

BRUCE DUNCAN MACQUEEN

Department of Comparative Literature, University of Silesia  
pl. Sejmu Śląskiego 1, 40-032 Katowice  
Poland

## PLEASURE AND INSTRUCTION IN THE PROLOGUE OF LONGUS' *DAPHNIS AND CHLOE*

ABSTRACT. Bruce Duncan MacQueen, *Pleasure and instruction in the Prologue of Longus' "Daphnis and Chloe"*.

The present study attempts to demonstrate that the ancient Greek novel *Daphnis and Chloe* systematically explores the problem expressed by Horace in the phrase *docere et delectare*, and that this purpose is announced in the Prologue. The functions of prologues as such are briefly reviewed. After a consideration of the prologues of the remaining ancient Greek novels, the Prologue of Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* is analyzed line by line. Longus uses the Prologue, then, to establish a series of dialectical tensions that operate throughout the novel, allowing it to delight and instruct at the same time.

Key words: ancient Greek novel, Eros, paradox, paideia, hunting.

### INTRODUCTION

A paradox often repeated, like a metaphor, eventually loses the shock value that makes it useful as a figure of speech. To use the terminology of cognitive psychology, it comes to be "overlearned," repeated without reflection at particular moments when the requisite prompt occurs. Its very familiarity makes it fade into the background, where it ceases to draw attention to itself. We have been told since childhood, for example, to "turn the other cheek," so we repeat the phrase automatically and almost entirely ignore it in practice, since it no longer demands our attention. When uttered by Jesus of Nazareth, however, it was certainly a paradox, flying in the face of common sense and even ordinary morality, which regarded leaving a wrong unavenged as a grievous moral fault. Thus the starting point for any effort to come to terms with the meaning of "turning the other cheek" in contemporary society, after nearly 2000 years of catechism, is to "unlearn" what is familiar in this paradox and allow it once again to contravene common sense and common opinion, as a paradox by definition ought to do.

The same holds true for the “Word becoming flesh,” for having to be “born again,” and many other such paradoxes from the New Testament (and not only).

The idea so succinctly expressed in Horace’s phrase *docere et delectare* is likewise a paradox, expressing a tension between two possible aims of a poem: to give pleasure and to instruct. Rather than forcing the poet (and reader) to choose between them, however, Horace demands the fulfillment of both at once; otherwise, he should have written *docere aut docere*. It is possible, of course, to evade the problem, to defuse the paradox by clever arguments. Perhaps a good text is one that manages to do both of these things in some reasonable proportion. Perhaps this is what defines the domain of the literary text. A text that instructs without giving delight is not literary, but then, neither is a text that merely delights and teaches us nothing; *ex hypothesi* what is left over is by definition literary. Assuming that any text which neither instructs nor delights is a waste of time and paper, then perhaps Horace has given us as good a definition of literariness as we really need. It is all a matter of the proportion, assuming that in most particular instances it is mostly *docere* and a little *delectare*, or the other way around. If a poem is primarily read for its “ideas,” it suffices to add a few adjectives of praise for its esthetic qualities, in order to satisfy the criterion we are calling *delectare*. If it is read primarily for pleasure, one hints broadly at deeper meanings that need not be elaborated, or treats the text as a piece of historical, sociological, or psychological evidence. Then we are learning something from it, so that reading it is not culpable self-indulgence, but rather a laudable act of scholarship.

There is, however, something deeply unsatisfying in all this. The root of the problem is that we continue to look at *docere et delectare* in one dimension, as though *docere* were on one end of a scale and *delectare* on the other. This simplifies the issue but significantly distorts it, forcing us to assume that the more a text delights, the less it instructs, and vice versa. This is always a temptation, but like all temptations it usually leads to deplorable consequences. The relationship between the esthetic and the cognitive can only be properly understood when it is viewed in two dimensions, on *x* and *y* axes, so that tension between them becomes possible (even probable in some cases), but not inevitable. Any theory that fails to account for the possibility of tension or conflict between *docere* and *delectare* in some situations, or fails to account for their peaceable coexistence in others, really has no claim on our attention. On this imaginary graph, then, bad poetry would fall in the lower left corner, near the intersection of the *x* and *y* axes, great art would place in the upper right corner, while “flawed masterpieces” (edifying but boring, pleasing but trivial) would be in the upper left or lower right regions.

The paradox of learning and pleasure can be viewed in other ways, of course, not necessarily restricted to poems, or even to literary texts as such. Learning is not necessarily pleasant; indeed, the most instructive experiences are often the most painful. Students can only with difficulty be convinced that the word *school* is derived from the Greek σχολή 'leisure, rest, free time.' At the same time, however, learning can be pleasant enough to devote one's life to it, else I should not be writing this text, nor should you be reading it. Delight, on the other hand, is something that one can learn, and in some cases must learn. It is possible to acquire tastes, which in many cases reward the effort involved in learning them by providing much greater (though perhaps subtler) delight than the naïve pleasures of childhood. In many ways this is what "culture" in the classical sense (Greek παιδεία, Latin *humanitas*) is all about: learning to appreciate the finer things often involves shutting out the noise of grosser delights, and in many cases overcoming a certain resistance. The first taste of coffee, wine, caviar and the like is seldom particularly pleasant and not infrequently evokes a gag. The first exposure to Shakespeare or Bach seldom enchants a young audience (though noteworthy exceptions do occur), and the great authors and composers seldom compete successfully for attention with sensational novels or the latest pop groups. We all know this and often deplore it, but we seldom think much or systematically about why this is so. Easier to lament the tide of barbarism, or to fight it, or to ignore it, or to give in to it, much harder to try to understand its causes.

One possible solution to this problem, apart from "fight or flight" reactions to encroaching barbarism, is to revalue culture. Perhaps indeed the canon is elitist, composed, as feminist critics have long complained, of "dead white males." The principle *de gustibus non est disputandum* has taken on the force of natural law: we ought not to be telling our students that *these* tastes are consistent with "high culture" and *those* are not. Rather than dragging our students to the opera, we should be going to rock concerts with them, to find out for ourselves why it is such a fine thing to jump up and down, screaming bloodthirsty, scatological texts at the top of one's voice, which cannot be heard anyway over the roar of the amplified music. Rather than requiring students to read the poetry of those "dead white males," we should go out and read Harlequin romances, watch soap operas, horror films, and rock videos, experience the world in which our students actually live. In this way popular culture becomes the object of scientific observation, which by its very nature gazes at its object as a specimen, a sample of a phenomenon to be studied, viewed with detachment and without any evaluation that might interfere with the process of objective observation. Viewed from this perspective, the dethronement of the classics is

only the next logical step along the journey that began when the great philologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to study the classics as scientists rather than read them as readers. There is no objective, scientific basis, after all, for the claim that one poem is better than another. If we really want to know and understand the ancient Greeks, we would learn more by rummaging through their garbage than by reading their elitist philosophical treatises. Or so it seems.

In the case of the ancient Greek novels, the problems under discussion have always played a very particular role in shaping the history of the scholarship. Those of us who interest ourselves in these texts have a certain problem at the very outset, which is the inescapably trivial nature of much of what we are reading and asking others to read. The problem can be resolved in several ways, of course. One is to take a detached, scientific, objective view: as classicists we are interested in ancient culture as such, and these texts, silly as they may sometimes seem, are part of that culture, reflect some aspects of its nature at a particular moment in its history. Just as modern sociologists may analyze comic books, or psycholinguists investigate advertisements, to find out something about the *Zeitgeist*, so we may be not only forgiven for poking our noses into books that for all the world resemble Harlequin romances, but indeed applauded for having the courage to do so. After all, classical antiquity is not limited to Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Greek tragedy, Herodotus, Thucydides, Lucretius, Catullus, Cicero, Vergil, Horace, or any such smaller or larger canon of "the Great Books" of ancient Greece and Rome. There is also the creeping suspicion that in about 200 years of classical philology (dating from Wolf) just about everything useful that can be said about the great texts has already been said, and so we can only justify continued scholarly work by shifting to marginal or dubious texts, or by studying the history of classical scholarship itself. It is much easier to write a doctoral dissertation on Longus, who has been the subject of no more than half a dozen books, than on Plato.

Another approach, of course, is to search out a serious side to the ancient Greek novels. Perhaps underneath all this silliness, frivolity, or sometimes nearly unbearable sentimentality there is a serious message encoded, which a resolute scholar can decode. In the history of scholarship on these texts such a thread can be discerned, especially in the initiation theories first suggested by Kerényi<sup>1</sup> and made famous by Merkelbach.<sup>2</sup> According to this

---

<sup>1</sup> K. Kerényi, *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung: ein Versuch*, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen 1927.

<sup>2</sup> R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike. Eine Untersuchung zur Religion*, C.H. Beck, Munich, Berlin 1962; H.H.O. Chalk, *Eros and the Lesbian Pastorals of Longus*, "Journal of Hellenic Studies" 80, 1960, p. 32-51.

view, the ancient novels are allegories of initiation into a mystery religion (there were always various ideas as to which one or which ones), and the eroticism is either symbolic of communion with the divine, or something like bait for potential initiates, or both. Although this approach still has its advocates, they are becoming fewer and fewer, and the allegorical reading functions today primarily as a whipping boy. Most of those active in the field can recite almost from memory the arguments against it and a brief bibliography of the critics who treated it so roughly in the 1970s and 80s.<sup>3</sup> Thus no sooner had the ancient novels found intellectual respectability than they were unceremoniously stripped of it. The contempt that Nietzsche openly expressed for the ancient novels,<sup>4</sup> that Erwin Rohde (author of the first serious philological work on them<sup>5</sup>) barely concealed, has given way to a dispassionate examination of these texts as evidence for the state of mind of their readers in the last centuries of pagan antiquity. So much good work has been done on the ancient Greek novels over the last several decades that complaints about scholarly neglect, once a common *topos* in the scholarly literature, have become moot.

The canon of the ancient Greek novel consists for all practical purposes of five extant texts:

- *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, written by Chariton of Aphrodisias, probably in the latter half of the first century AD;
- the *Ephesian Tale* (or *Anthia and Habrocomes*), probably written towards the end of the first century AD or the beginning of the second by an author known as Xenophon of Ephesus;
- *Leucippe and Clitophon*, by Achilles Tatius (perhaps the astronomer of the same name, though this seems unlikely), written in the latter half of the second century AD;
- *Daphnis and Chloe*, written around AD 200, give or take 25 years, by an author known only as Longus;
- the *Ethiopian Tale*, by Heliodorus of Emesa; the date is much disputed, but Heliodorus wrote at least a century after Longus, and possibly two.

These texts have in common the use of something we have come to call "literary *koiné*" (less vernacular than, say, the New Testament, but much less Atticizing than the prose of the contemporary Second Sophistic) and a preoccupation with beautiful young lovers, who pass through numerous

<sup>3</sup> R. Turcan, *Le 'roman initiatique: à propos d'un livre récente*, "Revue de l'Histoire des Religions" 163, 1963, p. 149-199; M. Berti, *Sulla interpretazione mistica del romanzo di Longo*, "Studi Classici e Orientale" 16, 1967, p. 343-358.

<sup>4</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, §361.

<sup>5</sup> E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. reprinted Georg Olms, Hildesheim 1960).

horrifying perils on their way to marriage. The names of many characters, their social status, and even many of the narrative motifs will be familiar to readers of post-Aristophanic ancient comedy, including of course Plautus. In the novels, however, what serves as narrated background for the plots of the New Comedy (whether expounded in the Prologue or revealed at the denouement) has become the plot itself, though they are now narrated in the mode of history, in prose, rather than presented in the mode of dramatic verse (the distinction here being, of course, that drawn by Aristotle in the first chapters of the *Poetics*).

There is in all of this an unspoken assumption: that whatever we say about the literary quality of the ancient Greek novels applies to all of them more or less equally, since they are so obviously “of a kind.” Ben Edwin Perry, to be sure, spoke of “comic” and “ideal” novels in antiquity, making the interesting claim that the former are serious literary works written by authors of genius, while the latter were mass produced by hack writers for a popular market.<sup>6</sup> But Perry put all five of the Greek novels in the “ideal” category, and the Roman novels of Petronius and Apuleius alone in the “comic” category, so once again we relegate all five of the extant ancient Greek novels to the same shelf: a rather low one, probably under the counter. But is this approach really justified? Are the five extant Greek novels really that homogenous, even if we set aside, for the moment, the issue of their quality? Achilles Tatius’s *Leucippe and Clitophon* lays on the sensation and sentiment so thickly that the effect is often humorous. Perhaps we should be asking whether he has done this accidentally (in which case he is a strikingly incompetent writer, and his novel is the Edsel of ancient Greek literature), or purposefully, in which case he may well have written the ancient equivalent of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*.<sup>7</sup> Longus’s *Daphnis and Chloe*, on the other hand, is so much unlike the other four, if only in the plot and the setting, that there exists at least a reasonable doubt as to its assignment to Perry’s “ideal” category. Graham Anderson, for his part, attacked Perry’s classification by arguing that all the ancient Greek novels are distinctly comic; even so, however, he assumes that in order to prove his thesis, he must make the case for all five texts.<sup>8</sup> On the academic market, so to speak, their stock always seems to rise and fall together.

<sup>6</sup> B.E. Perry, *The ancient romances: a literary-historical account of their origins*, Sather Classical Lectures 37, University of California Press, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1967.

<sup>7</sup> D. Durham, *Parody in Achilles Tatius*, “Classical Philology” 33, 1938, p. 1-19. Durham thought that Achilles Tatius was parodying Heliodorus, but since 1938 the ancient novels have been re-dated. Thus on the face of it Durham was simply wrong, but many of the arguments for parody remain sound, even if Heliodorus cannot have been the object of the humor.

<sup>8</sup> G. Anderson, *Eros Sophistes: ancient novelists at play*, “American Classical Studies” 9 (Chico, California: Scholar’s Press) 1982.

Another assumption that has tended to undermine serious literary study of the ancient Greek novel is, again, the one-dimensional approach to *docere et delectare*. To the extent that the ancient novels deal with the trials and tribulations of young lovers, we are inclined to treat them as very strong in *delectare* and rather weak in *docere*, the more so as neither the plots nor the characters presented by at least the first two authors of the canon, Chariton and pseudo-Xenophon, go much if at all beyond the New Comedy material. It is hard to imagine giving either of these books to young readers, admonishing them to read them and learn from them what love and marriage are all about; easier to imagine them being read in secret by naïve readers who would like to believe that this is what love is really like, even if real life (and real love) is ever so much messier. Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Tale*, however, at the other end, chronologically, of this series, unfolds in a very complex and surprisingly sophisticated manner, even though the material seems drawn from the same well as the sentimental romances of two centuries (or more) earlier. *Daphnis and Chloe* so delighted Goethe when he read Courier's French translation<sup>9</sup> that he conversed with Eckermann on the topic several times,<sup>10</sup> to the bafflement of some modern scholars, who cannot quite grasp what there might be in this silly, naughty tale that so enchanted the author of *The Sorrows of Werther* and *Faust*.<sup>11</sup>

One of the purposes of the present study, then, is to nibble away at the "handbook" consensus regarding the ancient Greek novels, that they all belong to a single, marginal, subliterate genre consisting of sentimental romances written for naïve readers who may have been literate but were certainly not very well educated.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the weakest point in the chain of arguments for such a view is *Daphnis and Chloe*, if only because the label "naïve reader who may have been literate but was certainly not very well educated" does not seem to fit Goethe very well. The task of overturning this consensus, as here stated, is of course far too ambitious for a single chapter in this collection of essays, so the discussion will focus upon the defense of a more limited thesis: I shall attempt to argue that *Daphnis and Chloe* lends itself very well to a "two-dimensional" understanding of *docere et delectare*, that the silly, delightful naughtiness of Longus's writing style

<sup>9</sup> P.-L. Courier, *Longus' "Daphnis et Chloé"*. Traduction d' Amyot, revue et complété par P.-L. Courier, Paris 1809.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. J.P. Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 20 March 1831, 21 March 1831.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, R.L. Hunter, *A Study of Daphnis and Chloe*, Cambridge Classical Studies Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1983, p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> See R. Thomas, *Literacy and orality in ancient Greece*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1992; S.A. Stephens, *Who read ancient novels?*, [in:] J. Tatum (ed.), *The search for the ancient novel*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore - London 1994, p. 405-418; E. Bowie, *The readership of Greek novels in the ancient world*, [in:] J. Tatum (ed.), op. cit., p. 435-459.

disguises a high level of learning and a degree of psychological insight surprising not only in an ancient Greek novel, but in any literary text. This general observation (which the present author has advanced in several previous studies<sup>13</sup>) will be supported here by a close reading of the Prologue, which consists of two paragraphs of medium length, explaining in a quasi-autobiographical manner how the book came to be written and where the story came from. The Prologue is not only a foretaste of the author's style, not only an incitement to keep reading (like the "cover blurb" on a modern book), but also a key to the central issues the book will raise. This becomes apparent when we examine it carefully, line by line, the kind of detailed analysis to which the texts of the ancient Greek novels are very seldom subjected. *Lector, intende: laetaberis*.<sup>14</sup>

## PROLOGUES

Almost every literary text has some sort of exordium,<sup>15</sup> broadly understood for the present purposes as the verbal equivalent of an "opening gambit" in a game of chess. It is possible to begin a story with a bit of action that bears directly on the plot, but this is a risky move and surprisingly seldom used, even in detective novels. Horace's injunction (based on Homer) that one ought to begin telling one's story *in medias res* is poorly understood if we apply it by jumping immediately into the very heart of things. Modern readers, perhaps, or at least the more sophisticated ones, will tolerate some uncertainty at the beginning of a novel (or film), a feeling of disorientation, of not knowing what is happening, or who the people are whose doings are being described, but ancient readers did not. A shorter lyric poem can do without an exordium, perhaps, but any longer narrative must begin by announcing its subject and orienting the reader in the situation. Accidentally overheard conversations among strangers in public places are seldom comprehensible precisely because we do not know who or what they are talking about, so that the implicit assumptions, presumed foreknowledge, and uncompleted sentences characteristic of almost all discourse turn ordinary speech into an impenetrable mystery. We have learned to read certain kinds

---

<sup>13</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Myth, Rhetoric, and Fiction: A Reading of Longus's "Daphnis and Chloe"* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln - London 1990); idem, *Przekraczanie granic światów a problematyka wolności w sielance Longosa*, "Civitas Mentis" 2, 2007, p. 31-40; idem, *Erotic paideia in Longus' "Daphnis and Chloe"*, "Classica Catoviciensia", 2007, p. 15-43.

<sup>14</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.1

<sup>15</sup> The term *exordium* is borrowed here from the Latin rhetoricians, including Cicero, who used this term to denote the opening of a speech, the part preceding the *narratio*.

of texts (murder mysteries, for example) that unfold very gradually, beginning with bits of action that when first presented are confusing, unrelated, because we are confident that if we read on, all will be revealed. Indeed, that is often the whole pleasure of reading a mystery novel: when the first pages or even chapters do not seem at first to make sense, we wonder how the author will get out of this mess, and take pleasure in watching the skillful maneuvers that finally wind all these threads into a sensible and pleasing texture. This is not, however, a universal taste, nor is it, so to speak, a "natural" skill: as readers we must learn the conventions of the mystery novel, just as writers do. If the pleasure proves to be worth the effort, then we give ourselves the trouble to learn; if not, there are better ways to spend one's time and energy.

Beginnings (whether in the form of formal prologues or exordia, proems, or just opening sentences) are of particular importance in ancient literature, beginning with Homer and continuing through to Byzantine and medieval literature. A whole taxonomy could be drawn up of these openings, and in the case of rhetoric and some poetry (especially tragedy and comedy) this has been done, to good effect. In the case of the ancient historians, on the other hand, the problem of how the work begins may not at first seem to be of much importance, though there is at least one interesting exception. The first great Roman historian, Sallust, begins each of his two monographs with four chapters of highly moralizing reflections that seem to have little or no connection to Catiline's conspiracy or the war against Jugurtha, respectively; there has been a marked tendency among scholars to subject prologues and narratives to separate treatment, focusing on one and ignoring the other, as though they were fully detachable.<sup>16</sup> Cicero is known to have written a collection of prologues, from which he chose one to preface each new philosophical treatise, and it has been suggested more than once that Sallust did the same.<sup>17</sup> It is possible to argue, however, that in doing so we have missed the main point: without the moral philosophy of the first four chapters, we may miss the real significance of what Sallust is trying to tell us, while the prologues without the story are rather literally lifeless.

Another useful example is provided by the Platonic dialogues. Here we very seldom speak of "prologues," there being no formal division whatsoever. Nevertheless, it is almost invariably the case that a dialogue begins

<sup>16</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Servilia officia: Sallust on hunting and farming*, [in:] R. Turasiewicz (ed.), *Prace Komisji Filologii Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności*, 25, PAU, Kraków 1997, p. 141-157.

<sup>17</sup> Quintilian (III.8.9) remarked of Sallust that "nihil ad historiam pertinentibus principiis orsus est." For commentary, see B.D. MacQueen, *Plato's "Republic" in the monographs of Sallust*, Bochazy-Carducci, Chicago 1982, chapter 1.

with a *mise-en-scène*, perhaps some desultory conversation, perhaps a request for one speaker to explain something to the other. The biographical tradition that Plato continued to revise the opening sentence of the *Republic* long after the dialogue had presumably been published<sup>18</sup> is simply baffling to those readers (almost certainly the vast majority) who see the mere fact that Socrates visited the Piraeus with Glaucon one day to see the Bendideia as inconsequential scene-setting. Progress is possible only when we take seriously the possibility that the first sentence, the first paragraph, the first several pages, and the first book of the dialogue are indeed essential parts of a whole, which without these “firsts” cannot be properly understood.<sup>19</sup> The dialogue begins with *katabasis*, places itself in the house of a rich and aging *metoikos*, and initially gives every sign of being a dialogue about old age, until the discussion almost accidentally veers off into the problem of character (does it change in the course of life, or is it given from birth?), and from there into the problem of whether or not there is any advantage to being fair and honest. If we skim over all this and plunge immediately into the building of the ideal city in Book II, as has largely been done for millennia, we are likely to mistake this dialogue (arguably the first major work in the history of psychology) for a treatise on good government.

In the case of the ancient Greek novels, much of interest can be learned by comparing the opening sentences or paragraphs, to see how the various authors solve the problem of orientation (broadly understood). Before we turn to the Prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe*, then, it may be well to briefly survey how the other four novelists begin their stories; the forms may differ, but the essential purpose of orienting the reader (perhaps especially crucial in a work of fiction, where there is no reality outside the text to which the author or reader can appeal) remains the same.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE EXORDIA OF THE OTHER ANCIENT GREEK NOVELS

Here are the first two sentences of the oldest extant ancient Greek novel, Chariton's *Chaireas and Callirhoe*.

<sup>18</sup> Diogenes Laertius III.25.

<sup>19</sup> See E. Brann, *The music of the “Republic”: essays on Socrates' conversations and Plato's writings*, Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia 2004.

<sup>20</sup> I have deliberately skipped over the formal question of defining “prologue” and establishing some sort of taxonomy in order to save space. For the present purposes, I am using the word broadly to mean little more than “introduction,” the first part of the text in which the author orients the reader in the situation.

Χαρίτων Ἀφροδισιεύς, Ἀθηναγόρου τοῦ ῥήτορος ὑπογραφεύς, πάθος ἐρωτικὸν ἐν Συρακούσαις γενόμενον διηγῆσομαι. Ἑρμοκράτης ὁ Συρακοσίων στρατηγός, οὗτος ὁ νικήσας Ἀθηναίους, εἶχε θυγατέρα Καλλιρόην τοῦνομα, θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου καὶ ἄγαλμα τῆς ὅλης Σικελίας.<sup>21</sup>

Chariton begins his story in the manner of a "serious" historian: he identifies himself by name and provenance, exactly as both Herodotus and Thucydides began their histories, and states the subject matter, properly placing the verb διηγῆσομαι at the end of the sentence. The object of the verb, however, is not a war, but an "erotic adventure" (πάθος ἐρωτικὸν) that happened in Syracuse. In the second sentence the reference to Syracuse is repeated, along with the mention of Hermocrates, the Syracusan general known from Thucydides. Again, however, the serious tone is adopted only to be immediately discarded: it is not the great Hermocrates who will be the object of attention here, but his extraordinarily beautiful daughter, Callirhoe.

The author of what is usually called in English the *Ephesian Tale*, Xenophon of Ephesus (perhaps a pseudonym), also begins his story in way that evokes the work of other historians, though not with the formula of introduction used by Chariton on the model of Herodotus and Thucydides.

Ἦν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἀνὴρ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα ἐκεῖ δυναμένων Λυκομήδης ὄνομα. τούτῳ Λυκομήδει ἐκ γυναικὸς ἐπιχωρίας Θεμιστοδὸς γίνεται παῖς Ἀβροκόμης μέγα δὴ τι χρῆμα [ῶραιότητι σώματος ὑπερβαλλούση] κάλλους οὔτε ἐν Ἰωνίᾳ οὔτε ἐν ἄλλῃ γῆ πρότερον γενομένου.<sup>22</sup>

At first glance, indeed, this seems to be much more a fairy-tale beginning, rather in the style, "Once upon a time, long, long, ago, in a land far away, there was a king...". The resemblance is specious, however, since the fairy-tale formula we know so well serves to set the story being told not only in a distant time (far too remote for memory or documents), but also a distant place (not a place any of us have ever actually seen). Xenophon of Ephesus, however, begins by setting the story in a well-known place, without specifying any timeframe at all (a vagueness characteristic of all the ancient Greek novels after Chariton). This is rather the mode of the included "novela" of Hellenistic historiography, in which geographical interests played at least as important a role as wars, battles, treaties, and the like. There is an attempt at respectability here, even though, as in Chariton's case, the almost immediate introduction of a young and "divinely" beautiful protagonist seemingly undermines the pretensions of the text to aca-

<sup>21</sup> B.P. Reardon (ed.), *De Callirhoe Narrationes Amatoriae Chariton Aphrodisiensis*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, K.G. Saur, Munich 2004. The text is also available online at <http://mercure.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Hodoi/concordances/intro.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> J.N. O'Sullivan (ed.), *Xenophon Ephesius, De Anthia et Habrocome Ephesiacorum libri V*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, K.G. Saur, Munich 2005.

demic seriousness (a few sentences later we are told that some townspeople were so struck by Habrocomes' beauty that they took him for a god and prayed to him).

From a review of the literature on Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* it quickly becomes apparent that no one quite knows what to make of this remarkable novel.<sup>23</sup> If it is meant to be taken seriously, it is egregiously bad writing, but if, as some have maintained, it is all meant to be a parody, then it may be a very clever one. The interpretive difficulties begin with the Prologue, which if quoted in full would run for several pages. Here is an extract:

Σιδῶν ἐπὶ θαλάσῃ πόλις. Ἀσσυρίων ἡ θάλασσα, μήτηρ Φοινίκων ἡ πόλις, Θηβαίων ὁ δῆμος πατήρ. δίδυμος λιμὴν ἐν κόλπῳ πλατύς, ἡρέμα κλείων τὸ πέλαγος, ἢ γὰρ ὁ κόλπος κατὰ πλευρὰν ἐπὶ δεξιὰ κοιλαίνεται, στόμα δεύτερον ὀρώρκεται, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ αὐθις εἰσρεῖ, καὶ γίνεται τοῦ λιμένος ἄλλος λιμὴν, ὡς χεῖμάζειν μὲν ταύτη τὰς ὀλκάδας ἐν γαλιήνῃ, θερίζειν δὲ τοῦ λιμένος εἰς τὸ προκόλπιον. Ἐνταῦθα ἦκων ἐκ πολλοῦ χειμῶνος, σῶστρα ἔθουον ἔμαυτοῦ τῆ τῶν Φοινίκων θεᾶ Ἀστάρτην αὐτὴν οἱ Σιδῶνιοι καλοῦσιν, περιῶν οὖν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν καὶ περισκοπῶν τὰ ἀναθήματα, ὀρῶ γραφὴν ἀνακειμένην γῆς ἅμα καὶ θαλάσσης. ...

[Here a very detailed and quite lengthy ecphrasis of the painting, which depicts the rape of Europa. As described by Xenophon it seems to have been a very busy work,<sup>24</sup> perhaps comparable to the style of Bruegel but exaggerated well beyond anything the latter would have dared to put on one canvas.]

Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τὰλλα μὲν ἐπήνουν τῆς γραφῆς, ἄτε δὲ ὦν ἐρωτικός περιεργότερον ἔβλεπον τὸν ἄγοντα τὸν βούν Ἐρωτα, καὶ „Οἶον”, εἶπον, „ἄρχει βρέφος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης.” ταῦτά μου λέγοντος, νεανίσκος καὶ αὐτὸς παρεστώς, „Ἐγὼ ταῦτ' ἂν ἐδείκνυν,” ἔφη, „τοσαύτας ὕβρεις ἐξ ἔρωτος παθῶν.” „Καὶ τί πέπονθας,” εἶπον, „ὦγαθέ; καὶ γὰρ ὀρῶ σου τὴν ὄψιν οὐ μακρὰν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ τελετῆς.” „Σμήνος ανεγείρεις,” εἶπε „λόγων” τὰ γὰρ ἐμὰ μύθοις ἔοικε.” „Μὴ κατοκνήσης, ὦ βέλτιστε,” ἔφη, „πρὸς τοῦ Διὸς καὶ τοῦ Ἐρωτος αὐτοῦ ταύτη μᾶλλον ἦσιν, εἰ καὶ μυθοῖς ἔοικε.” καὶ ταῦτα δὴ λέγων, δεξιοῦμαί τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπί τινος ἄλλου ἀγῶ γείτονος, ἔνθα πλάτανοι μὲν ἐπεφύκεσαν πολλαὶ καὶ πυκναί, παρέρρει δὲ ὕδωρ ψυχρὸν τε καὶ διαυγές, οἶον ἀπὸ χιόνος ἄρτι λυθείσης ἔρχεται. καθίσας οὖν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τινος θώκου χαμαιζήλου καὶ αὐτὸς παρακαθισάμενος, „Ὡρα σοι,” ἔφη, „τῆς τῶν λόγων ἀκροάσεως” πάντως δὲ ὁ τόπος ἡδύς καὶ μύθων ἄξιος ἐρωτικῶν.”  
Ὁ δὲ ἄρχεται τοῦ λέγειν ὧδε...<sup>25</sup>

At this point the narrative shifts to first-person, and indeed there is no return at the end of the novel to the narrative frame, the *mise-en-scène*. We never learn how Clitophon came to be in Sidon to meet the first-person nar-

<sup>23</sup> K. Chew, *Achilles Tatius and parody*, "Classical Journal" 96, 2000, p. 57-70; cf. D. Durham, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> B. Reeves, *The role of the ekphrasis in plot development: the painting of Europa and the bull in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*, "Mnemosyne" 60.1, 2007, p. 87-101.

<sup>25</sup> S. Gaselee (ed.), *Achilles Tatius. The adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, London 1947. The Greek text is also available online at <http://mercure.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Hodoi/concordances/intro.htm>.

rator at the very beginning of the novel. As Clitophon relates it, the story is full of perils and hardships, to be sure, but it has the traditional happy ending, so we do not quite know why Clitophon is sighing and complaining when we meet him in Sidon at the beginning. At the same time, the sly way in which the author presents his chance encounter with the young man, leading to the telling of his story, rather obviously looks like a seduction: the author first reveals that he himself is ἐρωτικός; then he is struck by the nearly divine beauty of this new acquaintance, flatters him shamelessly, and leads him off to a shady place to rest and talk. Are we to laugh at the fact that the narrator's perhaps not overt but really rather clear intentions towards Clitophon are thwarted by the latter's garrulousness, as he goes on to fill 8 books with his story? Is this also an ironic suggestion that the author is "seducing" his readers?

Following up these suggestions would be interesting, perhaps, but certainly digressive. For the present purposes, suffice it to note that Achilles Tatius begins with geography (like Xenophon of Ephesus, except that Sidon turns out to play no role whatsoever in the story itself), followed by ethnography, and then moves to an ecphrasis (the progression here is interesting). Moreover, he uses a very broad Asianic style, as the almost sing-song rhythms and rhymes of the opening sentence make very clear. Could this be parody? Would it have struck its readers as funny? These are hard questions to answer, but again, as in the case of Chariton, the author at least seems to have mixed the serious with the silly.

The opening sentence of Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Tale* (written at least a century after *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and possibly two centuries), has a remarkable history of its own.

Ἡμέρας ἄρτι διαγελώσης καὶ ἡλίου τὰς ἀκρωρείας καταυγάζοντος, ἄνδρες ἐν ὅποις ληστρικοῖς ὄρους ὑπερκύψαντες, ὃ δὴ κατ' ἐκβολὰς τοῦ Νείλου καὶ στόμα τὸ καλούμενον Ἡρακλεωτικὸν ὑπερτείνει, μικρὸν ἐπιστάντες τὴν ὑποκειμένην θάλατταν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐπήρχοντο καὶ τῷ πελάγει τὸ πρῶτον τὰς ὄψεις ἐπαφέντες, ὡς οὐδὲν ἄγρας ληστρικῆς ἐπηγγέλλετο μὴ πλεόμενον, ἐπὶ τὸν πλησίον αἰγιαλὸν τῆ θείᾳ κατήγοντο.<sup>26</sup>

At first, this seems to be a Homeric beginning, *in medias res*. Yet it is not really at all the same thing; after all, Homer does give a brief prologue before he commences telling the story, which he presumes his audience already knows, at least in outline. What Heliodorus has done is to begin his novel enigmatically and obliquely, introducing at the very beginning char-

<sup>26</sup> I. Bekker (ed.), *Heliodori Aethiopicorum libri decem*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Teubner, Leipzig 1855. A somewhat more recent Greek text can be found in the Budé edition: R.M. Rattenbury and T.W. Lumb (eds.), J. Maillon (tr.), *Heliodore: Les éthiopiennes*, Budé, Paris 1960. The text is also available online at <http://mercure.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Hodoi/concordances/intro.htm>.

acters through whose eyes we see the first action, but who disappear from the story after the first book. Through the influence of the Baroque romance, opening sentences in the style, "It was dawn, and..." became almost stereotypical in the modern novel.<sup>27</sup> Heliodorus continues, then, in the same vein. He does not begin with an exposition of the topic, an explanation of who is who and what is going on, nor does he shift to a first-person narrator (on the model of Achilles Tatius), who will begin the story at the beginning. Rather, he releases the essential information in bits and pieces, rather in the style of a mystery novel. We do not learn how Theagenes and Chariclea came to be upon that beach until much later, and we do not find out who they really are until near the end. Moreover, much of this piecemeal and non-chronological exposition comes from included narratives, told by persons who may not be telling us the truth (again, Homer with a twist).

Having stressed the significant differences in how Heliodorus opens his novel, we should not pass over some of the interesting similarities to his predecessors. Geography is introduced early, as we are made acquainted with the topography of the mouth of the Nile – though the natural expectation that the action is to played out in Egypt will be disappointed. At the same time, the introduction of pirates in the first sentences places the work generically: as readers of Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, or Achilles Tatius, we should know what to make of this. Here there is no overt reference to Eros, to be sure, but the theme of piracy, in antiquity as in modern fiction (and film) is always touched with eroticism, even though real-life pirates were and are anything but romantic figures when viewed from close up. As soon as we meet pirates in the *Ethiopian Tale*, we know already that there will be a beautiful young woman who will fall into their clutches, and so it goes.

By this point some generalities can be made, particularly in respect to the leading theme of the present study and the present volume: *docere et delectare*. In one way or another, each of these authors in the opening sentence or paragraph implicitly or explicitly promises to do just that: to educate the reader (history, geography, ethnography, "art history"), and at the same time to please her (love, romance, sex, adventure<sup>28</sup>). The peculiar opening of *Leucippe and Clitophon* may indeed reveal the essential strategy used by all the novelists, who rather literally seduce the reader, offering a

---

<sup>27</sup> G.N. Sandy, *Heliodorus*, Twayne World Authors Series, Twayne Publishers, New York 1982; there is also a useful introduction (in Polish) to the *Nachleben* of Heliodorus in *Opowieść etiopska o Theagenesie i Charikleie*, translated into Polish with notes and introduction by S. Dworacki, Adam Mickiewicz University Press, Poznań 2000.

<sup>28</sup> J. Winkler, *The Invention of Romance*, [in:] J. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore – London 1994, p. 23-38.

respectable goal (knowledge) while the real intention is mostly hidden but coyly revealed, rather in the classic manner of seduction: "Would you like to see my stamp collection?" The exordia are not used for exposition, on the other hand, as in classical rhetoric generally, precisely because the task of telling the story is a separate matter, which will be wasted effort if the reader has not been motivated to read on. In the novel, this is all the more true as the story about to be told is fictional: it is being created by the text itself, the author being the demiurge of the fictional world, and not a reporter of facts either witnessed or documented (even when he pretends to be doing just that).

It will also prove of some importance in what follows to note how the themes of beauty (κάλλος), "visions" (θέαμα), and the divine are introduced and associated with each other by each of the four novelists thus far discussed. Callirhoe is a young woman of "unearthly" beauty; Habrocomes is so handsome that people pray to him in the street; the painting described at the opening of *Leucippe and Clitophon* is astoundingly beautiful, and then there appears the "divinely" beautiful Clitophon, who quickly distracts the viewer from the painting. Heliodorus is somewhat subtler, treating us first to a magnificent scene that is presented to our imagination (the "mind's eye") rather than explicitly evaluated, but when the pirates later catch sight of Charicleia (1.2), they are at first convinced that they have seen a goddess. This association of beauty and the divine, so characteristic of Greek παιδεία,<sup>29</sup> is the single most salient common feature of all the exordia presented so far.

#### THE PROLOGUE OF DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

Chronologically speaking, Longus probably falls somewhere between Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, almost certainly nearer the former than the latter, though nothing is known for certain in respect to either author or date.<sup>30</sup> In the Renaissance the epithet "Sophist" came to be attached to his name, either in recognition of his rhetorical skill, or to associate him with the Second Sophistic, but there is no ancient testimony for this.

The Prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe* can be clearly distinguished from the four books of the narrative proper, though in the manuscripts it constitutes simply the first sentences (two paragraphs, as usually punctuated) of the first book. As in the case of Chariton and Achilles Tatius, Longus begins by speaking in the first person (though he does not give his name) to explain

<sup>29</sup> W.W. Jaeger, *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1934.

<sup>30</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Myth ...*

how he came to write this book. Unlike Chariton, however, he does not assume the persona of historiographer, and unlike Achilles Tatius, he does not shift to a first-person narrator. He gives no clue as to his fictive or historical identity.

Here, then, is the full text of Prologue (and the very beginning of the narrative) of *Daphnis and Chloe*:

Ἐν Λέσβῳ θηρῶν ἐν ἄλσει Νυμφῶν θέαμα εἶδον κάλλιστον ὧν εἶδον· εἰκόνα γραπτὴν, ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος. Καλὸν μὲν καὶ τὸ ἄλσος, πολὺδενδρον, ἀνθηρόν, κατάρρυτον· μία πηγὴ πάντα ἔτρεφε, καὶ τὰ ἄνθη καὶ τὰ δένδρα· ἀλλ' ἡ γραφὴ τερπνοτέρα καὶ τέχνην ἔχουσα περιττὴν καὶ τύχην ἐρωτικὴν· ὥστε πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν ξένων κατὰ φήμην ἦσαν, τῶν μὲν Νυμφῶν ἰκέται, τῆς δὲ εἰκόνας θεαταί. Γυναῖκες ἐπ' αὐτῆς τίκτουσαι καὶ ἄλλαι σπαργάνοις κοσμοῦσαι, παιδία ἐκκείμενα, ποιμνία τρέφοντα, ποιμένες ἀναιρούμενοι, νέοι συντιθέμενοι, ληστῶν καταδρομή, πολεμίων ἐμβολή. Πολλὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάντα ἐρωτικά ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα πόθος ἔσχεν ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ· καὶ ἀναζητησάμενος ἐξηγητὴν τῆς εἰκόνας τέτταρας βίβλους ἐξεπονησάμην, ἀνάθημα μὲν Ἔρωτι καὶ Νύμφαις καὶ Πανί, κτῆμα δὲ τερπνὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὃ καὶ νοσοῦντα ἰάσεται, καὶ λυπούμενον παραμυθήσεται, τὸν ἐρασθέντα ἀναμνήσει, τὸν οὐκ ἐρασθέντα προπαιδεύσει. Πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται, μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν. Ἡμῖν δ' ὁ θεὸς παράσχοι σωφρονοῦσι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν.  
Πόλις ἐστὶ τῆς Λέσβου Μιτυλήνη...<sup>31</sup>

The Prologue is clearly divided from the body of the text by the prayer-like (and highly enigmatic) sentence, “Ἡμῖν δ' ὁ θεὸς παράσχοι σωφρονοῦσι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν,” so that what follows is clearly *initium narrandi*. As we might well have expected, there is a geography lesson to start with, but the irony here is that there will be no travel in this novel at all: despite several moments when Longus seems to play with the reader's expectations, the entire action (apart from a few paragraphs at the very end) is played out in the same place, with a unity of place that is surprising in a novel.

I have elsewhere analyzed the structure of the Prologue, which in my view is a model of the structure of each of the four books that follow.<sup>32</sup> For the present purposes, however, I propose to “walk through” the Prologue fragment by fragment, with a particular view to the way themes related to instruction and pleasure are presented there, prefiguring much of what will follow in the text.

Ἐν Λέσβῳ θηρῶν ἐν ἄλσει Νυμφῶν

One of the paradoxes of *Daphnis and Chloe* is precisely that it is a pastoral set on Lesbos. A pastoral tale should be set in Arcadia (concretely or symbolically), or in Sicily, but Lesbos is famous for its beautiful cities and

<sup>31</sup> M.C. Reeve (ed.), *Daphnis et Chloe*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Teubner, Leipzig 1982. The text is also available online at <http://mercurio.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Hodoi/concordances/intro.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Myth...*

for a certain distinctive eroticism (it was, after all, the home of Sappho). Regardless of the actual charms of its landscapes, however, Lesbos as a *locus* in Greek literature was not a place to go hunting, not a place to find a charming grove of the Nymphs, not a place to find shepherds and shepherdesses cavorting with one another. Thus in the first three words of the novel there is an odd paradox.

Hunting (in ancient literature always a sport, not a way of gathering food) will prove to be a major theme of the novel, especially in book I, where we meet a predatory she-wolf and hunters trying to catch her, and in book II, where the idyllic existence of the protagonists is disrupted by the sudden appearance of a group of hunters from Methymna (the "other" city on Lesbos). All of this in turn prepares us for the (re-)appearance of a "she-wolf" in Book III: Lycaenium, the bored wife of a local landholder, who seduces Daphnis and teaches him what we now euphemistically call "the facts of life." In this character, then, the threads of hunting (introduced in the first sentence of the Prologue) and teaching (to be introduced a few lines below) are plaited together in a very intriguing way.

θέαμα εἶδον κάλλιστον ὧν εἶδον· εἰκόνα γραπτὴν, ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος.

The elements of spectacle and beauty are of course elements common to the *exordia* already discussed. The association of beauty with the erotic seems obvious enough, perhaps even biologically conditioned, though this is at best arguable. For the present purposes, however, what is most important is the implicit contrast between the painted image (εἰκόνα γραπτὴν) and the story it apparently tells (ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος). A painting is a two-dimensional object that represents a three-dimensional visual image, where the third dimension is supplied by some aspect of the painter's craft or skill that excites the imagination.<sup>33</sup> The fourth dimension, which would be necessary in order to speak of a "history," is even more problematic in a painting, where action is frozen at a single moment, and the viewer must imagine what came before and after. As Mittelstadt and others have pointed out,<sup>34</sup> in ancient art the temporal, sequential, diachronic movement of a painting (or sculpted relief) in antiquity is supplied by two techniques:

– a visual organization that leads the eye to move in a particular direction, bottom to top, left to right, etc.;

<sup>33</sup> Before the invention of perspective in the Renaissance, there were painterly conventions used to represent depth, which the viewer must learn to "read."

<sup>34</sup> M.C. Mittelstadt, *Longus' "Daphnis and Chloe", and Roman narrative painting*, "Latomus" 26, 1967, p. 752-761; J.W. Kestner, *Ekphrasis as frame in Longus' "Daphnis and Chloe"*, "Classical World" 67, 1974, p. 166-171; S. Deligiorgis, *Longus's Art in "Brief Lives"*, *Philological Quarterly* 53, 1974, p. 1-9; cf. B.D. MacQueen, *Myth...*, p. 19-23.

– the repetition of background motifs to make a constant background against which successive events are portrayed; i.e. when we scan a series of images in a particular direction, the repetition of trees or buildings from one “frame” to the next indicates that change has taken place in the fourth dimension, i.e. time.

A text, however, is diachronic by nature, and faces the opposite problem: how to create complex synchronic images rather than merely sequences or strings of “atomic” events. What Longus will do in *Daphnis and Chloe* is to build a narrative out of “scenic” episodes, each of which is a complete miniature, while it is the constant setting that anchors the narrative in its temporal dimension. There is something here of theatre (cf. θέαμα), something of painting (εἰκόνα γραπτὴν), but all this happens in a narrative (ιστορίαν). What holds it all together, so to speak, is Eros.

Καλὸν μὲν καὶ τὸ ἄλσος, πολὺδενδρον, ἀνθηρόν, κατάρρυτον· μία πηγὴ πάντα ἔτρεφε, καὶ τὰ ἄνθη καὶ τὰ δένδρα· ἀλλ’ ἡ γραφὴ τερπνοτέρα καὶ τέχνην ἔχουσα περιττὴν καὶ τύχην ἐρωτικὴν·

It is important here how Longus stresses that nature is beautiful “also” (the καὶ before τὸ ἄλσος). Still, he insists, there is more pleasure to be derived from the painting, due both to its τέχνη and to its τύχη, which is ἐρωτική, than from the lovely grove itself. The sequence τέχνη – τύχη is not unimportant, though it is perhaps counterintuitive: the “erotic content” should be more “pleasurable” than the “exceeding” technical skill of the painter, at least in a naïve, common-sense sort of way. Τέχνη is a skill, a way of doing things, i.e. a thing learned, while τύχη is ordinarily “chance,” what happens, that over which mortal beings have no control, the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” which Hamlet wonders if he really must bear.<sup>35</sup> In the present context τύχη seems to mean the content of the painting, that which is depicted by the τέχνη of the painter. It will later appear (indeed, as I have elsewhere argued,<sup>36</sup> it may be one of the main points of the novel) that there is more τέχνη than τύχη in Eros, i.e. one must learn something in order to practice it properly, and it is emphatically not something that “just happens.” In the course of the story, Daphnis and Chloe have ample opportunities to let things happen, but nothing ever comes of it – not because they are foiled, interrupted, interfered with, but because they do not know how.

ὥστε πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν ξένων κατὰ φήμην ἴεσαν, τῶν μὲν Νυμφῶν ἰκέται, τῆς δὲ εἰκόνας θεαταί.

Although the authorial person has indicated that he went to Lesbos to hunt, not to see a famous painting, it becomes clear from this sentence that

<sup>35</sup> W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, scene 2.

<sup>36</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Erotic paideia...*

the painting he is about to describe is a tourist attraction of sorts. The conjunction of motives, religious and esthetic, is interesting; one is reminded of the historic churches of Europe, visited by pilgrims who come to pray in a holy place, sanctified by the presence of relics, and at the same time by tourists, who come to marvel at the art and architecture. It is, of course, possible to do both these things, but in practice it is usually quite easy to tell the difference, and provisions often have to be made to prevent the tourists from disturbing the worshippers. This is not, of course, merely a replication of the *docere et delectare* paradox, but if we take a suitably broad reading of what *docere* might mean, then associating *delectare* with εἰκόνας θεαταί seems almost too obvious. Esthetic delight can be (though it need not be) at conflict with both intellectual and spiritual pursuits, to mention only Socrates' objections to art in the *Republic* and the periodic eruptions of iconoclasm in Byzantium, in medieval Europe, and in the Protestant reformation. Longus will develop the problem through the whole novel.

At the same time, the words θέαμα and θεαταί introduce a *topos* well known from the other novelists: the rapt gaze of the lover, the "divine" beauty of both protagonists. For that matter, the worship of the Nymphs has a distinctly erotic undertone, not only because Nymphs are inherently erotic figures in Greek literature and art, but also because the "divine" beauty of the young lovers in the other novels almost always inspires acts of worship, virtual or literal. After all, when we say in French to the object of our affections, "*Je t'adore*," we are saying literally, or at least etymologically, "I pray to you," as in Latin: *Te adoro*. Erotic delight, like esthetic, can be contrary to spiritual and intellectual pursuits, but it need not be, as reader's of Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* (not to mention the Song of Songs from the Old Testament) should know well.

Γυναῖκες ἐπ' αὐτῆς τίκτουςαι καὶ ἄλλαι σπαργάνοις κοσμοῦσαι, παιδία ἐκκείμενα, ποίμνια τρέφοντα, ποιμένες ἀναιρούμενοι, νέοι συντιθέμενοι, ληστῶν καταδρομή, πολεμίων ἐμβολή.

Though much is often made of the ecphrastic nature of *Daphnis and Chloe*,<sup>37</sup> still, in a technical sense this one sentence is really all the ecphrasis that Longus gives us in the Prologue. This, compared to the very lengthy and detailed ecphrasis at the beginning of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, is emblematic of Longus' teasing approach to the reader's expectations. It would surely be going too far to state that Longus is referring here to Achilles Tatius in some sense, whether by imitation or parody, but the ecphrasis as a rhetorical exercise was in fashion. Moreover, as I have elsewhere argued,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> S. Deligiorgis, *op. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Myth...*

the scenes mentioned by Longus here are not an adequate representation of what actually happens in *Daphnis and Chloe*, but seem to anticipate a much more typical ancient Greek novel, especially the last three items. The story will unfold rather differently than this list of *topoi* would seem to suggest.

Πολλὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάντα ἐρωτικά ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα πόθος ἔσχεν ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ·

Some editors punctuate the text differently, making the phrase *πολλὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάντα ἐρωτικά* the ending of the previous sentence (i.e. the conclusion of the ecphrasis), so that the next sentence (perhaps the next paragraph) begins with the participial phrase *ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα*. As is often the case in such constructions, there is no essential difference in meaning.

What we learn from this fragment is that everything (here, at least) is erotic, which is perhaps hardly surprising in context. This is immediately followed in close order by seeing, amazement, and longing, where amazement (or “wonder”) is bracketed between cognition (“seeing,” which in Greek and many other languages, including Polish, is always bound up with knowing) and affect (“longing,” a stronger and more physical verb than merely “wanting”). Then, finally, there is a repetition of the play in the first sentence on the two meanings of the verb *γράφω*: “to draw” and “to write.” This problem is perhaps more acute for us than it was for the Greeks, given that writing after two millennia has a different nature and a different role now than it had then. In antiquity the written word was still understood primarily as a spoken word graphically encoded for purposes of later reproduction, as witness the fact that the ancients did not read silently. Though this is thematically important for Longus (as I have elsewhere argued<sup>39</sup>), it is only indirectly if at all related to the issue of *docere et delectare*.

καὶ ἀναζητησάμενος ἐξηγητὴν τῆς εἰκόνοσ τέτταρας βίβλους ἐξεπονησάμην,

What the text does not say here is at least as important as what it does say. The story that lies behind the marvelous painting is not clear from the painting itself, so Longus must search for an interpreter. He does not say who this interpreter is or elaborate on what he or she may have told him, when or how. The very phrase *ἐξηγητῆς τῆς εἰκόνοσ* would seem to be a gloss on the role of the author of an ecphrasis, but the wording of the sentence divorces the role of explaining what the painting contained from the role of writing a book about it: exegete and author are not one and the same. We would have had no trouble accepting the situation if Longus had stated

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

or even implied that he had arrived at his own interpretation of the events depicted on the painting, or even that the painting had inspired him to imagine a history that would go with it, but the text does not allow either of these interpretations. He might also have followed the example of Achilles Tatius and let the exegete tell the rest of the story, thus shifting the responsibility for its truth. We are told merely that Longus searched out an exegete and then wrote (rather literally "labored over") four books, while the logical connection between the one event and the other is only implied.

ἀνάθημα μὲν Ἔρωτι καὶ Νύμφαις καὶ Πανί, κτῆμα δὲ τερπνὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις,

Without unduly belaboring the point we may notice that this μὲν...δὲ clause replicates rather neatly the one that preceded it, τῶν μὲν Νυμφῶν ἰκέται, τῆς δὲ εἰκόνοσ θεαταί. Once again there is a certain tension between esthetic and religious motives: the book we are reading is an offering to Eros, the Nymphs (which Nymphs? we can only guess at this point) and Pan, but it is also a source of pleasure and a literary monument. The enigmatic phrase κτῆμα τερπνόν is an egregious oxymoron that serves to remind us once again of the central problem: *docere et delectare*. Thucydides wrote a history that he claimed to be κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί, but he felt obliged to apologize that it may seem ἀτερπέστερον.<sup>40</sup> Though the allusion to Thucydides (the use of the word κτῆμα for a literary text can hardly fail to be such an allusion), Longus has made an extraordinary claim: that he has provided a work which is both "monumental" and "pleasurable." Perhaps what makes this possible is precisely the fact that it is an ἀνάθημα to Eros, but the point can hardly be forced.

ὃ καὶ νοσοῦντα ἰάσεται, καὶ λυπούμενον παραμυθήσεται,

This ἀνάθημα, which is likewise κτῆμα τερπνόν, heals disease and comforts the grieving, which is to say, that it relieves both the ills of the body and those of the soul. This is not an original claim for Longus to make, perhaps, but it is seldom made more concretely, even extravagantly, than here. Again, however, what is not said at this particular point may be just as important. There is nothing here that would connect this healing and consoling with any sort of Aristotelian catharsis. Longus does not claim that he will evoke negative emotions (pity and fear, for example) in order to purge the reader of them. It is not clear what the disease may be of which the "patient" is to be healed, just as the source of the grief is not explicitly named; from context we may assume that this is the physical and mental suffering of love, but that is only an inference. Later on, when first Chloe and then Daphnis "fall in love," they experience their newly awakened feelings as the

<sup>40</sup> Thucydides I.91.

symptoms of a disease. Indeed, “medical” metaphors recur throughout the story, especially when the hapless young lovers, in Book II, ask for and receive a “cure” (φάρμακον) for the “disease” to which they have both apparently succumbed. What Philetas “prescribes” is to kiss, embrace, and lie together naked, assuming, of course, that two young people in love who, after a bit of foreplay, find themselves reclined and undressed, will automatically know what to do next. Remarkably, however, this is not enough: Daphnis and Chloe try out the remedy and find it inadequate. Their “sex education” requires more than what Philetas has told them, and more than what Nature herself prompts lovers to do. This is rather literally incredible, but it is near the very heart of what Longus is trying to say.<sup>41</sup>

τὸν ἐρασθέντα ἀναμνήσει, τὸν οὐκ ἐρασθέντα προπαιδεύσει.

To this point, Greek words equivalent to *delectare* have occurred in abundance; now, we meet *docere* in the most literal way. The text not only cures physical and mental suffering, it also provides a cognitive basis for both memory and imagination. For those who have already loved, the text will remind them, lead to reflection; for those who have not, it will teach them what they will someday need to know. For some readers, then, reading *Daphnis and Chloe* will be a look backwards; for others, a look forward. This, again, is an extravagant claim, but it should be taken at face value. Longus claims that the reader will learn something from this novel, and that this knowledge will be useful, indeed necessary. It is not clear what, if anything, we are to learn from Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, or Achilles Tatius, but none of them implicitly or explicitly claims to have written a kind of “handbook” of Eros. Many readers may well reach the same conclusion regarding Longus: *Daphnis and Chloe* is a light-hearted, slightly naughty tale that can be read in a single sitting, two at the most, without seeming to engage anything deeper than an ironic smile at the amiable foolishness of young lovers and country folk. In my opinion, however, there is a great deal more substance to Longus’ claim than at first meets the eye. If Goethe could devote so much conversation with Eckermann to *Daphnis and Chloe*, then we may well begin to wonder what the greatest genius of German literature saw in this silly story.

Πάντως γὰρ οὐδείς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται, μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἢ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν.

This aphorism universalizes the previous sentence by explicitly denying the existence of a third group, i.e. those who have not loved and will never do so. At the same time, there is a point to the choice of the verb φεύγειν. After all, who would flee from something that gives only pleasure? Longus

<sup>41</sup> B.D. MacQueen, *Erotic paideia...*

will continue to stress the duality of Eros, which brings delight and suffering in equal measures at best. The crossing of the metaphors of hunting and loving is motivated by this central idea, that love brings pain and pleasure, that the beloved bleeds and cries out like a wounded animal, that the lover must seek out and attack his prey or nothing will happen.

The point is not difficult to grasp, perhaps, and has become something of a commonplace. In Agatha Christie's novel *Sad Cypress*,<sup>42</sup> there is a moment when the young heroine Elinor, who is about to be jilted by her fiancé, and then arrested for a murder she wanted to commit but did not, asks her dying aunt, "Do you think love is ever a happy thing?" And her aunt replies, "In the sense you mean, Elinor - no, probably not... to care passionately for another human creature brings always more sorrow than joy; but all the same, Elinor, one would not be without that experience. Anyone who has never really loved, has never really lived." This is not great literature, to be sure, but the issue is perennial, and no less difficult for being familiar. Purely happy love, a rose without thorns, is scarcely credible, and usually, frankly, rather boring; when all is going well we automatically begin to worry that something will come along to spoil it all, and this worrying is often precisely the "something" that replaces joy with pain, trust with jealousy, devotion with betrayal, and even, as Catullus so pointedly put it (*Carmen* 85), love with hate.

The ambivalence of Eros was of course not lost on Plato, where it is presented perhaps most explicitly in the *Phaedrus*. Here we meet not only the two steeds of the soul-chariot (the simile is fairly obvious), but also the two speeches of Socrates, the "erotic" second speech and the "anti-erotic" first speech, which is prefaced by the "anti-erotic" speech of Lysias, read to Socrates by Phaedrus from a scroll he is carrying with him. The point of the *Phaedrus* is not so much that the second speech "wins," giving the lie to the first, as that both speeches are equally convincing, and perhaps they are both true. Longus, in turn, enjoys setting up rather obvious contrasts between "good" and "bad" Eros, and then subverting or inverting them. In Book I, the brutish Dorcon, who means first to seduce Chloe, and finally to rape her, is thwarted and humiliated, to general satisfaction, but his sexual aggression is the catalyst that initiates the love of Daphnis and Chloe. In book IV, the pederast Gnathon makes an analogous assault on Daphnis, while somewhat later Lampis kidnaps Chloe with nefarious intentions; however, oddly enough, it is Gnathon who thwarts Lampis and restores Chloe to Daphnis. Lycaenium, the "she-wolf" who seduces Daphnis, is a female sexual predator whose pedagogical role is essential. All of these

---

<sup>42</sup> A. Christie, *Sad Cypress*, Collins, London 1940, reprinted 2001, p. 43.

“negative” figures play “positive” roles at the end, and all are present at the wedding of Daphnis and Chloe near the end of the novel (except for Dorcon, who has died a martyr’s death early in Book II, saving Daphnis).

The case may be made that this ambivalence, this play of light and dark, is precisely the lesson that Daphnis and Chloe must learn so that their love can finally be consummated (which occurs in the last sentence of the novel with the enigmatic remark that “everything which had happened in the woods had been only shepherds’ games”).

Ἡμῖν δ’ ὁ θεὸς παράσχοι σωφρονούσι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν.

This highly enigmatic sentence is difficult to translate faithfully. The substantive phrase τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν, lit. “writing [drawing?] the things of others” is the object of the transitive verb παράσχοι, whose subject is ὁ θεὸς and indirect object is ἡμῖν, modified by the unusual participle σωφρονούσι. Thus into the simple sentence “May God [which one?] grant us [something]” two other sentences have been embedded: the direct object [something] is replaced by the remarkably vague nominal phrase τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν, while the dative pronoun ἡμῖν is the subject of the predicate formed by σωφρονούσι. English syntax simply cannot reproduce all this embedding and gapping, especially when the Greek verb σωφρονέω has no easy equivalent in English, and must be rendered by the unduly periphrastic “to be in one’s right mind.” We are tempted to say something like this: “May God grant me to preserve my sanity as I write of the doings of others,” but this easy rendering distorts the relationship between the verb and its proper object.

What Longus means to do is write about τὰ τῶν ἄλλων, that is, not about his own experience, but about someone else’s. Keeping his wits about him is not what he asks God to grant him, but rather a condition that will be necessary in order to complete the task of writing *res alienae*. Longus must write about Eros with the detachment of a teacher. The good teacher draws upon her own experience to teach her students what they need to do, but must do so with the appropriate distance; otherwise, what the student learns is the pain and prejudice of the teacher. Longus needs to keep his wits about him, writing about young love, because he has something important to convey and cannot allow his emotions to cloud his vision or that of his readers, to whom the message is addressed.

None of this would make any sense at all if the sole and sufficient purpose of this text was to enable the reader to pass some pleasant moments immersed in the erotic adventures of a beautiful but entirely imaginary young couple. If that were the point, σωφροσύνη seems an odd thing to be praying for, almost as perverse as a crucifix hanging over the door of an

adult bookstore. Presuming, moreover, that οἱ ἄλλοι here refers to Daphnis and Chloe, there is a further objection. To what extent are they "other," when indeed they are the figment of Longus' own imagination? To speak of writing fiction as "writing the things of others" may be literally correct, but it is psychologically wrong. Daphnis and Chloe can be made to do and to experience exactly what the author wishes them to do and experience, and nothing else, because they are brought into existence by the text and do not exist outside of it. To be sure, Longus may be playing the game of treating his characters as though they were real persons, but that seems beside the point. What is more interesting is what Longus does *not* say here, which is that the *reader* needs to keep her wits about her as she reads "the doings of others."<sup>43</sup> The real point of this sentence, in my opinion, lies in this reversal of roles. The text will not accomplish its task if the reader is simply charmed by it, sees only the *delectare* and not the *docere*. This is what the reader must understand before Longus begins the tale proper: that all is not as it seems. By presenting the reader with a series of paradoxes, from the first sentence to the last, Longus prepares us for a text that will teach us more than any sex education class could ever hope to achieve. The delight causes us to open our eyes, but then, if we keep our wits about us, we will learn something.

#### CONCLUSIONS

"What's past is prologue," as Shakespeare put it in the *Tempest*.<sup>44</sup> Though prologues can be of many formal types and serve as only one of many different kinds of *exordium*, the heart of the matter is that they bring the reader into the process of reading in such a way as to condition the mind to hear what is about to be said. The attentive reader of *Daphnis and Chloe*, then, will be alert after reading the Prologue to the themes of hunting, nature, art, the pastoral landscape, beauty, the divine, love, writing, with all the intersecting paradoxes and dialectics which bind these apparently diverse themes together. A full explication of how this occurs as the story unfolds would expand the present paper beyond all reasonable bounds; for the present purposes, however, it will suffice to reflect briefly on how the theme of erotic *paideia*, prefigured by the verb προπαιδεύσει, is further developed in the text.

---

<sup>43</sup> Of course this may be implied by the use of the first person plural in this sentence, rather than the singular; the "editorial we" is more a Latin mannerism than a Greek, so the use of the first person plural pronoun is interesting.

<sup>44</sup> Act 2, scene 1, line 253.

One of the most remarkable features of *Daphnis and Chloe* is the incredible naïveté of the protagonists,<sup>45</sup> which prolongs the consummation of their love to the last sentence of the novel:

... καὶ τότε Χλόη πρῶτον ἔμαθεν, ὅτι τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς ὕλης γινόμενα ἦν ποιμένων παίγνια.

In both *Chaireas and Callirhoe* and the *Ephesian Tale*, the young lovers fall in love and are married at the very beginning, only to be separated later. Achilles Tatius puts Leucippe and Clitophon together in the latter's bedroom, where they are surprised by her mother at a most inopportune moment and flee, this being the first of their many adventures. Heliodorus gives us Theagenes and Charicleia "saving themselves for marriage," but it is the sense of shame and propriety, not ignorance, that keeps them from realizing their passion until the end of the novel.<sup>46</sup> Longus, however, makes his two young lovers so incredibly ignorant of the "facts of life" that the interventions of two teachers are required: Philetas, the old shepherd who in Book II informs Daphnis and Chloe who Eros is, and Lycaenium, the experienced (!) older woman who in Book III takes Daphnis off into the woods and teaches him what he needs to know. The point of all this is an explicit denial of what common sense and ordinary experience seem to suggest, that nature herself takes care of these things. Animals do not need sex education, they are born with the right set of instincts to do what is necessary when (and only when) it is necessary. For that matter, the rustics who live with and around Daphnis and Chloe also somehow know what they want and how to get it. It is only these two lovers who need the special protection of Eros, and must go through the whole process of learning to be lovers, so that they can transcend the ποιμένων παίγνια of mere coupling on the one hand, and childish exploration of each other's bodies on the other.

What the Prologue indicates, however, is that the erotic education provided by this text is actually for the benefit of the readers. The text promises to teach us something, as Philetas and Lycaenium teach Daphnis and Chloe, or, if we suppose we already know it, it will remind us of something we may have forgotten. This happens in a novel, which can be universal precisely because it is fictional, and which (in Longus's hands) combines the symbolic richness of myth, the narrative power of history, the sensuality and immediacy of painting, the transcendence of worship. There could hardly be a better example of how to give pleasure and instruction in such a way that we really cannot tell the difference.

<sup>45</sup> S. Goldhill, *Foucault's virginity: ancient erotic fiction and the history of sexuality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 1995.

<sup>46</sup> This is stressed by S. Dworacki, op. cit., in the Introduction to his Polish translation.