Chameleonic Paideia: Immigrant Experience and the "Acceptable Other" in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*

By Anna Coopey[1]

Abstract

Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* is a text that wrestles with cultural identity and performance in a world in which identity formation was rapidly changing and morphing in unexpected ways. The emergence of *paideia* as a form of "Greekness" that resisted this change became extremely important, and allowed those who were not "traditionally" Greek to assert their "Greekness", and, thus, to become "Greek". In Heliodorus' novel, the "Other" characters seek to perform "Greekness" through their *paideia*, but equally to perform their "acceptable" difference as foreigners for the gratification and enjoyment of the Greek "Self", too. This can be seen comparatively to chime with immigrant experience up to the modern day in the "West", and thus a continuum of immigrant experience can be seen to reach from the distant past right up to the present day.

The Second Sophistic (60-230 CE) was a particularly potent era of changing identity formations.[2] Under Roman Empire, Greek identity was destabilised, as increased migration and travel around (and beyond) the Mediterranean led to the decentralisation of Greek geographical space from Greek identity, and the traditional touchpoints of fatherland, lineage, and residence

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[2] On the issue of identity in the Second Sophistic, see Jones (2004), Nasrallah (2005), Goldhill (2007), Whitmarsh (2011), and Dench (2017). This elaborate renavigation of identity seems to have begun, too, in the fourth century BC (as Hall (2002) and Lape (2010) have demonstrated), and to have only been heightened under the Roman Empire.

began to give way to a cultural basis for "Greekness": *paideia*.[3] Greek learning and cultural knowledge, often displayed through literary or rhetorical means, thus came into sharper focus as an alternative locus for identification, and many "foreign" (i.e., non-Greek) authors of the period displayed their own *paideia* in their writing, "self-fashioning" their identities in order to ingratiate themselves amongst the Greek and Roman elite that made up a large part of their readership.[4] In a similar manner to the novelist Lucian's characters, these authors participate in 'the self-fashioned process of "becoming Greek" … via successful performances of *paideia*' (Derbew 2022:132).[5] This cultural phenomenon can equally be seen within the novels, as particularly-learned foreign characters perform their own *paideia* for Greek characters, so that they may productively engage with "civilised" society, rather than being rejected by that dominant culture. Within this article, building on scholarship that argues for Second Sophistic authors' "self-fashioning" in their novels, I shall explore how cultural identity is depicted in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, showing how foreigners within the text perform their *paideia* and thus are able to engage with the Greeks, and be "accepted" to some level by them. Simultaneously, though, other "Others" do not possess this *paideia* – or, at least, do not *perform* it – and so are *not* granted acceptance, and are trapped in their position as objects of an ethnographic, racialist gaze. One's position as a character – one's *positive subjectivity* – is thus dependent upon one's performance for the dominant culture, one's "self-fashioning" as an acceptable "Other". I will then examine the parallels that this has with modern immigrant experience now, through comparison with Nikesh Shukla's (2016) essay collection, *The Good Immigrant*, and particularly

[3] Ethnicity was certainly still important for one's identity, though, as Jones (1999) has demonstrated; it was just *less* important than it had been previously. On the connection between geographical place and identity, see Liotta (2009), Antonisch (2010), and Taylor (2010).
[4] The view of Second Sophistic authors, and especially Lucian, as "self-fashioning" (after Greenblatt (1980)) has a long legacy in Second Sophistic studies, and came to a head with Gleason (1994). For an eclectic mixture of scholarly treatments of the concept in the novels, see Whitmarsh (2001), Dobrov (2002), Eshleman (2008), Keulen (2010), Niehoff (2018), Niehoff & Levinson (2019), and Weeks (2023:93-100).
[5] Also see Goldhill (2007), 158-159.

with the essays contributed by Chimene Suleyman, Wei Ming Kam, Musa Okwonga, Darren Chetty, and Varaidzo.[6]

Before we begin delving into the novel itself, it is worth giving a brief explanation of the "Self-Other" dichotomy as I employ it in this article. By Hegel's (1807) view, in order for the "Self" to be actualised – in order for a person to conceive of themselves as existing – there must be an "Other", the opposite of the "Self", through whom the "Self" can define itself through positive differentiation.[7] A model conception of the "Self-Other" dichotomy, modelled on patriarchal, "Western" norms, may be the following:

Table One[8]

Self	**Other**
masculine	feminine
good	evil
white	black / non-white
strong	weak
brave	cowardly
logical	passionate
pure	impure / polluted

The conception of the "Other" has been used in a number of areas of thought, from feminist thought (de Beauvoir (1949)) to the psychology of the mind (Laing 1961), but its most extensive engagement comes in imperial and colonial thought (Said 1978, 1993). Through a colonial lens, the colonised subject constitutes the "Other" to the colonising "Self", and thus is constructed as "inferior", justifying their exploitation, subjugation, and, often, extermination. This

[6] This reading of foreign characters performing their identity for Greek characters (and, by extension, for the audience) can also be productively applied to Clitophon in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe & Clitophon*. Clitophon, a Phoenician character, tells his story, engaging extensively with Greek culture, literature, and philosophy (and thus showing his *paideia*), to the Greek listener, the frame narrator. On Clitophon's characterisation as a performer of Greek masculinity in particular, see Jones (2012). On the sophisticated narrative boxes in Achilles Tatius' novel, see Reardon (1994) and Whitmarsh (2003).
[7] On this philosophical conception of the "Other", see Husserl (1931) and Sartre (1943).
[8] This list is obviously not exhaustive, and many more opposing adjectives could be added to it.

construction is evident in the "Self's" artistic production, which perpetuates this "Othering", and solidifies it as an accepted fact. In the case of Heliodorus' novel, and in the case of the context of its production, the Greek is the "Self", and the non-Greek, or the βάρβαρος, is the "Other", defined precisely in the negative, by the state of not being Greek (or, at least, not *speaking* Greek).[9]

In response to this "Othering", the "Other" can, it seems, give one of two main responses. The first is that of assimilation, where they take on the "mask" of "Self", performing an adoption of the dominant culture in order to gain "acceptance" (Fanon 1952). The alternative, opposite response would be to reject assimilation entirely, and thus risk rejection (and, in many cases, violence) from the dominant "Self" (Arce 2023). It is not a simple choice, though: in order to successfully assimilate, one must be close enough to the dominant culture to do so successfully – i.e., one must not be *too* "Other". One particularly obvious example of this is seen in skin colour with non-white groups; generally, 'those of lighter skin are awarded social and economic privileges because of their closer phenotypic resemblance to whites and their assumed superior social value relative to their darker-skinned counterparts' (Hargrove 2020).[10] Skin colour and other physical attributes are only one aspect, and there are other aspects as well, such as religious affiliation (Kogan, Fong & Reitz 2020). It is this continuum of "Otherness", and this assimilation management, that I argue we can detect when we apply it to Heliodorus' novel.

In the *Aethiopica*, there is one primary "Greekified", *paideia*-wielding "Other": Charicleia.[11] Charicleia is almost excessively "Greek" on the surface. Raised by her adoptive father, Charicles, in Delphi, she serves as a priestess of Artemis, values her chastity to the highest degree (spurning marriage completely – until she meets Theagenes, of course), and displays her Greek socialisation

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[9] The noun βάρβαρος in the LSJ is defined explicitly as "non-Greek, foreign, … esp. of language". Importantly, it is also used, after the Persian War, to mean "brutal", or "rude", showing a collocation of all non-Greeks with negative attributes (which the Greeks would not attribute to themselves).

[10] Also see Hunter (2007) and Dixon & Telles (2017).

[11] Charicleia has been the object of much scholarship, particularly in relation to her race. On Charicleia, see Harris (2001), Haynes (2002), de Temmerman (2014), and Papadimitropoulos (2017).

and learning throughout the text.[12] However, the novel soon reveals to us that Charicleia is *not* Greek, but rather Ethiopian; while she *appears* Greek by her behaviour, occupation, and even skin colour – she is white – she *isn't* Greek, but instead is someone who *presents* as Greek. She *passes* as Greek: but she isn't Greek in the *traditional* sense.[13] She is, then, *performing* Greekness, whether consciously or not, and she does so successfully.[14] As Lye (2016:260-261) writes: 'Charicleia … although foreign-born, … comes to embody the more positive aspects of Greek identity through her courage, stoicism, rhetorical skills, and purity. … Her success reinforces the idea of an East-West symbiosis through *paideia*, … particularly relevant to Heliodorus' world.'

Charicleia is not the only "Other" in the novel who performs "Greekness" through her *paideia*; Hydaspes, her biological father and the Ethiopian king, is also a 'Hellenised Ethiopian', 'able to apply learned standards of Greekness to his behaviour in such a seamless manner that they appear natural' (Jones 2012:151).[15] Clearly, then, it seems that *paideia* is used within the novel by non-Greek characters for the (conscious or unconscious) active performance of "Greekness", which helps these characters assimilate within the Greek cultural world, and thus gain acceptance within the elite Greek community they partake in, both outside of the text and within. Charicleia is accepted by her Greek lover, Theagenes, and by her Greek reading audience, because of her display of markers of "Greekness". Concurrently, then, it seems that *paideia* is being used just as those non-Greek authors of the Second Sophistic have been read to have used it (Derbew 2022) – and just as Heliodorus himself may have been using it too. If we believe

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[12] The emphasis on her virginity has led many to Charicleia to the martyrs in Christian texts of the same period (Andujar 2012). For further comparisons between the novels and Christian texts, see Grottanelli (1987).
[13] cf. Stephens (2008), 101. On racial "passing" and Charicleia, see Perkins (1999).
[14] cf. Derbew (2022), 23. Lye (2016:251-253) compares Charicleia's performance of Greekness favourably to Arsace's performance in the same text, showing how, while Charicleia is able to articulate and display her "Greekness" in a "good" way, Arsace fails because of her immoderate behaviour and fundamental "Persian" nature. Clearly, then, we can see the continuum of acceptable "Otherness" on display, and, on this continuum, not everybody can assimilate.
[15] It must be noted, though, that some troubling aspects of Hydaspes' behaviour – for example, his insistence on human sacrifice towards the end of the novel – *do* have to be tactfully airbrushed out. He is not *entirely* assimilable, and sits a little closer to "Other" than his daughter does. On Hydaspes' characterisation within the text, cf. 9.26, 10.9, etc.

Heliodorus' *sphragis* at the end of the novel (10.41.4) and accept his claimed Phoenician identity, we can argue that, through writing his novel, he, a non-Greek, is performing his own *paideia*, showing himself, an "Other", performing as and thus assimilating to the "Self", to "Greekness".[16] In this light, then, just as Heliodorus uses *paideia* performance to encourage Charicleia and Hydaspes' acceptance by the Greeks *within the novel and without*, Heliodorus himself performs *paideia*, and thus ingratiates himself with his Greek audience, even as a non-Greek figure.[17]

Yet it is not simply through assimilation that this *paideia*-based identity performance shines through in the text. Alternatively, we can also see foreign figures play up to stereotypes before their internal (and external) Greek audiences, moulding themselves as viewable performance pieces for the "Self" – adopting Greek "knowledge" about non-Greeks and running with it. This is seen particularly in the character of Calasiris.[18] In Book 3, when Theagenes discovers that Calasiris is Egyptian, he is ecstatic, 'like a man who has stumbled on a hidden treasure', and jumps up, drinking to their friendship (3.11).[19] In Calasiris' own narrative, nested within the novel, Calasiris then takes advantage of the interest that his Egyptian identity generates, and indulges in 'showmanship' (3.17), playing up to Egyptian associations with magic, spells, and prophecy to interest his audience, and 'pretend[ing] that the spirit is upon him' (3.17). He even does this in front of Charicleia, as she lies bed-bound and lovesick (4.5):

> Having secured our privacy, I launched into a sort of stage performance, producing clouds of incense smoke, pursing my lips and muttering some sounds that passed for prayers, waving the laurel up and down, up and down, from Charicleia's head to her toes, and yawning blearily, for all the world like some old beldam.

Charicleia's reaction to this performance is perhaps also telling. She apparently shakes her head and smiles at Calasiris, ostensibly because she feels that he has been deceived by her own

[16] Much has been written on this end-of-novel ethnic identification, most recently by Whitmarsh (2022) and Repath (2022).
[17] cf. Redondo Moyano (2020), 40.
[18] For an earlier treatment of Calasiris' performance in Heliodorus, see Winkler (1982).
[19] This translation, and all others in this article, are by J. R. Morgan, accessed via Reardon (2019).

performance (she is pretending to be ill in order to hide her actual lovesickness for Theagenes), but perhaps, when we read her as a *fellow conscious performer* of ethnicity, because she recognises a kindred spirit in the man (4.11):

> I kept this up for some time, until, by the time I came to an end, I had made complete fools of both myself and the girl, who shook her head again and again and smiled wryly as if to tell me that I was on quite the wrong track.

Clearly, then, we can detect various "Others" within the novel who can be said to perform ethnicity. Charicleia – whether consciously or unconsciously – performs Greekness, overlaying her Ethiopian origins through her *paideia*, while Calasiris (consciously) performs Greek stereotypes of Egyptian identity in order to ingratiate himself with the Greeks. This ingratiation then allows Calasiris to gain the authority to further his plan for Charicleia and Theagenes, and thus stage-manage the rest of the novel. Like his characters, too, Heliodorus himself can be read to be performing his *paideia* through writing his text, and, through this, consciously seeking to ingratiate himself within the literary elite – much like the Egyptian Homer he invents in the text, too (3.14-15).[20]

By nature of this performance, Heliodorus (and his characters) can be viewed as breaking the "ethnographic present" that is so central to Greek interaction with non-Greek peoples. Clara Bosak-Schroeder (2020:3-4) defines the "ethnographic present" as follows:

[20] cf. Whitmarsh (2011), 114-115. For an alternative (but perhaps less intriguing) reading of Calasiris' performance, see Kim (2019). Kears (2014) argues that metics (resident foreigners) could indulge in the same kind of ethnicity performance in democratic Athens – see especially 271-281, for discussion of Demosthenes 57 through this lens.

> [The present tense] is the default in Herodotus, Diodorus, and other ethnographers, who describe many non-Greek customs as eternal, fixed at the time when the ethnographer (or an informant) observed them. … The ethnographic present constructs a moment of direct contact between ethnographer and ethnographic subject and places the reader there; this allows the pleasurable illusion of travel and increases the credibility [sic.] of the ethnographer, whose account, because timeless, never loses its authority. The ethnographic present also constructs the other person as other by forcing them to stand still and be compared to the observer.

Calasiris is a conscious performer of Greek stereotypes about Egyptians, yet it is through his performance of these stereotypes that he becomes “acceptable” to his Greek audience, whose fixed construct of “Otherness” Calasiris fits himself into in order to increase his own authority within the novel. He performs Greek knowledge in order to be accepted *as an active character in his own right*, as a *positive subject*, rather than remaining static as an object of the ethnographic gaze. Charicleia is a (conscious or unconscious) performer of “Greekness”, as an Ethiopian woman deemed “acceptable” to both her own intra-novel Greek society and the external Greek reader through her socialisation as Greek. These foreign figures, then, become recognisable to the Greeks through their performance *according to the Greek gaze*. Meanwhile, Heliodorus himself, through writing his novel (a display of *paideia*), equally can be seen to perform “Greekness”. Characters and author perform ethnic identity, whether “Greek” or “Other”, according to Greek standards, and thus gain “acceptance” as positive subject, either through performance as a stereotyped “Other” (Calasiris) or as a “Greekified” foreigner, assimilable enough for absorption by dominant Greek culture.

Not all “Others” within the text *can* escape the ethnographic present, though. As previously mentioned, assimilation is not always possible for “Others”, and acceptance by the “Self” is often contingent upon how close one sits to the “Self” on the “Self-Other” continuum. Bandits are a key feature of the Greek novels, used to ‘defin[e] and affirm[…] social boundaries’ (Perkins 1994:47), and they are explicitly “Othered” within Heliodorus’ novel. Peculiarly connected to

their physical landscape, almost to the point of merging with it (1.6.1-2)[21], speaking a different language that is unintelligible to the Greek "Self" (1.3.2)[22], and shown as remarkably morally corrupt (by Greek standards) (1.1.8, 1.3.2-3), with a markedly different (black) skin colour (1.2.8, 1.3.1)[23], the bandits are trapped by the ethnographic present, often unable to break out of it due to their foregrounding *through* that ethnographic lens. In Heliodorus' novel, Thyamis, a bandit leader (and Calasiris' son), escapes this ethnographic lens, *yet again, this is through his "Greek" learning* – he is more assimilable than the crowd of bandits we see in the ethnographic discursion that makes up a large part of the novel's first book (1.5.2-4). As Judith Perkins (1994:60-61) writes, 'In the romance, the bandits, through their inverted social structures – leaders, religious rites, even mock cities ..., but above all with their violence – provided a foil for the normative structures of elite society'. The bandits, it seems, are *too* "Other", and so remain constructs of that "Otherness", unable to break out of their ethnographic styling through (conscious or unconscious) performance.[24] Not every "Other" in the text is able to negotiate their "Othering", to fashion themselves as more acceptable to the "Self's" gaze.

The foreign "Other" *most* able to be accepted by – or most palatable *to* – the Greek "Self" in the text seems to be the Egyptian, as with Calasiris.[25] In Greek historiography, Egyptians generally seem to be a '"near Other", both geographically, culturally, and environmentally similar to Greeks and Romans and much easier to emulate than the remote Fisheaters and

[21] cf. Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe & Clitophon* 3.13.2-3, 4.12.6-8.
[22] On this language difference, see Perkins (1994), 61, and Derbew (2022), 165-166.
[23] Of course, Hydaspes, Persinna, and the Ethiopians – excluding Charicleia – are also black, but their skin colour is far less marked within the text, and their blackness is only mentioned in relation to disbelief at Charicleia's paternity at the end of the novel. The bandits, however, are *emphatically* black, and thus *emphatically* "different", *emphatically* "Other".
[24] The way in which the bandits are "Othered" here is remarkably similar to the "Othering" seen in texts of the later British Empire, such as Joseph Conrad's (1899) *Heart of Darkness*. The natives in Conrad's novel are strongly associated with the landscape, and their language is disparagingly described by the narrator as 'a babble of uncouth sounds'. On this, see Raskin (1967), Singh (1978), Sullivan (1981), Hawkins (1982), Elbarbary (1993), and Bowers (2013). Also see novelist Chinua Achebe's (1988) response to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.
[25] Another "acceptable" "Other" in the text would be the Ethiopian (Charicleia, Hydaspes), through their morality (and even through their amethyst – cf. 5.13).

Locusteaters' (Bosak-Schroeder 2020:99).[26] Calasiris, an Egyptian, *is* an "Other", but he is not an *ultimate* "Other"; he is closer to the Greeks, and so more capable of assimilation (and thus acceptance). However, it seems too that not all Egyptians are equally assimilable, and some are more "Other" than others. Calasiris illustrates this when he explains the different types of magic that Egyptians are associated with (3.16):

> There is one kind [of Egyptian wisdom] that is of low rank and, you might say, crawls upon the earth; it waits upon ghosts and skulks around dead bodies; it is addicted to magic herbs, and spells are its stock-in-trade; no good ever comes of it; no benefit ever accrues to its practitioners; generally it brings about its own downfall, and its occasional successes are paltry and mean-spirited – the unreal made to appear real, hopes brought to nothing; it devises wickedness and panders to corrupt pleasures.
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> But there is another kind, my son, true wisdom, of which the first sort is but a counterfeit that has stolen its title; true wisdom it is that we priests and members of the sacerdotal caste practice from childhood; its eyes are raised towards heaven; it keeps company with the gods and partakes of the nature of the Great Ones; it studies the movement of the stars and earthly concerns of the other kind, but all its energies are directed to what is good and beneficial to mankind.

Here, we are shown a type of Egyptian knowledge viewed as acceptable by the Greeks, as not-too-"Other", and a type that is *unacceptable*, too-"Other" – and, similarly, we are also shown within the text a type of *Egyptian* that is acceptable (Calasiris), and a type that is unacceptable. The unacceptable Egyptian in the text is the old woman from Bessa in Book 6 (6.12-15), who reanimates her dead son's corpse with magic, and is promptly killed for it (in what reads like a rather heavy-handed moral lesson).[27] It seems, then, that those "Others" capable of assimilation to the Greek "Self", then, are those who aren't *too* "Other" – those whose "Other" behaviour is comprehensible to the Greek sensibility. Because Calasiris is not *too* "Other", and because he possesses the knowledge to be able to perform his "Otherness" in a way acceptable to his Greek

[26] Capitalisation of 'other' my own.

[27] Necromancy was certainly popular in the ancient world, but the reanimation of the dead was particularly troubling to Greeks and Romans alike, and gave rise to various monstrous figures, including vampires, zombies, and ghosts, which haunted the popular imagination. For an overview of necromancy in the ancient world, see Ogden (2004).

audience, he is accepted as a positive subject. Once again, it is clear that the performance of ethnic identity for acceptance by the dominant "Self" is only possible for certain people – Heliodorus himself perhaps being among them.[28]

It is instructive to consider the way in which this experience of ethnic and cultural performance for acceptance and assimilation to the "Self" has parallel in the modern world, too. In Nikesh Shukla's 2017 essay collection, *The Good Immigrant*, twenty-one prominent ethnic minority authors, actors, and academics wrote on the issue of cultural performance, examining how they, as first, second, and later generation immigrants, feel the need to play the "good immigrant", the "good foreigner", in order to be accepted in modern British society.[29] Shukla (2017:17) summarises fellow contributor and friend Musa Okwonga's words to him in his preface, where he states that 'the biggest burden facing people of colour in this country is that society deems us bad immigrants – job-stealers, benefit scroungers, girlfriend-thieves, refugees – until we cross over in their consciousness, through popular culture, winning races, baking good cakes, being conscientious doctors, to become good immigrants'.[30] Varaidzo (2017:34) writes on how black people have long held the 'collective role ... of the entertainer' before the Western eye, and how the only way to 'control this gaze' is to 'indulge in the role of the performer'.[31] Wei Ming Kam (2017:107) laments the need to be a 'model minority', and thus not complain about the stereotypes East Asian actors are forced into in popular media, split between 'villains a la Fu

[28] Stephens (2008:101) writes how Heliodorus, deploring magic here, deprives the Egyptian priests of their legitimate magic and power, turning them into 'nothing more than impotent relics of a once powerful culture' – such are the hazards of assimilation! Lye (2016:249-253) writes further of how Arsace, too "excessive" as both a Persian *and* a woman – two "Other" identities – is also unable to perform successfully, and thus be accepted as a positive subject.
[29] A second essay collection, entitled *The Good Immigrant USA*, edited by Shukla and Chimene Suleyman, was released in 2019, and reflects on similar issues in the United States of America.
[30] George Alagiah (2006:45) also writes similarly in his memoir, *A Home from Home*: 'The honorary white is like a mannequin in a shop window. People get to dress it up any way they want to – and usually it ends up looking reassuringly like themselves. No fuss, no threat.' Also see Ahmed (2017), 174-175; Godden (2017), 206; and The Mash Report's (2018) "How to Be an Immigrant British People Like".
[31] On 'the burden of "acting white"', see Ogbu (2004).

Manchu' and 'delicate women who need saving, usually by white men'.[32] Darren Chetty (2017:118-119) quotes academic Karen Sands O'Connor in his essay, inspired by his experience teaching in an ethnically-diverse primary school, on how West Indian writers in British literature had to tell their stories 'in a way acceptable to their mostly white British audience'.[33] Most strikingly, Chimene Suleyman (2017:45), writing on how she has had to change the spelling of her name since childhood *purely so that British people would pronounce it correctly*, speaks of the need for immigrants to become 'chameleons' in their new countries:

> We have learned that our ways make us homeless and fatherless, just as there is a whiteness that is fearless to the point of tenure – unmoveable and permanent. We have become chameleons navigating the land, answering to white slave names put upon black nations, searching for directions not to Coaquannock – the 'grove of tall pines' but to Philadelphia.

This essay collection demonstrates that, even as recently as 2016, immigrants in the United Kingdom have articulated a sense of the need for performance for the dominant "Self" in society – in this case, white British people – in order to gain acceptance within that society.[34] Equally, we can see that there is a continuum of "Otherness" which impinges upon that acceptance; the less "Other" you are, through performance or not, the more likely you are to be accepted by the "Self".[35] It seems, then, that Calasiris and Charicleia, within Heliodorus' narrative, and

[32] On the stereotyping of East Asians in popular media past and present, see Marchetti (1993), Ito (2014), and CAPE's (2021) report.
[33] cf. Sands O'Connor (2007), 140.
[34] In Shukla's collection, the issue of skin colour is central to many of the essays. However, skin colour is only one reason for discrimination and marginalisation of immigrants in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and various other characteristics are central, including accent, qualifications (from foreign universities or institutions), language, religion, or cultural observation. As an example of this, we can take the experience of Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom, whose presence has called what Fitzgerald and Smoczynski (2015) have described as an 'anti-Polish migrant moral panic' (see Kawczynski (2008) and Rzepnikowska (2018)). Regardless as to whether the specific issue of skin colour necessarily holds within the ancient context, the framework is still useful for examining the experience of a cultural "Other" experiencing life in a land dominated by the "Self".
[35] For example, in the United Kingdom, where the dominant British "Self" is largely white, white immigrants are more likely to be accepted than non-white immigrants, as they are "closer to the Self" (Yeo 2020). Indeed, Lena Simic (2009:112), speaking on her theatrical work *medea / mothers' clothes*, noted an elision of her "Otherness" as a Croatian immigrant when she married a British man and gave birth to British children in her Liverpool community.

Heliodorus and his fellow foreign Second Sophistic authors as a whole, can be read as conducting a similar performance as "Others", tamped up or down for the wishes of the "Self", in modern Britain. Perhaps, then, Heliodorus isn't quite as distant as we may think.

The depiction of cultural identity and "Otherness" in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* is strongly bound up with performance. Heliodorus, in his act of writing (and performance of *paideia* through that writing), presents cultural "Greekness" to ingratiate himself with his dominant, "Greek" audience, and thus to gain favour and acceptance. Within his novel, Charicleia, the perfect picture of a "Greek" woman despite her Ethiopian origin, is acceptable to Greeks both within *and* outwith the text – the Greeks within the plot and the Greeks reading the novel – through her performance of "Greek" identity (whether this is conscious or not). Calasiris, on the other hand, *consciously* performs those aspects of his Egyptian identity (magic and prophecy) which the Greeks find entertaining, performing as the "acceptable" "Other". These successful performers are contrasted with those who cannot perform so well – the bandits (or Boukoloi), Arsace, and the woman from Bessa, for example – showing just how difficult it is for the "Other" to navigate cultural acceptance by the elite Greek "Self". This experience of performance is resonant with immigrant experience in the modern day, too, and hints to a continuing experience of immigrant performativity before the dominant culture. As Salena Godden (2017:206) writes:

> You earn time to chameleon, to camouflage, to make your shade darker or lighter. To morph into what is required or expected. Whatever it takes to survive, whatever it takes to be heard, whatever it takes to get the job. Whatever armour you must wear that day. It's all positive discrimination. Right? No. Wrong. Very. Wrong.

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