Utopian Themes in Three Greek Romances[1]

JEAN ALVARES
Montclair State University

Among scholars of Classics the study of utopian themes in the Greco-Roman world tends to focus on those ideal states imagined by philosophers like Plato or Zeno, utopian novellas such as those of Iambulus and Euhemerus; those near-utopias of the legendary past imaged by Plutarch and Dio of Prusa, the primitive or mythical paradise appearing in Hesiod's Golden Age and among Homer's Ethiopians and Pindar's Hyperboreans, plus the comic utopias of Aristophanes and other satirists.[2] But the wider field of current utopian studies also considers the ideal and utopian themes found in an extensive variety of materials, as well as those ideal elements which exist in even the most naturalistic literary work, if only ironically or in displaced form. The Greek romances are often called ideal, but a fuller description of their ideal dimensions needs to be presented beyond the usual references to the couple's status as aristocrats, their idyllic love, fidelity and enjoyment of the happy end. For example, one might consider the full ideological significance of the terms in which the romance's ideal dimensions are conceived, or how these ideal elements relate to a long and complex tradition of idealistic images found within literature, myth and religion, and thereby provide further layers of meaning.

Here I shall first set out some critical methods I have used, and then give the preliminaries of such a more complete description of idealistic images, motifs and themes mentioned above, concentrating on the romances of Chariton, Longus and Heliodorus. An understanding of these utopian themes, their presence and function within these texts, can better illuminate their full

---

[1] This is a considerably expanded version of the paper I gave at the International Conference on the Novel (ICAN 2000) at Groningen, Wednesday, July 26, 2000.

[2] For accounts of the Greek utopia see Ferguson (1975); Günther & Müller (1988); Giangrande (1976); Clay & Purvis (1999) 1–51; Dawson (1992).

reception by their readers, as well as add details pertaining to their era's intellectual and ideological contexts and their rôle in the process of historical change. For those interested in teaching the ancient novel in a wider literary and humanistic context, these investigations can help connect the ancient Greek romances to later medieval romantic traditions and other presentations of ideal environments. This essay is a *prolegomenon* to a longer study, and thus is, like this project, to a certain degree experimental; I have utilized and combined methodologies less common to standard Classics scholarship in order to open further avenues for reading and interpretation and for the refinement of these methods.

The first approach I use is best called myth-symbolic criticism, which postulates that all artistic productions are extensively informed by pre-existing structures of meaning, which include images and narratives. These building-blocks are often referred to as archetypes, although there is nothing mystical *à la* Jung about them. Since mythology, if not quite a total system of symbolic thought, is certainly a structured symbolizing activity,[3] myths, the earlier and more 'primitive' the better, are particularly useful for showing the most basic forms of these archetypes, since these narratives are less displaced by later concerns for realism and conventional morality. Scholars of myth and folktale commonly acknowledge the existence of 'story types' such as the Quest, and these have been fairly extensively catalogued.[4] In common with the structuralists, myth critics understand that forms of imaginative production (including literature) grow out of inherent ways of thinking about details of the world, human life and its needs, conflicts and contradictions. And just as forms of houses and tools have been refined over generations, so certain 'archetypal' story patterns, themes, characters and so forth have evolved with the expressive capacity to contain and communicate a culture's thoughts about the universe and human life within it. The patterns of narrative and image found within formal literature are related to, but not reducible to, their analogs found in myth, and scholars who focus on the use of such archetypes in literature must remain aware of the dialectical relationship between a mythic pattern within a literary work and such factors as the individual author's psychology and creativeness, the historical and cultural

---

[3] See Vickery (1980) 221.
[4] See Propp (1968); Aarne and Thompson (1961); Dundes (1964); Sowa (1984) is especially useful.

realities of his epoch, and the demands of the genre.[5]

The best known proponent of myth-symbolic criticism was Northrop Frye, who explored those great, overarching narratives that inform much myth and early literature and continue to exist, often in displayed or in fragmentary form, in various later genres.[6] For Frye myth was the structural principle of literature, and thus all literature has a mythic dimension.[7] Although many aspects of Frye's myth-critical methods and conclusions are unacceptable,[8] his survey of the characters and patterns of romance remains invaluable.[9] The fact that the basic plot of many Greek romances is so easily described conforms to Frye's dictum that most romances are rigidly conventional,[10] being based on patterns of action, character and image long proven to best reproduce a set matrix of themes, ideas and expressions of feeling; patterns so omnipresent and enduring in turn strongly influence the processes of writing and reading.[11]

---

[5] This dialectical process is similar to Walter Burkert's system of applying structuralism to classical mythology; see Burkert (1979).

[6] See Frye's *The Secular Scripture*; *The Anatomy of Criticism; Four Essays;* and also *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature*. As Russell (2000) shows, Frye was substantially influenced by Ernst Cassirer, a Neo-Kantian, and especially by his four-volume *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. Cassirer viewed all literature, art and other cultural productions as different forms of symbol manipulation; Cassirer believed these symbols and patterns of symbol manipulation arose first in 'mythic' or 'expressive' form, and gradually evolved into modern forms of narrative, art *etc*. through a somewhat logical process of extension and reification of their inherent loads of meaning.

[7] See Vickery (1980) 224; Frye (1970) 18.

[8] Especially troubling is Frye's subordination of all myth and narratives to one 'monomyth' and other rigid (and sometimes contradictory) patterns and his attempt to tie his *muthoi* to the seasons, as well as his strained use of Freudian theories; see Wimsatt (1966).

[9] Heiserman (1977) 222 note 5, quoted Frye's statement about the adventure as the essential component of romance, one which involves the hero's struggle (often fatal) with the antagonist and the hero's return and recognition, and simply declares that this definition cannot apply to the Greek romances; in doing so Heiserman ignored Frye's more fluid application of this pattern and his fuller exposition of the various phases and themes of romance.

[10] Frye (1976) 36, 45; Balfour (1988) 56; see also Morgan (1995) 130–152; Perry (1967) 53–79.

[11] Nimis (1994, 1999, and especially 1998) suggests that the ancient novels do not organically reflect from their first lines the meanings that their (often makeshift) conclusions later impose; rather the author sometimes begins with a vague plot idea, and initially employs meaning-rich images or mythological motifs (many identifiably archetypal) to open a series of narrative possibilities, some of which the author develops, with others left behind as red-herrings. The author fights a continual battle to rein in the narrative drive of

Frye saw that four meta-narratives, four 'master plots' so to speak, informed literature. These in turn are represented by his four great meta-genres, which he also referred to as *muthoi* — comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire.[12] While one might reject Frye's assertion of such an overarching pattern for all literature, Frye's *muthoi* nevertheless remain a valuable heuristic device for interpreting literature. Frye's *muthoi* of comedy and romance are ideal in spirit, for both genres possess a protagonist who triumphs over opposition and creates a better condition. However, in comedy the opposition is more between delusion and reality, and its triumph an *anagnôresis* of the true situation; a new and better type of society often emerges as the beneficial result of the action; the comic hero is more lucky than heroic, and often the blocking characters are more deluded than evil. In contrast, in romance the focus is more upon the hero's quest, and his more forceful triumph over evil, and the benefit that results from the overall action tends to be located more in the hero's new status, although a new society frequently emerges, as seen, for example, in Aeneas' establishment of the Trojans in Italy or Arthur's Camelot. The hero of romance is properly noble and heroic, and his opponents often are epitomes of evil.

Frye gave each archetypal *muthos* six *phases*, which present different aspects of the *mythos'* total narrative. For example, the phases of romance and comedy range from presenting the new society or hero as something incipient and tentative, to something that has been established as part of the world order, to something in decay or being viewed from a more universal or contemplative viewpoint. This chart illustrates Frye's six phases of comedy and romance:[13]

---

the imported images and themes, and often must impose an artificial closure to create the appearance of unified meaning. Thus this construction of meaning is a process, often associative. The author of a lengthy fiction thus is like Levi-Strauss' *bricoleur,* creating new stories and new meanings by assembling a narrative from odds and ends at hand, such as previously existing patterns and elements, with the chance process of association in part governing the choices made; see Levi-Strauss (1966) 16–33.

[12] On these *muthoi*, see Frye (1957) 158–239; Denham (1978) 66–76.

[13] This chart is heavily indebted to the analysis and chart in Denham (1978) 81.

	COMEDY	ROMANCE
I	*Premature/Ironic phase.* The new society and its powers unequal to the society it faces.	*The origins of the hero phase.* Theme of the mysterious origin of the hero.
II	*Quixotic phase.* The adolescence of the new society, more eccentric than powerful.	*Pastoral innocence phase.* The youth, often idyllic, of the hero.
III	*The typical phase.* The establishment of the new society, usually by overcoming an older, deluded order.	*The typical phase.* Often seen in the Quest, and in the triumph of the hero over evil.
IV	*The green world phase.* The society's maturity and triumph, where its potentials are fleshed out.	*The continuous innocence phase.* The maintenance of the innocent world against threats.
V	*The Arcadian phase.* The new society viewed as part of a settled order.	*Idyllic phase.* A reflective, idyllic view of experience, where the hero enjoys the triumph.
VI	*The gothic/eccentric phase.* The new society collapses, becoming a perverse parody of itself or shrinking to a small group or even an individual.	*The contemplative/panoptic phase.* The adventure now becomes contemplative, otherworldly, more internal and distanced.

When an extensive body of cultural productions involving a single myth or legend (for example, the poems, plays, mimes, *etc.* concerning Heracles or Odysseus) is surveyed, all these phases can appear; these phases, taken together, can create a virtual history of the hero's life that stretches from his birth to his more contemplative (and sometimes decaying or eccentric) old age.[14] Frye noted how, with time, literary (not archetypal) genres develop more encyclopedic forms;[15] the novel is an especially good example of this.[16] Thus the work of a later genre (such as the romance) can contain aspects common to several of these phases as it narrates the protagonists' life and adventures and thereby creates more complex and extensive levels of meaning.

The Greek romances possess many elements of Frye's *muthos* of romance; the protagonists have illustrious and sometimes have mysterious origins (Daphnis, Chloe, Charicleia); their childhood is generally idyllic; they go on journeys and have adventures which largely conform to the Quest-pattern. Yet, as in Frye's 4th and 5th phases, the protagonists are also

---

[14] See Denham (1978) 78–80; Frye (1957) 184–186.
[15] See Denham (1978) 119–122; Frye (1957) 54–58, 315–326.
[16] This accords with Bakhtin's depiction of the novel's inherent heteroglossia and polyphony; see Holquist (1990) 69–70; Morson and Emerson (1990) 139–145.

defenders and maintainers of a previously established ideal world against threats, and such works often contain scenes which reflect more panoptically and philosophically on events. What makes the Greek romances 'romances' is their emphasis on adventure. Yet only Chariton's Chaireas and, to a lesser extent, Heliodorus' Theagenes resemble proper romantic heroes. Xenophon's Habrocomes is heroic mainly in the persistence of his wanderings and endurance of his trials, as is his Anthia. Achilles Tatius' protagonists have horrific adventures and in his endurance and defense of his love even Clitophon is quasi-heroic. A triumph of good over evil appears in the crucifixion of Chariton's Theron, the exile of Achilles Tatius' Thersandros, and the defeat of Helidorus' Persians by Hydaspes. But more than the triumph of good over evil, the adventures of the Greek romance involve the preservation of innocence and personal integrity, as emblematized by the preservation of virginity and faithfulness to the beloved.

The comic (in Frye's sense of the term) dimension also bears utopian significance. The passivity, inexperience and occasional foolishness of the romantic hero combined with his ultimate good luck (Chaireas, Clitophon, Daphnis) links him with the protagonists of New Comedy.[17] Frye's comic *muthos* stresses the freedom from illusion and irrational law combined with the recognition of truth, which appears in such episodes as Chaireas' successful acquittal of the charge of murdering Callirhoe, the escape of characters from arranged marriages in Achilles Tatius and Longus, and the abolition of human sacrifice in Heliodorus. Sometimes erstwhile villains are redeemed, suggesting they are more ignorant than evil; thus Xenophon's bandit Hippothous and Heliodorus' Thyamis are brought back into society and to their proper status, and even the would-be rapist Lampis plays the flute at Chloe's wedding (4.38). More utopian is the implicit creation of a new society seen in the weddings that conclude some romances, along with the promise presented by their children (such as the children of Callirhoe and Chaireas, and of Daphnis and Chloe), as well as the new political and social status achieved by the protagonists and their friends and allies.

The modern desire for realism (a culturally relative concept at best) is relatively new; the myths of preurban, preliterate peoples are startling in their violation of physical law, their amorality and the bizarreness of their characters and events, all elements which more directly and forcefully express desire and meaning, and thus produce clearer manifestations of arche-

---

[17] See Borgogno (1971); Corbato (1968).

typal patterns and images. Those archetypal patterns, because of their reso-
nance with vital dimensions of the human psyche, persist, although they are
usually partially disguised through displacement in the direction of the real
and the ethical. This process of incorporation is aided by the fact that the
'constructive principles' of storytelling remain the same in mythical and
naturalistic stories.[18] Frye charts how such a mythic image 'descends' from
its most undisplaced manifestation to its most realistic and ironic.[19] Thus the
omnipotent Supreme Being of high myth becomes the Spartan King Lycur-
gus, the superlative rulers of romance, or More's King Utopus. A frequent
pattern in myth is that of 'goddess forced to associate with mortals,' a pattern
evident in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, in which the goddess is forced
by Zeus to fall in love with Anchises.[20] Chariton's Callirhoe, while techni-
cally no goddess, nevertheless fulfills this archetypal role: she is the *agalma*
(1.1.1) of Syracuse, and is compared to, and even mistaken for, a goddess.[21]
The texts themselves explicitly point to these archetypes. Chariton's Diony-
sios, suspicious of Callirhoe's real identity, informs his bailiff Leonas that
"historians and poets tell us that divine beings are compelled to associate
with mortals" (2.4.8). Similarly Dionysios and, later, Chaireas (3.3.4–6,
3.9.5) imagine some god has abducted Callirhoe. While the romances are not
mystery texts,[22] they employ many narrative and symbolic patterns used in
religious cult, patterns which import their burden of ideal meanings and thus
influence the reader's reception of the story.

  In addition to myth-symbolic criticism the other two methods of criti-
cism, I employ connect these utopian themes with the ideological and idea-
tional dimensions of society and social change. Ernst Bloch[23] viewed these

---

[18] Frye (1957) 51–52.

[19] See Frye (1957) 49–52, 141–158; Denham (1978) 60–66.

[20] Sowa's full pattern is that (1) Zeus causes goddess to become involved with mortals; (2)
goddess appears to mortals in disguise, often tells a lie; (3) goddess reveals her identity to
mortals; (4) goddess seeks to give immortality to mortal, but instead gives fertility or
equivalent. The goddesses Harmonia, Thetis, Kallirhoe, Eos, Kirke, and Kalypso were
also compelled to associate with mortals, although all their stories do not fit Sowa's pat-
tern; for a discussion of this theme largely in the context of the *Homeric Hymns*, see
Sowa (1984) 39–66, 281.

[21] See 1.1.1–2, 1.1.6, 1.14.1, 2.3.6–7, 3.2.14–16, 4.1.9, 4.1.11, 4.7.5–7, 5.3.3, 5.3.9, 8.6.11.
For further discussion of Callirhoe's presentation as a goddess, see Muchow (1988) 75–
87; Helms (1966) 42–45; Ruiz-Montero (1989) 126; Laplace (1980) 121–122.

[22] For a survey with bibliography on this topic, see Beck (1996) 131–150.

[23] For my understanding of Bloch I am especially indebted to Hudson (1982). Particularly
important for this study are Bloch's *The Spirit of Utopia* and *The Principle of Hope*.

and other utopian elements as part of a much wider history of humanity's imagining of a better world; his vast *The Principle of Hope* details how the dream of a fulfilling human society haunts all types of cultural production, literary and otherwise. Bloch gives quite substantial reasons for this focus on utopian themes; he recognized, especially in his analysis of the rise of Nazism,[24] the energy for social transformation that existed in these utopian imaginings, which the Nazis and other reactionaries have exploited. This same imaginative force, when used positively, can be educative, motivational and revolutionary. Bloch noted the 'surplus' of utopian meaning possessed by many images and themes within even anti-utopian compositions.[25] Bloch recognized the dynamism that arises from the open-endedness of human desire, for individuals as subjects constantly seek an object equal to themselves. This search takes place first in the imagination, which, for Bloch, is in some sense constitutive; our creative minds, working through the possibilities which the cosmos presents, can glimpse a 'pre-appearance (*Vor-Schein*)' of potential solutions, if only in the form of a latency or tendency. Bloch's concept of the 'objective real possibility (*das objektiv-real Mögliche*)' follows from an understanding of what becomes possible within the objective realities and equally objective tendencies in human life (including psychological and spiritual existence) and the material universe. Bloch also, in his focus on the 'not yet (*Noch-Nicht*)', demonstrated how the future holds the meaning of the past as well as the present, and that the full utopian dimension of the present moment is hidden in the future. Thus in the apocalyptic and eschatological dimensions of art and literature Bloch saw the concrete and realizable outlines of a direction and goal for human history.

The Greek romance corresponds to that type of modern, popular literature that Bloch designated as 'colportage', tales of adventure and miracle whose utopian themes lie close to the surface.[26] To give two simple examples; a persistent folktale theme concerns a world no longer hostile to the fulfillment of desire and passion, as seen most simply in tales of Cockaigne or Luilekkerland. This vision is part of a more extensive dream of the elimination of all gaps between human beings and divine power, other individu-

---

[24] See Bloch (1959).

[25] Thus in consumer advertising and political propaganda utopian overtones (complete sensual gratification, images of a just and harmonious society) are used to sell products or politicians.

[26] See Geoghegan (1996) 58; Bloch (1986)*,* 352–393.

als, their own inner selves, physical nature and the necessities of human life. The hope is for an integrated life, nature and a society made for humanity. This vision particularly corresponds to the conclusion of Frye's comic *muthos*, where people of all orders, including some former villains, appear at the final festivities, and even animals, plants and the material world take part. Another ideal theme is the ludic society, one in which there is no work, only play,[27] a condition observed at the conclusion of Xenophon of Ephesus' romance, wherein the protagonists' later lives became 'one long festival.' The work of Daphnis and Chloe in the Lesbian countryside likewise presents this ludic dimension. Utopias based on this dream of emotional satisfaction have more substantial expressions, for example in Fourier's matrices of carefully matched passions required for his Phalansteries, in the utopia of artistry and unalienated labor of Morris' *News from Nowhere*, and in Marcuse's visions of a libidinally liberated society.[28]

For Bloch those images and themes which the Greek romances share with apocalyptic and eschatological discourses bear considerable utopian meaning.[29] In such texts a superior society emerges often due to a radical break with history, as occurs when Heliodorus' Hydaspes abolishes human sacrifice and his daughter Charicleia transcends all confining conceptions of race and ethnicity. The full story of Charicleia and thus of Meroë's past and future is not fully known until the romance's conclusion, when truths are revealed that cast past events in a different light. In a sense the past is reconstructed and redeemed by the future, one of the eternal promises of apocalyptic discourse.[30]

Fredric Jameson also sees literature as a 'socially symbolic act' that reflects (in albeit complex ways) the various social and ideological structures and means of production within a given society.[31] His analysis stresses how the contradictions and limitations within society exert so pervasive an effect

---

[27] For a modern expression of this ideal, see Black (1986).

[28] See especially *Eros and Civilization*; like Bloch, Marcuse stressed an instinctual drive for happiness and freedom, which, *contra* Freud, he believed could be fulfilled within society.

[29] On Bloch's interest in apocalyptic/eschatological thinking, see Hudson (1982) 117–120.

[30] A fundamental difference exists between the ideal/comic vision and the tragic vision in their view of time and the past; the *anagnôresis* is of central importance. For comedy, the past conceals the key to a true identity which brings with it a better future, while in tragedy the past reveals a curse or primal evil that dooms the future.

[31] See especially Jameson (1981).

upon individuals that literature cannot help but reproduce them, even when these conditions are an 'absent cause' determining what topics cannot be directly addressed, what patterns of deformation occur, and what is finally expressed and how effectively within the text. Further, every culture possesses a mix of social formations and means of production; some are relics of a past time, some represent the dominant modes, and some are the germs of the future society. These formations are always in active tension, which constitutes a type of subterranean revolutionary process, which only occasionally breaks out in the familiar earthquakes of political revolutions.[32] Jameson's views concerning literary works are also similar to Levi-Strauss' understanding of myth as a space in which resolutions are constructed which cannot be created in the real world.[33] As with Bloch's notion of the 'utopian surplus or excess of meaning',[34] imaginative works often reproduce concrete social tensions and contradictions, which are then imaginatively harmonized through the use of utopian themes and images, usually to the advantage of the socially dominant class, but which sometimes reveal more plausible solutions grounded in the concrete social practice and potential of the author's society. For example, in the Greek East, as Dio of Prusa's career illustrates,[35] aristocratic rivalries were nearly as critical in his era as in the fifth century B.C.E. In Chariton's romance the two leading men of Syracuse, Hermocrates and Chaireas' father Ariston, are deadly rivals (1.1.3), yet through the operations of Erôs acting the demagogue their rivalry is eliminated (1.1.11–13). During Callirhoe's funeral and the Syracusans' later activities while searching for her, the Syracusan *demos*, *ekklesia* and *boule* present a harmonious and unified front.[36] Chariton's romance clearly provides images of familiar social problems; but these concerns are then managed and defused by the utopian vision.[37]

---

[32] Jameson (1990) 167–168.

[33] Jameson (1971) 384, citing Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques*, Paris: 1955, 199–203.

[34] The 'utopian surplus' is that extra, perhaps unintended, ideal significance a narrative, theme, or image contains; see Hudson (1982) 106, 160–164; Bloch (1972) 409–417.

[35] Jones (1978) 95–114.

[36] For example, when Hermocrates proposes an embassy to recover Callirhoe from Asia, the assembled *demos* cries 'Let us sail!' and most of the *boule* immediately volunteer (3.4.17). The equal number of ambassadors chosen from the *demos* and *boule* likewise implies social unity.

[37] See Jameson (1990) 137–140; Jameson cites the influence of Holland (1968).

I should also mention three more commonly considered ideal aspects of the Greek romances; the focus on aristocracy, the role of the gods and the depiction of erotic relationships. As often noted, the protagonists of the ancient novel belong to the high aristocracy. Frye would see such aristocrats as a characteristic element of romance, their lives a displaced image of the perfect existence of the gods. While these images of aristocratic life conform to the ideology of class constructions in Greco-Roman society, in their 'utopian surplus' they also affirm a general ideal of human life, of freedom, economic autonomy and Bloch's 'upright gait' of the citizen secure and respected in his social role. The gods, oracles, dreams and various miracles within the romances have an utopian force in their presentation of a cosmos ruled at some level by a human-like (and thus potentially rational and sympathetic) power. Further, the mysterious operations of the gods and chance can be viewed as projections or assertions of the unknown and unlimited potential which Bloch saw in the lived moment. Thus romantic protagonists (especially Charicleia[38]) create schemes to buy time and to allow this potential to develop. Obviously ideal too is the ability of the lovers to find in each other the perfect object for their affections. As noted above, their relationships recall the themes of the sacred marriage and union of a goddess with a mortal. But a perhaps more concretely realizable utopian dimension is found in the lovers' equality.[39] They are usually of nearly similar ages, love each other with equal desperation, without much of the male aggressiveness and domination common in Greco-Roman society, although it must be admitted romantic heroines in the end are generally subordinated to the patriarchal order.[40]

Using patterns and methods outlined above, let us consider now Chariton's *Chaireas and Callirhoe*, Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* and Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*.

Chariton's *Chaireas and Callirhoe*.

As noted above, Callirhoe's history has significant correspondences with Sowa's 'Marriage of the Fertility Goddess' pattern. It also conforms to

---

[38] See Chew (1994) 210–211.
[39] See Konstan (1994) 14–59.
[40] For a survey of this topic with bibliography, see Johne (1996) 151–207; Egger (1990).

Sowa's 'Rape of the Goddess' pattern,[41] and in particular to sufferings of Demeter and Korê, who descends through a type of death into a lower world;[42] afterward these deadly powers are in part overcome and Korê rises again, having obtained new status and bringing benefit to mortals, and having experienced human suffering and a previously unknown realm.[43] Both Callirhoe and Korê are abducted from Sicily and endure symbolic death,[44] and are compelled by trickery and force to undergo marriages with somebody of undoubted nobility; both Demeter and Chaireas, pursuing their abducted loved one, are disguised and assume servitude. Zeus initially gave Korê to Hades but was forced to acknowledge Demeter's power; like Zeus, Chariton's Artaxerxes gives Callirhoe to Dionysios (7.5.15), but he is forced (see Chaireas' letter, 8.4.2–5) to accept Callirhoe's return. As Hades obtained a message through Hermes to release Korê, Dionysios gets a message from the Great King and a letter from Callirhoe (8.5.6) detailing the final arrangements concerning herself and their child. Both heroines remain tied to the other realm; Korê must return yearly to Hades, and Callirhoe leaves her child with Dionysios;[45] Korê and Demeter receive new honors after their return, and likewise Chaireas and Callirhoe return with new status and riches. As the struggles of Demeter and Korê created a beneficent relationship between the gods and mortals which individuals of varied nationalities could share through the Eleusinian rites, the multiethnic crowd of Chaireas and Callirhoe's followers gain a place in a superior Syracuse (8.8.12–14). Because Korê crosses borders to the inaccessible world of Hades, she obtains experience of a previously unknown realm and can help humans in their relations with that realm; in Callirhoe's travels she too gains much experi-

---

[41] In this pattern (1) a loved one is abducted; (2) the grieved party searches for the abductee; (3) claims are settled and the loser learns of the arrangements that must be made; (4) payment of some kind is made; see Sowa (1984) 282.

[42] Several gods of Near Eastern myths die, and some return to life; see Foley (1977) 94–95.

[43] I follow here the analysis of Foley (1977) 84–97.

[44] Callirhoe is presumed dead, buried with an elaborate funeral, taken from her tomb and then is carried over water, which in myth often exists as a barrier to the lower world. Not only Callirhoe, but Xenophon of Ephesus' Anthia, Achilles Tatius' Leucippe (three times!), the nameless girl in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* and Apuleius' Psyche also come back to life after a type of death. While the melodramatic possiblities of such a scene are obvious, it is equally clear how this conquest of death connects with the deepest of human aspirations.

[45] In Sowa's pattern often a type of payment is made, and the child, whom Dionysios retains for a time, might be seen as functioning as this type of payment.

ence of previously unknown eastern areas, and in Callirhoe's friendship with Statira (8.47–9) a new relationship between the opposed realms of West and East is forged. The evident correspondences of Callirhoe's narrative with the Korê myth give it undertones of a profound myth about the conquest of the underworld and its powers and the creation of a new relationship with that world, as well as of other substantial benefits to humanity.

Chariton's romance, as the story of Syracuse and its leading citizens, generally conforms to Frye's 4th phase romance; an ideal Syracuse has been proven by Hermocrates' defeat of Athens, and its excellence must be protected and maintained, a process thematized by the struggles of Chaireas and especially Callirhoe to safeguard their fidelity and moral purity. Being the children of the first and second men of Syracuse, they also represent Syracuse's future rulers. Their child, whose excellent upbringing and return is insisted upon (2.9.5, 8.7.12), and whose future history is compared to mythical heroes like Cyrus and Amphion (2.9.5), promises further greatness for Syracuse.[46] Thus the outcome of the couple's adventures not only maintains the exemplary present, but also provides for Syracuse's future. In the references to past conflicts between Athenians and Persians and between Syracusans and Athenians and in the promise of the child to come, the romance presents the more panoptic perspective of Frye's 5th phase, where the adventures and the final results are revealed as part of a greater order of events.

Chaireas' own story reflects Frye's 3rd phase quest romance and corresponds to Sowa's 'Journey' pattern,[47] as well as to folktale quest motifs. Chaireas learns of Callirhoe's abduction and goes off to find her; symbolically Callirhoe is taken to the land of the dead, and Chaireas likewise travels there, a motif reinforced by his false death and funeral. The old priestess (see especially 3.6.5) and Mithridates loosely correspond to the usual helpers who aid the mythic protagonist in finding his lost item or love. Chaireas, after much suffering, finds Callirhoe. The death struggle with the antagonist, another common plot element of romance, can be seen in Chaireas' violent battle with Persia, which he undertakes initially in expectation of death (7.1.5–7). Often in Frye's 3rd phase of romance a substitute for the hero is

---

[46] See Alvares (1997) 613–629.

[47] In this pattern: (1) the protagonist loses something; (2) then goes off to find the lost item; this may involve travels to the underworld, and usually takes much time; (3) the protagonist encounters female and male beings who aid the search; (4) the protagonist finds the lost item or learns that it cannot be obtained; (5) a substitute dies.

destroyed,[48] a role fulfilled by the nameless Egyptian king who commits suicide. Chaireas' labors, as well as those of other heroes in Greek romance, which involve penitential suffering in pursuit of a clearly superior woman, recall those more spiritualized quests of medieval romance, whose heroes suffer in service to ladies who draw them to a higher level. Considering Callirhoe's status as the avatar of Aphrodite who is a fundamental power who can even overrule Tyche, Chaireas can be viewed as an hero who has returned home having attained heroic honor through deeds in service to his beloved, and who has also been thoroughly established in a faith which before he had held only superficially.

The utopian vision can posit a fuller correspondence between human nature and the world and its history, whose meaning is still hidden, allowing for the possibility of a different kind of history with a more humane set of motivators. Chariton's romance contains a history wherein devotion to erotic ideals produces greater success for society as well as for the individual than the pursuit of the usual motivators of history, such as wealth, status and power.[49] Thus Chaireas' erotically motivated exploits reproduce those of Alexander the Great, Xenophon, Leonidas and the Athenians at Salamis; his triumph is presented as superior to that of Hermocrates, for he brings home not the poverty of Attika, but the riches of Persia (8.6.12). In his concluding speech (8.7.3–11), Chaireas does more than fulfill the crowd's desire for details; Chaireas unfolds a new history, one that makes the past's evils no longer painful and meaningless; in a sense he has rewritten history according to a meaning that he has discovered only in the course of time.

As noted, a rather idealistic text can also concretely reflect some social realities. *C & C* has several depictions of society reflecting then-current social conditions and contradictions such as the abuses of despotism and the decline of even quasi-democratic institutions, and, for the Greeks, the conflict between the richness of their cultural tradition and the realities of Roman power.[50] As seen above, Chariton's romance presents well-known and dangerous aristocratic rivalries, but also shows how they are defused and the social orders harmonized though devotion to Erôs and Callirhoe. While Chariton's Persia is no exact allegorical figuration of Rome, in his description of

---

[48] See Frye (1957) 193; Denham (1978) 71.
[49] See Alvares (1997) 613–629.
[50] For recent studies of these issues, see Swain (1996); Edwards (1996); Whitmarsh (2001); also Alvares (2001–2).

Persian despotism his readers could recognize some realities of their lives under Roman power, as well as the elements of an imaginable alternative. Syracuse and its leader Hermocrates had been frequently idealized in Greek rhetoric and literature,[51] and Chariton's ideal government is one guided by a first man;[52] nevertheless several successful democratic processes appear, as when the Syracusans gather in the theater (even the women; 1.1.12), and their public request that the couple be allowed to wed is granted. Even the Egyptians 'elect by show of hands' their king (6.8.2), as the Persian women elect Rhodogyne to face Callirhoe in the beauty contest (5.3.4).

A common utopian theme is the inclusive state. The Greek rhetoric of the second sophistic[53] as well as some forms of Judeo-Christian apocalyptic expressed this ideal, as did Chariton's romance. A multiethnic micro-empire, comprised of Dorians, Aradians, Cypriots, and Egyptians spontaneously gathers and follows Chaireas to Syracuse, a marked contrast to the Persian empire, which compels unity through force. Chaireas' three hundred Dorians are given immediate citizenship, and even the Egyptians gain grants of farm-land from Hermocrates (8.8.14).

Three other facts are also relevant to the work's political subtext: (1) Chariton repeatedly stresses Syracuse's independence; (2) despite Chaireas' victory at sea the Persians ultimately win and Chaireas, once he has regained Callirhoe, has no further plans for aggression against Persia; (3) in the Egyptian rebellion Greek soldiers were instrumental on both sides of the conflict. I would suggest that these three facts are related to another, more concrete political dream, the possibility for a greater "freedom of the Greeks"[54] which

---

[51] See Billault (1989) 540–548; Bompaire (1977) 55–68. Chariton, however, has repressed any suggestion of the complete historical Hermocrates, who was exiled and later killed in civil strife.

[52] A political view presented in Stoic and Cynic speculation; see Ruiz-Montero (1989) 139–141.

[53] Note how Aelius Aristides in his *Roman Oration* declares that the emperor has "(59) appointed to your citizenship, or even to kinship with you, the better part of the world's talent, courage and leadership; while the rest you recognized as a league under your hegemony. (60) Neither sea nor intervening continent are bars to citizenship, nor are Asia and Europe divided in their treatment here. In your empire all paths are open to all. No one worthy of rule or trust remains an alien, but a civil community of the World has been established as a Free Republic under one, the best, ruler and teacher of order" (Oliver's [1953] translation, 901).

[54] Nero had proclaimed the freedom of the province of Achaea in 67 C.E.; note that in Plutarch's *On the Delays of Divine Vengeance* (32), the cruel punishment destined for

would be granted by Romans who had come to understand how valuable Greeks could be as friends or dangerous as enemies.[55]

Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*.

Utopian societies since Homer were placed in Ethiopia, a tradition Heliodorus evokes and builds upon. To the extent that the *Aithiopika* is Charicleia's story, it conforms to Frye's 1st, 2nd and 3rd phase romances, emphasizing the heroine's mysterious birth, upbringing in innocence and subsequent adventures. The mysterious child's father in undisplaced myth is a god (as fathered Romulus), becoming here the near-ideal king Hydaspes. Although technically Hydaspes' daughter, Charicleia, conceived as Persinna viewed a painting of Andromeda (whom she resembles exactly), is in a sense 'fathered' by the picture,[56] rather like a Platonic form come to Earth. The marvelous child's mother is frequently a victim and suspected of sexual misconduct and her child is frequently abandoned; Persinna, fearing suspicions of adultery, likewise must exile Charicleia. The marvelous child, after adventures and the recovery of its true identity, creates or restores an entire society, as did Romulus and Remus, a service Charicleia also performs for Meroë. The marvelous child often enjoys an idyllic, pastoral childhood (*e.g.* Romulus and Remus among the herdsmen) as does Charicleia, first among the shepherds of the Ethiopian countryside (2.31) then within Apollo's temple as Charicles' adoptive daughter. In Frye's 3rd phase of romance, dominated by the Quest pattern, the protagonist's wanderings and search for the lost item are connected with the attainment (or resumption) of status. Charicleia's quest is for the secret of her true identity, homeland and past, rather like the goals of Vergil's Aeneas in the epic's first half.

As the romance of Meroë, the *Aithiopika* corresponds to Frye's 4th and 5th phases, wherein an already ideal society is defended, improved or extended, and is shown to be established as part of the cosmic order. Meroë itself is obviously ideal, associated with Herodotus' superlative Ethiopians

---

Nero is mitigated, since the gods owe him gratitude for freeing "the noblest and most beloved of Heaven."
[55] See Alvares (2001–2) 140.
[56] See Whitmarsh (1998) 112–113.

who repelled Persian aggression (*Histories* 3.19–28).[57] Meroë's government pursues a celestial harmony through the worship of the Sun and Moon, with a priest-king at its head and an advisory council of philosopher/saints, the Gymnosophists, and thus has correspondences with the solar/celestial oriented theologies of later antiquity as well as philosophical utopias like Iambulus' *City of the Sun*, Zeno of Citium's Stoic Cosmopolis or Campanella's much later *City of the Sun*.

Bloch linked the themes of revolution and apocalypse/eschaton, a radical break with the past that creates a new future and thus recreates and redeems prior events; such ideal themes fill the *Aithiopika*'s latter third. There is a battle of world empires (the Persian and the Merotic) in which a great city is taken and the elements confused as the Nile is diverted around Syene, a paradox the text underscores (9.5.5).[58] The virginity test upon the fiery grate has eschatological correlates,[59] as does Theagenes' bout with the Ethiopian giant.[60] Hydaspes' elimination of the custom of human sacrifice presents a

---

[57] Note the medieval legends of Prester John, ruler of a vast empire in Ethiopia or the East who opposed the forces of Islam; see Bar-Ilan (1995) for discussion and further bibliography.

[58] Here recall the often-cited similarity between Heliodorus' depiction of the siege of Syene and Julian's depiction of the siege of Nisibis by the Parthian King Shapur II in 350 C.E.; for discussion with bibliography, see Morgan (1996) 418–421. If, as Morgan believes, Heliodorus must have written after 350 C. E., it is quite possible he saw Julian's destruction in 363 C. E. and the humiliating peace Jovian made with Parthia shortly after, which resulted in the Roman loss of Armenia. At that time the perception of the fragility of Roman power would certainly have increased, making it easier for a writer to imagine (and portray) Rome's critical weakness.

[59] Consider the New Testament's declaration that a person's works will be tested by fire (1 *Cor*. 3: 8–15 and *Rev*. 22:12). Charicleia, putting on her Delphic robe with its solar rays and leaping upon the burning *eschara,* is presented as a transfigured being, glowing with a holiness that arises from her virgin purity, more goddess than a mortal woman (10.9.3.); see Morgan (1998) 71–72.

[60] Giants are archetypal figures of arrogance, power and chaos (*e.g.* the Greek Gigantomachy) and some apocalyptic writings (the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Book of Enoch*) give a prominent position to giants and their defeat; St. Perpetua (*Pass. Perpetua* 9–10) dreams of fighting a giant Egyptian, who is recognized as the devil; later in Moschus (for Latin version see Minge PL 74.150) this figure becomes an Ethiopian; see Morgan (1998) 75–76. Theagenes' defeat of the 'giant' Ethiopian recalls this archetypal image. Morgan suggests that this wrestling is an initiation which turns Theagenes into an honorary Ethiopian. But the gross disparity in their sizes and styles of fighting recalls the match between Castor and Amycus in the *Argonautica,* which is also a battle between old and new versions of heroism. Thus, in wrestling the Ethiopian Theagenes also symbolically battles those archaic, brutal and powerful elements in Ethiopian tradition, which the

break with the evils of Merotic history. In many eschatological discourses the radical break comes with the appearance of a messiah figure;[61] Charicleia's peculiar status and condition of origin (especially the divine command given to Hydaspes to mate, 4.8.4), and even appearance,[62] make her such a transformational figure. However, the past is not completely eliminated, but reincorporated and purified. Charicleia exactly resembles Andromeda, the first creatrix of Ethiopia, who was also offered as a human sacrifice by her parents, and would have been killed but for Perseus' arrival; but now, instead of the primal[63] crime repeating itself, Charicleia's father rejects the custom of human sacrifice. Thus in the amazing events at Meroë the *Aithiopika* present the past as being rewritten by the future. Scholars make much of the deviousness of Heliodorus' plotting, the complex manner in which Charicleia's identity is mystified, interrogated and then resolved. Such complexity and unknowing mixed with unrealized potential echoes Bloch's 'darkness of the lived moment' which conceals the utopian potential and tendency present in everyday life.[64]

The unified, inclusive, harmonious and festal society is a frequent element of apocalyptic discourse.[65] The wedding of Charicleia and Theagenes, the union of the priest of the Sun with the priestess of the Moon, takes place via miracles at a critical juncture in Meroë's history. As Andromeda married a noble Greek and with him founded a new kingdom, so Charicleia will

---

people themselves now reject. Theagenes also resembles another common figure of myth, the outsider whose presence is needed to remedy a crisis situation, a rôle Aeneas and Hercules play in the *Aeneid*. Further, Theagenes' wrestling with the loose bull (10.28–9) also recalls the myth of Mithras, who likewise wrestles and captures the cosmic bull for the sun god; Theagenes will become priest of the Sun at Meroë; see de la Vega (1988) 175–188; also Morgan (1998) 62–64, 73–77.

[61] Outside Judeo-Christian eschatology such a messiah figure can be found among various non-industrial, non-urban cultures, such as the "transformational deity" anticipated by the Coast Salish Prophet Dance, as well as the Javanese "Ratu Idil" and West Papa's "Lord Mansren" who figures in the cargo cults; see Cook (1995) 70– 81.

[62] Not only does Charicleia look like Andromeda, but she seems, even as a child, to have an unusually piercing gaze (2.31); note that Calasiris claimed one can detect gods by their gaze (3.13).

[63] Such a primal evil that explains subsequent evils is a factor common to foundation myths such as the story of Cain and Abel, Romulus and Remus, or Tantalus' cooking of Pelops.

[64] See Bloch (1977) 256–262.

[65] Note, for example, the wedding of Lamb in *Revelation* chpt. 19, or Jesus' parable that compared the Kingdom to a wedding feast (*Matt.* 22.1–14.)

marry a Greek who claims descent from the original Hellenes;[66] these repetitions[67] and renewals of prior events suggest a return to the primordial creation-time,[68] again making the romance's events part of a profound cosmic/historical pattern. Charicleia herself merges several worlds; she is born of Ethiopian royalty, raised at Delphi by the priest Charikles, obtains a second foster father in the Egyptian priest Calasiris and finally marries Theagenes, descendent of Achilles, that paradigm of ancestral Greek aretê. Charicleia and Theagenes as future rulers will blend the best of Ethiopia, Greece and even Egypt. Through this and Charicleia's paradoxical racial makeup, Heliodorus' text subverts the relevance of race and ethnicity, implying the possibility of greater unity between peoples.[69] Eschatological discourse commonly features a radical recentering where the marginal becomes central; Whitmarsh argues that Heliodorus' romance (as do most of the romances to some extent) asks its readers to reorient themselves, placing Meroë, not Greece, in the central position from which the rest of the world is considered.[70]

Interestingly, Heliodorus particularly stresses the theme of exile;[71] Charicles, Thyamis, Calasiris, Knemon and Charicleia herself all suffer exile. Here one is justified in observing a probable connection between Helidorus' various social positions[72] and this emphasis on exile and problematized identity. Considering all the complex negotiations that were involved in the social position of Heliodorus and his class, it is easy to see how anxieties, resentments and dreams of relief could arise which his romance would in turn express, creating an imaginative solution to impossible tensions and

---

[66] Theagenes is descended from Hellen, son of Deucalion (2.34.2); see Whitmarsh (1998) 103.

[67] Morgan (1998, 60–78) stresses repetitions and duplications as one of the central structural principles of Heliodorus' narrative.

[68] Such a return to the *Urzeit* is stressed especially by Eliade (1971). It is also often a notable component of eschatological/apocalyptic discourse; see Cook (1995) 28.

[69] See Berry (2001).

[70] See Whitmarsh (1998) 98–101.

[71] See Whitmarsh (1998) 106 and note 57.

[72] Consider Heliodorus as a Syrian defined as an outsider by the gaze and other social practices of Greeks and Romans; as (at least) a lower-level aristocrat (perhaps one who took pride in the historical links between Emesa and the Severans) who also defined himself in opposition to those lower on the social hierarchy; as a non-Greek author defined functionally as a producer and transmitter of Greek cultural (and thus ideological) productions in part alien to him; quite probably as a member of the town councilor class whose position was becoming increasingly burdensome.

contradictions; at one near-magic stroke Charicleia gains an ideal solution to all her problems of identity, lineage and status.

While the direct divine action *seems* absent from Heliodorus' plot,[73] obvious references to magic occur. While Calasiris is sometimes the charlatan,[74] using Charicles' stereotypical views of Egyptian magic to manipulate him,[75] Calasiris' insistent distinction between high and low magic (3.16) has idealistic implications. Magic, like technology, is a method of producing results. The Egyptian woman who reanimates her dead son (6.14–15) is like Dr. Frankenstein who makes a creature out of dead bodies. Calasiris' higher learning accords with the ideal theme of a knowledge or science that brings humanity and the universe into a cooperative relationship, not one which makes the material world and human life mere things to be manipulated, which dehumanizes and destroys its user. Likewise the solar/celestial religion of Meroë and of Sisimithres' gymnosophists can be viewed in part as Heliodorus' imaginative dream of a more effective religion,[76] as Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* presents Isis worship (at least from Lucius' perspective) as an ideal type of religious experience.

Heliodorus' romance, like Chariton's, presents Persia as an aggressive empire ruled by corrupt and oppressive leaders who initiate war to gain territory and material wealth. In this activity Heliodorus' reader could see a similarity to the aggressive efforts of the Romans to expand their borders. In contrast to the Persian empire, the just multiethnic empire that appears only in microcosm at the end of *Chaireas and Callirhoe* is already in place in Ethiopia. Hydaspes rules a world-spanning empire that includes Eastern and Western Ethiopians and has allies in the Troglodytai, Blemmyes, and even

---

[73] According to Chew (1994) Heliodorus gives human choice more importance by minimizing divine activity. However, consider the way God works in the *Book of Acts*; amazingly fortuitous outcomes can seem just as indicative of divine power as epiphanies, and such subtlety agrees with Heliodorus' more refined sensibility and his penchant for keeping matters ambiguous.

[74] See Winkler (1982) 93–158.

[75] See Berry (2000) especially 91–101. One can view Calasiris as an opportunistic sophist who takes advantage of Charicleia's situation and then dies, leaving the couple in great danger, after he has achieved what he desired.

[76] The emperor Julian wrote a neoplatonic *Hymn to King Helios* and supposedly claimed Helios sent him a dream about Constantius' coming death (Zosimus, 3.9, 6–7). While the *Aithiopika* is hardly a mystery text for Emesa's Helios-cult, it seems possible that Heliodorus, like Julian, saw in Helios worship a vehicle for expressing his (probably refined) religious beliefs and inclinations.

the Chinese. Hydaspes' Ethiopians successfully resist an expansionist power, like Chariton's Hermocrates repelled the Athenian expedition. By Heliodorus' era the absolutism of the Roman emperor's power was undisguised, as was the use of religion to support the regime. Hydaspes presents a superior model for such a sovereign;[77] while Meroë is no democracy, Hydaspes, like Hermocrates, is a clever and effective military leader, and shows mercy and carefully follows the rule of law. There is fruitful interaction between populace and Hydaspes, who will not violate ancestral customs without popular support (10.16). Jameson's analysis stresses how all societies contain remnants of prior social formations; the abolishment of Meroë's ancestral custom of human sacrifice epitomizes the process of breaking free of all those archaic and barbaric (yet popular[78]) social practices surviving from previous times; such an operation is a concrete task that all societies must face to progress.

Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*

Longus' romance seems the most escapist, set in a semi-idyllic pastoral world closely watched by benevolent gods; there is also a sense that the romance represents the ideals of a world passing away.[79] As often noted, *D & C* has an experimental quality, negotiating its way through various dialectics of nature, country and wilderness, of *muthos* and *logos*, and of truth and falsehood. The second sophistic, with its obsession with the past, belongs to a transitional period leading to the very different world of late antiquity. Such a transitional period, when circumstances are unsettled and traditions contested, can be particularly rich in idealistic and utopian images.

---

[77] Hydaspes' mercy, righteousness, respect for law, and graciousness to his people create a nearly filial bond with them (10.3.3; 10.17.2); on Hydaspes' ideal rule, see also Szepessy (1957) 247–251.

[78] It is the people of Meroë that call most loudly for the human sacrifice (10.7.1).

[79] The pastoral of Philetas and Theocritus can be seen as a reaction to the decline of the polis-world, whose systems for creating identity were overwhelmed in the mass cultures of the Hellenistic cities. Interestingly, some critics believe Longus' romance is a response to a tale reported in Plutarch (*On the Obsolescence of Oracles* XVII) that the passengers of a passing ship heard the cry 'Great Pan is dead', symbolizing the end of the pagan Greek world; see McCulloh (1970) 13–15. On the era's pessimism and sense of an exhaustion, see MacQueen (1990) 175–181.

Longus' romance, as the tale of Daphnis and Chloe, recalls Frye's first three phases of romance. The children have a mysterious birth from higher beings[80] and are raised in pastoral innocence, one with strong intimations of the primitive rural paradise, their childhood innocence reproducing human-kind's primordial guiltlessness. This romance verges on (or becomes) comedy,[81] which, in Frye's analysis, centers on marriage, fertility and the forming of a new society, whose successful heroes are more lucky than effectual. And there is an implicit Quest — to find out what Love is, knowledge needed so that the protagonists' love can be properly consummated.

The pastoral setting recalls Hesiod's Golden Age, and the story of Daphnis and Chloe can be read as a myth about the development of civilization and the discovery of sexual love[82] — but one with superior outcomes. Erôs intends to make Chloe a *muthos*; at times Erôs seems to be conducting an experiment in love, like Psammetichus' attempt to find humanity's original tongue (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.2); the protagonists' absolute naiveté makes possible for them a less compromised amatory practice, one without the violence implied in the myths of Phassa, Syrinx and Echo.[83] The couple's erotic play develops largely outside the strictures of conventional, restrictive morality; their first sexual experiments are hindered only by their lack of knowledge, and once Daphnis has learned the secret of sex, he has no idea that he should maintain Chloe's virginity; yet once he has learned about the bloodshed inherent in a woman's loss of virginity, Daphnis spontaneously restricts his sexual behavior (3.20, 3.24). While here the 'sexual symmetry' between Daphnis and Chloe is compromised, these episodes also imply that erôs, when it is allowed to grow without restrictions and fear, can automatically acquire the ethical dimensions that moralizing systems try to impose from without. Thus the erotic careers of Daphnis and Chloe furnish a more

---

[80] As in New Comedy, they are the children of aristocrats; they are in the pastoral world but clearly not of it, being set apart by their beauty (1.7.1).

[81] Anderson (1982, 41–49) stresses the ineptness of the rustics and the couple and sees *D & C* as essentially a comedy in the modern sense of the word.

[82] See Hunter (1996) 377–382; Winkler (1990) 101–126.

[83] See MacQueen (1990) 82–97. While I hesitate to accept Winkler's suggestion that the reader is supposed to link Chloe with Demeter, I agree that the superior relationship between Daphnis and Chloe entails restraining Chloe and her capabilities, with the inherent violence and inequalities of sex being more repressed than truly eliminated; see Winkler (1990).

ideal vision of love, its growth and its processes.[84]

As was the case with Charicleia's replay of Andromeda's sacrifice, a past mistake is also avoided in *D & C*; as noted, *this* time the couple's love develops without the violence and oppression common to past erotic relationships. There is also a primal wrongdoing; Daphnis and Chloe as infants were exposed by their parents, a terrible deed which is transformed into a *felix culpa* as these past horrors are rewritten by later events, developments which, as at Meroë, restore a broken family and bring potential benefit to the wider community through a marriage and the couple's assumption of their proper social position.

Daphnis and Chloe's wedding feast (4.38), which combines city and country folk and customs, where all are forgiven and all matters set right, and where even the animals participate, echoes the reformed, inclusive and festal world of apocalyptic/eschatological narrative. Thyamis' rehabilitation was linked to a corrected social situation, the recovery of his priesthood. Ostensible villains such as the seductress Lykainion and kidnapper Lampis are likewise welcome at their wedding, since the social contradictions responsible for their actions are now (at least symbolically) dissolved. Fittingly, this occurs at a time linked with the vintage and Dionysos, a god who breaks down the alienating boundaries between persons and the natural world and other individuals. Daphnis and Chloe represent a new type of social being whose relationships unite, to the advantage of all, the realms of the gods, humans, country, city and physical nature. This new model for society will continue, as the couple, once married, divide their time between city and country, and make sure their children are given pastoral names and suckled by animals as they once were (4.39).

As the romance of the countryside of Mytilene and its population, *D & C* corresponds to Frye's 4th phase of comedy and romance, in which an ideal society must be defended and extended. It also has considerable elements of Frye's 5th phase; Longus stresses his tale's universality[85] and the constant mention of natural forces and the narrative's connection between the progress of the seasons and plot developments suggests that these events ex-

---

[84] Note that Longus' introduction not only claims to be able to provide useful information and to teach (as does Thucydides' prologue) but also to remind us about erôs, not only as a mundane process, but, as the rest of the romance shows, erôs as an ideal universal force that brings harmony to the entire universe, as Chalk (1960) emphasizes.

[85] Hunter (1996) 378.

press fundamental patterns. This ideal aspect is aligned with Longus' presentation of Erôs as the oldest and most powerful of the gods, who in syncretic fashion can all be identified with Erôs.[86] Heliodorus' Charicleia is something of a Platonic form incarnate; Longus, by borrowing themes and images from Plato's *Phaedrus*,[87] recalls the Platonic doctrine of those forms of absolute beauty that objects of this world reflect and hints at the connection between physical erôs and philosophic enlightenment; such a platonic doctrine insists that physical desire can be utilized for the highest philosophical purposes,[88] and Gnathon's partial redemption which is achieved through overcoming the brutish Lampis can be explained by his status as a *theatês* of Daphnis' platonically ideal beauty (4.16).[89]

As the works of Apuleius, Lucian, and Aelius Aristides show, even sophisticated readers could have considerable longing for a religion that provided rescue from life's arbitrary horrors, and many such readers would have responded to this ideal dimension in Longus' romance. The actions of the Gymnosophists and the Ethiopians of Meroë represent Heliodorus' dream of a more perfect religious practice; as has been seen above, Longus too provides an imaginative, ideal vison of a cosmos informed by the divine. This universe, a totality organized by a provident Erôs with a harmony recalling Plato's ideal cosmic music, is able to accommodate the emotional, imaginative and rational aspects of humanity. The gods of this world are accessible; Daphnis and Chloe develop a close relationship with Pan and the Nymphs and Erôs, and through them with the material and biological universe. In Longus' era many aristocrats participated in Dionysic rituals held in the countryside, and Dionysos imagery is common on Roman-era sarcophagi. Dionysophanes and Chloe's parents, devotees of the rural gods (4.13), leave the city to partake in the rural Dionysos festival and, through the resulting events and discoveries, their lives are substantially improved.

The life of the Lesbian aristocrats appears one of continuous pleasure without the burdens of work, although this ideal dimension is undercut by the circumstances of childrens' exposure (4.24). Bloch stressed the dream of a humanized nature and humanized work, an aspect quite prevalent in Lon-

---

[86] See especially Chalk (1960) 32–51.
[87] Borrowing, of course, with considerable irony and comedy; Socrates in the *Phaedrus* claims the city, not the country, is where he finds education, and Plato generally makes a strong separation between *muthos* and *logos*; see Hunter (1997) 17–18.
[88] See Hunter (1997) 15–28; Bretzigheimer (1988) 515–555.
[89] MacQueen (1990) 170.

Longus; it is hard to distinguish the work that Daphnis and Chloe do from play; the closeness of the protagonists to their animals, and the use of music instead of force to control them, suggests a very different vision of a proper means of production. The gardens, especially the great ornamental garden of 4.2–3, where art and nature are indistinguishably blended, again point to an ideal, cooperative fusion of human and natural effort, the result of a humane technology.[90]

Longus' romance, although largely reproducing the city-dweller's idyllic vision of country life,[91] contains abundant references to worldly evil; the practice of slavery, child-exposure, warfare and piracy, and the parasitical control of the city over the countryside, plus animal attacks and poor harvests. While such solutions as an end to war through the offices of Pan are utterly fanciful, the diminution of class distinctions during their wedding, and the later lives of the mature Daphnis and Chloe as aristocrats who defy the usual aristocratic social codes[92] and are not cut off from the land and the people who produce their wealth,[93] contains the rudiments of a realizable social improvement.

Summation

Chariton's romance is most utopian in its echoes of the myth of Demeter and Korê, in which the powers of the underworld are defeated and a new beneficent situation arises for humankind, and in the presentation of a recognizable, but better, type of history and society, which presents images of urban social harmony, democracy, rule of law and Greek independence from foreign imperial control. Heliodorus' romance likewise reflects contemporary

---

[90] Although the violent images depicted on the altar in the garden's center (4.3) suggest the violence at the heart of human life and relationships.

[91] Longo (1978) and DiVirgilio (1991) stress how this depiction of a countryside whose inhabitants are not obviously in poverty (they always have the resources to give gifts) and are often occupied in festivities, and are ennobled by a certain virtuous poverty, encourages Longus' urban readers forget the oppressive system their lifestyle is based upon.

[92] See Daude (1991).

[93] Gnathon, who makes a career of self-indulgent over-consumption without doing any constructive work and who is particularly despised by the country folk and made an object of ridicule by Longus particularly embodies this social evil; see Winkler (1990) 112. Further, Whitmarsh has pointed out that the only character that is explicitly designated as *pepaideumenos* is the urban parasite Gnathon (4.17.3); see Whitmarsh (2001) 102.

political problems and presents an even more ideal alternative in Hydaspes and Meroë. It also contains themes common to eschatology and apocalypse; Charicleia is clearly the marvelous child and reformer that must find her true identity and restore her people, creating a model for a more unified and less barbaric type of society as well as for personal integrity. It also, more than the other romances, challenges notions of Greek supremacy. Longus' romance presents exiled children who must find their identity and proper status, and who will create a new model for individual behavior and social relations. Longus' romance is especially utopian in its suggestion of the possibility of recovering the lost potentials of erôs, of forging more ideal relationships with nature and creating more ludic forms of work, and dissolving (at least partially) the gulf between social classes. All these romances show a future whose hidden potentials are able to rewrite and redeem a compromised past.

This overview hardly exhausts the topic. While the narrative of triumphant love was the most rewarding element for most readers of the Greek romance, this did not preclude other sources of engagement. The patterns our romances share with myths and religious formulations which posit a better world to a certain degree imported this perspective into them. And the persistence of literary works, folktales, rituals and other creative productions based on these perspectives testifies to the large number of individuals for whom such an ideal possibility was able to be enjoyed, if not faithfully believed. The limitations and distortions of social and political life make themselves felt in these texts, but also hopes, including objectively real hopes, appear; certainly images of a freer, less alienated society would have had their delights alongside the productions of erôs. Finally, by pointing out the persistence of this ideal dream within literary texts, we thereby show its durability in human history and aid those who still imagine the possibility of radical change, helping them know that there will be always a ground wherein the beginnings of a better world may take root.

Bibliography

Aarne, A., and Thompson, S. 1961. *The Types of Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography.* Folklore Fellows Communications No. 184, Helsinki.
Alvares, J. 1997. 'Chariton's Erotic History,' *AJP* 118, 613–629.
— 2001–2. 'Some Political and Ideological Dimensions of Chariton's *Chaireas and Callir-*

hoe,' *CJ* 97.2, 113–144.

Anderson, G. 1982. *Eros Sophistes – Ancient Novelists at Play*, Chico, CA.

Arnott, G. 1994. 'Longus, Natural History, and Realism,' in J. Tatum, ed., *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 199–215.

Balfour, I. 1988. *Northrop Frye*, New York.

Bar-Ilan, M 1995. 'Prester John: Fiction and History,' *History of European Idea*s 20, 291–298.

Berry, J. 2001. *Narrative and Identity in Heliodorus' Aithiopika*, Dissertation University of Chicago.

Billault, A. 1989. 'De l'histoire au roman: Hermocrate de Syracuse,' *REG* 102, 540–548.

Black, B. 1986. 'The Abolition of Work,' in B. Black, *The Abolition of Work and Other Essay*s, Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited. This essay is reproduced on the internet: www.scenewash.org/lobbies/chainthinker/situationist/black/zero/work18.html.

Bloch, E. 1959. *Erbschaft dieser Zeit.* (enlarged edition), Berlin and Frankfurt.

—— 1972. *Das Materialismusproblem, seine Geschichte und Substanz*, Frankfurt am Main.

—— 1977. *Geist der Utopie*, Frankfurt am Main.

—— Plaice, S. (N. Plaice, P. Knight, trans.) 1986. *The Principle of Hope.* (3 vols.), MIT Press.

—— Zipes, J. 1988. (F. Mecklenberg, trans.). *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*, MIT Press.

Bompaire, J. 1977. 'Le décor Sicilien dans le roman grec et dans la littérature contemporaine,' *REG* 90, 55–68.

Borgogno, A. 1971. 'Menandro in Caritone,' *RFIC* 99, 257–263.

Bretzigheimer, G. 1988. 'Die Komik in Longos' Hirtenroman Daphnis und Chloe,' *Gymnasium* 95, 515–555.

Burkert, W. 1979. *Structure and history in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Berkeley.

Chalk, H. H. O. 1960. 'Eros and the Lesbian Pastorals of Longus,' *JHS* 80, 32–51.

Chew, K. 1994. *Novel Techniques: Motivation and Causation in the Ancient Novels with Special Reference to Heliodorus' Aethiopica*, Dissertation UCLA.

Clay, D., Purvis, A. 1999. *Four Island Utopias*, Focus Press.

Corbato, C. 1968. 'Da Menandro a Caritone. Studi sulla Genesi del Romanzo Greco e i suoi Rapporti con la Commedia Nuova I,' *Quaderni Triestini sul Teatro Antico* 1, 5–44.

Cook, S. L. 1995. *Prophecy and Apocalypticism*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Daude, C. 1991. 'Le roman de Daphnis et Chloé, ou comment ne pas être «un animal politique»,' in N. Fick et J.-C. Carrière, eds., *Mélanges: Etienne Bernand,* Université de Besançon, Paris, 203–225.

Dawson, D. 1992. *Communist Utopias in Greek Thought*, Oxford.

de la Vega, M.J. Hidalgo. 1988. 'Los misterios y la magia en las Etiopicas de Heliodoro,' *Studia Historica. Historia Antigua* 6, 175–188.

Denham, R. D. 1978. *Northrop Frye and Critical Method*, Pennsylvania State University Press.

Di Virgilio, R. 1991. *La narrativa greca d'amore: "Dafni e Cloe" di Longo*, Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei.

Dundes, A. G. 1964. *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales*, Helsinki.

Edwards, D. R. 1996. *Religion and Power. Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Greek East*, New York.

Egger, B. 1990. *Women in the Greek Novel: Constructing the Feminine*, Dissertation University of California-Irvine.

Eliade, M. 1971 (W. R. Trask, trans.). *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History*, Princeton, N.J.

Ferguson, J. 1975. *Utopias of the Classical World*, Ithaca.

Foley, H. P. 1977. 'Interpretive Essay on the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*,' in H. P. Foley, ed., *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Princeton, 77–168.

Frye, N. 1957. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, Princeton.

— 1970. *The Stubborn Structure; Essays on Criticism and Society*, Ithaca.

— 1976. *Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, Harvard University Press.

— 1982. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, New York.

Geoghegan, V. 1996. *Ernst Bloch*, New York.

Giangrande, L. 1976. 'Les Utopies Hellénistiques,' *Cahiers des Études Anciennes* 5, 17–33.

Günther, R., Müller, R. 1988. *Das goldene Zeitalter: Utopien der hellenistisch-römischen Antike*, Stuttgart.

Heiserman, A. 1977. *The Novel before the Novel. Essays and Discussions*, Chicago.

Helms, J. 1966. *Character Portrayal in the Romance of Chariton*, The Hague.

Holquist, M. 1990. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, London.

Holland, N. 1968. *The Dynamics of Literary Reponse*, Oxford.

Hudson, W. 1982. *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*, New York.

Hunter, R. 1996. 'Longus, Daphnis and Chloe,' in G. Schmeling, ed., *The Novel in the Ancient World*, Leiden, 361–386.

— 1997. 'Longus and Plato,' in Picone, M., Zimmermann, B., eds., *Der antike Roman und seine mittelalterliche Rezeption*, Basel, 15–28.

Itzkoff, S. W. 1977. *Ernst Cassirer, Philosopher of Culture*, Boston.

Jameson, F. 1981. *The Political Unconciousness. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Ithaca.

— 1971. *Marxism and Form*, Princeton.

— 1990. 'Five Theses on Marxism,' in M. Hardt, K. Weeks, eds., *The Jameson Reader*, Oxford, 165–171.

— 1990. 'Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,' in M. Hardt, K. Weeks, eds., *The Jameson Reader*, Oxford, 121–148.

Johne, R. 1996. 'Women in the Ancient Novel,' in G. Schmeling, ed., *The Novel in the Ancient World*, Leiden, 151–207.

Jones, C. P. 1978. *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom*, Harvard University Press.

Konstan, D. 1994. *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres*, Princeton.

Laplace, M. 1980. 'Les Légendes Troyennes dans le "Roman" de Chariton, *Chairéas et Callirhoé*,' *REG* 93, 83–125.

Levi-Strauss, C. 1966. *The Savage Mind*, University of Chicago Press.

Longo, O. 1978. 'Paesaggio di Longo Sofista,' *Quaderni di Storia* 4, 99–120.

Marcuse, H. 1955. *Eros and Civilization*, Boston.

MacQueen, B. D. 1990. *Myth, Rhetoric and Fiction. A Reading of Longus' Daphnis and Chloe*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

McCulloh, W. E. 1970. *Longus*, New York.

Morgan, J. R. 1995. 'The Greek novel: towards a sociology of production and reception,' in A. Powell, ed., *The Greek World*, London, 130–152.

— 1996. 'Heliodorus,' in G. Schmeling, ed., *The Novel in the Ancient World*. Leiden, 417–456.

— "Narrative Doublets in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*," in Hunter, R., ed., *Studies in Heliodorus*, Cambridge, 1998, 60–78.

Morson, G.S., and Emerson, C. 1990. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, Stanford.

Muchow, M.D. 1988. *Passionate Love and Respectable Society in Three Greek Novels.* Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University.

Nimis, S. 1994. "The Prosaics of the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 27, 387–411.

— 1998. "Memory and Description in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 31, 99–122.

—   1999. "The Sense of Open-Endedness in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 32, 215–238.

Oliver, J.H. 1953. *The Ruling Power. A Study of the Roman Empire in the Second Century after Christ through the Roman Oration of Aelius Aristides.* (= *TAPHS*, n.s., vol. 43.4, 871–1003), Philadelphia.

Perry, B.E. 1967. *The Ancient Romances: a Literary-Historical Account of their Origins*. Berkeley.

Propp, V. – Scott, L., trans. 1968. *The Morphology of the Folktale*. 2nd ed. Austin.

Ruiz-Montero, C. 2000. "Caritón de Aphrodisias y el Mundo Real," in P. Liviabella Furiani and A. M. Scarcella, eds., *Piccolo Mondo Antico*. Perugia, 1989, 107–149.

Russell, F., *Northrop Frye on Myth*. New York.

Scarcella, A.M. 1993. "Realtà e Letteratura nel Paesaggio Sociale ed Economico del Romanzo di Longo Sofista," in *Romanzo e Romanzieri. Note di Narratologia Greca.* Perugia, 241–257.

Sowa, C.W. 1984. *Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns*, Chicago.

Swain, S.C.R. 1996. *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World A.D. 50–250*, Oxford.

Szepessy, T. 1957. "Die *Aithiopika* des Heliodoros und der griechische sophistische Liebesroman," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 5, 241–259.

Vickery, J.B. 1980. "Literary Criticism and Myth: Ango-American Critics," in J.P. Strelka, ed., *Literary Criticism and Myth*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 210–237.

Whitmarsh, T. 2001. *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*, Oxford.

—   1998. "The Birth of a Prodigy: Heliodorus and the Genealogy of Hellenism," in R. Hunter, ed., *Studies in Heliodorus*, Cambridge, 93–124.

Wimsatt, W.K. 1966. "Northrop Frye: Criticism as Myth," in M. Krieger, ed., *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism. Selected Papers from the English Institute*, New York – London, 75–107.

Winkler, J. 1982. "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*," *Yale Classical Studies* 27, 93–158.

—   1990. "The Education of Chloe: Hidden Injuries of Sex," in J. Winkler, ed., *The Constraints of Desire. The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. New York, 101–126.