of genre to be less pressing because it embraces the hybridity itself and describes genre as a constant *negotiation* – to use Jordheim's word - between what was considered to be central and peripheral.

In a broader chronological sense, generic conventions and sensitivities for a reader of the eighteenth century were not the same as ours. The polysystem theory allows us to view *Niels Klim* as an object of a wide range of generic forces in the literary system, that develop over time, both on a microlevel (during the actual reading process) and a macrolevel (in the reception later on). By thinking in terms of a polysystem that contains multiple subsystems, every subgenre such as utopia, letter novels, satire, Robinsonades or Gulliveriads, has its own place in the dynamics of that polysystem and the negotiation of *Niels Klim*'s genre. Because 'genre' is considered in the present thesis as a *negotiation* between text and reader, a 'reader' will refer to a pluralistic category that is both implied (by Holberg and his text) and diachronically variable, as a set of potential expectations, preferences and reactions at a certain time and place in European literary history. As responses of actual historical readers are scarce, it is as important to ask how a text *worked* within the European literary context of the eighteenth century, as how it did *not work* in contrast to other periods, such as the more nationally oriented nineteenth century or the modern-day scholar- and readership. Accordingly, *Niels Klim* will be viewed as a pluralistic text that includes the first edition (1741), the second edition with some marked differences (1745), Holberg's steering commentary in his *Third Autobiographical Letter* (1743) and the translations of *Niels Klim*.

Such a dynamic and relative model provides a more accurate paradigm to speak about *Niels Klim* and its place within a multilingual literary Europe in mid-eighteenth century.

Close Reading at a Distance

What polysystem theory does not provide are practical tools to read the texts of this dynamic literary network. The question thus remains on which points I will compare *Niels Klim* with other travel literature in order to determine its relative position? Which points

[49] Helge Jordheim, "Other Spaces, Other Times. Holberg's Niels Klim in the Context of the European Utopian Novel," in *Holberg*, ed. Eivind Tjønneland (Bergen: Fakbogforlaget, 2008), 158.

will help me to determine something as vague as the 'position' of *Niels Klim* in a theoretically endless and hybrid network of texts?

I will fight on two fronts: with distant and close reading, which brings us back to the field of world literature:

> [I]n the field of world literature, a new attentiveness to books has changed the approach to texts. Perhaps the most influential critic in this regard is Franco Moretti, whose model of "distant reading" involves tracking the way groups of literary works travel from their national origin into new spaces and languages. Distant reading calls for new objects of attention, and it imagines collaborations among scholars rather than one person's knowledge of every relevant language. However, distant reading presupposes someone else's traditional close reading of individual works. The synthetic calculations at the heart of distant reading are based on other readers' analyses of voice and idiom, on the comparison of national literary histories, and on the assumption that all literary texts begin in a unique language.[50]

Rebecca Walkowitz ventilates this criticism of close and distant reading in her study of modern literature, *Born Translated*. Her argument is applicable to *Niels Klim* scholarship and to an extent also to what Tom Deneire wanted to remedy with a shift from comparativism to dynamism: we tend to think in national categories and literatures, which reflects both in our distant and close reading of texts. Walkowitz argues in favour of an alternative she calls "close reading at a distance", which tries to embrace the transnational status of certain texts as such:

> As an intellectual strategy, close reading at a distance overlaps with two major developments in transnational literary studies: first the turn toward books in the study of texts, and, second, the effort to challenge, historicize, transform, and in some cases reject dominant practices of close reading.[51]

While distant reading takes into account multiple types of texts (commentaries, reviews, adaptations, translations, etc.), close reading provides us with indicators or trigger points to discuss the specific, dynamic relations between certain texts in a diverse polysystem. Quotations and verbal resemblances, for example, give us, scholars, something to hold on to when interpreting a text, because it is a seemingly objective way of observing intertextuality. In a dynamic view on literature, we have to be aware that this element of close reading is not the only relation between literary works; narrative structures, plot twists, thematic borrowings, philosophical ideas and many other textual elements can echo specific intertexts, a subsystem or the polysystem as a whole.

[50] Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 86.
[51] Ibid.

Holberg's text is a cogwheel in a whole mechanism of relations. Whether Holberg has actually read a text and reproduced it verbally, or not, becomes less important to define the work's position within the literary field, as long as the text you contrast or compare are both part of the same poly- or subsystem. The result is a dialogical method that contrasts and compares texts from various angles in order to (re)construct a complex and nuanced network of textual relations.

In line with Walkowitz's suggestion to read 'closely at a distance', the present thesis will try to show two sides of the coin.[52] Every first chapter of each part will focus upon the dynamics *within* Holberg's novel. These chapters 1, 3, and 5 will thus analyse narratological elements such as plot twists, characterisation, intertextual references and voices of narrators in order to understand *Niels Klim*'s dynamic narrative structure more profoundly. Every second chapter, then, will zoom out and will further analyse *Niels Klim*'s place within the polysystem of imaginary travel literature in the early eighteenth century. This category will be understood in the broadest sense, containing texts about travel that negotiate their own status as being 'imaginative.'[53]

A two-speed reading of *Niels Klim* will allow me to highlight an aspect of *Niels Klim* that has been valued insufficiently: like the mind of its creator, *Niels Klim* is protean in nature. Precisely this quality, which I will refer to as a 'mobile text', captures *Niels Klim*'s unique place within European literature of the early eighteenth century. Unlike many other imaginary voyages, *Niels Klim* is not only a text about travel, but also a text that was designed to travel (1) across linguistic and cultural borders, (2) across generic boundaries and (3) in the mind of the reader. It is a text that easily jumps from the level of narration to the level of the book, anticipated its own reception and again changes its reception along the way. *Niels Klim* is thus, I hypothesise, a very self-conscious text; it is *aware* of the unique position it holds and does not refrain from showing it. Firstly, the very thing that makes *Niels Klim* stand out compared to other contemporary travel literature, namely the choice for Latin, is constantly thematised, complicated, problematised, questioned, supported, and undermined. It is aware that it will be received in a multilingual environment called Europe, and plays with this knowledge. Secondly, *Niels Klim* thematises and problematises its own status as fiction, which makes any generic attribution difficult to maintain. Finally, *Niels Klim* trains the reader to contrast different beliefs, interpretations and morals, and presents this method as its main aim. Because of

[52] In chapter 2 of this thesis, Walkowitz's main argument of *Born Translated,* namely that some literary pieces anticipate their own reception in a multilingual environment and their own status as a transnational text, will be further discussed and adapted to the specific challenges of *Niels Klim* and eighteenth-century literature in general.

[53] The imaginary voyage as a genre that was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth century especially will be further discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. As said before, most of the corpus text that will be studied already featured in Paludan's monograph.

these three characteristics, the reader of *Niels Klim* can never stand still while reading.[54] These three features of *Niels Klim*, which I will group under the umbrella term of a 'mobile' text, together hypothesise *Niels Klim*'s unique position in European literary history.

The relevance of my study lies in the fact that my thesis thus will perform its own hypothesis. It will show by means of a dynamic and functionalistic approach that *Niels Klim* was not meant to be pinpointed to a specific linguistic or generic tradition. Holberg felt as no other the tendencies and problems in contemporary and widely popular travel literature. However, as centuries passed, the perception of *Niels Klim* changed as well. *Niels Klim*'s immediate status a best-seller in Europe is in sharp contrast to the overall lack of international interest in *Niels Klim* in the last hundred years, both in readership and scholarship. The hypothesised versatile and mobile character of *Niels Klim* was innovative and effective in the early eighteenth century, yet was not compatible with the tendency to place pieces of literature into rigid categories as genre and national literatures by the late eighteenth and nineteenth century - a legacy that lives on until present days. As scholarship and readership grew out of touch with eighteenth-century cosmopolitan sensibilities, *Niels Klim* was forced to stand still in categories as 'Menippean satire' and 'Neo-Latin literature', which in their turn were unwelcome in the branding of Holberg as 'the Father of Danish literature' or 'the Molière of the North'. While imaginary voyages in the vernacular could easily become part of the canons of national literatures of Western Europe, readers and scholars of Holberg shifted their focus to his 'less mobile' texts as comedies, and neglected the self-consciousness, paradoxality and 'mobility' with which *Niels Klim* manipulated the imaginary voyage tradition.

Chapter Outline

As previously mentioned, the methodological division between close and distant reading is reflected in respectively every first and every second chapter of each part of the present thesis. The parts themselves correspond to three core topics around which the debate between the two traditions in *Niels Klim* scholarship revolves.

Part I revisits the choice of language with a functionalistic approach. In chapter 1, I discuss how Holberg thematises and problematises multilingualism inside the plot and narrative structure of *Niels Klim*. This close reading will lead in chapter 2 to a re-evaluation of the question of language, guided by Rebecca Walkowitz's theory on born-translated literature. Both chapters will highlight on different levels that *Niels Klim* anticipates its

[54] This reading method will be linked to Holberg's status as an enlightened educator in chapter 6.

own reception in a multilingual environment, amongst others through translation, and is therefore 'designed to travel'.

Part II focuses on the problematic link between *Niels Klim* and tradition. In chapter 3, the plot will be analysed as a constant negotiation of the concept of authority. Klim's travels through the underground world thematise and problematise what Europe considers to be authoritative voices in the literary process, and plays with the narrative techniques that were commonly used to claim authority. This discussion will be brought to the level of the book in chapter 4, where I will revisit the generic authority of *Niels Klim* as a text. Which textual signals or contextual parameters led historical readers and modern scholars to certain generic attributions? Instead of choosing a genre, I will analyse the process of attribution and will propose this process as *Niels Klim*'s generic aim: it was designed to constantly question its own status as a fictional text. With this feature, *Niels Klim* stands in a transgeneric tradition of metafictional texts in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, rather than in a linear tradition of a specific genre.

In part III, finally, I will consider *Niels Klim* as a text that provides some kind of truth. Apart from being a gifted narrator, Holberg was also an educator who brought Enlightenment thinking to Denmark. Holberg does not simply provide knowledge to his readers, but trains them in reading critically. In chapter 5, this will be demonstrated by an analysis of Holberg's play with the terms of *historia* and *fabula*. The two terms drive *Niels Klim*'s plot from start to finish but traditionally raise almost contradictory expectations. This evokes a reflective reading method Holberg aims at and which brings readers one step closer to moral insights. In chapter 6, this reading method will be demonstrated on the level of the book through an analysis of Holberg's own playful but critical commentary of *Niels Klim* in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*. By contrasting his explanation with a contemporary imaginary voyage of one of his academic rivals, Erik Pontoppidan, I will show that *Niels Klim* was supposed to travel in the mind of the reader. Once readers stand still, according to Holberg's moral project, they lapse into prejudices and sectarian beliefs.

To stress the two-speed reading method, the three scholarly topics (language, tradition and truth) will each be linked to one of the generic categories found on the title page of *Niels Klim*. The title in full is *Nicolai Klimii iter svbterranevm novam tellvris theoriam ac historiam quintæ monarchiæ adhvc nobis incognitæ exhibens e bibliotheca B. Abelini.* [55] Accordingly, *Niels Klim* will be read as a book that travels (*iter*) across linguistic borders, thematises its own status as a (un)trustworthy text (*theoria*) and as a text that provides truth to the reader (*historia*). Hereby, the present study hopes to be a first, small step of defamiliarisation towards a more thorough and functionalistic re-evaluation of the

[55] "Niels Klim's Travels Underground Containing a New Theory of the Earth and a History of the Fifth Monarchy, unknown to us until now, Taken from the Library of Sir Abeline."

European character of Holberg's writings, and more broadly, of European literature in the early-eighteenth century.

Part I

Iter, or On Language

Unica relligio quondam fuit, unica lingua,
Discordes certum nusquam habuère locum.
Dogmata sed Batavi, lingvas junxere Britanni,
Dissidii heic tandem finis utrique fuit.[1]

In pugnaces Grammaticos.
Grammatici vulgò dicunt se humana docere.
His minus humanum nil tamen esse puto.
Nam qui de nihilo rixatur, & omnia miscet,
Hunc titulo humani privo hominisque simul.[2]

When Adam gave swimming creatures a name we would translate with 'fish', did this word correspond to the nature of these fish, or was his naming arbitrary? When Adam applied himself diligently to this tedious task, from which language did he draw the word for fish? Is there a way to annul Babel's Confusion of Tongues and trace or reconstruct the Adamic language that united the entire human race, so that we could say 'fish' and everybody would understand to what we refer? These and similar questions were fiercely debated among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theologians, philosophers and linguists. As the known world was expanding rapidly and communication problems were increasing, questions on linguistic universality, arbitrariness and multilingualism based on biblical passages in *Genesis* became a significant gateway to understanding one's position in society and the world.

Authors of imaginary voyages contributed to these linguistic and philosophical debates in creating their fictional societies. Their texts translated the hypotheses of theologians into fictional universes and explored the utmost extremities of what could

[1] *Epigrams* II.169, 78.
[2] Ibid. III.86, 103-4.

be considered as ideal and universal languages. In chapter 1, I will trace the theme of language in Holberg's *Niels Klim* and look at how the adventures of Klim evoke philosophical conceptions of linguistic difference. I will demonstrate that Holberg reflects upon contemporary language debates in a remarkably pragmatic and reflective way, typical for Holberg's style and thinking. A narratological and thematic analysis of Klim's linguistic *iter* will hereby not only contribute to a new way of looking at Holberg's appropriation of European, Enlightenment thinking but will also help *Niels Klim* to recover its rightful place in the study of imaginary voyages.

To Holberg, active engagement with the contemporary language debates and its fictionalisations in imaginary voyages was not a goal *an sich* in *Niels Klim*. In her study *Multilingualism in French Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages*, Barbara Elisabeth Knauff asks a pertinent follow-up question that is of great importance to *Niels Klim*: "does the inclusion of the issue of multilingualism in a literary text lead to an increased metalinguistic awareness on the part of the author?"[3] To Knauff, the increased sensitivity to language issues is strongly connected to the historical reality of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: on the one hand, to the intensive contacts of European colonisers with remote people and their languages, and, on the other hand, to the "increased rate of cultural exchange in Europe itself."[4] As Knauff argues, educated Europeans came to realise that knowledge of Latin and perhaps Greek did no longer suffice: "he (and even she) had to learn modern languages as well. This ascendancy of modern language learning multiplied the prevalence of multilingualism."[5]

As perhaps no other in the genre, *Niels Klim* gives expression to the problem that European intellectuals and writers faced and that gave rise to an increased awareness of multilingualism.[6] As a Latin, fictional travel story, *Niels Klim* was unique in the eighteenth century. By its very presence, it already raises awareness to language and to the issue of multilingualism in European literature and education, more in particular to the reality that Latin was losing ground in favour of the vernacular.

Niels Klim is not a swan song to Latin, but neither is it a classicist's yearning for a time in which Latin literature was the number one way to communicate with a cosmopolitan, elitist group of people. In the second chapter in the *Iter* part, I will argue that the attention to multilingualism in *Niels Klim* is aimed at raising awareness about the linguistic and literary situation of the reader. The role of Latin and translations within this multilingual situation is thematised in Klim's journey in order to make his readers reflect about what

[3] Barbara Knauff, "Multilingualism in French Late Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995), 4.

[4] Ibid., 6.

[5] Ibid., 7.

[6] As Knauff focuses on French imaginary travels, with the exceptions of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, both Holberg's text and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* are missing out on being considered as interlocutors in the dialogue between imaginary voyages and their language debates in the long eighteenth century.

they are reading. The fascination with multilingualism is thus brought to the metalevel and even continues outside of the borders of fiction as Holberg anticipates the early reception of *Niels Klim* through multiple translations, along with the Latin original. This ample treatment of the language theme in (and outside of) *Niels Klim* seems to suggest that Holberg's text stands in the epicentre of the dynamics Knauff ascribes to the genre of imaginary voyages. Knauff admits not all of her corpus texts have the same degree of metalinguistic awareness. In the same line, I argue in this part that this aspect in imaginary voyages is crucial to understand the unique position of Holberg's *Niels Klim* within European literature of that time and within Holberg's oeuvre. The thematisation of language debates and multilingualism in *Niels Klim* does not only function as an intertextual play with other imaginary voyages but also demonstrates a broader linguistic and literary awareness of Holberg. He is writing a travelogue in Latin in the middle of the eighteenth century. At first, this choice seems to speak against his self-proclaimed project of stimulating the production of Danish literature. But, as I will suggest in the second chapter, the linguistic awareness in *Niels Klim* is very much part of Holberg's didactic programme. It aims to raise the readers' awareness that they unavoidably are readers in a multilingual environment in which they have to deal with linguistic and cultural confrontations. Only by embracing these threats of a multilingual environment, or by embracing the gift of Babel, a reader can become a critical citizen of enlightened Europe.

Chapter 1

Language Debates and Multilingualism in Klim's Subterranean Journey

Language was one of the hot topics in academic Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Focusing on the book of *Genesis*, seventeenth-century exegetists were at odds on which natural language, or *Lingua Humana*, Adam used to address God in Eden and name things according to their natures. Some fostered the belief "that there still might be a Primitive Language and Alphabet somewhere in the world,"[1] that, because of its age, refers more directly to the Things of God's creation. Academics all over Europe suggested their own languages as the oldest language, closest to the Adamic language: amongst others Celtic, Tuscan, Castilian, Hebrew and Chinese.[2] Others were creating languages that were easy to learn, comprehend, speak and decline. Such artificial languages would enable mankind to overcome the burden of the Confusion of Tongues it suffered ever since the building of the Tower of Babel.[3]

The complex debates on the universality and arbitrariness of language and the overall fascination for the topic was not least stimulated by travel. Explorative expeditions were an inexhaustible source of information about new and exotic languages that intrigued European readers and writers back home. Apart from renewing the disputes among theologians and philosophers about the existence and nature of a universal or ideal language, travel (and colonisation) stimulated writers of fiction to use imaginary voyages as laboratories for testing the limits of language questions. The treatment of language

[1] Paul Cornelius, *Languages in Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1965), 2.

[2] For a discussion on several of these theories, see ibid., 20-21; Priscille Ducet, "Le monde souterrain et ses origines dans la littérature française du XVIIIème siècle" (PhD diss., Paris IV - Sorbonne, 2006), 227-28; Marina Yaguello, *Les Fous du langage: Des langues imaginaires et de leurs inventeurs* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), 51-62.

[3] See Ducet, 226.

grew into one of the most characteristic features of the genre, and thus serves as an ideal case study in our quest to understand *Niels Klim*'s place within European literary history.

In the present chapter, I will analyse and contextualise Holberg's treatment of language in *Niels Klim*. First, I will sketch an overall development of the language theme in imaginary voyages and hypothesise the place of Holberg's novel. As a contrast text, I will use Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. In countless aspects, Swift's satirical travelogue has proved to be seminal to the genre, one of them being his critical, pessimistic, but also characteristically playful treatment of language, influenced by the linguistic theory of John Locke (1632-1704). As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, it is commonly accepted that Swift influenced Holberg. The satirical treatment of language debates is one of the Swiftian elements that Holberg might have picked up on at different occasions, but that was so far understudied in Holberg scholarship.[4] In the second and third section of the chapter, I will test my hypothesis by following Klim's linguistic journey more in detail and consider language as a narrative force that drives *Niels Klim*'s plot. Klim's linguistic *iter* starts out in a particularly Gullivarian manner, but builds up towards a completely different outcome: one that is not pessimistic and misanthropic, like in Swift's book, but rather reflective and slightly optimistic in the form of a fascination with multilingualism as a reality that is beneficial to human (or European) society.

1.1 The Collapse of Cartesian Universals

In her study on multilingualism, Knauff describes a specific development in the laboratorial activities of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century imaginary voyages; she sees a "general shift in the perception of linguistic difference", which she describes as "the collapse of a belief in Cartesian universals."[5] By the latter Knauff means " the prevailing belief [...] that language was a universal phenomenon ruled by an underlying 'universal grammar' whose rules could be abstracted by comparative study and analysis."[6] As Knauff demonstrates, seventeenth-century imaginary voyages still have an optimistic view on language. Celebrating the idea of a universal and unambiguous language, writers

[4] Holberg's thoughts on language and how they relate to contemporary philosophical debates on language in other European countries and literatures are largely unknown territory for Holberg scholarship. A notable exception is Thomson's monograph on Holberg's *Moral Reflections.* See Hans Hagedorn Thomsen, *Sprogets fornuft. Om sproget i Ludvig Holbergs Moralske Tanker* (København: Museum Tusculanum, 1984). For the present chapter, I am very much indebted to Jørgen Magnus Sejersted for sharing his work-in-progress on language in Holberg's comedies and for discussing my views on Holberg's *Niels Klim*.

[5] Knauff, 8.

[6] Knauff, 14.

of these texts explore its possibilities with their outrageous fantasies. This optimism is most apparent in the creation of imaginary languages, which has traditionally received much scholarly attention.[7] Knauff exemplifies the influence of Cartesian rationalism in the works of Foigny and Denis Veiras. These two French grammarians created in their respective imaginary voyages, *La Terre australe connue* (1676) and *L'histoire des Sévarambes* (1677), utopian societies and fictional languages with an explanation of declinations and other grammar rules. Their linguistic projects are pervaded with a "claim to regularity, universality, transparency and even metaphysical significance."[8]

The encounter with entirely different languages and the communication problems outside of Europe heavily challenged this optimistic, Cartesian belief in universality. Particularly around the turn of the century and onwards, scepticism rose about the feasibility and significance of finding a language for all people of God's creation. A turning point in the debate might have been the publication of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690. Chapter III of this seminal piece contains a defence of a complete arbitrariness of language, and gives expression to a strong belief in the ability of men to shape their communication.[9] Whereas Locke's theory can be regarded as a celebration of the freedom of human understanding and thinking, it also opened up a dark side to the debate on language. Because of the complete arbitrariness of language in Locke's theory, man could impose language upon others. He can use and abuse language as he pleases, which can trail a path for a belief in superiority of one language over the other and a justification of linguistic oppression in colonies. Knauff phrases this as follows:

> The Cartesian notion of linguistic universals, and the ensuing belief in a fundamental equality between different languages, had given way to the realization of linguistic difference. This in turn gave rise to the idea that some languages were superior to others [...] and to the possibility of exploiting linguistic difference through policies of linguistic domination and even eradication.[10]

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[7] For studies on language debates in imaginary voyages, see, amongst others, Emile Pons, "Les langues imaginaires dans le voyage utopique. Les deux Grammairiens: Vairasse et Foigny," *Revue de littérature comparée* 12, no. 3 (1932); Edward D. Seeber, "Ideal Languages in the French and English Imaginary Voyage," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (1945); James R. Knowlson, "The Ideal Languages of Veiras, Foigny, and Tyssot De Patot," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24, no. 2 (1963); Cornelius. Although the ways in which writers of fantastical journeys reflected upon language debates are generally well studied, they have never attracted the attention of Holberg scholars. A reason may be that Holberg is not very much committed to specifics of etymological or grammatical nature, which has interested scholars the most. I will return to this apparent lack later in the chapter.

[8] Knauff, 352.

[9] For an extended analysis of Locke's theory of language and the opposing views by Leibniz, see Hans Aarsleff, "Leibniz on Locke on Language," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1964).

[10] Knauff, 354.

European contact with Amerindian languages fuelled this three-step collapse of Cartesian universals. The language theory of Locke provided writers of imaginary voyages from the turn of the century with an alternative to Descartes' rationalism. Not surprisingly, the optimistic views on language and human communication in imaginary voyages as well gradually made way for a rather pessimistic attitude in the first half of the eighteenth century.[11]

Knauff acknowledges that some texts, however, "seem to fall outside of this general trend."[12] Knauff describes an alternative attitude towards multilingualism that she finds in Françoise de Graffigny's *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747) and Voltaire's *Ingenu* (1767):

> Only Mme de Graffigny and Voltaire allay the resulting pessimism by focusing, not on the confrontation between different individuals or cultures, but rather, on the linguistic struggle taking place within a bilingual individual, for whom this struggle becomes a psychologically enriching and philosophically enlightening experience.[13]

In the examples of Knauff, the psychology of the main character is a gateway to the reader's understanding of this struggle.

The development Knauff sees is thus a general shift away from a Cartesian optimism that splits into two attitudes: on the one hand, a Lockean and (potentially) pessimistic look upon linguistic difference, and on the other hand, a philosophical, inner struggle that is an enriching experience. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will use Knauff's framework to analyse Holberg's treatment of the language debates in *Niels Klim* and to show its relative position vis-à-vis Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*

1.1.1 Musicality and Etymology

To start, we can state that the texts of Swift and Holberg cannot be situated at the beginning of Knauff's shift. Their travel tales show a shared critical attitude towards Cartesian universals, which will become clear from their treatments of two recurring features of the imaginary voyage genre: the staging of melodious or musical languages, and the use of word play and etymologies. Musicality is one of the most prominent features of utopian languages in the imaginary voyage genre, to a large extent because of the popularity of *The Man in the Moone* (1638) of the English bishop Francis Godwin and Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comique des États et Empires de la Lune* (1655). As Cornelius shows in his monograph *Language in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages*, the musical languages sprung from a widespread fascination for the melodious

[11] Ibid., 352

[12] Ibid., 354.

[13] Ibid., i-ii.

Chinese language as a result of recently renewed contacts with the East. The seemingly one-on-one relation between Chinese characters and reality inspired many writers of imaginary voyages on their quest to the ideal language.[14]

The way Holberg and Swift engage with the motive of musicality differs considerably from the tradition Foigny, Veiras, Cyrano and Godwin. Swift creates a floating land inhabited by intellectuals who spend their time listening to the music of the spheres. These Laputians become so much involved with what is above their heads that they loose their touch with reality.[15] As the other side of the Cartesian coin, Swift creates a land just underneath the floating island, Balnibardi. The country houses a School of Languages where a machine produces the Lagadan language's entire vocabulary, grammatical structure and syntax. Gulliver's passage in Lagado is known as "Swift's satiric comment on schemes to create a real character."[16]

Fifteen years later, Holberg satirises the musical language tradition in the Land of Music, a land with actual living music instruments, in chapter XI.[17] They hop around on one leg and have hands and arms. With a bow in hand, they play music on their own body and indicate their feelings with tonality and velocity. Cornelius acknowledges the tradition's influence on Holberg, and concludes his short discussion of Holberg's book as follows:

> Clearly, Ludvig Holberg, in this episode of his *Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground*, has satirized the 'imaginary language tradition' as it developed in the voyages of such writers as Godwin, Cyrano and Swift. This Scandinavian remembered his predecessors and the far-away country of China as he conducted Niels Klim through adventures in the subterranean world. In no other episode were his satirical intentions clearer than in his voyage to Crochet Island.[18]

In Holberg's *Terra Musica,* Cornelius finds a perfect way to close his argument on the fictionalisation of Europe's fascination for the Chinese language: a satirical and imaginative embodiment of his study object.[19] A century earlier than Holberg, Francis Godwin added pieces of music score to his travelogue to present the musical language of his utopian, lunar society. Holberg takes the musical language literally and simply stages living music instruments. Not surprisingly, both Cornelius' analysis of the novel *and* his analysis of imaginary languages in general lead to this climax.

Although Swift's treatment of musicality is much more concise than Holberg's, they are both aimed at stepping away from the belief in Cartesian universals and at

[14] Cornelius, passim.

[15] Holberg most notably recycles Swift's land of Laputa in the Philosophical Land, found in *Niels Klim* IX, 142-51. For a thematic comparison between both passages, see Skovgaard-Petersen and Zeeberg. 3-9.

[16] Ann Cline Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," *English Literary History* 45, no. 1 (1978): 43.

[17] *Niels Klim* XI, 250-54.

[18] Cornelius, 157.

[19] For Cornelius entire discussion of Holberg's text, see ibid., 154-57.

fictionalising its extreme consequences. Swift and Holberg also find each other in their ridicule of the most common tool for linguists to prove universality: etymology. To many linguists, the latter was used to retrace the steps of language evolution in order to come closer to the natural meaning of words, as expressed by the Adamic language. Swift, amongst others, satirises language purists in *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712) and displays his famous skill for punning to denounce the (ab)use of etymologies in *A Discourse to Prove the Antiquity of the English Tongue* (1765).[20] The last work in particular makes one think of Holberg's *Epistle 193,* where Holberg mocks Olof Rudbeck. The Swedish linguist founds a theory on the antiquity of the Swedish language in *Atlantica* (1675), an unfinished work in four volumes, more than 3000 pages and printed in parallel columns of Swedish and Latin. Rudbeck rewrites biblical and antique history to make Sweden into Plato's Atlantis and bases his argumentation on – to modern readers - absurd etymologies to Scandinavian words or names.[21] Holberg ironically gives Rudbeck credit for his theory that the Trojan War was actually a two-year siege of the city of Trondheim and founds this hypothesis with etymological explanations of his own:[22]

> Thi alle Græske og Trojanske Navne ere ikke andet end fordrejede Norske Ord, som for Exempel: Trojlus er ikke andet end Troels eller Truels, Paris Per Iversen, Hector Henrik Thorsen, Palamedes Palle Mikelsen, Agamemnon Aage Mogensen, Olysses Ole Lykke, Achilles Acho Hellesen, Ajak Anders Jacobsen, Helene Ellen, og saa fremdeeles.[23]

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[20] In another article, Kelly digs deeper into Swift's way of ridiculing what she calls 'modern etymologists' in amongst others in *The Antiquity of the English Tongue* and *A Tale of a Tub*. She describes these etymologists as academic seeking "to demonstrate through etymological analysis that his language has an inherent connection with Nature, in other words, that his language is a type of 'real character' which contains its meaning in its form." Ann Cline Kelly, "Swift's Satire against Modern Etymologists in the Antiquity of the English Tongue," *South Atlantic Review* 48, no. 2 (1983). The most thorough study of Swift's use of language in many parts of his writings is the monograph of Deborah Baker Wyrick in which see links his playfulness towards language and interpretation with the metaphor of clothing, which can hide or unveil meaning in many ways. Deborah Baker Wyrick, *Jonathan Swift and the Vested Word* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Her ideas on *Gulliver's Travels* in particular will be refered to later on in this chapter.

[21] See also Ducet, 227. It is debated whether Rudbeck actually saw Swedish as the Adamic language. In the most recent article of the linguistic theories of Rudbeck, Annie Burman argues that he rather saw Swedish as "a culturally seminal language of Europe and the Mediterranean." Annie Burman, "Language Comparison before Comparative Linguistics: Theories of Language Change and Classification in Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica*," in *Apotheosis of the North: the Swedish Appropriation of Classical Antiquity around the Baltic Sea and Beyond (1650 to 1800)*, ed. Bernd Roling, Bernhard Schirg, and Stefan Heinrich Bauhaus (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 79. For Rudbeck's use of etymology, amongst others with Greek and Latin names, see ibid., 83-85.

[22] *Epistles* III.193, 59-62.

[23] *Epistles* III.193, 44. "For, all Greek and Trojan names are merely twisted Nordic words, as for example: Troilus is no other than Troels or Truels, Paris is Per Iversen, Hector Henrik Thorsen, Palamedes Palle Mikelsen, Agamemnon Aage Mogensen, Olysses Ole Lykke, Achilles Acho Hellesen, Ajax Anders Jacobsen, Helene Ellen, and so on."

In the same line, Holberg suggests the wind god Aeolus was just a miswriting of Vergil for Olaus, a Nordic sea god (but also Rudbeck's Latinised first name). Holberg parodies the way linguists as Rudbeck manipulate major historical facts or mythical narratives to their own benefit, by basing their arguments on etymologies; and he does so with the same weapons, linguistic puns in the form of etymologies.[24]

In imaginary voyages, writers traditionally invent new words for their created world: amongst others, names of geographical places, creatures, their occupations and habits. In most seventeenth-century travel tales, these names are small riddles, and are sometimes even an important part of the text's humour and satire. The English bishop Joseph Hall, for example, uses in his description of imaginary societies on *Terra australis*, *Mundus alter et idem* (c. 1605), invented terms that are derived from different languages, and are simple, allegorical, and often comical representations of a core feature of the society; *Crapulia* is characterised by gluttony (*crapula* in Latin), *Moronia* by foolishness (*moron* in English) and Yvronia by inebriety (*ivre* in French).[25] Hall's play is sometimes far reaching and challenges the humanist reader to decipher a code through etymology.

Holberg's imaginary voyage is different. Linguistic games in his imaginative languages are limited and often (deliberately) dull. The geographical names range from telling (*Terra Musica*), over overt wordplay and easy etymologies (Potu - Utop), to simply nonsensical (Bostanki or Tumbac). The latter category is not only the most numerous by far, Holberg also often leaves out the explanation of the nonsensical words of subterranean languages in order to create suspense. For some readers, this game leads to an endless linguistic journey in search of the ideas behind the words. In the context of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Deborah Baker Wyrick calls this invitation by the text a "textocentric trap":

> [T]he bulk of the made-up languages in *Gulliver's Travels* have no secret meaning. They are arbitrary alphabetic nonsense. They have functions – naming people and places that Gulliver encounters and contributing to the book's engagement with language and verbal significance – but they have no literal message. By trying to find such messages, we play into Swift's hands.[26]

Both Swift's and Holberg's use of imaginary languages is a parody on the idea that circulated especially in the seventeenth century in the works of John Wilkins and others: that a name leads to the truth of the thing behind the name. Thus, names and words should be deciphered. The fact that scholars have not found hidden meanings for most of

[24] Holberg already ridicules the *Atlantica* in his poetical debut *Peder Paars* in 1720, where he lets the fictional commentator Just Justesen refer to Rudbeck by claiming that the Danish cliff, called 'Pater Noster', is the same one Vergil refers to as *Nimborum Patriam*. See *Peder Paars* I.1, 6, note c. Burman gives a nuanced image of Rudbeck's linguistic theories and argues that despite the fact that he "bends the facts to suit his own agenda," he also "makes some true observations about the nature of sound-change." Burman, 91.

[25] Joseph Hall, *Mundus alter et idem (an Old World and a New)* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1908). See also Paludan, 34-41.

[26] Wyrick, 82.

Holberg's invented words, can only mean that this is part of Holberg's ridicule of the fiercely debating grammarians and etymologists, and the laboratory activities of seventeenth-century writers of fictional travels. The words that indeed have a meaning – decipherable through simple tricks -, are each small provocations rather than clues to more decipherable words.

An example of Holberg's ridicule of linguistic key searchers is when Klim files a complaint against the judgment of the *Karatti*, the Potuan examiners who assign jobs to new citizens, to make Klim a court messenger. As his complaint gets rejected, Klim should get a sentence according to the following Potuan law: "Verba Legis libr. 4. cap. 3. de Calumniis haec sunt: *Spik. antri. Flak. Skak. mak. Tabu Mihalatti Silac.*"[27] The Potuan monarch shows clemency because Klim, as a foreigner, was not aware of this law. But Holberg ironically adds that "euidens sit verborum sensus, et sanctio legis nullam exceptionem patiatur."[28] Most probably, Holberg did not put much time in creating this nonsensical succession of sounds. The simplicity is part of the humour.[29] Instead of putting effort into grammatical and etymological games, like Foigny and Veiras, Holberg is rather interested in language's social function.

1.1.2 Arbitrariness and the Social Function of Language

Whereas Holberg and Swift both criticise and ridicule universality, albeit in a different degree and manner, their place in the rest of Knauff's development is less evident. Deborah Wyrick argues that *Gulliver's Travels* shows "a deep-seated ambivalence towards Locke's theory of language."[30] The novel has both been read as a fictionalisation of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and as a satire on it. Yet, it is commonly accepted that Swift was extremely familiar with Locke's work and engaged with it at different occasions. In the case of Holberg, the relation to Locke's language theory is more problematic. It is not unlikely that Holberg's views on language are rather based upon the

[27] *Niels Klim* IV, 59. "The words of the law, book 4, chapter 3, concerning defamation are these: *Spik. antri. Flak. Skak. mak. Tabu Mihalatti Silac*."

[28] Ibid., 59-60. "[...] the sense of the words was evident, and the penalty clause of the law permitted no exception [...]."

[29] Holberg might have found inspiration in the commentary of the Inca society by the Spanish chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* (1609). Holberg knew this work very well. He refers to it as *Historia Yncarum* in *Jewish History* I.1.4, 17 and 18n, and discusses a passage in *Discours sur l'entousiasme,* a part of Holberg's French work *Conjectures sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains* (1752, 183-85). Kristoffer Schmidt has also pointed out its relevance for Holberg's *Lives of Heroes* (*Heltehistorier*, 1739), particularly in the lives of Montezuma and Atapaliba. See 'Montezuma og Atapaliba' in the online appendix to Kristoffer Schmidt, "Om Heltehistorier," *Ludvig Holberg's Writings* v 2.6, http://holbergsskrifter.dk. Holberg probably made random varitions on the names of Incan cities and rulers with their prominent guttural sounds, like *Manco Capac*, *Quitu* or *Cuzco*, while inventing words as *Pikel Emi*, *Cupac, Maskabos, Henochi, Keba, Nehc, Iochtan, Chilac* and *Quama*.

[30] Wyrick, 11. For the academic debate on Swift's stance towards Lockean linguistics, see ibid., 10-11.

work of the German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf than by Locke's.[31] As it is the case with Descartes in Knauff's theory, Locke stands for a linguistic-philosophical tradition that is much more complex in theory than it is in its fictionalisations in imaginary voyages. In its contrastive position vis-à-vis the Cartesian universals, Locke's theory primarily stands for a "clear espousal of the arbitrariness of linguistic signs and of the considerable freedom of individuals to fabricate them."[32] It is in this camp we must place Pufendorf as well.[33]

Holberg comments upon the arbitrariness of language in a passage on Adam's naming of Things in *Jewish History*. There, Holberg interprets Adam's task to name creatures and things as a divine gift to mankind, namely the command of language and the opportunity to put this gift into practice.[34] To Holberg, God is not the author of the first language, nor did He put the words into Adam's mouth.[35] Adam rather had an articulate voice himself and named all things as he pleased.[36] Although language is man-made, Holberg suggests that Adam only named a few, broad categories of things and that language became increasingly complex as more and more specific words were created based on conventions in human society. Language is thus man-made but not entirely arbitrary.

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[31] For a discussion of Holberg's relation to contemporary debates on tolerance and specifically Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), see Lasse Horne Kjældgaard, "Tolerance og Autoritet hos Locke, Voltaire og Holberg," in *Holberg i Norden: om Ludvig Holbergs författarskap och dess kulturhistoriska betydelse*, ed. Gunilla Dahlberg, Peter Christensen Teilmann, and Frode Thorsen (Göteborg: Makadam, 2004). The degree in which Holberg was familiar with Locke's theories on language in particular is a matter of debate. According to Jørn Schøsler, who focused on Locke's interpretation of tolerance as well, Holberg was also acquainted with Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and probably read it in a French translation. See Jørn Schøsler, "Holberg, lecteur de Locke. Un exemple de réception chez les Lumières danoises," *Dix-huitième siècle* 41 (2009): 525n. However, the chapter on language in Holberg's *Natural Law* strongly echoes *De jure naturae et gentium* (1672) by Samuel Pufendorf. For a reading of Pufendorf's passage, see Avi Lifschitz, "The Arbitrariness of the Linguistic Sign: Variations on an Enlightenment Theme," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73, no. 4 (2012): 541-43. For a discussion of language in Holberg's *Natural Law*, see Thomsen, 7-15. Moreover, Knud Haakonssen even pleads to read Holberg's writings and his contribution to European intellectual history in light of *Natural Law* (1716), an early work Holberg revised throughout his career. Holberg's repeated adherence (sometimes bordering on plagiarism) to the Pufendorf in particular shaped many of Holberg's recurring ideas. See Knud Haakonssen, "Introduction, Part 2: the Author and the Work," in *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017); Knud Haakonssen, "Holberg's *Law of Nature and Nations*," ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

[32] This is what readers could have sensibly taken away from Locke's *Essay*, in the words of Lifschitz, 544. The most notable adherent of the Cartesian side who was contemporary of Locke was Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). For his interest in the Chinese language, the universal character, and etymology, see Daniel P. Walker, "Leibniz and Language," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972). For his criticism on Locke's theory, see Aarsleff.

[33] Lifschitz, 542.

[34] *Jewish History* I.1.7, 38-39.

[35] The idea that God is the first author is found in, amongst others Hobbes's *Leviathan* (...). Holberg gives a same critique in *Epistle 280* where he comes back to the relation between *res* and *verba*, and the role of Adam.

[36] *Jewish History* I.1.7, 37.

Adam still had total freedom in naming things, but afterwards the words became less a matter of individual arbitrariness than a product of dynamics within society and amongst speakers.[37] The obligation of men to use language in a way that is beneficial to society is a constant in his writings, and - being a side thought to the linguistic debate around arbitrariness - the main justification for Holberg to reflect on the language debates in the first place. Holberg has no true interest in linguistics or punning but is concerned with how language guides and potentially misguides human interaction.[38]

The concern with the social function of language, rather than with linguistic theory itself, Holberg shares with Swift. In her article *After Eden: Gulliver's (Linguistic) Travels* (1978), Kelly shows how Jonathan Swift in his novel gradually unfolds a strong criticism towards the idea of a universal language and the belief in its social benefits. Whether Gulliver arrives in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, Balnibardi or the land of the Houyhnhnms, the reader is always confronted with the same pattern; unknown to the indigenous language, Gulliver has to communicate with gestures at first, with varying success. After the language acquisition, Gulliver is able to learn more about the countries and their languages, but, as Kelly argues,

> Gulliver never finds an island of Edenic linguistic purity: in each country he visits, language to a greater or lesser degree is an barrier against reality erected by incomplete and irrational perceptions, and in each culture, some kind of domestic disharmony exists.[39]

Kelly sees a solid critique of Swift on "the premise of some of the language planners that a reform in language would automatically produce a reform in human behavior" or "an improvement of national affairs."[40]

Knauff's collapse of Cartesian universality is thus dramatised in *Gulliver's Travels*, and, more precisely, in two ways: Gulliver is the narrator of satirical objects as well as a satirical object himself. Gulliver is the observer of different forms of language use and abuse in societies but is also the embodiment of the quest for the ideal form of language and language use. Embarking on this quest that is doomed to fail, Gulliver gradually becomes a project maker, revolutionary thinkers whose projects were aimed at the improvement of society, but who were often unmasked as being imposters. Kelly's interpretation of Gulliver's failed quest leads to the assumption that Swift sees linguists, perhaps even Cartesian linguists, as such imposter-revolutionaries.

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[37] This preoccupation with the social dimension of language is particularly present in one of Holberg's *Natural Law* of 1716, as already shown by Hans Hagedorn Thomsen. See Thomsen, 10-12. I will return to this social contract of language at the beginning of part III of this thesis, when I speak of the relation between language and truth, according to Holberg (and Pufendorf).

[38] A notable exception is Holberg's short essay on the Danish language, called *Orthographical Remarks (Orthographiske Anmerkninger*), which was published as an appendix to his Ovidian poem *Metamorphosis* (1726).

[39] Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 48.

[40] Ibid., 49 and 50.

It has been argued before that Holberg shares a critical attitude towards projectors with Swift.[41] They are mocked by Holberg throughout his career and are particularly personified in the character of Klim.[42] Klim repeatedly tries to improve the societies his visits with the knowledge he brought from Europe, often with pernicious consequences. The subquestion of whether Klim also shows himself as a *linguistic* project maker, like Gulliver, has not been asked so far. In *Gulliver's Travels,* Holberg could have found an example of how to translate this concern with the social function of language into an engaging narrative, especially through the use of a projector as the main character. The overall method is thus similar, but still, as I will gradually show when zooming in on Swift's and Holberg's treatments of language in the remaining part of this chapter, Holberg lays different accents than Swift. Hereby, his text still holds a particular position in Knauff's shift.

Returning to Holberg's *Jewish History,* we may already find a hint in a passage in which he comments upon various interpretations of the tale of Babel. Holberg gives a remarkably positive twist to the commonly accepted negative outcome of the Confusion of Tongues to the human race:[43]

> Eftersom alle talede et Sprog, saa kunde og alle have Omgiængelse og Communication med hinanden, og derved giøre den Fordervelse, som havde reyset sig blant det menneskelige Kiøn gandske almindelig. Man maae derfor ansee Sprogenes Multiplication ved Babels Bygning, som et særdeles Merke paa Guds Forsyn, efterdi Menneskerne derved bleve deelte udi adskillige Societeter, hvorved i Fremtiden hindredes en allmindelig Fordervelse.[44]

[41] See Sejersted, "Reflections on Peer Gynt's Forefathers Niels Klim and Lemuel Gulliver." For the relevance of projectors for Swift's authorship, see J. M. Treadwell, "Jonathan Swift: The Satirist as Projector," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 17, no. 2 (1975). For a discussion of the general importance of projectors, particularly in the eighteenth century and onwards, see Markus Krajewski, ed. *Projektemacher. Zur Produktion von Wissen in der Vorform des Scheiterns* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2004).

[42] In the late comedy *The Republic, or the Common Good* (*Republiqven eller Det gemeene Beste*, 1754), Holberg focuses entirely on the topic of project makers.

[43] It must be noted that Holberg's discussion of language in *Jewish History* is partly a compilation from *An Universal History* by George Sale (1697-1736) and later George Psalmanazar. For Holberg's method of compilation in *Jewish History*, see Jørgen Magnus Sejersted, "Holberg's Jewish History," in *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

[44] *Jewish History* I.1.5, 26. "Since everyone spoke one language, everyone could also have contact and communicate with one another, and thereby turn the depravation that was set in motion into a common trait amongst the entire human race. Therefore, one has to consider the multiplication of languages at Babel's building as a sure sign of divine providence because men hereby were divided into various societies, which prevented a universal depravation in the future."

Holberg does not see the Confusion as a curse to human kind but as a miracle that bears witness to divine providence.[45] The passage hereby indicates a positive attitude towards multilingualism, a call for embracing the diversity of languages in the world. It suggests that Holberg's views on language might lean towards what Knauff described as a belief in the enlightening experience of the psychological and philosophical struggle with language difference. The Confusion of Tongues, and the in essence multilingual environment that existed ever since, is one that poses extreme challenges to mankind, but is ultimately beneficial. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will demonstrate that Holberg's treatment of language in *Niels Klim* can be situated in this alternative development of Knauff, whereas Swift's play with Lockean language theory in *Gulliver's Travels* fits in better with Knauff's general trend.

1.2 Subterranean Language Use and Abuse

1.2.1 Language Acquisition

Holberg creates an extreme form of multilingualism in his subterranean countries of humans, animals, trees, and even music instruments. This variety of languages brings forth different challenges for his main character, a foreign intruder and proud European. First, Klim has to learn those languages. A prominent place for this basic step of language acquisition is common in imaginary travel literature, but Holberg uses this in a particularly Gulliverian manner.[46] He is not interested in the pedagogic methods of language acquisition but in its meaning and importance for understanding society.

[45] In a later passage, he comes back to this thought. Babel helped the Jewish (and in extension the Christian) community to remain faithful to God: "Dog kand man sige, at denne Adspredelse og Sprogenes Forvirring ogsaa havde nogen Nytte; thi derved blev Jorden meere bebygget, og de Troende, som fandtes udi Sems Afkom, ikke saa let til Afguderie kunde forføres af de U-gudelige, som ellers, hvis de alle havde havt et Sprog, og hvis de alle havde levet i et Societet sammen." *Jewish History* I.1.5, 35. "One could say, though, that the spread and Confusion of Tongues also had some benefits; because, hereby the earth became more cultivated, and the faithful who stem from Sem could not have been seduced so easily to idolatry of the ungodly as when they all would have had one language and lived in the same society."

[46] A good example is an extended passage in *Le nouveau Gulliver* by the French journalist and translator Desfontaines, where Gulliver's son, Jean, learns the language of the Babilarians in less than a month. Desfontaines goes less into the imaginary language itself than in the teaching method, namely with a dictionary of pictures which enables the student to learn even verbs and adverbs. Jean adds he wished European universities would use this for teaching Latin and Greek to the youth. See Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines, *Le nouveau Gulliver, ou Voyages de Jean Gulliver, fils du Capitaine Lemuel Gulliver*, ed. Charles Georges Thomas Garnier, Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions et romans cabalistiques (Paris: Rue et Hôtel Serpente, 1787), 46-50.

Learning the language seems to be the first step for Klim towards insight in the nature of the countries he visits.

The theme of language acquisition is most prominent in Potu, where Klim's ability to understand the Potuan language structures the entire narration in chapter II. After tumbling down into the cave near Bergen and landing softly on the subterranean planet Nazar, Klim immediately has to run from a bull and climbs the nearest tree. To his surprise, the tree flings him to the ground. From that moment onwards the scene gradually unfolds in the same fashion as the arrival of Gulliver in the country he visits first. In Lilliput, the locals tie up Gulliver to the ground. Klim and Gulliver gradually regain their breaths and hear the industry of unknown creatures. As they observe the indigenous people and describe them with astonishment, they are confronted with language problems. Klim describes the situation as follows:

> His iacentem me sustulit, ac vociferantem abstraxit, comitantibus innumeris diuersi generis diuersaeque magnitudinis arboribus, quae sonos ac murmura edebant, articulata quidem, sed auribus meis peregrina, adeo, vt nihil praeter verba haec, *Pikel Emi* , cum saepius eadem iterata fuerint, retinere memoria potuerim. Audiui mox per verba haec intelligi simiam insolitae figurae: quippe e corporis mei forma et cultu coniiciebant, me simiam esse, quamuis specie non nihil distinctam a Cercopithecis, quos haec terra alit.[47]

In Swift's story, one of the Lilliputians climbs onto Gulliver's face and cries out "in a shrill but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul*." Gulliver adds: "the others repeated the same words several times, but I then knew not what they meant."[48]

The parallel between the two meetings is apparent. Klim and Gulliver hear words they cannot understand and repeatedly remark that they would only learn these things when they had acquired the indigenous language. Both Holberg and Swift use this initial and basic language problem to design a large part of the following adventures, and they do this with a simple but effective narrative technique. In the discourse of Klim and Gulliver one could distinguish two *personas*: the traveller who experiences things on the spot, and the narrator, penning these experiences down afterwards. The first has not yet acquired the indigenous language; the second has. This deduplication of the traveller-narrator

[47] *Niels Klim* II, 17-18. "With these [buds] the tree took me up from the ground and, as I screamed, carried me off attended by a multitude of other trees of various kinds and different sizes, which all kept muttering certain sounds, articulately indeed, but too foreign for my ears, so that I could not possibly retain anything of them, except the words *Pikel Emi*, which I heard them very often repeat. By these words (as I afterward understood) was meant "a monkey of an odd shape," because from the make of my body, and manner of dress, they infer that I was a monkey, though of a species different from the monkeys of that country."

[48] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Penguin Popular Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1994), I.1, 12. For a discussion of this passage in *Gulliver's Travels*, see Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 37.

creates an interesting starting point to describe the linguistic adventures of their protagonists.[49]

In *Gulliver's Travels,* it takes a while before Gulliver learns the Lilliputians' language. Until then, he has to rely on gesticulation. Primitive as it may be, this communication turns out to be quite successful for Gulliver; while he is chained, he is able to signal and satiate his basic needs for food, drinks and shelter.[50] In *Niels Klim*, gestures are of no use. Holberg describes how Klim is dragged to court, is perplexed by the strange customs, but is unable to interpret the situation and the trees' gestures. Only at the end of the chapter, after the entire court scene and Klim's punishment, the past events since his climb into the tree are explained to the reader.

The distressful positions in which Klim and Gulliver find themselves at first are thus a consequence of the inability to communicate with the indigenous people. Once the language is acquired, the perspective shifts from traveller to narrator and the situations of Gulliver and Klim change entirely. They can learn about the habits and laws of the hosts and thereby learn to appreciate and admire the country. Klim describes this game changer as follows:

> Haec omnia linguam subterraneam edocto penitius innotuerunt, quo facto clementius iudicium ferre coeperam de gente ista, quam temere nimis damnaueram. At, quamuis stupidas et stolidas has arbores primo intuitu iudicaueram, animaduerteram tamen mox non omni humanitate esse destitutas, ac proinde nullum mihi esse periculum vitae; in qua spe confirmabar, cum viderem, bis quouis die alimenta mihi afferri. Cibus vulgo constabat e fructibus, herbis ac leguminibus; potus erat liquidus succus, quo nil dulce magis ac saporum.[51]

Klim's phrasing in his judgment of the Potuans is particularly striking. Klim does not necessarily want to understand the trees, but wants to make the Potuans into one of his own kind, human, by defining them in terms of his own frame of reference, *humanitas*. The reason for doing so is not only that they are *human-like* - with an organised society

[49] Swift highlights the tension between the two *personas* by letting Gulliver remark that he did not know the meaning of the Lilliputian words at that time, and by even omitting the actual meaning later on. The reader will never know what exactly the brave loner on Gulliver's face yelled to his comrades. Later in this chapter, I will give an example of this trick in Holberg's text.

[50] Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 39. For the concept of gestures as the *Lingua Humana*, see ibid., 37.

[51] *Niels Klim* II, 29-30. "I thoroughly understood all these things once I had mastered the subterranean tongue. From then on, I began to form a milder judgment of a people I had too hastily censured. And though at first I was of the opinion that these trees were excessively stupid and brutish, I soon found reason to think that they were not altogether destitute of humanity, and that therefore I was in no danger of my life. What confirmed me in this was that one brought me food twice a day. The meal consisted of fruits, herbs and pulse, and my drink was liquor of the most delicious and grateful I ever tasted."

and a language-, but also that they are *humane*. He is offered daily meals, which gives him a feeling of humane comfort.[52]

Klim's use of *humanitas* might turn the reader's attention to the question whether the travelling hero actually understands the society he visits. In *Gulliver's Travels*, language acquisition first leads to an improved social status. He is now able to leave his primitive life behind, which only fulfilled his basic needs, and to integrate in the Lilliputian society. However, if we look at the entire passage of Lilliput, we see that the real problems only started after Gulliver had learned the Lilliputian language. As Kelly points out, he "is accused of having an affair with the minister's wife, manipulated into serving the Lilliputians' military aims, charged with polluting the royal palace, indicted with articles of impeachment, and condemned to be blinded." [53] Although able to produce the language, Gulliver fails miserably in using it according to Lilliputian standards.

The same pattern returns in Potu, where language acquisition first seems to open doors for Klim. The ruler of Potu becomes interested in the foreign traveller and grants Klim an audience on one condition: that he has learned the Potuan language.[54] The audience with the ruler has an important impact on Klim's integration into Potuan society. He is appointed as a royal messenger - although against his own will -, because his feet are unusually swift in comparison with the slow trees. At the end of chapter IX, Klim asks the monarch to give him another, more honourable position in the Potuan society, whereupon the monarch's refuses and gives an explanation that is telling for the way Klim is unable to understand Potuan society:

> Naturam, ait, nactus es nouercam, et desunt tibi animi dotes, quibus ad momentosa reipublicae negotia panditur iter. Sequi non debes, quae assequi nequeas, aliorum naturam imitaturus, omittas tuam. Porro, si ea, quae stulte petis, obtineres, Principem, ait, eo nomine male auditurum, ac leges infringendas: acquiescere igitur sorte tua, ac spem, cui natura refragatur, abiicere debes.[55]

Contrary to Klim's own assessment, mastering the Potuan language does not suffice as a way to gain insight in society. Part of Holberg's playfulness lays in the suggestion that Klim, as a human, does not understand the nature of the trees; he can only imitate their

[52] At the first meeting of the Potuan trees after he hears them say *Pikel Emi*, Klim is harsher in his judgement. The fact that the trees seemed social and able to communicate did not make them into humans right away. Klim first needed proof of their good morals. See *Niels Klim* II, 20-21.

[53] Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 40.

[54] For the sake of the story, Holberg does not persist in chronology. The audience with the Potuan leader, which is the immediate cause for Klim to learn the language, is described long after the interpretation of the court scene, namely in *Niels Klim* II, 30.

[55] *Niels Klim* IX, 192-93. "'Nature,' he said, 'has been a step mother to you, and you are lacking the gifts of the mind that pave the way to important offices in society. You should not follow what you cannot acquire. By imitating the nature of others, you lose your own. Moreover, if you would get what you foolishly ask for,' the Prince said, 'then this would give the bad impression that laws are there to be broken: you must accept your fate and abandon your hope that is against nature.'"

nature by learning their language, or dressing up as a tree.[56] However, this does not make up for Klim's behaviour. After his adventures as a messenger, Klim decides to submit a bill that would undo the gender equality in the Potuan government. The utopian society of Holberg cannot accept this absurdity and banishes Klim to the Firmament, the inhabited inner crust of the Earth. In Potu, Klim thus shows himself for the first time as a linguistic projector who rather wants to change the society to his own standards than adapting his social behaviour to the local conventions.

Although in neither *Gulliver's Travels* nor *Niels Klim* the main reason for the protagonists' misfortunes, the moment of language acquisition is an ambiguous turning point in the protagonists' fates. Knowledge of the language has temporarily positive outcomes, but is a curse in disguise. In the end, it does not necessarily lead to a better understanding of the country and its people, or to a complete naturalisation.

1.2.2 Entertaining the Idea of Arbitrariness

The problematisation of the link between language acquisition and naturalisation is in itself a Gulliverian theme. In the land of giants, Brobdingnag, Gulliver learns the Brobdingnag language after an infantile situation in which he is limited to communicate with gestures, and travels through the land as a tiny fool who amuses its public with his rudimentary linguistic knowledge. Once Gulliver starts to master the language and practices rhetoric at the court of Brobdingnag, the King does not appreciate his efforts at all. Because of it, Gulliver is considered "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."[57] So, even though Gulliver speaks the language, he is not perceived as a real citizen, but as an animal. The theme of nature is pessimistic in *Gulliver's Travels* and leads to a rather misanthropic view at the end, where Gulliver looks up to the perfect Houyhnhnms but cannot reach their perfection because of his Yahoo-nature.

In *Niels Klim*, the theme is more playful and reflective, which is characteristic for Holberg's epistemic attitude in general. Knud Haakonssen explains this attitude through the expression 'to entertain an opinion':

> When you entertain an idea, you do not subscribe to it, that is, adopt it as yours to be defended as yours, but nor do you suspend judgment about it in the sense of ceasing to debate it, though Holberg would occasionally do that about some ideas [...]. Rather, when you entertain an idea, you consider it to be a standpoint that is possible, in the sense of being open to continuing debate and further development, something we see in Holberg's practice of carrying over themes and figures

[56] Klim receives branches to look more like a tree after he was harassed by Nazarian monkeys who considered him to be one of their kind. See *Niels Klim* IV, 62-63.
[57] Swift, II.6, 140.

> between different genres of work. We may call this Holberg's 'entertainment epistemology', for the pun fits exactly his concern to entertain by getting his audience to entertain ideas.[58]

We must see Holberg's views on language in the same line: not a consistent praise of a clear position, but a preference for the critical method of contrasting opinions and the reflection upon these opinions as such. It is not the point of choosing sides, but showing the strengths and weaknesses of arguments.

In Potu and the ape-state Martinia, for example, Holberg shows a natural link between the language and the nature of their speakers. The slow and quick natures of respectively the Potuans and the Martinians not only define the way they walk and act, but also how they talk. Klim describes Potuan speech for the first time in the courtyard in chapter II. The lawyers give very short speeches, which they repeat three times and are followed by half an hour of silence.[59] The judge then brings out words Klim suspects to be his sentence. The reason for the repetitions and the silence is the Potuans' slowness in comprehension (*ob tarditatem perceptionis*),[60] which enables them to make decisions only after mature consideration. In Martinia, the meeting scene with the monkeys immediately shows the opposite nature of the monkeys compared to the Potuan trees.

> Vnusquisque ordine accedens, alloquitur his verbis: *Pul Asser*. Postquam hanc aduentitiam saepius iterauerant, verbaque eadem ego tandem regesseram, immodicos edebant cachinnos, comicisque gestibus indicabant, vocis istius repetitione mire se delectari. Animaduertebam mox, incolas hos esse leues, nouitatis auidos, ac loquaces: Crederes tympana pulsari, cum loquebantur, tanta volubilitate, ac vno spiritu quasi torrente, contorquebant verba. Vt paucis dicam, erant cultu, moribus, loquela, et corporis forma, *Potuanis* e diametro oppositi.[61]

Unknown to the Martinian language, Klim interprets the gestures of the new creatures, and derives their nature from their use of language. It is a torrent of words. Later in the chapter, the syndic of the Martinians, in contrast with the concise speech of the Potuan judge, pours out his words and is compared to the talkative barbers in Europe.[62] The

[58] Haakonssen, "Introduction, Part 2: the Author and the Work," 18.

[59] *Niels Klim* II, 22-23.

[60] Ibid. II, 25.

[61] Ibid. X, 204. "They all came one after another and addressed me in these words: *Pul Asser*. When they had repeated this salutation pretty often, I repeated the same words, which made them burst into a roar of laughter and they signified with comic gestures that they were highly delighted to hear me repeat their sounds. This made me conclude these people to be a light, babbling race of creatures, and vast admirers of novelty. When they spoke, you would think so many drums were beating, with so much volubility and so little out of breath they held on their chattering. In a word, as to dress, manners, speech, and form of body, they were the very reverse of the Potuans."

[62] *Niels Klim* X, 211. See also XI, 254-255. This characterisation of the Martinians recalls Holberg's comedy on a talkative barber *Master Gert Westphaler* (1723-24), in which the abuse or asocial use of language is a central theme.

reason for their fast language is that Martinians are very quick in processing impulses and making decisions.

Potu and Martinia to some extent resemble the Houyhnhnm-Yahoo opposition. Both Holberg and Swift create a situation in which language is closely connected to the nature of their native speakers. It echoes linguistic theories on the arbitrary use of signs, as found in Locke and Pufendorf:

> [Pufendorf] distinguished human language from animal communication. The sounds animals employed to express affections, pleasure and pain were determined by nature, while human beings used signs by institution. [63]

However, as Sejersted points out, there is a significant difference in tone. Instead of creating a depressing situation in which every distinction between animal and man is erased and the Yahoo's are described with disgust, Holberg uses his Potuans and Martinians rather as comical extremities.[64] The same goes for their treatment of the linguistic theory. We learn very little about the actual relation of Potuan or Martinian words to things. Instead, he 'entertains the idea' of the arbitrariness of language and invites the reader to reflect upon how one should use language in society.

The opposite natures enable Holberg to ridicule different types of asocial language. In his description of Potu, Holberg for example ridicules academic disputations and court hearings. The Potuan use of rhetoric is confined to the field of entertainment. After the court practices in Potu, which Klim first interpreted as a form of drama (*histrionia*),[65] Klim takes the reader to what the Potuans consider as a real theatre spectacle: an academic dispute. *Disputatores* are trained to skilfully use their language to orate and dispute and, in doing so, to entertain the spectators. There even are people, called *Cabalcos* or stimulators, who poke the debaters in the loins with sticks when the dispute is mitigating.[66] In short, academic disputes and the use of rhetorical speech are not more than cockfights. Potuans prefer to use language in a vigorous and concise manner in order to prevent confusion and ultimately corruption. Language use that becomes too sophisticated or stylistic is considered unpractical and unsuitable for serious matters such as law. It is restricted to the field of entertainment.

In Martinia, the apes clearly use language for the opposite purposes. The lawyers of Martinia are trained to turn the truth to their own advantage as accomplished sophists,[67]

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[63] Lifschitz, 541. In the following pages, Lifschitz explains that Locke's view was similar.

[64] Sejersted, "Å reise med Gullliver, Niels og Peer – Holbergs *Niels Klims underjordiske reise* lest mellom Swifts *Gulliver's Travels* og Ibsens *Peer Gynt*," 280. Further in the article, Sejersted elaborates on the man-animal theme by comparing the texts of Swift and Holberg with Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt* (1867), where the main character is also mistaken for a monkey.

[65] *Niels Klim* II, 23.

[66] *Niels Klim* III, 33-36.

[67] The comparison with sophists is expressed through a Greek saying in *Niels Klim* X, 221: "vt Graeci aiunt, τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρέιττω ποιεῖν." "Like the Greeks say, make the weaker word into the better."

and the Martinian doctors write dissertations on absurd questions like "[a]n sonus, quem reddunt muscae, aliaque insecta, per os vel per posteriora egrediatur."[68] The Martinians' language is complex, swift and literally sophisticated. It is used to manipulate, lie and to study worthless topics. The use of language and the difference in nature between Klim and subterranean creatures must highlight the inability of Holberg's European-minded and naive protagonist to learn from these extreme societies. In contrast to Holberg's ideal reader, Klim does not know how to deal with the examples of language use and abuse he witnesses.

1.2.3 The Function of Universality

When it comes to language use, the Potuan trees seem to have a way of communicating that is preferable to that of the Martians. Their considerate, rational speech, although exaggerated, is part of their ideal, utopian characteristics. It is no wonder, then, that this Potuan language turns out to be universal. On the entire planet Nazar, there is no Confusion of Tongues.[69] As a royal messenger, Klim travels through the planet of Nazar and encounters many other tribes of trees. The latter differ in morals, habits and even nature to some extent, but they have two things in common: they are all trees and all speak the same language. The curse of the Tower of Babel, the very first human project, has apparently not struck Nazar. As the trees are not very migratory and the different parts of Nazar are confined by water, the trees have developed into various tribes. However, they have a common origin:

> Annorum epochae sunt variae, et figuntur a rebus maxime memorabilibus, in primis ab ingenti cometa, qui ter mille abhinc annis diluuium vniuersale creditur excitasse, quo submersum fuit totum arboreum genus cum caeteris animantibus, exceptis tantum paucis, qui in collibus ac montium cacuminibus commune naufragium effugerunt, et ex quibus praesentes incolae descendunt.[70]

The origin myth of the Potuan trees echoes the biblical Deluge from *Genesis*.[71] The subterranean utopian country mirrors the destined sons of Noah who repopulated the earth from the mountain Ararat. One of the descendants of Noah, Nimrod, would start to

[68] *Niels Klim* X, 216-17. "Whether the sound which flies and other insects make comes through their mouth or their posteriors."
[69] It is said there is only one language in *Niels Klim* V, 67 and IX, 122.
[70] *Niels Klim* V, 69-70. "Their dates or eras of time are various; they depend on the most memorable events, particularly from the great comet which appeared three thousand years ago and is said to have caused a universal deluge in which the whole race of trees and other animals perished, except a few which on the tops of mountains escaped the general wreck, and from whom the present inhabitants are descended."
[71] A second possible reference would be to the classical origin myth of the human race, namely the deluge and the repopulation of Earth by Deucalion and Pyrrha.

the first human project in Babel.[72] Holberg creates a world in which the Confusion of Tongues did not take place. The trees still speak the same language, the one that was used before the universal flood.

One could read the linguistic situation of Nazar as a parody of the theological and linguistic quest for the universal language. Holberg answers the question 'what if our world would have a universal language, would it annul communication problems or human vices in general?' The answer is no. And the reason is quite comical. Although all Nazarian trees have one language, still depravation and vices cannot travel all over the globe; not because it is obstructed by language difference, but because of their slow nature. The creatures that have the vices cannot travel fast themselves and get into contact with one another. The unity of language does not make the arboreous people of Nazar into a paradisiacal world; they still differ in habits and morals, and are not all as exemplary as the utopian society of Potu. By this physical inability to travel, Holberg ridicules the idea of looking for an ideal, uniting language, and perhaps also the idea that a common language in itself would be enough to even out cultural differences.

There is thus a parody on Cartesian universals as Holberg creates a world in which universality of language does not bring forth any benefits. A universal language, so eagerly searched for by European intellectuals, exists, but does not actually *function* as it is supposed to, lifting the curse of Babel. The single person that benefits from the universal language, so it seems at first, is Klim. He does not need to learn other languages to get access to the different societies on Nazar. However, again, Klim's knowledge of the Potuan language does not bring forth profound understanding of the Nazarian communities. Specifically, a misevaluation of the province of *Cocklecu*, where the common European gender roles are reversed, leads Klim to the idea of his revolutionary bill, and ultimately to his own banishment of Potuan society. Universality of language, in the end, seems to benefit no one. [73]

[72] Genesis 11: 1-9.

[73] In other writings, Holberg speaks in his own voice about the quest for a universal language with similar scepticism. In *Jewish History* (I.1.5, 26), which Holberg was possibly writing at the same time as *Niels Klim*, Holberg comments upon the Jewish claim of Hebrew being the oldest language on earth. First, he discusses the pro's and con's of this theory; in *Jewish History* I.1.7, 39-40, Holberg, for example, rejects the significance of etymological arugements for the claim that Hebrew is the oldest language. Later he concludes that it is pure speculation: "Kort at sige, man kand intet sikkert Beviis finde til noget Sprogs Ælde, og derfor kand holde det for troeligt, at det første Sprog er forgaaet ved Talens Forvirrelse" "To sum up: one cannot find any sure evidence of any language's age, and therefore one can hold it likely that the first language disappeared with the Confusion of Tongues, *Jewish History* I.1.7, 40). In *Epistles* III.251, 306-8, Holberg discusses the popular suggestion that Chinese might be the oldest language on earth and the one that was spoken before and just after the Deluge. He mentions common arguments as the simplicity of the Chinese language, the closeness between its characters and the things they represent, and its immunity to linguistic change for thousands of years. His description is not characterised by fascination, as Cornelius studies in his monograph on imaginary language, but rather shows certain scepticism towards these opinions. It is not clear in the end whether Holberg actually believes Chinese to be the oldest language. It seems that the matter stays unresolved for Holberg, as he is aware of that Europe

Contrary to the linguistic situation on Nazar, the one of the Firmament is characterised by a confusion of tongues. Martinia, and the other countries Klim visits, the Mezendorian lands and Quama, all speak different languages. When Klim travels on a Martinian galley through the wondrous neighbouring countries, the ship has several interpreters on board who facilitate the trading contacts.[74] Holberg shows various extremes of language, amongst others in the Land of Music we discussed before. Two other extremes of language nature are straightforward satires of asocial language use. The first is found in the land of Pyglossia, whose inhabitants speak through their rear end. This leads to a very uncomfortable communicative situation for Klim and his comrades, which makes them leave the harbour as soon as they see the opportunity:

> At, magno meo malo tunc aegrotabat tonsor noster, quocirca Pyglossiani tonsoris opera vti cogebar. Nam, cum tonsores hic loquaciores fere sint Europaeis, tetro, dum barbam radebat, odore stabulum repleuit, adeo, vt post discessum eiusdem thura adolere coacti fuerimus.[75]

Like the Martinians, the inhabitants of *Pyglossia* represent talkative people, often typified in Holberg's works as barbers.[76] Later, in chapter XIV, Klim returns to the Wondrous Lands (*Terrae Paradoxae*) and describes the nation of the *Canaliscae*. They defend themselves against intruders by cursing and swearing.[77] Klim admits that in a sharp exchange of words, they "orbis nostri Grammaticis non cedere."[78] This is one of the most explicit ridicule of language debates in the entire novel.[79] Holberg was not very fond of, in his eyes, pointless linguistic debates.

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does not know everything yet of the Chinese language and culture. In *Jewish History* and *Epistle 251* thus 'entertains' the idea of universal language, between reflection and ridicule; he does not say there has not been an Adamic language, but questions the possibility and added value of seeking it.

[74] *Niels Klim* X, 240.

[75] Ibid. XI, 254-55. "To my great misfortune, the barber belonging to our ship was ill at that time, so I had to make use of a Pyglossian barber. The people of this profession are more talkative, if possible, in this country than they are in Europe, so that while he was shaving me, he left such a horrid stench behind him in the cabin that we were obliged to burn great quantities of incense to sweeten it again after his departure."

[76] The main example for this is Holberg's comedy *Master Gert Westphaler* (1723-24) on the eponymous talkative barber. This passage on Pyglossia must have occupied Holberg's mind even after the publication of *Niels Klim*, because in the second edition of the book in 1745, Holberg adds an explanation of the - already obvious - similarity with the talkative type of persons back in upper world. He even gives this type names: *Janus Severini, Olaus Petri* and *Andreas Laurentii*. Why he adds this paragraph, which is rather redundant, is not clear, but it is remarkable as the second edition of *Niels Klim* has so few additions, and apart from the highly significant *Apologetic Preface,* not at all as lengthy as this paragraph on Pyglossia.

[77] The *Canaliscae* may refer to Hobbes's language theory based on violence. According to Hobbes, animals got, amongst other things, claws to defend themselves. Man's weapon is language.

[78] *Niels Klim* XIV, 333.

[79] A similar but more elaborated idea we find in Tanian's description of Europe, where European grammarians are portrayed as a type of militia, fighting with pens. See ibid. XIII, 314.

So far in the novel, Holberg has shown the reader all sorts of language use: slow and swift speech, well-considered and premature, language for weighty topics and for entertainment, spoken by trees, animals and music instruments. Nowhere Klim encountered a language that could have a positive and uniting outcome as a universal language, envisioned by theologians and linguists. No language in the underground world so far was able to unite a people or improve society. At the end of Klim's journey through the *Terrae Paradoxae,* Klim finally finds the ideal society when it comes to language and communication: Mezendoria. In this land of fables, all trees and animals live together in peace:

> Post nauigationem octidui, ad metropolin imperialem peruenimus, vbi, quicquid de societatibus animalium, arborum, ac plantarum cecinerunt Poëtae, hic reuera existere deprehendimus. Nam *Mezendoria* tanquam communis patria est animalibus, arboribus, ac plantis, ratione praeditis. Quoduis ibi animal, quaeuis arbor, ius ciuitatis acquirit, modo regimini, ac legibus publicis se subiiciat. Crederes quidem, mixturam tot creaturarum diuersae formae, et diuersae oppositaeque naturae, confusionem ac turbas parere debere. At, ipsa contrarietas felicissimum producit effectum, virtute prudentissimarum legum ac constitutionum, quae miscellaneis his subditis, pro naturae ac ingenii modulo, negotia ac munera, vnicuique apta et conuenientia assignant.[80]

In Mezendoria, every species is welcome, even if they have an 'opposite nature.' Mezendoria's social harmony results in a social structure that is based on merits. Every species has its own task or place in society, which they all fulfil with pleasure. Klim expresses his admiration for the exemplary society as follows:

> Solus iste adspectus diuersi generis animalium, scil. vrsorum, luporum, anserum, picarum etc. regionibus ac vicis vrbis inerrantium, ac sermones serentium, admirationem simul ac voluptatem apud insuetos id genus spectaculorum excitat.[81]

Klim also provides the reader with an explanation of this structure. The legendary elephant lawyer Lilako turned the old, corrupted Mezendoria into a meritocracy by

[80] Ibid. XI, 257-58. "Eight days sail brought us to the imperial capital. There we found all that realised, which our poets have sung of the societies of animals, trees and plants; Mezendoria being, so to speak, the common father-land of all sensible animals and plants. In this empire each animal and every tree can obtain citizenship, merely by submitting to the government and laws. One would suppose, that, on account of the mixture of so many different types of creatures, and different opposite natures, great confusion would prevail among them: but this is far from the case. On the contrary, this very difference produces the most happy effects; which must be attributed to their wise laws and institutions, decreeing to each subject that office and employment to which his nature and special faculties are best fitted."

[81] *Niels Klim* XI, 262-63. "The sight alone of so many kinds of animals, to wit, bears, wolves, geese, magpies, etc., walking up and down the different streets and quarters of the city and conversing familiarly with each other cannot fail of exciting admiration and delight in those who are unaccustomed to such kind of sights."

placing a qualified person in every vacant position, over time. This patient and non-revolutionary way made Mezendoria into the harmonious society Klim witnesses.

It is telling that there is no mention of any Mezendorian language whatsoever, as one of the few countries in the subterranean world. It seems as if the trees and animals, whose languages in Potu and Martinia at least were extremely different, are still able to communicate with each other without any problems. Language does not stand in their way to create a harmonious society. They managed to overcome the difficulties Babel's Confusion of Tongues bring forth, and were able to create a society based on merits, lead by a wise, absolute ruler. The comical twist to the story of Mezendoria is that there is also a striking absence of humans. This fable country that should be exemplary for Holberg's European readership, is at the same time not reachable for a human society. Mezendoria is thus the closest an underground society can get to universality with social benefits, and, ironically, does not seem to have a universal language itself. Multilingualism reigns without obstructing the formation of an ideal political and social structure. In this sense, Mezendoria seems to be the actual utopia in *Niels Klim*: a society that is nowhere in reality, and ultimately not reachable to human kind, but is still exemplary because of its quality of a harmonious multilingualism.

Once again, Klim is not able to integrate in society. One of the Martinians is called a comedian by one of the Mezendorian citizens. Although monkeys in Mezendoria are all comedians by profession, the Martianian ape takes it as an insult and the dispute has to be settled in court. Klim, in turn, is approached by a sow who had grown interest in the handsome human and wrote poetry for him. That Klim rejects the sow's advances - to no one's surprise - is both a comical and painful reminder that Klim is not able to understand the harmonious living together of all vegetal and animal species, and that he will never be able to integrate in the Mezendorian society.

That Mezendoria is both a culmination and turning point in Klim's linguistic journey becomes apparent from its position in the overall structure of *Niels Klim*. Mezendoria looks back by combining Potuan and Martinian creatures, Klim's previous places of residence, and concludes Klim's description of his sea voyage in chapter XI. After this, Klim is shipwrecked, which is a sudden rupture in Klim's adventure. The test phase of subterranean multilingualism now ends for Klim. From that moment onwards, Klim lives in a society of primitive humans and can start anew. He can use the lessons he might have learned from his previous adventures, not least of the land he just passed, Mezendoria. However, Klim opts for linguistic oppression and forced universality.

1.3 Wor(l)d Domination in Quama

When Klim arrives in Quama he again encounters language issues. Klim is greeted by the Quamitians in words he does not understand. Because he recognises "Dank Dank", he thinks they might speak German.[82] Gulliver compares the language of the Houyhnhnms with Teutonic: "In speaking [...] their Language approaches nearest to the *High Dutch* or *German*, [...] but is much more graceful and significant."[83] In *Niels Klim,* the primitiveness of the Quamitians – like the Houyhnhnms, they have no literature, for example - is strengthened when Klim tries other languages to communicate with them.[84] He tries Danish and Latin, which are unknown languages for the Quamitians. The subterraneous humans do not even know the Nazarian and Martinian languages.

Not much is said about the Quamitian language itself. As mentioned before, Holberg does not invent much language apart from geographical names, and Klim does not reflect upon the manner in which the subterranean languages are structured. The only insight the reader gets into the relation between *res* and *verba*, or the Naming of Things in the subterranean world, is when Klim receives nicknames. The development in Klim's nicknames is striking. Klim starts out as *Scabba*, the quick-witted one, in Potu. Under this name, Klim publishes his *Itinerarium* of his two-year journey around the planet Nazar.[85] In Martinia, then, Klim is named *Kakidoran*, the dull-witted one. The two nicknames show that there is no one-on-one relation between the thing, Klim, and the word, '*Scabba*' or '*Kakidoran*'. Klim is only *Scabba* to creatures who think slower than he does. This naming game is again very Gulliverian. Wyrick explains Gulliver's situation as follows:

> Throughout *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver never refers to himself by his proper name; instead, he dons a succession of names given by the people he encounters. *Quinbus Flestrin* (Great Man Mountain), *Grildrig* (mannikin), and *naiah Yahoo* (gentle Yahoo) serve as proper names although they are actually generic descriptions, whereas

[82] *Niels Klim* XII, 274.

[83] Swift, IV.3, 258.

[84] This link and other links I will discuss further in this section between Quama and the land of the Houyhnhnms, show that the relation between *Niels Klim* and *Gulliver's Travels* is one that can be called dynamic. Holberg plays with the expectations of the readers who have *Gulliver's Travels* in the back of their minds. The society of Potu at first might recall the one of the Horses and the opposition Potu-Martinia might show the relations between the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoo's, but reader have to adapt this idea while reading. They have seen glimpses of Lilliput in Potu, of Brobdingnag in Potu and Martinia, of Laputa in the Land of Music, so when they arrive at the passage on Quama, they can expect to see the Houyhnhnm-land (again). This idea is already reflected in McNelis's preface to his English translation of *Niels Klim*. There, he discusses the structure of both novels, indicating a similar progression. See Holberg, *The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground*, xli.

[85] This more elaborate version of what we can read in chapter IX is much appreciated by the Potuan people and their ruler. At the beginning of chapter IX, Klim warns the reader that he neither described his entire journey through Nazar, nor wrote his adventures in a chronological order. The term *itinerarium* in the title of his publication in Potu, however, suggests a more complete and structured version.

> *Nardac* (honored courtier), *Splacknuk* (weasel-like animal), and *Relplum Scalcath* (freak of nature) classify Gulliver within a set of cultural norms.[86]

Klim is also given names by others. In Potu and Martinia, his abuse is that he is not pleased with the relation expressed by these names, between the Thing, himself, and the society. In Quama, finally, the naming of Klim is slightly different. After Klim has learned Quamitian, he reveals his descent and native country. The Quamitians do not believe this story and call Klim *Pikil-Su*, or Envoy of the Sun.[87] This last nickname of Klim does not represent his nature either, nor his relative nature, but is based on religious beliefs, preoccupations and conventions among the Quamitians.

The misconception of the Quamitians enables Klim to abuse their language. As we have seen on Nazar and at the Firmament, there is no universal or ideal language to be found in nature, among native speakers. The only solution to the curse of Babel, Holberg ironically suggests, is to force one language upon the universe. Step by step, Klim executes his ultimate project of turning Quamitian in a universal language. When Klim first encounters Quamitians, he is particularly struck by the primitiveness of his own species. The acquisition of the Quamitian language enables him to improve his own situation and the underground human civilisation: "Hinc Cynicam vitam hic diu traduxi, donec in lingua tantum proficerem, ut cum incolis loqui, ac ignorantiae eorum succurrere possem."[88] Unlike in Potu and Martinia, Klim does not need to understand the society or try to integrate into it. He is convinced of its inferiority and is quite easily given the power to reform Quamitian society because of his new identity and his knowledge of European warfare. Klim simply creates a society of his own: the Fifth Monarchy.[89] His megalomaniac military campaigns are his way of integrating in a subterranean society: taking power and uniting the Firmament under his reign by military force.

As Ducet argues, Klim's military campaign also has its linguistic consequences:

> Toutefois, lorsque les Qvamites, soit: les hommes, prennent autorité sur le monde souterrain tout entier sous le joug de Niels Klim, ces langues sont fondues en un idiome unique: le qvamite. La langue des humains du monde souterrain est donc devenue la langue de la Nature.[90]

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[86] Wyrick, 106.

[87] *Niels Klim* XII, 276.

[88] *Niels Klim* XII, 275. "I was forced to live like a Cynic philosopher till I had made such a progress in their language as enabled me to converse with the inhabitants and assist their ignorance."

[89] The naming of his Empire is significant to the plot of *Niels Klim*, which will be discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis.

[90] Ducet, 235. "However, when the Quamitians - that is men - take authority over the entire underworld under the yoke of Niels Klim, these languages are merged into a single idiom: the Quamitian. The human language of the underworld thus has become the language of Nature."

Men, once again, rule over both the animal and vegetable kingdom. One language is forced upon all natural beings.[91] On his linguistic travels through the subterranean world, Klim has been looking for the Adamic language; a language that is easy in use, that is universally understood and enables non-native speakers to succeed in their integration process. All was in vain. In Potu, Klim's is not able to take control of the Potuans, or change their nature according to the standard of *humanitas*. Now he reached a land of tribal humans, Klim has another go at at making the subterranean world look a bit more like Europe.

Although Klim's rise to power ends in megalomania, conquests and bloodshed, it needs to be noted that his corruption is only gradual. At first, when Klim relates to the Quamitians that he comes from Europe, he seems good-natured and convinced that they should know his true identity. As the Quamitians remain convinced of his status of Ambassador of the Sun, Klim starts to doubt. What makes him finally change his mind? A befriended Tiger, Tomopoloko, gives him a book that is, in his opinion, a must-read for Klim. The book is a travelogue to Europe, written by a (further unknown) subterranean traveller with the name Tanian. Tanian's *Itinerarium* is the most direct criticism on Europeans, their habits and vices. The readers – including Klim - see themselves directly in the mirror.[92] This harsh satire of Europe and confrontation with the self leads Klim to the opinion that it is better not to spoil the Quamitians' illusions. Klim's language abuse thus consists of a passive abuse of his name *Pikil-Su* and an aggressive abuse by forcing the Quamitian language upon others during his conquests. After failed attempts to impose *humanitas* on Potu and Martinia, Klim's third metamorphosis succeeds, not by peaceful naturalisation or social adaptation, but by manipulation and linguistic oppression. His metamorphosis is a sham. Klim shows himself as an impostor, a linguistic project maker.

With this treatment of language in Quama, Holberg deviates from Swift. In the land of the Houyhnhnms, Gulliver thinks he found a natural language. Kelly point to several elements that make Houyhnhnms into natural creatures:[93] 'Houyhnhnm' itself is a clear onomatopoetic word for the neighing of horses, their language is a combination of gestures and words, their alphabet is easier than Chinese, and they do not have any literature - why would they need it? The Book of Nature is wide open to creatures living in an Edenic environment. Moreover, their language contains words that refer to perfect things, while lying or falsehood, which does not exist in Houyhnhnm-land, cannot be translated into their language.[94]

Despite this seemingly Edenic situation, the Houyhnhnms' language is still problematic. Kelly argues that Swift's Houyhnhnms have taken linguistic control over the

[91] Ducet pertinently links this to the book of Genesis where God gave men the commandment over Nature. This way, men unite Nature, its communication systems, languages, etc. See ibid.

[92] For a more thorough analysis of the itinerary of Tanian, see chapter 3.

[93] See Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 44-46.

[94] See Swift, IV.3, 259.

Yahoos. By calling the man-like creatures 'Yahoos', which in their language means "a crude, brutish or obscenely coarse person," the Yahoos actually started to change their nature to the meaning of the word:

> There is evidence to suggest that the first Yahoos were not bestial by nature, so the Houyhnhnms were required to make them bestial by oppressive nurture; through a calculated policy of debasement they cause the word "brute" to cohere more perfectly with the thing it represents.[95]

The first Yahoos thus were not brute and apelike creatures. Swift ascribes a biblical genesis to the Yahoo-people. They derived from two Yahoos turning up on a mountain. The myth recalls the creation of Adam and Eve, but, as Kelly argues,

> instead of coming into a Garden supervised by a God in the same image who spoke the same language, and with whom a natural affinity would exist, the original Yahoos came up against creatures who immediately branded them as evil because they were different.[96]

With the Houyhnhnms Swift seems to ridicule the natural link between words and things. The natural creatures of his utopian land change the nature of Things by sheer linguistic oppression. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift treatment of language thus hides a pessimistic view on social communication.[97] In Swift's world, men cannot escape the abuse of language. Language always stands in the way of organising a society that is morally good. It is no wonder, then, that Gulliver does not want to return to England. Now that he has seen the Houyhnhnms and is convinced of the perfection of their language, communication back in Europe seems hell.

In *Niels Klim,* the linguistic oppression comes from Klim's side and does not translate to a misanthropic view. Holberg rather ridicules in his main character a European-centred way of thinking. It is not a general, pessimistic critique on mankind's inability to understand one another, but a ridicule of Eurocentrism, personified by Klim. He is naively unaware of abusing his own words and imposing European *humanitas* on a foreign culture. Holberg's 'entertaining' of the problems involving social communication thus rather corresponds to his beloved 'know-thyself' maxim; one must know one's place in society and act accordingly – think of the meritocracy in Mezendoria -, and not shape society according to one's own aspirations. In other words, Holberg engagement with language debates on arbitrariness and universality is not grounded in a philosophical or theoretical

[95] Kelly, "After Eden - Gullivers (Linguistic) Travels," 47.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Wyrick even reads Swift's book as a linguistic tragedy: "Swift [...] makes Gulliver trot through his tragic paces because he represents man as language-[ab]user, a definition ultimately indistinguishable from man as animal [ir]rationale. In this role, Gulliver discloses some of Swift's deepest fears about the treachery of language and his own ability to prevent it." Wyrick, 182.

interest, but in the conviction that the individual *can* use language in a way that is beneficial for society as a whole, and that he can be *taught* to do so, through a reflexive narrative that explores language use and abuse in its most extreme forms.

Holberg returns to the matter of Quamitian as a universal language in the *Apologetic Preface*, which was added to the second edition of *Niels Klim*, published 4 years later in 1745.[98] Apparently, the son whom Klim had with a Quamitian wife recaptured the throne after Klim's escape. This new ruler has become an old man by now and still reigns under the name Niels II. Klim's grandsons, the narrators of the Preface, announce the publication of the *Continued History of the Fifth Monarchy*, written by some Norwegian scholars:

> Vna cum annalibus prodibit Grammatica Quamitica, quae pro tempore nullius quidem momenti est; at poterit magno vsui esse posteris: Nam, cùm Patria nostra nouatorum (absit inuidia) feracissima sit, in commercio cum Quamitis stabiliendo otia, negotia, somnos, vigilias ponent, nihilque intentatum relinquent donec machinas comminiscantur, quibus tutò et absque arte magica in subterranea nauigari queat.[99]

The Quamitian language is, apparently, not solely a language that linguistically unites the Firmament. Thanks to the efforts of European grammarians, it has the potential to become an actual language of the universe, uniting or at least enabling communication between both subterranean and superterranean regions. Holberg brings the theme from the subterranean world to Europe, the world that is mocked in his own satire and is both known and dear to his reader; there is no universal language *inside* the Earth, but is there one *on* the Earth? Moreover, by this small remark on the Quamitian language, Holberg not only revitalises the theme of universal languages in his second edition, he also introduces it for readers who have not read the first edition. By putting the language theme forward so prominently at the beginning of the book, Holberg incites his readers from *Niels Klim* after 1745 to pay (more) attention to Klim's linguistic travels while reading his adventures and to reflect upon how to use language in society.

[98] As Hartmann mentions, there are also some notable similarities between Holberg's *Apologetic Preface* and Swift's prefaces: *A Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson* and *The Publisher to the Reader*. See Hartmann, 152.

[99] *Niels Klim*, Apologetic Preface, 7v-8r. "Together with the annals, there will appear a *Grammar of the Quamitian Language*. It does not have any interest at the moment, but can be of great benefit to our descendants. Our country has a mass of projectors – not a bad word about them. They will certainly seize every possible opportunity, both night and day, to establish trade relations with the Quamitians, and they will not rest until they have invented machines with which they can sail with perfect safety and without the aid of witchcraft to the subterranean regions."

1.4 Conclusion: The Gift of Babel

Holberg interacts with Swift's novel and the tradition of imaginary voyages in general by incorporating many of its motives. Through a particularly dynamic dialogue Holberg finds his own voice in the traditional language debates. Like Swift, he does not put much faith in the quests for the Adamic language. He resigns himself to the inability of men to ever recreate or find universality. In Swift's book, this results in a biting satire and linguistic pessimism, amongst others by erasing the distinction between man and animal based on language. Holberg is less interested in the linguistic and philosophical side of the language question, but more in the political and social function of language. He ridicules different types of language abuse and asocial language use, but not for the sake of satire alone. It results in a rather optimistic view on language that recommends readers to reflect upon multilingualism and possibly even embrace it as a gift to society and its citizens. Only by engaging in the confrontation with other languages, their cultures and literatures, one is able to gain insight in how to be of use in society. Klim, hereby, serves as a bad example. He rather avoids the confrontation by making everything that is strange comply with the standards of his choosing. With this characterisation, Holberg makes Klim into a linguistic project maker. His linguistic project illustrates that the knowledge of another language (or multiple languages) is not a guarantee for insight into the society of their native speakers. It is perfectly possible for the intellectual elite of Europe, in Holberg's view, to show off their knowledge of Latin, Hebrew, French, and other languages without adding anything substantial to an academic or cultural debate.

With this treatment of multilingualism, *Niels Klim* takes a remarkable position in the development of the language theme in the imaginary travel genre, as proposed by Knauff. Influenced by *Gulliver's Travels*, Holberg fictionalises the collapse of Cartesian universals. However, he changes the tone. In Knauff's general trend, the collapse of Descartes's linguistic theory develops towards "a firm belief in insurmountable linguistic obstacles separating cultures."[100] This belief is characteristic for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, but less outspoken in Holberg's text. Instead, Holberg seems to suggest that these obstacles are indeed surmountable, but it takes time, patience and the guidance of a wise ruler, as the example of Mezendoria showed. Klim just was not the right leader. His choices led to a form of linguistic colonialism in Quama, a theme that remains strong in imaginary travel literature throughout the eighteenth century.[101]

To some extent, the alternative development Knauff describes seems to be applicable as well to *Niels Klim*, and perhaps in a more fundamental way. Knauff argues that the

[100] Knauff, i.

[101] Knauff in particular discusses an example of linguistic oppression in Giacomo Casanova's *Icosaméron* (1788), which will briefly pass under review in chapter 4 of this thesis, and compares this with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). See chapter 3 in ibid., 202-66.

imaginary voyages in this shift focus on the linguistic struggle taking place within the single individual and on the encounter between cultures or individuals:

> Learning [...] a second language allows the protagonist to acquire a second set of referents which ultimately leads her or him towards a relativistic view of both language itself and of the environment. This experience is destabilizing and disillusioning, but at the same time liberating and enlightening in a philosophical sense.[102]

Holberg recommends this psychologically enriching and philosophically enlightening experience to his readers; not by exemplifying it in his main character, but by showing Klim's inability of achieving it. Klim generally embodies European vices, but in his rise to power Holberg's hero shows some signs of psychological development - albeit in the wrong direction. Klim's failure does not signal mankind's inability of achieving this enlightening experience, but the inability of some individuals to 'know themselves'. Language thus does not stand in the way of organising a morally good society; at worst, it poses challenges to individuals that are surmountable. With this rather optimistic view on linguistic struggle, Holberg deviates from Swift, who leaves little hope for mankind. Holberg encourages readers to put up their own linguistic struggle, to 'know themselves' and ultimately find their place within society. And what is a better way to do so than by making a linguistic journey inwards, literally, by reflecting upon language through a narrative on an inner earth?[103]

Niels Klim thus somewhat falls in between the two parallel developments of Knauff: in between the pessimistic, colonialist view on language that focuses on language abuse and confrontation to ridicule Cartesian universal, and the optimistic view on language struggle and its potentially enriching and enlightening effects for the individual.

The individual's struggle in a multilingual environment is most prominent on a higher textual level. For, Klim also represents the linguistic struggle of the European reader and writer in a multilingual environment. The problems Klim faces in the subterranean, multilingual environment mirror - or better, ironise - the problems readers are facing when they are trying to read and grasp European literature. They anticipate the struggle Holberg's reader enters into when taking up a *Latin* imaginary voyage. This metalinguistic aspect of the language theme, which makes *Niels Klim* truly original in the genre, will be explored in the following chapter.

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[102] Knauff, 354.

[103] Ducet also sees an inner journey in *Niels Klim,* and particularly in Klim's conquests: "les hommes de la surface qui ont perdu la langue de la nature ont la possibilité, même la capacité, de la retrouver, puisqu'elle est présente, quoique cachée. Elle est figurée comme étant « à l'intérieur de la terre », c'est-à-dire qu'elle se trouve « en soi »." Ducet, 236. "The men on the surface who have lost the language of nature have the possibility, even the ability, to find it back since it is present, albeit hidden. It is represented as being 'in the interior of the earth', that is, it is situated 'in itself'."

Chapter 2

Language in Motion: *Niels Klim* and the Irony of Reading and Writing in Latin

The theme of language in *Niels Klim* allows Holberg to ridicule the asocial behaviour of ivory-tower academics, linguistic colonisers, and talkative barbers. Hereby, he steps into a tradition of imaginary languages that leaves Cartesian universals behind. In her study on multilingualism in French imaginary travels, Knauff also argues that the thematisation of language issues often show a metalinguistic awareness of the author. On a metalevel, the authors can reflect upon the consequences of multilingualism for their authorship, and their readership. In the current chapter, I will demonstrate that this aspect is very much present in Holberg's *Niels Klim*. On the one hand, Holberg specifically reflects upon his choice for writing his novel in Latin, whereby he works towards a self-understanding of his own usage of language as an author who is highly influenced by various literary cultures in Europe. On the other hand, Holberg anticipates the way his novel will be received by not only an elitist Latin-reading public, but by a multilingual audience. Especially the role of translation, both in *Niels Klim*'s narration and in its reception by readers, is key in demonstrating this metalinguistic awareness in Holberg's text.

2.1 Metalinguistic Awareness in Imaginary Voyages

2.1.1 Multilingualism and Translation

In order to discuss the metalinguistic awareness of imaginary voyages, Knauff particularly looks at two aspects of her corpus texts. First of all, she demonstrates that

biographical details of writers can partly explain their reflection on what a universal language could look like and how it would function. This leads her to the backgrounds of Foigny and Denis Veiras as grammarians of French and Latin, both inspired by the Port Royal grammar. In this knowledge and practice lay the roots for the creation of their extremely systematic and seemingly universal artificial languages in *Terre australe, connue* and *L'histoire des Sévarambes*. As Knauff shows, the quest for a universal grammar in Foigny's and Veiras's writings still originated from a particular interest in multilingualism in Europe, where the familiarity of mostly Indo-European languages made it seem feasible to (re)construct a language that could cross language borders. Other writers like Baron de Lahontan and Alain-René Lesage found in their contacts across the Atlantic with extremely different languages, that universalism is not possible:

> Judging by these texts, we can conclude that by the first third of the 18th century, the Cartesian dream is dead. Languages are fundamentally different, linguistic communities separated by barriers which translation cannot overcome. Babel seems again a curse and not merely a challenge to humanity's ability at compiling and organizing information. Encounters between speakers of different language are futile or marked by a power differential and a unidirectional flow of information.[1]

As Cartesian universals were dying, translation became increasingly important, which is the second aspect. When there was no single language that could overcome language differences, the question remained if translation activities between languages could be the next best thing. Knauff does not fully explore this aspect of metalinguistic awareness as she primarily focuses on the pessimistic view on translation, like the one described in the previous quotation. However, the concept of translation itself was very much under negotiation, and there were also optimists who believed in the usefulness of translation, as long as this meant more than a rendering of words. Translation required a cultural transfer as well in order to let texts cross language borders. Translation thus is more than a part of the linguistic debates mirrored in imaginary voyages, or part of the protagonists' experiences along the way through a multilingual environment. As I will show in this section, translation was an intrinsic characteristic of the literary environment of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. This background is vital for an analysis of translation and the metalinguistic awareness in *Niels Klim*.

A quick glance at the annotated checklist of Philip Gove of the imaginary voyages between 1700 and 1800, gives the impression that Gove found 215 texts he considered to be part of the genre. However, as part of his 215 entries, he refers to many more translations.[2] Traditional views on originality hold Gove back to count them along with

[1] Knauff, 201.

[2] In the case of *Niels Klim*, Gove mentions only 5 translations in full, but admits there are more. See Gove, 303-05. For an extended bibliography on *Niels Klim*'s 59 editions in 11 languages, see Holger Ehrencron-Müller, *Bibliografi*

the 215, but a closer look to many of them shows that originality is extremely difficult to define in this age. First of all, many of the writers of imaginary voyages were active translators. In her study on the importance of translation for the emergence of the novel, *The Spread of Novels*, McMurran argues that literate Europeans in the eighteenth century were used to translating from a very young age, as it was one of the corner stones of language acquisition of both Latin and vernacular languages.

> Because the habit of translating, imbibed early, was necessarily shared with other literate people, translators were not a separate class of writers, but often the same bi- or multilingual writers who were building competence in several languages. As a result, translations were not necessarily written and published for those who were entirely ignorant of the foreign language, but for a community of multilingual readers.[3]

In an age in which translation was part of your education and development as a writer, it is no surprise that many imaginary voyages were written by multilingual teachers, grammarians, and translators. The French Huguenot Pierre-François Guyot Desfontaines (1685-1745), for example, not only wrote the popular sequel on *Gulliver's Travels*, *Le nouveau Gulliver* (1730), but also translated Swift's text in French some years before.[4] The idea that translators are also writers even had its consequences for the translation practice itself. Many were keen on leaving out passages, adding their own, adapting and rewriting them; practices that can hardly be called translation to modern standards, but which were rather the rule than the exception:

> In general, we cannot assume that a translation came directly from an original, or suppose a translation provided a literal or complete rendering of its source, because it was common enough for translators not only to alter the text but also to add some original work to it.[5]

The freedom translators and editors took in transmitting texts was especially problematic in the popular genre of imaginary voyages, where the ardour of translators has led to an explosion of texts and subgenres like Gulliveriads and Robinsonades. Although many of these cannot be considered to be translations anymore - not even to eighteenth-century standards -, they are only the most easily definable types of texts within the enormous grey zone of translations, adaptations, and imitations.

In the study of the novel, it has been repeatedly argued that our modern understanding of translation has limited our views on the literary environment of eighteenth-century

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over Holbergs skrifter, 3 vols., Forfatterlexikon omfattende Danmark, Norge og Island indtil 1814 (København: Aschehoug, 1933-1935), III, 213-326.

[3] Mary Helen McMurran, *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 14.

[4] Desfontaines.

[5] McMurran, 5.

Europe. In his firm objection of what is traditionally called 'the rise of the novel', Srinivas Aravamudan uses translation as one of his main arguments.

> It is just as revealing that about 36 percent of novels read in Britain between 1660 and 1770 were translations of French fictions. While this fact has been taken to suggest that the novel was a Franco- British affair rather than an exclusively English one, earlier Renaissance English fiction included major influences from Spanish and Italian sources, not to mention the internal dialogue with ancient Greek and Roman fiction and Near Eastern sources. It would be much better for investigations into the history of the novel to operate under the premise that fictions seem largely indifferent to the question of national origin until the mid-eighteenth century.[6]

His entire monograph is a warning for nationally centred readings of the dynamics within European literature. Especially the eighteenth century was a period of extreme openness towards other cultures, which challenged European authors to adapt their narrative techniques to impulses from the Orient. Aravamudan is particularly interested in the *Thousand and One Nights* as an extreme example of a text that has functioned in European literature as a multilingual text. In this case, the original text was not even accessible to most of the European intellectual readers.

Although McMurran and Aravamudan address the genre of travel novels only in passing, and they have very different objectives of their own, they still start from the similar observation that the relationship between translation and fiction is both very dense and blurry to modern readers.[7] Or to phrase it ever stronger, we could call the efforts of readers and scholars of many eighteenth-century fictional texts a vain quest for the original:

> Eighteenth-century fiction translation relied at least in part on the concealment of origins; novels were especially mobile because they did not bear the stamp of the author or nation. This might be a sign of transnationalism, but not in the modern sense of crossing historically stable national-cultural borders. Translations did not necessarily go abroad as national representatives, ushered in by the target culture's gatekeepers, but roved about promiscuously.[8]

This underlying critique on eighteenth-century scholarship is relevant to understand what we are dealing with when studying imaginary voyages. Translation was a vital aspect of the publications and the entire dynamics within the genre. Scholars have simplified their (already very hybrid) research object by considering translation as a practice that made the transfer of an original text to another culture, and thus as an

[6] Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 36

[7] McMurran, 7. After the introduction to her topic, McMurran mainly focuses on the cross-channel exchange, between France and Britain.

[8] McMurran, 63.

afterthought to the study of the single, original text. The boundaries between translation and the original text, however, are more often than not blurred.

2.1.2 Translation and Imaginary Travel

Imaginary travel literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries plays with this reality very prominently. On the front page of many imaginary travels, it is stated that the presented text is a translation of an original manuscript in another language. Between *The Man in the Moone* of Francis Godwin (1638), which was supposedly written by a Spaniard, and the bulky *Icosaméron* (1788), supposedly translated from English into French by Casanova, numerous examples are to be found of travel reports that originated from another language. Daniel Defoe's *The Consolidator* (1705) even claims to be a translation from a lunar language, in imitation of Godwin's society on the moon.

Although not all of these texts use the potential of this fictional trick to the full, it is safe to say that this aspect of imaginary travel literature is perhaps the most explicit example of what Knauff calls metalinguistic awareness. It does not only ironically raise the level of veracity of the presented journey, but also mirrors the multilingual environment in which the text will be received. In some cases, the blurred status of the original, and the unclear lines between fiction and reality, had consequences outside of the fiction. As McMurran says, "several fictional narratives were translated from an English or French original, but then accidentally translated back into the original language because the translator was unaware that her original was already a translation."[9]

The entanglement of translations and the original texts are thus a common feature of imaginary travel literature. One of the reasons for this may be that during the eighteenth century – both the high point of the genre and a period of radical change, as shown by Knauff -, there is also a drastic shift in what is considered to be translation. McMurran argues that the early eighteenth century is particularly a period of transition between "a premodern world of translative literary endeavor and a modern world where translation would occur alongside, almost as adjunct to literary production."[10] To McMurran, this shift in looking at translation explains the emergence of the novelistic genre that had the exceptional quality of being both domestic and being able to spread across language borders. While translations and originals in the early eighteenth century were still very much entangled, writing fiction and translating became two separate activities towards the end of the century. It suggests that the metalinguistic awareness about translation in imaginary travel literature, which Knauff touches upon, might be more than something coincidental.

[9] Ibid., 4.

[10] McMurran, 15.

A clear example of how prominent translation is on different levels of the text is again Denis Veiras's *L'histoire des Sévarambes*. In the preface to the book, D.V. (which presumably stands for Denis Veiras) tells the reader that the protagonist Siden (an anagram of Denis) had handed his manuscript to a Gentleman upon arrival back in Europe. The manuscript is not only "dans une grande confusion" but also written in Latin, French, Italian and Provencal.[11] Veiras continues: "ce qui le mit dans un grand embarras, parce qu'il n'entendait pas toutes ces langues, & qu'il ne voulait pas fier ces mémoires à des mains étrangères."[12] On the question why the manuscript of Siden was written in so many different languages, Knauff gives the following answer:

> Siden's jumble of different languages seems to suggest the confusion of tongues at Babel, and the total breakdown of communication which results is seen in the reaction of the doctor to whom Siden had left his papers [...] who, in frustration, just abandons the incomprehensible bundle without bothering to penetrate it any further. Before being accessible to a reading public, Siden's text has to be edited, translated, pulled from linguistic obscurity and confusion.[13]

Denis Veiras himself, according to the preface, was the one the Gentleman turned to for help. By pointing to the few biographical details we know of Veiras, Knauff shows that this (fictitious) origin of Siden's text is metalinguistic. Veiras was himself a well-travelled French Huguenot "who depended for his living on the knowledge of modern languages."[14]

However, Knauff does not seem to link this explicitly with the blurry, but multilingual publication of *L'histoire des Sévarambes* itself. For, Veiras's novel had an extremely complex origin. Veiras started out by publishing one part in English in 1675. Because of its popularity, Veiras seems to have written parts II to V in French between 1677 and 1679. The second part in English then appeared in 1679 as well, but is very different from the rest of the work, which has raised questions about authorship in the past.[15] The English version would only be completed in 1738, long after Veiras's death in 1683. The novel was

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[11] Denis Veiras, *L'histoire des Sévarambes* (Paris: Champion, 2001), 64. "[...] in a great disorder and confusion for the most part." Denis Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, trans. John Christian Laursen and Cyrus Masroori (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 4.

[12] Veiras, *L'histoire des Sévarambes*, 64. "[...] the diversity of which Languages put him [the Gentleman] to a great deal of trouble, for he did not understand them all, neither was he willing to trust the Writings into Strangers hands." Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, 4.

[13] Knauff, 109.

[14] Ibid., 75.

[15] In their English edition of the text, Laursen and Masroori give a short explanation of the complex publication history of *L'histoire des Sévarambes*: "Part I appeared first in London in English as *The History of the Sevarites or Sevarambi* (1675). Then parts I to III appeared in French in Paris as *L'Histoire des Sévarambes* (1677; some volumes of part III have 1678), followed by parts IV and V in French in 1679, the same year that the English part II appeared. The English part I and part II were republished in English in 1700, but the first full version in English, a retranslation from the French version, appeared in London in 1738 as *The History of the Sevarambians*. [...] Part I of the 1675 edition overlaps substantially with part I of the 1738 edition, but part II of the first edition is very different from part II of the second." Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, ix.

extremely popular all through the eighteenth century: it had 12 French editions up to 1787, and was further translated in Italian (1730), Dutch (1682, 1701), and German (1689, 1717, 1783).[16] It was even rewritten as a third, English volume of *Gulliver's Travels* in 1727, narrating a fifth voyage of Gulliver, to Sevarambia.[17] Even when we leave out this popularity later on, it is still safe to say that not only Siden's manuscript, but also Veiras's text was a multilingual text from the start. We do not know much about Veiras – not even if he has written all parts -, and even for scholars nowadays it is not clear whether we should call Veiras's text English or French.

The example of *L'histoire des Sévarambes* shows that translation in and outside of the fictional borders are still very much entangled around the turn of the century. The multilingual status of the text probably caused Veiras himself no sleepless nights. It is only later, readers and scholars have made efforts to pin *L'histoire des Sévarambes* down to one place, and one language. It seems as if the prominent thematisation of translation inside a fictional text in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century is almost inevitably a metalinguistic expression of a reality outside of the text, namely the multilingual environment in which the borders between translation and origin are blurred, and in which both the author and the reader operate. It recalls McMurran's statement about the eighteenth-century novels, which "were especially mobile because they did not bear the stamp of the author or nation."[18]

2.1.3 The Language Question of *Niels Klim* Revisited

The previous considerations about translation, origin, and multilingualism in the early eighteenth century provides a necessary background for tackling the problem of Holberg's language choice for *Niels Klim*. In prefaces and introductions to *Niels Klim*, the same reasons return why Holberg has written *Niels Klim* in Latin. Scholars primarily ascribed to Holberg the desire to write a work that had more international appeal than his Danish comedies. Sven Hakon Rossel mentions that *Niels Klim* was "directed not merely toward a Danish public but toward the international, sophisticated reading public, for it was written in Latin," and Frederik J. Billeskov Jansen states that "[Holberg] chose to write in Latin, [...] not in order to conceal bold opinions behind a learned language, but to secure his book a wide dissemination," to quote just two.[19] This reason of international ambitions often goes hand in hand with the observation that, despite the Latin original, *Niels Klim*

[16] Knauff, 83-84.

[17] See the introduction to Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, vii.

[18] McMurran, 63.

[19] Rossel, *A History of Danish literature*, 134-35; Billeskov Jansen, *Ludvig Holberg*, 99.

had mainly reached the European public through translations.[20] As Karen Skovgaard-Petersen rightfully argues, Latin facilitated the translation process considerably: it "paved the way to a European vernacular readership."[21] It shows the dissemination Billeskov Jansen speaks of was partly indirect.

Scholarship has thus already pointed out that translation was a vital part of the way in which *Niels Klim* was received in Europe, yet, in close readings of *Niels Klim* it has been mostly reduced to a fun fact. The reception through translation has been an afterthought in *Niels Klim* scholarship, or at least a study object that is clearly distinguishable from the study of the original Latin text.[22] However, one could argue that the previously cited statements on Holberg's international ambitions with *Niels Klim* are an illustration of what scholars as Aravamudan and McMurran are warning for: that our modern conceptions of nations, language barriers, and translation are standing in the way of our readings. When taking the blurry relation between translation and fiction in the early eighteenth century into account, we might have to ask some follow-up questions: what does it actually mean to reach Europe through translation? And what does that say about the function of the original text in Latin, and our interpretation of it?

There are two elements that further complicate the question of Holberg's language choice, and which become somewhat problematic when considering the entanglement of translation and fiction in the imaginary voyage genre. On the one hand, Holberg's book is published at least partly abroad, in Leipzig. This has been considered as a strategic choice, not only in order to reach the international market, but also to avoid rigid censorship in his home country.[23] According to Billeskov Jansen, *Niels Klim* "caused trouble" in Copenhagen immediately after publication, "and it was a borderline matter whether it should be confiscated or not."[24] On the other hand, because of the extensive use of prose and verse quotations of classical texts, scholars have argued that Holberg wanted to write a Menippean satire, in a tradition that was past its prime for over a century. The strongest advocate of this theory, Sigrid Peters, argues that Holberg chose Latin because he wanted to be sure his readers would recognise quotations from a canonical literature and thus not pass over additional intertextual meanings.[25]

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[20] A quantitative research on the diffusion and circulation of the editions of *Niels Klim*, however, is lacking and would shine a new light on the language question.

[21] Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Interplay with Roman Literature in Ludvig Holberg's *Iter Subterraneum*," 186.

[22] The best overview study of the translation history of *Niels Klim* is Flugt.

[23] As Cecilie Flugt argues, the reasons to publish *Niels Klim* outside Denmark are not mutually exclusive ibid., 144. The relation between the two motivations is debated. Helge Jordheim explicitly argues for the sales as a more decisive factor. Jordheim, 54. See, amongst others, Kragelund's introduction to his edition of *Niels Klim* for the opposite opinion. Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, lxvii-lxxiv.

[24] Billeskov Jansen, *Ludvig Holberg*, 101. I will come back to the matter of how *Niels Klim* was received in Denmark and to the role of censorship in chapter 6.

[25] Peters, 57-59. Jozef Ijsewijn also included him in his overview of the genre in Neo-Latin. See Jozef Ijsewijn, "Neo-Latin Satire: *sermo* and *satyra menippea*," in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500-1700*, ed. R.R.

The self-evidence with which these publication strategies are mentioned and repeated over and over is striking. The explanations of international ambition, censorship and Menippean satire become especially problematic when one tries to combine them. If Holberg mainly reached translators, was he aware of the fact that his book would not primarily be read in the original version, but in the English, Dutch, French and German translations that followed all within the same year, 1741? In other words, did he realise that his Menippean satire, in practice, would not be a Menippean satire and overshoot the mark Peters has attributed to *Niels Klim* entirely? Why would Holberg write a text that only works in Latin, for a public he reaches through translation? If Holberg wanted to connect with a traditionally Latin genre by writing in Latin, how should we explain the repeatedly stated influence of the vernacular genre of imaginary voyages, most prominently of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*? As a Menippean satire, *Niels Klim* would be an extreme latecomer, yet, as an imaginary voyage it would also be the odd one out, namely the only voyage written in Latin out of more than two hundred published between 1700 and 1800.[26] Symptomatic for this entire language question of *Niels Klim* is Sven Hakon Rossel's description of *Niels Klim* as "quite simply a Danish *Gulliver's Travels.*"[27] This not only reduces Holberg to one of Swift's many imitators, but also totally disregards the fact that *Niels Klim* was written in Latin, and not in Danish.

In short, Holberg-scholarship is in need of a renewed view on this issue, a view that defamiliarises us with what we have taken for granted in the countless introductions and references to *Niels Klim*. We need to consider these questions on the function of *Niels Klim* within a multilingual environment to get a better understanding of the place Holberg's novel takes within contemporary literary Europe, ranging from a Latin (or even Danish) Gulliveriad to a novelistic Menippean satire, and the view we get of Holberg himself, ranging from an opportunistic modern writer to a skilful classicist. Published in 1741, *Niels Klim* stands at the crossing of the shifts proposed by Knauff and McMurran. To get a more nuanced view on how the text *Niels Klim* actually *functioned* in eighteenth-century Europe, an analysis of the language question of *Niels Klim* that includes the reception in translation as a vital part and is open to metalinguistic awareness in *Niels Klim*.

Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 50. For a more thorough discussion of the relation between *Niels Klim* and Menippean satire, see chapter 4 of this thesis.

[26] See Gove.

[27] Rossel, *A History of Danish literature*, 134.

2.2 *Niels Klim* as Born-translated

To make the suggested functionalistic method more concrete, I will specifically consider a recent theory by Rebecca Walkowitz. In her monograph *Born Translated,* Walkowitz presents a view on literature that does not consider publication, dissemination, translation and reprinting as part of the context but as an important part of the text itself.[28] As she is particularly concerned with contemporary novels, the speed by which texts are spread out and translated in this digital age leads her to the assumption that some literature is 'born-translated', originally existing as a group of texts, in several languages, and on several places. Many parts of her argumentation might allow us to translate Knauff's and McMurran's shifts into an actual reading method and ultimately shed a new light on *Niels Klim*.[29] In scholarship, we easily speak of the text *Niels Klim* without specifying what this implies. One refers to the first edition of 1741, while others to the one of 1745, which has few but crucial additions. Some quote a Danish translation, not seldom the one of the Danish poet Jens Baggesen (1789), or use non-specified translations in other languages as *Niels Klim* is far from always studied by Latinists. Without acknowledging it, scholarship already speaks of *Niels Klim* as if it were a group of editions and translations. Moreover, by repeatedly stating that *Niels Klim*'s European success is mainly owed to the almost immediate translations, scholarship has already made way for the experiment of considering *Niels Klim* as a born-translated piece of literature.

Because of the prominent function of translation, both inside and outside the text, Walkowitz comes to the following definition of what born-translated means:

> In born-translated novels, translation functions as a thematic, structural, conceptual, and sometimes even typographical device. These works are *written for translation,* in the hope of being translated, but they are also often *written as translations,* pretending to take place in a language other than the one in which they have, in fact, been composed. Sometimes they present themselves as fake or fictional editions: subsequent versions (in English) of an original text (in some other language), which doesn't really exist. They are also frequently *written from*

[28] Walkowitz. An older and more concise version of her theory was already published in 2009. There she uses the term 'comparison literature' instead of 'born-translated literature' Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "Comparison Literature," *New Literary History* 40, no. 3 (2009).

[29] Walkowitz does not consider her theory to be applicable to periods earlier than the twentieth century, arguing that a quick circulation of a book within Europe is not enough; it has to have global dissemination Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 6. In the present chapter, I consider this argument of Walkowitz as a matter of scale. In the eighteenth century books could indeed not be published in, for example, Japan within a couple of years, but the aesthetics, dynamics and strategies Walkowitz ascribes to born-translated literature are already seen within Europe.

> *translation.* Pointing backward as well as forward, they present translation as a spur to literary innovation, including their own.[30]

Walkowitz' theory interestingly sees the opportunism to reach a large audience as something that is not only part of an economical strategy but also of literary innovation. Hereby, it can bridge the two extreme images of Holberg, namely that of opportunistic modern writer, on the one hand, and that of the skilful classicist, on the other hand. The extreme intellectual and seemingly classicist elements in *Niels Klim*, such as the quotations from classical authors, are a way to make the reader aware of the literary situation in contemporary Europe, a context in which Latin is increasingly pressed by the rise of vernacular literature and translation has, for many, become a part of the reading experience of Latin literature.

One could argue that the theory of Walkowitz has two sides: a text-internal part that focuses on fictional, narratological and structural elements in the text that thematise translation, and a text-external part that treats the publication context and immediate translation history of the work.[31] Born-translated literature is unique in the fact that there is a dialogue between these two elements: the thematisation of language within the story, on the one hand, becomes externalised as the text is presented in a paratext as being a translation or it invites the reader to reflect upon language politics outside the text. The external publication history, on the other hand, becomes internalised as Walkowitz considers the immediate translations and following editions as a constructive part of the text itself. The present study will follow this structure and demonstrate that Holberg's text, like one of Walkowitz' born-translated texts, already prefigures or incorporates translation on many levels and reflects upon the multilingual European context of publication, translation and readership. The choice for Latin thus becomes a particularly ironical one: *Niels Klim* makes readers aware of a world outside of Latin literature while they are reading a seemingly classicist piece.

2.2.1 *Niels Klim* in Translation. Crossing National Boundaries

Let us first consider the external part of Walkowitz' theory, i.e. the publication and translation history of *Niels Klim*. According to Walkowitz, contemporary born-translated novels are mainly written in English as "Anglophone novels are more likely than novels in other languages to appear in translation: more works are translated out of English than out of any other language."[32] The position of English in the present globalised market, makes one think of two languages in the eighteenth century, Latin and French. Latin was

[30] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 4.

[31] The division between 'text-internal' and 'text-external' is my own. These terms enable me to concisely introduce and structure important elements of Walkowitz's multifaceted and often digressive study.

[32] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 20.

still the most dominant transnational or cosmopolitan language in Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century.[33] For over a century, however, Latin had been losing its position as the language of literature while staying strong in the field of science. Partly due to considerations and reflections that were central to the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns, authors had found ways to fit the strong inheritance of the Classical tradition into their literary creations without having to write in the Latin language itself. For centuries, authors had been writing in a common language that was per definition not their mother tongue, but still felt natural or 'native' to many of them.

When Walkowitz speaks about our own age, she says that English has the "role as a mediator, within publishing, between other literary cultures."[34] Latin still had this role well into the eighteenth century. This mediating function, however, had become particularly one-way, from Latin to vernacular. The strongest two-way mediator in mid-eighteenth-century Europe was French.[35] It was through translations in this language, and not in Latin, that vernacular bestsellers reached other parts of Europe. A telling example is the reception of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift's work quickly spread out over Europe, but not in its original form. Due to an anonymous French translation and the quick second version by the hand of Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines, both published within a year after Swift's, Gulliver could travel into other languages and language systems all over Europe. As Wilhelm Graeber says, "there are signs everywhere to suggest that *Gulliver,* on its course from England to the Continent, was as shipwrecked as its protagonist on the coast of Lilliput."[36] However, the mediation was more than a verbal mediation. The translation of Swift's novel famously required - in the eyes of Desfontaines at least - a strong cultural translation, namely to the French taste.[37] Vernacular languages

[33] The intellectual historian Françoise Waquet convincingly argues in her monograph on the role of Latin in (early) modern society that through education, the Church, and the Republic of Letters, Latin could constitute a familiar universe that lasted even up until the twentieth century. Françoise Waquet, *Le latin, ou, L'empire d'un signe: XVIe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998).

[34] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 21.

[35] In an article on translation in early modern Europe, Peter Burke argues that Latin translations of vernacular texts were very common, though most of these were of non-fictional texts. Moreover, a decline in the eighteenth century is apparent. In the period 1700-1749, he found 157, and only 50 for 1750-1799. See Peter Burke, "Translations into Latin in Early Modern Europe," in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68.

[36] Wilhelm Graeber, "Swift's First Voyages to Europe. His Impact on Eighteenth-Century France," in *The Reception of Jonathan Swift in Europe*, ed. Hermann Josef Real (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 11. It is a subject for debate whether Holberg has read Swift's work in the original version or in a French (or even German) translation. In any case, Holberg was more comfortable reading French. He owned translations of several other works that were originally published in English. For a list of a part of Holberg's private library, see Christian Bruun, *Fortegnelse over en del af Ludvig Holbergs Bibliothek* (Kjøbenhavn: Lynges, 1869).

[37] For a study of Desfontaines's translation, see Benoit Léger, "Les notes du traducteur des Voyages de Gulliver. Détonation et «détonnement»," *Lumen* 21 (2002).

as English were still in a phase in which idioms and references to local culture required not only a linguistic mediation, but also a strong cultural one.

In a study of Holberg's translation critique, Lars Eriksen shows that Holberg was very well aware that cultural differences impede translation. When it comes to comical writings, the text had to be changed according to the expectations of the audience, even with changes of names and characters; otherwise the comical effect would be gone. A translator of comical works should be an author himself. He partly based this opinion on a previous experience he had with translations of his work.[38] In a French introduction to a French translation of his comedies, *Le Théâtre Danois* (1746), however, Holberg proclaimed quite the opposite concerning the task of a translator of comedy:

> Pour juger sainement du mérite de ce Théâtre Danois, il faut faire attention, que les Scènes ne sont pas à Paris, ni dans quelque autre Ville de France; mais la plupart à Copenhague. C'est la raison pourquoi le Traducteur n'a pas jugé à propos d'y faire de changemens; ce n'eût plus été peindre les moeurs de notre Septentrion, ni donner une Traduction, mais déguiser des Comédies du Nord en les habillant à la Françoise.[39]

After *Le Théâtre Danois* flopped, however, Holberg admits in his *First Autobiographical Letter* (1728) that the translations of his comedies did not suit the Parisian public, as they were too Danish.[40] Holberg thus learned his lesson: the translations were not enough tuned into French culture in order to successfully translate a comical text from one culture to the other.

What Holberg's translation critique demonstrates is that the loss of something that is typical for the original text does not mean the loss of effect on readership, at least if the translator is skilled and inventive enough. The original work is not sacred, but the spirit of the text must be kept in translation. As Eriksen concludes, the translation must answer to the expectations of its audience, which is for Holberg clearly bound to the genre, but also to the literature and culture of the target audience.[41]

In writing *Niels Klim*, Holberg had only one real option when it comes to the choice between Latin and French – or for any vernacular language that could reach Europe for that matter. Besides the fact that he was more comfortable writing a novel in Latin than

[38] Eriksen, 103. Holberg expresses this opinion in an essay published in 1749, namely *Epistles* IV.368.

[39] Holberg, *Preface to Fursman's Le Théâtre Danois,* 11. "To soundly judge the merit of this *Danish Theatre*, it is necessary to be aware that the scenes are not taking place in Paris, or in any other city of France, but mostly in Copenhagen. This is the reason why the translator did not think it fit to make changes to this; that would not have been a way to paint morals of the North, nor to give a translation, but to disguise comedies of the North by giving them a French look."

[40] For a broader discussion of this passage and whether Holberg shows himself as an opportunist, see Eriksen, 104-5. For Holberg's remark on the reception of his plays in Paris, see *First Autobiographical Letter*, 143.

[41] Eriksen, 106.

in German or French,[42] the way Holberg would reach Europe was different. Through Latin, *Niels Klim* had to be translated, as an increasing amount of people were more comfortable reading in vernacular, but at the same time, the culture was not in need of translation as much as French or Danish did. Latin covered a cosmopolitan language system that was European in nature, not bound to nations, but detachable and movable.

The choice of an author to write in a dominant language in order to "mitigate the need for translation," is what Walkowitz calls "preemptive translation."[43] She admits the fact that this strategy can already be found in late Medieval and early modern times, but downplays these early forms of preemptive translation arguing that there is not a clear division between writing and speaking language: "writing in Latin while speaking in French is only a species of translation, or second-language use, if writing in French is the norm."[44] I believe that when writing in vernacular became the norm in the first half of the eighteenth century, arguably even a bit earlier, preemptive translation was already a pressing reality for authors from small language areas. They constantly turned to German, French, and also Latin to make themselves known, which inevitably had become a form of self-translation.

Writing in Latin as a Danish writer was particularly useful to Holberg as his work would not be bound to a geographical place, only a mental place, which Holberg, as so many others all over Europe visited since childhood. As Walkowitz argues, born-translated literature is not made in one country, after which it travels to others. It is often written by a migrant who is not bound to a specific country.[45] Authors in the eighteenth century who write Latin, a language that is not their mother tongue, are all migrants. Especially when a European-minded author like Holberg writes a Latin travelogue, his text is not meant to stay at one place or in one language. It is "designed to travel" across national boundaries and in different language systems at the same time.[46]

But what exactly does it mean to be 'designed to travel' in *Niels Klim*'s case, or to be 'a migrant' in the case of Holberg? First of all, we need to reconsider the place and context of publication from this new perspective. On the title page of the first edition both Copenhagen and Leipzig (*Hafniae et Lipsiae*) are mentioned as the place of publication, and the publisher is Jacob Preuss (*Iacobi Preusii*). He was an autodidactic bookseller who stood at the start of a period in Copenhagen's book history of combining both cities in the

[42] Outside of the introduction to the French translation of his comedies, Holberg wrote three works in French, all published at the very end of his career: *Conjectures sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains* (1752), the short *Lettre qui contient quelques remarques sur les mémoires concernant la Reine Christine* (1752) and a commentary on the work of Montesquieu, *Remarques sur l'esprit des loix* (1753).

[43] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 11.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., passim. See also Walkowitz, "Comparison Literature," 573-76.

[46] Walkowitz uses this expression in ibid., 570.

publication process.[47] As Harald Ilsøe shows, Copenhagen booksellers frequently visited the biannual book fair in Leipzig, but Preuss must have had local contacts that allowed him to print and stock at least a part of his issues in Leipzig.[48] If we may believe Holberg himself, Preuss repeatedly asked him to sell him the manuscript of *Niels Klim* because he could make a great profit from it.[49] Holberg claims in his *Third Autobiographical Letter* to have felt some reluctance to accept Preuss's offer, but this should be read with a good share of restraint. Preuss was Holberg's ideal business associate for *Niels Klim*. He was an upcoming man, a new purveyor of the Court, and already with one foot in an international book market, through which Holberg could bypass Danish censorship.[50]

Although Holberg's hand in the actual distribution of *Niels Klim* remains unclear, it was definitely not his test piece. In an excellent and thorough study of the book history of Holberg's *Peder Paars* (1719-1720), Jens Bjerring-Hansen shows that Holberg was strongly committed to the profiling and distribution of his poetical debut. The piece took shape along the way: four books were published in three serial editions in only two years, with changing titles and publishers.[51] The complex publication history of *Peder Paars* is both an early and an extreme illustration of Holberg's play with and mocking of the book market.[52] Reader responses and criticisms were immediately countered or parodied in following editions – a practice he repeatedly used throughout his career, also in *Niels Klim* which Holberg made into a lively and ever-shifting piece of literature. With *Peder Paars*, Holberg showed two faces for the first time: "den driftige aktør med øje for profitmaksimering i 1700-tallets virkelighed og den kritiske iagttager af bogmarkedet og litteraturens kommecialisering og vareliggørelse."[53] In *Peder Paars*, Holberg thus already internalised the book market by making different editions part of what we now know as *Peder Paars*. He also used paratexts, like the critical footnotes of the fictional academic Just Justesen, in order to internalise different reading publics. Hereby, Holberg already sowed the seeds for born-translated literature in his poetical debut, but he would only reap the harvest when he would turn to his Latin travelogue.

Jacob Preuss was not only the man who published *Nicolaus Klimius*, but he was for Holberg also a gateway to translations. Holberg gave him the right to publish Klim's

[47] Whether the copies of *Niels Klim*, or some of them, were actually printed in Leipzig is not certain though plausible, for, the prices of fabrication were much lower in Germany. See Harald Ilsøe, "Et forlag til salg. Jacob Preusses lager af forlagsskrifter 1743," *Fund og Forskning* 40 (2001): 20.

[48] Ilsøe, 21.

[49] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 9.

[50] Ilsøe, 8.

[51] Jens Bjerring-Hansen, *Ludvig Holberg på bogmarkedet: studier i Peder Paars og den litterære kultur i 1700-og 1800-tallet* (København: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015).

[52] Holberg always had strong opinions about the book market and the quality of its goods, but is most open about it in his *Moral Reflections* and *Epistles*. For a discussion of Holberg's criticisms, see ibid., 53-84.

[53] Ibid., 82. "[...] the entrepreneurial actor with an eye for maximising profit in an eighteenth-century reality and the critical observer of the book market and the literary commercialising and commoditisation."

Voyages in French and *Reise* in German, which both appeared within the same year, in 1741. The German edition remained anonymous, but the translator of the French edition was printed on the front page: Elèazar Mauvillon, a Huguenot who at the time was residing in Leipzig.[54] Even the anonymous Dutch edition, also published in 1741, but not by Preuss, could have had a German connection as it could have been translated by a German residing in the Netherlands.[55] As Yanick Maes says,

> Holberg is lucid enough to understand that the use of Latin excludes the majority of the public. The success of his novel will be measured, not by the copies sold, but by the number of translations made.[56]

The choice for Preuss was thus not one out of charity.[57] It allowed Holberg to publish a work that immediately existed at different places, beginning with two, Copenhagen and Leipzig, and in different languages. Preuss could get his text around Europe, and so *Niels Klim* was born, born-translated.

2.2.2 *Niels Klim* as Translation. A Vain Quest for the Original

For Walkowitz, being born-translated means more than the almost simultaneous existence of a work in different languages and places.[58] Translation goes much deeper, entering the fictional story. It is not only written *for* translation, but also written *as* translation.[59] As previously shown, this was a common feature in imaginary voyages. Holberg plays with this tradition in the second edition of his novel, published in 1745. By this time, *Niels Klim* had already appeared in a Swedish, English and Danish version, besides the before-mentioned German, French and Dutch. In the *Third Autobiographical Letter* (1743), Holberg is not shy to repeatedly brag about *Niels Klim*: "[...] celebratissimum istud Opus, qvod variis jam lingvis legitur."[60] Inspired by imaginary travel literature,

[54] Flugt, 69.

[55] According to the editor of *Niels Klim*'s most recent reprint in Dutch, André Hanou, the translation of 1741 was written in a "peculiar kind of Dutch," more specifically "a sort of 'eastern' Dutch". See Hanou's introduction in Ludvig Holberg, *De onderaardse reise van Claas Klim (1741)* (Leiden: Astraea, 1995), 20.

[56] Yanick Maes, "Continuity through Appropriation? By Way of Introduction," in *Latinitas perennis*, ed. Wim Verbaal, Yanick Maes, and Jan Papy (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 8.

[57] Despite *Niels Klim*'s success Preuss went bankrupt later that year. Harald Ilsøe extensively describes the turbulent history of the auction of Preuss's stock. See Ilsøe.

[58] In Walkowitz' view only post-Holocaust literature is eligible in this sense as the distribution of books was incredibly facilitated by globalisation and the upcoming digital age. As Bjerring-Hansen shows, however, the book market at the beginning of the eighteenth century was characterised by a huge expansion of and a functional differentiation. See Bjerring-Hansen, 53. The book markets in both periods are thus not comparable in absolute numbers, but in the scale by which they grew compared to previous periods.

[59] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 4.

[60] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 8. "[...] this much celebrated work which is already being read in various languages."

Holberg saw the fictional potential of the immediate translation boom and internalises this in the added *Apologetic Preface* in 1745. Here, the grandsons of Klim ambiguously confirm the veracity of their grandfather's story and in a written testimony Bergen intellectuals add that the text of the first edition was a Latin translation from the original manuscript. The effect of this preface is that the reader of the second edition is invited to read the book anew and adjust his image of the protagonist and supposed author, Klim, according to this new information. Like in *Peder Paars*, Holberg thus uses editions as a way to alter and renew his text. New compared to *Peder Paars*, however, is that Holberg also draws the translation history into the fiction. As a consequence, when talking about the text *Niels Klim* we cannot just talk about one text, but a virtual group of texts.

In the *Apologetic Preface* in the second edition, it becomes clear that Holberg saw the potential of his first text and its subsequent translation history. He dramatises translation much more prominently and invites the reader to an ongoing act of translating. We already saw that Klim's manuscript was apparently translated to Latin. In addition, the grandsons of Klim invoke a Finnish shaman, Peyvis, as their ultimate claim of veracity. He transforms into an eagle, flies to the underground world and reports back in Bergen what he has seen in the subterranean world. Before depart, Peyvis praises his magical powers to the citizens of Bergen and he does this "verbis Danico idiomate expressis."[61] As the commentators of *Niels Klim* say, the narrators of the preface hereby point out to their readers that they will read something that is translated from Danish to Latin.[62] What follows is ironically a verse quotation from Petronius' *Satyricon:*

> Quicquid in orbe vides, paret mihi: Florida tellus,
> Cum volo, spissatis arescit languida succis:
> Cum volo, fundit opes; scopulique ac horrida saxa
> Limosas iaculantur aquas: Mihi Pontus inertes
> Submittit fluctus: Zephyrique tacentia ponunt
> Ante meos sua flabra pedes: Mihi flumina parent.[63]

In the *Satyricon*, the Priapus-priestess Oenothea commends herself as a sorceress to Encolpius, who suffers from erectile dysfunction.[64] The healing ritual of Oenothea, however, fails completely, first after a series of accidents and later even more so when Encolpius kills a goose without knowing that the animal was a guardian of Priapus. The

[61] *Niels Klim*, Apologetic Preface, 5v. "[...] with words expressing a Danish idiom."

[62] Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Niels Klim, Forsvarende Fortale* 1745". 5v.

[63] *Niels Klim*, Apologetic Preface, 5v, and Petronius, *Satyricon* 134, 12. "Whatever thou seest in the world is obedient to me. The flowery earth, when I will, faints and withers as its juices dry, and, when I will, pours forth its riches, while rocks and rough crags spurt waters wide as the Nile. The great sea lays its waves lifeless before me, and the winds lower their blasts in silence at my feet. The rivers obey me [...]." The English translation is by the hand of Michael Heseltine in Petronius, *Satyricon*, trans. Michael Heseltine, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 355.

[64] Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Niels Klim, Forsvarende Fortale* 1745". 5v.

reader thus never sees the great powers Oenothea claims to possess. Within the context of the *Apologetic Preface*, the self-praise of Peyvis does not help to convince the reader either. When he returns to Bergen, he reports how Klim's other grandson - he also had a wife during his reign in Quama -, now rules the subterranean world. Instead of enforcing the veracity claim of Klim's superterranean grandsons, the excessive fantasy of Peyvis's metamorphosis has quite the opposite effect. Petronius thus does not support Peyvis's story, it only highlights the absurdity and ineffectiveness of his claim.

The irony of Peyvis's quotation use prefigures how the reading of *Niels Klim* suddenly changes. Now, quotations in the text remind the reader that they are not reading the original, but a translation. All the quotations the reader comes across in the following 16 chapters of *Niels Klim*, both in verse and in prose, get an entirely different status. Klim might not have been the writer of these quotations after all, for often a similar kind of ambiguity or irony is voiced in a text that is not from Klim's hand. The translator Abeline has not only translated the words of Klim, he has translated Klim's text entirely to another language system and culture, the kind of transposition that for Holberg was necessary to bring across humour to a different audience.

In the next section, I will come back to the issue of the quotations, but for now I go deeper into the difference between reading *Niels Klim* from 1741 and *Niels Klim* from 1745, which is not just a matter of reading *Niels Klim* with or without the preface. For an attentive reader, these two are different texts. Holberg has amplified specific topics from the first edition in the second, and this with a specific goal.

When discussing *Niels Klim* in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*, published in between *Niels Klim*'s two editions (1743), Holberg presents himself as being most concerned with bringing across the right morals to his reading public.[65] He speaks of a "totum systema morale" ("whole moral system") that is hidden within *Niels Klim*'s "festiva fictio" ("enjoyable fiction"). He uses a simile of a fisherman who changes his bait to the taste of little fishes, to explain why he opted for an imaginary voyage to feed his readership morals. He arms himself against criticasters "qvi qvicqvid festivum ac amœnum est, nauseant, [...] ac christiano homine indignum judicant."[66] The entire passage exhales frustration with the part of his readership that was fixated on the story, something Holberg seemingly considers to be only a "vehiculum [...] praeceptorum ac meditationum moralium."[67] Moreover, as Holberg's portrays them, the readers of *Niels Klim*'s first edition are not only blinded by the light-footed story while assessing the novel, but some are also obstructed by their insufficient language skills. For this last group of readers, Holberg delayed the publication of the Danish translation. As Holberg claims himself, most of the

[65] For Holberg's entire commentary of *Niels Klim*, see *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 8-25. For a more thorough analysis of this incredibly rich passage than it is the case in the following page, see chapter 6 of this thesis.

[66] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 9, "who find everything that is enjoyable and attractive nauseating, [...] and a Christian unworthy."

[67] Ibid., 12. "[...] vehicle for moral precepts and meditations."

Danes he wanted to reach with *Niels Klim* could also read it in German. The rest was just not ready to interpret his *systema morale*.[68]

The way Holberg presents the readership of *Niels Klim* in this letter is an ironical marketing trick. The flagrant misinterpretations of his work by unskilled readers, and sometimes by people who did not even read the text, are ways to rouse the interest of the readers of his autobiography for *Niels Klim*. He even warms his readers up for an upcoming second edition, two years later; in the *Third Autobiographical Letter*, Holberg already speaks of "binae Praefationes" ("two prefaces") that explain the scope of *Niels Klim*. At the time the public reads this, in 1743, there is no single preface to be found in *Niels Klim*. The impatient reader has to wait two years to be able to read only one of them.[69]

Holberg thus already prefigures the *Apologetic Preface* of the second edition in 1743. In that preface, then, Holberg highlights those themes that were seemingly the greatest obstacles for the criticasters of the first edition: unreliability and fictionality, multilingualism and translation. Through the amplification of these themes and the irony that surrounds them in the *Apologetic Preface*, *Niels Klim*'s readership is caricaturised in a similar fashion as in the autobiographical letter: they seem to have been outraged about the fantastical elements of the story and obstructed in their reading by the intellectual language and style. Hereby, Holberg not only incorporates the immediate translations of *Niels Klim* into his text, but also establishes a dialogue between *Niels Klim* and his commentary of *Niels Klim* in his Latin memoirs. The translations, editions, and commentary, all were part of Holberg's plan to make *Niels Klim* into a text that was 'designed to travel'.

In 1748, Holberg adds one last episode to the translation saga. In a Danish essay, Holberg talks about the inequality of wages and adds a passage on the *Quislimiri*, a subterranean people from the planet Nazar that did not make the publication of *Niels Klim*. He begins as follows: "Jeg vil til Oplysning heraf anføre en Historie, som af Vanvare er glemt at indføres udi Klims Reyse, og som kand tiene til Supplementum, om Skriftet tredie Gang paa nye skulde oplegges [...]."[70] That the episode of the Quislimiri was left out 'by mistake' in both the edition of 1741 and the one of 1745 is unlikely.[71] Moreover, a third edition did in fact come out in the same year as Holberg's death, 1754, but the passage on the Quislimi was not added. Holberg made sure *Niels Klim* kept travelling.

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[68] Ibid., 25.

[69] It remains unclear whether the second preface Holberg speaks of is a fictional one or not.

[70] *Epistles* I.79, 118. "In support of my point I shall cite an episode which by mistake was not included in Klim's journey and which can serve as a supplement if the book is republished a third time." Translation is taken from Ludvig Holberg, *Selected Essays*, trans. P. M. Mitchell (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 63.

[71] Kragelund points out that Holberg probably just thought it was not worth adding to Klim's long description of the planet Nazar in chapter IX, and later changed his mind. See Kragelund's commentary in Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, III, 70.

The addition of the supposed translation in 1745, Holberg's commentary and finally the Danish supplementum all caused quite some confusion in later periods and gave rise to a myth that *Niels Klim* was originally written in Danish, and even before the publication of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The most famous example of this theory is Henry Weber, an editor of an English translation of *Niels Klim* in 1812.[72] The example of Weber demonstrates two not mutually exclusive things: that Holberg was very effective in manipulating his reading public, and that a nineteenth-century readership was out of touch with the idea of born-translation. In a study on the translation history of *Niels Klim,* Cecilie Flugt notices not only a significant decrease of translation interest in *Niels Klim* in the nineteenth century, but also a tendency towards adaptation, and more attention for the specific needs and sensitivities of the target culture.[73] This illustrates both a key characteristic of the nineteenth-century nationalism, and the loss of something that was before; during the eighteenth century Latin still was easily *relatable* to a European public in different countries - a cosmopolitan collective memory so to speak -, even though it was not always *readable* in this very language by everyone. The nineteenth-century reader lost touch with the cosmopolitan aspect of literature, or - to use terms of Walkowitz - the 'translatability' of texts and the 'migrating' identity of Latin. As translators increasingly felt the need to adjust Latin to the target culture, Latin became German, French or English, and stopped being European. It is striking, then, that in 1866 the Latinist Carolus Elberling republished Holberg's *Niels Klim* in Latin, added a preface in Latin, and translated the Quislimiri-episode from *Epistle 79* in Latin; a final act of despair, we might say, to fight the reception of *Niels Klim* in translation.[74]

2.2.3 Niels Klim Translating? The Failure of Latin in a Multilingual Environment

That the second edition of *Niels Klim* explicitly foregrounds the issues at stake in this part of the thesis – multilingualism and translation - does not mean that *Niels Klim* of 1741 does not address these issues. In various ways the first edition already suggests that the reader is confronted with a translation, or to use a term of Walkowitz, with a dramatisation of translation; the text "registers the presence of foreign languages without representing

[72] See Flugt, 156-57. For the original version, see Weber's introduction to Ludvig Holberg, "Journey to the World Underground," in *Popular Romances: Consisting of Imaginary Voyages and Travels*, ed. Henry William Weber (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1812), xxix-xxxi. In his autobiography, Holberg indeed mentions that he had written *Niels Klim* "ante aliqvot annos" ("some years before", *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 8). It is improbable that this would imply the vast period between Swift's publication in 1726 and 1741.

[73] Flugt, 144-46.

[74] See the preface to Ludvig Holberg, *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum* (Havniae: Thielianis, 1866), xvi-xvii. It was reproduced in Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, III, 71-72.

them directly."[75] *Niels Klim* constantly reminds the reader that there has been a long process of multiple translations before the text became what the reader is reading.

As I have shown in the previous chapter, the entire journey of Klim is one through an environment that is extremely multilingual, perhaps even more than in Europe. Holberg explores the entire range of imaginary languages the large tradition of imaginary travel literature has to offer, stretches possible answers to the question 'what is language?', and explores the cultural implications of multilingualism. To do so, he makes his protagonist into a polyglot who picks up exotic languages like no other – perhaps only Gulliver - and gladly shows off his knowledge of different European languages as well.

In sharp contrast with the multilingualism of the subterranean world and of Klim, however, stands the status of Latin. After a long wandering through many subterranean countries, Klim is washed ashore in Quama. Expecting he would be able to converse with the humans in European languages, Klim tries to speak German, Danish and Latin, but these seem to be unknown languages for the Quamitians (*ignotas linguas*).[76] The order in which Klim tries the languages to communicate with the locals is particularly telling. Klim is not an intellectual, but an opportunistic, multilingual European who first tries German and Danish, before reaching for Latin. For Klim, Latin is not a living language that feels natural; it is reduced to a facade that can help you claim a specific social status in Europe. Klim is not a Latin author, but a caricature of the multilingual European. As some kind of Latinist-fraud, Klim is unable to convince inhabitants of the underground world of the value of Latin and its culture that originated and somehow survived for ages in the superterranean world. When Klim tries to establish an educational institute in Quama as one of his first acts as the new Monarch, he quickly realises that his subterranean subjects have no use of learning Latin.[77] Klim thus reconciles himself with the failure of Latin in the subterranean world, and takes over Quamitian as the medium of communication of his new Monarchy.

Holberg still goes one step further and explicitly transfers this negative status of Latin to the superterranean world, to Europe. Further in the novel, Klim reads the account of Tanian's European journey. He describes how arrogant, inconsequent, and corrupt Europeans are. This *Itinerarium Taniani* is the culmination point to which the previous reflections on language evolve, including Latin. When Tanian speaks about Latin in the Catholic Church, he mentions it is forbidden for the faithful to honour God except in an unknown dialect (*ignota dialecta*). Tanian hereby alludes to Catholic liturgy in which all prayers and rituals were in Latin, a language that the lion's share of the faithful could not

[75] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 40.

[76] *Niels Klim* XII, 274.

[77] For the passage in which Klim suggests to introduce Latin and Greek in the subterranean school curicula, see *Niels Klim* XIII, 294. For more instances where antiquarianism and the classical dominance in European education is ridiculed, see Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Interplay with Roman Literature in Ludvig Holberg's *Iter Subterraneum*," 190-91; Skovgaard-Petersen, "Journeys of Humour and Satire: *Peder Paars* and *Niels Klim*," 131.

understand. In just a couple of remarks, an unknown, fictive subterranean author with the slightest authoritative voice – so it seems - reduces Latin from an *ignota lingua* in Quama to an *ignota dialecta* in Europe.[78] As Yanick Maes phrases it when referring to this passage, "we are witnessing not a splendid resurgence of a vitalized Latin literature – no, this is some sort of *Götterdämmerung*."[79] Latin is knocked off of its pedestal.

Tanian's harsh criticism, moreover, is in itself mediated multiple times: it is translated to Klim by a befriended tiger, called Tomopoloko. He, in his turn, translated it from an unknown subterranean language Tanian had written the text in. The complete absurdness and uselessness of Latin in Europe is thus communicated to the reader through a subterranean text, interpreted into a subterranean language (Quamitian or Tanachitian), and eventually written down by Klim. In 1745, when Holberg adds the aspect of Latin translation, Tanian's criticism is suddenly mediated once more, and, ironically, by the language he initially criticised, Latin.

The characterisation of Klim as a naive, multilingual European, which we already get in the first edition of *Niels Klim*, makes one wonder if such a character is able to insert so many Latin quotations into his travelogue. In Swift's novel, the polyglot Gulliver at least chose to write in the language in which he could reach the public he wanted. That is still doubtful in the case of Klim. Within the fictional world of Holberg's text, on the one hand, Klim did not reach the public he initially intended to reach; his presumably Danish work was published in Latin. However, outside the fiction, his work did not reach Europe in Latin, but through translations. By adding mediating layers of translation, Holberg invites readers to reflect upon multilingualism in Europe, and more specifically the status of Latin in society, education and literature. As has become clear by now, it is not fruitful to stay within the fiction while interpreting *Niels Klim*, nor to focus upon the historical context it refers to. According to Walkowitz, born-translated literature asks for a "close reading from a distance."[80] Only with such an approach the reader can play along with Holberg's metafictional game: he encourages his readers, as he also did in *Peder Paars*, to cross those boundaries constantly, back and forth, while reading.

2.2.4 Reading *Niels Klim* as Translating. The Translatability of the Classics

As I demonstrated earlier, the countless quotations from classical texts play an important role within the fiction of *Niels Klim*, not in the least because of the doubtful authorship of these digressions in both the first and second edition. The question remains how this affects the actual reading experience. Let us thus step out of the fiction once more and

[78] For a more profound discussion of Tanian's voice, see chapter 3 of this thesis.

[79] Maes, 8.

[80] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 90.

look at how *Niels Klim* externalises not only the problem of translation and multilingualism, but also the problem of quotations.

Multiple scholars have shown that the effects of these quotations are varied and often far-reaching; from a subtle sense of irony to a tone that characterises an entire part of the novel. They are a crucial part of Holberg's Latin text, not in the least for the characterisation of Klim as a narrator and foreign observer.[81] If one would follow the reasoning of Sigrid Peters, one could argue that this use of quotations in particular is a perfect example of the untranslatability of Holberg's text. The effect of the quotations in a Menippean satire can only come across in Latin, in the original language of the reference frame that is being used, namely that of the Classics. This idea behind Peters's entire study is an example of what Walkowitz critiques in her monograph when she talks about the 'untranslatability' of born-translated texts:

> It is conventional to distinguish between works that impede translation ("untranslatable") and those that invite it ("translatable"). But what would it mean for a work both to impede and to invite at the same time? The work that is difficult to translate is celebrated for its engagement with a specific national language and for its refusal to enter, or enter easily, into the pipeline of multinational publishing. The portable work, for its part, is vilified for having surrendered to that pipeline, exchanging aesthetic innovation for commercial success, eschewing the idiosyncrasy of the local for the interchangeability of the global.[82]

Walkowitz thus fights the idea that a work is valued more when it seems to be inextricably linked to one specific nation or language system due to its difficulty. Considering what we have seen so far - that multilingualism and translation is an important aspect of Klim's journey and that Holberg's text conquered Europe not in Latin alone but as a group of editions and translations -, we may have to look at the use of quotations from a different perspective than Peters: what if *Niels Klim* is a text that both impedes and invites translation at the same time?

From the study of *Niels Klim*'s translation history by Cecilie Flugt, two concluding observations need to be mentioned in this respect. In general, the translations that were published at the same time as the Latin first edition are quite faithful to the original. A part of this 'faithfulness' is that they generally translate the poetic quotations from classical authors, but quite close to the text and still separate from the prose text, as is the case in the Latin original:

[81] Most of these interpretations are found in the critical commentary to Holberg's text by Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". They add many valueable insights to earlier works by Peters and Kragelund. In chapter 3 of this thesis, I will discuss some of the intertextual play behind Holberg's quotations, and especially its implications for the characterisation of Klim in a case study.
[82] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 31.

> Årsagen til den tidlige trofaste oversættelsestendens kan være, at *NK* knytter sig til en klassisk latin-sproget litteratur og dermed opfattedes som del af en fælleseuropæisk litteraturhistorie i midten af 1700-tallet, hvilket bevirkede, at *NK* ikke fremstod fremmed for målsprogskulturen, og at der i selve værket er indarbejdet citater fra romerske forfattere, som på dette tidspunkt blev anset for målestokken, efter hvilken alt andet skulle måles.[83]

In the earliest translations of *Niels Klim*, translators did not feel the need to change the poetic or literary function of the quotations in the text. The first English translation even kept the poetic quotations in Latin.[84] A second remarkable, though less surprising, conclusion Flugt makes is that in later translations, especially from the turn of the century onwards, there is an increasing tendency towards omission of these quotations, or translating them freely in the prose text.[85]

This periodical difference is telling. While European culture became increasingly nationalistic, the Classics changed with it from being part of a common, cosmopolitan tradition to a culture in which the use of Classics brings discomfort and interrupts the reading process, rather than being natural. Returning to Walkowitz's notions of 'translatable' and 'untranslatable,' one could argue that *Niels Klim* is indeed both when it comes to the quotations. The references to classical authors are not translatable in the strictest sense; they are a manifest break in tone, style and register that invites the translator to change his way of translating accordingly. It impedes translation in the sense that it complicates the practice of the translator, as also a French reviewer of *Niels Klim* points out in the literary journal *Nouvelle Bibliothèque*:

> Il est très bien écrit, & l'Auteur, qui paroît posséder à fond les Poëtes Latins, a fait fort heureusement de fréquentes applications, ou parodies, des plus beaux endroits de leurs Ouvrages. Ce tour ingénieux rendra toujours la Traduction de ce voïage très difficile, parce qu'il seroit presque impossible à un Traducteur de conserver cette partie des beautés de son Original.[86]

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[83] Flugt, 141. "The cause of the early tendency towards faithful translation can be that *Niels Klim* is linked to classical literature in Latin and is therefore regarded as a part of the joint European literary history in the middle of the eighteenth century, which entailed that *Niels Klim* did not appear strange to the target culture and that quotations from Roman authors are incorporated in the same work, which was considered at this time as the standard after which everything else should be measured."

[84] For a discussion of this first, anonymous English translation, see ibid., 40-43.

[85] Especially in the German tradition, this is very clear. See ibid., 141.

[86] Anonymous, review of Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum; c'est-à-dire Voïage de Klimius sous la Terre, *Nouvelle Bibliothèque ou Histoire littéraire des principaux écrits qui se publient* Novembre (1741): 356. "It is very well written and the author, who appears to have a thorough knowledge of the Latin poets, succeeds brilliantly in making frequent use of, or parodying, some of the most beautiful passages of their works. This ingenious device will always make the translation of this voyage very difficult because it seems impossible for a translator to preserve this part of the beauty of his original."

At the same time, the quotations are translatable in the contemporary European context as they carry out a reference frame that is known by the reader from other texts, not only in Latin, but also in translation and vernacular texts. Readers of the first translations of *Niels Klim* would not be interrupted in their reading process when coming across poetic forms in their prose text, for they refer to an 'interchangeable' European culture.

The quotations from classical authors are, of course, a trigger for the reader to look for more intertextual references. Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, for example, demonstrated the importance of Livy and Vergil in the characterisation of Klim as a ruler in the last part of *Niels Klim*.[87] When these quotations are translated into French, German or Dutch, and hereby become less recognisable, this part of Klim's characterisation becomes blurred. Traditionally, this unavoidable loss of meaning that was couched in Holberg's Latin text is considered to be the main reason why *Niels Klim* seems untranslatable. To some extent this is true; readers of translations will almost never notice quotations from Petronius or Cicero skilfully hidden in the prose text. However, the poetic quotations that were separate from the prose text are still recognisable as quotations. Hereby, *Niels Klim* is one of Walkowitz's untranslatable texts that "find ways to keep translation from stopping" and "invite translation rather than prohibit it."[88] The translation process of *Niels Klim* does not stop when it is published in another language, but continues during the reading process. In search for what the separate quotations refer to, readers translate again to Latin, not literally, but to the cosmopolitan realm of Latin. Whether they fail to recognise them or to attach an extra meaning to the quotation - which could as a matter of fact also happen when reading in Latin -, is of secondary importance. *Niels Klim* invites readers to keep on translating and incites the awareness that they are reading a translation.

The ongoing act of translation makes *Niels Klim* into a mobile text that is not, as often plainly stated, directed to the intellectual audience of Latin readers, but rather to multiple audiences. The European intellectuals were a very heterogeneous group, varyingly polyglot with varying skills for reading Latin. Let us give the word once more to Walkowitz:

> [B]orn-translated works block readers from being "native readers," those who assume that the book they are holding was written for them or that the language they are encountering is, in some proprietary or intrinsic way, theirs.[89]

Here lies the irony of reading *Niels Klim*. Holberg holds up a mirror and makes his readers aware of the fact that they are not native readers. When readers' Latin skills are sufficient to understand the extra levels of meaning of the quotations, they are suggested to be reading either a translation by someone else or a text written by a reader with insufficient Latin skills himself. When readers read *Niels Klim* in translation, Klim's extolling of

[87] Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Interplay with Roman Literature in Ludvig Holberg's *Iter Subterraneum*," 186-89.
[88] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 44.
[89] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 6.

classical culture and the translated verse quotations remind them that their reading skills were insufficient to read it in Latin. From the moment these quotations are left out from the translations, there is no reason any more to expect the original was written in Latin except from a statement at the front page, which enables mistakes as the one of Henry Weber and ultimately reduces Holberg's novel to one of the many imaginary voyages which use this element of fictional translation only on the front page. Nineteenth-century readers and translators got out of touch with the way *Niels Klim* was composed, as a work that was born-translated. Not only in the sense that it immediately existed at several places in Europe, but also that readers are confronted with a narrative that invites them to reflect upon translation, its function and place in European literature. It is a work that both impedes and invites translation. The quotations of classical authors are as much part of Holberg's idea as the effect on the reader of starting to reflect upon the language in which it is written.

2.3 Conclusion: Designed to Travel

The way Holberg treats Latin as demonstrated in this chapter makes Latin more than a functional language choice. Functionality or even opportunism becomes part of Holberg's aesthetics, and is tightly linked to his use of irony, Holberg's favourite method to bring across criticisms or morals. In one of his Danish essays, published seven years after *Niels Klim*, he warns an anonymous reader not to take his writings too literally, because he often uses irony, "som er det kraftigste Middel, hvorved man bestrider menneskelige Lyder og U-rimeligheder."[90] After linking this writing method to Socrates and Erasmus, Holberg also notes that "dette Seculum haver produceret en stor Mester udi den Engelske Doctor Swift."[91] Although Holberg praises Swift for his ironical style, he manages to deviate from his example in the way his text conveys irony towards the very language in which it is written.

To understand the innovation of Holberg compared to Swift, Walkowitz can be of use perhaps one last time: "[p]ointing backward as well as forward, [born-translated writings] present translation as a spur to literary innovation, including their own."[92] Swift only points backward by inviting the reader to reflect upon ideals and problems concerning the language in which it is written, English, and concerning language in general, as a way of human communication that is full of flaws. Swift's work has reached Europe almost

[90] *Epistles* II.157, 321. "[...] which is the most powerful means by which one can fight people's faults and lack of fairness [...]."

[91] Ibid. "[...] this age has produced a great master in the English Doctor Swift."

[92] Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*, 4.

immediately, but was never actually European, which is perhaps why *Gulliver's Travels* had survived the rigid selection of nineteenth-century nationalism better than Holberg's novel has. Swift's travelogue was in essence born-English, and translation an afterthought. *Gulliver's Travels* has travelled from Dublin into several remote nations of the world, but always returned to the canonical lists of *English* literature.

Niels Klim, by contrast, fits uneasily within every literary history: the Danish or the Neo-Latin, the one of imaginary voyages or the one of Menippean satire. One of the reasons behind this is that Holberg does not only point backward by asking his reader to reflect upon Latin. Holberg also points forward, enforcing this reflection by anticipating *Niels Klim*'s translation and existence in other languages as an arguably fortunate, but inevitable fate. Holberg prefigures a reader that is not just Danish, French, German, or Dutch. His reader is part of a cosmopolitan culture that is increasingly heterogeneous, and increasingly endangered because of both external factors, such as the rise of the vernacular, and internal factors, exemplified by the humanistic translating style of Abeline. Before *Niels Klim* was turned into "simply a Danish *Gulliver's Travels*", *Niels Klim* had no place of birth nor a resting-place. Holberg's mobile travelogue was designed to be translated as well as to prevent translation from stopping, but perhaps most importantly it was designed to travel.

Part II

Theoria, or On Tradition

Physicum studium pauperes reddit cultores suos
Naturæ studium naturam ducit ad ipsam,
Ac sortem, quacum nascitur omnis homo.
Nudos nos facit ac cunctorum reddit egenos:
Mendicis physicis omnia plena vides.[1]

In Scriptorem Novellarum.
Falsi convictus do dignas crimine poenas.
Præmia tu tollis: non sumus ergo pares.
Forsitan impune es tu mendax, verùm ego plector,
Quod semper fallis, quodque ego fallo semel.[2]

In part one, the *iter* of Klim was perceived as a linguistic journey, both in the fictional world and in the real. The attention for translation and multilingualism made us conclude that Holberg gave its novel a versatile quality. When we now read the title of *Niels Klim* further, we not only see the attributive term *subterraneum,* but also that the account contains a new theory on the earth (*nova telluris theoria*), which stresses the novelty and the scientific value of the subterranean world. Klim presents his tale as a piece of natural philosophy that theorises the existence of an upside down world and creatures living inside the earth.[3]

Holberg's text has always been celebrated for this novelty. In his critical anthology *Subterranean Worlds* (2004), Peter Fitting calls *Niels Klim* "almost certainly the first fictional depiction of the hollow earth."[4] Earlier, there were epic descents in the underworld and

[1] *Epigrams* III.88, 104.

[2] Ibid. I.23, 6.

[3] Existing theories on the hollow earth will be discussed further in chapter 3 where appropriate.

[4] Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*, 8. Fitting points out that few of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tales on subterranean fictions actually present a hollow earth. There are tales narrating the relocation to another part of the Earth through a subterranean passage, like the anonymous *Relation d'un voyage du Pôle*

fabulous journeys into subterranean passageways and caverns, but the world Klim discovers is a fully-fledged, habitable universe inside the Earth like it manifested itself later in works such as the anonymous *A Voyage to the Centre of the World* (1755), and Casanova's often forgotten bulky novel *L'Icosaméron*.[5]

The hollow earth theory has tempted scholars to label *Niels Klim* as an early science fiction novel. There are some dangers linked to this attribution. The first one is obvious: there is a friction in each definition of a genre from the moment you take up a book that is said to be part of that genre, and *Niels Klim* is no exception. In an attempt to circumvent this theoretical pit, Dalgaard adheres to a dynamic model of the genre of science fiction that is not fixed on the meaning or chronology of 'science', which in any case meant something different in the eighteenth century than it does now. Instead, he stresses that some tales from all ages manifest "en forskydning mellem virkeligheden og det fortalte," and that "denne forskydning bygger på et novum, et nyhedselement (eller et kompleks af elementer), der udspringer af en tankegang der er i overensstemmelse med det moderne verdensbillede."[6] Indeed, the hollow earth, Holberg's *novum*, was topical in the early eighteenth century because of the theorisation of life in a subterranean world by the English natural philosopher Edmond Halley (1656-1742), who will repeatedly come back in the course of this part of the thesis.[7]

When Dalgaard talks about *Niels Klim*, however, he admits that the *novum* of Holberg's story, namely the idea of a hollow earth, is not what the novel is about: "Holberg er ikke konsekvent med sin kosmologi, eftersom det ikke er det væsentlige for ham, og han er

Antarctique par le centre du monde (1721), Tyssot de Patot's *Les voyages et aventures de Jacques Massé* (1710) and Robert Paltock's *Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (1750), and in other works, characters are inhabiting cavern, like in Charles de Fieux Mouhy's *Lamékis* (1735-1738). Fitting wrote an article on *Niels Klim* in which he advocates for a renewed attention for the fantastical and non-utopian features of this 'buried treasure'. Fitting, "Buried Treasures. Reconsidering Holberg's Niels Klim in the World Underground." He also published an article on the arguable 'subterranean' story of Charles de Fieux Mouhy, *Lamékis* (1735-1738), which will be under review in chapter 4 of this thesis. Peter Fitting, "Imagination, Textual Play, and the Fantastic in Mouhy's Lamékis," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 5, no. 4 (1993).

[5] For further reading on the idea of the hollow earth beside Fitting's previously mentioned anthology, see Régis Messac, "Voyages modernes au centre de la terre," *Revue de littérature comparée* 9 (1929); Hanjo Berressem, Michael Bucher, and Uwe Schwagmeier, eds., *Between Science and Fiction: the Hollow Earth as Concept and Conceit* (Berlin: Lit, 2012); Ducet.

[6] Niels Dalgaard, *Fra Platon til cyberpunk* (Odense: Science Fiction Cirklen, 2004), 12. "[...] a shift between reality and the told, [...] this shift is based on a *novum,* a new element (or a complex of elements) that originates from a mind-set that is consistent with the contemporary worldview."

[7] Patricia Fara convincingly shows that, in the words of Samuel Galson, "the marvellous 'fiction' of subterranean life was in fact a plausible scientific conjecture." Samuel Galson, "A Missive from the Mole. Holberg on How to Read the *Iter subterraneum*," in *Der neulateinische Roman als Medium seiner Zeit. The Neo-Latin Novel in its Time*, ed. Stefan Tilg and Isabella Walser (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013), 198; Patricia Fara, "Hidden Depths: Halley, Hell and Other People," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 38, no. 3 (2007).

aldeles ligeglad med senere tiders ønske om videnskabelig stringens."[8] A textbook example of a wish for scientific stringency about the hollow earth is Jules Verne's novel *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1864). The lion's share of this narrative consists of the journey thither and describes the intellectual, emotional and physical process of reaching it. The hollow earth is hypothesised, theorised, calculated, recalculated, found, and described. The journey is a journey for scientific stringency in itself and for the gradual exposure of a *novum*. Assessed according to such measurements, *Niels Klim* becomes anachronistic and artificial.

But what is *Niels Klim* about, if not about the *novum*? In this part, I am not so much interested in the constellation of the underground world, as I am with the explicit label '*theoria*' that attributed to the text by Klim (or Abeline). Studies of science fiction tend to pass over the satirical play that is present in the title of *Niels Klim*. This label is unreliable not just because of the ontological problem of a subterranean world (which can be argued to be anachronistic), but because the text in fact hardly presents a theory. From this perspective of unreliability, the creation of a subterranean world changes into a narrative technique that works on many levels.

Firstly, it is a common mirroring trick that is not very different from hypothesising living creatures or utopian societies in locations such as the Far East, America, Australia, or the moon. In literature, the moon has always been the Other World, and as discoveries and scientific knowledge progressed, writers sought for alternative upside down worlds.[9] Based on the old theory of the geographical equilibrium between North and South, writers of fiction in the sixteenth and seventeenth century speculated on the nature of *Terra australis.*[10] Later, when this Great Southern Land was no longer *novus*, the fireside traveller's attention shifted towards the Poles.[11] For the satirical, utopian and moralizing purposes of writers, mirroring conceptions of fictional worlds were always the rule. Underworlds in particular were already an important feature in the spatiality of Western

[8] Dalgaard, 30. "Holberg is not consistent with his cosmology because it is not the essence for him, and he is completely indifferent to the desire of later times about scientific stringency."

[9] A very thorough study that shows how the creation of alternative worlds was pervasive in the early modern period is the monograph of Mary Blaine Campbell. Mary B. Campbell, *Wonder and Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), esp. 111-220. I will come back to this grey area between science and fiction later in this part of the thesis.

[10] Recent monographs on imaginary voyages of Paul Longley Arthur and David Fausett were particularly interested in the South Land. See Paul Longley Arthur, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837* (London: Anthem Press, 2010); David Fausett, *Writing the New World: Imaginary Voyages and Utopias of the Great Southern Land* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993).

[11] Two examples of travel fictions about the poles that will be discussed in chapter 4 are Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 2004); Anonymous, *Relation d'un voyage du Pole Arctique au Pole Antarctique par le centre du monde, avec la description de ce périlleux Passage, & des choses merveilleuses & étonnantes qu'on a découvertes sous le Pole Antarctique* (Amsterdam: N. Etienne Lucas, 1721). The poles would continue to fascinate authors well into the nineteenth century.

European literature (*Gilgamesh*, Claudianus, Vergil, Dante, and many more).[12] With the great revival of interest in astrology (Brahe, Galilei, Kepler, and others) and later the success of Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), it was a matter of time before a writer of imaginary voyages would opt for a planet inside the Earth.

Secondly, the attribution of *theoria* sets expectations for a scientific discourse that legitimises the writer of the *theoria* as an authority, but it does not fulfil later on in the novel. As I will argue, *Niels Klim* is thus a book that explores the narrative possibilities of a *novum,* but uses this in the first place to (re)negotiate the concept of authority. In the course of the seventeenth century, it seems like authority got eroded from all sides. On the one hand, the new sciences, in the line of Cartesian rationalism and Francis Bacon's empiricism, put aside the classical authors and, as time passed, even Scripture as authorities in scientific research. In literature, on the other hand, the quarrel of Ancients and Moderns questioned the normativity of classical writers. The first half of the eighteenth century was still a period of struggle, which would get 'solved' in the second half by growing towards an increased belief in the individual and romantic literary genius. Although both developments particularly surfaced in the intellectual circles in Britain and France, Holberg was very sensitive to the philosophical and poetic vogues in these two countries.[13] As a writer in a small language area and away from the eye of these intellectual storms, Holberg could negotiate his position almost from scratch. In *Niels Klim,* Holberg negotiates authority by letting the two traditions and their respective epistemologies clash in *Niels Klim*: the Classical tradition with its authority-based epistemology that was transmitted for centuries through a fairly stable educational system and was therefor to a large extent self-referential, elitist and cosmopolitan, and the new scientific epistemology that was strengthened by its institutionalisation into the Royal Societies, and picked up, mocked and tested by writers of imaginary voyages.

In the third chapter, we will focus on how Klim's discourse evokes this negotiation. How does he, step by step, construct his own authority as a *physicus* and writer of *theoria*,

[12] For an overview of different types of underworlds before the Enlightenment, see Ducet, 37-148.

[13] This academic debate was particularly strong in Britain and France, where opposing parties bickered about how to deal with the classical heritage in new creations. Holberg's position in this debate is overall ambiguous. In his monograph on the Classical tradition in Norway, Sigmud Skard phrases it as follows: "In France, Holberg had eagerly followed the long-lasting battle that was dividing the country in his age, between those who worshipped the Ancient world and those who gave the first rank to the moderns. He was never quite able to make up his mind about the problem. But he agreed wholeheartedly with those who criticised the blind adulation of the past, the cramming of dead languages and dead knowledge, the display of hollow rhetoric and the aimless academic disputations." Sigmund Skard, *Classical Tradition in Norway* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 68. Larsen puts it catchier: "Canonical literature of the past was for [Holberg] contemporary literature, which just happened to have been written in the past but always ready to serve as a model here and now." Larsen, 63. For studies of the Quarrel in general, see amongst others Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books. History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Marc Fumaroli, Anne-Marie Lecocq, and Jean-Robert Armogathe, eds., *La querelle des Anciens et des Modernes XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles précédé de Les abeilles et les araignées* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

and how does this get undermined? References to both the new-scientific and the Classical tradition, and the narrative value of a subterranean world will be discussed as factors that steer the negotiation of Klim's authority as a writer. As I will argue, this clash of epistemologies not only makes Klim's discourse unreliable, it also makes *Niels Klim* into a metafictional narration, i.e. a narrative about narrative, a discourse about discourse, a fiction about fiction.[14] To recycle the words of Dalgaard in a new context, *Niels Klim* is more about the "shift between reality and the story", than it is about the *novum*. By raising the question 'is this subterranean world, the *novum*, real of fictional?', *Niels Klim* trains the reader in recognising if a discourse is a reliable text or not, or valuable as a source for different types of information.

In the fourth chapter, we will follow *Niels Klim*'s travels, and argue that the clash of the two epistemologies on the level of the narrative has its poetical equivalent outside of the text, in reader- and scholarship. Holberg is primarily a very good reader; one who knows which narrative techniques and constellations European writers use. Holberg lets different poetical traditions clash: I will first discuss the one of the imaginary voyage and the one that has been labelled 'Menippean satire'. This clash has led to quite some confusion about *Niels Klim*'s categorisation. It is argued in chapter 4, however, that the impossibility of categorising *Niels Klim* should be valued as such. The Classicist qualities of *Niels Klim*, then, are both a genuine enrichment and a deliberate mockery of the imaginary voyage tradition. Moreover, a third poetical tradition will be added to the discussion: the novelistic type to which romances and fables are related and of which Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is the most influential example. It is particularly this line that makes *Niels Klim* into *Niels Klim*, and not into another *Gulliver's Travels* or another Menippean satire. For, *Don Quixote*'s prominent negotiation of authority and constant disruption of fiction with a wide range of narrative techniques gave Holberg the tools necessary to combine aspects we now attribute to in itself anachronistic categories as the imaginary voyage and Menippean satire.

This part will thus continue to put *Niels Klim*'s mobility to the test and show that Holberg's reader was invited to contrast narrative traditions. When scholarship puts *Niels*

[14] Ansgar Nünning makes a distinction between metanarration and metafiction. The first a form of "self-reflexive narration in which aspects of narration (and not the fictionality of the narrated) become the subject of the narratorial discourse." Ansgar Nünning, "On Metanarrative: Towards a Definition, a Typology and an Outline of the Functions of Metanarrative Commentary," in *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology*, ed. John Pier, Narratologia (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 16. Metanarrative comments thus do not have to "destroy the illusion of a narrated world." Ibid., 17. Nünning sees metafiction as one of the many functions of metanarration, at the end of a spectrum between an authenticating a discourse and a disruption of the illusion of fiction. In this chapter I will use both terms: metanarrative is used to thematise the act, result or effect of the narration, while, metafiction is used when these metanarrative comments hereby disrupt the illusion of fiction. Comments of Klim on his narration can thus be called metanarrative, but only become metafictional if other contextual or textual elements speak against his claims.

Klim into one of these traditions – into a literary *theoria,* we might say -, it makes *Niels Klim* into a static text it refuses to be.

Chapter 3

Nullius in verba?
(Re)Negotiating Authority with Klim, the Physicist

In a Danish epistle, first published in 1749, Holberg talks about his standpoint towards ancient and modern thinkers. He opens his letter as follows:

> Jeg haver udi et af mine forrige Breve viset, af hvad Aarsag Videnskaber fordum ikke kunde komme til nogen ret Vext, nemlig: efterdi man ikke bekymrede sig selv saa meget om at randsage, og at lede efter Sandhed, som at fortolke og forsvare sine Læremesteres Lærdom. Jeg haver viset, at saadant Slaverie haver ophørt ved Stiftelser af nye Videnskabers Academier efter Verulamii Plan; og at den Devise: Nullius in verba , det er, ingen Lærdom at bygge paa andres Ord, men alleene paa egen Erfarenhed og Experimenter, som af de fleeste nye Academier er antagen, haver foraarsaget, at Philosophien udi de sidste Tider haver erhvervet et stort Lys, og mange af de gamle Vildfarelser ere rettede.[1]

Holberg seems to have been optimistic about the philosophical and scientific progress the intellectual community made, supported by the establishment of new academies. He is clearly aware of the importance of Francis Bacon, or Baron Verrulam since 1618, to question long established authorities. Immediately after the words of praise for the new sciences, Holberg adds some nuance:

[1] *Epistles* IV.366, 239. "In one of my earlier epistles I pointed out that the reason the sciences were not able to flourish previously was because less effort was expended in investigation and in the search for truth than in the interpretation and defense of the teachings of the masters. I pointed out that such slavishness ceased with the establishment of new academies of science in accord with the plan of Lord Verrulam and that the motto *nullius in verba* – i.e., to base no doctrine upon the words of others but only upon experience and experiments, a motto which has been accepted by most new academies – is the cause for philosophy's having acquired great lustre in recent times and for many old fallacies having been corrected." Translation from Ludvig Holberg, *Moral Reflections & Epistles*, trans. Phillip Marschall Mitchell (Norwich: Norvik Press, 1991), 155.

> Ikke desmindre maa man dog derhos tilstaae, at adskillige store Systemata i Philosophie, Mathesi og Metaphysica, som de sidste Alders Philosophi have sammensmeddet, og udgivet for nye, ere dog ikke gandske nye; thi, naar man blader udi Græske og Romerske Skrifter, finder man, at Carthesius, Copernicus, Cudworth, Leibnitz, Spinosa og andre, som holdes for Stiftere af nye Lærdomme og Meeninger, have grundet deres Systemata paa ældgamle Lærdomme, som de alleene meere tydeligen og vidtløftigen have udført.[2]

In the rest of the *Epistle*, Holberg compares the theories of new scientists with the works of writers from antiquity. Descartes's atomistic philosophy had its roots in the work of Democritus, Leucippos, and Epicure, while his doctrine of animal mechanism reached back to Diogenes and the sixteenth-century Spanish physician Gomes Pereira.[3] Copernicus' systematised Pythagoras' idea of the motion of the earth, Cudworth's doctrine of *natura plastica* was already pointed out by Cicero, Leibniz's *Theodicée* is found in the work of Iamblicus, and Spinoza's doctrine comes from Xenophanes, amongst others.[4]

The epistle demonstrates that Holberg takes an ambiguous standpoint towards the scientific, philosophical tradition. On the one hand, he lauds the intention of breaking loose from the doctrines proposed and slavishly followed by predecessors. On the other hand, he acknowledges the value of some of the ideas from predecessors and thus the impossibility of thinking (and writing) something that is completely detached from tradition. It is an ambiguity that is – perhaps against the intentions of the founders of the new scientific academies – intrinsic to the words *nullius in verba*. While the philosophers value it as a guiding principle that leads one away from previous authorities, the motto itself proves this is ultimately an illusion. The claim of not having to swear allegiance to a master comes from Horace's epistle to Maecenas, in full: "I am not bound over to swear as any master dictates" (*Nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri*).[5] Whereas Horace lauds the poetic freedom he enjoys under the supervision of Maecenas, the new scientists use words of a poet whose poetic ideas, in *Ars Poetica,* had been slavishly followed for

[2] *Epistles* IV.366, 239. "It must nonetheless be admitted that several great systems of philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics that the philosophers of the last century put together and represented to be new are not quite new, for if one leafs through Greek and Roman works, one concludes that Descartes, Copernicus, Cudworth, Leibniz, Spinoza, and others who are looked upon as the founders of new doctrines and opinions, based their systems on ancient doctrines which they merely expanded and made more explicit." Translation by Mitchell in Holberg, *Moral Reflections & Epistles,* 155-56.

[3] The association with Descartes's ideas on animal mechanism, Holberg probably got from Pierre Bayle. See Mitchell's notes to another epistle of Holberg, namely II.149: Holberg, *Moral Reflections & Epistles*, 178.

[4] The entire passage on these resemblances is found in *Epistles* IV.366, 239-42.

[5] Horace, *Epistles* I.1, 14. The translation is by Fairclough in the Loeb edition of Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 251-53.

centuries, to show their emancipation from tradition and, amongst others, classical authority.

Although Holberg does not point to this ambiguity in the motto itself, he embraced it as a way to look to the literary tradition in which he had to establish himself. This tradition was neither ancient nor modern – perhaps only in the chronological sense of roughly before and after the Middle Ages -, but a continuity of generic, aesthetic and poetical schemes and paradoxes in Western-European literature. As a creative individual, being either a philosopher or a writer of fiction, one cannot escape the legacy of Roman or Greek literature, but in order to make new creations of literature relevant to present-day readers, one can neither see those ancient texts as normative.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the debate revolving around the nature, importance and textual markers of authority is central to *Niels Klim*. The book presents its main character as a *physicus*, who personifies the scientific code and motto of the Royal Society (or at least aspires to it), but whose quest for reliability is constantly obstructed by other elements. On the one hand, we have the intertextuality within Klim's discourse to classical authors, and thus the very tradition of authorities the natural philosopher is supposed to distance himself from. On the other hand, we have the use of other narrators, especially the embedded travel account of Tanian, who is presented as a complete stranger, but still evokes more authority than Klim. For each aspect, a key passage will be analysed, respectively Klim's words directed to the reader right before the narration of his sea voyage in chapter XI and the *Itinerarium Taniani* itself in chapter XIII.

3.1 Klim, the *Physicus*

3.1.1 *Doctus* and on a Mission

Anno 1664. These are the first words of Klim's text. The date is arguably random, but the periodisation is not. From the first half of the seventeenth century, scientific societies popped up everywhere in Europe: the *Academia dei Lincei* in Rome (1606), the *Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina* in Halle (founded in 1652) and the *Académie des Sciences,* established in Paris in 1666 under Louis XIV. In Britain, the empiricism of Francis Bacon was institutionalised in the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge, founded at Gresham College in 1660. Under their supervision many highlights of the natural sciences would get produced, such as Isaac Newton's *Principia* (1721), with support of Edmond Halley. In the present study, the importance of the Society lies in their constant impulses to the production of imaginary voyages. One of the founding members of the Society, the natural philosopher John Wilkins, for example, published *An Essay*

towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language (1668) that expresses the possibility of creating a universal language, which was under review in the first chapter of this thesis. In 1665, Hooke published his much celebrated and highly influential *Micrographia* on his microscopic findings, which inspired Jonathan Swift to create the disproportional inhabitants of Lilliput and Brobdingnag.[6] Likewise in 1655, the first issue of the Society's journal *Philosophical Transactions* appeared – the same journal that would later also publish Edmond Halley's theory on the hollow earth.

Several scientific works that came out in the late 1650s and the following decades are echoed in the title of Holberg's book. In 1656, the German Jesuit and polyhistor Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) published his *Iter extaticum* (*Journey of Ecstacy)*, which describes the moon and planets through a dialogue between an angelic guide, Cosmiel, and a young man, Theodidactus. In the third dialogue, the journey goes into the inner earth.[7] In a second edition (1657), Kircher already prefigures *Mundus subterraneus*, a work that would only come out in 1664, the same year as Klim's descent. In this work, Kircher theorised a system of water circulation and heating through fire caverns inside the Earth.[8] The seawater was sucked into the Earth through a vortex at the North Pole and came back up at the South Pole, heated. As Duane Griffen says, "his encyclopedia covers the origin of earthquakes, volcanoes, minerals, ores, 'figured stones' (fossils), springs and rivers, as well as topics like dragons, giants, and subterranean demons."[9] The German physician Johann Joachim Becher (1635-1682) wrote *Physica subterranea* (1669, reprinted in 1703), a work on mineralogy, and the English physico-theologian Thomas Burnet (1635-1715) published his *Theoria Telluris Sacra* in 1681.[10] Burnet theorised a hollow earth that was once filled with water. The hollow earth emptied at the Deluge, which event created mountains and oceans on the Earth's surface.[11] Overall, Klim's *theoria* was thus extremely topical.

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[6] See Frederik N. Smith, "Scientific Discourse: *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Philosophical Transactions*," in *The Genres of Gulliver's travels*, ed. Frederik N. Smith (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 141.

[7] Monroe Z. Hafter, "Toward a History of Spanish Imaginary Voyages," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 8, no. 3 (1975): 270. For the original text, see Athanasius Kircher, *Iter extaticum secundum qui & Mundi Subterranei prodomus dicitur* (Romæ: Mascardus, 1657).

[8] Athanasius Kircher, *Mundus subterraneus in XII Libros digestus*, 3 ed. (Amstelodami: apud Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Filios, 1678).

[9] Duane Griffin, ""What Curiosity in the Structure:" The Hollow Earth in Science," in *Between Science and Fiction: the Hollow Earth as Concept and Conceit*, ed. Hanjo Berressem, Michael Bucher, and Uwe Schwagmeier (Berlin: Lit, 2012), 5.

[10] Johann Joachim Becher, *Physica subterranea*, 9 ed. (Lipsiæ: apud Joh. Ludov. Gleditschium, 1703); Thomas Burnet, *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (Amstelædami: apud Joannem Wolters, 1694). Burnet published in 1684 an elaborated version in English under the title *Sacred Theory of Earth*. Sejersted also sees a link between Holberg's opening discussion on Creation in his *Jewish History* and the ideas of Thomas Burnet, but argues that he knew Burnet through *An Universal History* by George Sade. See Sejersted, "Holberg's Jewish History," 203-04.

[11] For a short discussion of this work, see Griffin, 6.

That Klim departed from his hometown Bergen in a period of scientific enthusiasm, is immediately reflected in the first pages of his account.[12] He relates that he successfully finished a degree in theology and philosophy (which included natural philosophy at the time) at Copenhagen University and returned home, like all Norwegian students, "doctior quidem, sed non ditior."[13] This first characterisation will stick with him throughout both the novel and my analysis of it: is he really *doctus*?

His lack of money and intrinsic desire for recognition brings him to the idea of exploring a cave near Bergen:

> Nam, vt Physicum, cui initiatus eram, studium experimentis illustrarem, indolemque terrae ac montium viscera explorarem, omnes prouinciae angulos solicite perreptabam. Nulla tam ardua erat rupes, quam non scandere, nulla tam praeceps et immanis cauerna, in quam non descendere conabar, visurus, ecquod curiosum ac Physici examine dignum forte reperirem. Permulta enim in patria nostra, non oculis modo, sed ne auribus quidem nouimus, quae si tulisset Gallia, Italia, Germania, aliaue quaelibet miraculorum ferax commendatrixque terra, audita, perlecta lustrataque haberemus. Inter ea, quae notatu maxime mihi visa sunt digna, erat spelunca magno praeceps hiatu in cacumine montis, quem indigenae vocant *Flöien*."[14]

[12] For brief discussions of the realistic scenery at the beginning of Klim's narration, see Karin Gundersen, "Den gamle retorikken og Holberg: *Niels Klim*," *Edda*, no. 1 (1987): 68; Jordheim, 152.

[13] *Niels Klim* I, 2. "[...] wiser indeed, but not wealthier." The commentators of *Niels Klim* point out that there are many anachronisms in the opening of *Niels Klim*. The philosophical examination Klim passed would only be established in 1675, the grading scale – Klim's grade was *laudabilis* - only in 1707. One of the Bergen scholars Klim names as his teachers and fervent supporters, *Magister Eduardus*, was probably based upon the historical figure of Edvard Edvardsen (1630-1695) who would only publish a natural philosophical article in 1682, on the observation of a comet. Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". I, 2. These historical inconsistencies, which might have remained unnoticed by most readers, illustrate Holberg's overall playfulness. Holberg was not concerned with making his fictional universe chronologically and historically waterproof, as modern readers know from fantastical worlds as the ones of Jules Verne and later J.R.R. Tolkien. What was important, however, was that Klim looked from the first sentences of the novel like a physicist, and even a physicist active in the early years of the new sciences, when the value of empirical data still had to be argued for, at the expense of the authority of classical texts, and when the discourse on making such data reliable to a broad public was under full-development.

[14] *Niels Klim* I, 2. "For, in order to add lustre to natural philosophy, study I was initiated in, with experiments, I rambled over every corner of the province with an insatiable curiosity to explore the nature of the Earth and to search into the bowels of mountains. No rocks were so steep that I did not climbed it, no cavern so hideous and deep that I did not made a descent into it to try if perhaps I could discover anything curious and worth the inquiry of a natural philosopher. For there are a multitude of things in our country hardly ever seen or heard of, which if they would be located in France, Italy, Germany, or any other country so full of and beneficial to wonders, nothing would be more talked of, sifted and examined. Among those things which appeared to me most worthy of observation there was a large and deep cave upon the top of that mountain which the natives call Flöien."

Klim sketches the scientific enthusiasm of the Societies' early years (without mentioning Britain as an example), and implies a certain adherence to empirical epistemology. He does not want to hypothesise anything, but illustrate with experiments (*experimentis illustrarem*), and see the seemingly miraculous natural phenomenon with his own eyes (*visurus, mihi visa sunt*). He considers himself to be initiated (*initiatus eram*) into the cosmopolitan society of natural philosophers and vows to do his share for this European project, starting with his hometown. However, Klim does not only follow his own experience. The passage cited above is found in a slightly altered version in the letters of Pliny the Younger, more specifically in a letter to Gallus in which he complains that natural phenomena in and around the city of Rome often remain under the radar of natural philosophers, although the same phenomena would have been advertised and examined in Greece, Egypt and Asia Minor.[15] From the start, Klim thus legitimises his discourse in two ways: by empirical epistemology based on experience and experiment, and through the voice of a classical authority that he does not mention by name.[16] The effect of Klim's early characterisation as a *physicus* and the prominent placement of his adventure halfway the seventeenth century, is that the question of authority is foregrounded. What does it mean to have authority or follow authorities?

3.1.2 Authority and the Imaginary Voyage

It lies in the DNA of imaginary voyages to raise the question to the reader what makes the narrated voyage 'imaginary' or not. The entire discussion on whether we should accept the imaginary voyage as a genre always returns to the same issue: how do we know whether the voyage is imaginary? Do we base ourselves on our own scientific and historical evidence or do we consider the knowledge of 'the reader' in a certain historical period? It has been pointed out that some imaginary voyages were believed to have happened in real life; not only Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* but even Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.[17] In the monograph *Travellers and Travel Liars*, Percy Adams distinguishes impostors from genuine travel writers and traces the confusion certain travel accounts evoked with readership.[18] The most famous example might be the *Description of Formosa* (1704), in

[15] Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* VIII.20, 2. For a comparison between both passages, see Peters, 153-54; Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". I, 2. Later, Klim also describes the natural phenomenon of air coming out of the cave with words of Pliny the Younger. See *Niels Klim* I, 2-3, the respective pages of the online commentary, and Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* IV.30, 5-6. For the influence of Pliny on Holberg's authorship in general, see Kragelund, *Ludvig Holberg citatkunstneren. Holberg og den yngre Plinius.*

[16] Later in this chapter, I will discuss an instance where Klim uses words of Pliny the Elder and exceptionally mentions the author by name.

[17] Paul Longley Arthur, "Fictions of Encounter: Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages to the Antipodes," *Eighteenth Century-Theory and Interpretation* 49, no. 3 (2008): 198-99.

[18] Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars 1660-1800* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1962).

which the self-proclaimed inhabitant of present-day Taiwan, George Psalmanazar, tricks an entire nation into believing his collected and invented snippets about this exotic and at the same time largely mythical land.[19] He even made a fake Formosan language, presented his 'findings' in front of the Royal Society of London and was repeatedly criticised and eventually unmasked.[20] Primarily interested in such intentionally fraudulent travel writings and the grey zone of truth, Adams discards the imaginary voyage as a part of his corpus saying that they "were not intended to fool the general reader."[21]

Still, as will become clear once again in this and the following chapter, writers of imaginary voyages have been fooling readers quite a bit. Especially those voyages with I-narration typically present a narrator who is very sensitive about his authority and reliability in the eyes of the reader, and tries to convince his readership of his manuscript's authenticity, by any means necessary. The illusion that is created, and which has gone by many names,[22] is indeed rather a literary game and parody of actual travel reports and other genres than an actual intent to trick the reader into believing the story as a historically or scientifically apt account. Therefore, the imaginary voyage has been increasingly seen as "an unreliable form of travel narrative rather than as a fictional form in its own right."[23]

One way to discuss *Niels Klim*'s illusion of authenticity is through the notion of unreliable narration, a narratological concept that is often attributed to imaginary travel literature, amongst many other genres.[24] In scholarship on *Niels Klim*, Søren Peter Hansen

[19] As Sejersted points out, Psalmanazar also was one of the writers of the series in 65 parts called *An Universal History,* which started in the 1720s. Holberg uses this publication in his *Jewish History*. Although Psalmanazar was not mentioned on the title page and it is thus unclear whether Holberg knew he was compiling Psalmanazar, it is certain Holberg knew Psalmanazar by name and reputation. Holberg was in Oxford (1706-1708) at the time the scandal around Psalmanazar broke out, and the word 'Psalmanazar' recurs in Holberg's comedy *Mascarade* (1724) as a part of a pretended foreign language. Sejersted, "Holberg's Jewish History," 202-06.

[20] For discussions of Psalmanazar's Formosan language see Campbell, 310-18. For further reading on the curious case of the impostor Psalmanazar, see Michael Keevak, *The Pretended Asian: George Psalmanazar's Eighteenth-Century Formosan Hoax* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004). Chapter 2, in particular, treats the interactions between Psalamanazar and members of the Royal Society, amongst others Edmond Halley. See also Jack Lynch, "Forgery as Performance Art: The Strange Case of George Psalmanazar," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Requiries in the Early Modern Era* 11 (2005).

[21] Adams, 81.

[22] For 'hyperempiricism', see Arthur, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837*, 7-8. For 'reality-effects' in *Niels Klim*, a term borrowed from Barthes's essay *L'effet de réel*, see Galson, 196; Niels Dalgaard, "En konvolut med blandet indhold. Om Holbergs brug af genrer i *Niels Klim*," in *Litterære skygger: norsk fantastisk litteratur*, ed. Torgeir Haugen (Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forlag, 1998), 74.

[23] Arthur, "Fictions of Encounter: Eighteenth-Century Imaginary Voyages to the Antipodes," 201.

[24] The concept has seen two dominant approaches, one in line of Wayne Booth's rhetorical interpretation of unreliability, and one in line with cognitive studies. For a comprehensive summary of the different approaches to narrative unreliability, see Ansgar Nünning, "Reconceptualizing Unreliable Narration: Synthesizing

most prominently treated reliability.[25] He calls the I-narrator Klim unreliable in a moral or ethical sense, i.e. because Klim misinterprets his own adventures.[26] On the question how interpretations of Klim are perceived as *mis*interpretations, Hansen's wordings remain vague.[27] He maintains that Klim "exposes himself to the reader" as an unreliable narrator and that the reader simply "gets the idea."[28] As Klim's unreliability is reduced to a misinterpretation of morals or habits of foreign societies, compared to the traveller's and reader's own society, Hansen disregards the narratological complexity of *Niels Klim*. Hansen's texts raise questions about Holberg's intentions, while the reading method of 'unmasking' often comes down to a certain gut feeling about what Holberg wants to bring across through an implied version of himself.[29]

Other scholars have pointed at more problems of interpretation - without using the concept of unreliability -, particularly in the paratexts of *Niels Klim.* Dalgaard (1998) states that there are two ways to interpret the *Apologetic Preface* in which the grandsons of Klim attempt to convince critics of their grandfather's reliability: as a passage that boosts the narration's credibility or as the exact opposite.[30] Dalgaard seems to suggest that the credibility and reliability of Klim is simultaneously enhanced and undermined in the process of reading, but he does not specify how these dynamics work in the text. Mortensen discusses another paratext, the epilogue written by Klim's friend Abeline,

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Cognitive and Rhetorical Approaches," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

[25] For Hansen's entire treatment of the unreliability of Klim, see. Søren Peter Hansen, "Mellem rejseroman og udviklingsroman. En læsning af Holbergs Niels Klim," in *Danske Studier* (København: Academisk Forlag, 1982), 14-15. Hansen rewrote this book chapter later into an English lecture that is publicly available: Søren Peter Hansen, "Modern Thoughts Disguised as Ancient Genres. A Discussion on Ludvig Holberg's novel 'Niels Klim'," in *ISECS* (Dublin 2008), 5-7.

[26] Hansen, "Mellem rejseroman og udviklingsroman. En læsning af Holbergs Niels Klim," 14.

[27] I will address the problems revolving around the moral side of Klim's unreliability in chapter 5 of this thesis.

[28] First quotation comes from Hansen, "Mellem rejseroman og udviklingsroman. En læsning af Holbergs Niels Klim," 14. For the second quotation, see Hansen, "Modern Thoughts Disguised as Ancient Genres. A Discussion on Ludvig Holberg's novel 'Niels Klim'," 6.

[29] It is tempting to use the metaphor of the mask in scholarship on Holberg, a playwright who is notoriously obsessed with the idea of masks, hiding 'true' identities, as becomes most clear in *Mascarade* (1724) and other comedies. The idea of masks are omnipresent in Holberg' fictional and historical writings. It is even repeatedly used to describe Holberg's changing personality. See amongst others Jens Kruuse, *Holbergs maske* (København: Gyldendal, 1964). Specifically for *Niels Klim*, see Kjell Heggelund, "Maskøren som ikke ville maskere. Ludvig Holberg: *Niels Klims underjordiske reise*," in *Tekstopplevelser. Ni analyser av norske prosatekster*, ed. Willy Dahl (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970). However, we need to be aware of the potential pitfalls of the mask-metaphor for the study of *Niels Klim*. As the narrator should be 'unmasked', or better: 'unmasks himself', one assumes that there is a specific characterisation to be found behind the mask of the unreliable narrator. However, Klim is no Psalmanazar who intentionally deceives his audience and hides a 'true identity'.

[30] Dalgaard, "En konvolut med blandet indhold. Om Holbergs brug af genrer i *Niels Klim*," 73-74. For a further discussion of the preface, see also Finn Hauberg Mortensen, "Romanens ramme. Hvad der videre hændte Niels Klim," in *Digternes paryk: studier i 1700-tallet: festskrift til Thomas Bredsdorff*, ed. Marianne Alenius, et al. (København: Museum Tusculanum, 1997), 167-68; Gundersen, 67-68.

convincingly arguing that the latter plays an ambiguous role as the first recipient of Klim's story. The epilogue suggests that Abeline did not support the publication of Klim's manuscript.[31]

Elaborating on the ideas of Dalgaard and Mortensen on *Niels Klim*'s diversified narration, I will adhere in this chapter to an interpretation of unreliability that assumes a more active participation of the reader. Robert Uphaus recognises this participation as a prominent feature of many eighteenth-century fictional texts:

> Many eighteenth-century texts [...] challenge the reader into a new or renewed awareness of just how problematical the nature and formation of all beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and value judgements are. Many eighteenth-century texts, for example, do not reaffirm the customary expectation of finding meaning in the text, meaning which is ordinarily assumed to be governed by prior literary conventions that reinforce the expectations of order, stability, and objectivity.[32]

This response of the reader in Uphaus's theory is often evoked by texts that present an 'observer narrator', such as in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

> Though initially confident of the self-sufficiency of reason, [the observer narrators] willingly or unwillingly become participants, and sometimes victims, of the very actions they wish to describe with rational detachment.[33]

Swift's travelogue is known for its impossibility of interpretation, while *Niels Klim* has been argued to be a satire of interpretation as well, in Samuel Galson's article *A Missive to the Mole*.[34] The main object of satire in *Niels Klim* is the interpretation of narration itself. Like in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, *Niels Klim* does not invite the reader on a quest for unmasking the narrator or finding the true intentions of the (implied) author. The unmasking is rather a continuous process than a singular act. Every time Klim tries to guide the reader into a specific direction, another element undermines his argument. However, as we will see, some elements do in fact play in Klim's favour as well. Like so, in such a continuous process of creating meaning, the reader does not simply 'unmask' unreliability of the narrator, but ponders over the criteria based on which voices can be authoritative or not. Readers learn new criteria, assess them, re-evaluate others, etc. No voice in *Niels Klim* is an established authority: not one of the narrators, not one of the classical authors the text refers to, not even the 'implied author'. Instead of unmasking an unreliable narrator, readers are thus invited by the text, more generally, to negotiate authority. This negotiation is a continuous act of interpretation that is stimulated by

[31] Mortensen, 165.

[32] Robert W. Uphaus, *The Impossible Observer: Reason and the Reader in 18th-Century Prose* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 2.

[33] Uphaus, 14.

[34] Galson, 205.

elements inside the novel's body text, in the paratexts, in the paratext of the second edition, and in translations.

3.1.3 Signals of Unreliability

With these considerations in the back of our minds, let us return to Klim's *theoria*. Holberg presents his protagonist as the real author who supposedly lived through the subterraneous adventures himself. Klim even relates his journey in a realistic, almost scientific, way.[35] Let us take a step back and imagine an eighteenth-century reader, a woman perhaps, who enters the realm of *Niels Klim* for the first time. Based on which criteria can she assess authority in *Niels Klim*?

Let us assume she gives Klim the benefit of the doubt when she first comes to know him as an enthusiastic *physicus* - he says to have attained a university diploma, did he not? When our reader would be very familiar with Norway and Denmark, she would perhaps know that Klim was an actual bell-ringer in Bergen.[36] Even the authorial hand of Holberg could be recognised. Holberg was also born in Bergen and studied in Copenhagen. But perhaps more significant, Klim did not just go and look for any type of natural phenomenon, but for a 'hollow mountain', which is etymologically very akin to 'Hol-berg' in Danish, Dutch and German.[37] Let us assume our hypothetical reader was not *that* attentive. She is British, or French, proficient in Latin, but unfamiliar with literary production in Scandinavia. Once Klim starts off with narrating his actual journey - from the fall into Fløien onwards – how can our reader realise that there is something odd about Klim's *theoria*? When falling down to the subterranean world, Klim finds that he loses his taste for bread, and that, once he had thrown away the piece of bread he carried, it starts to circle around his own body. The *physicus* Klim is of course intrigued by his own gravitation.[38] To the reader, this might be one of the first signs to Klim's naivety as a scientist, but also to his stubborn egocentrism and persistent prejudices; he is the centre of his own little universe.

All the previous considerations are based upon knowledge of reality or require a certain degree of scientific education which our very average reader might not have

[35] Not only the omission of Holberg's name on the title page and the first signs of Klim being a *physicus* contribute to this authentication of Klim's narration. As Fara exemplifies with reference to Klim's adventures in the utopian country of Potu, "Klim carefully details the characteristic of Potuan trees as though he were an objective observer." Fara, 579.

[36] The biographical Niels Klim (1620-1690) was born in present-day Denmark, became a royal bookseller and later a bell ringer in the Korskirken in Bergen. See Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". frontpage.

[37] Dalgaard, *Fra Platon til cyberpunk*, 30. The association is not that far-fetched. When Holberg was named Baron in 1749, he got a coat of arms that depicted in the middle a mountain with a hole in it.

[38] For the entire passage on the gravitation of the bread, see *Niels Klim* I, 8-9.

received. In addition, two types of elements can guide the reader in her negotiation of Klim's authority: metanarrative passages, which address the issue of reliability directly, and intertextuality, which can be in the form of verbal quotations, but also of thematic or structural associations. In the course of Klim's descent in the underground world, our reader notices that citations of Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, become more frequent,[39] but can also be alerted when Klim opens his eyes on Nazar and is carried away by walking trees; not just because of her knowledge of nature (i.e. trees do not walk), but because of an association with Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comiques de la Lune*, where the main character lands on the moon underneath the Tree of Life, or another text.[40] It is this intertextuality that runs as a thread through *Niels Klim.* They can both strengthen or undermine the truth claims and overall discourse of Klim as a narrator, but in any case make the reader reflect upon the status of Klim's narration.

If we assume that our hypothetical reader reads the second edition of *Niels Klim*, the signals of metanarration and intertextuality are even more highlighted from the start of her reading process. The entire *Apologetic Preface* abounds with arguments that thematise the authority of the text she is about to read, not in the least the story of the eyewitness-shaman Peyvis, enabling what Dalgaard's calls a double interpretation. As I have shown in chapter 2, moreover, Abeline's sudden role as translator of Klim's manuscript raises questions about the authorship of the Latin quotations. Did Klim's manuscript already contain Latin quotations, inserted in a Danish text? Abeline's figure thus adds the (possibility of) extra layers of meaning in the text and, therefore, plays a significant role in undermining Klim.[41] After Klim's self-portrayal as a *physicus* in the body text, Klim adds that his first mission was supported by two Bergen scholars: the school principle *Magister Eduardus* and Abeline. They are portrayed as celebrated natural philosophers who were too old to descend into the cave themselves. Stimulated by hours of conversation with them, Klim made his final decision to go through with the idea.[42]

The previous hypothetical digression does not teach us much about actual readers, but opens up a new perspective to the reading of Klim's unreliable narration; one that take

[39] Sigrid Peters points out that some quotes from Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are used at the beginning and the end of Klim's journey to paint "den Übergang vom Realen in das Phantastische und umgekehrt vom Phantastischen zurürck in die Realität." Peters, 112. "[...] the transition from the real to the fantastical and the reverse, from the fantastical back to reality."

[40] The aerial voyage of Dyrcano to the moon sporadically echoes Klim's calculations and predictions about his surroundings on his way down to Nazar. For the fall on the moon that is similar to Klim's landing on Nazar, see Cyrano de Bergerac, *Histoire comique des État & Empire de la Lune et du Soleil*, ed. Charles Georges Thomas Garnier, Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions et romans cabalistiques (Paris: Rue et Hotel Serpente, 1787), 135. For a discussion of astronomical ideas in Cyrano's text and some comments on its relevance for *Niels Klim*, see Paludan, 64-74.

[41] This interpretation would be in line with the characterisation of Abeline by Mortensen, namely as an ambiguous persona. See Mortensen, 165.

[42] *Niels Klim* I, 3.

into account the gradual progression in reading and thus leaves more room for doubt - if not structural or fundamental, at least temporary – about the fictionality of Klim's narration. Klim's authority as a *physicus* is not a static characteristic, but is being shaped and reshaped throughout the novel by metanarrative passages and intertextual links. Through these elements, *Niels Klim* invites the reader to negotiate authority. What does 'authority' imply when classical authors are no longer considered normative and the accounts of travellers are scarcely to be trusted as sources of information about people and nature? What is the weight of empirical evidence when a reader still has to interpret the discourse that expresses the evidence? Such questions do not expect an answer, or a revelation of truth behind the mask, but a continuous critical reflection of every new authority that is presented.

In the remaining part of this chapter, we will thus attempt to understand how metanarration and intertexts guide the negotiation of authority in *Niels Klim*. With a close reading of, first, the preface to Klim's journey through the Wondrous Lands (*Terrae Paradoxae*) in chapter XI, I will demonstrate how the illusion of authenticity is simultaneously enhanced and undermined. Secondly, I will move further in the novel, to chapter XIII, which contains a travel account of the subterranean inhabitant Tanian. This passage extends the mirroring play of the *novum*, namely the upper and lower world, and ultimately changes the way the reader looks at the very notion of authority.

3.2 A Clash of Epistemologies: Klim's Sea Voyage

3.2.1 The 'Support' of Satirists

In chapter XI, Klim sails on a Martinian galley through the *Terrae Paradoxae* or the Land of Wonders. On this sea voyage, which is one of the most marvellous in *Niels Klim*, Klim visits nations such as the *Terra Musica* or Mezendoria, the fabulous society of animals.[43] Preceding these adventures, an extended apologia is inserted that begins as follows:

[43] For fantasy in *Niels Klim*, see amongst others Fitting, "Buried Treasures. Reconsidering Holberg's Niels Klim in the World Underground," 96; Dalgaard, "En konvolut med blandet indhold. Om Holbergs brug af genrer i *Niels Klim*," 79.

> Antequam ad descriptionem huius navigationis progredior, censores tetricos, ac rigidos moneo, ne frontem nimis contrahant ad narrationem rerum, quae naturae adversari, ac proinde omnem fidem excedere videbuntur.[44]

Klim addresses his readers and thematises his own narrative - the sea voyage that follows the apologia. Klim's metanarration characterises the readers as critics of the scientific verisimilitude. Klim is aware that they will question the existence of the subterranean creatures, the accurateness of his descriptions, and, therefore, the scientific reliability of his text.

To strengthen his apologia, Klim turns to authoritative texts. He inserts a classical quotation, one from Persius' fifth satire: "Non equidem hoc studeo, bullatis vt mihi nugis / pagina turgescat; dare pondus idonea fumo."[45] Klim embeds this quotation to claim authority, displaying his knowledge of classical authors, and, therefore, to authenticate his narration. However, the reader as defined earlier can interpret this quotation quite differently when she recalls the source text. There, Persius speaks with his Stoic teacher Cornutus, whom he calls his beloved friend (*dulcis amice*, v. 23). They confer on what it means to be a satirist, on poetry and suitable themes. Cornutus recommends Persius to leave the weightiness of tragedy aside and describes Persius with the following words:

> verba togae sequeris iunctura callidus acri,
> ore teres modico, pallentis radere mores
> doctus et ingenuo culpam defigere ludo.[46]

To this, Persius replies with the line adopted by Klim. The above quoted characterisation of a satirist makes Klim's use of Persius' quotation very ambiguous. At first sight, the quotation perfectly fits in Klim's discourse, as the meaning of the Latin word *nugae* shifts from the weighty themes of tragedies, to scientific nonsense. However, readers recall how Persius addresses his readers 'with moderate utterance' and denounces blame 'with well-bred wit'. Klim's addressing of *his* reader, in contrast, seems rather hostile, and his denouncement of blame, namely the blame for being unreliable, seems dead serious.

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[44] *Niels Klim* XI, 241. "Before going into the description of this navigation, severe critics, I warn rigid people not to frown too much upon the narration of things that are adverse to nature and therefore seem to exceed every belief."

[45] *Niels Klim* XI, 241 and Persius, *Satire* V, 19-20. "My aim is certainly not to have my page swell with trifling nonsense, fit only to give weight to smoke." The translation is by the hand of Susanna Morton Braund: Juvenal and Persius, *Satires*, trans. Susanna Morton Braund, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 99. Only the word 'trifling' is my own because Holberg uses *bullatis* instead of *pullatis* ('dark-robed'). Holberg has probably drawn the word from the text edition of Juvenal and Persius by Joseph de Jouvancy from 1697, as he owned a copy. See Bruun, 28.

[46] Persius, *Satire* V, 14-16. "You pursue the language of the toga, skilled at the pointed combination, rounded with moderate utterance, clever at scraping sick morals and at nailing fault with well-bred wit." Both the Latin and the translation by Braund are from the Loeb edition of Juvenal and Persius, 97.

One way to read the link between Persius and Klim is that the latter consciously writes in a satirical manner. Then, Klim would undermine his own narration, which he passionately defends. Much more fruitful than this circular interpretation is to assume Klim does not intentionally identify himself with Persius in any way. Cornutus' description of the satirist Persius does not match Klim because he is a *physicus* who sincerely attempts to convey scientific information about the newly discovered world to his reader. The description of Persius resembles Holberg more than Klim. In short, Holberg satirises Klim; Klim does not satirise himself.

More elements can be added to the association between Persius and Holberg. Further in Persius' text, the Roman author lauds his relationship with Cornutus. The latter is not only his friend, but also a reader who understands his satires. Through this panegyric, the conversation between Klim and his readers shifts to one between Holberg and *his* readers. The reader, who, in the description of Klim, is very critical about the story of the narrator, suddenly turns into a friend of the writer who is amused by and skilled in reading satire. This comical reversal of roles enhances the distance between Klim and the reader of *Niels Klim*. Klim defends himself against severe critics, but is not aware of the fact that his readers actually read his book as satire or amusement.

In what follows, Klim further defends himself. He emphasises that he narrates incredible, but true things, and again highlights his intention of giving empirical evidence by underlining that he has seen them with his own eyes.[47] Not aware of the doubtful status of such claims of autopsy, Klim only makes it worse by, again, adhering to the notion of *doctus*:

> Rudes ac indocti, qui extra limina patriae pedem non protulerunt, cuncta iudicant fabulosa, quibus ab infantia non assueuerunt. Docti vero, maxime rerum Physicarum gnari, qui experientia didicerunt, quam ferax varietatum sit natura, aequiora de rebus, quae narrantur, insolitis ferunt iudicia.[48]

The fragment is the beginning of an extensive reflection on the Latin concept *doctus*, 'well-educated'. Klim's interpretation of *indocti* and *docti*, is logical within his rhetoric. A person who has not travelled and seen the world is unlikely to believe what Klim narrates; one who knows physics, like Klim, knows that nature is very diverse and nothing is

[47] The argumentation Thompson calls the 'autoptic principle', then, suits the empirical discourse of a modern traveller-writer, but is nonetheless unconvincing. The principle was in travel writing problematic as there is no external verification possible. The reader just has to trust the travel writer, which "may engender scepticism rather than belief." Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), 65.

[48] *Niels Klim* XI, 241. "Inexperienced and uneducated people [*indocti*] who never set foot outside their home country, consider all of it fabulous things to which they are not accustomed anymore since childhood. Well-educated people [*docti*], however, especially when they know some things about physics, who learned from experience that nature's variety is very rich, would pass milder judgements on the unusual things that are narrated."

entirely impossible.[49] Klim, hereby, authenticates his work as a scientific treatise that describes nature's diversity. His argumentation, however, is founded on loose ground. The reversal of the same metanarrative comment and, thus, a reversed interpretation of the term *doctus* seem to make even more sense; one who is well-educated and knows physics is unlikely to believe that there is a world inside the Earth's core, inhabited by walking trees and music instruments; uneducated readers, by contrast, will more easily believe fantastical stories.

In the traditional sense of the word, Klim's readers are all *docti*. Like our hypothetical reader, Klim's public is by definition well-educated and able to read his Latin text. *Docti* are not only able to recall the initial presentation of *physicus* Klim as *doctus*, but also the context from which the quotation of Persius came, where the term *doctus* already appeared. There, the word referred to Persius himself, the satirist. Holberg thus raises the question: who is *doctus*? The reader who believes and trusts Klim's narration based on their knowledge of nature's variety? Or the one who recognises the Latin source text, interprets the text as a satire and doubts the authenticity claim of narrator Klim? Is the physicist-author *doctus* as he underestimates his readers and criticises them for their lack of trust, or the satirist as he challenges his readers by complicating the interpretation process with Latin quotations?

The problematisation of *doctus* continues in the subsequent paragraph. Klim inserts a long quotation from Juvenal's thirteenth satire.[50] As the commentators on *Niels Klim* show, in the source text Juvenal ironically comforts a person who has lost some money. The narrator says that these things happen in Rome. In the verses in which Klim quotes Juvenal, he gives examples of phenomena that seem remarkable from the outside, but are not necessarily so in their proper context: goitre in the Alps, big breasts in Africa, the blue eyes of the Germanic people, and fights between pygmies and cranes in Thracia.[51] The first three examples are realistic, while the last one is a myth. The commentators of Holberg justly argue that the myth is ironically presented as a parallel with the first three. The pointe they add is the same in both Juvenal and Holberg.[52] Nevertheless, it is in line with the interpretation of Persius' quotation to assume that Klim does not intend the pointe. He interprets the pygmies as equally realistic as the blue-eyed Germans, the big African breasts, and all the creatures and particularities he encountered and described. Klim is not aware of the ironical twist in Juvenal's text.[53]

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[49] In his monograph on empiricism and the genre of imaginary voyages, Riccardo Capoferro points out that the first type of argument, which he calls the 'strange, therefore true' trope, was very common throughout the late seventeenth- and eighteenth century. Riccardo Capoferro, *Empirical Wonder: Historicizing the Fantastic, 1660-1760* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 164.

[50] Juvenal, *Satire XIII*, 162-73.

[51] Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XI, 242.

[52] Ibid.

[53] The quotation describing the pygmies ends with the words "pede non est altior uno" ("no taller than one foot"), which Holberg uses in two other works: in his *Juridical Dissertation on Marriage of the Closely Related,* 17

3.2.2 The 'Support' of Natural Philosophers

Klim then enumerates all sorts of fabulous races that were described by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* and concludes that no one would have ever believed this if Pliny had not seen it with his own eyes.[54] Interestingly enough, Klim has already met three races that are similar to some from Pliny's text. The cyclopic people Klim refers to in this passage, for example, resemble the trees in the land of Mardak in chapter IX, which had different types of eyes, including in the back of their heads.[55] The people who are grey in their youth correspond with the inhabitants of Quamboia, whom Klim visited on the same journey through Nazar.[56] In Quamboia, the ageing process is reversed, which causes the old men to play on the streets as children. In retrospect, lastly, the race of creatures that walk backwards echoes the encounter between Klim and the tribe of the *Canaliscae*.[57]

It seems that not only Pliny, but also Klim can rely on the argument of autopsy. Klim immediately confirms this by continuing:

> Ecquis denique credidisset, terram esse concavam ac in visceribus eiusdem contineri solem et planetas, nisi experientia mea mysterium istud fuisset detectum? Quis credidisset, terram dari, ab arboribus ambulantibus ac ratione praeditis inhabitatam, nisi eadem experientia omnem dubitationem excussisset?[58]

The naming of Pliny makes perfect sense within Klim's discourse. By positioning these statements just after those of Pliny the Elder, whom he calls a very eminent author, Klim equates himself with this Roman authority, the serious, reliable and *doctus* physicist.

The passage, however, does not echo Pliny directly, but rather Aulus Gellius.[59] The latter talks in his *Attic Nights* about cheap, marvellous travel books written in Greek, which he bought in Brindisium. He compares them with Pliny's *Natural History*. First, Aulus Gellius enumerates the different races that would be mentioned by Klim as well, maintaining that they were described in the Greek books. He considers the travelogues to be worthless. Then, Aulus Gellius adds to the list of marvels some particularities from Pliny's text and recognises the Roman author to be a high authority because he saw them

(*Dissertatio juridica de nuptiis propinqvorum,* 1719), and in *Description of Denmark and Norway* I, 22 (*Danmarks og Norges Beskrivelse*, 1729). It is striking that in the latter, the quotation is used when Holberg talks about the unreliability of the tales of seamen. See Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, XI, 242.

[54] *Niels Klim* XI, 242-43.

[55] Ibid. IX, 130.

[56] Respectively ibid. XI, 243 and IX, 135.

[57] Ibid. XIV, 332-33.

[58] Ibid. XI, 243. "Who, finally, would have believed that the earth was hollow and its bowels would include a sun and planets, if this mystery was not solved by my experience? Who would have believed that the earth was inhabited by walking trees, gifted with reason, if that same experience had not removed all doubt?"

[59] For a comparison of Holberg's text with Gellius' and Pliny's, see Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XI, 242-43.

with his own eyes.[60] Although Aulus Gellius seems to acknowledge Pliny's authority, the passage abounds with irony. Gellius' enumeration of different marvels from the cheap travelogues was actually a compilation of different passages of Pliny's *Natural History*.[61] This way, he ironically suggests that Pliny's writing is just as worthless as cheap travelogues.[62] This additional layer is passed on to Holberg's text as well. Klim wants to give his text authority by comparing himself with Pliny and his similar adventures. In doing so, he inserts the compilation by Aulus Gellius, unaware that Gellius actually brings the authority of Pliny down in a subtle manner. Therefore, Klim's text is indirectly equated with cheap Greek travelogues.[63] Due to the intertextual link, the text plays with the concept of authority. For Klim, this concept verges on the term *doctus*, as they are both considered to know physics. Although Klim does everything in his power to picture himself as a *doctus* author, the intertexts make his argumentation stagger.

Another example of intertextuality that only seemingly strengthens Klim's discourse concerns a link to contemporary science. Klim's description of the *docti* as physicists, who understand the variety of nature, and further, the use of classical texts as authorities, echoes a text by Edmond Halley. This influential English physicist hypothesised the existence of a globe within the Earth's core. Halley even theorised the possibility of subterraneous life. When Halley speaks of the habitability of the inner globe in his treatise *An Account of the Cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetic Needle* (1692), he anticipates his readers' objections with an argumentation analogous to Klim's interpretation of *docti*.[64] First, Halley sums up different sorts of terrestrial animals. Then he continues:

> [A]ll whose ways of living would be to us incredible did not daily Experience teach us. Why then should we think it strange that the prodigious mass of matter, whereof this globe does consist, should be capable of some other improvement than barely to serve to support its surface? Why may not we rather suppose that the exceeding small quantity of solid matter in respect of the fluid ether, is so disposed by the

[60] Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* IX.iv.11-14. See Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights. Books VI-XIII*, trans. John Carew Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

[61] For a detailed textual comparison between the passage in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, the words of Pliny and those of Klim, see Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XI, 242-43.

[62] Wytse Hette Keulen, *Gellius the Satirist: Roman Cultural Authority in Attic Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 201.

[63] The commentators of *Niels Klim* indicate that the word 'Plinius' is omitted in the second edition, but say that "[o]m navnet er faldet ud ved et uheld eller fjernet bevidst, kan ikke afgøres." Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XI, 243. "Whether the name is coincidently or consciously omitted cannot be decided." Because of the intertextual play with Aulus Gellius, I tend to think that Holberg wanted to leave *auctor gravissimus* open for interpretation. As there are, apart from the *Apologetic Preface* of Klim's grandsons, only a handful of adjustments in the second edition, it is unlikely that omission would be an editorial coincidence.

[64] As Fara argues, it is very likely that Holberg knew Halley and has read his text. Fara, 577-78.

> Almighty Wisdom as to yield as great a surface for the use of living creatures as can consist with the conveniency and security of the whole.[65]

Although the passage in Halley's treatise does not correspond word for word with Klim's argument, it still has the same rhetoric and train of thoughts: the wondrous variety of nature, as we know it from experience, would prove that the presented theory is at least possible.[66]

The existence of life forms on the inner globe, moreover, was not probable without illumination. Halley was very aware of this counter-argument, but was not able to fill this gap. In his treatise, he tries to increase the probability by saying that "there are many ways of producing Light which we are wholly ignorant of."[67] What Halley was not able to explain, Klim's narration does, since an inner sun illuminates the subterranean world of Holberg.[68] At this point, the authenticity of Klim's narration seems to profit from the echo of Halley's text. Klim wants to write a scientific treatise and uses an authoritative text that proves the scientific possibility of his story.

A *doctus* reader recalls the end of Halley's argumentation. While arguing the illumination of the inner globe is not unthinkable, the physicist refers to classical poetry:

> I am sure the poets Virgil and Claudian have gone before me in this thought, inlightning [sic] their Elysian Fields with sun and stars proper to those infernal, or rather internal regions.[69]

Two quotations follow, one from the *Aeneid*, the other from Claudianus' *Rape of Proserpine*.[70] Halley knows that references to Roman poets are useless in order to prove a scientific point. It is rather meant as a pun, as he explains afterwards: "And though this be not to be esteemed as an argument, yet I may take the liberty I see others do, to quote the poets when it makes for my purpose."[71] Halley rejects the scholastic type of

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[65] Edmond Halley, "An Account of the Cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetical Needle. With an Hypothesis of the Structure of the Internal Parts of the Earth.," *Philosophical Transactions* 16 (1692): 575. As Fara indicates, it is unclear how firmly Halley believed his own theory. The latter argues very tentatively and promises a revised version, which would never appear. Fara, 573. Fara further explains that Halley uses "literary devices, such as arguing from analogy and posing unanswerable questions with the silent assumption of an affirmative answer" in order to present "an elaborate scheme of whose likelihood even he was uncertain." Ibid., 581.

[66] At the beginning of her article, Fara quotes the first sentences of Klim's apologetic preface to chapter XI, in the English translation from 1742. When she mentions Halley's rhetoric tactics, however, she does not discuss similarities with Klim's tactics.

[67] Halley, 576.

[68] See *Niels Klim* I, 7.

[69] Halley, 576.

[70] Vergil, *Aeneid* VI.640-641; Claudianus, *The Rape of Proserpine* II.282-4. Fara explains, "Halley's unusual subterranean proposal raised particular issues about hell." Therefore, "Halley coined an infernal pun to indicate his awareness that the centre of the earth was traditionally occupied by fiery furnaces." Fara, 574.

[71] Halley, 576.

argumentation in other texts, which is exactly what we have seen Klim do in his apologetic preface to chapter XI. He recalls classical texts by Pliny, Juvenal, Persius and Aulus Gellius to support his case. Even if the scientific side of Klim's narration may appear more likely because of the intertextual links with the theory of Halley, it conflicts with Klim's quoting of Latin authoritative texts, which Halley rejects as scientifically irrelevant.

The intertextual link to Halley's *theoria*, brings the negotiation of authority back to the problem with the role of Abeline. If Klim tries to adhere to the argumentation of natural philosophers like Halley, why would he refer to classical authorities? Scholars have always attributed references to the canon in *Niels Klim* to the narrator Klim. Gundersen, for example, confirms in her article on ancient rhetoric in *Niels Klim* that the two types of argumentation are found throughout Holberg's novel. The first is authority-bound, the other empirical, which she both ascribes to Klim.[72] With the addition of the *Apologetic Preface* in the second edition of *Niels Klim*, and the potential intervention of Abeline in the manuscript of Klim, it can dawn on our reader that Abeline could also have added this scholastic type of argumentation, based on authoritative texts.[73] By adding the role of Abeline as a translator, Holberg ridicules antiquarian academics once more - not coincidentally a subgroup of his initial public. They use Latin literature as a catalogue of possible quotations that could give their writings stature and authority. For them, quoted words in their own texts are purely functional. Klim is primarily a physicist. The characterisation of Klim as an antiquarian academic, so Holberg suggests, is an adjustment of Abeline, who makes Klim the object of satire.

Although the previous, far-reaching interpretations, based on a single sentence in the *Apologetic Preface*, are in a way tentative, Holberg deliberately revised the role of Abeline. It shows that the unmasking of Klim as an unreliable narrator is a continuous process of interpretation, rather than a simple truth-or-lie-game. The reader of the edition of 1745 must read *Niels Klim* again, and take Abeline's role into consideration when renegotiating the notion of authority.

[72] Gundersen, 68. This way of thinking relates to what the commentators of *Niels Klim* say about the previously discussed references to Juvenal and Pliny in chapter IX: "Klim er den stolte akademiker der ukritisk sætter de klassiske tekster højere end den sunde fornuft." Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XI, 242. "Klim is the proud academic who uncritically puts the classical texts before common sense."

[73] Before the addition of the *Apologetic Preface*, the only possible interpretation was indeed to ascribe both types of rhetoric to Klim. So, I do not object Gundersen's approach, but I give an alternative interpretation, enabled by the additional role of Abeline, suggested by Klim's grandsons in the second edition of *Niels Klim*.

3.3 A New Authority: Tanian's Embedded Journey

3.3.1 *Docti* and *indocti* in Europe

We have seen how Klim's authority as *doctus, physicus* and ultimately narrator is undermined by intertextual links, both in the form of quotations from classical authors, and in the form of echoes to similar argumentations or ideas. For readers of the first edition of *Niels Klim* (1741), these contradictions are strange incongruities that help them unmask Klim as quite the opposite: a *physicus* without authority who genuinely wants to be believed and acknowledged as authoritative, but uses elements in his text of which he is unaware that they can undermine his discourse. Readers do not only find elements inside the discourse of Klim that alert them to the fictionality or inauthenticity of Klim's account. Other narrators appear on stage, and the most enigmatic of them is Tanian.

The constellation of Tanian's account in chapter XIII is particularly anecdotal and even chaotic. At first sight, there does not seem to be much coherence in the various observations and criticisms of European society. However, the only element that recurs almost constantly in the passage is authority: who or what do the Europeans consider as authoritative? What follows is a series of examples of the European's absurd or perverted views on authority.[74] Already in the first paragraphs, Tanian sets the tone: he indicates that the name for Germany, *imperium Romanum*, 'is just a title' (*solus est titulus*) because the dominion of the Romans had been destroyed for centuries;[75] Paris is described as an *imperium* as well, but mainly a fashion empire with authority all over Europe (298); hopping over to the Pope in Rome, Tanian exclaims 'what an enormous authority!' (*enormis sane autoritas*) is given to a man before whom all the European princes bow.[76]

[74] In an article on the literary phenomenon of showing the known world through the eyes of a stranger, Kjældgaard places Tanian's account in a broader context of Enlightenment fiction that uses this technique to plead for tolerance. He describes Tanian's account as "et veritabelt katalog over kulturelle fænomener der for overjordiske væsener tager sig ud som selvfølgelige, ja *naturlige*, men som springer Tanian i øjnene som *urimeligheder* eller *ufortståeligheder*." Lasse Horne Kjældgaard, "Fremmede øjne. Tværkulturelle dialoger i oplysningstidens dansk litteratur," in *Mere lys! Indblik i oplysningstiden i dansk litteratur og kultur*, ed. Mads Julius Elf and Lasse Horne Kjældgaard (Hellerup: Spring, 2002), 67. "[...] a real catalogue of cultural phenomena that look self-evident, even *natural*, to superterranean creatures, but which strike Tanian's eye as unfair and incomprehensible things." As Aravamudan indicates, the trope of what Michel Foucault calls "the foreign spectator in the unknown country" is one of the greatest in eighteenth century fiction. Aravamudan, 40. Although Holberg definitely read Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, one of the examples that is most often referred to, other texts in this tradition might have served as an example to him, such as the immensely popular *L'espion turc* of Marana, which he mentions in *Epistle 38*, 209 (1748) and *Moral Reflections,* 11 (1744) Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XIII, 296.

[75] *Niels Klim* XIII, 207.

[76] Ibid. XIII, 299.

The three examples show three types of authority in Europe that are questioned throughout the rest of the account. Illusions of political or social power, firstly, are translated in the hypocrisy of lawyers (301), the obedience of men towards their women behind closed doors (in England, 306, *and* in Italy, 309), the power of the people in the United Provinces that actually lies in a small number of wealthy families (307), the laws that are diametrically opposed to habits (308), etc. Wealthy people are looked up to while the people who harvest the fruits they eat are despised (308). Cultural influence, secondly, is seen in phenomena such as drinking coffee amongst intellectuals (302), the use of perukes (305), the use of powder to whiten the face (300), or getting around town in carriages (302 *and* 305). These behaviours or physical appearances are considered to exude the authority of noblemen or intellectuals. Religious power, finally, is primarily questioned in the Catholic countries where even God's authority is undermined because there are as many saints (Tanian calls them 'Gods and Goddesses') as there are cities (309). The Pope seems to be the highest in command, but is elected by cardinals, in whose hands thus lies the true power of the Church, according to Tanian. In general, the Roman-Catholic Church is presented as an institution full of contradictions that preserves itself and legitimises its authority with policies that either severely punish people with a critical attitude or even make the maturation of such an attitude impossible.

The red thread throughout Tanian's catalogue of anecdotes is that Europeans have a severe issue with blindly cultivating ill-grounded authority. All symbols of authority seem to be for sale in Europe, whether it is titles such as *Edelgebohrn* and *Wohlgebohrn* (302), the keys to Heaven, or crowns and sceptres (310), and authority remains unquestioned because of a general lack of or intolerance towards critical attitudes.[77]

We must keep in mind that in *Niels Klim*, Klim himself is reading all these criticisms of European interpretations of authority on socio-political, cultural and religious grounds. Tanian's account was a reading tip of the Tanachitean tiger Tomopoloko. Klim was on the verge of unmasking the person the Quamitian thought he was, namely the Legate of the Sun, and revealing himself as he truly was: a European. Tomopoloko asked Klim to reconsider and urged him to read Tanian's text first. When one starts to read the *Itinerary,* it is primarily through the concept of *doctus* that Klim – and with him his own reader – is undermined as a European. The term is first introduced in the *Itinerary* in a passage that sums up Tanian's critique on authority:

> Controuersiae, quae in Gymnasiis Europaeis vulgo discutiuntur, de rebus sunt, quarum naturam indagare nec interest hominum, nec capit humanae coniectura mentis. Doctissimae vero materiae, in quas commentantur Europaei,

[77] In the previous paragraphs, I wanted to give an overview and show the relevance of Tanian's anecdotes for the overall negotiation of authority. For more info on individual anecdotes, I thus gladly refer to the database, where the commentators of *Niels Klim* explain and contextualise many of Tanian's criticisms in an excellent manner, including significant thematic cross-references to other writings of Holberg. Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XIII, 298-317.

> sunt de veterum et emortuarum quarundam gentium crepidis, calceis, monilibus, ocreis aut togis. Porro de scientiis, tam sacris, quam profanis, non iudicant plerique, sed iudiciis aliorum subscribunt. Ad quamcunque enim sunt disciplinam quasi tempestate delati, ad eam, quasi ad saxum, adhaerescunt. Nam quod dicant, omnia se credere ei, quem iudicent fuisse sapientem, probarem, si id rudes ac indocti iudicare potuissent: statuere enim, qui sit sapiens, vel maxime videtur esse sapientis.[78]

What is considered *doctus* in Europe is first of all antiquarianism. That Klim himself wrote his thesis on Roman sandals is a *Spielerei*;[79] the underlying critique is that as people in the 'profane sciences' consider Roman authors as authorities, they stop thinking for themselves. This is amplified by the immediately following notion of the profane sciences (along with the sacred) being sects which *docti* slavishly follow. Two paragraphs later, Tanian talks about how the writers of literature (*literarum cultores*) are praised in Europe because they distort the natural order of words and are the greatest liars (*mendax*). Particularly the old poet Homer is imitated in his ability to twist phrases and pervert truth (*in phrasibus evertendis, ac in veritate pervertenda multi imitantur*, 311). The people who slavishly follow classical authors are portrayed as sect members, blinded by ill-grounded authority.

The passage is central to the treatment of authority in Tanian's itinerary and even in *Niels Klim* as a whole. In this book, the doubt of readers should not lead them to a more profound knowledge of the *novum* or of reality as such, but should be considered as central to the development of a critical mind. Tanian's satire of Europe brings the wandering reader back to the central point of the novel, and this is not the *theoria* of the subterranean world, but the creation and cultivation of ill-grounded authority. Of the latter, both the Classical tradition and Roman Catholicism are the recurring examples.

It is no coincidence then, that Tanian's criticisms on European society culminate in a sharp analysis of the institution where all the illusions and fixed opinions are born in the minds of new citizens: the European universities (*academiae Europaeae*, 312). The schools are the playground of *magistri* and *doctors* who deem themselves *docti* to instruct (*docere*) *indocti* about how to think about nature, religion, literature, language, etc. Tanian compares the academies with taverns where people can simply buy their titles, grades

[78] *Niels Klim* XIII, 305-6. "The controversies which are commonly discussed in the schools in Europe are about things people should not bother to investigate as they are not within the reach of human comprehension. But the most learned subjects (*doctissimae)* of all which the Europeans comment upon are the rings, robes, slippers, shoes, and buskins of certain antique and extinct people who lived many centuries ago. As to the sciences, as well sacred as profane, the generality do not judge for themselves but subscribe implicitly to the opinion of others. Whatever sect they happen to fall into, they stick to it with all imaginable firmness. As to what they say of pinning their faith upon the sleeve of others who are wiser than themselves, I should approve of it, were the vulgar and illiterate proper judges of this matter, for to be able to distinguish who is this wise man that may be relied upon requires the greatest wisdom."

[79] Ibid. III, 37.

and erudition without profound study (312). The European universities are even portrayed as religious sects:

> Docti ab indoctis, moribus et cultu, maxime vero religione distinguuntur: quippe hi vnum solum Deum, illi vero plures Deos Deasque colunt. Praecipua Doctorum Numina sunt Apollo, Minerua, nouem Musae, aliique minorum gentium Dii, quos scriptores, maxime vero Poëtae, cum furere gestiunt, inuocare solent.[80]

The academies are placed on the same level as the Roman Catholic Church: a polytheistic sect revolving around ill-grounded authority and a faithful who are taught to blindly cultivate the sect's premises. The comparison between Rome and the authority of Classics in education refers back to one of the observations Tanian mentioned earlier in his *Itinerary* about the southern countries of Europe:

> In iisdem regionibus prohibitum est, Deum colere ac adorare, nisi ignota dialecto , adeo, vt solae illae preces legitimae, ac Deo gratae censeantur, quae fiunt ab illis, qui nesciunt, quid dicant.[81]

As a loose paragraph, the *ignota-dialecto*-comment is a swipe at the Catholic Church for not making Scripture accessible to the majority of the faithful. However, now Tanian placed academia at the level of the Church, the Latin language becomes a means by which Tanian mocks the normative following of classical examples. Whereas few faithful in the Catholic Church just reproduce Scripture without understanding it, *doctors* and *magistri* who present themselves as *doctus* actually reproduce the language of classical writers without understanding them.

Tanian elaborates on his criticism of European academia by giving short definitions of the different types of *docti*: philosophers are portrayed as literary merchants of opposing opinions (313), poets make follies and ecstasy laudable (*nugae ac furor,* 313-314), grammarians are a type of soldiers fighting each other in a gown and with pens (314), and metaphysicians describe and define what is invisible and are unable to see what is right before their feet.

Perhaps the most telling definition is the one of the *physicus*: "Physicus est, qui viscera terrae, naturam bipedum, quadrupedum, reptilium, ac insectorum scrutatur, quique omnia nouit praeter se ipsum." Tanian's observation of the *physicus* does not just function as a satirical comment towards European society, but also as a metafictional comment

[80] *Niels Klim* XIII, 313. "The learned [*docti*] can be distinguished from the unlearned [*indocti*] by their dress and manners, but chiefly by their religion; for the latter worship only one god, whereas the former pay their devotions to several. The principal deities of the Doctors are Apollo, Minerva, the Nine Muses, and others of an inferior rank which writers, especially poets, tend to invoke when they fall into raptures."

[81] *Niels Klim* XIII, 312. "In the same countries, it is forbidden to worship and adore God in any but an unknown tongue [*ignota dialecto*], so that only such prayers are thought to be legitimate and agreeable to God as are put up by persons who do not understand a word they say."

that undermines the authority of Klim.[82] Our very own *physicus* reads in Tanian's notebook perhaps the best life lesson he could take home from his underground journey: 'know thyself'.[83]

Tanian ends his exposé of European academia by going over the steps towards erudition, from his own impartial point of view. First, he admires the doctors and *magistri* who can instruct others in fields that are not even of their own expertise (315). Then, he points to the inner contradiction of people who study both philosophy and theology: "Iidem, qua philosophi, de omnibus dubitant, qua vero theologi, nihil negare sustinent."[84] Lastly, Tanian mentions the magical way in which Europeans become *doctus* in an incredibly short amount of time. They read a type of writings – identified in a footnote as literary journals (*Ephemerid.)*, which allows them to read hundreds of volumes within one day (315).

In short, if there is one thread through Tanian's *Itinerarium*, it is that he points to the vicious circle of authority. Europeans are not taught knowledge or an attitude, but obedience to the superior *doctus* and easy ways to fake their own status as *doctus*. But who can say someone is *doctus* enough to follow, when you are yourself *indoctus*? Whereas Klim himself used the concepts of *doctus* and *indoctus* in his apologetic introduction to the *Terrae Paradoxae*, Tanian shatters the European illusion of being *doctus.*

3.3.2 The *Itinerary of Tanian* as *mise en abyme*

By the thirteenth chapter of *Niels Klim*, Klim has already lost all his credibility as a narrating *physicus*. Now, after this series of allegations about Europe's authority concept, however, we might ask the question: why would we trust Tanian's evaluations instead? In the previous analysis of Tanian's *Itinerarium* it has been hinted at that Tanian is not simply mirroring the follies of European society. It does not only hold a mirror in front of readers, and show them absurdities of European societies, but is also a *mise en abyme* for Holberg's novel. The embedded passage of Tanian reflects the frame narrative as a whole in multiple ways and has far-reaching implications for Klim's authority, the structure of

[82] *Niels Klim* XIII, 314. "A physicist is a person who diligently studies the bowels of the earth, the nature of quadrupeds, reptiles, and insects and who knows everything, except himself." The indirect sneer of Tanian to Klim has already been pointed out by Galson, 195.

[83] To know thyself was originally adviced by the oracle of Apollo in Delphi and is a recurring maxim in Holberg's writings. In natural philosophy, this maxim returns in the *Natural System* (*Systema naturae*) of the Swedish physicist Carolus Linnaeus, published only six years before *Niels Klim* (1735). Linnaeus systematised minerals, animals and plants in tables and fills the section of man with only three words, namely '*nosce te ipsum'*. See the table on the animal kingdom (*Regnum animale*) in Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema naturæ, sive Regna tria naturæ systematice proposita per classes, ordines, genera, & species* (Lugdunum Batavorum: apud Theodorum Haak, 1735).

[84] *Niels Klim* XIII, 315. "Whereas they doubt everything as philosophers, as theologian they dare not to deny anything." The theology and philosophy exam brings the reader back to the very first sentence of *Niels Klim*, where it is said that Klim just passed this double exam at the University of Copenhagen.

the narration and the intertextuality. The power of the passage of Tanian thus lies primarily in its function as not a single but a *double* mirror in the text. The quest for a renewed concept of authority, and, related to that, the imperative to know thyself and to be critical towards people who call themselves *doctus*, is not just a red thread through Tanian seemingly hectic series of observations, but also one in the seemingly chaotic plot of *Niels Klim*.[85] It is in this double mirroring function that the power of the passage lies. But let us break up the *mise en abyme* in parts: that of the author and that of the reader.

It may have been noticeable that my description of Tanian hints at many of Holberg's own fancies. In Holberg's philosophy and project as an enlightened author, education lays the foundations in every person for an individualised process of becoming a critical and reflective citizen. Tanian seems to imply that academia and the teachers and intellectuals who preserve their own illusory authority already misguide Europeans from the very start. As a contrast to Klim's rather aggressive and accusatory apology in chapter XI, Tanian exemplifies a different method, that of impartial, critical thinking, and presents himself as a mild judge. He does not want to defend the habits and laws of the subterranean societies, but merely wants to illustrate why the Europeans are not in the position to judge others (300). After the analysis of Europe's academia, Tanian's tolerant attitude develops into a complete withdrawal from an authoritative status. He makes each of his own direct readers, i.e. the subterranean people, as individual judges of Europe: "Possem plura afferre: sed sufficit praecipua delibasse. Vnde facile iudicet Lector, iurene an iniuria se solos sapere credant Europaei."[86] Tanian hereby explicitly leaves the final evaluation of Europe up to the readers.[87]

Tanian and his creator, Holberg, even have an important characteristic in common: their authorities as judges or satirists of Europe are paradoxically anonymous. It is explicitly said that Tanian "nomen creditur fictum."[88] This pseudonymity, which is very common in Holberg's writings, is to Holberg a way to show authority should not be linked

[85] This type of mirroring in which an embedded tale duplicates the entire embedding narrative, we could call '*réduplication aporistique*' ('aporetic reduplication'), after Lucien Dällenbach's typology of the concept of *mise en abyme*. See Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abyme* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), 142.

[86] *Niels Klim* XIII, 315. "I could adduce more examples, but it is sufficient to have touched upon the most important points. The Reader will easily judge from hence whether the Europeans are right or wrong in thinking they alone are wise."

[87] For a discussion of Holberg's views on tolerance, also in *Niels Klim*, see Kjældgaard, "Tolerance og Autoritet hos Locke, Voltaire og Holberg." In this article, Kjældgaard moves Tanian's tale to the background in order to give a more theoretical discussion on tolerance, amongst others in the work of Locke. Kjældgaard does not go into the relation between the two terms in his title, tolerance and authority, and focuses on the first. Although Holberg's text indeed thematises tolerance and cultural relativism, as I have tried to show in the previous pages, this is a thematic motive in a more profound method Holberg wants to provide; Tanian's journey and *Niels Klim* as a whole more generally seek to train the reader in being critical through a never-ending negotiation of the concept of authority, in which cultural and religious tolerance is an important aspect.

[88] *Niels Klim* XIII, 298. "[...] is thought to be a fictive name."

to a title or a name, but to the philosophical and literary skills of the writer.[89] Anonymity in Holberg's project, I would even argue, is not a way to escape censorship, but a performative way to promote his views on enlightened education. He pleads not to concentrate too much on the big names that can only stand in the way of 'knowing thyself'. The new authority presented is thus an anonymous character who performs an eclectic and critical attitude towards authority.

Tanian's account abruptly ends, and is followed by a clearly metanarrative passage. Klim says he waited with patience but suddenly interrupts Tomopoloko, who was translating the piece for Klim on the spot and is referred to as *lector.* Klim is highly indignant (*indignatione accensus*), considers the content to be figments of the narrator's imagination (*figmenta*) and vents criticism on the writer by calling him unfair and morbid (*iniqui et atra bile perciti scriptoris*). Shortly afterwards, his mood changes; he passes a more clement judgement on the itinerary and realises that the writer, in spite of the many lies, often hits the nail right on the head (*quaedam acu tetigisse*). This description probably corresponds with the reader's reaction as Holberg thought of it while writing *Niels Klim*: a feeling of indignation turning into some kind of moral understanding. However, Klim's insights are never of long standing. Based on the itinerary, Klim takes the crucial decision to keep his mask on and further allow the Quamitians to recognise him as a Legate of the Sun, rather than *civis Europaeus.*[90]

With hindsight, we know that Klim will corrupt as the megalomaniac Emperor of Quama. His choice after having read the warnings of Tanian to claim unrighteous titles can only be explained by egocentrism and a stubborn belief in the European concept of authority.[91] However, are there any elements that speak against Tanian, and thus would justify doubt in Tanian's authority instead of Klim's? Apart from Tanian's unclear background and his explicit distancing from his own authority, there are indeed many reasons why the *Itinerarium* should be considered unreliable. To show how complex and playful the negotiation of authority in *Niels Klim* gets with the addition of Tanian's *Itinerary,* we must continue to hypothesise the reading process and expectations of our well-read reader.

Let us assume that our eighteenth-century reader would feel something what we now would call a 'suspension of disbelief' and lets herself get taken away by the fantastical and amusing story. Let me summarise what she is reading in this hypothetical situation: a text

[89] Holberg wrote many of his works, amongst others his comedies and his poetical debut *Peder Paars*, under the pseudonym Hans Mickelsen. See, amongst many other scholarly work on Holberg's alter ego, Thomas Ewen Daltveit Slettebø, "Holberg's Authorial Personae," in *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017); Flemming Lundgreen-Nielsen, "Ludvig Holbergs spejlkabinet. De fiktive udgiverapparater: satire, parodi og mystifikation," *Danske Studier* (2014).

[90] For the entire passage of Klim's reaction to the itinerary, see *Niels Klim* XIII, 76.

[91] In chapter 5, I will come back to Klim's rule in Quama and specifically the role of Klim's reading of the *Itinerary of Tanian*.

that is published in 1741, long after the described journey took place between 1664 and 1676 or 1678, depending on who you believe, and long after the death of the owner of the text, Abeline, who according to himself did not want to release the manuscript.[92] The text itself contains the account of an unintended journey through an illuminated and multileveled universe inside the bowels of the Earth, where rational trees, animals and music instruments are said to live, narrated by the self-proclaimed eyewitness and *doctus* student who is desperately in need of money.

In (the improbable) case twelve chapters would pass without arousing suspicion with the reader, the *Itinerarium Taniani* definitely does: it is an in itself fragmentary travel account - although the narrator does not mention any circumstances of travelling - or, better, a chaotical list of anecdotes about or critical observations on a – to our hypothetical reader – realistic and known world. It is written in a mocking and sometimes even comical style (almost like a series of epigrams) by a further unknown figure: 'Tanian' is said to be a fictive name, and no one knows how he reached Europe. The account is preserved in a seldom consulted and highly damaged manuscript in the library of the Tanachitians, a subterranean tribe of intellectual tigers. A former Tanachitian rival but now a befriended and wise advisor, Tomopoloko, suggested this book to Klim and interprets the *Itinerarium Taniani* on the spot from the manuscript's language – which one is not said – to another Klim masters, perhaps Quamitian. Klim has carefully listened to Tomopoloko's oral translation until he interrupted him out of agony, and wrote it down at an either close or distant point in the future.

Let us now assume that our reader takes up *Niels Klim* in 1745, she reads its second edition, but is unaware of the previous edition and the commotion that surrounded it. Then, the above-mentioned realistic society, described by Tanian, is found in a Latin text of which already was suggested that it was originally penned down in another language, perhaps Danish. The Latin version was allegedly faithful to the original text (whatever that means), rendered by the natural philosopher Abeline, and also contained a bilingual word list which is now lost for some reason. The hypothetical reader knows all this from the preface written by two agitated grandsons of the writer, who, after four years, collaborate with shape-shifting shamans to defend their grandfather's authority.

Clearly, 'suspension of disbelief' is not what Holberg aims at. Not because one cannot imagine a reading experience in which one does not question the ontological status of walking trees and talking music instruments, but one cannot escape the fact that the reader is constantly reminded of what she is reading, and, to echo the words of Uphaus, "how problematical the nature and formation of all beliefs, assumptions, expectations,

[92] For these inconsistencies, see Mortensen's discussion of the ambiguous role of Abeline in the last chapter of *Niels Klim* and the epilogue: Mortensen, 165.

and value judgements are."[93] *Niels Klim* is not about a subterranean world, but about the discourse and the voices that describe it and open it up to the reader.

Whereas *Niels Klim* started out with a characterisation of Klim that hinted at the biography of his creator, by the time readers reach Tanian's account they have to shift this attribution. Not Klim, but Tanian is the personification of the implied author 'Holberg'. The most authoritative voice in *Niels Klim* is a pseudonymous subterranean stranger who distances himself from authoritative voicing and is even more fictional – if we can sort things that are all fictional – than Klim.

3.4 Conclusion: *Niels Klim* as a Metafictional Text

If Tanian's *Itinerary* is not the highpoint of Holberg's plot, it is at least a climax of the negotiation driven by oppositional concepts of authority. This negotiation guides the reader through the subterranean world, and is spurred by two earlier embedded voyages: Klim's sea voyage in chapter XI introduced by his apologetic preface, and arguably also his *Itinerarium Scabbae*, which narrates Klim's adventures on the planet Nazar in chapter IX. These passages function as *mises en abyme*, mirroring the embedding story as a whole in slightly different ways. Through metanarrative passages and intertextual links, of which I showed multiple examples in this chapter, *Niels Klim* becomes a metafictional text; a text that obstructs readers from going along with the fiction and trains them in versatility and mobility, which is a *sine qua non* for becoming a critical citizen.

To end this chapter, I want to return specifically to the *novum*, the idea of a subterranean world. The function of the *novum* in *Niels Klim* is most clearly a narrative technique when considering Tanian's tale. The function of this passage within the whole novel might trigger associations that guide the reader in their negotiation of authority. In her thesis on underground worlds, Ducet links Holberg's subterranean universe to a long, continuous tradition of journeys to the underworld in European literatures.[94] These journeys are often only a small part of the fictional text, and function as a sort of rite of passage for the main character. Holberg was perhaps most familiar with the (reception of) classical imaginations of the underworld. In Homer's *Odyssee*, the seer Teiresias reveals to Ulysses how he and his comrades can escape from the island of the witch Circe. In book VI of Vergil's *Aeneid*, an actual descent in the underworld helps the troubled Trojan descendant to come to terms with both his destiny, as the founder of the glorious Roman people, presented to him by his father Anchises, and his past, amongst others the choice

[93] Uphaus, 2.

[94] Ducet, 37-148.

to leave his loved one in Carthage, Dido. In the seventeenth century, in one of Holberg's favourite moralistic novels, Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1699), the son of Ulysses goes into the underworld to find out whether his father is still alive. Like in the *Aeneid*, it is a relative, namely his great grandfather Arcésius, who affirms to him that Ulysses is still alive. This gives the main character the motivation necessary to continue his path of maturation.[95] In all these examples, the underworld is a place where truth is provided to the wandering hero, and thus a pivotal scene in the flow of the narrative, and in the building of the main character's own authority as a leader.[96]

Within the narrative structure of *Niels Klim*, it is not only the entire journey of Klim that corresponds to these initiating and pivotal journeys to the underworld, but also, and perhaps primarily, Tanian's *Itinerary*. Tanian's account of the upper world is the underworld scene of *Niels Klim*. This comical and ironical twist in Holberg's story has quite some implications. Because of the prominent place of Tanian's tale in the novel's narrative structure, Tanian becomes the visionary Teiresias, the father of Aeneas, Anchises, or Arcésius. The effect is both comical and confronting. While a pseudonymous and further unknown subterranean creature is promoted to an epic truth teller, the message he is actually bringing, namely of the perverted notion of authority in Europe, is all the more painful to the European reader. Tanian's story extends or intensifies the metafictional play with Klim's *theoria* of the underground world. Inside a world underneath ours that is presented as an existing world – but we know by now it is fictional -, another world is presented which is so familiar that you would swear it exists. It is the world turned upside down, in an upside down world.

[95] For Ducet on the underworld scene in *Télémaque*, see Ducet, 107-08.

[96] I will return to the notion of truth in *Niels Klim* in part III.

Chapter 4

Genre in Motion:
Niels Klim and the Metafictional Paradigm

In the previous chapter, I showed how different epistemologies, based on empiricism and classical authority, clashed on different levels of *Niels Klim.* I came to the conclusion that this negotiation of authority makes *Niels Klim* into a metafictional text because it prominently thematises and questions its own status as a fictional text. In this second chapter of the *theoria*-part we will – in a fashion similar to chapter 2 - step out of the realm that is *Niels Klim*, and look at the texts that revolve around it and ultimately help form our categorisations of *Niels Klim*. Classifying *Niels Klim* as an imaginary voyage, a Menippean satire, science fiction, utopia, or any other genre, is primarily a matter of which text you recognise in Holberg's text. When one is more familiar with either Petronius' *Satyricon* or Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, one will highlight different aspects. There is unfortunately no way to entirely circumvent the methodological pitfall of genre, and my chapter does not claim to do this either. I will commit myself to these selective readings of *Niels Klim* and add one to the list, namely Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and call *Niels Klim* a novel.[1] This addition must not be conceived as the solution to *Niels Klim*'s problematic categorisation, but is aimed at revaluing its generic hybridity as such. We need to embrace this protean nature, I will argue, which intensifies the metafictional quality of *Niels Klim* and contributes to its overall status of *Niels Klim* as a mobile text.[2]

[1] Hansen, amongst others, already placed *Niels Klim* in the tradition of the picaresque novel, of which *Don Quixote* is also a representative. Hansen points in particular to the development and evolution in the characterisation of Holberg's main character, the dynamic structure of the plot and, as discussed in chapter 3, the unreliable narrator. Hansen, "Modern Thoughts Disguised as Ancient Genres. A Discussion on Ludvig Holberg's novel 'Niels Klim'," 11. In general, *Niels Klim* is often called a novel, but most of the time this term seems to be used as a rather neutral way that avoids genre theory rather than engaging with it.

[2] My approach is similar to Jordheim's approach to genre in his discussion of *Niels Klim*: "Hence, to use genre as a label doesn't really correspond to the way generic conventions actually manifest themselves historically and

4.1 Towards a Re-evalution of Genre

4.1.1 Holberg's Terminology

As far as terminology goes, Holberg betrays not much familiarity with the categories we tend to apply to *Niels Klim*. Holberg never mentions 'Menippean' satire in his entire oeuvre. In the preface to *Moral Reflections* (1744), Holberg uses the category of 'opdigtede Rejse-Beskrivelser' ('fictional or imaginary travel descriptions') for *Niels Klim*, and links it to Veiras's *L'histoire des Sévarambes*, Lucian, Bidermann's *Utopia* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. However, in his *Moral Fables* (1751) *Niels Klim* is said to be *en moralsk roman*.[3] The term *roman* is somewhat ambiguous, halfway between what we call the romance, on the one hand, and the (domestic) novel, on the other hand. In the words of the online dictionary of Holberg's writings, Holberg means by *roman* "romaner om kærlighed, eventyrlige oplevelser, fortidens helte, el[ler] romaner med belærende, moraliserende indhold el[ler] romaner der er fantasiskildringer."[4] In *Moral Reflections*, where Holberg thus does not categorise *Niels Klim* as *roman*, he gives a history of the *roman*. He traces it back to Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus on the Greek side, Apuleius' *Metamorphosis* and Barclay's *Argenis* on the Latin side, but points out those were mainly written for the leisurely reader. What he calls a '*moralsk roman*' are of three types: the "masterpiece" of Fénelon, *Télémaque*; texts from the type of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.[5] In the preface to his *Moral Fables* in 1751, then, Holberg first makes a distinction between the moral fables, in the tradition of Aesop and Phaedrus, and the moral *roman*:

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textually in the literary work, especially not in the 18th century, before many influential literary genres, including the novel, have won their modern shape. Indeed, no literary work is just an example of one and only one literary genre, but can better be described as a scene of negotiations, genre negotiations, through which the author is trying to combine and possibly unite different generic conventions [...]. However, these conventions do not always integrate seamlessly, but may come into conflict with each other, a conflict that the author will have to solve, or at least to alleviate, if he is to achieve his literary ambitions." Jordheim, 158. As said in the introduction, I will focus on the negotiation, like Jordheim.

[3] *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 9-10. *Moral Fables*, Preface, 2v-3r.

[4] Aage Hansen, Svend Eegholm-Pedersen, and Christopher Maaløe, eds., *Holberg-Ordbog. Ordbog over Ludvig Holbergs Sprog*, 5 vols. (København: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 1981-1988), IV, "Roman". "[...] novels of love, adventurous experiences, heroes from the past or novels with pedantic or moralistic content or novels which are depictions of fantasy." A reference to Holberg's use of the term *roman* for the romances of King Arthur is found in *History of Denmark* (1732, *Danmarks Riger Historie* I, 824).

[5] Holberg mentions *Don Quixote* multiple times in his writings. In *History of Denmark* (III, a2v), he explicitly refers to Cervantes's book as being *en roman*. One of the most popular modern interpretations of the novel is the idea of the rise of the domestic novel, in the wake *Pamela* and the novels of Henry Fielding. Although Holberg is Fielding's contemporary, he does not mention him anywhere. It is beside the scope of this study to include Fielding's great oeuvre, but there is definitely work to do in this field. Fielding was also a playwright, a travel writer and novelist who had a particular interest for metafiction in novels as *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* (1749).

> Og de Fabler, som udi nyere Tider ere skrevne paa Moderne Sprog, ere fast ikke uden de samme, som igien ere opkaagte, med mindre man vil regne moralske Romaner, item visse Materier, hvilke ere udførte udi Fabler, som Utopia Mori, Campanellæ Civitas solis, Verulamii novus Atlas, Bidermanni Utopia, Reinicke Foss og andre deslige, som jeg dog ikke henfører til denne Classe. Thi i saa Maade kunde jeg siges allereede at have opfyldt Publici Begiæring ved Klims Underjordiske Reyse.[6]

Although Holberg makes the distinction, he acknowledges that the moralistic novels *Niels Klim* adheres to are often associated with the fable genre. Moreover, it is striking that in one breath he names texts which we tend to categorise as utopias, Menippean satires, imaginary voyages or even pure fables. In his *Lives of Heroines* (1745), finally, Holberg repeats the attribution of *moralsk roman* to *Niels Klim*, claiming that there is no equivalent to it except for Barclay's *Argenis*, which again has mythological content and could be categorised as Menippean satire.[7]

Holberg is thus not consistent in his categorisations, but what is clear is that he has a conception of fabulous literature that is hybrid and transgresses different modern generic borders. Holberg places *Niels Klim* in a tradition that covers what we would now call novels, romances, fables, utopia, the more novelistic types of Menippean satires and imaginary voyages. For practical reasons, we will henceforth use the translation of 'novel' for the term he uses, *roman*, while keeping in mind that he does not refer to the domestic novel.[8] Instead, I want to give an interpretation to this term that is in my view closer to what Holberg wanted to express with *roman,* and is intrinsically metafictional, since it invites the reader to think about the world in terms of discourses that are used to claim authority.

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[6] *Moral Reflections*, 3r. "The fables that are written in more recent times and in modern tongues are almost the same as the old ones, which are just presented again, unless you want to count moral *romans* amongst certain materials that are staged in fabels, as for example More's *Utopia,* Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, Verulamius' *Novus Atlas,* Bidermann's *Utopia,* Reinard Fox and other comparable writings, which I do not simply want to put in the same class; for, in this way, one could say, I have already fulfilled the public's desire with *Klim's Underground Journey*."

[7] *Lives of Heroines,* b4v. For Barclay's novel as a Menippean satire, see Ingrid De Smet, *Menippean Satire and the Republic of Letters, 1581-1655* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1996), 76-77.

[8] I use 'domestic novel' after Aravamudan's monograph on what he calls Enlightenment Orientalism. He argues that imaginative texts in the course of the eighteenth century "opposed the domestic yoke brought by novel practitioners, who eventually triumphed as translations and fabulist forms declined and oriental tales were downgraded as morally unacceptable." Aravamudan, 4. Although Aravamudan focuses on Oriental tales, he also opens up the possibility to include imaginary travel literature into his endeavour to 'resist the rise of the novel' and consider the novel as a more diversified and conflicting genre in its early stages: "While the novel did battle with various kinds of romance, the oriental tale was an alternative genre to the domestic novel — as were others before it, such as the lunar voyage, the travel narrative, and the criminal biography. Thus scholars need to reexamine the system of eighteenth-century fictional genres, their circulation, and ways that relative hierarchies have been altered to impose certain outcomes." Ibid., 6.

4.1.2 Sermain's Metafictional Paradigm

Before we arrive at this point, we need to take some steps in between. A good starting point is the theory of metafiction as presented by Jean-Paul Sermain in his monograph *Métafictions.*[9] According to Sermain, metafiction was a dominant feature in the discourse of the Enlightenment's narrative and imaginative literature in France, in a period that just preceded the publication of *Niels Klim*, 1670-1730. A heterogeneous group of texts supports his argument that metafictions both stage and question 'fables'. Sermain's fable (*fable*) is not to be confused with the fable genre (*conte de fees*), which is only one expression of the metafictional paradigm he theorises. Instead, the Fable – I will use a capital as to avoid further confusion in English – must be seen as different kinds of beliefs (mythological, religious, etc.). Texts within the metafictional paradigm evoke a critical attitude that identifies and qualifies these Fables as seductive and misleading fictions. In the words of Citton, "as soon as I am led to realize that my belief is a matter of discourse (rather than simply reflecting "reality as it is"), the belief threatens to vanish."[10] In Sermain's view, the metafictional paradigm is thus a characteristic of many texts at the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century with a specific aim: it questions the borders between reality and fiction so as to make the reader question certain belief systems. Yves Citton summarises Sermain's conception of metafictions as follows:

> Metafictions thus engage the novelistic genre on the tracks of reflexivity and suspicion: for decades to come, novels will offer the modern readers an experience in self-distancing, whereby fiction opens the safest way to reach truth by making the interpreter aware of the fabulatory nature of all truth-claims.[11]

The theory of Sermain has the advantage that it does not depart from a rigid and anachronistic category applied to texts by modern scholars, although these categories pass under revue in the course of his monograph. Alternatively, Sermain departs from narrative elements that were dominant at a specific historical moment, and in multiple genres, and which point to a transition phase between what is traditionally called the romance on the one hand, and the domestic novel on the other. He considers the history of the novel, as it manifested itself in the Ancient Regime, as "disloquée," discontinued and heterogeneous, and metafiction as a paradigm of the novel, closely connected to the philosophical ideas of the time.[12]

The dominance of the paradigm, Sermain exemplifies with different texts and genres in which it manifested itself. The fables (*contes de fée*), for example, saw a broad revival in

[9] Jean-Paul Sermain, *Métafictions (1670-1730): la réflexivité dans la littérature d'imagination* (Paris: Champion, 2002).
[10] Yves Citton, "Fairy Poetics: Revisiting French Fairy Tales as (Post) Modern Literary Machines," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 4 (2006): 551.
[11] Citton, "Fairy Poetics: Revisiting French Fairy Tales as (Post) Modern Literary Machines," 551.
[12] Sermain, 70-73.

the period Sermain studies and delivered two of its most canonical authors in Jean de la Fontaine and Charles Perrault. Sermain also discusses texts that Holberg mentions, such as the *Télémaque, L'histoire des Sévarambes* and *Don Quixote*. Especially the latter deeply influenced the popularity of the metafictional paradigm. According to Sermain, *Don Quixote* is a fable that denounces the delusional power of fables, and hereby helped the metafictional paradigm to crystallise in the new poetics of the novelistic genre, which revolves "around the issue of 'vraisemblance' after 1670."[13]

Although Holberg had a strong sense for and opinion of genres, such as the comedy or history, we must not forget that he was also a masterful narrator who picked up techniques in different genres and modified his tools as he went on. The novel was only loosely conceptualised in the early eighteenth century, and was closer to Sermain's transgeneric interpretation than to modern interpretation of both the *romance* and the *novel*. The novel (henceforth thus seen as a transgeneric expression of the metafictional paradigm) provided the perfect platform to play with the wealth of narrative techniques that was out there in European literature at a specific historical moment.

4.1.3 *Niels Klim*'s Play with Tradition(s)

Sermain's outlook on the imaginative literature of a period just before the publication of *Niels Klim,* can give us a clue on how to get out of the generic impasse of *Niels Klim*. In what rests of this chapter, I will reconsider the genres that were at the basis of the present study, namely the imaginary voyage and Menippean satire, and show how metafiction and the novelistic tradition in the wake of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* can function as a catalyst. Cervantes's text might have inspired Holberg to make some of the narrative decisions we discussed in the previous chapter, such as the ambiguous role of Abeline, the prominent place for authority, and the function of Tanian's tale in the narration. *Niels Klim*'s metafictional quality is the reason why Holberg could easily blend literary traditions without itself being previously recognised as a generic feature. It is not my intention to propose *Don Quixote* as the exclusive solution to the staged quarrel between Menippus and Gulliver, so to speak, as was my means of presenting *Niels Klim* scholarship in the beginning of this thesis. What I want to revalue is the quarrel itself. It is the clash of multiple traditions that makes *Niels Klim* into *Niels Klim*, and not *Gulliver's Travels*, *Menippus or Don Quixote*. Although I will thus break a lance for considering *Don Quixote* as a vital part of Holberg's mental library, one must interpret this effort as a way to point out that in the seventeenth and eighteenth century many narrative techniques and thematic motifs crossed (modern) generic boundaries, and Holberg picked the one that served his project. More precisely, it is the way the text invites its reader to reflect upon

[13] Citton, 551. See Sermain, 52-56.

fiction (and how it is presented) that makes *Niels Klim* into *Niels Klim.* Discussing Cervantes in this chapter is thus a way to make a voice heard that has been neglected – as once the discussions of Menippean satire did to highlight the classical voice.

Thematic resemblances or even word echoes cannot make the case for a relation between *Niels Klim* and *Don Quixote*. To claim that *Niels Klim* functioned as a metafictional novel requires an additional and different methodological approach than when we would want to use to claim that *Niels Klim* is an imaginary voyage or a Menippean satire. Therefore, I will describe a network – a polysystem, if you like - of fictional texts that have been linked to *Niels Klim* in one way or the other and show how they all in their own way are metafictional. In the three parts of this chapter, I will elaborate Sermain's metafictional paradigm into three types of fictionalisation of the world represented in texts, or three metafictional threads running through fictional travel narratives of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: (1) a mode of telling I will call the fantastic-scientific, most dominant in what modern scholarship would call the genre of imaginary voyages, (2) the mode of telling that is menippean–carnevalesque, and finally (3) a mode that relates more closely to the discussions of different genres in the later chapters of Sermain's book, which I will call romanesque-fabulous because of its kinship to fables (the genre) and romances.

These modes of telling are not generic categories in itself but help us to highlight different manifestations of the metafictional paradigm, which were especially dominant in travel literature at the time. In a concrete text these modes can and are most of the time combined, and reality can be fictionalised in different ways. In the course of the chapter, I will discuss texts in which one type is very dominant or which combine two out of three; I will discuss travel texts that have fantastical content but are hardly metafictional; and I will discuss texts that have the three modes of telling, of which *Niels Klim* is an example. This method will allow me to construct a generic polysystem in which the individualities of each text are still acknowledged, especially those of *Niels Klim*.

4.2 The Fantastic-Scientific Mode

Metafiction is a narrative device that invites the reader to jump between different levels in the text, but one of Sermain's first points is that the period he describes has the particularity of looking at the world outside of the text as a fiction. Sermain deliberately calls the represented universe (*l'univers représenté*), the empirical reality as one would say, the 'fiction' of the world. This fiction "overflows" (*déborde*) the novel:

> Pourquoi parler de la fiction pour parler du monde? Parce que, durant cette période, les écrivains, les moralistes, les philosophes, les historiens, les romanciers, les religieux voient la réalité, la conscience, les idées, les représentations, entièrement infiltrées par la fiction, et qu'ils se donnent pour tâche de la traquer, de la révéler, de la mettre à l'écart et ainsi d'établir les frontières du réel ou du vrai. La deuxième moitié du 17e siècle, sans souscrire nécessairement à ses idées, suit en cela la démarche de Descartes qui a étendu le doute sur le réel ou la vérité jusqu'aux limites extrêmes du *cogito* et supposé que notre pourrait être le produit d'une manipulation maligne ou d'un rêve.[14]

The interweaving of fiction and reality, crystallised in Descartes's influential *cogito*, leads to a theoretical problem in seventeenth-century philosophical thinking: the world as we know it is an illusion or a dream. Men of letters understand reality as filtered by fiction.

The development Sermain describes is central to the genre of imaginary voyages. In his monograph on imaginative literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Riccardo Capoferro conceives a cluster of genres such as apparition narratives and imaginary voyages as precursors of what he calls, after the theory of Tzvetan Todorov, 'the fantastic'. Capoferro convincingly argues that these fantastical texts developed in parallel with the rise of the realistic novel, and, more importantly, in constant dialogue with the empirical sciences.[15] The genres he discusses share a "recognizably pseudo-scientific language" and "the combination of an empirical mode of presentation with non-realistic content."[16] Imaginary voyages, like other early works of the fantastic, "addressed, and solved, some of the epistemological issues determined by the rise of the new science."[17] Building further upon this observation, we could say that the imaginary voyage of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries precisely highlights Sermain's 'fiction' of the world and has the intrinsic potential of being metafictional. It negotiates the 'imaginary' or 'fictional' status of the world it presents and even of the world it functions in as a text.

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[14] Sermain, 12-13. "Why talk about fiction to talk about the world? Because during this period, writers, moralists, philosophers, historians, novelists and clergymen consider reality, consciousness, ideas, and representations to be completely infiltrated by fiction, and they set themselves the task to track it, to reveal it, to discard it and thus to establish the boundaries of the real or the true. The second half of the seventeenth century, without necessarily subscribing to his ideas, followed the approach of Descartes, who extended the doubt about the real or truth to the extreme limits of the *cogito* and assumed that ours could be the product of a malignant manipulation or a dream."

[15] Capoferro, 20. For the theory of Tzvetan Todorov, see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975).

[16] Capoferro, 12. The epistemology of the new sciences would clash with traditional views on supernatural ontology, Capoferro further argues. "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, empiricism implicitly threatened religious culture and various attempts were made to mediate between worldviews that were felt to be increasingly incompatible." Capoferro, 21.

[17] Ibid.

4.2.1 Metafiction at the Basis of the Imaginary Voyage

If we go back to the roots of the imaginary voyage's golden age, knowledge of the 'real' world seems to have been negotiated, theorised and hypothesised primarily through texts that take a middle position between modern conceptions of fiction and non-fiction, like in the astronomical texts of Kepler, *Somnium* (posthumously published in 1634), and Galileo Galilei, *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610). In his *Nova Atlantis,* Francis Bacon laid the foundation for the establishment of the Royal Society in London by creating a fictional institute. In a preface to the reader, William Riley, Bacon's secretary and literary executor, explains this by first calling Bacon's work a 'fable':

> This fable my Lord devised, to the end that he might exhibit therein a model or description of a college instituted for the interpreting of nature and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men, under the name of Salomon's House, or the College of the Six Days' Works.[18]

He further stresses the importance of its place in a larger volume. *Nova Atlantis* appeared in 1627 as an appendix to a volume with the title *Sylva Sylvarum, or A Natural History* that consists of a diverse group of texts on natural philosophy. Playing with the title of the works of the Roman author Statius, *Sylvae*, Bacon presents his works as a miscellaneous thought experiment on nature. Early on in its development, there is thus something metafictional about imaginary voyages, although it is not always very outspoken.

Later, Margaret Cavendish would write a true celebration on the creation of fiction for purposes that are closely related to those of natural philosophy. She published her *Description of a New World, Called The Blazing World* as part of a greater volume with the title *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666).[19] In the preface, she defends the decision to link a work of "fancy" with a work of "reason", which she sees as two "actions of the rational parts of matter."[20] In an epilogue she comes back to the close relation between the scientific speculation and the *Blazing World:*

> By this poetical description, you may perceive, that my ambition is not only to be Empress, but Authoress of a whole world; and that the worlds I have made, both the Blazing and the other Philosophical World, mentioned in the first part of this description, are framed and composed of the most pure, that is, the rational parts of matter, which are the parts of my mind.[21]

[18] Francis Bacon, "New Atlantis," in *Three Early Modern Utopias. Utopia, New Atlantis and The Isle of Pines*, ed. Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 151.

[19] For Capoferro's discussion of *The Blazing World* and Cavendish's ambivalent attitude towards the new science, see Capoferro, 166-74.

[20] Cavendish, 124.

[21] Ibid., 224.

She ends by giving the opportunity to become member of the world she created, simply by imagining oneself in it. If her readers desire not to be part of her creation, she urges them to "create worlds of their own, and govern themselves as they please."[22] Scientific speculation of the natural philosopher to Cavendish is closely connected to the creation of fictional worlds.

It might not be too daring to claim that Cavendish's *Blazing World* is perhaps one of the most metafictional works of the imaginary voyage tradition.[23] The main character, the Lady, departs with a boat to the North Pole where she ends up in a new world that borders to our own by just one channel. The new, *fabulous* world is a utopian society with a capital called 'Paradise', one language, one peaceful and wise Emperor and inhabited by multiple anthropomorphised animals. All types of creatures have their own specialties in science and converse at length with the Lady: the Bird-men talk about celestial bodies, Bear-men (the natural philosophers of the Blazing World by profession) about the importance of tele- and microscopes, Fish-men about the sea and sea animals, Worm-men about minerals and life in the bowels of the earth, etc. The Ape-men prove to be alchemists, Spider-men mathematicians, Lice-men geometricians, and finally magpie-, parrot- and jackdaw-men orators and logicians. Later, the Lady wants to improve the Blazing World's society by establishing a new Church. This is the cause for Cavendish for starting a metafictional play that completely abolishes the boundaries between her fictional creation and the world outside of the text. The Lady summons the ghost of the Duchess of Newcastle, also known as Margaret Cavendish, to help her. She uses the Duchess as her spokeswoman to write a philosophical, moral or political 'Cabbala'. The Duchess, however, advises her to make a "poetical or romancical Cabbala, wherein you can use metaphors, allegories, similitudes, etc. and interpret them as you please."[24] The Duchess later discovers that she can create a world of her own and become Empress of a terrestrial world, for, "every human creature can create an immaterial world fully inhabited by immaterial creatures, and populous of immaterial subjects."[25] The creation of this world is narrated, and thus to some extent also the creation of *The Blazing World* as a book. She puts aside authorities from Thales and Plato to Descartes and Hobbes, to finally let her own creativity, literally, reign. The story further contains a journey of the Duchess and the Empress to the real world, more specifically London and Nottinghamshire, and finally an epic battle between the home country of the Duchess and the army of the Blazing World, which ends in the triumph of the Empress as absolute monarch of "all the world."[26]

Francis Bacon's and Margaret Cavendish's tales show not just that fiction and science are inextricably intertwined in texts some like to categorise as 'early science fiction', but

[22] Ibid., 225.

[23] Capoferro calls Cavendish's work "self-consciously fantastic." Capoferro, 171.

[24] Cavendish, 183.

[25] Cavendish, 185.

[26] Ibid., 214.

more importantly, that the seventeenth century shows a fundamental doubt in reality as such, making the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, as we would call it now, fade away.[27] This Cartesian doubt would continue to be influential in the genre. Especially after the publication of Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, everything was possible in narrative fiction. One late example of this tradition is Casanova's *Icosaméron, ou histoire d'Edouard et d'Elisabeth qui passèrent quatre-vingts-un an chez les Mégamicres habitants aborigènes du Portocosme dans l'intérieur de notre globe* (1787), in short *L'Icosaméron*.[28] The introduction to this voluminous work begins with a peculiar statement on the veracity of the story:

> Personne au monde n'est en état de décider si cet ouvrage est une histoire, ou un roman, pas même celui qui l'auroit inventé, car il n'est pas impossible, qu'une plume judicieuse écrive un fait vrai dans le même tems qu'elle croit l'inventer, tout comme elle peut en écrire un faux étant persuadée de ne dire que la vérité. De cet antécédent on peut faire une induction. On ne pourra sans preuve évidente ni nier un fait quelconque, ni y ajouter foi. L'homme qui lit doit se mettre à son aise, et croire vrai tout ce qu'il trouve vraisemblable, et faux tout ce qui choque sa raison.[29]

The narrator Casanova does not pretend that Elisabeth and Edouard's journey is a historical event, as in so many other imaginary voyages. The invented status of the

[27] When speaking of the seminal works of Francis Godwin and Cyrano de Bergerac, Campbell points to a similar blending of fiction and reality: "I do not mean here to reinstate an arbitrary and for my purpose problematic division between the fictional and the scientific, or between reading for pleasure and reading for knowledge/power. I mean only to point out that one of the overt fascinations of both the two writers under discussion is the epistemological thrill of fictionality itself, and the challenge of its application to the task, under such intense revision in the seventeenth century, of envisioning the world." Campbell, 154.

[28] In general, Casanova's production fits perfectly into what we call after Sermain the metafictional paradigm of the imaginary voyage. As Craig (1997) mentions "examples of the *merveilleux* and the fantastic are [...] not hard to find in Casanova's texts, and display, in keeping with his other writings, a wide range of narrative strategies along with a tendency to comment self-consciously upon genre and modes of reading." Cynthia C. Craig, ""Lecteur, ne vous allarmez pas" [Reader, be not afraid]: Giacomo Casanova and Reading the Fantastic," in *Out of the woods: The Origins of the Literary Fairy Tale in Italy and France*, ed. Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 279. Craig also links Casanova's poetics to the concept of the fantastic as theorised by Todorov, and traces this not only in *l'Icosaméron*, but also in his autobiography *Histoire de ma vie* and the unpublished document *Mondes ou îles*. The reflexive aspect of the *Icosaméron* is moreover explained by David Nelting with a comparison to an art genre in the 18th century, namely the *capriccio*. The *capriccio* is "an art drawing attention to art itself, and not as an art mediating a message" David Nelting, "The Hollow Earth as a Capriccio. Giacomo Casanova's *Icosaméron*," in *Between Science and Fiction: the Hollow Earth as Concept and Conceit*, ed. Hanjo Berressem, Michael Bucher, and Uwe Schwagmeier (Berlin: Lit, 2012), 171.

[29] Giacomo Casanova, *Icosaméron*, 5 vols. (Plan de la Tour: Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 1986), I, ix. "No one in the world is in a position to decide if this work is a story or a novel, not even one who would have invented it, because it is not impossible that a judicious pen writes a true fact while at the same thinking it is inventing it, just as it can write a false while being persuaded of speaking nothing but the truth. From the foregoing one can make an induction. Without obvious proof, one can neither deny nor believe any fact. The man who reads must put himself at his ease, and consider everything true that he finds probable, and everything false that offends his reason."

account, surprisingly enough, seems to be a presupposition, yet, one that takes the reader to an even greater state of aporia. No one is in the position to judge whether Casanova's work is a history or a novel, not even the one who invented it. If the narrator deals with his inventions in a cautious manner, the figments of his imagination might as well be true without his knowledge. Paradoxically, the consequence of this empowerment of the creation of fiction is that the degree of truthfulness is not up to the author anymore, but the readers bear total responsibility of figuring out if what they are reading holds truth.

On how readers should start this quest for truth, Casanova has the following answer, clearly playing with Descartes's *cogito*:

> [L]'homme qui doute ne sait rien, mais en revanche il ne se trompe jamais: une existence pensante circonscrite de matière ne peut se dire sûre de rien. Nous pouvons néanmoins raisonner. Heureux ceux auxquels la raison peut servir d'amusement.[30]

Casanova advises his readers to doubt. By portraying his ideal reader as a doubting reader, Casanova urges them to ponder over the status of the presented world as fiction because there is a slight chance that the author - while inventing the subterranean paradise of the Mégamicres - actually was right.

After the introduction, Casanova spends a hundred pages on an essay called *Commentaire litteral sur les trois premiers chapitres de la Genese*. The analysis is aimed at proving at least the possibility of the existence of a paradise inside the earth. When starting off reading the actual travelogue, the reader is thus ideally convinced of the fact that he should neither reject the fantastical voyage right away, nor go along with the fiction and believe everything it says. As an alternative, the reader should doubt about and ponder over what he is about to read.[31] Casanova's *histoire* is a late example within a long and disperse evolution within imaginary travel literature. The narrators of imaginary voyages had already pushed their argumentations to the extremes with both empirical and authoritative evidence. Now, in Casanova's text, the aim of the work shifted towards the (unending) process of solving the question of truthfulness, as the question itself could solely lead to an aporia.[32] We can explain this aporia by referring back to Cavendish. It celebrates the creation of fiction, while at the same time problematizing the

[30] Casanova, I, xi-xii. "A man who doubts knows nothing, but on the other hand he is never wrong: an existence of thinking, circumscribed by matter, can not be said to be sure of anything. We can nevertheless reason. Happy are those to whom reason can serve as amusement."

[31] In the words of Craig, "Casanova's treatment not only questions culture but questions how we are to read the genre itself, as well as the nature of representation, which is ultimately judged to be untrustworthy" Craig, 289. For the commentary, see Casanova, 1-102.

[32] As Craig explains, "the reader's hesitation is now imbued with a purpose: the purpose of questioning, of valorizing a challenge to norms, and to the desire for order." Craig, 293.

distinction between fiction and reality.[33] Casanova does so on a philosophical – even biblical – basis. The blurring of these boundaries, which seems to be in the DNA of the imaginary voyage, evokes the fundamental questions 'what is fiction' and 'what is reality'?

4.2.2 The Range of the Fantastic-Scientific Mode

It is important to note that the first metafictional thread is not all-embracing but rather a matter of degree. To show this I will briefly expand on the mode's range from a certain desire for verisimilitude or an unproblematic portrayal of a fictional world to a constant disruption of the fictional premises. Canonical imaginary voyages in the nineteenth century, such as the ones of Jules Verne, invite readers to suspend their disbelief. They represent universes that are realistic and scientifically detailed. Part of the reading pleasure in Verne's texts is the possibility for the reader to actually believe that there is an ancient world of fossils in the centre of the earth, reachable by a network of underground tunnels underneath Iceland. In most of the eighteenth-century imaginary voyages this is hardly possible because their universes are not that precise or coherent as in Verne's texts. However, there are texts that do not prominently problematise the borders between fiction and reality.

In Citton's words, the metafictional paradigm for Sermain is the following:

> Cette stratégie de dénonciation du récit comme relevant de l'illusion de "la fable" se manifeste certes par l'invraisemblance provocatrice des épisodes narrés, mais elle s'exprime également par le travail de sape envers les autorités (classiques et modernes) mené dans le dispositif de notes infrapaginales faussement érudites.[34]

[33] In the case of Casanova, the dialectic and doubt that texts aim at even leads to a certain *l'art-pour-l'art* quality: "Within one text, Casanova presents a range of reading and narrative modes, but he does not advocate any of them except the independence of the artistic, of fiction, from questions of veracity. The reader, he instructs his patron and his public, should suspend the search for an absolute truth and instead believe only that which is persuasive in the text. While engaged in the act of reading, the reader must discard conventional systems of belief; deprived of this system, Casanova acknowledges, the reader may be baffled or uncomfortable [...]. The wise reader believes not in the truth but in literature's intrinsic potential for artistic value beyond truth or fiction, mistrusting certitude but not doubt, and thus, we may infer, not the hesitation of the fantastic." Craig, 299. It would be a step too far to claim that Holberg's *Niels Klim* expresses the idea of *l'art pour l'art* as Craig seems to point to. The reading of *Niels Klim* should not lead to some sort of artistic sensation, but to moral insight, as will become clear in part three of this thesis.

[34] Yves Citton, "Inspiration et renoncement dans Lamékis," in *Le Chevalier de Mouhy. Bagarre et bigarrure*, ed. Jan Herman, Kris Peeters, and Paul Pelckmans (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 162. "This strategy of denouncing the narrative as part of the illusion of "the fable" certainly manifests itself by the provocative improbability of the narrated episodes, but it is also expressed by the undermining of authorities (classical and modern) carried out in the falsely erudite footnotes."

We will come back to the use of pseudo-intellectual footnotes in Sermain's metafictions, but I want to focus now on the phrasing that the metafictions are not just implausible or improbable tales, but provocative in their improbability. A few examples of eighteenth-century imaginary voyages will show that metafiction is intrinsic to the genre. They raise the question whether they are imaginary or not, but this does not always surface as a provocation. There are already quite some imaginary voyages that are not prominently metafictional.

The anonymously published text *Relations d'un voyage du Pole Arctique au Pole Antarctique par le centre du monde* (1721) has been linked to *Niels Klim* in the past because of the idea of the centre of the earth, although there is neither an individualised main character (only *l'Auteur*) nor a fully-fledged world that is discovered.[35] The subterranean voyage is a short passage along the underground water streams that were believed to be a shortcut to the South Pole. Once arrived at the South Pole, the narrator describes what seems to be an ancient building of a lost civilisation, with an inscription of bizarre characters.[36] Finally they enter a cave in the South Pole and discover a subterranean space where the lost civilisation has left more remains, now of a city wall.[37] Not long after these inexplicable discoveries underground, the crew (of whom we know no more detail than in the beginning) suddenly decides they have seen enough and can return to "the old world" (*le vieux monde*).[38]

The *Relations* is an example of an imaginary voyage that hardly thematises the fictionality of the represented world. It is primarily a tale of wonders, full of marvellous events such as inexplicable weather conditions.[39] To the I-narrator and his crew everything is *merveilleux* or *extraordinaire* (volcanoes, white bears, large birds, a meteorite, etc.) without reflecting upon their status as wondrous miracles. So, although the fantastical element is very prominent in the *Relations*, the text completely lacks a sense of fictional awareness. The reader must be left behind amazed and puzzled.

Especially in the second half of the eighteenth century something happens to the metafictional paradigm. Capoferro describes a generic shift as follows:

> Each imaginary voyage portrays a unique world – although imitations of Swift's work proliferated, accelerating the genre's conventionalization – but almost invariably constructs an image of nature that resists disenchantment. However,

[35] Paludan, 170; Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*, 25-26; Ducet, 161.

[36] Anonymous, *Relation d'un voyage du Pole Arctique au Pole Antarctique par le centre du monde, avec la description de ce périlleux Passage, & des choses merveilleuses & étonnantes qu'on a découvertes sous le Pole Antarctique*, 69.

[37] Ibid., chapters 6-8.

[38] See ibid., 170 ff.

[39] The wonder and mystery of the *Relations* in particular makes one think of the works of Edgar Allan Poe. The short story *Manuscript found in a Bottle* (1838), for example, also relates a mysterious discovery of the South Pole and many inexplicable weather conditions. Here, metafiction is much more present than in the *Relations*, as Poe clearly plays with the authenticity of the 'manuscript found in a bottle' like it was very common in the fantastic tradition. The same can be said of Poe's novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gorden Pym of Nantucket* (1838).

> from the 1750s imaginary voyages' main focus shifted: new works, such as *Peter Wilkins* (1751) and *William Bingfield* (1753), articulated a proto-imperialist subtext.[40]

The first work Capoferro refers to, *Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (1751) by the English novelist Robert Paltock (1697-1767), has again been linked to Holberg's hollow earth because the title page promises Wilkins's "wondrous passage thro' a subterraneous cavern."[41] However, the tale is primarily a Robinsonade that first takes the main character from his home country England to Brazil (Saint Salvador), Angola, Congo, and finally to a utopian society of humans with wings, the male Glums and female Gawry.[42]

Like in many imaginary voyages, Robert Paltock thematises the origin of the manuscript of *Peter Wilkins* in the introduction. Paltock (who subscribes the introduction as R.P.) had met Wilkins when he fell down from the sky near the vessel Paltock was on. They got him on board and Wilkins told his adventures to Paltock before he died when landing in Plymouth. Paltock afterwards published the "faithful Narrative" as it was told to him. However, these are not intended to provoke the reader, but rather make it more similar to the desire for mimetic description and verisimilitude in travel literature on exotic countries. The sceneries are largely realistic, the foreign languages somewhat musical, but not absurd, the creatures tangible despite their somewhat wondrous appearance. The proto-imperialist subtext in *Peter Wilkins*, then, I would argue, stands in the way of a prominent metafictional quality.[43] Although the text shows flying humanoid creatures and a subterranean voyage, the text is not focused on the borders between fiction and reality. It more prominently stages the meeting of two different cultures, shows how they interact with each other, and adds colonial elements that are rather new in the imaginary voyage tradition.[44]

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[40] Capoferro, 15.

[41] Robert Paltock, *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). For a brief discussion of the misconception that Paltock portrays a subterranean world, see Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*, 202.

[42] The subterranean cavern can hardly be called the *novum* of *Peter Wilkins*. Instead, it is pointed out that the creatures inhabiting the utopian land, the flying Gawry, thematise the concept of a mechanical flying machine, which would become extremely popular in the nineteenth century. Arthur, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837*, 57-77. See also Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*, 57.

[43] Capoferro still includes *Peter Wilkins* as a part of the fantastic because there is "a fully-fledged realistic representation that is consistent with the main purpose of the fantastic: to represent non-empirical entities as if they were real." However, "the presence of the supernatural serves not so much to re-enchant the world as to validate Peter's gaining colonial power." Capoferro, 201-02.

[44] Examples are that the main character learns the language of the inhabitant, but his lover also learns English; they procreate and bare children that are half human, half animal; Wilkins translates the Bible to the local dialect to convert them. For a more elaborate discussion of the cross-cultural encounter and colonial themes in *Peter Wilkins,* see Arthur, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837*, 64-76. The proto-imperialist subtext is also present in the last part of *Niels Klim* where Klim reigns over the Quamitians, which echoes the colonisation of America by Spain, and even to the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. See chapter 5 of this thesis for a more thorough discussion of this topic.

The *Relation* and *Peter Wilkins* are two completely different texts; the first being a tale of wonders while the second leans towards the subgenre of the Robinsonade or at least the more realistic imaginary voyages. Still, they show that metafictionality was a matter of degree. An imaginary voyage, once recognised as such by a reader, always evokes the question of the 'imaginative' status of the presented text, but the text does this in a way that is to a larger or lesser degree self-reflexive and provocative.

4.3 The Menippean-Carnevalesque Mode

Menippean satire is perhaps even more artificial and anachronistic as a generic category than the imaginary voyage, mostly because scholarship revolving around this concept has developed into an ancient and modern school of their own. The ancient school focuses on the formal aspect of prosimetrum in a satirical text to show the importance of classical examples and quotations. The modern school, most prominently represented by formalists as Northrop Frye and Mikhail Bakhtin, have made the genre into an almost unworkable category. In the following section, I will not pick one out of the two schools, which I will refer to as the Menippean, in the strict sense, and the Carnevalesque, after Bakthin's concept that will be treated. Instead, I want to show that they have a shared way of fictionalizing the world, namely turning social and intellectual standards upside down. The imaginary voyage is very much akin to the Menippean satire precisely in this shared metafictional attention. At the end of this section I will also give some examples of texts in which the menippean-carnevalesque mode of telling crosses with the fantastic-scientific. This will affirm the idea that metafictional narrative was a popular literary phenomenon that crossed generic borders, and circumvents the entire discussion of whether the imaginary voyage or the Menippean satire was actually considered as a genre by Holberg. Holberg was influenced by narrative techniques he found (or could find) in a series of texts we would later apply to different generic categories.

4.3.1 Negotiating Authority in an Upside-Down World

The old school traces the genre back to works as *Icaromenippus* and *True Histories* of the Greek writer Lucian of Samosata who followed another Greek writer, Menippus, whose texts are now lost. Apart from some sole cases in the following centuries, scholars of the old school rather quickly move to the Renaissance to find further examples of the genre. As Ingrid De Smet shows in her monograph *Menippean Satire and the Republic of Letters* the genre saw a great revival in the Renaissance. She focuses on the period between 1581 and

1655 and the theoretical reflections upon satire at the time by humanists like the Scaligers, Justus Lipsius, Isaac Casaubon, Daniel Heinsius and Gerardus Joannes Vossius. Hereby, she adapts a specifically historical approach, asking what *they* understood under Menippean satire, rather than how *we* would define it as a tradition or genre.[45] Her method and focus brings the Menippean satire down to its classical basics, namely its prosimetric form, its titles that often refer to classical examples as Petronius' *Satyricon*, and, by extension, its moralizing attitude. According to De Smet's working definition, Menippean satires are

> fictional (mostly first-person) narratives in prose interspersed with verse (which can, but need not be, original), aimed at mockery and ridicule and often moralizing. Thus humanist Menippean satire fulfils in prosimetric style that commonly recognized function of Classical satire phrased by Horace as 'ridentem dicere verum' (*serm.* 1,1,24).[46]

In *Niels Klim* scholarship, the emphasis on the prosimetric form has proven valuable to point out specific characteristics that otherwise remain under the scholarly radar. As pointed out in the introduction to this thesis, the scholarly efforts of in particular Aage Kragelund, Sigrid Peters, and Karen Skovgaard-Petersen arises from the desire to compensate the apparent shortcomings of modern readers, namely to recognise intertextual references, especially to Latin literature. At the same time, this branch of *Niels Klim* scholarship is always confronted with a simple question 'why so late'? *Niels Klim* is published almost a century after the end point of what De Smet sees as the flourishing period of the genre and at the same time is considered to be one of its most characteristic members.[47]

De Smet already points out that after her study's end point, namely 1655, "the mixture of prose and verse will become a feature, in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, of travel accounts."[48] De Smet gives examples of French travelogues, but we see the same phenomenon in Britain, such as in Joseph Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705).[49] Holberg lives in an age in which the use of quotations from classical authors was not limited to a humanist genre. As the ironic remark of Edmund Halley showed in the previous chapter, the use of quotations had not even left scientific discourse. De Smet looks ahead in her theoretical chapters and seems to suggest that the Menippean satire, as she defines it, was more of a nucleus where various genres come together at a point in time, and from there moved on into again different genres. She speaks of a "horizon of

[45] See De Smet, 32.

[46] Ibid., 70.

[47] See Ijsewijn, 50.

[48] De Smet, 70.

[49] De Smet gives the examples of Bachaumont and Chapelle's *Voyage en Provence et Languedoc* (1656) and La Fontaine's *Voyage en Limousin* (1663). Ibid.

the Menippean genre" that is constituted by related genres as *sermones*, iambic satires, pamphlets, but also utopia (under which she discusses *Niels Klim* very briefly) and the *histoires comiques*.[50] In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, "Menippean satire could itself be a point of departure for authors writing in other genres such as the comic novel."[51]

Whereas De Smet thus acknowledges a grey zone, the prosimetrum seems to be the central point of the humanist Menippean satire and the related genres in later periods.[52] In the modern school of Menippean scholarship, the prosimetrum is left aside. It is primarily Mikhail Bakhtin's theory on the *Menippea* that became extremely influential. The twenty-first-century literary scholar should always have some kind of reflex when dealing with Bakhtin's linear and teleological views on literature,[53] and his conceptions of the *Menippea* are no exception. It grew out into an almost unworkable and ever-expanding set of texts that were otherwise difficult to categorise. In line with Bakhtin's concept, Menippean satire is often seen as a protean genre, "an antigenre, a burlesque of literature at large" which often presents an unreliable narrator as a way of self-parody.[54] Menippean satire challenges generic borders. A recurring feature is also the mocking tone towards intellectualism and scholarship, and an overall unwillingness to be put into a category. The prosimetrum, then, becomes just one of the many possible appearances of such a border crossing, but one that performs a certain comical pseudo-intellectualism. The Menippean satire thus proves to be primarily an intellectual and elitist genre that expects a certain degree of education from its reader and mocks itself by the use of sometimes far-fetched intertextuality and word echoes.

Crucial for the present study is that scholarship has always acknowledged a close connection between Menippean satire and the imaginary voyage. The recurring narration of fantastical voyages in texts that were seen as Menippean satires made Peters argue for considering the latter as the overall genre of *Niels Klim*.[55] But also in the modern school, this kinship is acknowledged.[56] Bakhtin mentions that "the fantastic is subordinated to the purely ideational function of provoking and testing a truth."[57] This

[50] Ibid., 71.

[51] Ibid., 86.

[52] De Smet thus focuses on form rather than on subject-matter. Ibid., 56.

[53] As Aravamudan says, "[d]espite warnings to the contrary by the most acute of his readers, Bakhtin has been popularized as an unqualified celebrator of the novel's "rise," and his literary archaeology of prose genres has been read as an unabashed teleology of progress resulting in the apotheosis of *the* novel as a particularly versatile inheritor of all that went before." Aravamudan, 34.

[54] Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean satire* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 30, 34-35.

[55] Peters, 55.

[56] Capoferro sees it as a precursor of the fantastic. Capoferro, 39-40.

[57] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 114. Bakhtin's characteristics of *Menippea* are primarily found in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in which he traces an evolution of the novel towards its most eminent example Dostoevsky. Ibid., 112-19.

mode of searching after, provoking and testing truth is the most important characteristic of what Bakhtin calls the *carnevalesque*.[58] He traces the genre of *Menippea* back to carnivalised folklore and derives from this its ability to turn known structures upside down.[59]

Within this study, the *carnevalesque* can thus be considered as another type of fictionalisation of reality. The parodied society, or *l'univers representé* in Sermain's terminology, is turned upside down, not primarily based on its ontological status (which was characteristic for the fantastic-scientific mode), but its social and political structures. Howard Weinbrot, who has put much effort into slimming down the genre of Menippean satire, indicates that "Menippean satire lives in a precarious universe of broken or fragile national, cultural, religious, political, or generally intellectual values."[60] Satire makes the reader aware of the illusionary status of the world they are part of and, according to Weinbrot, opposes "a dangerous, false, or specious and threatening orthodoxy."[61] Weinbrot explains what he means as follows:

> We [...] see finite and recurring topics: concern with dangerous, harmful, spreading views whether personal or public, whether by the individual human being who needs to learn not to fantasize about harmful heroism or beauty, the governor who needs to learn not to tyrannize, or the nation that needs to learn not to destroy its benevolent heritage. I call these responses to a dangerous or threatening false orthodoxy.[62]

Like in the fantastic-scientific mode, the menippean-carnevalesque thus does not present a fictional world that is detached from reality. It reverses the represented universe to invite readers to see the illusion and fiction around them, in the real world. The world that is represented is not a dream or a fiction, but a socio-political illusion that is shattered by the text's pseudo-intellectualism and satire. This subversive process of fictionalisation thus again questions the concept of authority, this time not the authority of the people who claim to be scientifically trustworthy, but of people who claim social or political power. It is this mode that makes the subterranean world of *Niels Klim*, as we saw in the previous chapter, not only a scientific *novum* but also a prominent narrative technique of turning European society literally upside down. The amplification of this game in Tanian's *Itinerary* and the intertextual play with the classical quotations in *Niels*

[58] De Smet points to the perverted effects of the theories of Frye and Bakhtin: "Many of their followers dwell too much on proving at all costs that a certain work by a certain author is a Menippean satire, even if the author was not aware of this. Too often generic criticism has become a goal in itself." De Smet, 28. The same perhaps could be said about Peters's work on *Niels Klim*.

[59] Bakhtin, 114.

[60] Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 7.

[61] Weinbrot, 6.

[62] Weinbrot, 5-6.

Klim should then primarily be seen in this manner; they help putting the negotiation of authority in the spotlights and make the reader aware of multiple threatening orthodoxies such as antiquarianism in the European schooling system and intellectual environment, but also false idolisations of (war) heroes, of outer appearances, of multiple gods, etc.

4.3.2 The Voice of the Classics: Krook's *Fonton Freemason* and Bidermann's *Utopia*

At this point, especially with the analysis in chapter 3 in the back of our minds, it seems almost pointless to differentiate between a fantastic-scientific mode and a menippean-carnevalesque because they are so closely intertwined. However, in some cases one of the two is clearly more dominant. A discussion of some texts that have been connected to *Niels Klim* in the past will exemplify the range of the menippean-carnevalesque mode. I will hereby show that *Niels Klim*'s combination of both modes is if not unique, then at least quite exceptional; and moreover that we need a third mode to assess the position of *Niels Klim* within this literary polysystem of metafictional texts.

With two examples, I want to contest some connections between modes that might be made too quickly. Although *Niels Klim* combines the fantastic-scientific and the menippean-carnevalesque modes, there are texts that only use one of the two, even if they share basic features like the use of classical quotations and the thematisation of travel. My examples will be on the one hand the Swedish imaginary voyage *Tanckar om jordens skapnad, eller Fonton Freemassons äfwentyr* (*Thoughts on the Earth's Shape, or the Adventures of Fonton Freemasson)*, published in the same year as *Niels Klim* (1741) by Johan Krook (1713-1778) and *Utopia* (1640) by the Jesuit Jakob Bidermann.

Krook's astronomical travel tale has been solely studied as one of the earliest novels in Swedish, but has otherwise remained under the scholarly radar.[63] And I cannot blame scholarship. Krook's text is a badly written and obnoxiously dwelling narrative about the author's journey on an airship to the moon. He finds a paradisiacal society whose inhabitants introduce him to their highly valued relics of the Earth. It concerns the intellects of humans, evaporated from Earth and conserved in bottles on the moon. The main character thereupon drinks his proper evaporated intellect. After an exchange of information about the Moon's and the Earth's societies, Krook wants to observes the Earth

[63] Mats Malm, *Textens auktoritet, de första svenska romanernas villkor* (Stockholm: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2001), 88-94. For Krook's work, see Johan Krook, *Tanckar om jordens skapnad, eller Fonton Freemassons äfwentyr, till högwälborne herr Grefwen och nu med Anmärckningar till trycket befordrat af Anticthon.* (Stockholm: Lorentz L. Grefing, 1741). I wish to thank Tim Berndtsson at this point because I am largely indebted to him for the following part on this almost forgotten imaginary voyage in Swedish.

with his newly received knowledge but realises he does not know anything more than before.

The plot is of minor importance in Fonton Freemasson. There is a striking lack of narrative elements or events. Krook does not describe the lunar society but prefers digressions whereby, as Malm argues, "the narrator deprives himself of the actual tools of satire and rather narrates about satire than narrating it."[64] In its own way, the text is thus highly reflexive, and moreover, highly intertextual. The digressions are full of quotations from and references to both classical (Vergil, Plato, Tacitus, Lucretius, Ovid, Cicero, etc.) and modern authors (Descartes, Leibniz, Mandeville, Voltaire, Fontenelle, etc.). As a final call for authority at the end of the story, the narrator calls on the liberty of the poet to make fictional truths. He ends with a quotation from Barclay's *Argenis*: "Ut tam erret, qui omnia, quam qui nihil in illa scriptione exiget ad rerum gestarum veritatem" and explains it as follows:

> At den där tror alt detta wara sant, felar och bedrar sig lika så wäl som den där tror ingenting. Och sådan til någon min egen ursäkt, såsom *Argus*: At wi Bröder i Apollo hafwa en oinskränkt påfunds makt, wi ha låf at resa til Himlar, afgrunder, stiernor och nya werldar at wid hemkomsten wisa Folck sina dårskaper.[65]

The celebration of the creative imagination makes one think of Margaret Cavendish's *fancy* and thus closely connects to the fantastic-scientific mode, although Krook misses the narrative mastery to make it into an interesting read.

The references to other texts, however, have a rather strange function that can hardly be called Menippean. The references have an air of name-dropping rather than they are part of the fiction. Krook was typically a young man who wanted to prove his erudition and literary skills in order to reach certain state positions.[66] Whereas the menippean-carnevalesque mode often mocks the socio-political structure that is maintained by the intellectual elite, Krook seems to aim for an admission to this elite rather than a mockery of it. To phrase it more boldly and evaluative: Krook's text does not mock pseudo-intellectualism; it is a perfect example of the phenomenon itself. In this sense, the menippean-carnevalesque mode is thus not prominent in *Fonton Freemasson*. Satire and even the fantastical element are subordinate to a plain exhibition of erudition and his adherence to certain philosophical thoughts, of which none are original but all go back to classical and early modern authorities.

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[64] Malm, 91.

[65] Krook, 80. "The one who believes this all was true is mistaken and deludes himself as much as the one who believes nothing. And this would by my own apology to someone, like the Argus: That we, as Brothers in Apollo's craft, have complete power of imagination, we have the right to travel to heavens, abysses, the stars and new worlds, that when returning we can show people their own follies."

[66] For a standard work on these so-called "state official authors" (*tjänstemannaförfattare*) in Swedish literature, see Bo Bennich-Björkman, *Författaren i ämbetet: studier i funktion och organisation av författarämbeten vid svenska hovet och kansliet 1550-1850* (Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1970).

Diametrically opposed to Krook's text is the one of the German Jesuit and playwright Jakob Bidermann.[67] As a product of the humanist tradition and teacher of Latin, Bidermann was completely immersed in the Classical tradition. His Latin *Utopia* can truly be called a masterpiece in the Menippean satire genre as theorised by De Smet.[68] The *Utopia* was written for students to acquaint themselves with classical literature through a set of amusing tales and anecdotes.[69] The *Utopia* is not only a prosimetric text that mixes seriousness with mockery,[70] it also stages multiple scenes that are clearly *carnevalesque:* a masked procession called Circus of Stultitia (book IV), a theatre play about a peasant turned to king (book IV.30 f.),[71] and multiple mock trials (book V). Through the novel runs a line of criticism on the pernicious state of the literary affairs -the false orthodoxy against which Bidermann opposes, so to speak – which is introduced to the reader at the beginning of the conversation between the main characters Hugo, Bemardinus and Philippus in book I.[72]

Holberg was extremely familiar with this text.[73] Apart from having used thematic content in some of his other works,[74] Holberg uses the *Utopia* throughout *Niels Klim* as the number one non-classical source for quotations.[75] There is no way around this work when

[67] The most recent text edition of Bidermann's *Utopia* is edited and introduced with a very thorough study by Margit Schuster. It concerns a bilingual edition with a seventeenth-century translation, or better adaptation in German. This plagiarising text, as Schuster calls it, was published by Christoph Andreas Hörl von Wattersdorf under the title *Bacchusia oder Fast-nachtland*. Jakob Bidermann, *Utopia: Edition mit Übersetzung und Monographie, nebst Vergleichenden Studien zum Beigedruckten Plagiat des Christoph Andreas Hörl von Wattersdorf (" Bacchusia oder Fassnacht-Land...")*, 2 vols. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1985).

[68] Neither De Smet nor Ijsewijn mention Bidermann's *Utopia*, which is rather a sign of its obsurity than of its unsuitability in an overview of humanist Menippean satire. Chronologically, *Utopia* also fits in with De Smet's demarcation of her study object. It was posthumously published in 1640, but is said to have been finished by 1604. For the publication history, see Gunnar Sivertsen, *Kilden til Jeppe paa Bierget* (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2010), 26-27.

[69] See Schuster's introduction to Bidermann, 5.

[70] This feature is commonly known as *spoudogeloion* is often linked to the work of Lucian of Samosata. See Schuster's introduction to ibid., 8. For her discussion of the use of quotations in the *Utopia*, see ibid., 40-41.

[71] The passage on the so-called 'Scheinfürsten' was the main source of inspiration for Holberg's comedy *Jeppe on the Hill* (*Jeppe paa Bierget*, 1723). For an elaborate discussion of this intertextual link, see Gunnar Sivertsen, "Bidermanns gamle historie. Om forelegget i Ludvig Holbergs "Jeppe paa Bierget"," in *Opplysning i Norden*, ed. Heiko Uecker (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998). Sivertsen also links this turning upside down of social roles to Bakhtin's notion of the carnevalesque. Ibid., 91-92.

[72] *Utopia* has narrative setup comparable to Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Decamerone*, a series of tales told by people in the same company, but later fans out into different directions.

[73] Sivertsen argues that *Utopia* must have been widespread in Norway and Denmark in Holberg's time. Holberg might have used the text in his teaching of Latin. Sivertsen, *Kilden til Jeppe paa Bierget*, 30. For *Utopia*'s overall influence on Holberg's writings, see ibid., 32-38.

[74] For an enumeration of other loans by Holberg of *Utopia*, see Sivertsen, "Bidermanns gamle historie. Om forelegget i Ludvig Holbergs "Jeppe paa Bierget"," 85, n1.

[75] Kragelund lists 28 instances where Holberg might have quoted from *Utopia* in Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, vol. 3, 170. Sivertsen argues that even Holberg's citations of classical authors are sometimes filtered by Bidermann's text. See Sivertsen, *Kilden til Jeppe paa Bierget*, 36-37.

dealing with Holberg's repertoire of ready knowledge of classical quotations and some smaller thematic echoes. Especially Gunnar Sivertsen has thoroughly proven the importance of Biderman's text to Holberg's writings, and even did his part for saving *Utopia* itself from oblivion with an extensive paraphrase, structural analysis and partial translation in Norwegian.[76] When considering the modes of telling we distinguished so far, we could say that Holberg adopted, apart from specific anecdotes and quotations, the *Utopia*'s overall satirical mode of telling that turns socio-political structures upside down, but that the fantastic-scientific is completely absent.[77] Sivertsen rightly points out that the frame story, which covers 320 out of 400 pages, prominently thematises travel, to far greater degree than is the case in Thomas More's *Utopia*.[78] Hereby Sivertsen contests Paludan who refuses to see Bidermann as a part of the tradition of the travel novel. However, this thematisation of travel is not a journey with scientific or exploratory purposes, as in the fantastic-scientific mode, but only a movement through an arcadic setting which enables Bidermann to structure his novella cycle; more in line with what came before, such as Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, than what would start in the same period and later culminate in texts like Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comique* for example.[79]

4.4 The Romanesque-Fabulous Mode

Although Bidermann's *Utopia* is a textbook example of the menippean-carnevalesque mode, we do not fully understand its place in the metafictional polysystem with this mode alone. Bidermann's cumulative plot also attests to a certain pleasure and self-awareness of the very act of narrating. The previous two modes of telling point to the fictionalisation of the real world, one specifically to the thin epistemological line between fiction and reality (i.e. nature), and the other to the illusionary status of socio-political roles and structures that are observed in reality. What the last mode, the romanesque-fabulous,

[76] Sivertsen, *Kilden til Jeppe paa Bierget*.

[77] Although the term *Utopia* is quite ambiguous as a generic category for Bidermann's text, utopias can be considered as texts in which the menippean-carnevalesque mode is most dominent; their fictionalisation is aimed at questioning socio-political structures, rather than questioning the ontological status of reality. For a discussion of the term of *Utopia* as a title of Bidermann's text, see Schuster's introduction to Bidermann, 7.

[78] Sivertsen, "Bidermanns gamle historie. Om forelegget i Ludvig Holbergs "Jeppe paa Bierget"," 88.

[79] Holberg links Bidermann to Lucian of Samosata and categorises their writings as travel discriptions, in *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 13. As also Sivertsen points out, Holberg distinguishes them from Swift and his own *Niels Klim*, which form a new tradition of travel descriptions. Sivertsen, "Bidermanns gamle historie. Om forelegget i Ludvig Holbergs "Jeppe paa Bierget"," 38-39. The distinction is significant, as Holberg considers Bidermann to be part of an older tradition, not a contemporary one. We thus might only call the *Utopia* an imaginary voyage in the strictest sense, as a text that narrates a fictive journey. The scientific-fantastical mode is less present.

brings to the table is a fictionalisation of the represented universe that is literary. This third mode is within our polysystem perhaps the most meta*fictiona*l mode as it questions the borders between reality and fiction by playing with fictional worlds of others, or with the fictional world narrated.

The romanesque-fabulous mode thus blurs the borders between reality and fiction, like the fantastic-scientific mode, but in the latter's case these borders are ontological. Whereas the fantastic-scientific raises the question whether we actually know what reality is and how we gain knowledge from this reality, the romanesque-fabulous rather asks how the text represents reality as we know it and how it misleads us in thinking it reflects reality. In addition, it also warns the reader for a threatening orthodoxy in society, like in the menippean-carnevalesque, but this orthodoxy does not concern a social or political order, but concerns stories. They share the questioning of authority, but the romanesque-fabulous negotiates the authority of people who spread fabulous stories and of superstitious people who believe them. It is not a coincidence that this romanesque-fabulous mode relates more to corpora Sermain discussed in his chapters on "romans au second degré" influenced by *Don Quixote* and on fairy tales (*contes de fees*). In his typology, these genres are called "recyclages littéraires."[80] In a rather positive tone, they recycle a discours that is already fictional and stage "l'écriture" of the novel or the creation of fabulous stories.

4.4.1 Thousand and One Fables: de Mouhy's *Lamékis*

A text in which the romanesque-fabulous thread is very dominant is *Lamékis* by Charles de Fieux de Mouhy (1701-1784).[81] Ever since Garnier's collection of imaginary voyages, in which *Lamékis* was placed just after a French translation of *Niels Klim*, de story of de Mouhy was primarily known as one of the earliest narrations on the Hollow Earth.[82] The subterranean element, however, lies more in line with the network of caverns and the lost civilisation it hides in the *Relations du voyage au Pole Arctique* than to the universe Klim

[80] Sermain discusses the literary recyclings in his last part. See Sermain, 303-432.

[81] In his article on *Lamekis*, Citton already links de Mouhy's novel to the theory on metafiction of Sermain. See Citton, "Inspiration et renoncement dans Lamékis," 162.

[82] The edition I use is the twentieth and twenty-first volume of Garnier seminal collection of imaginary voyages: Charles de Fieux De Mouhy, *Lamékis, ou les voyages extraordinaires d'un Égyptien dans la terre intérieure avec la découverte de l'Île des Sylphides*, ed. Charles Georges Thomas Garnier, Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions, et romans cabalistiques (Amsterdam: Rue et Hotel Serpente, 1788). Holberg's *Niels Klim*, in the translation from 1741 by de Mauvillon, was placed in the nineteenth volume. Translations of *Lamekis*, where possible, were taken from the first English edition of Michael Shreve, which also includes some of the prefaces that are lacking in Garnier's edition: Charles de Fieux De Mouhy, *Lamekis*, trans. Michael Shreve (Encino, CA: Black Coat Press, 2011).

stumbles upon.[83] The influence of fables pushes the fantastic-scientific mode of telling to the background.[84]

Lamékis tells the spiritual journey of the Egyptian Lamékis, together with his sidekick Sinoüis, to his lover Clemelis. This is the short version. The long version is that *Lamékis* is a highly confusing story with both aerial and subterranean voyages, metamorphoses, philosophical and spiritual ordeals, multiple love stories, and extraordinary creatures like winged monsters, a type of worm-men, and a blue dog with the size of a donkey named Falbao. The narrative counts up to five levels, many narrator shifts, pseudo-intellectual footnotes, and other techniques that break up the flow of reading. Although it is coherently constructed, it is very hard to keep track of the story. One is easily confused not only by the shifts between narrative levels, but also by naming of characters. Lamékis's father is also named Lamékis, and the Princess *Nasilaë* is a completely different person than *Nasildaë*, the mother of one of the other main characters Motacoa. Its rhetoric is moreover "formulaic and monotone" so that you can understand, as Citton said, "why its fate in scholarship has been as subterraneous as the adventures it describes."[85] The literary quality of *Lamékis* does not make it a less interesting text for the present study – on the contrary. It is a good example of how trivial literature can highlight elements that are common in a specific period to an extent that it seems exaggerated and absurd to modern readers.

As a *romancier*, De Mouhy was extremely prolific and fought hard to make a living of writing.[86] De Mouhy's recurring aim to reach a broad public also surfaces in *Lamékis*, which he published in a series of eight parts.[87] De Mouhy clearly takes great pains to keep things interesting for the reader who has to stick with his story for three years, between 1735 and 1738. He attracts the reading public with absurdly fantastical content and complicating narrative techniques. Scholars already have pointed out that *Lamékis*'s narrative complexity and prominent place for fabulous and romantic stories is linked to

[83] For an explanation of the subterranean element in *Lamekis* and the relation to the idea of the Hollow Earth, see Fitting's work. Fitting, "Imagination, Textual Play, and the Fantastic in Mouhy's Lamékis."; Fitting, *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*, 29-36.

[84] Capoferro excludes fairy tales from his study of the fantastic because they "do not replicate the tension between the empirical and the non-empirical that is crucial to the fantastic: they deploy the rhetoric of realism only marginally and do not problematize the presence of magic." Capoferro, 22.

[85] Citton, "Inspiration et renoncement dans Lamékis," 153.

[86] Rivara points out that the social status of a writer and a novelist was still in flux during the life of De Mouhy, and he always struggled to reconcile his unbridled imagination and curiosity with the ruling tastes for moralistic novels. Annie Rivara, "Un écrivain caméléon, chevalier inexistant ou figure "d'auteur" hardie? Lecture et création chez le Chevalier de Mouhy," in *Le chevalier de Mouhy: Bagarre et bigarrure*, ed. Jan Herman, Kris Peeters, and Paul Pelckmans (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), esp. 14-16. For an overview of de Mouhy's authorship and diverse writings, see the edited volume Jan Herman, Kris Peeters, and Paul Pelckmans, eds., *Le Chevalier de Mouhy: Bagarre et bigarrure* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

[87] *Lamekis* was published in three places: in Paris by Depuis (parts I and II in 1735 and 1736), in Paris by Poilly (parts III and IV in 1737) and in The Hague by Neaulme (parts 5 to 8 in 1738).

the French translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* (1704-1717) by Galland, which was incredibly popular at the time.[88] In the preface to part 5, De Mouhy highlights reliance to another popular serial publication full of mystery and romances, *L'espion turc* of Marana, in his main goal of entertaining the reader. He further asks the reader to keep supporting his publications and defend him "like a new Don Quixote [...] at the crossroads as the nicest, most entertaining author."[89] The voice of 'De Mouhy' also speaks in footnotes, where he points to contradictions in the texts, gives more detailed information and references to, amongst others, Heinsius, Gregory of Tours and Cyrano de Bergerac, or he adds translations of (fictive) language utterances.[90] These intertextual links already hint at the fact that the metafictional paradigm is extremely prominent throughout the text – and even essential to guide the reader from one embedded tale to another.

The most interesting metafictional passage by far is found in the centre of the book.[91] At the end of the fourth part, Mouhy includes a metaleptic scene. The passage begins when de Mouhy abruptly cuts off the narrative in the following manner:

> La quatriéme partie finit dans cet endroit, & dans la cinquiéme il ne se trouve aucune trace de l'histoire de Déhahal, ce qui m'ayant fait imaginer que ce défaut venoit d'une lacune considérable, ou de la perte de quelques pages de manuscrit; j'ai cru devoir y suppléer en cherchant dans les auteurs les plus savans quelques passages qui pussent m'aider à finir une histoire si intéressant; deux ans se sont passés à feuilleter dans les bibliothèques les plus connues, tous les savans qui ont écrit dans ce genre, & sur tout ceux qui ont commenté les aventures de Lamékis. Je commençois à me rebuter de tant de soins inutiles, lorsqu'une aventure extraordinaire qui mérite d'être rapportée, ma mis enfin en état d'achever cet ouvrage.[92]

De Mouhy further describes the extraordinary adventure at length at the end of part 4 and especially at the beginning of part 5, where the metafictional paradigm truly surfaces.

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[88] Fitting, "Imagination, Textual Play, and the Fantastic in Mouhy's Lamékis," 311; Emmanuelle Sempère, "Du fantastique dans *Lamekis* ou les souterrains de la raison," in *Le Chevalier de Mouhy: Bagarre et bigarrure*, ed. Jan Herman, Kris Peeters, and Paul Pelckmans (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 169. For the importance of Galland for eighteenth-century fiction, see Aravamudan, 10-18.

[89] See the English translation, which includes the original prefaces: De Mouhy, *Lamekis*, 369.

[90] In the preface to part III, De Mouhy says that he is aware of the difficulty of the narrative and ironically advises his reader to skip the notes when going through the narrative for the first time. De Mouhy, *Lamekis*, 367.

[91] For more detailed information on the narrative's structure, see Sempère, 170-71.

[92] De Mouhy, *Lamékis, ou les voyages extraordinaires d'un Égyptien dans la terre intérieure avec la découverte de l'Île des Sylphides*, vol. 1, 339-40. "Part 4 finishes here and no trace of Dehahal's story is found in Part 5, which makes me think that there is a considerable lacuna or a number of missing pages in the manuscript. I thought I could compensate for it by looking among the most learned writers for some passages that might help me finish this interesting story and ended up spending two years in the best libraries leafing through all the scholars who wrote anything on the subject and especially those who commented on the adventures of Lamekis. I started to get discouraged by so much wasted effort when an extraordinary adventure happened to put an end to this work, which deserves to be mentioned here." De Mouhy, *Lamekis*, 188-89.

In a state between sleeping and awakening, the author suddenly meets many of his own characters in his bedroom.[93] They complain to him about the way he portrayed them in the previous parts of *Lamékis*, and narrate in turn their own stories in their own slightly altered versions. In an embedded flashback, de Mouhy then recalls the time he was awakened by a barking dog outside. He followed the animal to a hole in a wall that gave access to a subterranean cavern. After a long walk through what seems to be underground temples, de Mouhy reaches a vestibule with golden bas-reliefs that depict the previous adventures of Lamékis. It even gets more estranging. After the ekphrastic scene, the dog who turned out to be the blue character Falbao, looses his animal form. He turns out to be both the philosopher Déhahal, who had tested Lamékis in the previous part, and the Armenian travel companion of de Mouhy who had told him the story of Lamékis in the first place. Finally, de Mouhy wakes up and in a magical scene, part 5 of *Lamékis* literally writes itself. De Mouhy hereby includes a summary of the previous four parts that had been published over the course of three years with a clever but extremely estranging narrative intervention.

The entire passage is a celebration of the imagination, and reminds one of Margaret Cavendish's creative act of writing. But *Lamékis* is not aimed at gaining knowledge about the natural world. It is the unbridled act of writing *and* reading that is central to *Lamékis*. Reality is not inextricably intertwined with fiction, as in the fantastic-scientific mode, nor is it turned upside down in some sort of mirroring universe, like in the menippean-carnevalesque.[94] De Mouhy's somewhat experimental novel is an extreme example of a text in which reality is only present in the staging of the literary act: the reader reading and the writer writing. One is reminded of this every time De Mouhy shifts from one narrative level to another or from one role into the next. In between those shifts, the fabulous is omnipresent in multiple love stories and adventures.

4.4.2 The Oscillation of Modes: Cyrano de Bergerac and Desfontaines

As has become clear by now, the three different modes of telling often manifest themselves in different combinations and degrees although they all share a desire to thematise and question the borders between reality and fiction. The dominance of certain modes can also be linked to regional preferences in European literature. It is no coincidence that the romanesque-fabulous mode was much more popular in France, where Sermain sees a strong revival of the fable as a genre and a strong influence of *Don Quixote*. At the same time, we see in academic works on Menippean satire that once the

[93] As Sempère points out, the metaleptic scene is the central passage around which the narrative is structured. See Sempère, 176.

[94] Citton argues that the evocation of wonder in the novel is a purely literary experience, free from any clear ideological imperative or authority. Citton, "Inspiration et renoncement dans Lamékis," 166.

Renaissance and the dominance of Latin in the genre is left behind, this changes in a preference for British texts at the turn of the seventeenth to eighteenth century. Especially texts of Alexander Pope (*The Dunciad, Essay on Criticism*) and Jonathan Swift (*The Battle of the Books, A Tale of a Tub, Gulliver's Travels*) are named in these contexts.[95] Weinbrot considers a certain negativity or severity to be characteristic of the Menippean satire, and finds it primarily in English works. He even excludes Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as a Menippean satire because it is "too jolly."[96] Apuleius text, according to Weinbrot, "may be a romance, or an early picaresque novel, or magic realism, but it is not the protest against a specious but powerful threatening orthodoxy of, say, the *Satyricon* or *The Dunciad*."[97]

Weinbrot's decisive feature makes the Menippean satire even more artificial as a genre than it already was, and is symptomatic for methodological pitfalls that come with corpus choices. However, within the limits of this study, the regional preferences for one mode of narration or the other might explain the difference in tone we see between Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Holberg's *Niels Klim*. Whereas Gulliver ends up as a misanthropic and frustrated human being, Klim remains the naive, pitiful and somewhat comical student from the beginning. In this last part, I therefore want to explore the idea that *Niels Klim*'s use of *Gulliver's Travels*, or at least his interpretation of it, leans towards what is considered to be the novel at the time in France, and thus is closer related to the romanesque-fabulous mode of telling than *Gulliver's Travels* is. I will do so by discussing three texts that are often considered as a sequence of influence in the imaginary voyage genre: Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comiques* with its mock-commentary *Iter Lunare* by David Russen, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and Desfontaines's *Le nouveau Gulliver*.

One of the most influential texts in the traditional corpus of imaginary voyages was Cyrano de Bergerac's *L'autre monde ou les Estats et Empires de la Lune* and *Les Estates et Empires du Soleil*, often referred to as *Histoire comique*. Cyrano's fiction is primarily a celebration of the imaginary voyage tradition itself. The main character, Dyrcona (an anagram of Cyrano), is guided on the moon by Domingo Gonsales, the main character of Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone*. We find elements we previously discussed in the context of the imaginary voyage tradition, such as the air voyages to the moon and back, a melodic moon language, the animalisation of the main character that would influence Swift, and many other *topoi.* [98] But most importantly, Cyrano's text is a celebration of the

[95] See Weinbrot. It is telling that Northrop Frye, when starting his criticism on the Menippean satire (which he renames as 'anatomy' at the end), he remarks that "most people would call *Gulliver's Travels* fiction but not a novel." Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957; repr., 1971).There is thus a general feeling that *Gulliver's Travels* lacks a certain fabulous quality to consider it a novel.

[96] Weinbrot, 297.

[97] Ibid.

[98] For the musical language in Cyrano de Bergerac's texts and its relation to this element in Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone,* see Cornelius, 39-64. For the man-beast theme, see Campbell, 175-76.

seventeenth-century scientific progress in the field of astronomy. In the course of the narrative, Dyrcona repeatedly compares his empirical evidence with previous theories of, amongst others, Campanella, Gassendi, Democritus, Epicurus, Galileo, Descartes and Kepler in extensive digressions. The adventure begins with a scene that recalls the metaleptic scene of *Lamékis*: Dyrcona finds a book from the Italian natural philosopher Gerolamo Carnado (1501-1576) magically opened on his library desk. The passage it reveals to Dyrcona is the story about how two figures appear to Carnado and present themselves as lunar people. This is for Dyrcona a divine impulse to travel to the moon himself.

Cyrano's text grew into a cult text that influenced many imaginary voyages to come, not the least Swift's, but it shows a certain blending of the fantastic-scientific mode and the romanesque-fabulous. Lambert devotes a chapter to Cyrano's text in her monograph *Imagining the Unimaginable* (2002) and points to the openly intertextual character of the text, playing with both ancient and modern texts through encounters between the main character and literary characters from other texts – also biblical characters - and through literary *topoi*:[99]

> The worlds in the Moon and the Sun are clearly literary worlds. Nevertheless, the narrator does not acknowledge the fact that the episodes and ideas quoted are fictional borrowings from other texts, but presents them either as empirical confirmations or corrected versions (based on the new empirical evidence that Dyrcona's journey supplied) of the events related in these texts.[100]

Cyrano's texts thematise literature almost constantly: romances, fables, but also the very type of literature they represent, the imaginary voyages.[101] In other words, Cyrano does not only use the fantastic-scientific mode of telling that is characteristic for imaginary voyages, but also consciously reflects upon this mode of telling by using intertexts from the same tradition.

Few texts can be said to be more metafictional than this one.[102] The *Histoire comique* both stages and denounces a literary genre and oscillates between the three modes of

[99] Lambert calls this the metanarrative dimension of Cyrano's text, which she links to amongst others Kepler's *Somnium.* Ladina Bezzola Lambert, *Imagining the Unimaginable: The Poetics of Early Modern Astronomy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 107. The quotations do not make the text Menippean in the sense that it is not in prosimetric form.

[100] Lambert, *Imagining the Unimaginable*, 112.

[101] There are elements that come from the romances. Lambert exemplifies the metanarrative quality of Cyrano's *Soleil* with the embedded story of the Kingdom of Lovers in *Soleil*. She rightly argues that this passage works as a *mise en abyme* as it "shows how the imagination visualizes [the worlds of the *Lune* and *Soleil*] through a playful reemployment of literary figurations." Lambert, 115.

[102] It is no coincidence that the other extremely metafictional text we saw earlier, namely *The Blazing World* of Margaret Cavendish, takes over many thematic elements from Cyrano de Bergerac. Like in Cavendish's text, Cyrano thematises the creation of his own fiction as an almost cognitive experiment. For a discussion of a particular passage in which Cyrano visualises the productions of the imagination, see Lambert, 119-21.

telling. The oscillation is primarily a characteristic of the reading process itself, but generally, I might conclude, on the one hand, that the menippean-carnevalesque mode as I defined it – a satirical reversal of socio-political structures - is perhaps the weakest, although Cyrano's texts have been linked to the genre of Menippean satire in the past. On the other hand, Cartesian thinking and early developments of the imaginary voyage permeate his texts. This makes the fantastic-scientific mode perhaps most dominant, closely followed by the literary reflexivity of the romanesque-fabulous mode.[103]

The dialogue Cyrano puts up between his own text and other texts that fictionalise the represented world through a pseudo-scientific discourse, is reused and somewhat amplified in *Iter Lunare* (1703), an English text by the largely unknown David Russen. It purports to be a tract that wants to refute the idea that an inhabited moon is considered to be "a Romance".[104] The body text is a point-by-point discussion of Cyrano's argument for the existence of an inhabited Moon, stuffed with more 'evidence' from both scientific and imaginary texts. Aspects as the feeding of the lunar people with fumes and their Musical language are explained with references to both ancient and modern thinkers. Russen's 'paper' is at times a rather annoying read and kills the comical undertones often present in Cyrano's texts. It is not entirely clear whether Russen was an amateur-philosopher who simply took over Cyrano's references to both fictional and ancient texts, or if he deliberately made Cyrano's metafictional play even more absurd, and just lacked the poetical skill to make it into an interesting text.[105] In both cases, however, it highlights that Cyrano's texts were primarily read as metafictional (i.e. thematising the fiction of the world), and openly intertextual (thematising a negotiation of authority).

An alternative reworking of Cyrano's text is Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which negotiates the ontological status of the countries Gulliver visits and hereby thematises its own status as a reliable travel report, in line with the prescriptions of the Royal Society.[106] Moreover, the fantastic-scientific line, with its interest for empiricism, crosses the carnevalesque line of Menippean satire in Swift's text. Swift's text also fictionalises socio-political structures and fights against "threatening orthodoxies," of which the work of empiricists is just one example. *Gulliver's Travels* thus uses the pseudo-scientific rhetoric to write a

[103] For a discussion of Cyrano's texts by Capoferro in line with the concept of the fantastic, see Capoferro, 157-60. Capoferro adds that "the stunning variety of worldviews incorporated by Cyrano connects the *Comical History* to the tradition of Menippean satire, which is, as we have seen, a precursor of the fantastic, as well as to the subsequent tradition of imaginary voyages." Ibid., 157. De Smet sees the genre of *histoires comiques* as one that would arise out of what she calls "the horizon of the Menippean satire." However, they speak of Menippean satire as genres, while I have defined the menippean-carnevalesque mode of telling as a narrowed down version thereof.

[104] See the preface to David Russen, *Iter Lunare, or A Voyage to the Moon Containing Some Considerations on the Nature of that Planet, the Posibility of gentting thither, with other Pleasant Conceits about the Inhabitants, their Manners and Customs* (London: Robert Gosling, 1707), A2.

[105] Capoferro sees much irony and contradiction in Russen's text and calls the latter a 'mock-commentary'. Capoferro, 175.

[106] Ibid., 183.

socio-political satire that is, as indicated before, much harsher in its criticism than *Niels Klim*. Compared to Cyrano's texts, then, Swift foregrounds the menippean-carnevalesque, at the expense of the romanesque-fabulous. *Gulliver's Travels* hereby becomes less absurd in its inventions but satirically more poignant.

As said in chapter 2, Swift's novel was quickly adapted to the French taste by the French translator and novelist Pierre Abbé Desfontaines. The preface of Desfontaines, as Léger points out, "n'a d'autre but que d'inscrire la traduction française de *Gulliver* dans un cadre référentiel compréhensible et acceptable, tant pour le public que pour la critique." As a consequence, Desfontaines presents *Gulliver* not as a satire, but as a moral fable.[107] What is particularly interesting in Desfontaines's translation is that he adds many footnotes to Swift's texts. Léger shows that some of these interrupt the reading, prevent readers from getting carried away with the "imaginations" of the writer and put the focus on the passage. Other footnotes introduce a moral value and sometimes object ideas expressed in the body text, which force the reader to reread the passage.[108] What Desfontaines essentially does is amplify the romanesque-fabulous mode of the metafictional paradigm in Swift's original. The footnotes point to the play with different layers of fiction, add moral value, help to change a satire into a moral fable, and thus generally make the reader aware of the act of reading and interpreting.

In his sequel to *Gulliver's Travels*, *Le nouveau Gulliver*, Desfontaines continues in the same line of his translation. His new novel will be something different than Swift's texts: "ce n'est ni le même voyageur, ni le même genre d'aventures, ni le même goût d'allégorie. La seule conformité est dans le nom de *Gulliver.*"[109] The paratexts again express the desire to develop a romanesque poetics, and anticipate the addition of amorous adventures of Gulliver's son Jean and of moralistic undertones in the body text.[110] At the end of the novel, Desfontaines adds a note from a fictive Doctor Ferruginer to the author, Jean. The doctor's argument aims at supporting Jean's credibility and employs a rationale which recalls Klim's argumentation at the beginning of chapter XI and his opposition between *docti* and *indocti*:

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[107] Léger, 183. "[The preface] has no other purpose than to inscribe the French translation of Gulliver into a frame of reference that is understandable and acceptable, both for the public and for the critics." For the preface by Desfontaines, see Jonathan Swift, *Voyages de Gulliver*, trans. Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines, 2 vols. (Paris: Jacques Guérin, 1727), vol. 1, v-xxviii.

[108] For the two effects of the footnotes, Léger uses the terms "détonation" and the neologism "détonnement". Léger, 184.

[109] Desfontaines, 16. "It is neither the same traveller, nor the same sort of adventures, nor the same taste for allegory. The only conformity is in the name of Gulliver."

[110] For a more detailed interpretation of Desfontaines's romanesque poetics in *Le nouveau Gulliver*, see Benoît Léger, "Voyages de Desfontaines dans la Romancie: *Le Nouveau Gulliver* (1730)," in *Préfaces Romanesques. Actes du XVIIe colloque international de la SATOR. Leuven - Anvers, 22-24 mai 2003*, ed. Mladen Kozul, et al. (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2005).

> Il faut avouer, Monsieur, que les savans qui ont eu l'avantage de lire Ctesias, Hérodote, Pline, Solin, Pomponius Mela, Orose, Manethon, sont bien plus disposés à croire les choses extraordinaires qu'on rapporte des pays éloignés, que la plupart des autres hommes, que l'ignorance & le préjugé rendent soupçonneux & difficiles.[111]

Doctor Ferruginer continues to laud these authors because they informed people about incredible but existing creatures, which is the same passage Klim used from the *auctor gravissimus* Pliny.[112] To the extent that Pliny was the exemplary *physicus* for Klim, Doctor Ferruginer also follows Pliny in saying that "avant que l'expérience nous eût appris que plusieurs choses étoient possibles, on les croyoit impossibles."[113]

Desfontaines highlighted an aspect that was already present in Swift's original, but was relegated to the background because of Swift's preference for socio-political satire. Desfontaines, both in his translation and in the sequel, foregrounds a metafictional play that makes his adaptations into 'recyclages littéraires'. As Desfontaines adds reflexive footnotes to a story that builds upon the universe of Gulliver, and adds the role of a pseudo-intellectual commentator who uses quotations from classical authors to vouchsafe the veracity of Jean's tale, he creates a 'roman au second degré'. A fictional world of a previous novel is the fundament of the new story. Additionally, Desfontaines changes to a large extent the tone from a biting satire to a moral fable. Hereby, *Le nouveau Gulliver* makes the romanesque-fabulous mode more prominent than the menippean-carnevalesque.

This shift in dominance of the modes of telling is similar to the shift that manifests between *Gulliver's Travels* and *Niels Klim.*[114] Whether this parallel is coincidental or telling, is not clear, but it helps to understand *Niels Klim*'s position in the polysystem of (meta)fictional narratives in the early eighteenth century. Holberg was aware of literary vogues and definitely of intellectual ideas from Britain and other parts of Europe, but when it came down to his narrative poetics, he leaned towards techniques that were in vogue in France, the country of the new cosmopolitan language of eighteenth century Europe.

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[111] Desfontaines, 348. "It must be granted, Sir, that the men of learning who had the opportunity to read Ctesias, Herodotus, Pliny, Solinus, Pomponius Mela, Orosus, and Manethon, are much more inclined to belief the extraordinary things that are told about remote countries than most of the other people, who act suspicious and difficult because of their ignorance and prejudice."

[112] For the related passages, see *Niels Klim* XI, 243; Pliny, *Natural History* VII.2; Desfontaines, 349.

[113] Desfontaines, 349. "[...] before experience had taught us that many things were possible, they were thought to be impossible."

[114] There are some resemblances between characteristics of specific countries in the universes of Desfontaines and Holberg. See Kragelund's introduction to Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, xlii-xliii; Paludan, 157-61. However, these thematic similarities are not sufficient proof to claim that Holberg read *Le nouveau Gulliver,* or Desfontaines' translation instead of Swift's English original.

4.5 Quixotic Puppetry in *Niels Klim*

To strengthen my claim that *Niels Klim* again forgrounded the romanesque-fabulous mode compared to *Gulliver's Travels*, I want to focus in this last section on the relation between *Don Quixote* and *Niels Klim*. What Bidermann was for the menippean-carnevalesque mode, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is for the romanesque-fabulous: one of the books that most purely expresses this mode. The premise of *Don Quixote* is metafictional in the sense that the text specifically (and paradoxically) questions the fictional status of worlds inside other fictional texts: chivalric romances. Cervantes lets his main character wander through a world that is in itself a realistic environment, adds a fictional universe through (amongst others) Don Quixote's madness, and asks the reader whether the world of Don Quixote is real or literary. As *Don Quixote* is not an I-narration, the reader initially is convinced of the literariness and fictionality of the world as seen by Don Quixote. However, through a game with narrative levels, different voices in the text, role reversals, and many other techniques that became generally associated with the fictional universe of *Don Quixote,* Cervantes lets the reader repeatedly doubt this fictionality and thus the madness of his hero. The importance of Cervantes's novel in European literary history lies, amongst others, in its function as a wide encyclopaedia of narrative techniques and its influential voice in popularising metafiction.

Holberg was profoundly familiar with *Don Quixote,* as he proves most clearly in his poetical debut, the Danish mock-heroic poem *Peder Paars* (1719-1720). Although scholarship has repeatedly acknowledged this link, it has forgotten *Don Quixote* while reading Holberg's other popular travel story.[115] Just as in *Peder Paars*, in which a shopkeeper takes up a non-heroic journey to reunite with his lover Dorothea at the other side of a sea narrow, Holberg stages again the doubtfully heroic adventures of a lowly figure in *Niels Klim*.[116] Although the narrative constellations are quite different, as I will show, Holberg readapts the negotiation of authority, so vital to both Cervantes's narrative and to *Peder Paars*, to a new type of text. The I-narration, amongst other choices, gave Holberg some narrative restrictions in incorporating the metafictional play of *Don Quixote*, which he imitated quite plainly in *Peder Paars*. Still, *Don Quixote* is present, albeit in a subtler manner.

[115] *Peder Paars* has often been studied in relation to the tradition of mock-heroics, and three models often pass in review: Boileau's *Le Lutrin* (1674), Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. For Cervantes, see amongst others Clausen, 106-07. The primary focus goes to the presence of Vergil's *Aeneid* as a parodical object in *Peder Paars*. See amongst others Dorte Hørlück Lundsager, "Den Parodiske Peder Paars," *Spring. Tidsskrift for Moderne Dansk Litteratur*, no. 25 (2008); Erik A. Nielsen, *Holbergs komik* (København: Gyldendal, 1984), 58-75.

[116] In a recent article, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen compared *Peder Paars* and *Niels Klim*, and focused on their shared play with Vergil's *Aeneid.* Skovgaard-Petersen, "Journeys of Humour and Satire: Peder Paars and Niels Klim." I will come back to the relation between *Peder Paars* and *Niels Klim* later in this chapter and in chapter 5.

The metafictional play in *Don Quixote* is made possible by a ingenious narrative constellation based on two character duo's: 'Cervantes' and the Arabic writer of Don Quixote's adventures, Cide Hamete Benengeli, on the one hand, and Don Quixote himself and his servant Sancho Panza, on the other hand. These characters can personify opposing epistemologies, poetics and reading methods, and have served as an example for Holberg to construct his narration in *Niels Klim*.

The first duo relates to the distinction I made in the previous chapter between Klim, the writer of the text, and Abeline, his editor or translator. Like in *Don Quixote,* this distinction only becomes apparent in the second edition. After Cervantes had received quite some reactions to his first edition from 1605 and another writer even wrote a sequel to his story, Cervantes reclaimed the adventures of *Don Quixote* in 1615 by adding part that not only wrote Don Quixote dead and made future sequels impossible, it also reacted to the reception of the first edition in various ways which made *Don Quixote* in one of the most metafictional texts in the literary history of Western-Europe. Part of this reaction was to add that the original tale of *Don Quixote* was supposedly written by the Arabic writer, and later edited by Cervantes. Cervantes repeatedly interrupts his narration to reflect upon his editing process or mentioning irregularities or specific features of the original, Arabic text. Hereby, a filter is added which makes the reader attentive of what they are actually reading.

The technique was most clearly copied by Holberg in *Peder Paars* where the poet Hans Mickelsen, a recurring pseudonym of Holberg, wrote down Paars's doubtfully heroic adventure, and is constantly commented by Just Justesen, another common fictional character in Holberg's writings who personifies the (pseudo-)intellectual. Justesen's weapon of commentary is primarily the footnote, while the aspect of translation is not present.[117] In *Niels Klim*, then, the roles are redistributed to the travel writer and genuine *physicus* Klim and the (pseudo-)intellectual translator and editor Abeline, whose weapon of commentary shifts from the footnote to the quotation.

The second duo is Don Quixote himself and Sancho Panza. To Holberg, Cervantes's Don Quixote was primarily a wandering knight who fought against forces that were too powerful for him.[118] In the short Latin parody Holberg published early in his career, *Dissertation on the Law about Marriage with Relatives*, he refers to Don Quixote in order to mocks his opponent and colleague Andreas Hojer:

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[117] The use of different voices in the text and particularly the development of these voices in a series of editions has also been linked to the genre of Menippean satire as it expresses the mockery of pseudo-intellectualism. A clear example is the subdivision by Weinbrot, menippean by addition. See part II of his study, in which he primarily treates Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*: Weinbrot, 115-92.

[118] Holberg refers to Don Quixote as the "wandering knight" in his comedies *The Invisible* (*De u-synlige,* Act 1, Scene 1, H3r) and *The Fidget* (*Den Stundesløse,* Act 1, Scene 2, L2v). In *Moral Reflections*, Holberg refers twice to the windmills Don Quixote famously fights (*Moral Reflections* I.160, 217 and II.1, 281). For a catalogue of where Don Quixote appears in Holbergs writings, see Jens Kr. Andersen, *Holbergs kilder? Studier i komediedigterens mulige litterære forudsætninger* (København: Akademisk Forlag, 1993), 118.

> Videris mihi mutare studia, ut bellum geras cum totius orbis Literatis, imitaturus in eo strenuum Heroëm Don Quixot de la Mancha Cavallero de la triste figura, qvi omnes Gigantes, ubicunqve terrarum erant, provocare non dubitavit.[119]

Don Quixote was moreover accompanied on his adventures by his sidekick Sancho Panza.[120] They both personify a different look on the world they are travelling through, but they also have a different social rank, linked to different poetical standards. Don Quixote is the one who extracts his knowledge of the world from fiction and (fictional) authorities, while Sancho Panza is the sober-minded person of the duo, who puts the practical and tangible reality before the world of books.[121] The adventures of the duo gave the blueprint for many so-called mock-heroic texts, like Holberg's very own *Peder Paars*.[122] Peder is accompanied by Per Ruus, a peasant who takes notes of Peder's heroic adventures in Denmark and the somewhat backward island of Anholt. Per Ruus is not only an important agent in *Peder Paars*'s plot; he is thus also the chronicler of the narrated events and the main source for the material of the poem.

At the beginning of the third song of book I, Hans Mickelsen questions the authority of Ruus as the writer of Paars's adventures.

> [...] Jeg seet har hans Journal,
> Som paa Raadhuuset end forvares paa en Sal.
> Hans Skriver, Peder Ruus har fast altsammen skrevet,
> Endeel forandret af min Helt Per Paars er blevet.
> Om jeg maa driste mig at criticere lidt,
> Om vore Lærde Mænd, og tale noget frit,
> Da synis over dem man Aarsag har at klage,

[119] *Juridical Dissertation on Marriage of the Closely Related*, 16. "It looks like you change your field of study in order to wage war against the entire world of learned men, to imitate in this the brave Hero Don Quixote de la Mancha de la Triste Figura, who did not hesitate to provoke all giants wherever they were on earth." An almost identical phrase Holberg uses in *Lives of Heroines* I, 116-117.

[120] Holberg mentions Sancho Panza in his comedy *Don Ranudo* (1745, Act 3, scene 4, 52).

[121] Cervantes plays with this opposition as well, especially in the second part of *Don Quixote* where there are multiple episodes in which the overall opposition is comically reversed. It is not a coincidence that Erich Auerbach, when characterizing *Don Quixote*, precisely picks one of those passages in which the poetical and philosophical roles attributed to the two main characters are questioned, namely the meeting with Dulcinea in *Don Quixote* II.10. As Don Quixote longs for his (imagined) Lady Dulcinea, Sancho Panza finally sets up a situation in which someone dressed as Dulcinea is brought to Don Quixote. However, it is Don Quixote then who starts to doubt what he sees. What did not sprout from his own imagination or his reading of romances cannot be real. For Auerbach's reading of the passage about Dulcinea, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2001). Although these reversed passages are equally characteristic for Cervantes's metafictional play, it can safely be argued that the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were rapidly canonised as oppositional figures: the noble, educated, and dreamy master and his down-to-earth servant.

[122] It is no coincidence that seminal mock-heroics as Boileau's *Le Lutrine,* Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* and Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* also have been considered as Menippean satires in scholarship.

De tage sig iblant formange gode Dage;
Thi skrive store Mænds Bedrifter ingen vil,
Mand skulle tvile om Per Paars har været til
Hvis jeg af Nidkierhed for denne Heltis Ære,
Af hvis Exempel mand saa meget got kand lære,
Ey hafde omsorg haft at bringe for en Dag
Hans mange Eventyr, og saadan vigtig Sag.[123]

The text is thus supposedly based on notes of Per Ruus, the chronicler, composed in verse by Hans Mickelsen and commented by Just Justesen. What makes *Niels Klim* so interesting is that Klim is both travel writer and traveller, both Hans Mikkelsen and Peder Paars, both 'Cervantes' and Don Quixote. Abeline, then, is suggested to be the editor and translator, but he is also the first listener of Klim's story. The two levels of oppositional figures are blended into one oppositional duo: Klim and Abeline.

Let me illustrate more clearly how the different roles play out in *Don Quixote* and how it relates to the roles in *Niels Klim.* One of *Don Quixote*'s most canonical passages is the one on Montesinos. In the second part, published in 1615, Don Quixote descends into a cave, like Klim.[124] He wants to see the Cave of Montesinos from within, also out of curiosity: Don Quixote is resolved "de entrar en ella y ver a ojos vistas si eran verdaderas las maravillas que de ella se decían por todos aquellos contornos."[125] He does not refer to physical wonders, however, but to the wonders as described in romances. Like the entire *Don Quixote*, the passage on the cave of Montesinos – *Don Quixote*'s subterranean voyage, so to speak – is primarily a literary journey. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are led to the cave by a guide who is introduced to them as "famoso estudiante y muy aficionado a leer libros

[123] *Peder Paars* I.4, 19-32. "His journal I have seen / within the town hall safely placed behind a screen; / Peer Ruus therein has written in a wordy fashion / of Peder Paars, my hero, but has changed a portion. / If I may dare to criticize our learned man / and let my thoughts come forth as freely as they can, / then I would say I have a lingering suspicion / too many perfect days appear in his rendition; / But no one writes of everything that may befall. / One might have doubted that Peer Paars had lived at all / if I from zeal anent this hero's fame and glory / (for one may learn much good from reading such a story), / had not with thoughtfulness decided to retrace / his numerous adventures and this weighty case." For the translation, see Ludvig Holberg, *Peder Paars*, trans. Bergliot Stromsoe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 43-44.

[124] By way of introduction to his article on *Niels Klim* and the utopian genre, James F. Jones starts with a brief comparison with Cervantes's passage on Montesinos, which he argues to be strikingly different from previous descriptions of entrances to the netherworld in European literary history: "when asked by Sancho and the cousin what he had seen in Hell, Don Quixote replies categorically that it was not Hell at all but the most beautiful vista one could possibly imagine. What this famous character finds on his particular descent differs radically from the experiences of his literary predecessors, and to an even greater degree, the same thing may likewise be said of Don Quixote's fictional successor in descending to the world below through a cave – Niels Klim [...]." J. F. Jones, "Adventures in a Strange Paradise - Utopia in 'Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum'," *Orbis Litterarum* 35, no. 3 (1980): 193.

[125] Miguel de Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Cátedra, 2010), vol. 2, XXII, 212. "[...] to go down into it, and prove by his own eyesight the wonders that were reported of it round the country." Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. P.A. Motteux (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), 485.

de caballerías" and a writer himself.[126] On the way over, he tells Don Quixote about his most recent products of his pen: a Spanish *Metamorphoses* or in short "Ovidio a lo burlesco" and a supplement to the historical work of Polydore Virgil.[127] Our hero is lead to the cave by a typical pseudo-intellectual who brags with his doubtful rhetorical and poetical skills.

Once arrived at the cave, Sancho Panza and the guide let Don Quixote down with a rope. The rope does not break, like in *Niels Klim*, but after half an hour they are getting worried about why Don Quixote's descend takes so long and they pull the knight back up. Don Quixote reappears above ground fast asleep, and, once awoken, narrates what he saw in the cavern, namely the complete affirmation of things he knew from previous chivalric romances. What Don Quixote saw is less important in relation to *Niels Klim* than the setting of the embedded story. It is not clear to the reader whether the narrated adventures truly happened or Don Quixote dreamt it. He admits that he never reached the bottom of the cave, but crawled into a hole halfway inside the cavern, waited there to be pulled back up but fell asleep in the meantime. The entire subterranean journey, narrated by Don Quixote to his friends in chapter 23, is thus either a dream or an eyewitness report. At the beginning of chapter 24, the narration is interrupted:

> Dice el que tradujo esta grande historia del original, de la que escribió su primer autor Cide Hamete Benengeli, que llegando al capítulo de la aventura de la cueva de Montesinos, en el margen dél estaban escritas de mano del mesmo Hamete estas mismas razones: "No me puedo dar a entender, ni me puedo persuadir, que al valeroso don Quijote le pasase puntualmente todo lo que en el antecedente capítulo queda escrito: la razón es que todas las aventuras hasta aquí sucedidas han sido contingibles y verisímiles, pero ésta desta cueva no le hallo entrada alguna para tenerla por verdadera, por ir tan fuera de los términos razonables. Pues pensar yo que don Quijote mintiese, siendo el más verdadero hidalgo y el más noble caballero de sus tiempos, no es posible; que no dijera él una mentira si le asaetearan. Por otra parte, considero que él la contó y la dijo con todas las circunstancias dichas, y que no pudo fabricar en tan breve espacio tan gran máquina de disparates; y si esta aventura parece apócrifa, yo no tengo la culpa; y así, sin afirmarla por falsa o verdadera, la escribo. Tú, lector, pues eres prudente, juzga lo que te pareciere, que yo no debo ni puedo más; puesto que se tiene por cierto que al tiempo de su fin y muerte dicen que se retrató della, y dijo que él la había inventado, por parecerle que convenía y cuadraba bien con las aventuras que había leído en sus historias."[128]

[126] Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, vol. 2, XXII, 212. "[...] a pretty scholar, and a great admirer of books of knight-errantry." Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 485.

[127] Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, vol. 2, XXII, 213. "Ovid burlesqued" Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 485-86.

[128] Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, vol. 2, XXII, 232-33. "The translator of the famous history declares, that at the beginning of the chapter, which treats of the adventure of Montesinos' cave, he found a marginal annotation, written with the Arabian author's own hand, in these words: 'I cannot be

The entire passage on Montesinos and this metafictional passage are striking in relation to *Niels Klim*. Quixote-Klim is guided to a cave by a (pseudo-)intellectual scholar (Abeline?), led down with a rope and enters - without wanting to admit it - a universe of fiction. Once returned to the upper world, he narrates his adventures to the same pseudo-intellectual scholar and Sancho Panza. Sancho does not believe his story and warns Don Quixote not to spread his tale. Consequently, the translator of Don Quixote's story (parallel to Abeline) again doubts the truthfulness of the story, and admits to have doubted to leave it out.[129]

The roles in *Niels Klim* do not have a one-on-one relation to those in *Don Quixote*. This is what makes Holberg's travel text into a rewriting of Cervantes's metafictional techniques rather than an imitation of Cervantes's novel. As *Peder Paars* already shows, any author has room to change the roles of the characters, but the effect stays the same: the fictional status of the narration itself is questioned, not only of the represented world. In *Niels Klim*, the narrative set-up is again different, mainly because Klim is both the traveller and the narrator of the main part of the text. He is his own chronicler and experiences his adventures alone.

Moreover, reading *Niels Klim* with Cervantes's novel in the back of our minds highlights *Niels Klim*'s negotiation of authority on different levels of the texts and the addition of a pseudo-authoritative figure who mediates the narration and represents the classical voice in the text. Already in the preface of *Don Quixote*, quotations are introduced as an important factor for the authority of the presented text. There, 'Cervantes' complains to a friend about the difficulty of writing a preface to his *historia*. This anonymous friend advises 'Cervantes' to brighten up his history by adding, "de manera que venga a pelo, algunas sentencias o latines que vos sepáis de memoria, o, a lo menos, que os cuesten poco trabajo el buscalle."[130] He follows on arguing that one can use quotes of Horace, Cato or from Scripture as long they fit in to the new context. The role Holberg added for Abeline

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persuaded, nor believe, that all the wonderful accidents said to have happened to the valorous Don Quixote in the cave, so punctually befell him as he relates them: for, the course of his adventures hitherto has been very natural, and bore the face of probability; but in this there appears no coherence with reason, and nothing but monstrous incongruities. But, on the other hand, if we consider the honour, worth, and integrity of the noble Don Quixote, we have not the least reason to suspect he would be guilty of a lie; but rather that he would sooner have been transfixed with arrows. Besides, he has been so particular in his relation of that adventure, and given so many circumstances, that I dare not declare it absolutely apocryphal; especially when I consider, that he had not time enough to invent such a cluster of fables. I therefore insert it among the rest, without offering to determine whether it is true or false; leaving it to the discretion of the judicious reader. Though I must acquaint him by the way, that Don Quixote, upon his death-bed, utterly disowned this adventure, as a perfect fable, which he said he had invented purely to please his humour, being suitable to such as he had formerly read in romances.'" Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 496-97.

[129] The precise role of Abeline at the end of *Niels Klim*, when Klim returns to the upper world and narrates his adventures to his old friend, will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

[130] Cervantes, *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, 98. "[...] here and there some scattered Latin sentences that you have already by rote, or may have with little or no pains." Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 5.

in the second edition of *Niels Klim* echoes the traditional voice that clings to the knowledge and poetical standards provided by authorities in the past and which is mocked throughout *Don Quixote* in many forms. This clashes with a more modern voice that prefers properly acquired knowledge and new poetic standards.[131]

Whereas in Bidermann's text references to the Classics have a didactic purpose in – to teach the students the Classics canon and the basics of rhetoric -, Holberg makes the classical voices integrate into the overall negotiation of authority and fictionalisation of the world. It does not have a direct didactic purpose. The latter was rather common in the humanist tradition, which was still a more authority-based schooling system in which the use of classical quotations was valued as prove of your status as an intellectual or well-read pupil. In *Niels Klim*, the quotations are one of the many voices in the negotiation of authority, in line with Cervantes's novel. The classical voice in *Niels Klim* and *Don Quixote* are part of the fictionalisation of reality. This does not mean that certain intertextual links in *Niels Klim* cannot genuinely convey morals that the reader has to pick up on, such as references to Cicero often convey. However, they also serve the narrative structure and the continuous negotiation of authority that is based upon a shifting motion between fiction and reality.[132]

[131] Skovgaard-Petersen says the following on the mockery of pseudo-intellectualism in Holberg's text: "Niels is [...] a narrow-minded antiquarian pedant like the learned commentator Just Justesen in *Peder Paars* (at least as he is portrayed in the greater part of his commentaries) – and like Erasmus Montanus in the eponymous comedy (1731). Their horizon is defined by old books." Skovgaard-Petersen, "Journeys of Humour and Satire: *Peder Paars* and *Niels Klim*," 131. What I have tried to show is that this mockery is not just portrayed in one character. The division of roles is, like in *Don Quixote*, more complex. The role of Abeline makes the reader doubt about the characterisation of Klim. The satirical object remains the same, but it is personified in two characters, depending on how you read the text.

[132] A text that rewrites the Quixotic roles in a similar fashion as *Niels Klim* is Casanova's *Icosaméron*, albeit in a more dramatised version. The novel contains the report of the subterranean adventures by the heroes Elisabeth and Edouard, but is often interrupted by their conversation partners, amongst whom their parents. *L'Icosaméron* is thus primarily a dialogue, a bulky version of the narrative setting at the cave of Montesinos. The two groups of people personify a clash between old and young, but also between old and new beliefs, worldviews and poetics. In his article on *L'Icosaméron,* Craig examines how the novel "questions modes of reading the *merveilleux*." Craig, 290. He refers to the frame story in which twelve people listen to, question and evaluate the story of Edouard and Elisabeth. He particularly describes Casanova's text as follows: "The text's convergence of utopian and fairy-tale motifs is joined by extensive commentary on literary conventions, much of it dealing specifically with the *Icosaméron*'s particular way of participating in the questioning and hesitation, the dialectic, inherent in the genre of the fantastic, particularly when merged with utopia." Ibid. Casanova's *Icosaméron* thus perfectly expresses the combination of the romanesque-fabulous and the fantastic-scientific modes."

4.6 Conclusion: A Mobile Novel

The previous overview of imaginary voyages, Menippean satires and novels was aimed at sketching a polysystem of fictional texts in which Holberg's *Niels Klim* can be placed. Following Sermain's theory, I have pointed to the inclination of writers of fiction in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century towards metafiction. This metafictional paradigm manifests itself in different forms and degrees, sometimes almost absent, other times extremely prominent. *Niels Klim* is rather exceptional in its ability to combine the three modes of telling. It points to the borders between fiction and reality (1) by questioning the ontological status, specifically with the play of *Niels Klim* as a *theoria* and Klim as a *physicus*, (2) by turning socio-political structures upside down, which manifests in the utopian and dystopian societies of Potu and Martinia, but also in the satirical reversal of Europe at the Firmament or in Tanian's account, and finally (3) by using fictional worlds of others, which highlights the status of *Niels Klim* as a fabricated and filtered text, and shows the act of reading and interpreting itself. The quotations of classical authors in *Niels Klim* do not only have a menippean-carnevalesque function (laughing with pseudo-intellectualism), but are integrated into the fictional play of the other modes: they help questioning the *theoria* and point to the fabulous status of the text and other texts.

The classical voice in *Niels Klim* can thus not be reduced to a use of the prosimetrum after the Menippean satire as it was practiced a century before. Holberg reintroduces this narrative technique in a new poetical and narrative era that uses metafiction to invite readers to reflect upon the borders between reality and fiction. *Niels Klim* is a child of its age that combines influences from (at least) French, British and Latin into an innovative narrative that negotiates authority. *Niels Klim* is thus not a Danish *Gulliver's Travels,* but at best a Latin *Gulliver* with a French touch and European society as its satirical object, examined from its literary periphery, i.e. Scandinavia. This description is not less artificial, but at least it recognises the individuality of *Niels Klim* as a text that is dislocated and mobile.

The overview of the polysystem has moreover shown that it is perhaps less anachronistic to call *Niels Klim* as novel after Holberg's own term *roman*, instead of a Menippean satire or an imaginary voyage. Holberg had a conception of fabulous literature that crossed modern generic borders of the utopia, the fairy tale, the imaginary voyage and the Menippean satire. His interpretation of the novel was, like Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, building upon a tradition that is most prominent in romances and the genre of the fable, and is characterised by both staging and denouncing *fabulae.* Hereby, Holberg's novel wants to make the reader "aware of the fabulatory nature of all truth-claims."[133]

[133] Citton, "Fairy Poetics: Revisiting French Fairy Tales as (Post) Modern Literary Machines," 551.

The novel, as it fits *Niels Klim*, is thus a self-referential type of text that is open and dynamic.[134] *Niels Klim* can only be categorised in a way that accepts its ability to juxtapose features from different genres, and to combine different metafictional modes of telling. Hereby, we acknowledge *Niels Klim*'s mobility and evasiveness, this time on the basis of genre. Because it lets its reader reflect upon fiction, tradition and genre, no genre is really applicable, unless it embraces its own paradoxicality. The novel at the end of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth was a mobile genre: parasitising on other genres, aware of its own search for a poetics, and easily crossing linguistic and cultural borders. As part of this 'genre', *Niels Klim* was primarily designed to travel, not only between languages and cultures, but also between genres.

[134] Bakhtin already was a promoter of such an interpretation of the novel, namely, in the words of Aravamudan "a force [...] at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, and the artificial constraints of that system." Aravamudan rightly nuances that the term novel "is useful only insofar as it puts a static hierarchy of genres into a dynamic and transformative interrelationship." Aravamudan, 34.

Part III

Historia, or On Truth

Propheta & Historicus
Officium vatis cum sit narrare futura,
Historici officium est pandere præterita.
Is prædicit, at hic dicit; docet unus & alter,
Quæ vitanda homini, quæ facienda sient.[1]

Fabularum scriptores insectantur stulti homines,
dum credunt semper de se ludi.
De me cur semper ludatur fabula, clamas;
At sine te ludi fabula nulla queat.[2]

After having discussed in parts I and II how the concepts of *iter* and *theoria* shape the character of Klim and potential readings of *Niels Klim* as a book, I turn in this part to the third and final genre mentioned on the title page: that of *historia*. I will discuss what Klim and Holberg mean by this term, and how this concept fails or succeeds to guide the way we read *Niels Klim*. While the previous parts taught us something about how *Niels Klim* plays with language and tradition, this part will deepen our understanding of *Niels Klim* as a mobile text by focusing on the concept of truth, a common connotation linked to *historia*, both in Latin and in modern times.

But what is truth? In Holberg's *Natural Law* (1716), in which his project as a moral philosopher is deeply rooted,[3] he explains what truth and lies are. He first makes a distinction between the Latin *veritas logica* and 'moral truth' (*moralske Sandhed*).[4] In the latter case, the speaker speaks his mind ("Talen kommer overeens med Sindet") and he both understands and means what he says. When one does not speak his mind, one can

[1] *Epigrams* VII.105, 192.
[2] Ibid. II.19, 46.
[3] Recent scholarly efforts have shown the importance of *Natural Law* for Holberg's project and were bundled in the edited volume Jørgen Magnus Sejersted and Eiliv Vinje, eds., *Ludvig Holbergs naturrett* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2012).
[4] The entire passage is found in *Natural Law*, I.9.130-34. I must thank Jørgen Sejersted for pointing me to this extremely relevant passage.

still express a logical or verbal truth, but the speaker knows that his words express something different than what he means; when the audience is entitled to know the right meaning, his speech can be called a lie. The reverse is also possible. Speech can hold moral truth without expressing a logical truth. Holberg calls this 'false speech' (*falske Tale*) and gives the example of fables or 'made-up speech' (*Fabler eller opdigtet Tale*). The concise taxonomy that Holberg proposes shows that what we would call historical or scientific truth does not necessarily coincide with *moral* truth. A history in which the *historicus* twists his knowledge to trick the reader is a worse source for moral truth than a fable, which, against all logical truth, can still hold morals.

Holberg's discussion in *Natural Law*, shows how closely the notion of truth is intertwined with language and authority – the central themes of parts I and II of this thesis. Truth in general can be established in language and in human interaction. The type of truth (*veritas logica* or *moral truth)* or untruth (*false speech* or *lie*) depends on how the speaker claims authority, or better, on what the speaker's says and how that relates to what he knows and what the recipient oughts to know.

In light of these considerations, the generic attribution of *historia* to a completely fabulous story as the one in *Niels Klim* may not be left unnoticed. In chapter 5, the use of the term *historia* – and its counterpart *fabula* - will be considered as an ideal tool in Holberg's game of make-believe and in the characterisation of Klim. We will get to know Klim as a reader of *historiae* and as a *historicus* himself. What does *historia* mean for Holberg's protagonist, and how does he live up to his own standards of good, historical writing? Intertextual links with some of the most popular, fabulous *historiae*, such as Lucian's *True Histories* and Veiras's *L'histoire des Sévarambes*, will point to a deliberate play with the terms of *historia* and *fabula* and underline the discrepancy between Klim's notion of *historia* and Holberg's. For, this play between *historia* and *fabula* misleads readers in thinking they have to seek *veritas logica*. What Holberg actually wants to bring across is moral truth in the form of a 'moral system', as Holberg calls it.

In chapter 6, we will explore what Holberg means by 'morals' and how a reader should create such a 'moral system' out of a text that challenges historical truth by means of fiction. In his commentary of *Niels Klim* in the *Third Autobiographical Letter*, Holberg opposes to prevailing opinions on literary interpretation and the moralistic value of literature. The person he antagonises most clearly, although his name is not mentioned, is the Danish Pietist and theologian Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764). His legacy as an educator of the people, and especially his fictional travelogue about an Asian prince travelling through Europe, *Menoza* (1742-1743), will be considered as an opposite example of how Holberg envisioned moral engagement of the reader in a text. Pontoppidan and *Menoza*, moreover, form an important component of *Niels Klim*'s early reception. They, amongst others, incited Holberg to write his commentary in 1743 and later the *Apologetic Preface* in the second edition of *Niels Klim* (1745).

In chapter 4 we considered the metafictional paradigm in literature to be characterised by 'the Fable', a critical attitude that makes the reader "aware of the fabulatory nature of all truth-claims." This did not mean, however, that nothing is to be gained for the reader from *Niels Klim*; the text should not leave the reader in a state of aporia. Holberg does not only want to make a text that is metalinguistic and metafictional, but also metareflexive; it provokes readers to think about themselves and their place within society. Hereby, I will show again from a different angle how Holberg positioned his novel in the polysystem of fictional travel literature, both locally and internationally. Like in the parts on language and tradition, I will argue that it is *Niels Klim*'s mobile and illusive quality that defines this position to a large extent. The 'moral system' Holberg suggests to provide is an open, dynamic and personal set of moralistic insights that continuously has to be under review. The doubt on whether *Niels Klim*'s truth is historical or fictional should train the reader in being versatile and not blindly accept the moral precepts of the author-teacher.

Chapter 5

Klim, the Historian: Seeking Truth between *Historia* and *Fabula*

In his commentary on *Niels Klim* in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*, Holberg puts all elements that will be problematised in this chapter into one sentence:

> Tota *Historia*, cum tantum vehiculum sit præceptorum ac meditationum moralium, mere nugax est. *Argumentum Fabulæ*, ut nuper indicavi, mutuatum est a stultitia popularium qvorundam, qvi commercia cum subterraneis crepant.[1]

I deliberately leave out the translation because translations would force me to choose between interpretations I want to contrast in this chapter of the dissertation. For now, it suffices to point out some remarkable things. Holberg plays with three terms that form a significant triangle in the rhetorical tradition. Cicero famously opposed *historia* to *fabula* in his *De inventione,* and added a third category in between, *argumentum*. *Historia* showed, according to Cicero, "gesta res ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota," *fabula* was the account "in qua nec verae nec veri similes res," while *argumentum* referred to "ficta res, quae tamen fieri potuit."[2] The division was taken up by Quintilian and Isidore of Seville and was still very present in Humanism. Hardly any piece of literature truly fits this traditional division - and neither does *Niels Klim* – but it still functioned as a normative framework.

[1] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 12, my italics.

[2] Cicero, *De inventione* I.19.27. *Historia* is "an account of actual occurrences remote from the recollection of our own age." *Fabula* is an account "in which the events are not true and have no verisimilitude," and *argumentum* is "a fictitious narrative which nevertheless could have occurred." The translation is taken from Cicero, *De inventione*, trans. H.M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 55. See also Peter G. Bietenholz, *Historia and Fabula: Myths and Legends in Historical Thought from Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 59-60.

Despite its lasting influence in early modern times, by the end of the seventeenth century, Cicero's tripartite structure had proven out of date. Both the term *historia* and its equivalents in other languages, such as *histoire* and *history* were omnipresent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel literature, but the equivalents had evolved by then into almost synonyms of 'account' or 'retelling', like in Veiras's *L'histoire des Sevarambes*, Casanova's *Icosaméron, ou Histoire d'Edouard et d'Elizabeth*, or Henry Fielding's domestic fiction, contemporary to *Niels Klim*, *The History and Adventures of Joseph Andrew* (1742). Although *historia* also can take the meaning of 'story', due to the timelessness of Latin and its canon, the concept must have had a connotation of 'truth' to the ears of an eighteenth-century reader. Every reader of Latin had learned the language through Cicero and thus knew *historia* to be the traditional opposite of *fabula*.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to dive into the etymological grounds and semantic shifts of these terms in the different languages, nor to the question how they evolved in the genre of imaginary travels. Yet, to understand how the term *historia* plays a role in *Niels Klim*, it is key to recognise Holberg's sole position as a writer of a *Latin* imaginary voyage, a position that, again, granted him unforeseen advantages. Like in the very sentence quoted above, *Niels Klim* can play with Humanistic categories of fiction and can make old and new clash. Writing in Latin, Holberg can play with the double use of the term *historia*, as 'story' *and* as 'truth', and can hereby ask what kind of truth *Niels Klim* is supposed to hold. How should a reader find this truth?

In order to show this game of *historia* and *fabula*, we will first dig deeper into the use of these two terms by Holberg in other parts of his oeuvre. From there, I will analyse Klim's narration once more, but now with a specific attention to Klim's previous readings of *historiae* and his (in)ability to put his knowledge and gained insights into practice. Finally, this will lead me to a comparative analysis between *Niels Klim* and some other questionably 'historical' intertexts.

5.1 *Historia* and *fabula* in Holberg's Project

As both a prolific historian and writer of fiction, Holberg was in the perfect position to play with the interpretation of the term *historia*. But what is *historia*, according to Holberg? In 1733, Holberg publishes his *Synopsis of Universal History* (*Synopsis historiae universalis*), a short textbook in Latin that teaches students precisely that. As part of the text's erotetic form - i.e. the alternation of questions and answers - Holberg gives the following answer to the question 'what is *historia*?': "Historia est rerum præteritarum narratio, eum in finem suscepta, ut earum memoria conservetur, quibus, ad bene

beateque vivendum, instruamur."[3] The first understanding Holberg wants to raise with his students is that *historia* is a narration (*narratio*), a creation of an author who collects facts or loose data about the past, and then shapes these pieces of information into a coherent and comprehensible story. The demand for a creative and literary act on account of an author is what *historia* sets apart from chronicles. According to Holberg, therefore, the chronology within a *historia* should not be taken too strictly. The reader or student most of all has to be able to follow the main thread of the story, and not lose himself in details. In contrast to someone who writes *chronologiae* or *annales*, a *historicus* is thus a storyteller who "non facta solum pronunciat, sed etiam, quo consilio, quaque ratione gesta sunt, explicat."[4] Secondly, by wisely choosing the facts and the way they connect into a story, a *historicus* must show the reader exemplary figures and deeds. There is thus always a moral and didactic side to the work of a *historicus*.

The historian Holberg tried to put the two ideal characteristics of narrativity and moralism into practice.[5] Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen summarises Holberg's style in histories as follows:

> A coherent narrative, dealing with a broad range of subjects but still focussing on the main events and characters of political life, pleasing to read but not rhetorically elaborate, replete with moral and political wisdom but not excessively didactic.[6]

Because Holberg's "main concern was not with documentation and criticism but with narrative flow and political and moral interpretation," Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen calls him a pragmatic historian.[7] He primarily wanted to write history that was useful to the reader; and his readership was diverse. The lessons learned were to some extent directed

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[3] *Synopsis*, A. "History is the tale of things past, with the aim of preserving the memory of those things by which we are taught to live [morally] well and happily." The *Synopsis* is not part of the online database of Holberg's writings. I quote from the ninth edition of Holberg's popular *Synopsis*: *Ludvig Holberg, Synopsis Historiae Universalis, 9 ed. (Francofurti et Lipsiae1753).* The translation is after Torben Damsholt, "Ludvig Holberg and Greek-Roman Antiquity," in *Ludvig Holberg: A European Writer. A Study in Influence and Reception*, ed. Sven Hakon Rossel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 45.

[4] *Synopsis*, 4. "[...] not solely proclaims facts, but also explains what the purpose and rationale behind the events are."

[5] Holberg practiced his own ideal only with varying success. Larsen points out that Holberg suggests that historiography should be based upon evidence and causal explanations, without being able to obtain and check these in practice. See Larsen, 67. In general, Holberg's historiographical work is as much characterised by narrativitiy and moralism as by a struggle with the past. Damsholt shows, for example, the ambiguous position vis-à-vis the Classical tradition that speaks from Holberg's answer to "Quid est Historia?": it is "the clearest expression of Holberg's modern philosophical view of history" because it rejects antiquarian studies, but also "contains an implicit confrontation with earlier humanism, which according to classical models viewed the subject area of history as events (*res gestae*)." Damsholt, 46.

[6] Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, "History: National, Universal and Dynastic," in *Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754): Learning and Literature in the Nordic Enlightenment*, ed. Knud Haakonssen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 162.

[7] Ibid.

to the monarch. As Brian Kjær Olesen explains, "Holberg understood history as 'a Mirror' in which the historian can inform 'Princes and Persons of a high Esteem' about politics, law and morality, holding before them the examples of the past."[8] Despite his loyalty to the absolute regime, and his academic position as a professor of history at the University of Copenhagen since 1730, Holberg was primarily a private author, susceptible to the mechanisms of the book market. He interacted more with the general reading public than with his academic or literary peers.[9]

Holberg's popular writing style was partly a reaction to the flaws of history writing he saw amongst these peers.[10] The narrativity and moralism provided an alternative to the - in his view - useless and pedantic antiquarianism. *Historia* was to Holberg not a medium for dry facts, but, as the Q&A-format of the *Synopsis* already suggests, strongly focused upon the development of the reader; its overall aim was "to offer the tools needed by readers to respect evidence, critical skill and the capacity to maintain a focus and select from the past what is relevant in their present situation."[11]

This aim was similar to Holberg's view on *fabula*. In a short Danish text titled *Orthographical Remarks* (*Orthographiske Anmerkninger,* 1726), Holberg explains his own word choices in his Danish writings and mentions at one point the word *fabula*:

> Vel er det sant, at vort Sprog er ikke med de rigeste, saa vi nødes ofte til at laane fremmede Ord. Men det vil intet sige: alle andre Sprog laane ogsaa det ene af det andet. Tydske, Engelænder og Hollænder have laanet af de Franske, De Franske af Romere og Romere igien af Græker, og allene givet de laante Ord en anden Termination efter deres eget Sprogs Art og Natur, saasom af det latinske Ord Fabula have de Franske giort Fable, og vi Fabel, udi plurali Fabulæ, Fables, Fablerne, hvilket er langt bedre end med Hollænderne at opdigte nye Ord, hvorved Sproget giøres gandske ukiendeligt. thi, efterat de samme Folk have taget slige mesurer, er deres Sprog bleved engang saa vanskeligt at forstaae som tilforn.[12]

[8] Brian Kjær Olesen, "Monarchism, Religion, and Moral Philosophy" (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2016), 2. Olden-Jørgensen moreover states that if there is a grand narrative to be discerned from Holberg's historical works in general, it is "the emergence of the modern dynastic and absolutist state of which the Kingdoms of Denmark and Norway are a prime example." Olden-Jørgensen, 175.

[9] Olden-Jørgensen, 162. For another discussion of Holberg's double readership and the dawn of the open market of ideas in Holberg's time, see Sune Berthelsen, "Holberg - The Historian," in *Holberg*, ed. Gunnar Sivertsen and Eivind Tjønneland (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2008), 114-15.

[10] Brian Kjær Olesen argues that Holberg's understanding of history was a reaction to the contemporary notion of history. Olesen exemplifies this with a fable from Holberg's *Moral Fables* in which Holberg explains the current state of *historie* and complains that it had become "an instrument of authority and tradition, an uncritical compilation of names, deed and events, without reflection on proper causes." Olesen, 2. For the fable on history, see *Moral Fables* 148.

[11] Larsen, 67.

[12] *Orthographical Remarks,* 94-95. "It is true that our language [Danish] is not among the richest languages, so we often have to lend foreign words. But this does not say anything. All other languages also lend things from others. The Germans, English and Dutch have lent from the French, the French from the Romans and the Roman

From this statement, it seems that the words *fabula* and the French *fable* are nearly synonymous or interchangeable loan words. This suggests *fabula* or *fable* to be a tradition across language borders. In the previous chapter, we called this broad, transgeneric narrative tradition 'Fable' and indicated its recurring feature of metafiction as it pointed readers to the illusions and superstitious beliefs in reality. In line with the overall aesthetics of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Europe, the Fable can also be considered as a moralistic method. Metafictional texts were playful and hereby made examples digestible for the audience. In this role, the Fable characterised a large part of the fictional literature of the Enlightenement and crystallised in the fable genre that was once again extremely popular at the turn of the century.

One of Holberg's ways to connect with European Enlightenment was to write fables himself. His *Moral Fables* (1751) have never received much applause from readers or scholars, but have an interesting feature that again points to Holberg's reader-focused method of writing. Dalgaard points out that Holberg's moral conclusions of his fables rarely mirror the tale that came before:

> Normalt er det moralen der driver pointen hjem i et klart sprog, og dermed er den mest udpræget didaktiske del af teksten, mens det fortællende stykke gestalter en handling og dermed er udpræget narrativt. Holberg forekommer at arbejde mod enten en opløsning af denne distinktion, eller en udnyttelse af den til fremprovokering af et ekstra lag af reflektion hos læseren – der dermed når frem til en pointe, der *ikke* står på papiret, hverken i den narrative eller didaktiske del, men derimod befinder sig i sprækken mellem dem.[13]

Like in his histories, Holberg's fables did not simply present moral precepts, but only provided readers with interpretative tools. In Holberg's view on *historia* and *fabula*, narrative and morals were thus inextricably intertwined. They were two sides of the same project to enlighten and educate his readership into becoming critical readers.

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from the Greeks. They only give the loan word another ending that is conforming to their own language's nature. From the Latin word *Fabula*, the French have made *Fable*, and we *Fabel*, in plural *Fabulæ, Fables, Fablerne*, which is much better than the newly formed word of the Dutch by which the language becomes totally unrecognizable." Which Dutch word Holberg refers to is not clear, but it could be an equivalent for the English 'story'.

[13] Niels Dalgaard, "Ludvig Holbergs Moralske Fabler og oplysningstidens didaktik: Et eksempel på "generic engineering"," in *Opplysning i Norden*, ed. Heiko Uecker (Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang, 1998), 180. "Normally it is the moral that drives the point home in a clear language, thus being the most pronounced didactic part of the text, while the narrative shapes an action and is thus distinctly narrative. Holberg appears to work against either a resolution of this distinction or an exploitation of it to provoke an additional layer of reflection from the reader - thus reaching a pointe that is *not* on paper, either in the narrative or didactic part, but in the gap between them."

5.2 *Ludibrium fortunae*

In *Niels Klim*, Holberg plays with the potential, more traditional connotations of *historia* and *fabula*, and portrays them as each other's opposites instead of two equal parts of a moral program. *Historia* and *fabula* clash and seem to be irreconcilable in the words and deeds of Holberg's main character. What Klim writes is *historia*; the attribution of *fabula* for his work is felt as a disgrace. Klim's use of the terms *historia* and *fabula* thus mirrors their classical interpretations, while it gradually becomes clear to the reader that Holberg actually promotes an opener form, close to the Enlightenment project. Klim is once more the victim of this negotiation between the different interpretations of the terms: when it comes to being *historicus* or a reader of *historiae*, Klim is a bad example with particularly little interest in the moral side of history and without any belief in the benefits of *fabula*.

The portrayal of Klim as a *historicus* manifests itself most explicitly in three similes. Klim compares his fate in the subterranean world with the one of Alexander the Great and the one of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the story, the local people of Bergen compare Klim with the Wandering Jew. An analysis of these three figures will allow me to assess Klim's role as a *historicus* and as a reader of *historiae*.

5.2.1 Klim as a Reader of *historia*

The most significant events in Klim's journey are caused by misreading *historiae*. The first time we encounter Klim's status as a reader of *historiae* is in chapter VII, where Klim learns from the *historia subterranea* that Potuan law prescribes a severe punishment for project makers, namely the banishment to the Firmament.[14] The *historia* does not prevent him from introducing a bill himself at the end of chapter IX and finally getting him indeed banished from Nazar. This misreading of what is and is not exemplary in *historia*, is only a small forerunner of what comes later in the novel. Once Klim mounts the throne in Quama, Klim refers to himself as "Alexandrum subterraneum."[15] In a telling passage at the beginning of chapter XV, Klim compares his military accomplishments to those of previous, European warlords, and doubts whether the title of *Koblu* (the Great) would suffice:

> Elatum sane ac superbum fateor nomen istud *Magni*: at, si conferant se veteres illi Cyri, Alexandri, Pompeii, Caesares, qui infra laudes Klimii iacebunt, modicus et demissus hic titulus videri potest. Orientem quidem subegit Alexander, at, quibus copiis? militibus veteranis, perpetuisque bellis induratis, quales erant Macedones tempore patris Philippi. Ego vero longe plures, et Persis ferociores gentes, minori

[14] See *Niels Klim* VII, 89.

[15] Ibid. XIV, 330, "Subterranean Alexander."

> temporis spatio, cum populo nuper rudi ac barbaro, quem ipse formaueram, imperio meo subieci. Titulus, quo postea vsus sum, hic erat: NICOLAVS MAGNVS, SOLIS LEGATVS, IMPERATOR QVAMAE ET MEZENDORIAE, REX TANACHI, ALECTORIAE, ARCTONIAE, REGNORVM MEZENDORICORVM ET MARTINIANORVM, MAGNVS DVX KISPVCIAE, DOMINVS MARTINIAE ET CANALISCAE etc. etc.[16]

Earlier in the novel, when Klim learns that the Potuans reserve the heroic title of *Magnus* for parents with a large offspring, Klim still refers to Alexander and Julius Caesar as being "humani generis eversores."[17] By chapter XV, Klim is corrupted by power and deems himself too great for the title of *Magnus* alone.

Previous scholarship has shed light from different angles on the moral connotations of Klim's actions as a commander and monarch of the Quamitians. Latinists have demonstrated intertextual links with Aeneas' conquests in Latium in Vergil's *Aeneid* and the deeds of the first Roman kings in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*. In addition, scholars have repeatedly linked Klim's military escapades and the strategical advantage of knowing gunpowder with the Spanish conquests in South-America.[18] The moral message behind Klim's actions is clear: the real hero is not measured by square meters of land, the number of subjects or the number of victims at the other side of the battlefield.

The cause of Klim's immoral actions can additionally be explained as misreadings of *historiae.* Holberg portrays his main character as a particularly bad reader who starts to live by his own misinterpretations of the books he admires. Some sort of a precursor of this side of Klim's character we already find in Holberg's fictional debut, *Peder Paars*. In

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[16] *Niels Klim* XV, 348-49. "There is, I confess, something excessively vain and arrogant about the name 'Great,' but when you compare me with ancient people like Cyrus, Alexander, Pompey, and Caesar, who cannot measure themselves with Klim, the title can seem perfectly humble and modest. Alexander indeed subdued the East, but with what forces? With veteran troops, hardened by neverending wars, like the Macedonians were in the time of his father Philip. But I, in a shorter period of time, subdued far more and fiercer nations than the Persians, and that by the help o a people that was until recently rude and barbarous but whom I myself had instructed. The title I used from then on was this: Niels the Great, Emperor of Quama and Mezendoria, King of Tanachis, Alectoria, and Arctonia, Grand Duke of Kispucia, Lord of Martinia and Canalisca, etc. etc."

[17] Ibid. VIII, 92, "destroyers of mankind."

[18] For the *Aeneid* in *Niels Klim*, see Peters, 103-15; Skovgaard-Petersen, "The Interplay with Roman Literature in Ludvig Holberg's *Iter Subterraneum*," 186-89. In connection to the Spanish conquests, Skovgaard-Petersen reads the use of Vergil's phrasings as a way "to evoke sympathy for the victims of the European conquests." Ibid., 189. An interesting parallel to Klim's interpretation of his own fate is Holberg's *Lives of Heroes* (*Heltehistorier,* 1739) and its sequel *Lives of Heroines* (*Heltindehistorier,* 1745), just as *Jewish History* written in the same period as *Niels Klim*. After Plutarch's parallel lives, Holberg compares in each chapter historical figures as moral *exempla*. In a recent article on the concept of the hero, Schmidt makes a distinction between different types Holberg discusses. Amongst the 'tragical heroes', Schmidt counts, amongst others, the Aztec Montezuma and the Inca Atapaliba, the victims of Spanish *conquistadores*. Klim is thus a morally bad example of the coloniser, who portrays himself as the victim. For a typology of heroes in *Lives of Heroes* and *Heroines,* see Kristoffer Schmidt, "Helte, skurke eller bare berømmelige? Et nyt blik på Ludvig Holbergs Heltehistorier," in *Historikeren Ludvig Holberg*, ed. Jørgen Magnus Sejersted and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2014). For a discussion of Livy's *Ab Urbe condita* in *Niels Klim*, see Peters, 143-52.

this Danish mock-heroic poem a young man named Jens Block enters the stage as the newly appointed leader of the army of Anholt, a little Danish island. With no previous military experience whatsoever, Jens Block does not have the trust of the people of Anholt to lead the army to victory. The narrator, Hans Mickelsen, however, supports him by noting that Jens has learned all he needs to know from the Classics and, more in particular, from the example of Alexander the Great:

> Af hans Historie han General var bleven,
> Han havde nøye læst, hvad Curtius har skreven
> om samme store Helt, vel oversat paa Tydsk;
> Thi for Mons Wiingaards Tid den ikke var paa Jydsk.
> Det fast utroeligt er, hvad man af gamle Bøger
> kand lære, naar man dem med Fliid igiennemsøger.
> Man alting der i see; de ere som et Speyl,
> Der viiser store Mænds Bedrifter, deres Feyl,
> Samt store Dyder. Man af dem kand see og lære
> alt hvad en General kand give Navn og Ære;[19]

In a footnote to this passage, the fictional editor and commentator Just Justesen shows the reader how to interpret Block's know-how: "Poeten synes her at raillere med dem, som bilde sig ind, at de kand blive fuldkomme Statsmænd og Generaler af Romaners Læsning."[20]

The passage in *Peder Paars* can function as an addition to the characterisation of Klim. The close resemblance between Jens Block's library and the habits of Klim as a reader are striking. Jens Block is characterised by his lack of Latin reading skills, as he has consulted Curtius Rufus' tale of Alexander in German. It reminds one of the *Apologetic Preface* to *Niels Klim* and the suggestion that Klim did not write his *historia* in Latin but in Danish. Holberg reincarnates Jens Block in *Niels Klim* and makes him into a fervent, but misguided reader of *historiae* as well. The histories from classical antiquity he reads as plain handbooks. He copies the deeds and motives of long-dead warlords without reflecting upon the moral implications and without adapting them to his own time, situation and capabilities. The sheer fact that the *historia* happened makes it morally acceptable to repeat it. Whereas

[19] *Peder Paars* I.5, 95-96, v. 101-110. "He had become a general through reading stories / that Curtius had written of that hero's glories / and which had been translated into German script, but ere Mons Viingaard's time in Jutish were not writ. / 'Tis scarce believable what one may learn from sages / in books of history by searching through the pages. / One there sees all for like a mirror they display / a hero's worthiness, and they his faults portray / as well as great exploits. One learns from such a story / of things that give a general a name and glory." The translation is by Bergliot Stromsoe in Holberg, *Peder Paars*, 54-55.

[20] *Peder Paars* I.3, 96n. "The poet seems to mock those who imagine themselves able to become fully-qualified statesmen and generals by reading novels (R*omaners*)." This translation is my own because Bergliot Stromsoe left out the commenting footnotes by Just Justesen from her translation.

Jens Block's misinterpretations are mainly comical and lead to not much harm, Klim's misinterpretations have far-reaching consequences. He becomes a tyrant.

As so often, Klim personifies the faults Holberg sees in his readership. Klim's fate as a reader of *historiae* calls to mind the words of Holberg in his autobiography: historiography is nonsense (*nugae*); not just as a source for profound practical knowledge, we might add, but as a vehicle for moral precepts. It is one thing to read history as a mirror and a source for moral examples, but another to critically reflect upon their deeds and adapt it to a new context. *Historiae* are for Holberg primarily texts or narrations that need a critical and reflective interpretation process in order to extract moral *exempla*. The latter are not given, but reconstructed by the reader. Holberg thus gives a more nuanced view to the moral reading of *historia*. He observes that, like Klim, we often do not tend to learn from history and do it better, and the cause of this are not the texts but the people who read them.

Klim's misreadings of *historiae* from classical antiquity lead him to his position as Emperor of Quama but also to his fall. The titles of chapters XIII to XV clearly show the pattern of the rise and fall of Klim's rule over the Quamitian Empire: from "Primordia Quintae Monarchiae" over "Klimius Monarcha Subterraneus" to "Catastrophe." Klim interprets this catastrophe in particular as follows:

> Et sane, si reuoluantur Annales ac Historiae tam remotioris, quam nostri aeui, vix exemplum tanti casus occurret, nisi forte in Nabocodonosore, qui e maximo terrae Monarcha, in feram, syluis inerrantem, transformatus fuit. Eadem ego fortunae ludibria expertus sum: [...] Monarcha nuper fueram, iam scholarchae aut ludimagistri munus in patria vix sperare poteram: solis Legatus vocabar, iam vero ob inopiam famulum Episcopi vel Praepositi cuiusdam fore verebar.[21]

Klim compares his own fall from a mighty ruler to a bishop's servant with the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian monarch who, according to the *historia* in the book of Daniel, lost his mind and lived as a wild animal for seven years.

With this comparison to Nebuchadnezzar Klim again shows himself a bad reader of *historiae*. Nebuchadnezzar ultimately accepts his fate as subordinate to the heavenly rule, and is restored to his position as a monarch. Klim does not have any regrets about his bloodthirsty rule and conquests. He sees Nebuchadnezzar's transformation as an unfortunate and tragic event that makes his own downfall all the more undeserved and

[21] *Niels Klim* XVI, 363. "And indeed, turn over the annals of histories (*Annales ac Historiae*), both of the remote and recent past, and you will not be able to find an example of a similar adventure as mine, unless perhaps in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, who from the greatest monarch in the world was transformed into a wild creature and wandered about in the woods. The same freaks of fortune (*fortunae ludibria*) I experienced. [...] Until recently, I was a monarch, and now the utmost of my hopes was to procure the mastership of some little school for my subsistence. Until recently, I was called the Ambassador of the Sun, and now I feared necessity would drive me to become the servant of some bishop or dean."

regrettable. Klim turns the moral *exemplum* of Nebuchadnezzar as a humbled ruler into a ruler mistreated by fate.

The biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar pervades Klim's entire adventure through the underground world. Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a tree that is chopped down. The prophet Daniel explains that Nebuchadnezzar *is* this tree and that he will turn mad as a wild animal.[22] Klim's adventures lead first to the land of walking trees, Potu, and, when Klim is banished from their society, he travels to the land of Monkeys, Martinia. Klim thus runs through all the stages of Nebuchadnezzar's metamorphoses, but there is a twist that makes Klim again into a bad reader of Nebuchadnezzar's *historia*: whereas Nebuchadnezzar *is* a tree in his dream, Klim tries to fit in with the society of trees by dressing up like a tree. He fails to live up to the standards of this rational society; while Nebuchadnezzar actually *becomes* a wild animal, Klim gets so popular in the ape country that they offer him a fake tail to attach to his body. Finally, whereas Nebuchadnezzar was a historical monarch, Klim tricked the Quamitians into thinking he was an Ambassador of the Sun so they would worship him and help him realise his megalomaniac plans.[23] In other words, Klim relives what he has read in the *annals* and *historiae*, but unlike Nebuchadnezzar, he is swindling his way through the subterranean world rather than humbly accepting his fate. He is a hypocrite and an impostor who interprets the *historia* of Nebuchadnezzar as a legitimation for his actions in the underground world.

The comparisons with Alexander and Nebuchadnezzar are driving narrative forces behind *Niels Klim*'s plot and echo what is already found on the front page of *Niels Klim*: "historia quintae monarchiae adhuc nobis incognitae."[24] The theory of the Fifth Monarchy again finds its roots in the book of Daniel where the Prophet explains another dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The dream, about a statue made out of five different materials, prophesises the return of Christ as King of Kings after the fall of four great empires: the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek and the Roman. The traditional Christian view on history was based on this succession of monarchies. Although this historical model was already old-fashioned at the time of Holberg, and definitely for an Enlightenment figure, Holberg builds upon this theory for his pedagogical work, *Synopsis of Universal History*. As Holberg says in the preface, his intention with the *Synopsis* is twofold: provide a firm basis of historical knowledge to students of history, and make them like history. As Skovgaard-Petersen indicates, the model of the succession of monarchies helped Holberg to narrate

[22] Holberg also paraphrases the Biblical story in *Jewish History* I.6.3, 495-496, published a year after *Niels Klim*'s first edition.

[23] It would be ahistorical to read the previous parallels as a misreading by Klim of the book of Daniel as a *historia* instead of a *fabula*. In the section "Comment on this wondrous history (*historie*)" in *Jewish History,* Holberg calls the story a "real history" (*virkelig Historie*) and contests disbelievers by claiming that the Prophet Daniel lived at Nebuchadnezzar's court and was therefore an apparent witness. See *Jewish History* I.6.5, 501. The use of the simile of Nebuchadnezzar itself thus does not cause a tension between *historia* and *fabula*, it only shows how Klim misreads the *history* as a wrong kind of moral *exemplum*.

[24] "The history of the Fifth Monarchy so far unknown to us."

world history in one single, coherent narrative.[25] Without such a coherent story and thread, the second step of making his student like history would have been impossible to achieve. In other parts of his writings, the Fifth Monarchy predominantly returns as a subject of mockery, as it does in *Niels Klim.*[26] In the seventeenth century, the so-called Fifth Monarchists, a Puritan sect in Britain, proclaimed the end of human rule on Earth. The year they projected was 1666, two years after Klim's decent into the underground world.

In the last chapters of the novel, Klim becomes the protagonist of the succession of monarchies. On the one hand, he relives the previous rules of Alexander the Great and Nebuchadnezzar, while, on the other hand, he fulfills the prophecy of the Fifth Monarchy. The borders between different levels of narration become blurred. Klim follows his creator's *Synopsis*, carries out the prophecy of Daniel, and thus reads and relives *historiae* in line of his creator. At the same time, however, as a practitioner of Holberg's profession, Klim shows himself Holberg's worst enemy: an antiquarian chronicler.[27] As *historia*, *Niels Klim* is thus metareflective; apart from being an apparent *speculum principum* (or a comical reversal thereof), *Niels Klim* dramatises the process of reading *historia,* which to Holberg includes the activation of knowledge from past events in your own life. It gives a comical and exaggerated example of what happens when one misinterprets history, and hereby provides, tests and questions the tools with which readers can tackle other histories.

In the second edition of *Niels Klim,* Holberg adds a layer of irony to this dramatisation of reading *historia*. As it turns out, the passing of the torch of Europe's power, once in possession of the Greeks and the Babylonians, was successful after all. The Finmarkian shaman Peyvis mentions in the *Apologetic Preface* that Klim's ancestors still rule the subterranean world and are about to get into contact with the upper world. The grandsons, then, mention that Bergen scholars are planning to publish a historical work on the Quamitian rule in Europe, together with a Quamitian grammar book. According to the grandsons, the grammar book will be of great importance to following generations of Europeans. Latin, and the political legacy it helped to establish, it is suggested, will thus make room for the underground language in the field of politics and economy. Both the political and cultural power of the Classical tradition continues to crumble down – perhaps not what the Eurocentric Klim initially intended. The colonisation story in *Niels Klim* thus ends with the outlook to a future in which Europe is ironically paid back for its colonial and bloody history; and the colonisers are the ancestors of a fabulous country.

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[25] Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, ""At tale om fornödne ting, og at give nogen idée om historiens hærlighed" - Om Ludvig Holbergs lærebog i verdenshistorie, *Synopsis historiae universalis* (1733)," *Fund og Forskning* 51 (2012): 216-18.

[26] For a list of references to mentions of the Fifth Monarchy in Holberg's writings, see Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XIII, 285.

[27] The most explicit example of Klim as an antiquarian is when Klim admits to the Potuans that he had written his thesis on Roman sandals (*Niels Klim* III, 37). For a discussion of Holberg's criticism on antiquarianism, see Damsholt, 44-45.

What thus began with a misinterpretation of European *historiae* by Klim, has finally led to the ultimate rule of *fabula* over *historia*.

5.2.2 Klim's Fate as *historicus*

After Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, the tragic fate of Klim as *historicus* is underlined by a third simile at the end of his subterranean voyage: the legendary figure of the Wandering Jew. In *Jewish History*, Holberg recounts the story of the Wandering Jew, whom he refers to as Asverus or Jerusalem's shoemaker. In Holberg's version, Asverus struck Jesus with his last when the latter passed Asverus' shop on his way to the cross, and added that he should move on, whereupon Jesus got angry and damned him to never stop moving until his return. Asverus has wandered ever since and all over the world.[28]

Holberg was clearly not in the camp of the believers of this legend. In *Jewish History,* he decides to include the story simply because "mange lærde Folk have fæstet Troe til denne Historie."[29] As a considerate historian, Holberg mentions some of them, as well as more nuanced believers, "[m]en de fleeste forkaste Historien, og holde den for en urimelig Fabel."[30] After unmasking a few recent instances of Asverus-spotting in Hamburg and Lübeck as the deeds of "nogle Fanatici eller Bedragere," Holberg gladly wraps up the passage by saying that it already was too long.[31]

Asverus makes his appearance a few more times in Holberg's oeuvre.[32] In *Niels Klim*, it is not Klim who refers to the figure, as he did with Alexander and Nebuchadnezzar. Instead, he is recognised as such by the people from Bergen. On his descend from Fløien to the town of Sandviken, still confused by his return to the Earth's surface, Klim addresses some passing boys in Quamitian: *Ieru Pikal Salim,* or "monstrate mihi semitam."[33] Because of the sound resemblance to *Hierosolymitanus* and Klim's strange-looking clothing – he still wore his royal garments including headwear with sunrays -, the boys consider Klim to be the Shoemaker of Jerusalem (*sutor Hierosolymitanus*).

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[28] The entire passage on the Wandering Jew is found in *Jewish History* II.15, 718-721.

[29] *Jewish History* II.15, 718, "so many learned people have held firmly to their belief in this history."

[30] Ibid. II.15, 719. "But most people dismiss the history (*Historie*) and take it as an unfair fable (*Fabel*)."

[31] Ibid. II.15, 721, "some fanatics or impostors." The commentators of *Niels Klim* mention that the legend of Asverus was primarily known in Denmark through the German folkloristic book *Warhafftger Bericht von einem Juden aus Jerusalem, mit Namen Ahassverus* (1602) by the pseudonymous Chrysostomus Dudulæus Westphalus. This book makes mention of the meeting between the bishop Paul von Eitzen (1521-98) in the 1540s and the Wandering Jew in a church in Hamburg, which Holberg also mentions in *Jewish History* II.15, 720. Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XVI, 365.

[32] The commentators of *Niels Klim* mention beside the passage in *Jewish History* also more satirical passages: *Epistle* 60, 323 (1748) and *Epistle* 216 (1750). See Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". XVI, 365.

[33] *Niels Klim* XVI, 365, "show me the way."

In the rest of chapter XVI Holberg's primary object of satire with the Wandering Jew is the gullible townsfolk. Holberg clearly describes the ease with which the misconceptions are turned into truths. Before Klim could reach the town, the boys had already spread the rumour that the Wandering Jew proclaimed his name to them:

> Totus hinc vicus commouetur, nemine de rei veritate dubitante, maxime cum nuper recocta esset fabula de isto ambulante sutore, idemque diceretur non ita pridem *Hamburgi* apparuisse.[34]

While Nebuchadnezzar as a reference figure still mirrors a historical and biblical reality, the Wandering Jew leans towards the field of folklore and superstition, to which Holberg eagerly directs his mockery throughout his career. Holberg's Norwegian readership is dragged into the story as a superstitious people. In this satirical aim of exposing superstition lies the relevance of the Wandering Jew in Holberg's writings in general, but also in his profession as such, that of *skomager* or *sutor*. Cobblers in Holberg's oeuvre are almost always the archetype of someone who, according to the proverb, 'does not stick to his last.' As part of Holberg's Enlightenment project, shoemakers are repeatedly unmasked as impostors or charlatans.[35]

There is more to the Wandering Jew-simile than the ridicule of the gullibility of the Norwegian people. The Quamitian words that give cause to the misconception of Klim's identity, for example, echo words in Marana's popular, epistolary novel *L'espion turc.* In *Letter XXXIX* of volume 2, Mahmut the Arabian reports to his friend Ibrahim about his encounter with the Wandering Jew, called Michob Ader. At one of his travels to different parts of the world, Michob has noticed a linguistic familiarity with Hebrew in the Baltic region:

> Dans la Livonie, dans la Russie et dans la Finlande, il a trouvé des gens qui parlent une langue différente de celle du pays et ont quantité de mots hébreux, que ces peuples ne mangent ni chair de pourceau, ni sang, ni choses étouffées, que dans leurs lamentations pour les morts, ils se servent toujours de ces mots: *Jeru-Jeru Maseo Salem*, et qu'il a cru par là qu'ils se rappelaient la mémoire de Jérusalem et de Damas, qui sont deux fameuses villes de Palestine et de Syrie.[36]

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[34] *Niels Klim* XVI, 366. "The whole town was now in commotion because nobody doubted the truth (*veritas*) of the matter, especially as there had been a story (*fabula*) cooked up just the other day about this wandering shoemaker, who was said to have appeared in Hamburg not much time before."

[35] In his *First Autobiographical Letter*, a *sutor* in Rome claims to be able to cure Holberg's illness. *First Autobiographical Letter*, 105. In *Epistle 293*, Holberg uses the simile of the shoemaker to criticise different kinds of unqualified academics: the *philosophus*, the *polyhistor*, the lawyer, and the *historicus*. *Epistles* III.293, 456-459.

[36] Giovanni-Paolo Marana, *L'espion turc* (Paris: Coda, 2009), vol. 2, Letter XXXIX, 280. "In Livonia, Russia and Finland, he had met with people of distinct languages from that of the country, having a great mixture of Hebrew words; that these abstained from swines flesh, blood and things strangled. That their lamentations for the dead always used these words *Jeru-Jeru Maseo Salem,* by which he thought they called to remembrance *Jerusalem* and *Damascus*, those two famous cities of Palestine and Syria." English translations are from Giovanni-

A common feature of the legends circling around the Wandering Jew was the vivid remembrance of the Temple of Jerusalem. Despite the cultural and linguistic resemblances with Judaism, these Baltic people had never heard of the siege or destruction of Jerusalem, or "des autres choses dont toutes les histoires sont remplies au sujet de la nation juive."[37]

The assumption that Klim might have memories of the city of Jerusalem becomes explicit in the reuniting scene between Klim and Abeline at the end of chapter XVI. Still unaware of Klim's true identity, Abeline takes his old friend into his home and asks him to recount his adventures. Abeline expects that Klim's whims of fate (*fortunae ludibria*) will include, amongst others, the destruction of Jerusalem because, he says, "si ista, quae de te narrantur, vera sint, possunt natales tui ad principatum Tiberii referri."[38] Klim does not understand what the old man is talking about. Abeline thus brings him a document "in qua expressa erat imago Templi Hierosolymitani, rogans, ecquid multum ab archetypo aberret pictura."[39]

In Marana's text, the vivid remembrance of Jerusalem's temple is a way of verifying the Wandering Jew's identity:

> Comme il m'avait parlé de la ruine de Jérusalem, je lui demandai où il était quand cette ville fut détruite. Il répondit qu'il était à la cour de Vespasien et qu'il avait entendu dire à l'empereur lorsqu'on vint lui annoncer que le temple de Salomon était en cendres, *qu'il aimerait mieux que la ville de Rome fût brûlée*. Le vieillard se mit alors à pleurer les ruines de ce magnifique bâtiment dont il me fit la description aussi naturellement que s'il ne l'eût vu que le jour précédent.[40]

Klim laughs away Abeline's question, but ironically enough, one might consider the Wandering Jew as an extreme example of what Klim himself tries to establish with his *iter, theoria* and *historia*. In *L'espion turc*, the Wandering Jew receives the benefit of doubt. The narrator tells Ibrahim that he is trustworthy:

Paolo Marana, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived Five and Forty Years, Undiscovered, at Paris*, 5 ed., 8 vols. (London: Henry Rodes, 1702), 183-84.

[37] Marana, *L'espion turc*, vol. 2, Letter XXXIX, 280. "[...] any matters wherewith all histories abound concerning that nation." Marana, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived Five and Forty Years, Undiscovered, at Paris*, 184.

[38] *Niels Klim* XVI, 368. "If it is true what is told about you, your birth can be dated back to the time of Emperor Tiberius."

[39] Ibid. XVI, 369, "that showed an image of the Temple of Jerusalem, asking me whether the picture differed very much from the original."

[40] Marana, *L'espion turc*, vol. 2, Letter XXXIX, 281. "Having mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem, I ask'd him where he was at that time? He told me in the court of Vespasian at Rome, and that he had heard the Emperour say, when he understood the Temple of Solomon was burnt to ashes, *He had rather all Rome had been set on fire*. Here the old man fell a weeping himself, lamenting the ruins of that noble structure, which he described to me as familiarly, as if he had seen it but yesterday." Marana, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived Five and Forty Years, Undiscovered, at Paris*, 184.

> J'ose te dire, sage Ibrahim, que si les prétentions de cet homme sont fondées, il est si plein de mémoires choisis et a vu tant d'événements durant l'espace de seize cents ans qu'on peut avec raison le regarder comme une chronologie vivante [...].[41]

He will not repeat Michob Ader's entire account but adds the following: "Il paraît qu'il a beaucoup de connaissance de toutes les histoires, qu'il a beaucoup voyagé et qu'il affecte de se faire passer pour une personne extraordinaire."[42] The Wandering Jew is thus the ultimate traveller and empiricist, gaining his knowledge from being eyewitness to the most decisive events in history. With the addition of inside information at the Roman court, he might be the most truthful historian imaginable. The diachronic perspective allows him to see connecting threads that for the average historian remain a matter of guessing, or in line with Holberg's *Synopsis*, of *narratio.*

Whereas the people from Bergen are thus the main object of satire, the game with Klim's identity as *historicus* continues to build up. For the reader, it is both tragic and comical to realise that Klim willingly accepted misconceptions of his identity before, but he considers it laughable to be associated with precisely someone who has a monopoly to historical truth.

The tragicomedy of Klim's identity shifts climaxes at the end of chapter XVI. The first true test for Klim as a *historicus* is convincing Abeline - the personified initial reader. The latter calls him out for talking like a dreamer, a madman or a drunk. The only way Klim is finally able to convince Abeline is by the means of the Wandering Jew: claiming his role as an eyewitness, and consistently repeating his *historia* with a sense for detail. When Klim finally convinces Abeline of his true identity and of the truthfulness of his account, he asks his old friend what to do next. Abeline gives the advice not to tell his story to anyone:

> Nostine zelum sacerdotum nostrorum: hi, quoniam proscribere solent eos, qui motum terrae ac quietem solis statuunt, te, de sole ac planetis subterraneis dissertantem, impium, ac Christiana ciuitate indignum, pronuntiabunt. [...] Suadeo igitur, ac moneo, vt aeternum sepulta haec sint, et vt quiete aliquamdiu apud me maneas.[43]

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[41] Marana, *L'espion turc*, vol. 2, Letter XXXIX, 281. "I tell thee, Sage *Cheik*, that if this man's pretences be true, he is so full of choice memoirs, and has been witness to so many grand transactions for the space of sixteen centuries of years; that he may not unfitly be called *A Living Chronology* [...]." Marana, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived Five and Forty Years, Undiscovered, at Paris*, 185.

[42] Marana, *L'espion turc*, vol. 2, Letter XXXIX, 281. "He seems to be a man well vers'd in all histories, a great traveller, and one that affects to be counted an extraordinay person." Marana, *Letters writ by a Turkish Spy who lived Five and Forty Years, Undiscovered, at Paris*, 185.

[43] *Niels Klim* XVI, 374. "You know the zeal of our priests. You know they persecuted the author of that famous discovery of the Earth's motion round the sun, and all who adhered to that philosophy. And what then do you think will become of you for asserting the existence of a subterranean sun and planets? You will be declared a heretic, and as such unworthy to live in a Christian community. [...] I give it you therefore as my best advice that you suffer these things to lie buried in eternal oblivion, and that you live privately in my house for a time."

Accordingly, Klim will pose as a nephew of Abeline, visiting from Trondheim. The sudden disappearance of the Wandering Jew alarms the gullible townsfolk even more than his initial appearance. They think it foretells that the end of the world is near, which leads to utter chaos in the community.[44]

Again, Holberg thus primarily pays attention to the superstition of the Bergen people, but within our discussion of Klim as a *historicus* it is important to highlight Klim's identity shift. Whereas a search for moral truth leads the reader to the self, Klim's stubborn adherence to *veritas logica* comes with a huge price: the loss of his identity, precisely in the community he grew up in. The bishop of Bergen appoints him to the office of curate of St. Cross (*Korskirken*), but, as Abeline relates in his epilogue, Klim prefers to spend time in his study:

> Bibliotheca eius maximam partem e libris politicis constabat, et cum eiusmodi librorum apparatus aedituo parum conuenire crederetur, eo quoque nomine reprehensus a nonnullis fuit. Itinerarii huius, propria autoris manu exarati, vnicum tantum exemplar, quod in custodia mea asseruatur, extat. Saepe typis hoc opus euulgare molientem variae praegnantes causae a consilio auocarunt.[45]

Now the tragic fate of Klim as a historian is complete. Abeline is the first to believe Klim's story, the one who advises him to take on another identity, and the one who has the power to publish Klim's *historia* but does not, for tacit reasons. Klim is silenced by his old friend and mentor in natural philosophy, and is ultimately denied conveying his truth to the public and making history in Europe as a writer of *historia*. The references to both Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, and the scene on the Wandering Jew prepare the reader for this climax of Klim's *historia*.

5.3 *Ludibrium fabulae*

To Klim, the distinction between *historia* and *fabula* is strict and simplistic: *historia* equals truth and narrates preferably the heroic deeds of fearsome rulers, while *fabulae* are invented by imposters who deliberately lie to others, such as the ones who pose as the Wandering Jew. If one would apply the taxonomy from Holberg's *Natural Law* to Klim's ideas, we could say Klim's play of make-belief towards the gullible Quamitians was merely

[44] *Niels Klim* XVI, 375.

[45] Ibid., Abeline's Epilogue, 380. "The main part of his library consisted of political books, and because such a choice of books was not fitting to the office of a curate, some criticised him for it. He himself wrote his adventures, and his manuscript, which is the only one in being, is at present in my custody. Though I always intended it for the press, yet I have hitherto been hindered from publishing it by very important reasons."

false speech, while what fabulists – and by extension poets - do is *lying*. The latter Klim wants to avoid by any means. Moral truth (*moralske Sandhed*), finally, is completely absent in the conversation between the two physicians, and in extension in Klim's entire discourse. Klim never defends himself against potential accusations of immoral behaviour, yet always against accusations of lying.

The criticism on the heroic status of bloodthirsty commanders can shed new light on the quote from Holberg's commentary on *Niels Klim* at the beginning of this chapter: "Tota *Historia*, cum tantum vehiculum sit præceptorum ac meditationum moralium, mere nugax est."[46] Suddenly, it seems rather banal to interpret this as if Holberg would say that the 'story' is just a trifle because it only serves the morals presented within. The sentence lets the play between *historia* and *fabula* in *Niels Klim* reverberate and adds an ironical or at least ambiguous meaning: the entire history - thus not only *Niels Klim* -, as a vehicle to bring across morals, is nonsense. Man does not tend to learn from history. Like Klim, he easily finds justification for his actions in historical events. As Holberg uses the word *fabula* in the following sentence, could he suggest that one perhaps learns more through the medium of fiction?

The tension between *historia* and *fabula* does not only arise from the identity shifts of Klim and his own role as a *historicus.* His claims and adventures are continuously countered by intertextual references. In the following section, I will discuss several fabulous *historiae* that can guide the reading of Klim's *historia*.

5.3.1 Conveying Truth (with Lucianic Lies)

The first intertext seems to be unavoidable in the context of *Niels Klim*: the *True Histories* of the Greek writer Lucian of Samosata. In most of literary scholarship, Lucian is presented as the uncrowned king of science fiction and the first precursor of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tradition of imaginary voyages. In his monograph on Lucian's reception, Christopher Robinson shows that the Renaissance saw a renewed interest in Lucian's sophistic dialogues and absurdist humour, both in the form of translations and rewritings, and Lucian continued to be influential throughout the Enlightenment. It cannot be left unsaid that most of the travel texts that are under discussion in this thesis have to some extent a Lucianic touch. Writers as Cyrano de Bergerac, Swift, Montesquieu and Voltaire were openly fans. Since the work of Paludan, Lucian's *True Histories* is frequently mentioned as a great influence to Holberg's *Niels Klim* as well, although it is impossible to draw a straight line from Lucian to Holberg, as Robinson already indicated:

[46] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 12, my italics.

> Holberg, in fact, represents the point at which the various strands of the imaginary voyage tradition that owe something to Lucian have become totally fused. In his preference for pure fantasy over the semi-realism of *Gulliver*, he returns to Lucian. In his clear moral stand and his use of sustained, sometimes complex, irony, he is recognizably following Cyrano and Swift. And he has something uniquely his own to add, too, in the choice of a single voyage structure with a cumulative moral point.[47]

Moreover, few scholars have studied the relation between both works more closely.

Within the scope of this chapter, the *True Histories*, or, as it was known since the Renaissance translation in Latin, *Verae Historiae*, are relevant because the title already expresses a tension between *historia* and *fabula*. The I-narrator of the story relates absurd adventures, such as voyages to the moon, on a sea of milk, to an island made of cheese and finally Lucian's arrival at the Antipodes, which he promises to describe in a third book that was never actually written. Lucian already shows in his preface that his text is a veiled parody of literary 'liars' such as Homer and Herodotus, and that at least he admits to just tell one truth, namely that what will follow are all lies. The tension between this statement and the repeated truth claims in the story itself is characteristic for the entire work:

> [A]s an imaginative work of literature, it is surprisingly modern; Lucian not only deconstructs his own fiction by proclaiming its falsehood but also interrupts the work abruptly in book 2, thus denying the reader the satisfaction of artistic closure.[48]

It can hardly be denied that Lucian's game with truth and lies, and the fantastical techniques, have influenced Holberg in some form or the other, both by reading Lucian and through the imaginary voyage tradition that translated Lucian to the specific challenges and possibilities of travel literature in the Age of Discovery and further.

The *True Histories* is particularly significant for the study of *Niels Klim*, I will argue here, because of a mediating intertext that has not been sufficiently studied until now. Lucian's omnipresence in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century fiction was partly thanks to the French translator Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt (1606-1664).[49] Perrot d'Ablancourt's translation of the work of *Lucien* in two volumes was published in 1654 and

[47] Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 144.

[48] David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 181.

[49] For the influence of Lucian on France in particular, see Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière, *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVIe siècle: athéisme et polémique* (Genève: Droz, 1988). For the presence of Lucian in Neo-Latin literature, see Marsh. See also chapter 5 of Eleni Bozia, *Lucian and his Roman Voices: Cultural Exchanges and Conflicts in the Late Roman Empire* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015). For the influence on Holberg in particular, 169-72.

reprinted both in Paris and in Amsterdam throughout both centuries. In his *First Autobiographical Letter*, Holberg mentions this about Lucien:

> Difficile est exteris Gallos imitari in elocutione g vel ch, ante vocales i & e. Memini interjectis aliqvot mensibus, cum aliqvot historicos veteres coëmerem, imprimis verò du Chene, plerosqve bibliopolas deceptos elocutione pro du Chene Lucianum, qvi Gallicè dicitur Lucien, mihi porrexisse.[50]

Whether he was actually looking for Du Chesne or not, the anecdote of Holberg indirectly attests to the omnipresence of Lucian in France. Holberg himself also owned a copy of Perrot d'Ablancourt's translations of Lucian.[51]

Perrot d'Ablancourt became famous for his translation of classical literature because of his free way of translating that led to the generic term of *les belles infidèles*. The translation of Lucian's *True Histories* is a good example of his classical adaptations. In the preface, the translator acknowledges that what he generally does is not translating, but something more:

> Cependant, cela n'est pas proprement de la Traduction, mais cela vaut mieux que la Traduction, et les Anciens ne traduisoient point autrement. C'est ainsi que Terence en a usé dans les Comedies qu'il a prises de Menandre, quoy qu'Aulugelle ne laisse pas de les nommer des Traductions.[52]

In Perrot d'Ablancourt's view, this form of rewriting is justified because some elements in Lucian's texts are in his view untranslatable. Comparisons to Love, for example, "parlent de celuy des Garçons, qui n'estoit pas étrange aux mœurs de la Grece, et feroit

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[50] *First Autobiographical Letter*, 57. "It is difficult for foreigners to imitate the French in their pronunciation of *g,* or *ch* before the vowels *i* and *e*. I remember, some months after my arrival, when I wanted to purchase some historical works, especially Du Chesne, most booksellers were mislead by my pronunciation and handed me instead of Du Chesne Lucian, who is called Lucien in French."

[51] Bruun mentions an edition from the year 1597, printed in Amsterdam. As Paludan already pointed out, this cannot be right because Perrot lived from 1606 to 1664. Perrot's supplement to the *True Histories* seem to have been published continuously in the later revisions. Paludan has read the supplement in an edition from 1664 (Paris). See, Bruun, 23; Paludan, 268. Bruun might have meant the edition of 1697, which I will use to quote Perrot d'Ablancourt's prefatory *Epistre*: Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Epistre," in *Lucien* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1697). Holberg moreover refers to Perrot d'Ablancourt in the preface to his own translation of the Roman history of Herodianus (*Herodiani Historie*, 1746), and specifically to Perrot d'Ablancourt's translation of Tacitus in *Epistles* IV.368, 248. Eriksen argues that Perrot d'Ablancourt was an examplary translator in the eyes of Holberg. See Eriksen, 96-98. Racault argues that Swift also had read the *True Histories* in the translation of Perrot d'Ablancourt. Jean-Michel Racault, *Nulle part et ses environs: Voyage aux confins de l'utopie littéraire classique (1657 - 1802)* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 136.

[52] Perrot d'Ablancourt, 7v. "Nevertheless, this is not properly a Translation; but it rates more highly than a Translation; and the Ancients did not translate otherwise. Terence deployed this very method with the Comedies that he took from Menander, even though Aulus Gellius does not leave off calling them Translations." The translation is by Lawrence Venuti: Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Preface to Lucian," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), 36.

horreur aux nôtres."[53] He also decided not to translate some references to Homer, myths or proverbs, which would seem a sign of pedantry in the new context:

> Car il s'agit icy de galanterie, et non pas d'érudition. Il a donc falu changer tout cela, pour faire quelque chose d'agréable: autrement ce ne seroit pas Lucien et ce qui plaît en sa Langue, ne seroit pas suportable en la nôtre.[54]

In order to keep the text of Lucian pleasant for a seventeenth-century readership, Perrot d'Ablancourt thus translates primarily Lucian's humour to the taste and morals of the *galanterie française*. To him, Lucian is a joking author, not a moral example.

In the second volume, the nephew of Perrot, Nicolas Frémont d'Ablancourt – allow me to simply call them Perrot and Frémont from now on -, adds a *Supplément de l'Histoire veritable*. It contains two books of newly invented adventures that complete Lucian's – in Frémont's eyes – unfinished book. His inventions, which have travelled all over Europe together with Perrot's popular translations, are completely in line with his nephew's views on translation. Frémont adds a moral tone to Lucian's pleasantry that appeals to a contemporary public.

It is striking that, on the level of the plot, Frémont's added adventures reverberate more strongly in *Niels Klim* than Lucian's original.[55] Like the Mezendorian lands at Holberg's Firmament, Frémont describes an Empire of Fables (*Empire des Fables*), which contains, amongst others, the Land of Pygmies, who have repeated battles with cranes, and the Kingdom of *Aparctiens*, or men of ice.[56] The strongest echo, however, is Frémont's Island of Animals in book III. The animals are ruled by a Phoenix and Aesopus is the legislator. Like in Holberg's Mezendoria, all animals live together in peace: sheep are grazing amongst wolfs, falcons flies next to doves and swan plays with snakes. After a description of the court of the Phoenix and a celebration of his reign, the festivities are interrupted by an urgent report: the animals of the Antipodes have revolted against 'the Savages' and ask for military support. What follows is a fierce battle between the animals and the humans that reminds one of Holberg's Battle of Sibol in chapter XIII in *Niels Klim.* As head of the army of Quama - Holberg's Antipodes -, Klim leads the brute humans to

[53] Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Epistre," 6v-7r. "[...] address the Love of Boys, which was not foreign to the morals of Greece, but which is abhorrent to ours." Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Preface to Lucian," 35.

[54] Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Epistre," 7r. "[F]or here it is a question of Gallantry, not erudition. It was therefore necessary to change all that, in order to make something pleasing; otherwise, it would not be Lucian; and what pleases in his Language would not be tolerable in ours." Perrot d'Ablancourt, "Preface to Lucian," 35.

[55] For Paludan's brief and summarizing discussion of Perrot's translation, see Paludan, 268-69.

[56] For the Empire of Fables, see Nicolas Frémont d'Ablancourt, "Supplément de l'Histoire veritable," in *Lucien* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1709), IV, 509-11. For the passage on the *Aparctiens*, see 501-503. Whereas the battle between pygmies and cranes is a common feature in folklore and mythology, in chapter 3 of this thesis we saw this passing in Klim's discourse at the beginning of chapter XI. There, in a quote from Juvenal, the pygmies were proof of the variety of nature and functioned as evidence that his story was *theoria* rather than *fabula*. See *Niels Klim* XI, 242.

victory against the animal forces in the neighbouring countries: the Arctonians (bears), Kispucians (large cats) and Alectorians (gamecocks).[57]

The role of the I-narrator in Frémont's battle is particularly relevant to the comparison with Holberg's text. Lucien first stays at a distance; he climbs a tree to watch the battle, "ne voulant pas qu'on me pust reprocher à mon retour d'avoir tenu le parti des bestes contre les hommes." [58] When the animals finally win the battle, there are some disagreements on what they should do with the Savages. Consequently, Lucien proposes to negotiate peace, leads a small delegation to the Savages and manages in the end, to reconcile the animals with the humans almost single-handedly. The discrepancy between Lucien's and Klim's role in battle cannot be greater. The Battle of Sibol is a turning point in Klim's rise to power as he manages to inspire the human army with a lengthy speech.[59] This does not only empower the Quamitians to win the battle, it also convinces them to proclaim Klim as the true successor of the Quamitian Emperor, who was killed in action. Once emperor, Klim sails with an army to the heart of Holberg's empire of animals, Mezendoria, crushes its army, besieges its capital, and finally annexes the entire Mezendorian Empire to his.

We are dealing with an intertextual triangle. In the preface to his *Moral Reflections*, Holberg categorises Lucian's travel writings – he does not name *True Histories* explicitly – in a similar manner as Perrot did. Lucian's works are a type of travel descriptions "hvilken indeholder indet uden Skiemt," in contrast to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and his own travelogue, which are also didactic.[60] In relation to Lucian's text, Holberg thus does something similar as Frémont: he rewrites a text that is in his view primarily pleasant in another context with modernised morals.[61] However, Holberg goes one step further. He also uses Frémont's previous rewriting, especially by contrasting Lucien's actions with those of Klim in Quama. Frémont's Lucien is the moral example of the reconciler Klim could have followed.

The intertextual play between the three texts again highlights the tension between *historia* and *fabula*. The game of truth and lies that is so characteristic for Lucian's text is primarily directed to *historical* truth. The latter is confined to the field of *historia*, while

[57] The passage on this battle begins right after Klim has read Tanian's *Itinerary*. See *Niels Klim* XIII, 317-23.

[58] Frémont d'Ablancourt, III, 494. "[...] not wanting that one could reproach him for having chosen the side of the animals against men."

[59] For the speech, see *Niels Klim* XIII, 323-25.

[60] *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 10, "that contains nothing but jest."

[61] Paludan already pointed to the change in tone between the *Supplément* and Lucian's tale very briefly: "I Stedet for Lucians parodiske Overdrivelser og kaade Spøg faa vi nu en allegorisk-didaktisk Reise som saa mange andre, men ofte mindende om Partier af N. Kl." Paludan, 268. "Instead of Lucian parodical exaggerations and playful hoax, we now get an allegorical-didactic journey like so many others, but often recalling parts of *Niels Klim*."

fabulous texts are the work of poets.[62] Frémont's supplement translates Lucian's approach to truth to seventeenth-century France, a context in which *fabulae* are explicitly used for moralistic and didactic purposes. The absurd play with truth and lies become more innocent and common under the pen of Frémont. An example of this might be the ending of Frémont's tale. As if his additions of two new books were not enough to restore the reader's satisfaction of artistic closure, Frémont nicely finishes up the story with the suggestion that everything seemed to have been one long dream.[63] The deconstruction of fiction, which Marsh saw in Lucian's text, is hereby turned into a piece of literature that is less challenging. In Holberg's text, finally, both games with truth and lies are contrasted. On the one hand, despite Klim's repeated truth claims, his *historia* echoes the *True Histories* of one of the most notorious liars in European history. On the other hand, the moralistic tone of Lucien's actions becomes apparent through Klim's immoral actions. Holberg's game with *historia* and *fabula* is thus still Lucianic, but rather indirect or at least modernised and more layered.

5.3.2 Making History (of Utopia)

The reader's judgement of Klim's actions can also be guided by the fictional *historia* of Denis Veiras's *L'histoire des Sévarambes* (1677). Veiras's popular novel starts out as a Robinsonade *avant-la-lettre* in part I. It presents the memoirs of a sailor, Captain Siden, who is shipwrecked and lands on an unknown island. Together with other survivors, Siden explores the country and finds a hospitable native population in the city of Sevarinde. The rest of Veiras's text is primarily a utopia in the tradition of Thomas More. Siden describes the social practices and customs of the country (part II and IV) and its religion (part IV and especially V).[64] Part III, finally, treats the history of the political development of Sevarinde, which was named after its reformer Sevarias – an anagram of Vairas(se), like Siden is of Denis.

It is primarily in this third, historical and political part we see many comparisons with *Niels Klim*. Sevarias was born in Persia as a Zoroastrian sun worshipper. He travelled around Europe and Asia before landing on the shores of *terra incognita*. With his knowledge of gunpowder and firearms, he can easily conquer the natives and start

[62] The purposes of history are the topic of another of Lucian's writings, *How to Write History*. There, Lucian argues amongst other things that the distinction between useful and agreeable histories (the second type being panegyrics) is unneccesary because history should only aim for the former.

[63] Frémont d'Ablancourt, IV, 517.

[64] For an elaborate and critical summary see the introduction to Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, ix-xix.

building his utopian society with the knowledge he acquired during his travels.[65] As the locals are already worshipping the Sun, Sevarias claims to be an envoy of the sun. Both the resemblances and differences with Klim's recognition as *Pikel-Su,* or the Legate of the Sun, and his rise to power in Quama are clear:

> Sevarias er ingen fuldstændig Bedrager som N. Klim; han er virkelig Solens Præst hos Parserne, faar ikke Thronen ved Usurpation og Forbrydelser og misbruger ikke sin Magt, men indfører derimod en ideal, utopisk Samfundstilstand, hvorom Resten af Bogen handler.[66]

As Paludan concisely describes above, Holberg's Quamitian scene portrays an immoral Sevarias. Paludan fails to mention that Veiras already stages such a character in part V with the name Omigas. When Sevarias landed on the South Land, he found two rivalling tribes, the Prestarambi and the Stroukarambi, who worshipped the Sun and disagreed with each other on how to worship their God. The Stroukarambi were led by the impostor Omigas who claimed to be the Son of the Sun and legitimised his power by staging false miracles.[67] Sevarias conquers both tribes and reunites them under a reformed religion. Through the intertextual links with Veiras's utopia, a shift in roles occurs between Klim and the Emperor of Quama at the time of Klim's arrival, Casba, who "deduceret a Spynko, solis filio, qui primus Quamae sceptra tenuerat."[68] Casba is a genuine and dignified ruler, while Klim becomes a split persona; to the Quamitians he is a Sevarias, while the reader unmasks him as Omigas. It again highlights the tension between Klim's intentions of establishing a utopian and universal monarchy and the immorality of his method.

When we read Sevarias's conquests in Holberg's text, we draw a parallel with the history of Sevarinde rather than with the frame story, namely the actual itinerary of the main character Siden. In the early utopian tradition, the foundation of the state is often a flash back, as it is in Thomas More's *Utopia*. In book II, More briefly refers to Utopus, the conqueror of the island. The latter gave his name to the island and "rudem atque agrestem turbam ad id quo nunc caeteros propè mortales antecellit cultus, humanitatisque perduxit."[69] Veiras zoomed in on this small element of More's *Utopia* and

[65] The political nature of Veiras's utopian society is a point of discussion. Fausett calls it "an absolute social ideal – pure democracy," while Laurens and Masroori leave it at "monarchical, despotical and heliocratical." Fausett, xiv; Veiras, *The History of the Sevarambians: a Utopian Novel*, xiv.

[66] Paludan, 45. "Sevarias is not a complete fraud like Niels Klim; he is truly the Sun's priest amongst the Persians, does not get the throne by usurpation and crimes, and does not abuse his power, but introduces an ideal, utopian state that is treated in the rest of the book."

[67] As Fausett point out, "echoes of the Spanish conquest of America, of More's Mazdaism, or of the Christ story might be detected here." Omigas's parallels both the Inca Manco Capac and the Pope, as "a powerful critique of ecclesiastical abuses of the time" towards the Protestants (or Prestarambi). Fausett, 118.

[68] *Niels Klim* XII, 282. "[...] descends from the great Spynko, son of the Sun, and founder of the Quamitic Empire."

[69] Thomas More, *Utopia* (Basileae: apud Io. Frobenium, 1518), II, 71. "[...] also brought the rude and wild people to that excellent perfection in all good fashions, humanity and civil gentleness, wherein they now go beyond all the people of the world." For the translation, see Thomas More, "Utopia," in *Three Early Modern Utopias. Utopia,*

rewrote it into an extended *mise en abyme* on the history of his utopian land.[70] The reader can thus expect to read a description of a utopian land. The entire twelfth chapter of *Niels Klim* seems to prepare the reader for the utopian civilisation of a "rude and wild people" as More's utopians.

Because of the wordplay of Potu/Utop, scholars have intuitively – and not entirely without reason, of course - looked for references to the utopian tradition in the description of Potu. Some elements, like the structuring in short chapters according to the different aspects of society, are clear, generic characteristics.[71] However, when Sigrid Peters compares More's *Utopia* and Holberg's Potu, she finds "just few similarities," amongst others, the minimalist religion, the respect for agriculturists, and the geographical size of 200 miles.[72] As with so many other intertexts, Holberg's *rewrites* rather than recycles elements, and plays with the reader's expectations. He begins and ends with two elaborate rewritings of the utopian tradition; the first, Potu, is a generic description of a utopian society, while the second, Quama, portrays its generic *historia* in which is narrated how Klim establishes a utopia, albeit *his* Eurocentric utopia. In *Niels Klim*, these two sides of the utopian tradition that were made explicit in Veiras's *L'histoire des Sévarambes*, flank a passage that is the most explicit *fabula* of the entire novel, namely chapters X and XI on Klim's adventures in Martinia and the neighbouring Wondrous Lands.

The rewriting of the utopian tradition in *Niels Klim* is in line with Holberg's views on *historia*, namely with a clear preference for narrative and moral usefulness. As Helge Jordheim observes, there is a discrepancy between the conventions of utopian literature Holberg followed quite closely in chapters III to VII, and the highly dynamic and dramatic plot in the rest of the book:

> As soon as he changes into utopian mode and starts mapping out the utopian society of Potu [...] another organization of the texts is called for, banishing all events, all movement from the novel. The main feature of the utopian state is *stability*, in other words, the absence of any event or any kind of movement that might destabilize the ideal order. [...] It isn't until Klim has returned from his journey around the planet Nazar that Holberg goes on to explore the effects of a narrative hero, the hero of a travel novel, on the structure of utopian society.[73]

To Holberg, the non-movement of Potu's utopia, which is made explicit in the immobility of the Potuan trees, initiates the dynamism of the following plot. In other words, the

New Atlantis and The Isle of Pines, ed. Susan Bruce, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 50.

[70] For a discussion of this mirroring effect in Veiras's text, see Fausett, 125.

[71] A clear example is the article *Adventures in a Strange Paradise* (1980), in which J.F. Jones does not go beyond Potu to discuss the utopian features of *Niels Klim.*

[72] For the entire comparison, see Peters, 93-95.

[73] Jordheim, 164.

question ‘what is an ideal society’ is as important as ‘how does one work towards such a society?’ To answer this question, the static description of Potu does not suffice. There is need for a dramatisation of possible answers through *historia*.

Apart from Klim’s failed attempt in the Quamitian chapters XII to XV, Holberg therefore introduces different other subterranean legislators. In Potu, Klim learns from the *annales* that Potuan rule, which is organised by hereditary and lineal succession, was once given to a philosopher named Rabaku. The Potuans wanted to test the idea that a ruler should excel in wisdom rather than be appointed by birth.[74] After a short period of success, things in Potuan society started to get out of hand. The people lacked veneration and respect for the philosopher. Rabaku tries to claim his authority through submissive flatteries and later severity, but he cannot prevent a revolt. Once the succession of power was restored, peace was as well. In the *annales Mezendorici* in chapter XI, Klim reads about the historical legislator Baccari. This prudent elephant had to clean up the social mess an emperor called Lilako left behind and turned Mezendoria into a meritocracy. He did this in a particularly considerate manner, by consistently appointing the right animals to vacant positions over time.[75]

In short, the structure and organisation of Holberg’s ideal society is not Potu in its pure form, but a composite of elements found in various parts of Klim’s subterranean journey. Although readers are first presented with an ideal society, they have to work themselves through a dynamic plot to create an answer to how one should organise such a society, and how one should behave and act in order to function in it. In Holberg’s moral project, such insights can be gained from reading *historiae*, but, ironically, in *Niels Klim*, the subterranean *historiae* and fabulous *historiae* provide more insight than the European.

5.3.3 Living the Dream (of a Madman)

After Klim falls back to Bergen and is shocked by his fortune, Klim asks himself whether the things he had seen were true and if it was not a dream that had tricked his eyes.[76] The young man whom we have come to know as a self-confident empiricist starts to doubt his senses. Once Klim meets his teacher in physics, Abeline, however, all faith in his vision is restored, and he tries to convince him of the truthfulness of his subterranean adventure. This conversation between Abeline and Klim in chapter XVI echoes with the words

[74] The entire passage is found in *Niels Klim* VII, 82-84. The idea of a philosopher ruler reaches back to Plato’s state. Holberg was an overt supporter of absolutism, which was established in Denmark in 1660. For references to other parts of Holberg’s oeuvre where he discusses this topic, see the commentary of the Rabaku-passage: Skovgaard-Petersen, Zeeberg, and Flugt, "Kommentarer til *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*". VII, 82-84. Olesen also reads the Rabaku-passage in a broader discussion of Holberg’s embrace of hereditary monarchies. See Olesen, 143-44.

[75] *Niels Klim* XI, 260-62.

[76] *Niels Klim* XVI, 362.

historia, fabula, veritas, and *somnium*. Abeline first interrupts Klim by calling his stories dreams, fabricated insanities or delusions.[77] With words reminding of his preface to the Mezendorian sea voyage, Klim admits that his story may sound *fabulosus* and *poeticus*,[78] and in a last attempt Klim reaffirms his previous version of the *historia itineris subterranei* by drawing the card of the eyewitness report once more:

> Attonitum iam, ac pedem retrahentem acriter vrgeo, monstrando, longe absurdius itinere hoc esse hypothesin illius, de monstris ac lemuribus, antra montium inhabitantibus: nam mera haec esse somnia, ad aniles fabulas releganda, diuersos vero magni nominis Philosophos, concauam esse terram, et alium orbem minorem nostro contineri, statuisse: veritatem huius sententiae experientia me edoctum, sensibus propriis obniti nequire.[79]

The conversation between Abeline and Klim further plays with the possibility that Klim might have been a dream, as Klim suggested himself at the beginning of the chapter when referring to Nebuchadnezzar's dreams.

To modern readers of *Niels Klim*, the *somnium*-element may seem an insignificant detail, but to an eighteenth-century reader the simile of Nebuchadnezzar, which is already anticipated on the front page, must have been strongly marked. An illustration we may find in the reception of *Niels Klim* in Dutch literature where two texts in the late eighteenth century clearly rewrote Holberg's novel with a specific attention for the aspect of the dream.[80]

In 1760, a short political satire was published in the Dutch *Spectator* with the title *Description of the Republic of Trees* (*Beschryving van een Boomgemeenebest*) and the telling pseudonym Phileleutherus Dendrologus.[81] Dendrologus describes a society of rational trees that mirrors the contemporary state of the Dutch Republic. He portrays a society ripped apart by rivalling parties, in full degeneration compared to the Greeks and Romans, and one that causes its own destruction through avarice and greed. Dendrologus' satire is pessimistic, and it does not mince matters as to the analogy between his fictive society of trees and the real Republic. Few analogies to Holberg's more subtle description of Potu are to be found, yet the beginning of the *Description* is telling; the story begins with

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[77] Ibid. XVI, 370.

[78] Ibid. XVI, 371.

[79] *Niels Klim* XVI, 372-73. "He was already baffled and about to give up, so I pushed some further and made him aware that such a journey was not nearly as absurd as his own belief in trolls and monsters living in mountain caves, for, those are purely dreams (*somnia*) that had to be thrown into the class of old wives' fables (*aniles fabulas*); that several philosophers of reputation were of the opinion that the Earth was hollow, and that it contained another world, smaller than ours; and that I had learned from experience that this idea was true, so I could not possibly oppose my own senses."

[80] André Hanou briefly mentions the two texts I will discuss in his introduction to the most recent Dutch translation of *Niels Klim*. He does not refer to the similarity of the dream. Holberg, *De onderaardse reise van Claas Klim (1741)*, 16-17.

[81] Phileleutherus Dendrologus, "Beschryving van een Boomgemeenebest," *Nederlandse Spectator* 12 (1760).

the author falling asleep after he had read Holberg's *Underground Journey of Klaas Klim* and imagining himself being near the mythological oak forest of Dodona.[82] The satire on Dutch society is thus framed after Klim's suggestion at the end of the book, that his adventures amongst the Potuan trees might have been a *somnium*.

In a more elaborate and diverting imaginary voyage called *Journey through Ape Country* (*Reize door het Aapenland,* 1788), the Dutch writer J.A. Schasz sketches a society of monkeys close to Holberg's Martinia.[83] The I-narrator witnesses how the apes in a desperate attempt to look more like humans collectively cut off their tails. While the satirical comparison between the human traveller and a monkey is in itself a firm motive in imaginary voyages such as Cyrano de Bergerac's *Histoire comique* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, it is primarily the tail as the sole distinctive characteristic between both species that highlights the link between Holberg's and Schasz's text.[84] Klim is mistaken for a monkey when he arrives on Nazar because of the piece of rope that was attached to his body since his fall.[85] Later, Klim is summoned for the Potuan king explicitly in the same clothing he wore when falling on the planet (*eodem habitu, quo in planetam hunc delatus fueram*), which is the reason why little monkeys torment him on his way over to the palace.[86] For Martinians, there is nothing more important than decorating their tails, which is considered a sign of reverence.[87] In order to allow Klim to integrate in society, the Martinians give him a fake tail (*cauda fictitia*), which Martinian poets then laud with poems and panegyrics.[88] At the end of Schasz' text, when the monkey state has died with its tailless inhabitants, the author wakes up from a deep sleep.

The early reception of *Niels Klim* in the Netherlands demonstrates that the importance of the figure of Nebuchadnezzar was not left unnoticed, and this in two ways: in the translation of Nebuchadnezzar's appearances (as a tree and as an animal) in fabulous, satirical societies, and in the suggestion of the subterranean voyage being *somnium*.

The *somnium*-attribution is particularly relevant in the present study because it is an additional way of undermining Klim's *historia*. It shifts the reader's attention from the

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[82] When talking about the roots of Holberg's idea for inventing rational trees, Paludan refers to a work Phileleutherus Dendrologus might also have been aware of, namely an allegorical, political fable *Dendrologia, Dodoans grove or the vocall forest* by J.H. Esq. or James Howell (1666). Paludan, 170.

[83] J.A. Schasz, *Reize door het Aapenland* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2007). Schasz was in all likelihood a pseudonym of the prolific, enlightened satirist Gerrit Paape.

[84] Sejersted discusses another text that plays with this monkey theme and focuses on the tail as a distinctive feature between monkeys and men, namely Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt* (1867). See Sejersted, "Å reise med Gullliver, Niels og Peer – Holbergs *Niels Klims underjordiske reise* lest mellom Swifts *Gulliver's Travels* og Ibsens *Peer Gynt*."; Sejersted, "Reflections on Peer Gynt's Forefathers Niels Klim and Lemuel Gulliver."

[85] The first time the piece of rope is compared with a tail is *Niels Klim* I, 11. The recognition of Klim as a monkey by the Potuan trees is based on the similarity of form and clothing in II, 17.

[86] *Niels Klim* III, 48.

[87] Ibid. X, 208 and 216.

[88] *Niels Klim* X, 215 and 232.

truthfulness of the events presented to the truthfulness of the beliefs and theories represented by those events. In other words, the status of Klim's adventure as the fulfilment or reliving of a dream problematises Klim's strict but simplistic division between *historia* and *fabula*: as events that did and did not actually happen. Because Klim fixates himself on *veritas logica* and lies, *somnium* is relegated to the category of *fabula*. In Latin literature, however, *somnium* cannot simply be equated with *fabula*, but holds a middle position between *historia* and *fabula*, like the third of Cicero's notions, *argumentum*. Although *somnium* shows events that did not happen in reality, it still holds truth because it was the medium for visions. In the *Somnium Scipionis* in Cicero's *De re publica*, for example, the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus has a cosmic vision in which his grandfather Scipio Africanus foretells him the future destruction of Carthage. Closer in time to Holberg, Kepler's *Somnium* demonstrates the truthfulness of the Copernican theory in the form of a voyage to the moon, while Athanasius Kircher's work on astrology, *Iter exstaticum* (1656), was also embedded in a dream narrative. In other words, the narratives of Cicero, Kepler, Kircher and even the ones of Dendrologus and Schasz all use the dream to indicate that there is a visionary, allegorical or moral truth in the text that is not simply linked to *historia* or to *fabula*, but comes to the fore through a play between the two. The same effect might be attributed to Lucien's suggestion of dreaming in Frémont's *Supplement*. When Klim and Abeline present the dream as yet another form of untrustworthy and deceptive *fabulae*, the reader may again be reminded of Klim's – meanwhile painful - blindness for "*moralsk Sandhed*."

Additionally, the conversation between Abeline and Klim about *historia, fabula*, *veritas* and *somnium* recalls the scene in Cervantes's novel about Don Quixote's descent into the cave of Montesinos and the doubt of the Arabian writer about the veracity of the events. In chapter 4 of this thesis, I demonstrated that the entire passage on Montesinos asked the question whether the subterranean voyage was real or a dream, but in the current context of Klim's *historia*, the intertextual link to Don Quixote's subterranean journey becomes especially striking. One of the elements that makes Cervantes's novel so fit to Sermain's theory on metafiction and the Fable is its notorious and excessive literary game on the terms of *historia* and *fabula*. Throughout the novel, Cervantes calls his piece 'historia' and even adds most of the times the adjective 'verdadera'.[89] Bruce Wardropper argues that Cervantes eliminates every critical scrutiny of evidence whereby it becomes impossible to discriminate between history and story. This game is to Wardropper an allegory for "the moral dilemma of man, who must live in a world where the boundaries between truth and falsehood are imprecise."[90] Interestingly, Wardropper also links these ill-defined boundaries between *historia* and *fabula* to Don Quixote's madness: "It is not so

[89] Bruce W. Wardropper, ""Don Quixote": Story or History?," *Modern Philology* 63, no. 1 (1965): 2.
[90] Ibid., 4.

much the reading of too many books of chivalry that drives him mad; it is the misreading, the misinterpretation of them that causes his insanity."[91]

To some extent, Klim thus becomes another Don Quixote. As I showed earlier, Klim's immoral behaviour and megalomania was not due to the sheer exposure to power, but to his misreadings of books. They made him idolise false heroes, such as Alexander the Great, and misinterpret the *historiae* of moral examples, such as Nebuchadnezzar. However, whereas Don Quixote forswears all his beliefs in chivalric romances at the end of Cervantes's book, and thus straightens things out with the reader, Klim remains blind for what *historia* actually is all about: moral truth and not *veritas logica*.

The catastrophe of Holberg's *historia* is therefore not characterised by Klim's metamorphoses as such, but by the discrepancy between Holberg's own taxonomy of truth he wants to bring across, and Klim's simplistic categorisations: *historia* and truth as diametrically opposed to *fabula,* lies and even *somnia*. Various intertexts indicate to Holberg's readers that they have to create more nuanced categories. Moral truth can be gained from both *historiae* and *fabulae*, but always after a highly reflective process of reading. Klim's misreading of both European and subterranean *historiae*, and his anxiety to be associated with a teller of *fabulae*, amongst others things, constitute a highly ironical narrative force that guides readers to this understanding.

5.4 Conclusion: From Chaotic History to Moral Truth

Holberg creates a discrepancy between what Klim writes (or wants to write) and what the readers read. Klim's intentions as a writer are aimed at *veritas logica*: a truth that is based upon his scientific verification as an eyewitness (*theoria*) and thus provides knowledge of events (in this case *iter*) that actually happened (*historia* in contrast to *fabula*). According to Klim, his descriptions are close to ethnographical, while in the eyes of the reader he travels from one genre to another, ranging from imaginary voyages and fables to mock epic and Menippean satire. The reader's associations with popular literature and genres further complicate interpretations of moral truth. When it comes to *historiae*-intertexts, *Niels Klim* restages a Lucianic *True History* inside a political-utopian plot reminiscent of *L'histoire des Sévarambes*, inside a dream sequence of a subterranean voyage after Cervantes's *historia* of Don Quixote. Hereby, Klim relives three of the most notorious and ambiguous *fabulae* in the history of travel literature. This intertextual game between *historia* and *fabula* makes the reader aware of the discrepancy between Klim's absurd and pointless quest for *veritas logica* and Holberg's aim of moral truth, which is most clearly

[91] Wardropper, 6.

expressed in Klim's direct references to and moral misreadings of the histories of Alexander the Great and Nebuchadnezzar.

In his article on Holberg as a writer of world literature, Larsen at one point focuses on the utopian element in *Niels Klim.* Comparing it with Holberg's comedies, he asserts that *Niels Klim* is a "close to one-to-one translation from fiction to social reality, a slightly veiled philosophical treatise on moral and social philosophy" and depicts it as a novel about the future:

> If the comedies deal with an explosive bunch of uncontrollable individuals demonstrating the difficulty of humans to actually live as humans, the novel is about the potential of balanced reasoning for reforming society in view of a more human future. [...] The novel is more focused on moral principles and social action than character. No wonder: what would a character of the future look like?[92]

Indeed, Klim's character is rather flat compared to Holberg's comical figures. Nevertheless, the main problem of human existence represented in *Niels Klim*, especially when you take into account the potential associations with intertexts, is a fundamental one: the problem of interpretation. A look towards the future, which Larsen argues to be central to *Niels Klim*, always goes hand in hand with a view to the past and the texts it brought forth. In Holberg's Enlightenment project, changing the future must be done in a considerate manner and with a sound knowledge and moral judgement of history. Klim, then, personifies the problems that come with this method: in reviewing history and reading *historiae,* every politician and reformer can *mis*read. In the seemingly straightforward quote of his third autobiographical letter, Holberg indirectly warns the reader to finally learn from history (*tota historia).* The reader must not blindly accept what other people consider to be true (*argumentum*) and should realise that a fabulous story (*fabula*) can also hold moral truth.

With the present chapter, I also conclude the narratological half of this thesis, consisting of chapters 1, 3 and 5. Throughout these analyses of Klim's *iter, theoria* and *historia*, it was my aim to nuance in particular one interpretation of *Niels Klim*, found in Paludan's seminal work on *Niels Klim* and the imaginary voyage. He conceives *Niels Klim* as a text that lacks internal cohesion:

> Bogens Feil er vel navnlig at falde fra hinanden i en Mængde satiriske Enkeltbilleder, der holdes sammen ved en fælles Ramme, men mangle fælles, gjennemgaaaende Plan.[93]

[92] Larsen, 81.

[93] Paludan, 175. "The major eror of the book is that it falls apart in numerous single satirical parts, held together by a frame, but without a common, general plan." The translation is by Søren Peter Hansen. He also mentions two instances where F.J. Billeskov Jansen says something similar about *Niels Klim*'s lack of a unified plot. See Hansen, "Modern Thoughts Disguised as Ancient Genres. A Discussion on Ludvig Holberg's novel 'Niels Klim'."

Søren Peter Hansen reacted to Paludan's evaluation before by arguing that *Niels Klim*'s central element was the development and evolution of Klim's character, in line with the tradition of the picaresque novel and intensified by the introduction of an unreliable narrator.[94] As I will summarise here, I have tried to take Hansen's solution even further in my narratological chapters.

Niels Klim must be understood as a generically hybrid text, which we theorised in chapter 4 of this thesis. It connects to utopian, Menippean, quixotic and other traditions, and plays with *fabulae* that are presented as *historiae*. The danger of contesting Paludan's depiction of Klim as a chaotic text is that *Niels Klim*'s hybridity remains an observation. This has led in the past to relapses into fixed, generic categorisations without actually embracing the hybridity of the text. In the narratological chapters on *Niels Klim*, I therefore wanted to show not only the structure in the chaos, but also the function of this chaos: it trains the reader in looking further than what the text presents at first sight and in making meaningful and useful associations with other literature, both – in modern terms – fictional and non-fictional, and in multiple languages. This reading experience raises doubt and incites reflexivity, which are handed to the readers as necessary tools to construct moral truth.[95]

In the next chapter, I will further elaborate on the nature of this moral truth, but, to finish this narratological thread, I would like to go over the plot of *Niels Klim* once more to show its coherence, or better, to show how Holberg plays with the expectations of the readers and constantly challenges interpretations that might be formed all too quickly. Holberg creates a discrepancy between narrator and implied author through a dynamic plot and an elaborate play with intertexts.

The plot's coherence is provided by the model of the Fifth Monarchy, albeit in a subverted form compared to Holberg's *Synopsis*. The tripartite degeneration from plants, over animals to finally a world of humans is apparent.[96] The reader is guided through three traditional and classicist genres: *utopia, fabula* and *historia*. The last one refers back to the first as it recalls the embedded histories of the utopian tradition, and hereby nicely

[94] See Hansen, "Mellem rejseroman og udviklingsroman. En læsning af Holbergs Niels Klim."; Hansen, "Modern Thoughts Disguised as Ancient Genres. A Discussion on Ludvig Holberg's novel 'Niels Klim'."

[95] The following, brief analysis of *Niels Klim*'s structure, might be associated with a specific branch of narratological studies, namely that of narrative ethics, which lies at "the intersection between various formal aspects of narrative and moral values" and theorises the distinction between the ethics of the told, which implies moral evaluations of characters and events, and the ethics of the telling, i.e. "text-internal matters involving implied authors, narrators, and audiences." James Phelan, "Narrative Ethics," ed. Peter Hühn, et al., *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (Hamburg: Hamburg University), http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/. 3-4. It is from this perspective, I assume that readers construct ethics and moral by continuously contrasting the told with the telling, and by interpreting passages in the light of passages that juxtapose them. In this sense, any juxtaposition of narrative elements, whether chaotic at first sight or not, can be meaningful to the reader's construction of morals.

[96] See Dalgaard, "En konvolut med blandet indhold. Om Holbergs brug af genrer i *Niels Klim*," 81.

ties it all together. These three central phases of Klim's journey are clearly marked by a drastic turn of events that anchors *Niels Klim* into the long tradition of imaginary voyages; first, the aerial voyage, caused by the banishment from the utopian society, and second, the shipwreck, which abruptly ends the – equally common - sea voyage and introduces Klim's Robinsonade.

So far, Klim's structure seems far from chaotic; yet Holberg adds three anecdotal, embedded journeys, one in each of the central parts. In the Nazarian chapters, Holberg adds the *Itinerarium Scabbae*, a moralistic-philosophical series of descriptions of often paradoxical, smaller countries that nuance the utopian aspects of Potu. In the Martinian, or better Mezendorian chapters, Holberg lets Klim take a trip at sea, which leads the reader through the most fabulous passage in the entire book. These first two journeys have the same narrator as the frame story but are embedded in the sense that they are clearly separated from Klim's main journey. The *Itinerarium Scabbae* is said to be published as a whole in Potu, but in an abbreviated form in *Niels Klim*, while the *Navigatio* is marked by its extensive introduction, directly addressed to the reader of *Niels Klim.*[97] The last embedded journey is the *Itinerarium Taniani* in the Quamitian chapters. In the three embedded voyages, truth is conveyed in different forms: first as a set of moral paradoxes, then as a pleasant *fabula* (strikingly taking place in the *Terrae Paradoxae*), and finally as a harsh and direct mirror of Europe's faults. The *Itinerarium Taniani* is for many reasons the climax of *Niels Klim*, amongst others because in this passage the rest of the book is reversed: not the subterranean countries are paradoxical, but Europe.

The reader thus has to adjust and readjust his interpretation on the go. After having read the description of Potu, readers might think they encounter a dystopia in Martinia. Although strictly not incorrect, this interpretation of utopia and dystopia is tested further on, when Mezendoria seems to present the ideal meritocracy of nature, and Europe itself, in Tanian's description, the true dystopia. Although the first elements of the Quamitian chapters might raise the expectations of a new utopia, in the end, Klim strengthens the idea of the European dystopia by copying Europe's bloodstained history to the subterranean realm.

Chaotic as the plot may be, the effect of *Niels Klim* would not be the same without, say, Klim's lengthy description of a series of 28 countries in chapter IX; its omission would change, amongst others, *Niels Klim*'s metafictional quality, its negotiation of authority and the reader's search for moral truth. Without the immobility of the utopian part, the dynamics of Klim's adventures in the rest would be less powerful. *Niels Klim* would not *be* worse or better, it would *function* differently. Like Paludan's own quite chaotic text, *Niels Klim*'s chaos is structured and serves a greater purpose, in this case as part of Holberg's moral project. Holberg's plot is built upon oppositions and paradoxes, which both provide

[97] For the publication of *Itinerarium Scabbae*, see *Niels Klim* IX, 191-92. For the introduction to the sea voyage, see XI, 241-44, and chapter 3 of this thesis.

inner coherence (as different parts resemble, negate or echo each other) and challenge the reader to deal with its chaos.

To Holberg, *historia* gains in moral relevance through the meaningful and challenging juxtaposition of narrative scenes and characters. He shows this, paradoxically, through a multiform *fabula*. *Historia* and *fabula* are two central expression forms of the same project of moral philosophy; the first gives *exempla* to the reader, while the second contests presumptions and prejudices in a fictional world. Neither of the forms is plain and prescriptive; they are intrinsically dialogical as they aim at a reading experience that does not stand still, but is in a constant motion of opposing, pondering, doubting and reflecting. This aspect of mobility will be further explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Morals in Motion: Holberg on (Critics) Seeking Truth and (Mis)Reading *Niels Klim*

In the previous chapter, the term *historia* was considered as a categorisation of Klim's narration that created a tension between, on the one hand, what Klim reads and writes, and, on the other hand, what we read. Through a tension between intertexts that all use the term *historia* and related terms very differently, the question is raised, 'what is truth?' In the case of Klim, both *veritas logica* and moral truth of his narration fails miserably, but how did it work out for Holberg? Did readers of Niels Klim, both contemporaries and modern readers, fail or succeed to find truth in the novel? What kind of truth is it and, more importantly, how should they reach it? For, the reading process is more complex than simply reversing Klim's moral judgements.

6.1 Holberg Scholarship on Morals

6.1.1 *Utile dulce*: A Tipped Balance

Let us look once more to Holberg's comment on *Niels Klim* with which we started part III:

> Tota Historia, cum tantum vehiculum sit præceptorum ac meditationum moralium, mere nugax est.[1]

Besides claiming that the entire *historia* is a mere trifle, Holberg also calls it "a vehicle for moral precepts and meditations." Later he would add that the moral doctrine is "Operis præcipuus scopus."[2] Lasse Horne Kjældgaard warns of misinterpreting Holberg's claim as if his *historia* would just be a compilation of moral precepts, and attributes such misinterpretations to a difference between the eighteenth-century and modern reader:

> Det lyder unægtelig, som om litteraturen kun er emballage om maksimer og moralske forskrifter, der lige så godt kunne fremsættes direkte og uden omsvøb. Det er også den fordom, hvormed mange læsere i dag møder oplysningstidens litteratur, der ikke lever op til den adskillelse af det æstetiske og moralske, som har været betingelsen for god kunst siden slutningen af 1700-tallet.[3]

To some extent, Kjældgaard's warning goes for Holberg scholarship as well, where one can notice an over-emphasis on morals in reading *Niels Klim.* Scholarship has particularly focused upon the passages in *Niels Klim* in which moralistic or didactic features predominate, which went hand in hand with an underappreciation for elements that would stand in the way of discussing morals, such as fantasy. Raymond Trousson for example says in his overview study of utopian literature that in *Niels Klim* "la critique des mœurs, de la morale, de la politique est toujours présente en filigrane, mais noyée dans ces débordements de l'imaginaire." [4] Especially the utopian land of Potu and its surroundings – I admit, in number of pages by far the largest part of the novel - has always drawn the most attention, at the expense of the Mezendorian and even Quamitian parts.[5]

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[1] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 12. "The entire *historia*, when it is a vehicle for moral precepts and meditations, is a mere trifle."

[2] Ibid., 14, "the main scope of the work."

[3] Kjældgaard, "Tolerance og Autoritet hos Locke, Voltaire og Holberg," 74-75. "It sounds not genuine, as if literature is just the packaging around maxims and moral precepts that might just as well have been expressed directly and without a roundabout. It is also this prejudice by which many readers today encounter Enlightenment literature, which does not comply with the separation of the aesthetic and the moral, which has been the requirement for good art since the end of the 18th century."

[4] Raymond Trousson, *Voyages aux pays de nulle part: Histoire littéraire de la pensée utopique*, 3 ed. (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1999). "[C]riticism of morals, morality, and politics is always present in the background, but drowned in these floods of the imaginary."

[5] Peter Fitting has made this observation back in 1996 and called for a renewed interest in the fantastical element in *Niels Klim*, and thus also for the chapters after Klim's stay on Nazar. Fitting, "Buried Treasures. Reconsidering Holberg's Niels Klim in the World Underground," 103. Fitting hereby not only refers to Raymond Trousson, but also to Jones's article on utopia in *Niels Klim* as striking example of total disregard for the second half of Holberg's narrative. Compare also with Galson, who says that particularly the second half of the book "tend to frustrate interpretation", which had two effects on scholarship: "over-emphasizing the utopian aspects of Potu (which also has dystopian elements), and downplaying the critical aspects of the later adventures." Galson, 193. The fact that Samuel Galson has renewed Fitting's call for a shift in focus in 2013 shows that not much has changed in this respect.

What is at stake in Kjældgaard's warning is not just the relation between the story and the morals in *Niels Klim*, but more generally the evaluation of *Niels Klim* on the spectrum between pleasure and instruction. As Charles Batten argues in his study of eighteenth-century travel literature, Horace's *utile dulci* dictum from his *Ars Poetica* was "ultimately one of the acknowledged cornerstones of neoclassical criticism" and travel literature in particular.[6] In the age of the Enlightenment, writers of imaginary voyages in particular, exploring life questions in new universes, had to find a balance between the playful wit, satire and fantasy, on the one hand, and the seriousness of philosophical and moralistic doctrine, on the other. On this basis, their literature was evaluated and criticised. For Holberg, opposition came especially from the Pietist courner in Denmark, which nearly confiscated *Niels Klim*, while an early French review of *Niels Klim* characterises the book as "un Roman curieux, à peu près le goût des *Voïages de Gulliver*. Il y a cependant une différence, c'est que celui ci est d'une utilité plus générale."[7] In his *Moral Reflections*, Holberg repeats this idea when talking about *Niels Klim*:

> De fingerede Rejse-Beskrivelser, som udi vor Tiid giøres af den bekiendte Engelske Doctor Swift er en Sammenblanding af Skiemt og Lærdom, dog saaledes at det første derudi prædominerer. Udi Klims Underjordiske-Rejse ere ogsaa begge Deele, men besynderlig det sidste: thi der indeholdes saa mange Characterer, at man deraf kand forsynes med Materialier til et heelt Moralsk Systema.[8]

Holberg's statement that *Niels Klim* leans towards the direction of instruction, compared to *Gulliver's Travels*, has intensified the emphasis on morals in order to set *Niels Klim* apart from *Gulliver's Travels*.[9] But what is important here is that *Niels Klim* was clearly written in a climate in which peers heavily approved or disapproved a text according to this neoclassicist preconception, and Holberg had to justify his work to himself and his peers accordingly.

Holberg's emphasis on instruction in the preface to *Moral Reflections*, moreover, is embedded in a passage in which he explains his general view on literature. He enumerates

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[6] Batten continues noting that travel writers "always aimed at blending pleasure with instruction in order to achieve an artistically pleasing literary experience." As the balance between both ends is negotiable, many of them stressed the instructive function of their travelogue to avoid the risk of it being read as a bundle of lies. Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction. Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 25. For the *utile dulce* balance in imaginary voyages in particular, see also Arthur, *Virtual Voyages: Travel Writing and the Antipodes, 1605-1837*, 54-55.

[7] Anonymous, 356.

[8] *Moral Reflections,* 10. "The fictitious travel descriptions that in our days are rendered by the well-known English Doctor Swift, are a mixture of jest and learning, yet in such a manner, that the first of these predominates. In Klim's Underground Journey both parts are present as well, but mainly the latter: for it contains so many characters, that one can be provided with material for a whole moral system."

[9] Sejersted reads this comparison of Holberg as a transformation of Swift's satire and radical ideas into "conservative morality". "To a certain extent," Sejersted continues, "one could say that Holberg is writing a parody of Swift's satire" Sejersted, "Reflections on Peer Gynt's Forefathers Niels Klim and Lemuel Gulliver," 154.

the genres of romance, travel descriptions, letters, Spectators, *pensées*, and plays, accompanied by the to him most laudable examples of each type. The entire passage testifies that good literature is to Holberg in essence moralistic.[10] Therefore, he claims that one can see in his writings that he "haver søgt at moralisere paa adskillige Maader."[11] Moral teachings are omnipresent in Holberg's work, as they are in good pieces of literature in general. Since his poetic debut, *Peder Paars*, Holberg repeatedly rants against authors who in his view write bad literature and denounces the overproduction of literature and its pernicious consequences for its aesthetic quality and moral value.[12]

Moral instruction is thus to Holberg a *sine-qua-non* for good literature, which brings this state of the art, like Holberg scholarship, trapped in a vicious circle of over-emphasising morals. However, as the previous chapters of this thesis have sufficiently demonstrated from different angles, the other side of the spectrum is equally important. The fantasy, the story and the juxtaposition of comical and more serious passages are precisely what gives *Niels Klim* its dynamics. In the present chapter, I will therefore revisit the early reception of *Niels Klim*, this time in the light of the *utile dulce* spectrum, and argue that Holberg himself struggled with these neoclassical notions. He was brought up with the comprehension of pleasurable instruction as a continuum on which a book should have its position, and was pressed by it to depict *Niels Klim* as having a specific place on this spectrum. However, I will explore the possibilities for a paradigm shift: from a continuum to a more dynamic conception of pleasurable instruction that takes the reading process into account and implies a more active role of the reader, which was essential to Holberg's didactic project. Such a paradigm shift is in my view imperative to pull scholarship out of the impasse that was sketched above. As the emphasis on instruction in *Niels Klim*, which originated very early on in its reception history, has been repeatedly emphasised in the course of almost three centuries, *Niels Klim* was forced to stand still. I will argue that it was nonetheless designed to travel during the reading process, between pleasure and instruction, so the reader could construct moral truth.

I will specifically analyse Holberg's commentary of *Niels Klim* in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*, from which the quote was taken at the beginning of this chapter. In its entirety, this passage is full of irony and criticism towards his critics, and abounds with ridicules on the extreme positions of the spectrum between pleasure and instruction. I will demonstrate this through three metaphors Holberg uses. The first is

[10] This is in line with the statement of Kjældgaard, cited earlier, that we, as modern readers, tent to separate aesthetics from morals. We inherited this from romanticism in particular, but should be careful applying this as true for eighteenth century literature.

[11] *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 20, "has sought to moralise in different manners." As Thomas Ewen Daltveit Slettebø explains, Holberg subdivides moral writings into the serious and the humorous kind. See Slettebø, 32. It is remarkable that whereas satire and comedy belong to the humorous kind, he categorises fictional travel descriptions among the serious ones.

[12] As Slettebø argues, "Holberg's reputation as a moralist was threatened [...] by the appearance of writers who had neither the talent nor the decorum necessary to carry this responsibility." Ibid., 39-40.

the idea of the mobility of morals, symbolised by the term *vehiculum* in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter. Holberg's readers should have not fixed, but versatile minds that are open to paradox and nuance. The second, the one of the 'key' (*clavis*), stands for the idea that there is one interpretation of a text (or 'door'). Within this metaphor, the readers are called *claviquaerentes* and are negatively evaluated by Holberg. The third, the one of *fabula*, stands for the value of fictional stories in the creation of a moral system. The readers in this metaphorical discourse are ironically named after animals, first 'little fish' (*pisciculi*) and later 'moles' (*talpae*) to show that the *fabula* (not by coincidence also a genre that typically anthropomorphises animals) is a necessary component to Holberg's moral project.

In the last section of this chapter, I will contrast Holberg's (remarks on) *Niels Klim* with a Danish imaginary voyage *Menoza* written by one of Holberg's many enemies in Copenhagen, the Pietist Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764). This work will serve as an almost complete negation of what Holberg wanted to establish, and how he wanted to get his readership involved in *Niels Klim*. This comparison will allow us to give more context to Holberg's commentary of his novel and show how he positions his novel against Pontoppidan's, also with regard to how to read it. Together with the analysis of the three metaphors (*vehiculum* – *clavis* – *pisciculi*), it will suggest that *Niels Klim* does not contain a fixed or universal truth that can be revealed. Much is open for personal interpretation, as long as the reader does not deem the fictional *vehiculum* superfluous. *Niels Klim* should not be placed on a fixed position between pleasure and instruction, but it is the reader who should move between those poles during the reading process. This chapter thus studies *Niels Klim* as an interpretational play- and training ground (providing respectively pleasure and instruction) and Holberg's discourse surrounding this aspect of *Niels Klim*.

6.1.2 Holberg's Moral Project and Eclecticism

For our re-evaluation of the role of morals in the process of reading *Niels Klim*, a better understanding of exactly what morals are for Holberg is a prerequisite. Holberg has always been fond of portraying himself as an advocate of moral philosophy. He defines this branch of science as follows: "Aliæ Scientiæ nos homines, hæc vero humanos reddit, ac in viam pacatæ, tranqvillæ, qvietæ & beatæ vitæ deducit."[13] It is the art of living (*vivendi ars*) or "moralis [...] viæ dux, virtutis indagatrix, vitiorum expultrix."[14] A constant in Holberg's moral project is his central concern with the question on how to live together in civil society.[15] To answer this question, Holberg negotiated diverse philosophical

[13] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 43. "Other sciences make us human, but this one makes us humane and leads us on our way to a peaceful, tranquil, calm and happy life."
[14] Ibid., 43, "the guide of life, the explorer of virtues, and the ouster of vices."
[15] Olesen, 181.

movements, both ancient and modern. However, Lutheran faith and natural law in the tradition of Samuel Pufendorf and Christian Thomasius seems to be have been most fundamentally present.[16]

In recent years, scholars as Knud Haakonssen, Jørgen Magnus Sejersted and Brian Kjær Olesen have paid specific attention to Holberg's *Natural Law*, in order to understand his authorship as a whole, and have convincingly made a case for placing Holberg's mutlifaceted moral project in the tradition of eclecticism.[17] Eclecticism can explain many of Holberg's hobbyhorses, such as his religious tolerance or his annoyance with scholasticism, as it implies the cultivation and teaching of a moral philosophical *method* rather than the teaching of moral doctrines as such. Olesen summarises the influence of eclecticism as follows:

> The principles of eclectic philosophy to which Holberg generally subscribed both presupposed and called for the ability of free reasoning on the part of the philosopher and careful selection of one's sources. The principles of moral philosophy can be deduced from no single authority, be it the reputation of a teacher or the word of God, but have to be established from a thorough examination of a variety of writings – biblical, historical, classical and modern. Eclecticism thus differs from scholasticism, described by Barbeyrac as a disordered patchwork. In opposition to the scholastic thinker, the eclectic philosopher examines no preconceived authorities (i.e. Aristotle and the Scriptures). Rather the eclectic philosopher seeks those moral principles that are considered the most solid, wherever they may be found.[18]

To underpin his eclectic interpretation of morals, Holberg uses, towards the end of his career, the notion of a 'moral system'. About *Niels Klim*, Holberg claims on different occasions that it contains the materials for an entire moral system,[19] but also *Moral Reflections, Epistles* and even a part of his *Third Autobiographical Letter* are presented as such. [20] Discussing the *Essays* of Holberg, Jørgen Magnus Sejersted convincingly demonstrates that Holberg's system contains *material* for a moral system, and does not

[16] In his article on Holberg's essays, Jørgen Sejersted argues that morals and religion were inextricably intertwined in Holberg's authorship: "religion was the necessary basis of morals and therefore a fundamental premise for society." See Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 80.

[17] See especially Sejersted and Vinje; Haakonssen, "Holberg's *Law of Nature and Nations*."; Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays."; Olesen. For a broad contextualisation of natural law in seventeenth-century Europe, with a discussion of many thinkers Holberg was influenced by, see Knud Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[18] Olesen, 161.

[19] For the moral system in *Niels Klim*, see *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 10, and *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 9.

[20] See *Third Autobiographical Letter,* 143-189, which contains "Specimen qvoddam systematis moralis" (Representation of a moral system). In separate essays that would later be embedded in his *Moral Reflections* in Danish, Holberg discusses topics as piety, happiness, and *decorum*.

say it is *arranged* as a system.[21] Therefore, it is not systematic in a modern sense of the word, implying a structured and fixed set of rules and opinions. The system that is the result of an eclectic method is still a "coherent, autonomous 'philosophical system", but also "unfinished or subject to critique."[22]

In Holberg's view on history, Sejersted further argues, eclecticism has replaced the servile following of authorities in various branches of science, theology and literature. The eclectic process allows a person to be impartial (*unparteyisch*) and therefor to stay out of the claws of philosophical and religious sects. In his overview of German eclecticism, Horst Dreitzel gives the following definition to the early, anti-sectarian eclectic 'system', which Sejersted takes to be closest to Holberg's notion of a system: "'Die eklektischen 'Systeme' waren deshalb als offene konzipiert, sie reflektierten ihre Unabgeschlossenheit und Wandelbarkeit, u.a. durch die Diskussion ungelöster Probleme."[23] Thus, Sejersted comes to the following conclusion:

> These notions of system and eclecticism materialize in the essayistic mode of Holberg's *Moral Reflections* and *Epistles* and are keys to his concepts of 'philosophy', 'theology', 'sects', 'partiality', 'scepticism', 'method', and, not least, 'truth'. His specifically moral (and theological) 'systema' is predominantly presented as a personal, subjective construction that consists of changing ideas and arguments that might be in flux or even contradict each other, but that are controlled by certain basic axioms of the kind mentioned above, [...].[24]

This eclectic interpretation of Holberg's notion of a 'moral system' already gives some more meaning to the characterisation of *Niels Klim* as a moralistic and an instructive work. It gives a more concrete idea of the dialectics between moral philosopher and reader. Such a reading process approaches the ideal way of instruction Holberg envisioned in the classroom at university. As Thomas Bredsdorff demonstrates, "Holberg frowned upon the social power that academics, including students, had acquired by virtue of simply being academics."[25] This led him to develop some radical ideas in matters of education. As a substitute to the disputations and *ex cathedra* teaching – which were mocked in, amongst others, his comedy *Erasmus Montanus* and *Niels Klim*, Holberg propagated a rather modern teaching situation in which education revolves around the student and *his* interests, and the lecturer does not take up the role of authority, but of respondent. As Sejersted phrases Holberg's ideal of instruction, "a student should never simply accept the system of his

[21] Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 86.

[22] Ibid., 85.

[23] Horst Dreitzel, "Zur Entwicklung und Eigenart der 'Eklektischen Philosophie'," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 18, no. 3 (1991): 290. "Those eclectic 'Systems' were therefore conceived as being open, they reflect upon their 'unclosedness' (*Unabgeschlossenheit*) and ability to change (*Wandelbarkeit*), among others through the discussion of unsolved problems."

[24] Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 86.

[25] Bredsdorff, 201.

teacher; he must independently make his own, idiosyncratic system by eclectic gathering from different sources."[26]

Within the context of this study, Holberg's eclectic moral project and Sejersted's interpretation of 'moral system' is particularly relevant as a reading method: the reader should create, maintain and polish a personal moral system out of various and often paradoxical pieces of information. It requires openness, flexibility and mobility of the reader's mind, as well as of the author, who has to provide the information. Many of the mobile characteristics I discussed in previous chapters, such as the negotiation of authority, the generic hybridity and the imperative to read and reflect upon cultural and linguistic difference thus come together in Holberg's essentially eclectic approach to learning. Moreover, the terminology Sejersted uses to describe Holberg's systems ('open', 'dynamic' or 'in flux') are not so different from the words I used to describe a polysystem. Dreitzel's notion of *Wandelbarkeit* might be an even better substitute for our characterisation of *Niels Klim's* 'mobility'. *Niels Klim* does not only move around (*wandeln* in German) but is also variable and changeable (*wandelbar*).

If one translates Holberg's philosophical notion of an eclectic moral system to a more literary-theoretical standpoint, one could even say that the author's intention is in itself mobile and provides room for an eclectic process of the reader to construct a personal system. This ties in with Samuel Galson's interpretation of *Niels Klim* and Holberg's commentary of his novel. Galson argues that *Niels Klim* is essentially a "satire of interpretation": "any interpretation which claims to have attained a purely moral or purely scientific truth must have exposed the limitations of its interpreter."[27] Galson does not link this to Holberg's eclectic philosophy, but more to his game with the notion of nature. He further explains that the fact that in *Niels Klim* satire is interrupted by fantasy and vice versa, gives it "its artistic and intellectual coherence as an exploration of the contradictions inherent in the Enlightenment relation to nature."[28] Holberg's commentary of *Niels Klim*, then, Galson argues to be an extension or even a performance of this game, rather than an explanation.

It is tempting by now to consider it to be a waste of effort to search for a fixed, authorial intention in *Niels Klim*, not only from a modern literary-theoretical standpoint, but also from Holberg's own philosophical standpoint. It is important to note, however, that the duty of the moral philosopher (both Holberg and his readers) to contrast different opinions and critically reflect upon them does not contradict the fact that Holberg still adhered to specific moral notions, which were reflected in *Niels Klim* in, amongst others, specific countries on Klim's journey through Nazar. As Olesen warns, in trying to be "free from sectarian doctrines and preconceived intellectual authorities" eclectic

[26] Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 86.
[27] Galson, 204.
[28] Ibid., 205.

philosophising does not lead "to ethical scepticism, but to moral pluralism."[29] Holberg was thus not a pure relativist who shuns taking sides in specific moral debates or is indifferent to which truth his readers would take away from his texts. Accordingly, Galson's satire of interpretation should not lead to a state of aporia or indifference, but to a critical attitude. Holberg ridicules those readers who consent all too quickly to specific interpretations and consequently get stuck in their beliefs.

What we have to take from this discussion of eclecticism is that Holberg gives much power to his reader-student, and it is particularly this aspect of Holberg's eclecticism that might distinguish his later 'moralistic writings' from his earlier, such as the comedies and *Peder Paars*. Although Holberg was influenced by eclecticism since his *Natural Law,* early in his career, it is only towards the end of his career that he finds a way of writing that invites an eclectic reading method and performs the dialogical method with which the student-reader should be able to find truth, and ultimately faith. To phrase it more enigmatically, we could say that the only author's intention that is truly fixed is that Holberg asks for a reading process that is in motion. The moral system should not survive its inventor, but be renegotiated by every individual reader. In the remaining part of this chapter I will thus not focus on the contents of specific moral negotiations, but the act of the negotiating itself and how Holberg envisioned this process.

6.2 Metaphors in Holberg's Commentary

6.2.1 *Vehiculum.* Morals and Mobility

With the performative interpretation of Galson in the back of our minds, Holberg's quote at the beginning of this chapter starts to make more sense, precisely because it contains paradoxes and problematises the term and function of *historia.* In the following sections, I will discuss three (sets of) metaphors Holberg uses to perform his satire of interpretation and teach his readers an eclectic method: *vehiculum*, *clavis* and the animal metaphors of *pisciculus* and *talpa*. These metaphors, as I will argue, symbolise the reading process and the manner of engaging Holberg envisioned for his readers.

That Holberg calls the *tota historia* not only *nugax* but also a *vehiculum* is in itself striking. Later in the commentary, Holberg uses the term once more. He states: "comœdia absqve sale, satyra absqve aculeis est veluti vehiculum absqve rotis."[30] Although the metaphor is not carefully thought out and consistently interpretable – as Holberg's satire

[29] Olesen, 115.

[30] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 24, "comedy without salt, satire without stings, is like a vehicle without wheels."

of interpretation is performed –, the metaphor of mobility is present in the entire commentary of *Niels Klim* and can be embedded in a larger poetics and the specifically eclectic reading process Holberg envisioned.

The most explicit example we find in Holberg's explanation of the most prominent subterranean nations, Potu and Martinia:

> Præcipuus vero character est eorum, qvorum ignea ingenia omnia pollicentur, qvi rem celeriter percipiunt, sed penitus haud perspiciunt. Hos vulgo ad cœlum tollere solemus, qvos tamen Gens Potuana cum otiosis ambulatoribus comparat, qvoniam perpetuo movendo nil promovent. Prudentes vero, cum proprias vires ac negotiorum molem metiantur, ac proinde tardi ac timidi sint ac gradibus testudineis procedant, ignavos & stupidos vocare solemus. Utriusqve characteris imago datur in gentibus Potuana & Martiniana.[31]

In explaining *Niels Klim*, Holberg presents the states of Potu and Martinia as two extremes of mobility. Each extreme governs multiple facets of the respective subterranean nations. In the Potuan society, the inhabitants have, first, limitations of physical movement, which prevents them from travelling long distances. This inability is translated, secondly, into the immobility of their cognitive capacity. They think and talk slowly. When evaluated positively as 'consideration', this intellectual slowness transgresses into the social and political sphere where mobility is not unthinkable but still highly unusual. So, because of a natural inclination towards conservatism, immobility structures their society and way of living.

The Potuans legitimate their extreme immobility by disapproving wandering that is not just aimless, but *otiosus*.[32] The term implies that those wanderers do not fulfil their duties and are therefore useless to society. This worst nightmare of the Potuans is embodied by the Martinians whose extreme versatility again is found in their character, cognition and social structure. They are revolutionary project makers, always on the look-out for new trends. Martinia is a subterranean Hollywood: a society based upon

[31] Ibid., 14. "A conspicuous place among the characters is reserved for those whose arduous nature promises many things, and who perceive a matter quickly, but do not look into it deeply. We tend to praise these people to the skies, but the race of Potuans compares them with unduteous wanderers because they are moving constantly but do not move forward at all. Prudent men, on the other hand, who assess their own strengths and the gravity of their duties, and are therefore slow-paced, cautious and proceed with turtle steps, we tend to call weaklings and fools. Examples of both of these characters are given in the depictions of the Potuans and Martinians."

[32] Holberg's refers specifically to a passage in *Niels Klim* where Klim mentions the most important maxim of the Potuan court. There, he uses similar wordings and is the link with social duty even more prominent: "Inter apophthegmata igitur aulae huius insigne est istud, nempe eos, qui prompte nimis munera obeunt, comparari posse cum otiosis ambulatoribus, qui progrediendo, retroëundo eandem semitam terunt, mouendoque nihil promouent." *Niels Klim* IV, 57. "Among the maxims therefore of this court was this important one that those who are prone to take up too much offices, can be compared with wanderers with to much free time who go forward and back, trampling down the same soil and, while moving progress nothing."

entertainment and fashion in which people can both quickly climb up and suddenly sink very low. The example of this is Klim's sudden and intense success as a European fashion guru, which comes to an abrupt end when a jealous female-monkey unjustly accuses him of sexual assault.

Holberg promotes neither the Martinian soap opera nor the Potuan still life to his readers, but a compromise between these two extremes.[33] This is illustrated by Klim's eventful moralistic learning process, which is defined by a constant evaluation of physical, intellectual, political and social movement in the subterranean societies. Holberg's entire story is about how Klim – which is the Dutch word for 'climb' – tries to climb the social ladder and contribute to society. Full of conceit as he is, he wants to establish himself as a scientist by studying a local cave and advancing European knowledge of the world. While trying, however, he finds a new world in which European academic and scientific prides, such as theology and classical studies, are completely irrelevant.[34] While travelling through this universe, he can start over multiple times. However, his quest is doomed to fail because Klim is physically (and even intellectually, socially and politically) unsuitable to fit into the subterranean societies. The relation between his mobility and the one of the locals defines his place in the society of Potu and Martinia, and even his name.[35]

Not any type of movement is thus desirable. The moral lesson to be learned from the mobility paradox in *Niels Klim*, to Holberg, is rather the method of seeking moderation: do not stand still, but do not keep on moving without a cause either. The first could be associated with stoicism, which conflicted with Holberg's strong belief in humoralism, i.e. the idea that specific fluids in the human body influence a person's temperament, character and health. This is what separates us fundamentally from the wooden Potuans without *humores* and makes a stoic life (symbolised by the Potuan's immobility) against

[33] Although Potuan social life with its civilised and sensible institutions might be prefered by Holberg – and is thus, as an extremity, not entirely on a par with Martinian life -, the stoicism and lack of emotions in Potuan life, which, as said earlier, Jørgen Sejersted linked to the wooden nature of the Potuans and their lack of fluids, is an indication for the ultimately unreachable status of Potuan *u-topia* for human beings. Hence, his readers also have to deal with passions as well, like presented in Martinia.

[34] In Potu, faith can be explained on merely two pages, which makes theology superfluous. See *Niels Klim* VIII, 108. In Quama, Klim tries to institutionalise the study of classical languages, but his subterranean intellectuals advise against this initiative as European, dead languages are useless in the underworld. *Niels Klim* XIII, 294.

[35] For a discussion of Klim's naming, see chapter 1 of this thesis.

the nature of men.[36] Moving without interruption or direction, as seen in Martinia, then, leads to a society that degenerates into excess.[37]

After the discription of *Niels Klim*'s mobility theme in the passages on Potu and Martinia, Holberg uses the metaphor of mobility to describe the different facets of his pursuit as a moral philosopher. First, morals themselves seem to be in motion. When Holberg explains what morality signifies, he makes clear that morals are subject to change:

> Qvod attinet ad Doctrinam morum, qvæ Operis præcipuus scopus est, characteres, qvi sparsim disseminantur, maximam partem paradoxi sunt; Virtutes ac Vitia ea sunt, qvorum specie sæpe decepti, Junonem pro nube amplectimur.[38]

With a classical simile, Holberg explains the deceptive nature of virtues and vices. The reader cannot directly embrace the morals provided, but should be aware of their elusiveness. The second component of the mobility of Holberg's moral project is his own struggles to bring morals to his reader. He uses the simile of a runner to compare his situation with moral philosophers in Germany, France, and especially in England. He complains that writers in Denmark are constantly obstructed in their work by censors, and thus have to run in between thorns and on unpaved tracks. It is not the feet that hinder him, but the state of the road. Therefor, it is much more difficult for Danish moral philosophers, including Holberg, to reach the turning point or finish line (*meta*).[39] Finally, in Holberg's view, the aim of the moral philosopher should be to 'move the heart' of the reader. He refuses to declaim moral precepts and prefers to make morals digestible by means of a *fabula moralis*: "Sonantia tantum verba sunt, qvæ auribus obstrepunt, sed corda non movent."[40]

It seems the duty of a moral philosopher is one that is characterised by mobility. Holberg's story, the vehicle for moral precepts, has to be manoeuvrable in order to avoid the roadblocks of censors, and Holberg has to find ways to teach its readers to be versatile. They have to learn to deal with paradoxes, like the Potuan stability and Martinian

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[36] Jørgen Sejersted makes this very good point while discussing Holberg's criticism of Stoicist control over ones passions as something that is against human nature: "Humans are not made of marble and oak, so they cannot avoid their emotions, hence the stoic ideal is in fact impossible. The wooden metaphor of his argument is a subtle reference to the moral of the utopian novel Niels Klim from the same period (1741)" See Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 83. Klim, being full of fluids and hence passions, cannot adapt to the rationality and Stoicism of the Potuans.

[37] Holberg often links the undesirable, Martinian swiftness with the idea of a *perpetuum mobile*. Both in *Epistles* III.216, 146 and IV.311, 35, Holberg even links this to the character of the Wandering Jew, whose deceptive claim of truth we discussed in chapter 5.

[38] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 14. "What concerns the moral doctrine - which is the principal aim of the work - , the characters, which are spread out over the entire text, are for a great part paradoxical; virtues and vices are things of which the appearance is often deceptive, and we think of embracing Juno instead of a cloud."

[39] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 16.

[40] Ibid., 15, "words are only sounds that hurt the ears, but not move (*movent*) the heart."

swiftness, and find their own way through. The versatility Holberg promotes, should, however, be kept within bounds. There is no use in rejecting everything and be revolutionary. The image of Even-Zohar's polysystem is thus again valuable, now to illustrate Holberg's eclectic moral system.[41] The eclectic reception of cultural impulses and influences should be in constant negotiation and motion, but the result of this search is a stable, but personal moral system.

Although Holberg's use of the *vehiculum* metaphor and the theme of mobility thus cover one of the central dynamics between the moral philosopher, the student and the text, it becomes much richer and more ironical in relation to the other two metaphors. Whereas the *vehiculum* metaphor implies how one should read *Niels Klim*, the ones of the *clavis* and the animals imply how one should *not* read, and allows Holberg to ridicule his critics.

6.2.2 *Claviquaerentes*. Morals and Interpretation

Holberg's text initially stirred quite some commotion. By the time the anonymous book arrived in Copenhagen, there were many different interpretations and rumours about the author's identity. A unique testimony to the confusing first months of *Niels Klim's* existence is the correspondence between Georg August Detharding, the German translator of several of Holberg's works, and the German author and critic Johann Christoph Gottsched. On 18 February 1741, Detharding writes he wonders what kind of text has just been released in Leipzig:

> Ich habe davon allerhand zerstreute Nachrichten allhier gehöret. Man sagt, es seÿ eine Satÿre auf Dännemark, und man es fast nicht einmal zu sehen bekomme. Es wird solches dem H. Holberg beÿgemeßen, und auch nicht. Ich habe den Titel nur ganz dunkel vernehmen können. Es hieß etwa also: Crimmii Imperatoris et Diaconi Iter subterran: Eben erhalte ich das allhier erwehnte Buch. Ew Magnif: müßen aber nicht lachen, wenn der Titel nicht recht ist; ich weis ihn würkl: nicht beßer.[42]

In a letter from 28 March 1741, Detharding expresses to Gottsched his enthusiasm about *Niels Klim* and points out with a tongue-in-cheek comment that there was a persistent demand for an interpretational key to the Holberg's text.

[41] For the notion of the polysystem, see the introduction to this thesis.

[42] Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Briefwechsel unter Einschluss des Briefwechsels von Luise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched. August 1740—Oktober 1741*, vol. 7 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 342. "I have heard all sorts of scattered messages here about the book. People say it is a satire on Denmark, although one has nearly got a look at it. Some attribute it to Mr. Holberg, others do not. I could only vaguely overhear the title. It is called something like: *The subterranean journey of Emperor and Deacon Krim*. Dear Sir, you must not laugh, though, when the title proves incorrect when I receive the above-mentioned book. I truly do not know any better."

> Der H. Holberg, ist glücklicher gewesen, als Er fast selber vermuthet, da Nicolaus Klimmius auch beÿ denen ingress gefunden, welche ihn können wieder ad regionem subterraneam in perpetuum relegiren. Zwar wolte man gerne den Clavem haben, aber ich vermuthe, dieser seÿ drunten geblieben, würde sonst mehr auffschließen und entdecken, als dem Klimmio gelegen ware.[43]

It was not clear to all, as was to Detharding, how one should put such a fantastical and confusing Latin text into practice. How should a reader distract morals from a text that is so overtly and blatantly fabulous?

It would take two years for Holberg to answer to the initial fuss revolving around *Niels Klim.* When he finally breaks silence in 1743, Holberg gives a hyperbolic version of the events:

> Audiebantur passim murmura ac sinistræ interpretationes, maxime vero eorum, qvi Librum non legerant; historia innumeris commentariis & additionibus interpolatur, totaqve ita refingitur fabella, ut novum opus & alium autorem suspicarer.[44]

As the book had been travelling around Europe fast, the most divergent interpretations were spreading. Here, Holberg ironically remarks that people who did not gauge the true value of *Niels Klim*, just did not read it, but later he would also criticise those who had indeed read it, but not properly. Strikingly, he ridicules his critics with the same metaphor Detharding referred to, the key:

> [D]atur certum hominum genus, qvod in rebus vel maxime liqvidis mysteria suspicatur & claves qværit. Isti clavium in qvalibet re Qvæsitores infestissima Reipublicæ literariæ insecta sunt; nam nodos in scirpo qværunt, & ea scribentibus affingunt, qvæ ipsi somniant. Ut mysticæ huic genti qvodammodo satisfaciam, claves operis candide hic dabo.[45]

Although Holberg promises to 'clearly give the key to the work', in the passage that follows, Holberg says that in *Niels Klim* "qvot paginæ sunt, tot claves dandæ." Later on,

[43] Gottsched, 384. "Mr. Holberg has been luckier than he himself probably realises that Niels Klim reached an audience among those who could permanently relegate him back to the subterranean region, indefinitely. To be sure, one would gladly have the key (*clavem*), but I guess it has stayed down there. Otherwise, more would be revealed and discovered than Klimmius would like."

[44] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 10. "One could hear murmurs and bad interpretations everywhere, especially from those who had not read the book. The account was interpolated with innumerable comments and additions, and the entire tale was reshaped so I doubted whether they were talking about a new work and another author."

[45] Ibid., 10. "[T]here is a certain class of persons who are always suspecting mystery, and searching for keys [*claves*] in things that are already abundantly clear. These key-searchers are most noxious insects in the republic of letters, for they seek knots in bulrushes, and attribute motives to authors for which there is no foundation except in their own confused imagination. To satisfy this mystical class of persons [*mysticae huic genti*], I will here clearly give the whole key to the work.

Holberg complicates the key metaphor even more and contradicts his own statements as follows:[46]

> Nulla igitur opus est clave, ubi porta stat aperta, & nulla solutione, ubi nullus nodus. In gratiam tamen claviqværentium totam rem explicatam dabo: exponendo, qvæ in hac Fabula delectant, pungunt ac instruunt.[47]

In reading *Niels Klim*, so it seems, it is key to understand that there is no key for understanding. Holberg's explanation of *Niels Klim* is as paradoxical as the text itself.[48]

The key-metaphor functions in line with Galson's notion of a satire of interpretation and is an ideal way for Holberg to promote an eclectic reading method based upon paradox and openness. It is a metaphor for a view on literature most modern literary scholars dread: the idea that there is *a* meaning to the text to be *found*, with the use of simple hermeneutical tools.[49]

In the eighteenth century, imaginary voyages, not in the least the ones written by enlightened authors, were increasingly occupied with countering this idea of one interpretation. An example we find in Voltaire's short story *Micromégas*, published in 1752, two years before Holberg's death. The main character, a giant of 39 kilometres tall and inhabitant of the star Sirius, Micromégas, goes on a journey to other stars and planets. His final stop is the Earth, with its minuscule inhabitants. We see the Earth as a meaningless dot in an endless universe with creatures much more intelligent than us. On Earth, the conversation between Micromégas and French philosophers ends as follows:

> Il leur promit de leur faire un beau livre de philosophie, écrit fort menu pour leur usage, et que, dans ce livre, ils verraient le bout des choses. Effectivement, il leur donna ce volume avant son départ: on le porta à Paris à l'Académie des Sciences ; mais, quand le secrétaire l'eut ouvert, il ne vit rien qu'un livre tout blanc : *Ah !* dit-il, *je m'en étais bien douté*.[50]

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[46] Ibid., 11, "there are as much pages, as there are keys."

[47] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 12. "So, there is no need for a key where the door stands open, nor a solution where there is no knot to untie. Nevertheless, for the benefit of key-searchers, I will proceed to give an explanation of the whole matter: I shall explain what in the fabula there is to delight, to sting and instruct."

[48] Both in his *Epistles,* IV.389, 313, and in *Moral Reflections*, I.27, 63-64, Holberg returns to the early reception of *Niels Klim*. The passages strongly echoes Holberg's discussion of the need for an interpretational key in his *Third Autobiographical Letter*.

[49] It would be anachronistic to claim Holberg considered the author's intention as insignificant – far from it. Instead, the metaphor of the key should be seen within Holberg's critique on the education system of the time. It implies that there is only one that fits the keyhole. This kind of narrowing of interpretation is to Holberg undesirable for the development of the student and reader.

[50] Voltaire, "Micromégas," in *Romans et contes*, ed. José Lupin, Folio (Saint-Amand: Gallimard, 1972), 121. "He promised to write them a nice book of philosophy, in very small script just for them, and that in this book they would discover what was what. Sure enough, he gave them this volume before he left. It was taken to Paris to the Academy of Sciences. But when the secretary opened it, he found nothing but blank pages. 'Aha', he said,

These are the last sentences of *Micromégas*, and summarise the short story perfectly. The scientists of Earth, on the look-out for calculable answers that are easy to find with the aid of hermeneutical tools, are left disappointed because Micromégas (and with him Voltaire) does not simply give ready-to-use answers to life questions. Voltaire writes a philosophical short story to entertain a more elite reading public by holding up a mirror, in this case a blank book. He gives the reader a lesson in humility, both as a human being and as a 'civilised' European. Voltaire aims with Micromégas's blank book at a reflective reader activity, typical for many Enlightenment novels.

The fact that Holberg specifically uses the term 'key' to address the early criticisms on *Niels Klim* adds a layer to Holberg's negotiation of this European debate on the openness of interpretation. The concept of *clavis* is embedded in a large, literary critical tradition. Paratexts with the title 'key' were often added to pieces of literature in order to explain their allegorical content. A famous and seminal example is the satire *Argenis* of the Scott John Barclay, published in Latin in 1621. In the years following, there were already circulating keys in Latin in the form of lists of characters and their respective decryptions.[51] When the translator Robert Le Grys made a translation for Charles I in 1728 he also added a *clavis* that helped identify the characters of Barclay's political allegory.[52] In the preface to his translation, Le Grys claims to "unlocke the intentions of the Author in so many of the parts of it, as I could conceive he had any aime in at all."[53]

As Gertrud Maria Rösch argues in her monograph *Clavis scientiae* (2004), the *claves* to Barclay's work stand at the beginning of a tradition of so-called *Schlüsselliteratur* or *romans à clef*. The genre found its roots in earlier interests in the encryption of meaning and messages, such as steganography and cryptography, but developed in the seventeenth century into a popular way of providing readers of novels a game of hide and seek, veiling and unveiling.[54] The genre of imaginary voyages, as it would develop in the following

'just as I thought.'" Translation is by the hand of Roger Pearson in Voltaire, "Micromegas," in *Candide and Other Stories*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 106.

[51] For a discussion of these keys, see Gertrud M. Rösch, *Clavis scientiae: Studien zum Verhältnis von Faktizität und Fiktionalität am Fall der Schlüsselliteratur* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2004), 44-57.

[52] Holberg mentions Barclay's novel at multiple instances in his authorship, such as in *History of Denmark*, III, 637, and *Moral Reflections,* Preface, 4. In the preface to his *Heltindehistorier*, b4v, Holberg even explicitly draws a parallel with *Niels Klim*, saying that there ha been nothing similar written in Latin as *Niels Klim*, except for the *Argenis*. For a more detailed discussion of the importance of the *clavis* in Le Grys's translation, see Annabel M. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: the Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 188-93.

[53] Cited from ibid., 188.

[54] Especially in the decades at the turn of the century, it became a trend to describe hidden anecdotes or adventures of historical figures, often linked to European courts. Texts with titles such as *secret histories* or *histoire secrètes* were circulating widely. For discussions of such novels and their key in a German context, see Rösch, 60-71. For the situation in Britain, see Rebecca Bullard, *The Politics of Disclosure, 1674–1725: Secret History Narratives* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 2016). Together with the before mentioned tradition of spy-literature, boosted by Marana's *L'espion turc*, the *clavis*-paratexts and related literary vogues show that authors were

centuries, employed its narrative possibilities of secrecy, revelation, encryption and decryption to the full.[55] Ironically enough, they even caused a *clavis*-literature of their own. In Jonathan Swift's *Letter from Captain Gulliver to his Cousin Sympson*, which was added to *Gulliver's Travels* in Faulkner's edition (1735) Gulliver reproaches his negligent editor of "loading our carrier every week with libels, and keys, and reflections, and memoirs, and second parts."[56] The fictional letter was supposedly dated April 2, 1727, but Swift clearly had knowledge of almost a decade of reader reception of *Gulliver's Travels.* As early as 1726, the same year as *Gulliver's Travels*, a key was published in London: *A Key, Being Observations and Explanatory Notes upon the Travels of Lemuel Gulliver* was supposedly written by "a noble venetian" Signor Corolini di Marco and translated from an Italian original. The front page bears the motto 'Out comes the Book, and the Keys follows after'. Behind the text is in all probability the bookseller and publisher Edmund Curll (1675-1747), who already had written a key to Swift's *Tale of a Tub* in 1710. The four keys to each of Gulliver's travels were more than lists of decrypted wordplay. They had particular attention for deciphering references to historical events and individuals and added extensive quotations to prove these parallels. Jeanne Welcher describes its style as follows:

> Whether expressing public response or forming it, the Keys epitomize the early preoccupation with reading *Gulliver's Travels* 1) biographically, for the light it threw on Swift and vice versa and 2) topically and allegorically, as a "System of modern Politicks" (Key to Part 1, p. 5). The explanations so concentrate on these narrow and relatively superficial questions as to eliminate consideration of style, character, and meaning.[57]

By the end of the year, the four keys were already published together with *Gulliver's Travels*, with lasting consequences for the reception of Swift's novel. During the eighteenth century, the keys accompanied reprints of Swift's text no less than thirteen times. They were translated in the Dutch, French and German translations of 1728, and in the reprints of those translations.[58] Gulliver thus not only reached the European audience through translations, as argued in chapter 2 of this thesis, but the fictive Italian Corolini joined him almost every step of the way.

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negotiating the singularity of literary interpretation on a large scale, and all over Europe. For the importance of the so-called 'surveillance chronicle' and secret histories in the context of the Enlightenment, see Aravamudan, 58-68.

[55] As shown in chapter 1, the linguistic games in imaginary voyages directly responded to the craze of allegorical decryption, and led readers on a sometimes never-ending interpretational quest. By using names of fictive places that *were* indeed decipherable by the means of hermeneutical tools – often the knowledge of multiple languages -, authors tricked the reader into what we called after Wyrick, a 'textocentric trap'. Wyrick, 82.

[56] Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 3.

[57] Jeanne K. Welcher, *An Annotated List of Gulliveriana, 1721-1800* (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1988), 75.

[58] Ibid., 76.

Like *Gulliver's Travels*, Holberg's text is a parody of the idea of decypherable literature and the tradition of the *roman à clef*. The commentary of 1743 highlights and renews this parody. By using the metaphor of the key, Holberg points to its logical defect and shows why he was reluctant to give a key to his novel; by singling out a handful of significant aspects of a text (e.g. the mobility metaphor in Potu and Martinia), you inevitably limit the scope of a text that on each page has new references to new contexts or intertexts, and you limit the possibility of other readers to construct their personal moral system. Although he suggests otherwise, Holberg does not intend to provide his readership with multiple keys to multiple doors, nor a key to one. He deliberately gives one key to a hall of mirrors, with multiple exits of which some are wide-open and others are blocked.

6.2.3 *Pisciculi*. Morals and Dehumanised Readers

The third and last side of Holberg's figurative speech, the animal metaphors, brings us back to the quote at the beginning of this chapter, more specifically the term *fabula*. In line with the aspect of anthropomorphising in fables, Holberg portrays his readers first as little fish (*pisciculi*) and later as moles (*talpae*). These figures allow Holberg to ridicule his readership once more, but now in a very subtle manner.

After explaining the *historia nugax*, Holberg continues as follows, ending up with the fabulous simile of the little fish:

> Hæc omnia nugacia sunt, sed non inanes omnino nugæ, cum ad legendum stimulent illos, qvi præcepta nimis tetrica nauseant: & veluti Horologium Epitaphio suo qvondam annexuit Trimalchio, ut qvisqvis horas inspiceret, vellet, nollet, nomen suum legeret; ita in gratiam eorum, qvi solis jocis delectantur, seria nugis condiuntur. Nam nisi Piscator hanc escam hamis imposuerit, qvam appetituros scit pisciculos, sine spe prædæ moratur in scopulo; ita maximi sæpe nominis Philosophi festivos delectabilesqve apologos commenti sunt, ut præcepta moralia cum audiendi qvadam ille cebra inculcarent.[59]

As mentioned before, in Holberg's view, moral philosophy does not make people human, but humane. The question of human nature, and, more importantly, the concept of humanity, is central to Klim's entire adventure.[60] It is not surprising, then, that in the

[59] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 13-14. "These are all trifles, but not altogether useless nonsense as they stimulate those to read who are too much nauseated by harsh precepts; just like Trimalchio linked the horologe to his own epitaph, whereby anyone who looked at the hour would, wanting or not, also read his name. Hereby, in favour of those who are only attracted by jokes, serious matters are funded by trifles. For, only if a fisherman places bait on his hook that is to the taste of the little fish, he will have hope of bait... Philosophers with the best reputations have often written pleasant and delightful apologies so that the public would inculcate moral precepts by an allurement."

[60] For a discussion of how Klim imposes *humanitas* on the subterranean creatures, see chapter 1.

commentary of *Niels Klim* Holberg does not only portray his critics as key-searchers, but also as animals. Whereas Klim has (unsuccessfully) transformed into a tree and a monkey, Holberg transforms his readers into little fish. All readers of *Niels Klim* should, like Klim, transform into animals first, so it seems, to find out what humanity means.

But who are those little fish? The reference to Trimalchio, the infamous dinner host from Petronius' *Satyricon*, gives a first hint and already demonstrates the ironical tone of the passage. In the simile, Trimalchio corresponds to Holberg. Just as he puts his name on a horologe so one cannot possibly miss it, Holberg writes a text that attracts the reader's attention and captivates him in order to bring across information, whether the reader is willing to receive this information or not. The reader is lured into reading by means of blatant joking and pleasant *fabulae.* However, as no other in Latin tradition, Trimalchio is known as a person of bad taste and abundance. This was precisely what Holberg was accused of by his critics. Back in 1741, a German reviewer of *Niels Klim* in *Göttingische Zeitungen vor Gelehrten*, criticised the nature of Holberg's universe and its fantastical inhabitants as being distasteful. He talks about "die gar zu starke und weitläuftige Fabul" by which the few good things in the book overshoot their mark entirely and calls *Niels Klim* even "tausend und eine Nacht der Unterwelt."[61] With the reference to Petronius, Holberg satirises his critics by turning their claim into a simile: he changes into a tasteless art lover who lures the little fish of Naples (such as the slave Encolpius and his lover Giton) to his feast of abundance. The information he wants to bring across, then, is compared to an epitaph, a text that like no other symbolises the fixity and even eternity of words. The message Holberg seemingly wants to have his readers look at is written in stone.

With the reference to Petronius, Holberg thus ridicules his critics and performs the satirical aim of *Niels Klim*. The two extremes are represented in one intertextual reference: *Niels Klim* is both a blatantly fictional and joking tale, and a text that allows no more than one interpretation, the one that refers to the host/author. The irony, then, lies in the fact that you have to be more than a 'little fish' to get the paradox. The readers Holberg refers to as 'little fish' are the same ones who are reading his *Third Autobiographical Letter,* and who can understand the reference to Petronius: i.e. the educated, Latin reader or *vir perillustris*.

The second animal metaphor is the parable with which Holberg ends his commentary on *Niels Klim*. He explains that he himself was the cause of the delay of the Danish

[61] Anonymous, review of Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum, *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* 47, no. June 12 (1741): 399 and 400. "[T]he far too strong and long-winded fable," and "Thousand and One Nights of the Underworld." In the commentary, Holberg explicitly links this review to the people who wanted his novel be censured. See *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 17-18. As regards to the *Thousand and One Nights*, the reviewer could not have chosen a more iconic tale to compare *Niels Klim* with. In chapter 4 of this thesis, the *Thousand and One Nights* was a symbol for the romanesque-fabulous mode, with its excessive use of fictions and narrative levels which gave *Niels Klim* its distinctive, narrative tone and dynamics.

translation of *Niels Klim* as he deemed this specific group of readers not ready for his complex and paradoxical novel:

> [N]am lingvam Germanicam plurimi Danorum callent, & inconsultum duxi moralia præcepta maximam partem paradoxa exponere perversæ plebis crisi. Qvod capiunt alii & cum fructu legunt, plebs vix adhibitis conspicillis videt. Huic enim recte aptandus est seqvens Apologus. Talpa, cum audiret conspicillis uti homines, matrem orabat, ut ejusmodi oculorum thecas sibi coëmeret; at mater: desine, ait, filia! ambire ea, qvæ naturæ tuæ adversantur; nam conspicilla, qvæ hominibus usui sunt, nil prosunt talpis'.[62]

Holberg seems to imply that *Niels Klim* was not just aimed at the European public of Latin readers, but also at those who could read it in translation. Only the readers who exclusively mastered Danish were denied the privilege of reading *Niels Klim*.

With the two fable-passages Holberg thus, on the one hand, ironises in a performative manner an element that is central to *Niels Klim*, namely the concept of humanity, to show that in order to 'move the heart' of the reader, he had to write a moral text with *fabula.* On the other hand, they bring the status of Latin in early eighteenth-century Europe back to attention.

These elements of the *fabula*-simile are elaborated in the *Apologetic Preface* of *Niels Klim*'s second edition (1745), where Holberg returns to the medium of *fabula* to criticise his readership: a fictional paratext that is aimed at providing the ultimate proof of the veracity of Klim's history. When the grandsons of Klim put forward the testimony of the reliability of Klim's account, they claim that the ones who signed it "cuncti antiqua virtute et fide perspicui homines nec fabulas orbi obtrudere nec nubem pro Iunone amplecti solent."[63] The grandsons use the term *fabula* and the same simile of Juno's evasiveness Holberg used in 1743. The contemporaries of Klim emphatically decline the elusive status of virtues and harbour illusions about a personal gift to elude this elusiveness. The other piece of evidence, the eyewitness report of the Finish shaman, then, is presented as the key to the entire controversy revolving around Klim's manuscript. The report of a man who transformed into an eagle for a quick fact check in the subterranean world should hand the interpretational key to the 'little fish' and 'blind moles', but is in fact the clearest

[62] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 25. "[F]or, most of the Danes in the higher classes understand German, and many of the moral precepts in this work were of a paradoxical character, which I considered it inexpedient to expose to the judgment of the instructed portion of the community. The common people can scarcely see with spectacles what others understand and read with advantage. The following fable may be aptly applied to this case. A mole, hearing that men used spectacles, begged her mother to buy a pair for her. 'Child,' said her mother, 'do not covet what is unsuited to your nature; for spectacles, which are serviceable to men, are of no use to moles'." In his discussion of *Niels Klim*'s reception in *Moral Reflections*, I.27, 64, Holberg uses the fable of the mole again, but does not refer to Danish writers, but more generally to people who look for keys.

[63] *Niels Klim*, Apologetic Preface, 2r, "all are men of old virtue and remarkable trustworthiness, who do not tend to impose *fabulae* on the world or mistake a cloud for Juno."

fabula of the entire novel. The metamorphosing shaman is thus a comical response to the disapproval of *Niels Klim*'s fabulous aspects, and a continuation of Holberg's characterisation of his readers as animals.

The testimony of the Bergen scholars also mentions the fictive publication and translation history of Klim's story, which adds an extra layer to the parabel of the mole. Klim described his world discovery, a treatise with potential impact on world economics and science, in a local language, Danish. Abeline wanted to secure Klim's book a wide dissemination by translating it into the very language of science, Latin. But who exactly is the blind mole in this case? The Danish people who were not ready for Klim's story, or the scholastic teacher Abeline, who banished Klim's book and fame to the textual world of Latin artificiality and oblivion?

Holberg's fictive *Apologetic Preface* is the summit of Holberg's irony on the interpretation and instructive function of *Niels Klim*. Part of the ironical effect of the preface is due to the discrepancy between the aims of the grandsons and the parodical aim of Holberg. The elusiveness of moral truth, evoked by the Juno-simile in the *Third Autobiographical Letter*, shifts back to the elusiveness of *historical* truth in the grandsons' plea for trust. The grandsons use arguments and terminology that are aimed at evading *fabula* and lies and claiming *historia* in the sense of *veritas logica*. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will show that the same arguments and terminology are used to mock a particular fraction of Holberg's critics, namely the Pietists, for their disinterest in joking, moral fables, and satire. It is not a coincidence that the grandsons refer to their fight against 'disbelief' with the Greek term *apistia* (ἀπιστία). Although the grandsons clearly aim at vouchsafing the veracity of their story, *apistia* also has a strong religious connotation, meaning 'lack of faith.'

6.3 Holberg's Implicit Criticism of Pontoppidan

The early reception of *Niels Klim* (and Holberg's language choice for Latin) has been repeatedly interpreted in the light of local events in Denmark. Since Christian VI inherited the Danish throne in 1730 and established Pietism as the state religion, Pietists had a direct hand in the discission on what could and could not be read in Denmark-Norway. Especially the Pietist court preacher and professor of theology at the university of Copenhagen, Erik Pontoppidan, is often named as one of the advocates for confiscating *Niels Klim*.[64] In scholarship, Pontoppidan and Holberg grew into thankful protagonists in

[64] See Michael Neiiendam, *Erik Pontoppidan. Studier og bidrag til pietismens historie (1698-1735)*, 2 vols. (København: Gad, 1930-33), II, 153. With concerns to the near confiscation of *Niels Klim*, Aage Kragelund partly cites a letter

a dramatically staged battle between, on the one side, powerful religious movements in Denmark, and, on the other, rationalism and the Enlightenment. The first fought with the admonishing finger, the second with a sharp pen. In his study of Holberg's moral philosophy, Olesen somewhat nuances this view by arguing that Holberg, in his eclectic project, also took ideas from the moderate strand of Pietism of which Pontoppidan was part.[65] Like the Pietists, Holberg was "staunchly critical of prevailing religious orthodoxies," but Holberg redescribed Lutheran doctrines to make them compatible with his Enlightenment project.[66] An example Olesen gives is their shared claim to the priesthood of all believers, but with a significantly different interpretation:

> Holberg's emphasis on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was challenged by a rival Pietist interpretation of the same doctrine. Yet, in contrast to the Pietists, who emphasised inner repentance and devotion, Holberg stressed the sociable consequences of intellectual enquiry. The aim of intellectual enquiry is not inner repentance, but rather participation in an ongoing dialogue about the truthfulness and reasonableness of one's religious beliefs.[67]

Although Holberg's and Pontoppidan's respectively moral and religious projects were thus both founded on a firm Lutheran basis and they had a shared interest in educating the people, their methods of instruction, and additionally their views on literature, could not be more different.

In this last section of chapter 6, I will show that Holberg's ridicule of his critics in the commentary of *Niels Klim* was partly directed to the Pietists, and perhaps even Pontoppidan himself. To do so, I will contrast the previous metaphors that were central to Holberg's envisioned reading of *Niels Klim* with some remarkable characteristics of Pontoppidan's authorship and his own imaginary voyage, *Menoza*. In 1742 and 1743, Pontoppidan, published this book of 726 pages with the revealing subtitle "en asiatisk Prinds, som drog Verden omkring og søgte Christne [...] men fandt lidet af det, han søgte."[68] It consists of 56 letters written by the fictive Indian prince Menoza to an anonymous friend in Denmark, Mr D.D. Menoza narrates in retrospect his geographical and spiritual journey from India, through Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and Germany, to

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of Holberg's colleague, Hans Gram. See Kragelund's introduction to Holberg, *Niels Klims underjordiske rejse (1741-1745)*, lxxii.

[65] There were two Pietist movements in the first half of the eighteenth century. The moderate Pietists, amongst whom Erik Pontoppidan and Andreas Hojer, found support at court, which lead to state Pietism under the reign of Christian VI. The so-called radical Pietists were part of the Morovian brotherhood, founded by Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. They lived withdrawn in Herrehut. Olesen, 44-45.

[66] Ibid., 45.

[67] Ibid., 248.

[68] In English, "an Asian Prince who travelled the world in search of Christians [...] but without finding many of whom he sought." I use the following edition: Erik Pontoppidan, *Menoza. En asiatisk Prinds, som drog Verden omkring og søgte Christne, særdeles i Indien, Spanien, Italien, Frankrig, England, Holland, Tydskland og Danmark, men fandt lidet af det, han søgte.* (Kjøbenhavn: Woldikes Forlagsboghandel, 1860).

Denmark. In many others respects, Pontoppidan's text fundamentally differs from *Niels Klim*.

6.3.1 *Menoza* as a Motionless Text

Holberg's emphasis on the mobile features of his moral project, as we saw in his commentary of *Niels Klim*, gains in relevance when held into the light of Pontoppidan's *Menoza*. Like in Holberg's *Itinerary of Tanian*, Pontoppidan creates a fictional world that is familiar to the reader, and describes it through the eyes of an exotic main character. By choosing to write a letter novel, Pontoppidan even subscribes more directly than Holberg to the tradition of which Giovanni Paolo Marana's *L'espion turc* (1686) and Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721) are the popular precursors. However, the narrative techniques applied by Pontoppidan are remarkably different than those examples and show why Holberg felt the urge to stress certain features of *Niels Klim*. Pontoppidan employs the narrative tools provided by the letter novel tradition in a fashion that we might call 'motionless'. He does everything in his power to make his readers engage with the moral and religious message of his text in the most direct manner. To this aim, Pontoppidan downplays narratological elements that could stand in the way of this engagement, and that made the genre of exotic letters so versatile.

First of all, the illusion of privacy, commonly created by the letter correspondence between multiple characters, is reduced to a thin narrative layer over Menoza's travels. The book begins with a letter to an anonymous Danish friend of Menoza who is curious to hear how he got all the way to Denmark. Apart from occasional apostrophes later in the text, the characteristics of a letter retreat into the background. The endings of each letter are merely typographical pauses within the chronological account of his journey. Different from Montesquieu's letter novel, *Menoza* only contains letters from the main character's hand. The result is a unilateral text that invites the reader to sympathise and identify with Menoza's spiritual quest and struggle.

Secondly, the identification process is made easier by the character of Menoza himself. He seems to be the anti-Klim: an Asian Prince, already at the top of the social ladder. While Klim is convinced of the superiority of Europe and starts his journey by accident, Menoza's departure from his homeland is motivated by a sense of not belonging and a quest for true faith. His travels are not a story of social mobility or of failure to personally adapt to society. *Menoza* is a story of success. He is the typical oriental character who has in fact few Asian or exotic features in contrast to his loyal sidekick Ninaruk. From the start, Menoza is rather a Dane in disguise whose mask falls off already in the first volume when he meets missionaries from Denmark in the colony of Tranquebar and lets himself get baptised. On the rest of the journey, he is tested multiple times along the way, but the doctrine the Danes taught him prevails time and again. Whereas the reader of Holberg

gets estranged from Klim, Pontoppidan's text ideally leads to the identification with Menoza.

Lastly, it is programmatic that Menoza decides to travel abroad "ej for at see verden, men for at spørge vej til himlen og verdens skaber, den ubekjendte Gud."[69] While Klim portrays himself on the first page as a student of theology and physics and is particularly interested in nature and the world, Menoza focuses on the transcendent and the inner journey. Moreover, *Menoza* thus pretends to be a travel tale, but its narrator describes hardly any aspects of travelling; the world only functions as a symbolic stage for Pontoppidan's compilation of meetings and discussions between Menoza and priests and philosophers throughout the Western European continent.[70] Eighteenth-century readers also noticed the lack of elements of travel. In the first Dutch translation, published in 1749, the translator proudly mentions that he added passages of half the size of Pontoppidan's text, which already had three volumes. [71] His additions contain descriptions of cities, landscapes, buildings, and governments in a rather unskilful, dry style. It seems the translator wanted to comply with the popularity of pleasurable and descriptive travelogues, hereby countering Pontoppidan's focus on an spiritual, inner journey.

Menoza's journey thus covers quite some distance in space, but its narrative and its reading experience is rather fixed; Menoza is a Dane from the beginning and quickly gets stuck in the doctrine of his destined faith. The reader is not expected to be in motion, but, at the most, to follow Menoza's example. Pontoppidan's text therefore attests to a certain fixedness of interpretation that lies far from *Niels Klim*'s satire of interpretation.

6.3.2 The Pietist's Need for Keys

In Denmark, it was precisely the openness of literary interpretation, towards which Holberg was favourable, that was problematised in the form of rigid censorship. Holberg was not against censorship as such; he pleaded for a censorship that would reject useless and trivial literature and thus would come down to a form of literary review. What Holberg rejected was censorship that breaks the diversity of opinion.[72] This diversity was the *sine qua non* of the eclectic reading method Holberg envisioned for his readers.

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[69] Pontoppidan, *Menoza*, I, 21, "[...] not to see the world, but to seek the way to heaven and the world's Creator, the unknown God."

[70] See also Paludan, 313. For Paludan's entire discussion of *Menoza,* see 310-314.

[71] See Erik Pontoppidan, *Gedenkwaardige, vermaakelyke, en in deze tyden zeer nodige, nuttige en leerzaame Deensche Brieven, waarin op eene aangenaame wyze de Reize en byzondere ontmoetingen van een Asiatisch Prins genaamt Menoza*, trans. Johan Wilhelm Heyman, 7 vols. (Leyden: Abraham Honkoop, 1749), front page.

[72] See amongst others Erik Reenberg Sand, "Ludvig Holbergs religionssyn som udtrykt i "Niels Klim"," *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift*, no. 25 (1994): 65; Olesen, 209-10. As Olesen points out, "Holberg's attempts to avoid censorship should not be exaggerated. In the 1740s, whilst Holberg published some of his more subversive

When Holberg ridicules in his commentary of *Niels Klim* people who suspect mystery everywhere in his book, and ask for keys of interpretation, the Pietist censors come to mind immediately. Their literary preferences as *mysticae* and *claviquaerentes* stand in the way of the publication of a type of literature that values the development of (critical) reading skills instead of the plain instruction of doctrines. In his *Moral Reflections*, Holberg again responds to certain allegations of his censors, and portrays them as if they simply cannot read literature:

> Slige Censurer rejse sig derfor enten af Ondskab at skade sin Næste, eller af Vankundighed, og vil jeg heller henføre dem til det sidste, saasom ingen er dristigere i at criticere end en halvlærd, og den, som man siger, haver ikkun læset een Bog.[73]

Holberg turns the tables. The censoring of *Niels Klim* – so it seems from Holberg's comment - was to Holberg not just a matter of ignorance, but a proof of his opponents' lack of reading skills and inability to interpret literature. The Pietists are thus *claviquaerentes* par excellence. They symbolise a relative intolerance towards others' opinions, fixedness of literary interpretation, and immobility of thinking.

In using the key-metaphor in the *Third Autobiographical Letter,* Holberg might even downplay the characteristics of his own novel to ridicule texts as *Menoza*. Compared to *Niels Klim,* the narrative of *Menoza* is an open door. As Skarsten argues, Pontoppidan fashioned "a tool with which conservative Pietists in Scandinavia could defend the church against the attacks of the radical separatistic Pietists on the one hand and the Rationalists on the other." [74] *Menoza* might thus be described as an instruction manual with a prominent apologetic function, disguised as a letter novel, but in particular one that can hardly be called, as Skarsten does, a "clever literary device."[75] It provides clear keys to open the door to Pietist faith and encourage others to do the same.

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tracts abroad, his *Moralske Tanker* and the *Epistler* were published in Copenhagen. A convicted and a devoted Lutheran, Holberg's major works on moral philosophy were neither challenging the legitimacy of absolutism, nor the truth of the Chistian religion." Ibid., 49. In his article on absolutism, Jakob Maliks also nuances the rigidity of censorship, especially in the period that is under review in this chapter: "The reign of Christian VI (1730-1746) has traditionally been regarded as a return to a more repressive regime. But although the king's personal sympathy for the Pietist movement meant that the regime was less open to frivolous excesses (like the theatre), the monarchy nevertheless softened its control over history-writing and promoted arts and sciences, while also implementing reforms intended to increase the population's reading skills." Jakob Maliks, "To Rule is to Communicate: The Absolutist System of Political Communication in Denmark-Norway, 1660-1750," in *Eighteenth-Century Periodicals as Agents of Change: Perspectives on Northern Enlightenment*, ed. Ellen M. Krefting, Aina Nøding, and Mona R. Ringvej (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 140.

[73] *Moral Reflections*, Preface, 11. "Such censorship arises either from evil to hurt their fellow man, or from ignorance. I want to ascribe them rather to the last, as no one is more bold in criticising than a semi-learned man, and one who is said to have read only one book."

[74] Trygve R. Skarsten, "Erik Pontoppidan and His Asiatic Prince Menoza," *Church History* 50, no. 1 (1981): 43.

[75] Skarsten, 43.

One could explain the difference between Holberg's and Pontoppidan's projects by means of the term of 'paradox', which is according to Sejersted central to Holberg's notion of a moral project.[76] As an enlightened philosopher, Holberg values the idea that one should first learn to doubt, before learning to believe.[77] In *Niels* Klim, he established this by the use of paradoxes, in the sense of 'against logic'. They most notably take shape in the fabulous fictions in his subterranean world, but, as argued in the previous chapter, more profoundly in the juxtaposition of events, countries, adventures, intertexts and genres throughout *Niels Klim*. Holberg's fiction thus makes the search for moral truth a challenging textual journey full of doubt and paradox. Pontoppidan, by contrast, writes a more accessible fiction in *Menoza*. The reader of Pontoppidan ideally develops towards Menoza, who not only grows into a Christian, but also into a rhetorically equipped defender of Pietism. *Menoza* also leaves room for paradox, but not in the meaning of Holberg's paradoxes. Paradoxes in *Menoza* are to be understood as 'against *doxa*' or 'conflictive with doctrine'. These paradoxes are reserved for Menoza's adversaries of different faiths and need to be undercut by the Asian prince time and again. Holberg might thus have ridiculed Pontoppidan who in his travelogue meanwhile avoided paradox (as in 'against logic') to smoothen the reader's quest for salvation and fight off temptations that are 'against *doxa*'.

6.3.3 The Pietist's Public of Little Fish and Blind Moles

One could question whether the animal metaphors in Holberg's commentary do in fact refer to the situation of *Niels Klim*. The characterisation of its readers as *pisciculi* seems to be at odds with the narratological complexity and the highly demanding Latin intertextuality found in *Niels Klim*. Perhaps they downplay Holberg's own project again in order to mock the situation of Pontoppidan. For, did Pontoppidan not address his *Menoza* to a public of – in Holberg's eyes - Danish blind moles? And, we saw that in *Menoza*, aspects of travel literature or the letter novel were poorly developed, and were a thin veil to attract readers to his soteriological manual. So, is a description as 'bait for little fish' not much more applicable to Pontoppidan's fictional narrative?

But what is Pontoppidan's relation to the Danish public exactly, and how did he address them? Pontoppidan's project differed already from Holberg's when it comes to his choices of language. Pontoppidan's language choice was initially connected to the audience he wanted to address. Especially in the 1720s and 1730s, but also later in his career, he

[76] For a discussion of Holberg's attribution of the term 'paradoxical' to his moral system, see Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 86.

[77] See Bredsdorff, 198. In the same line, Jørgen Sejersted mentions about Holberg's moral eclecticism, that Holberg's 'moral command is not "have faith", but "search" Sejersted, "Morals and Religion in Holberg's Essays," 86.

produced a significant number of German works, both on religious and scientific topics. These were "to inform a new German-speaking Danish civil service installed at Copenhagen by King Frederick IV (1699-1730) about the country they served."[78] During the reign of Christian VI (1730-1741), then, Danish became more important to Pontoppidan. The king ordered Pontoppidan to write an instruction book for the Danish people. The result, an explanation of Luther's Small Catechism with the title *Truthfulness for Piety* (*Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed*, 1737), had an immediate impact on the level of literacy in Denmark. In 1739, Christian VI even "proclaimed universal public elementary education for all within his realm as well as sweeping reforms in higher education" in order to make his people read Pontoppidan's text.[79] As a newly appointed professor of theology in Copenhagen in 1737, Pontoppidan also writes a few works in Latin. Amongst others, his *Selected Danish Marmors or a Collection of Inscriptions* (*Marmora Danica selectiora sive Inscriptionum Fasciculus,* 1739-1741) and *The Deeds and Traces of Danish outside Denmark* (*Gesta et vestigia Danorum extra Daniam*, 1740-1741) testify to a certain antiquarian side of Pontoppidan; he wanted to contribute to the international scientific field and show that Denmark as a research topic is worth the investment.

It would be incorrect to suggest that Pontoppidan's language choices point to a clear division of audiences into noblemen, academics and the common people, especially when considering the growing share of Danish in Pontoppidan's oeuvre in the 1750s and 1760s.[80] Until the early 1740s, however, the period Holberg could refer to in his commentary, Pontoppidan was inclined to hold onto the traditional division of roles between Latin and the vernacular. The vernacular was rather an internal matter: the medium by which Pontoppidan addressed the faithful (in Danish) or the noblemen at the time of the Pietistic court in Copenhagen (in German). The choice for Latin meant a choice for the European public of Latin readers, trained in universities, and collectively expanding scientific knowledge of the world.[81] Latin seems to be the language of the European intellectuals

[78] Nicholas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 150.

[79] Skarsten, 35. Pontoppidan also seized the opportunity to relaunch his *The Mirror of Faith* (*Troens speil*, 1740), a hymnbook he originally published in German in 1727, in a Danish translation.

[80] As shown by Mortensen and Haberland, the more general tendency in Denmark in the course of the eighteenth century was that "Latin, in spite of still having significant practical value, was increasingly considered the academic language of tradition, while the national language was associated with progress." Janus Mortensen and Hartmut Haberland, "English — the New Latin of Academia? Danish Universities as a Case," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2012, no. 216 (2012): 181. As Mortensen and Haberland also point out, pioneers in preferring Danish over Latin as the language of education and research were the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters (founded in 1742) and the Sorø Academy, which was given a new impulse from 1747 onwards. Mortensen and Haberland, 180-81. By the 1750s and 1760s, apart from the fields of theology and Classics, a choice for Latin could hardly be motived anymore and even Pontoppidan then chose to write his scientific works in Danish, such as *The Natural History of Norway* (1752-1753) and *The Danish Atlas* (1763).

[81] Although one could argue the choice for German also point to the aspiration of reaching an international readership, Latin still seemed to have the status of the unrivalled cosmopolitan language to Pontoppidan. Many of Pontoppidan's scientific works in the vernacular bear a catchy short title in Latin, followed by a more

withdrawing in a textual and scientific world, the vernacular the language of a local group that is disconnected from the Latin, textual world and mainly engages with hardships in the real, namely the religious and political matters of the Monarchy.

The division of language is thus more traditional in Pontoppidan's project than in Holberg's. When Pontoppidan writes his fictional travelogue *Menoza* in Danish, he opts to (partly) address the 'little fish', the large group of faithful. Although in Holberg's moral project another language asks for a different way of presenting his eclectic method, Holberg's duty as a moral philosopher is not linked to a specific language, as it is in Pontoppidan's project. Both Danish and Latin readers are in need of guidance.

At one point in his commentary of *Niels Klim,* Holberg compares his way of moralising with the method of people like Pontoppidan in more direct wordings:

> Festivitas Operis ac Fictio me maxime anxium habuit. Fremendo alii, alii ridendo verum dicunt, utriqve diversis licet itineribus ad eandem metam tendunt; sed qvod apud illos vocatur zelus, apud hos dicitur petulantia: nam, cum sub fabulis ac apologis vitia corripiant hi, suspicatur lector
>
> - - – cui frigida mens sit
> Criminibus, – – – – –
>
> de corio suo ludi.[82]

Holberg's comparison with other moralists echoes his simile of the runner who was disadvantaged compared to international competitors because of the state of the road. Holberg strikingly grants Pietists a place at the start of the race, and even a shot at providing 'truth'. In some cases, they can also *dicere verum* because, as an eclectic, Holberg does not claim the monopoly on moral doctrine (*ne in doctrina morum monopolium*, 22). However, he mocks the methods by which they want to 'move the heart' of their readers.

The manner in which to instruct readers and popularise knowledge was heavily debated in early-eighteenth-century Denmark, also by Pontoppidan. In *Truthfulness to Piety* (1737), Pontoppidan already expressed quite some critique about various ways to embellish morals:

> 'Comedies', along with dance, games, and tavern songs, are 'in themselves a Sin', right next to 'Futility, salacious Company, Novels and promiscuous Love- Stories or

extensive and explanatory subtitle in German or Danish. Examples of this are *Memoria Hafniae* (1729), *Theatrum Daniae veteris et modernae* (1730) and *Annales Ecclesiae Danicae* (1741-1752). When not writing in Latin, Pontoppidan thus seems to have used the language as a form of advertisement, to increase the international appeal of his scientific works.

[82] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 21-22. "The pleasantness of the book and its fictitious character, however, was a source of anxiety to me. Some men speak the truth by grumbling, and others by laughing (*ridendo dicere verum*); both strive for the same finish line (*meta*), though by different routes (*itineribus*); but that which is praised as zeal in the former, is censured as levity in the other, and he who attacks vice with pleasantry (*fabulis*) and parables (*apologis*) is expected by his reader to be himself indifferent to its enormity."

> Images, frivolous Games, Dancing,' and whatever else might arouse mankind's desires, 'Plays' are considered amongst those things inspiring impurity.[83]

At that moment, Holberg was already a well-known playwright in Copenhagen. By the publication of his subterranean novel, Pontoppidan was finally lured into writing a novel himself, but one that avoided pleasantries, such as the use of *fabula*.

In the commentary, Holberg repeatedly criticises the methods employed by Pietists, who "tragico hiatu bacchari in vitia, qvæ ipsi peccatores agnoscunt."[84] He swears by poetical preferences which are quite the opposite: the value of satire for a moral philosopher (11), the importance of jokes in the tradition of Socrates (20) – he even calls *Niels Klim* a *jocus philosophicus* -, and the usefulness of 'comedies, satires and moral fables' in general (23). Although Holberg was reproached of having written a novel that was solely aimed at pleasure, it has become clear that he was himself writing in an environment in which Horace's balance tipped to the side of instruction.

Holberg does not refer to Pietists, Pontoppidan or *Menoza* in a direct manner, nor does he limit his criticism to this courner of the literary field. However, as I have tried to show by echoing Holberg's use of metaphors, the literary experiences he aimed at with *Niels Klim* was one that fundamentally clashed with the literary methods Pietists as Pontoppidan made use of. To Holberg, the Republic of Letters had produced a type of readers, whether *mysticae* or *claviquaerentes*, who despite their ability to read Latin, cannot seem to understand what his novel is about. They are blinded by fables, and write themselves for blind moles. Even with hermeneutical tools, symbolised by glasses (or keys, for that matter), the portrayed Pietists cannot see straight but still reproach others for their ignorance. Although this rant against his critics provides quite some reading pleasure in itself, its significance lies primarily in the performative manner by which he promotes an eclectic reading, teaching and learning method.

6.4 Conclusion: Reading Pleasurable Instruction

To conclude this chapter, let us return to the *utile dulce* dictum in order to revise the traditional characterisation of *Niels Klim* as a moralistic work. In the eighteenth-century literary-critical discourse, Horace's continuum was omnipresent. From the perspective of Holberg, it was impossible not to go along with the neoclassicist conceptions because he had to fight his peers and critics with their own weapons. Critics reproached Holberg for

[83] Cited from Olesen, 173.

[84] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 5, "declaim with tragical fury against vices which they themselves as sinners acknowledge."

looking for one extreme of the spectrum (pleasure), so Holberg mocks them as if they only looked for the other extreme (instruction). Pontoppidan's *Menoza* is an example of a text that aims for one side of the spectrum, more so than Holberg's text. It leaves little room for the interpretation of readers, and avoids narrative techniques that might stand in the way of the reader's inner journey.

Both *utile* and *dulce* are essential in Holberg's moral project, but, at the same time, the *utile dulce* balance does not quite suffice to understand the reading experience Holberg promoted and the conception of the eclectic, moral system itself. Moral truth does not lie somewhere on this spectrum, waiting to be discovered by the reader. Instead, it is negotiated in a dialogue between the reader and a text that provides in both ends of the spectrum. Readers are lured into the text by means of a pleasurable storyworld, after which they move between pleasurable and instructive passages and intertexts. Even after having finished the text, the readers cannot end their quest for constructing their moral system. They are lured back in with elusive keys and a fabulous preface, which let them start the reading process from the top. Whereas *Menoza* leaves its readers behind with fixed ways of thinking, *Niels Klim* teaches one to read and interpret literature in all its diversity, complexity and paradoxality. This mobility of the reading process allows them to become instructed, or find moral truth. The commentary, then, is a text that performs this experience. It is proving that Holberg's fictional world can only be explained through fictions; it is both self-explanatory and extremely complex, both necessary and negligible, existing both in Latin and in translation.

In other words, instead of scaling a continuum between 'pleasure' and 'instruction', and defining *Niels Klim*'s position upon this continuum, Holberg worked towards an evaluation of his novel that went beyond the traditional concept of a continuum and valued mobility instead of position. Especially by discussing Holberg's use of metaphors, I wanted to sketch Holberg's inner battle to free himself from the neoclassicist literary model of the continuum, and develop a more dynamic and reader-oriented model. It is precisely in his valuing of the readers' eclectic experience of his mobile text and their active contribution the construction of a moral system that Holberg sets *Niels Klim* apart from other travel literature of the time.

Conclusion

Towards a Poetics of Mobility in Holberg's Writings

The analyses of *Niels Klim* in the context of eighteenth-century travel literature in the past six chapters were aimed at demonstrating that *Niels Klim* is a 'mobile' novel. This implies that the narrative of *Niels Klim* is put in a diversified mode of telling that is characterised by a constant clash and dialogue between genres and traditions. This mode of telling, more importantly, demands a specific mode of reading in which doubt, critical thinking and reasoning are fundamental, and the goal is finding or, rather, negotiating morals and creating one's own moral system. The amusement of reading *Niels Klim* lies predominantly in the first steps: the book makes you doubt (although it is clearly fictional and unreliable), incites you to think further than what Klim tells you about Europe. In order to search for the morals or enjoy the narrative, hopping from one narrative level to another and back is a prerequisite. The metafictional character of *Niels Klim* makes it impossible to read it with an intense suspension of disbelief.

In order to conceive of *Niels Klim* as a mobile novel, one must acknowledge, furthermore, the multilinguality and development of Holberg's text, consisting of and elaborated in several editions, translations and commentaries. Including its immediate multilingual and orchestrated reception into the study of *Niels Klim* has the advantage of helping *Niels Klim*-scholarship takes its first steps out of an old impasse. It can lead one past the problematic and, in my view, ultimately unsolvable question about what *Niels Klim* 'is', towards a better understanding of how *Niels Klim* 'worked' in literary history.

Finally, in *Niels Klim*'s status as a mobile novel – and thus the particular manner in which Holberg combines the modes of telling of metafictional narratives of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century which incites a reading method that is based on mobility and aimed at a multilingual readership, I see the fundamentals of what makes *Niels Klim* into a piece of European literature, to a degree perhaps no other text was in both the tradition of imaginary voyages and the one of Menippean satire. From this perspective, *Niels Klim* is not a rigid or solitary novel, as a Menippean satire that came 'too

late', an imaginary voyage in *Latin* or an imitation of *Gulliver's Travels* (or even 'a Danish *Gulliver's Travels*'). It was a novel of its time, written by a writer from a peripheral and unique position in the European, literary polysystem, who had a remarkable eye for literary and narrative vogues of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, and showed off this reflective skill.

In relation to Holberg's authorship, it was my aim to show that within the Enlightenment project of the early eighteenth century, literature can only be European when it incites the reader to negotiate concepts as language, culture, authority (and canon), fiction, and truth. From the moment these concepts are conceived as being fixed or static, literature becomes culturally, linguistically, generically or geographically bound, and scholarship relapses into nationally oriented categorisations. Holberg cannot simply be called a European writer (except in the geographical sense). Instead, we can speak of the European function or role of his literary production, and this nature is one in flux and a process of trial and error. It was not always as great a target of Holberg's output as it was in *Niels Klim*, nor was it simplistically linked to the language in which he wrote. A Danish text can be very European, while another Latin one can feel very local.

By way of ending the description of *Niels Klim* as a 'mobile' novel and this thesis, I would like to extend the notion of a mobile text to a larger poetics in Holberg's authorship. It is not my intention to suggest a waterproof poetical framework that can include all of Holberg's writings. I merely want to hint at the potential for future research to consider Holberg as a writer who negotiated his own literary voice in European literary history by developing narrative techniques, thematic preferences, and publication strategies that made both his writings and their reading expierence 'mobile'.

A more elaborate study of Holberg's poetics of mobility would then draw the attention to the following three questions: (1) how did the theme of mobility, in plot structures and characters, activate readers in negotiating morals and creating their moral system? (2) How did Holberg's texts change over the years and how did that affect the way readers could engage with the text? (3) Was the literary context, pervaded by translation activity and multilingualism, a reality that can be traced inside the text (themes, plot, use of different languages, play with expectations, etc.) and/or outside the text (in the contemporary and later reception of the work)? These subquestions may also allow us to differentiate between aspects of Holberg's Europeanness. A work may be European from one perspective, but Danish or Latin from another. In *Niels Klim*, as I have tried to show, these different 'mobile' aspects manifest themselves collectively, and make it perhaps into Holberg's most European work. However, aspects of *Niels Klim*'s mobility are manifested in other parts of Holberg's oeuvre as well.

I started out this thesis with a brief discussion of Holberg's shape-shifting throughout his career. Fictive alter ego's and characters helped Holberg to negotiate his own literary *persona* in a dialogical and dynamic form: Holberg published most of his early fictional works under the pseudonym Hans Mickelsen, he let a fictive academic Just Justesen

comment on his own and others' writings at multiple occasions, and gave a self-portrayal in his *Autobiographical Letters* the form of a letter correspondence with a fictive *vir perillustris*, who may be the European public, but may well be his own European alter ego.[1] Throughout his career, Holberg has shown that mobility is a fundamental characteristic of human existence, which anchored in his belief in *humoralism* – the workings of bodily fluids that ultimately separate humans from (Potuan) trees. Larsen explains Holberg's fascination for the ancient doctrine of the four humours within his study of character:

> [T]he character of a human being is a bodily determined proclivity for certain mental tendencies and physical states which form an invariable feature of the individual human being. Therefore, each person is engaged in a life-long project of establishing a mental and bodily balance counterbalancing any destabilizing tendency to indulge in particular excesses of moods.[2]

Holberg often portrays characters who are comically unstable, shifting, and mobile, not to promote unbridled mobility, but to train his readership in critical thinking and to let them find a balance between Potuan fixedness and ultimately inhuman rationality, and the *perpetuum mobile*-nature of Martinians. Larsen explains it as a way of controlling human passions and traces this in Holberg's comedies, in which excesses are portrayed and ridiculed. The comedies do not only give the audience insight in the complexity of human character, they are rather "merciless and challenging, ripping up not only any prejudice but also relativizing their own moral teaching – there is more to human character than reason and ethics can handle."[3] To Larsen, this complex treatment of human character gives a perspective to Holberg's comedies that is "beyond a national confinement."[4]

Larsen's interpretation of Holberg's study of character can be expressed and expanded in terms of mobility: Holberg's comedies thematise the extremeties of movement. The movement of character we find in *The Vacillating Woman* (*Den Vægelsindede,* 1723), which shouws how an inconstant and whimsical Lucretia terrorises her environment, or in *Master Gert Westphaler* (1723), which portrays an eponymous barber who cannot stop with babbling, and who reminds one of the Martinians' speech and restlessness. In addition, we find tales of social mobility in, amongst others, *The Political Tinker* (*Den Politiske Kandestøber*, 1723) and *Jeppe on the Hill* (*Jeppe paa Bierget*, 1723). These two comedies dramatise the metamorphosis of a lowly figure (respectively a tinker and a drunk) into a person of rank (a mayor and a baron). *Don Ranudo de Colibrados* (1745), then, tells the tale of an impoverished Spanish nobleman who at all costs wants to stay at the social place of

[1] For this last interpretation of *vir perillustris*, see Gimnes. For Holberg's game with pseudonyms and fictive voices, see Lundgreen-Nielsen; Slettebø.

[2] Larsen, 72.

[3] Ibid., 80.

[4] Ibid.

his ancestors. Social mobility is further linked to cultural and educational background in the comedies *Jean de France* (1723) and *Erasmus Montanus* (1731). The first portrays Hans Frandsen who returns to Copenhagen from his travels to France, full of awe for French culture. He changes his name into Jean de France, speaks French to show his refinement, but is not respected for it, or even understood by the citizens of Copenhagen. The second takes a similar approach to Latin. *Erasmus Montanus* ridicules the antiquarianism and pedantry of people schooled in Latin in the person of a Norwegian student who latinised his name into Erasmus Montanus. In his Norwegian hometown, Montanus is confronted with the uselessness of Latin outside the academic bubble in Copenhagen from whence he came. *Erasmus Montanus* hereby foreshadows and dramatises the tension in *Niels Klim* between Klim as a narrator and Abeline as his editor. But the theme of mobility extends beyond Holberg's comedies: his debut as a poet is a travel tale, *Peder Paars*; in 1726, Holberg explores shape-shifting in a Danish reworking of Ovid's poem, *Metamophosis*, and in his later works, Holberg returns to the mobility of human psychology, this time in a more methodic way, and celebrates the mobile nature of the individual in his *Moral Reflections* (1744) and *Epistles* (1748-1754).

Holberg's moral project thus could be understood as the creation of a hall of mirrors that shows the reader the mobility of human nature and European culture through reflections from all sides. It shows both mobility's usefulness and ridiculousness, which must not be simply observed by the reader, but cultivated to get to know oneself and one's place in society. This part of Holberg's poetics of mobility thus requires an active participation of the reader to recognise oneself in Holberg's characters (including Holberg himself) and inquire multiple sides of human existence. Mobility is not simply a theme that can be observed, but a feature of the learning and reading process.

To shed light on Holberg's poetics of mobility, we must take into account a second aspect, namely the mobility of our research object itself, Holberg's publications. As shown in the study of *Niels Klim*, Holberg's firm knowledge of generic conventions not necessarily leads to an unproblematic categorisation of his works. An example we saw earlier in this thesis is Holberg's *Moral Fables,* which Dalgaard argues to be a commentary of the fable genre itself; the last line of the fables often convey another moral message than the one readers would take out of the narrative.[5] Holberg's familiarity with generic conventions gave him the room to play with them rather than imitating them in a new language.

As *Niels Klim* taught us, Holberg did not only play with generic conventions, he also made texts that were in flux, even in the first years of existence. We need to be aware that many of Holberg's works developed over time. The serial publication of Holberg's poetical debut, *Peder Paars*, has already been studied thoroughly by Jens Bjerring-Hansen, but other works of Holberg show that the latter was prone to write mobile texts in the sense

[5] Dalgaard, "Ludvig Holbergs Moralske Fabler og oplysningstidens didaktik: Et eksempel på "generic engineering"," 180.

that the text's publication was not an endpoint, grew or changed in different editions and hereby guided the reader's interpretation of the text.[6] Some of his non-fictional works, Holberg worked on throughout his career: an enhanced edition of *Natural Law* (1716) saw daylight in 1734, his *Description of Denmark and Norway* (1729) was expanded in 1749, and the *History of Denmark* came out in three parts (1732, 1733 and 1735). Holberg's Latin *Epigrams* and Danish *Epistles*, moreover, were probably written almost continuously throughout his career and only later published as separate collections.

Holberg's writing itself was thus in a state of flux. The most intriguing example perhaps is Holberg's *Autobiographical Letters*. They were published in three publications (1728, 1737 and 1743), and each publication included an additional letter to the previous one(s), sometimes with remarkable changes in the text.[7] Scholarship has amply discussed the changing in tone and to some extent the generic shifts in the different *epistolae*, and studied this in relation to Holberg's own whimsical nature and the programmatic functions of the different letters.[8] However, it is important to keep vigilant for the versatile nature of the publication itself. The edition of 1737 was published under the title *Opuscula Quædam Latina* (*Some Small Latin Writings*) and did not only add the *Second Autobiographical Letter* to the first, but also contained five books of Latin epigrams. The third letter was published in *Opusculorum Latinorum pars altera* (*Second Part of Small Latin Writings*), which contained a sixth book of epigrams. Holberg's *Epigrams* would live their own life as a separate publication in 1749 with a seventh book, but some of the epigrams were also recycled as introductory lines to his Danish essays in *Moral Reflections* (1744). In the meantime, Holberg's autobiography further developed. The last part of the *Third Autobiographical Letter*, titled *A Piece of a Moral System* (*Specimen qvoddam systematis moralis*), treats topics as piety, happiness and wisdom, and would be translated and slightly rewritten to fit in his *Moral Reflections*.[9] Finally, as the first essay of his fifth and last volume of *Epistles*, Holberg publishes a Danish continuation of his life letters. This rather short *Epistle 447* is often counted amongst Holberg's autobiography.[10]

The curious process of growing and shape-shifting in Holberg's autobiography highlights a third aspect of Holberg's poetics of mobility: multilingualism and translation. Holberg's life was reproduced in two languages, in multiple texts that were transgeneric, and to a readership in a multilingual environment. Compared to *Niels Klim,* it is remarkable that the translation of Holberg's *Letters* into the vernacular only took off (with the notable exception of a Danish one) after the publication of the third letter, which

[6] Bjerring-Hansen. See 49-51 in particular for an overview of the publication history of *Peder Paars*.

[7] See the example in the introduction to this thesis in which Holberg changes his self-portrayal as a joking or lying author.

[8] See amongst others Gimnes; Kondrup, 122-39; Nyrnes; Skovgaard-Petersen, "Holberg's Autobiographical Letters."

[9] *Third Autobiographical Letter*, 143-189.

[10] *Epistles* V.447, 1-32.

included *Niels Klim*'s commentary.[11] His Latin memoirs that are often said to be a showpiece for the European public surfed on the waves of *Niels Klim*'s international success, rather than it was able to travel across language borders on its own. Holberg's memoirs are thus not exactly born-translated, but clearly play with the possibility of being received in a multilingual environment.

A text that indeed managed to travel on its own across language borders like *Niels Klim* was Holberg's *Synopsis of Universal History* (*Synopsis Historiae Universalis*, 1733). The international success of this textbook cannot be understood through Holberg's choice for Latin alone. In the succession of monarchies, Holberg choose a structural and narratological device that was easily translatable to other cultures and regions. As a result, editors, historians and translators all over Europe reworked and adapted Holberg's text and made the *Synopsis* into a shifting and mobile text, in order to meet the specific demands of the classroom. The text's function within European, educational history was consequently more defined by translation than by the Latin original.[12] In general, it might be rewarding to consider Holberg as a writer who shaped his European voice by allowing translation to become a state of mind. He was interested in the very practice of translating, practiced it himself on several occassions and had a close relation to, amongst others, the German translator Detharding, who rendered various pieces of Holberg's hand into German.[13]

Of course, *Niels Klim* cannot be considered to be the summum of Holberg's style and voice in general. It is teleological and far too evaluative to assume *Niels Klim* was the text in which all pieces of the puzzle fell into place, the completion and perfection of a quest to find his literary voice. This quest for a literary voice was a process of constant negotiation that involved many factors, both textual and contextual. Throughout his career, Holberg wanted to contribute to the European project of the Enlightenment and sought a way by which he could be an interpreter between Denmark and Europe.[14] *Niels Klim*, then, was most clearly detached from geographical and cultural contraints, most clearly expressed Holberg's cosmopolitanism, and was therefore well equipped to travel through Europe.

The previous, brief discussion of the possibility of describing a poetics of mobility in Holberg's authorship was aimed at showing that there is room to consider, on the one hand, Holberg as a cosmopolitan writer who travelled in heart, mind and pen, and, on the other hand, his ideal readers as travellers or individuals who are versatile in their interest

[11] For the editions and translations of Holberg's autobiographical letters, see Ehrencron-Müller, 92-128 and 248-51

[12] For an overview of the rewritings and translations of Holberg's *Synopsis*, see ibid., 220-42.

[13] For Holberg's relation to Detharding, see Eriksen, 95-96.

[14] Larsen says that Denmark and Danish literature and culture must be seen as "the platform for his cosmopolitanism" and that "Holberg never forgot that active cosmopolitanism is only real when situated in local environments." Larsen, 61.

for genres, languages and literatures, willing to adapt one's look on the world accordingly and therefore able to shape their own eclectic, moral system.

Holberg's words to the reader in *Moral Reflections* might sum up the present look towards the future in a symbolic manner. There, Holberg ends by saying the following:

> Det er til moralske Meditationer og Theologie mine Studia nu omstunder ere fæstede: thi jeg anseer mig selv, i Henseende til min Alder og Svaghed, som en reisefærdig Mand, der maa forfatte sit Systema, førend han tager Afskeed og begiver sig paa Reisen.[15]

Moral Reflections is presented as the tutor's last way of transmitting his moral system first to paper and then to the reader, and giving his reader the possibility and the tools to be 'mobile'. His moral project, most prominent at the end of his life, is one that has to (try to) grasp Holberg's eclectic system in order for it to move further in the minds of his readers. Only then, Holberg can depart on his final journey, leaving his work for what it is worth to his European readership. And this last journey of Holberg is not surprisingly a religious one, one to the afterlife. For all the shape shifting, twisting and turning is only possible on steady ground, provided by religion. Once the student has nearly perfected his reading skills, having dealt with all the mobile features literature has to offer, and he has passed these on as a tutor to the next generation, doubt can finally make room for unbridled faith.

[15] *Moral Reflections*, 2v. "It is to moral meditations and theology I devote my studies almost exclusively these days because I see myself, in regards to my age and weakness, as a man ready to travel who must write down his system before he takes leave and sets out on his journey."

Epilogue

A Mobile Thesis

By Tom Pollock, University of Tanachis[1]

Having read the thesis four times by the time I started writing the epilogue, I realised an epilogue did not give me sufficient space to put all my thoughts and remarks on this thesis. I see multiple future perspectives for Velle's research, such as the epigrams of Ludvig Holberg. They show a similar tension between the language in which they are written, Latin, and his oeuvre as a whole. Holberg (re)publishes his epigrams as *libri*, as introductions to his Danish essays in *Moralske Tanker*,[2] and as part of a Latin publication including his first two autobiographical letters. This raises many interesting questions on the travelling status of Holberg's epigrams. Another one would be to further study the ability of texts to anticipate their own travelling status. Such an approach combines publication, translation and reception history with close reading.

I could further dwell upon these themes, but by now you have read too much to actually enjoy my ideas. Instead, I like to draw your attention, dear Members of the Jury, to a specific element of this thesis that might have seemed odd. I have taken the liberty to add some literary mottos at the beginning of the different parts before the text went to press and was submitted to the Faculty Board. I delibirately did not translate these epigrams of Holberg, for, which text is ever better in translation? Moreover, I assume,

[1] Due to the quickly approaching deadline for submission, *doctorandus* Thomas Velle, requested me to make a guest entrance as writer of the epilogue to his thesis. As we are befriended since our study times in Berlin, I accepted the invitation on one condition. Because my standards of academic integrity are high, I wanted to put my name underneath it, and my name only. Although I summarise some of his ideas, I have structured and written the following piece from scratch. Honourable academics as you all are, dear Members of the Jury, I assume no one takes offence in this last-minute and somewhat unconventional manoeuvre. Credit to whom credit is due.

[2] I prefer to use the original Danish and Latin titles of Holberg's works. I guess drs. Velle aimed for an international readership when deciding to use English translations.

illustrious readers, you do not need a translation of a Latin text. Velle apparently thought otherwise.

I thought these small poems were more fitting in an academic context than the mottos Velle originally used. At the beginning of each chapter, he refered to travel literature, and more specifically to passages that describe or refer to cities and countries Velle visited in the course of his fellowship, for both professional purposes and leisure. One might have considered them as relics of his journeys, but they were so loosely related to the arguments of the chapters that I took the freedom to alter them and give the whole of the thesis some more lustre with some more Latin of Holberg. Velle did not have the possibility to revise these or even to give his permission to include them, but I am sure he would have approved. For the sake of our friendship, I will include some of his original mottos at the end of this epilogue, but, as experts in literature, you will immediately know why I wanted to replace them in a thesis. Moreover, I cannot escape the feeling that Velle might not have read the travel texts he wanted to quote as mottos in their entirety. I assure you in good faith that Velle is a well-travelled man, but I doubt whether this would be mirrored in such random quotes.[3]

I do not want to abuse the opportunity of this reflective section of the thesis by getting into further detail about Velle's personal life. Instead, I would like to quote one of *doctorandus* Velle's own sentences in the introduction of this thesis. Drs. Velle describes the position of Holberg vis-à-vis the narrative geniuses of the European Enlightenment. I think the point he makes can be translated to Velle's own position towards Holberg scholarship up North. I think the sentence captures both the challenges he faced as well as those he will still face to convince you, Members of the Jury, of his contribution to Holberg scholarship.

> Ten opzichte van het intellectuele klimaat waarin hij zich als een vis in het water voelde, stond Holberg in de periferie. Deze positie bracht veel moeilijkheden met zich mee, maar gaf hem ook een frisse kijk op de omgeving waar het denkwerk normaal verricht werd.[4]

I also gave him the advice to drop the names of some established scholars at least once: Barthes, Bakhtin, Benjamin, etc.[5] As you know, illustrious readers, a dissertation is only considered worthy of the Faculty of the Arts and Humanities when some of these "big fish" are mentioned. These broad-minded authors were all revolutionary in their own

[3] Some months ago, when Velle was in doubt whether to include mottos, I suggested including some apt quotes of Vergil and Ovid. He was not impressed by my idea at the time, saying that the thesis already treats a text that is full of references to classical poets, and added that they "would be the straw that breaks the camel's back." This English *proverbium* with an exotic frame of reference, which Velle used to express his criticism, demonstrates that he is a widely travelled man.

[4] See the introduction of this thesis, 21.

[5] My most recent work concerns this issue of namedropping in academic discourse, and will be published in autumn 2018 under the title *Plan B of Academic Research* (Boston, Brill).

way, producing strangely familiar theories that are so workable that, in the end, every reader seems to read literature in the same manner. Velle took my advice only partially as he kindly rejected to name Benjamin and Bourdieu. I left it at that. In other parts of the thesis, I revised some paragraphs here and there, and restructured some of his chapters, but I never actually wrote any part, neither in the final manuscript, nor in a draft form. So, I left my name out of the main part. This gives Velle an honest shot at an academic title, which one desperately needs these days to make it in life.

Now, there is nothing left to say than that I genuinely bid you, Members of the Jury, to be clement at the defense, so that you might bring me the pleasurable news and I rejoice when I read in your e-mail - as an old poet once said - "Imprimis te, Pollock, suum dum laudat amicum, quae tibi vitarit narrare pericula gestit."

> *Paratis necessariis ad iter, solus, relictis omnibus, quae moram & impedimentum adferre possent, adsumo vestimenta, capsulam coriaceam papyro pennisque refertam, baculum, qui insculptas exhibebat mensuras, conscendo equum, & ingredior iter Lapponicum die decima tertia Maii 1732, omnia dum Upsaliae vernali tempore vigebant, florebantque.*[6]
>
> *Endlich kann ich den Mund auftun und meine Freunde mit Frohsinn begrüßen. Verziehen sei mir das Geheimnis und die gleichsam unterirdische Reise hierher. Kaum wagte ich mir selbst zu sagen, wohin ich ging, selbst unterwegs fürchtete ich noch, und nur unter der Porta del Popolo war ich mir gewiß, Rom zu haben.*[7]
>
> *"You are a scholar, my son," his mother replied, "and it is right that 'one who studies when young should travel when grown up'. But do take care on the journey to the examinations, and if you are given office, come back home as soon as you can."*[8]

[6] Linnaeus, *Iter Lapponicum*.

[7] Goethe, *Italienische reise.*

[8] Wu Cheng'en, *Journey to the West*. Especially this quote raised my suspicion. As far as I know, Velle does not read Chinese and the translation of W.J.F. Jenner, which he probably quoted, runs over 1800 pages in 4 volumes.

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As announced in the 'Note to the Reader,' all references to writings of Holberg follow the online, critical database *Ludvig Holberg's Writings* (*Ludvig Holbergs Skrifter*). For the sake of clarity, I give the bibliographical reference to the database as a whole. Underneath, I enlist all the works that were mentioned with their English titles in the course of this thesis, accompanied by their Danish and/or Latin titles as found on the database. References to online commentaries of Holberg's writings are mentioned separately under the section 'Secondary References'.

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Apology for the Bard Tigellius	*Apologie for Sangeren Tigellio*
Comedies	Komedier
The Political Tinker (1723)	*Den Politiske Kandestøber*
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Jeppe paa Bierget (1723)	*Jeppe paa Bierget*
Master Gert Westphaler (1723, 1724)	*Mester Gert Westphaler*
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The Fidget (1731)	*Den Stundesløse*
Don Ranudo de Colibrados (1745)	*Don Ranudo de Colibrados*
The Republic, or the Common Good (1754)	*Republiqven eller Det gemeene Beste*
Metamorphosis (1726)	*Metamorphosis*
Orthographical Remarks	*Orthographiske Anmerkninger*
Autobiographical Letters	Levnedsbreve

First Autobiographical Letter (1728)	*Første levnedsbrev (Ad virum perillustrem epistola)*
Second Autobiographical Letter (1737)	*Andet Levnedsbrev (Ad virum perillustrem epistola secunda)*
Third Autobiographical Letter (1743)	*Tredje Levnedsbrev (Ad virum perillustrem epistola tertia)*
Description of Denmark and Norway (1729, 1749)	*Dannemarks og Norges Beskrivelse*
History of Denmark (1732-1735)	*Dannemarks Riges Historie*
Lives of Heroes (1739)	*Heltehistorier*
Niels Klim	*Niels Klim*
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