Philosophical Framing:
The Phaedran Setting of *Leucippe and Cleitophon*

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1. *Opening questions*

The beginning of Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Cleitophon* presents the reader with an enigma. The opening sequence stages the entire novel as the oral narrative of one ego-narrator (Cleitophon), nested within the ego-narrative of an unnamed primary narrator who communicates across the page without mediation as if in internal monologue, without any reference to writing, papyrus, or textually-orientated entities such as the reader which might allow us to triangulate him, delineate a textual context for his curiously disembodied voice, or otherwise account for its *written-ness*. No further clues are found, either, at the end of Cleitophon's narrative, which finishes abruptly, without a return to the opening frame.[1] In a genre which typically justifies, or at least in some way acknowledges, its textuality, especially at the narrative's beginning or end,[2] the anonymity of *Leucippe and Cleitophon*'s primary narrator, the text's resistance to acknowledging its own medium, and the absence of an inscribed author creates a gap between the fiction and the actuality of the narrative's discourse that demands filling. How did these ostensibly spoken words make the transition to the written

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[1] For discussion, see § 3 below.

[2] Chariton 8,8,16: 'This much I wrote (*synegrapsa*) about Callirhoe'. Hld. 10,41,5 is more suggestive in its wording: 'Such was the limit of the composition (*to syntagma*) of the Ethiopian story concerning Theagenes and Charicleia, composed (*ho synetaxen*) by a Phoenician man from Emesa, one of the descendants of the sun, the son of Theodosius, Heliodorus'. On oral/written forms of closure in the novels, see Nimis 2004. In a paper delivered at the 2007 RICAN, Ewen Bowie explored tensions between orality and textuality in Chariton, Longus, and Antonius Diogenes. On orality in the novels, see Rimell 2007. All translations in this paper are my own.

words we are reading? Who wrote them down? Where is this novel's fiction
of its own textuality? These questions are not simply a reaction to the
novel's deviation from an apparent generic norm; this paper explores how
the presence of Plato's *Phaedrus* as a philosophical and literary intertext in
the frame of *Leucippe and Cleitophon* provokes reflection on such issues,
playfully foregrounding the tension between the (pseudo-) orality and textu-
ality of this disjunctive work.[3]

2. *Phaedran soundings in the preamble to Leucippe and Cleitophon*

The philosophical and literary implications of Achilles Tatius' use of Plato
have been examined most recently and extensively in monographs by Helen
Morales and Ian Repath which devote much attention to the importance of
the *Phaedrus* as a philosophical underpinning to the novel's erotic theme.[4]
Love, however, is only one of the concerns of the *Phaedrus*, as both Morales
and Repath recognise; it is also concerned with rhetoric: what we do when
we make or write speeches – and for Socrates, this difference is crucial.
Achilles Tatius' choice of the Phaedran *locus amoenus* as the location for
Cleitophon's narrative is, as Repath notes, programmatic for the novel: *Leu-
cippe and Cleitophon* is a Phaedran text. It is therefore crucial to explore the
ways in which these Phaedran allusions map on to the novel the metaliterary
concerns of Plato's work, especially the difference between oral and written
discourse which for Socrates pivots on the presence or absence of the author,
and the related issue of reader-response.

   At 1,2,3, Achilles Tatius evokes the famous *locus amoenus* from the
prelude to the *Phaedrus*, a scene with shady plane trees and cool pellucid
stream, which provides the setting – both physically and ideologically – for
Cleitophon's narrative.[5] The intertextuality in itself – indeed any such allu-

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[3] See Fowler 2001, 226 on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* as a disjunctive work which
'…aspires to "presence", but simultaneously signals an awareness of its impossibility,
and derives its energy from an interplay of the two…'

[4] See Morales 2004, especially 50–60. Repath's *Playing with Plato* (forthcoming) is a
book-length analysis of Achilles Tatius' use of Plato, the second chapter of which, 'Plane
Talking: Setting the Scene,' is especially relevant to this paper. For a stimulating inter-
pretation of the Platonic allusions in the preamble to *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, which
differs from mine, see also Marinčič 2007. On Plato in the Greek novel more generally,
see Goldhill 1995, ch. 2.

[5] Pl. *Phdr.* 229a–229b3 and 230a6–230c5. On the plot-shaping role of this and other land-
scapes in the novel, see Martin 2002.

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sive strategy – serves as a reminder of the writerliness of the text; here the obvious literary texture of the characters' conversational exchange[6] and the setting in which they interact focuses attention on the disjunction between the fictive orality and the actual textuality of their discourse. The fictive orality brings us mimetically closer to the fictionally real events, while the allusiveness of their words and of the setting frames these events as literary, textual artifice.[7] The preamble therefore constructs and simultaneously subverts its illusion of orality, problematising the novel's discourse in a way that invites the reader to think about speech and writing within an explicitly Platonic context. This paradoxical quality of the opening frame is itself paralleled in the complex framing-devices prefacing some of Plato's dialogues, which simultaneously assert and undermine the dialogues' authority in ways that seem designed to provoke the reader into thinking about issues of authority.[8]

The preamble of Plato's *Phaedrus* highlights twin concerns: first, the issue of orality *versus* textuality, and second, the question of how to interpret traditional stories exemplified by the myth (*mythologēma*) of Boreas and Oreithyia. To recall the opening scene, Socrates asks Phaedrus, who has just visited Lysias, to recite Lysias' speech on love. After an initial display of reluctance, which Socrates immediately sees through, Phaedrus, who has been practising since early morning, agrees to give an oral summary of the speech, but is foiled when Socrates guesses correctly that he is cheating: he is not summarising the speech from memory; he has the text of Lysias'

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[6] Cleitophon's disingenuous expression of reluctance to tell his story (1,2,2) is reminiscent of Phaedrus' false modesty when Socrates asks him to recite Lysias' speech on love (*Phdr.* 228 b6–c9); Cleitophon's image of the 'wasp-nest of stories' (*smēnos logōn*) echoes Socrates' 'wasp-nest of arguments' (*hesmos logōn*) in *R.* 450b1. For discussion, see Morales 2004, 50–60.

[7] For the contrary view, that the Platonic *prooimion* functions as a quasi-*trompe l'oeil*, designed to efface the dialogue's texuality, see Marinčič 2007, 175, who insists that: 'The only thing that can be said for certain about those [Platonic] frames is that they are not intended to call attention to the written materiality of the dialogue; quite on the contrary, they create a distance from the material book, an illusionary stage for a living conversation, which could otherwise give the impression of a transcription or, even worse, of a "script" for future performances of the *same* text'. Given the self-referential prominence assigned to the material text in the *prooimia* to dialogues such as the *Phaedrus* and the *Theaetetus*, however, I find this assertion highly questionable.

[8] Plato's frames have been the subject of much scholarly debate in recent years; for an excellent general discussion, see Johnson 1998; for discussion of the frame of the *Symposium*, see Halperin 1992 and Henderson 2000, 291–298; on the *Theaetetus*, see Morgan 2003, especially 102–107. On the framing of Plato's Atlantis myth in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*, see Gill 1979.

speech hidden under his cloak! They agree instead to sit down on the grass under the shade of a plane tree, and to read the text of the speech together.[9] The preamble therefore presents a scenario where Phaedrus initially tries to deceive Socrates with an oral performance of another author's speech, and Socrates discovers the textuality underlying the ostensibly oral discourse. When Phaedrus and Socrates settle down under the plane tree to read Lysias' speech, we, as readers of Plato's *Phaedrus*, peer over their shoulders, as it were, and read the text (of the text) with them, in a sort of virtual *locus amoenus* that is conjured up for us in Plato's words. This *mise en abyme* signals that what Phaedrus and Socrates say concerning the text *they* are reading will affect also the text *we* are reading, as the *Phaedrus* acquires a self-reflexive dimension.

There are striking similarities in the preamble to *Leucippe and Cleitophon.* Both Socrates and the novel's primary narrator listen to a discourse on love while wandering in strange surroundings (the Attic countryside, albeit familiar to Socrates, was avowedly not his natural *milieu*; the primary narrator of *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is temporarily stranded in the city of Sidon).[10] Both characterise themselves as 'lovers'; Socrates as 'a lover of speeches' (*logōn erastēs*), and the narrator as 'erotically disposed' (*erōtikos*).[11] Both passages contain a myth involving the rape of a girl by a god: the rape of Oreithyia by Boreas in the *Phaedrus*,[12] and the rape of Europa by Zeus in the painting described by the novel's primary narrator. Both of these myths are connected with their physical setting: the spot in the Attic countryside where (Phaedrus thinks) Oreithyia was raped, and Sidon, the location of the painting of Phoenician Europa. The final tableau in the description of the Europa painting, where Eros leads the taurine Zeus, is a visual echo of Socrates' ironic self-depiction in the *Phaedrus*, being led into the countryside by his love for speeches, as hungry animals are led with temptingly brandished vegetables.[13]

As the narrator and Cleitophon sit down in a *Phaedrus*-style *locus amoenus* in order to listen to Cleitophon's story about love, we, as readers, are already sensitised to the textuality of their world: it is conjured out of Plato's

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[9] *Phdr.* 228d6–229b3.

[10] For Socrates as a 'tourist' in the countryside, see *Phdr.* 230c6–d5.

[11] *Phdr.* 228c1–2; Ach. Tat. 1,2,1. Repath (forthcoming, ch. 2, § 1) argues that *erōtikos* means 'fascinated by things to do with love,' drawing the anonymous narrator close to the Platonic Socrates.

[12] *Phdr.* 229b4–d2.

[13] Ach. Tat. 1,1,13; *Phdr.* 230d5–e1.

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text.[14] Echoes of the opening scene of the *Phaedrus* enhance the collusion with the exodiegetic reader that this orality is fictive only; the *logos* that was hidden under Phaedrus' cloak finds its counterpart in the implied text underlying Cleitophon's oral recitation; beneath a veneer of fictive orality, *we* are reading this covert text. The presence of the *Phaedrus* in the preamble therefore figures Achilles Tatius' ludic interplay of orality and textuality.

The primary narrator's invitation to Cleitophon to begin his narrative also constitutes a frame-breaking invitation to the exodiegetic reader into a metatextual reading of the scene:

> "Ὥρα σοι," ἔφην, "τῆς τῶν λόγων ἀκροάσεως· πάντως δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος τόπος ἡδὺς καὶ μύθων ἄξιος ἐρωτικῶν."
> "Now,' said I, "it's time to hear your tales – and this sort of place is in every way pleasant and worthy of love-stories". [15]

To produce the sense in which I have translated it above (which is the common sense ascribed to this line), σοι is interpreted as an ethic dative, marking Cleitophon's responsibility for the *logoi* which it is time to hear. However, the prominent position assigned to the pronoun σοι, as well as the ambiguity of the noun *akroasis* (meaning both 'listening to' and 'recitation of')[16] invites alternative interpretations, such as: 'It is time for you (i.e. Cleitophon) for the recitation of stories' but also: 'It is time for you for listening to stories'. This latter reading, which exploits the primary sense of *akroasis* ('hearing, hearkening or listening to') is peculiarly disjunctive, as the pronoun σοι should indicate the narrator's interlocutor Cleitophon, but it makes no sense to tell the story*teller* that he should *listen to* the story. The pronoun in this interpretation inscribes the exodiegetic reader, in a frame-breaking acknowledgement by an esodiegetic character of the exodiegetic reader's presence, breaching one of the fundamental laws of narrative logic, which dictates that characters can only be aware of other characters who share the same narrative level. The inscription of the reader into the text also converts the narrator's remark about the suitability of the charming topographical setting to the type of story Cleitophon is about to tell – it is 'a charming place, suitable to love stories' – into a metaliterary comment on the suitabil-

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[14] Whitmarsh 2003, 194 interprets the 'hackneyed,' metaliterary setting, combined with the initiatory language used by the primary narrator, as a sign that Cleitophon has been 'novelised'.

[15] Ach. Tat. 1,2,3.

[16] LSJ, s.v. ἀκρόασις.

ity of the *locus amoenus* as a *topos* in erotic narrative.[17] The primary narrator's statement, therefore, serves both to instigate Cleitophon's narrative, and to alert the reader to the fact that the story proper is about to start.

The Phaedran intertext also adds savour to Cleitophon's apology about the suspiciously story-like nature of his narrative, by injecting doubts about the authorship of his story. The authenticity of the *Erōtikos*, which is 'quoted' at *Phaedrus* 230e6–234c5, has been hotly debated in modern scholarship, and the question of the authorship of the speech concerned ancient readers as well.[18] If it is Lysianic, it is unique; we have no other example of an epideictic speech by Lysias. If it is not an authentic Lysianic composition, two possibilities then present themselves: it may be Plato's reconstruction from memory of a genuine speech on love by Lysias, the original of which has not survived, which would account for some non-Platonic features of the style and language. Alternatively, it may be a Platonic pastiche in imitation of Lysias' style; the speeches of Aristophanes and Agathon in the *Symposium* are excellent proof of Plato's mimetic skill.[19] To exacerbate the problem of Lysias' authorial connection to the speech, at 257c4–6 Phaedrus reports his ill-repute as a *logographos*, a writer of speeches to be performed by *other* people, a figure who, in the context of Socrates' condemnation of the written word in the *Phaedrus*, reifies the separation of the text from its author. All of this raises the possibility that the corresponding text-in-the-text *we* are reading – Cleitophon's narrative – may also be the product of another author's creativity: Cleitophon's avowedly fiction-like account of what he claims are his own adventures may in fact be someone else's novel…

The choice of Platonic intertext is highly significant, as the *Phaedrus* explores, self-reflexively, the relation between the author and his *logos*, and the relative value of the spoken and the written word for imparting true wisdom.[20] Socrates argues that oral discourse is preferable for communicating

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[17] Plutarch, who knew the *Phaedrus* well and used its *locus amoenus* himself in his own dialogue on love, the *Amatorius*, was also aware of the rather hackneyed nature of this and other, similar *topoi*, from competitive over-use by writers trying to outdo Plato (*Mor.* 749a).

[18] For a summary of modern arguments on either side, see Rowe 1986 *ad loc.* Ancient evidence sides with the genuine Lysianic authorship of the speech as it stands in Plato's text, e.g. D.L. 3,95; Herm. *in Phdr.* 35,19. However, Hermeias' somewhat dogmatic assertion of Lysianic authorship (*eidenai de dei*) rather implies the existence of alternative views on the matter, even if these have not survived. Plutarch (*Mor.* 40e) believes the speech in *Phdr.* 230e–234c is not directly representative of the Lysianic original, but is Plato's reworking of the original.

[19] For a survey of the problem, see Dover 1968, 69–71.

[20] *Phdr.* 274b6–end, especially 275c5–276a9.

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truth and wisdom because it allows one to interrogate the author in order to clarify his meaning. In written discourse, by contrast, the author is absent; he is represented only by his mute, written words, which cannot respond to questioning. Dialectic is therefore impossible with a written text, and writing can only ever remind one of what it says; it cannot impart new wisdom. Significantly, Socrates uses the analogy of *painting* to illustrate writing's deficiency in this respect,[21] and it is no accident that Achilles Tatius' Phaedran preamble also contains a painting, which represents the textuality of the novel. In fact, the primary narrator's description of the Europa painting draws attention to the painted figures' inability to communicate vocally: the helpless girls watching Europa's marine abduction from the shore have their mouths open as if they were about to emit a cry of fear – a visual representation of a silent scream.[22] Implicit in this conceit is Simonides' famous assertion that 'painting is silent poetry; poetry is painting that talks,'[23] but the overtly Phaedran context elicits a reading within the framework of Socrates' ideas on the difference between spoken and written words.

The *Phaedrus* also inscribes into the preamble of the novel the metaliterary concern with how to interpret stories, especially their *truth-value*. In Plato's dialogue, at his recollection of the myth of the rape of Oreithyia by Boreas, Phaedrus asks Socrates if he believes the story to be true. In his response, Socrates shows an awareness of chic rationalising interpretations which explain the myth as an allegory for an accident, where the girl was blown off the rock by a gust of wind, but he makes the calculated decision to accept the story at its traditional face value instead. For Socrates, such intellectual endeavours are simply not worth the effort, for if one is to rationalise *one* such story, one must rationalise them *all* – and this is a diversion from the more important business of getting to know oneself.[24] Socrates is an ironic reader, pretending to know less than he does by entering knowingly into the common contractual understanding (*to nomizomenon*) of how to 'read' myths: believing them to be true, even though he knows really that they are not. This is a good description of how experienced readers read fiction, entering into the game of make-believe which requires that they ascribe to the story the status of truth, while knowing that it is not 'really' true, but fictionally true. Socrates' reasons for reading myths in this way may be

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[21] *Phdr.* 275d4–7. On painting in Plato, see Keuls 1974.

[22] Ach. Tat. 1,1,7.

[23] Plu. *Mor.* 346f. The idea became commonplace; see Plu. *Mor.* 18a, where it is described as 'that oft-repeated saying'. For discussion of the conceit in the proem to Longus' novel, see Hunter 1983, 44–47.

[24] *Phdr.* 229c4–230a6.

quite different from those that motivate most readers of fiction (entertainment, imaginative freedom, vicarious experience, escapism…), but the crucial point is how the Phaedran presences invite a variety of responses to Cleitophon's narrative: one may, like the 'over-clever and laborious' rationalist readers of myth, question the truth-value of Cleitophon's story at every detail, or one may, like Socrates, decide to enter into the spirit of the exercise, and read it knowingly as fiction. Cleitophon's declaration that the narrator's request has stirred up a wasp-nest of *logoi* and an account that is like *mythoi* inscribes into the text the metafictional discussion of the *mythologēma* of Oreithyia and Boreas in the preamble to Plato's dialogue;[25] the presence of the *Phaedrus* in the preamble to the novel thematises programmatically the issue of how to read fiction, and constructs an implied reader who is alert to the metafictional and metanovelistic thrust of the work. Nor is Achilles Tatius unique in using the *Phaedrus* in this way. Lucian allusively inscribes Socrates and Phaedrus' discussion of how to interpret myths in the prelude to the *Philopseudes*, a Platonic-style dialogue on the theme of lies,[26] and it is no accident that the first inset tale in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* – which leads directly into a discussion of how the story should be interpreted – features a character called Socrates, who meets his gruesome end in a *locus amoenus* that comes straight from the *Phaedrus*.[27] The discussion of the believability of traditional stories about gigantic skeletons and Homeric warriors in the preamble to Philostratus' dialogue on heroes, the *Heroicus*, similarly takes place in a *Phaedrus*-style *locus amoenus*.[28]

By placing the orality of the novel within a distinctly Phaedran frame, Achilles Tatius also highlights the importance of the reader's role. In Socratic terms, the written text, being without a present author, shifts the emphasis from author to reader as the site where meaning is realised; meaning is no longer an issue of authorial intention, but rather reader-reception, which was problematic for Socrates, as it led to a plurality of interpretations rather than absolute truth. By foregrounding, paradoxically, the written-ness

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[25] See Repath forthcoming, ch. 2, where he discusses Plato *Gorgias* 523a1–3 as a particularly clear example of the *logos*/*mythos* dichotomy along the lines of fact/fiction. For similar shaping of reader-reception using these terms, see Longus 2,7,1.

[26] Lucian *Philops.* 2–3; for discussion of Platonic presences in Lucian's *Philopseudes*, see Ní Mheallaigh 2005a, 11–31.

[27] Ap. *Met.* 1,18–19; on the Phaedran nuances in Aristomenes' tale in Apuleius, see Smith & Woods 2002 and Graverini 2007, esp. 146–147.

[28] Philostr. *Her.* 3–5; on the *Heroicus*, see Martin 2002 and Hodkinson 2003. For a survey of allusions to the *Phaedrus* in the literature of the Second Sophistic, see Trapp 1990 (who does not, however, mention the allusions in the *Philopseudes*).

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of his text within the framework of the oral/textual dialectic of Plato's *Phaedrus*, and by refusing to inscribe an author to account for this writtenness, Achilles Tatius signals that his novel will exercise and explore reader-response performatively, as Plato's *Phaedrus* does. It is appropriate that such theoretical concerns are established programmatically in a novel which repeatedly toys with and tests the reader's ability generally to interpret texts such as paintings,[29] and more specifically to read novelistic fiction, by tracking the incremental novelisation of the narrator Cleitophon: his initiation into the experience of being a knowing novel-reader.[30]

3. *Philosophical presence…and absence*

One of the interpretational problems generated by the preamble is its tenuous connection to the rest of the novel. Although Cleitophon's entire narrative is formally mediated through the anonymous primary narrator, this character no longer makes his presence formally felt in the narrative once Cleitophon begins to speak, and we are not brought back to this opening frame once Cleitophon's tale comes to a close.[31] This formal elision of a narrative layer itself has a classic Platonic pedigree: it is the explicit strategy outlined by Eucleides, the author of a Socratic *logos*, in the prelude to the *Theaetetus*[32] – a work which begins self-reflexively, like the *Phaedrus*, with the transition from oral to written discourse, in this case the textualisation of the original dialogue between Socrates and Theaetetus, which took place years previously. The *Theaetetus* is the only Platonic dialogue to feature the text of a Socratic *logos*, just as *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, unique among the novels for the extent to which it evades its own textuality, is also – paradoxically – the only surviving novel to contain a *book*.[33]

The anti-closural lack of a return to the opening frame is a feature of several of Plato's dialogues, most famously perhaps the *Symposium*. Marinčič, who notes the structural similarity with the *Symposium*, interprets the

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[29] For discussion, see Bartsch 1989, especially 40–79.

[30] Whitmarsh 2003.

[31] Whitmarsh 2003, 193, however, points out that, while there are no formal inscriptions of the primary narrator's intervention once Cleitophon' narrative begins, this does not necessarily mean that he is forgotten: 'the co-existence of hidden authors is an ever present but unexpressed potentiality, and stimulates (or can stimulate) the reader to explore narrative ironies'.

[32] *Tht.* 143b–c.

[33] Ach. Tat. 1,6,6; see Goldhill 1995, 70; Whitmarsh 2003, 199.

strategy in both texts as a deliberate evasion of authorial closure, and a re-
fusal to frame the narrative as text, the intended effect of which is to sustain
the illusion of an open-ended, 'oral' performance.[34] An interpretation that is
consistent with the overtly Phaedran context of the novel – specifically in
terms of what Socrates says in that work about writing's inability to commu-
nicate – is also possible, and perhaps preferable. The text's open-endedness
provokes questions from the reader, which the text itself cannot answer; the
absence of writing that generates questions at the end of the novel mirrors
the enigmatic, question-provoking *presence* of writing at its start. The
novel's lack of closure heightens the reader's awareness of the absence of an
authorial figure to tie up narrative ends in accordance with generic conven-
tion.[35] The non-closure of *Leucippe and Cleitophon* frames the novel in an
artfully Phaedran play on presence, absence, and text.

The preamble therefore contains hints that invite the knowing reader into
a complicit recognition of the game: that this fictive orality is *only make-
believe*. Significantly, the text's playful ironisation of its own fiction of oral-
ity takes place within an explicitly *Platonic* context. Cleitophon himself is a
character with a Platonic name, as Repath observes.[36] It is a name that is sug-
gestive of his *orality* as a narrator: 'famous-speaker', but in the specifically
Phaedran and more generally Platonic context of the frame, the alert reader
will also recall that Cleitophon in the cast of Plato's dialogues is a friend of
Lysias, none other than the author to whom the speech in the *Phaedrus* is
ascribed.[37] He also shares his name with a Platonic dialogue – the *Cleitophon*
– itself a work of meta-philosophy much as Cleitophon's narrative is meta-
novelistic, a work whose authorship has been questioned in modern scholar-
ship, and which is sometimes felt to lack closure.[38] Cleitophon's name is
therefore, paradoxically, both metatextual *and* representative of orality.

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[34] Marinčič 2007, 180–181.

[35] For other interpretations of the open-endedness of the novel, see Fusillo 1997, 219–221;
Nakatani 2003, 74–79; Morales 2004, 143–151; Repath 2005; more generally, see Nimis
1999.

[36] Repath forthcoming (see n. 4), ch. 4, explores significant names in the novel; see 4.4 for
a discussion of Platonic names in the novel generally, and 4.8 for a discussion of the
name Cleitophon.

[37] Pl. *R.* 340a; *Clit.* 406a.

[38] Plato's *Cleitophon* represents a debate between Cleitophon and Socrates on the value of
protreptic. For discussion of the authenticity of the dialogue, see Slings 1999, 215–234
(he concludes that it is authentic). On the question of whether the dialogue is finished or
not, see Slings 1999, 10–18. For discussion of the Platonic resonance of the name, see
Repath (forthcoming), ch. 4 'The Name Game.' In the conclusion to his monograph, Re-
path argues, on the basis of identification with the character in Plato's eponymous dia-

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In the context of significant names, lack of a name is meaningful too. The anonymity of the primary narrator and his virtual absence from the novel may be a nod to Plato's apparent authorial absence from his own work and his problematisation of his authorial role, most famously in *Phaedo* 59 b10, where Phaedo declares that Plato was absent from Socrates' death-bed.[39] In the context of the preamble's play on speech and writing – its conscious self-positioning as a mimesis of speech – it is tempting to read this anonymity – as Kahane has argued with reference to the prologue to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* – as a deliberate frustration of the linear directionality of Aristotle's model of representation, whereby speech is a symbol of feelings in the mind, and writing is a symbol of that speech.[40] According to this model, if one retraces the line from writing through speech, one should arrive ultimately at the consciousness of the author – but in Achilles Tatius, the author is absent, and the primary narrator is anonymous, leaving us with an aporetic problematisation of the narrative's origins, which mirrors at an infra-structural level the lack of a return to the opening frame at the end. *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is therefore further evidence of contemporary fiction's use of speech and writing in a self-reflexive exploration of origins: cultural, authorial, and textual.[41] Both the anonymity of the primary narrator and Cleitophon's name with its metatextual Platonic pedigree inscribe also questions of authorship, authority, and open-endedness into this meta-novelistic novel.

4. *Closing questions*

The novel's suggestive play with authorial absence (the rejection of the traditional author), its metaleptic frame-breaking and blurring of ontological boundaries, its enactment of the arbitrary nature of beginnings and endings –

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logue, that Achilles Tatius' Cleitophon represents an 'anti-Socrates': 'One of the few characters in the Platonic corpus who is allowed to get the upper hand over Socrates, and arguably the only one who is unchallenged, has a namesake in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* through whose eyes Platonic love is deconstructed…'

[39] Authors contemporary with Achilles clearly enjoyed playing games with this declaration of Plato's authorial absence, e.g. Lucian *Philops.* 24; *VH* 2,17; *Peregr.* 31 (where the joke hinges on anonymity); for discussion of these narratological games, see Ní Mheallaigh 2005b.

[40] Arist. *Int.* 16,4. See Kahane 2001.

[41] Too 2001 analyses Apuleius' use of writing in Platonic terms as representative of the erasure of the author, reflecting the prologue's problematisation of cultural origins.

as an anti-closural novel that is presented as the *mediae res* of some greater universe or text – and its use of its own representational medium in a problematisation of origins ... all of these features are a mark of the novel's modernity, its affinities with the modern category of Metafiction.[42] The Phaedran setting of Achilles Tatius' novel establishes a pleasing slippage between the fictive orality of the characters' words, and their actual textuality, colluding with exodiegetic readers that we too are reading fiction, and what happens in *mise en abyme* within the text figures what is happening as we read. The regression is infinitely possible: if we are reading one set of characters reading a text, how can we be sure that *we* are safely outside the text; who knows what other readers are reading *us*, right now?[43] The preamble to *Leucippe and Cleitophon* seems calculated to set up such a regression, as Cleitophon's avowedly novelish life-story is framed within the anonymous narrator's suspiciously novelish life-story (shipwrecks, *ekphrasis*, exotic location, and the theme of love…):[44] one character-in-a-novel reads another character-in-a-novel's novel … which we are reading too. These characters' ignorance of their textuality implies unsettling questions about our own epistemological assumptions: maybe our life-story is equally a fiction, and all our experiences, though lived by us, a mere textual vestige in some other author's novel?[45]

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[42] On these aspects of Metafiction, see Waugh 1984.

[43] 'These inversions suggest that if the characters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, we its readers or spectators, can be fictitious.' (J.L. Borges, 'Partial Magic in the *Quixote*', 196).

[44] See also Marinčič 2007, 174: 'In truth, the narrator who suffered a shipwreck near the Phoenician coast and offered a sacrifice to Astarte…is not to be trusted any more than Clitophon… He is a typical inhabitant of the same fictional world…'

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