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"Respect these Breasts and Pity Me"  
Greek Novel and Theatre

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Theatre and Novel seem two genres *a priori* opposed each another in Greek literature, and perhaps elsewhere: characters incarnated by actors in roles on one side under the audience's eyes vs. characters represented (in each meaning of the word) by one or several narrators on the other.<sup>1</sup> The novel seems at first sight to renew the narrative tradition coming from the epics, as if it were a kind of bourgeois epic. Homer's presence appears in Chariton, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus through several devices such as Homeric problems and quotations, and the latter explicitly mentions that Theagenes is an offspring from Achilleus, whereas Charicleia comes from Perseus' and Andromeda's union. However, as several specialists also have noted, the links between the novel and theatre, comedy as well as tragedy, are very strong, and maybe still stronger than with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. As far as terminology is concerned, for all the success of the term *intertextuality* due as it seems to Kristeva, we stress the interest of the term *allusion* coming from the Italian tradition (Alaux-Létoublon 1998, 145-7).<sup>2</sup>

We will start up from an interesting coincidence: in both *Chaireas and Callirhoe* and the *Aithiopika* are found quotations or allusions to the same passage in *Iliad* 22.84 where Hecuba shows her breast to her son Hector, asking him for pity. This allusion may appear a symbol of the continuity of Greek literature, from Homer to the Roman Empire. More specifically, this Homeric passage was already alluded to in the Aeschylean Oresteia and Euripides' *Orestes*, when Clytemnestra imitates Hecuba's gesture for her son Orestes (*Choeph.* 895),<sup>3</sup> so that novelists may sometimes seem to think of Aeschylus

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1 The most common case seems that of one narrator who may be the author (Chariton for *Chaireas and Callirhoe*, Xenophon for the *Ephesiaca*, [Longus] for *Daphnis and Chloe*); the *Ethiopika* show the case of a plurality of narrators beside the author (Heliodorus) such as mainly Calasiris and Knemon : see Morgan 2004 b.

2 For *intertextuality*, see Morgan and Harrison. For the Italian tradition, see mainly Conte 1986.

3 Cp. Hom. *Il.* 22.83-5 Ἑκτορ, τέκνον ἐμόν, τάδε δ' αἶδεο καὶ μ' ἐλέησον  
αὐτήν, εἰ ποτέ τοι λαθικήδεα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον,  
τῶν μνηῆσαι, ...  
Aesch. *Choeph.* 895 Ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσαι, τέκνον,  
μαστόν, ...

rather than Homer. The *Iliad* is also subtly recalled in Euripides' *Hecuba*, where the queen's daughter Polyxena, before being sacrificed on Achilles' tomb, discovers her own breast and asks her murder to strike her with the sword in her breast.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that the mother shew her son the "breast he was nurtured with", whereas the daughter, as a virgin, shows herself highly infringing in this gesture. Anyway, all the tradition refers to Homer's characterization of the Trojan tragic queen rather than Agamemnon's unfaithful wife. The main feature we want to stress is that theatricality does not begin with the invention of the tragical stage in Athens, but may actually be considered already existing in the melodramatic very position of Hecuba addressing her son from the walls of Troy, in contrast with Hector alone below at the foot of the city-doors, engaged in a discussion with himself before fighting with Achilles. Hecuba's gesture of discovering her breast is by itself melodramatic, as the painting tradition attests.<sup>5</sup> Thus Clytaimnestra as well as Polyxena, Chaereas' mother (Char. 3.5. "Respect these breasts and pity me") and the male character Aristippes who utters "My child, stay your hand a while! Have pity on your father! Have mercy on the grey head that raised you" in the *Aethiopika* 1.12.3 have Hecuba's and Hector's relations in mind.

In a paper published with Jean Alaux in 1998, we suggested that when the novel alludes to theatre plays, it obeys two rules or laws: *condensation* and *avoidance*. Several œuvres

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Eur. *Or.* 527 ὅτ' ἐξέβαλλε μαστὸν ἱκετεύουσά σε  
μήτηρ

Eur. *El.* 117 ἔδειξε μαστὸν ἰὲν φοναῖσιν

Char. *Chair. and Call.* 3.5. 6.4 quotes *Il.* , τέκνον , ἔφη, τάδε δ'  
αἶδεο καὶ μ' ἐλέησον

αὐτήν, εἰ ποτέ τοι λαθικήδεα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον,

Hld. *Eth.* 1.12.3. καὶ, ὦ τέκνον, ἐπίσχες μικρὸν, ἔλεγεν, οἴκτειρον τὸν  
γεννήσαντα φείσαι πολιῶν αἰ σε ἔθρεψαν. We emphasize both the words literally  
echoed in this passage (ἐπίσχες in Aeschylus and Heliodorus; αἶδεο καὶ μ'  
ἐλέησον from the *Iliad* in αἶδεσαι in Aesch., more prosaic οἴκτειρον in Heliodorus;  
μαζὸν in Homer, μαστὸν in Aesch. and Euripides) and the changes brought by every author: the  
origin of the Aeschylean ἐπίσχες may be found in Hecuba's Homeric ἐπέσχον: the mother who  
provided her breast in the earlier text uses the same word for asking her child to stop his murdering  
hand. The most visible change in Heliodorus is from the mother to a father, which implies the absence  
of the breast and the comical effect of the white hair that nourished the child.

4 Eur. *Hec.* 560-1 μαστοῦς τ' ἔδειξε στέρνα θ' ὥς ἀγαλματος  
κάλλιστα, ... (Talthybios' narrative of Polyxena's death)

564-5 Ἴδοῦ, τόδ' εἰ μὲν στέρνον ... / παῖεν προθυμῇ, παῖσον, ... (he reports Polyxena's last words).

This gesture and words are anticipated by Polyxena's allusion to her mother's breast in v. 424

ὦ στέρνα μαστοῖ θ', οἳ μ' ἐθρέψατ' ἠδέως.

5 This tradition actually refers to Polyxena rather than Hecuba: for instance Panfilo Nuvone, *Le sacrifice de Polyxène*, 1531, priv. coll.; Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662) *Le sacrifice de Polyxène*, New York, MOMA; Giambattista Pittoni (about 1733-5) painted Polyxena going forth to Achilles' tomb (Louvre) and the sacrifice (Munich), but Polyxena is seen from behind, as a way for avoiding the representation of a virgin's breast.

or myths are alluded to at the same time, thus condensed in one and the same passage. On the other hand, particularly when the novel reminds of a tragedy, it has to avoid too close an imitation, that could dangerously approach the tragic end: for all kinds of hindrance the protagonists meet on their way, the novel must go on, and the heroes pursue their travel, or their life through seasons in Lesbos for Daphnis and Chloe. We will meet several instances of those laws' applications in the novel corpus.

We shall thereafter study the relations between the novel and theatre from the more visible and exterior aspects to the deeper ones, i.e. from language and material objects to paradoxically invisible phenomena, that occur in the hearts.

### 1. Theatre in words

Several of our texts show an extensive use of the theatrical vocabulary. As soon as 1894, this phenomenon was known and accurately studied by Walden, who took into account the frequency in the novels by Chariton, Achilles Tatius, Heliodorus and Eustathius of such words as *drama*, *theatron*, *skene*, and the lexical family of *trag*-. By qualifying the acts they accomplish as “*dramata*”, the novelists may not simply allude to their “pathetic” nature<sup>6</sup>, but to their real derivation from the theatrical realm. In fact, not only is the term “*drama*” used by the narrator to generically designate the main story<sup>7</sup>, or a sub-story<sup>8</sup>, but the characters themselves seem to resort to this term when their adventures take the form of a show /spectacle that their readers could watch in the theater. For example, Thyamis and Petosiris stage a *drama*<sup>9</sup> which reminds the fratricidal duel between Eteocles and Polinyces. Chereas invites Clitophon to stick to his instructions and not “to spoil “the *drama*”<sup>10</sup> of Leucippe’s seduction, probably referring to a cliché largely spread by the New Comedy and mimes. The massive presence of theatrical terms in the novels testifies that the theater permeates the plot of the novels with a vast number of scenes and episodes, which are sometimes intentionally unveiled by the novelists when they want to point to, according to the circumstances, the tragic or comic nature of the story. We cannot exclude that a word like *drama* could be used in common everyday life as an idiom. But *tragodeo*, *tragikos* and *skenographeo* are not

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6 ROHDE 1876, 450.

7 Ach. Tat. 1,3,3.

8 Hel. 2,23,5; Ach. Tat. 8,15,4.

9 Hel. 7,6,4.

10 Ach. Tat. 1,10,7.

likely to occur so often in common Greek language. The metaphorical use of this vocabulary is thus surely guaranteed. As Walden noticed,<sup>11</sup> the theatre terminology implies a metaphorical use, that may come from “before them in the theatre of their own day” (Walden 1894, 2). We shall later show that the lexical face of the novel language constitutes an index pointing to a deeper, less visible aspect: the metaphor of theatre might reveal a fundamental way of seeing human life under the Roman imperial power.

## 2. Romanesque thread and theatre plot : the Ideal Novels and New Comedy

Already in Aristophanes' plays, one could state that comedy as a genre is a parody of the tragic, a way of removing the political conflicts while transposing them to a ridiculous (*Knights*) or utopic (*Lys, Eccl. Thesm.*)<sup>12</sup> manner, thus it appears a form of *katharsis*.

However Aristophanes does not seem as strongly present in the novels as Aeschylus and Euripides. Nevertheless, the fact that in Achilles Tatius, a character in the trial opposing Clitophon, Leucippe and Melite to Thersander imitates explicitly Aristophanes (*Leuc. and Clit.* 8.9)<sup>13</sup> well implies the importance of its comedies for the novelist. But the evidence of strong links to the so called New Comedy is more frequently met. Menander and his Latin followers had based their comedies on the family life as opposed to an external world populated by robbers, soldiers and pirates who are all eager to kidnap the young girls, sometimes also the boys. This genre provided the writers with some models of familial dramas, already turned to bourgeois plots: Chariton's and Xenophon's of Ephesus plots show clearly this familial mainline, as well as many details in the other ideal novels; there we can include the narrative of *Daphnis and Chloe* from the children found in book I<sup>14</sup> to their progressive discovering of love, and eventually to their recognition by their actual parents, and their marriage in book 4, after the recognition first of Daphnis, thereafter of Chloe. The parallel between Charikleia as an abandoned child soon after birth by her mother<sup>15</sup> and both of the pastoral foundlings nurtured by animal mothers, and their respective *symbola* is striking. One of the most visible features linking the novels to New Comedy may be called failure of matrimonial strategy:

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11 The metaphorical use of the word *drama* referring either to the whole thread or to a series of events by a protagonist occurs three times in Chariton, thirteen in Heliodorus and eighteen in Achilles Tatius.

12 Carrière 1979 on the *carnavalesque* aspects of Aristophanes.

<sup>13</sup> See Brethes 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Hunter 1983: 23-6; Morgan 2004: 150-4.

<sup>15</sup> In book IV of the *Ethiopica*, we learn the mystery of her birth by Calasiris' decipherment of the embroidered linen left with her by her mother.

Clitophon's father in Achilles Tatius wants his son to marry with his half sister Calligone; Heliodorus show how the adoptive father of Charikleia as well as her actual father later want her to marry with the young man they chose for her. In *Daphnis and Chloe* the adoptive parents show such intentions for the foundlings, and after their recognition, the actual parents will do so too. The interest for the reader consists in how the will of the young characters will outdo those strategies.

In several cases, some individual characters also seem to come directly from New Comedy and from Theophrast's *Characters*: for instance in *Daphnis and Chloe*, Gnathon represents the type of the parasite, as well as Satyros in *Leucippe and Clitophon* the *servus callidus*,<sup>16</sup> In the *Ethiopica*, Cnemon's name also comes from the same source. We will thereafter mention more accurately the main features taken by the novels from New comedy, first the conflictual relations in the family, then the place of Love and Destiny, thirdly the happy dénouement.

## 2.1- Fathers and sons

The relationship between the protagonist and their parents is often problematic like in the Comedies of Menander, Plautus and Terence, as Konstan has brilliantly analysed<sup>17</sup>. In Chariton's novel, Chereas is torn between the love for Calliroe, which urges him to sail away from Syracuse, and the affection for his parents, who beseech him not to leave them, echoing a famous Homeric passage. In the *Ephesiaca*, Anthia's and Habrocomes' parents, when they see their children touched by love sickness, ask the oracle of Colophon for an advice, and the god's answer prompts the decision to marry them, without a detailed conflict (1.6.2-7.1); Clitophon, Achilles Tatius' protagonist, has to face a still more serious problem: as well as in the partially-conserved Menander's *Georgos* (5-22) the father of the protagonist has already arranged his marriage to his step-sister.<sup>18</sup> In Achilles Tatius' case, comedy is echoed not only by a generic reprise of the situation, but also in the rhetorical figures. For example, the metaphor entailed in the verb *makhomai* (to fight) is present also in the monologue by which Clitophon tries to describe his interior conflict: the authority and respect towards his father urges him to obey to him,

<sup>16</sup> Satyros in Tatius reminds for instance Syros, Sostratos' slave in *Dis egypton* by Menander.

<sup>17</sup>KONSTAN 1987, 1994, CRISMANI 1997.

<sup>18</sup>Sometimes, like in this case, comedy is echoed not only by the allusion to a scene, but also by the reprise of the same metaphor. Both Clitophon (Ach. Tat. 1,11,3) and the protagonist of the *Georgos* have to choose whether to obey to their father or to Eros, who threaten them with fire arrows. This interior struggle is expressed by the verb μάχομαι. On stepmothers in Greek literature, see Watson 1995.

but Eros is a powerful judge who threatens to burn him with his fire-arrows (1,11,3). In [Longus], a conflict between children and parents is latent when Lamon first proves Daphnis' high ascendance through showing the tokens found with the baby, while Chloe did not yet appear as valuable a wife for him.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. 2- The central place of Love

The resemblance between the standard plot of the New Comedy and the novel is striking, as Canfora noticed<sup>20</sup>. In both genres, two youngsters of an astonishing beauty who have to undergo a series of adventures and dangers before they can get married. However, the novels move away from the New Comedy by introducing a mutual and at first-glance love<sup>21</sup> between the two protagonists. Because Achilles Tatius puts the whole Love narrative in Clitophon's mouth, the birth of love between Clitophon and Leucippe does not appear mutual and instantaneous like it does in the other novels, but the sole Clitophon falls in love at first glance, whereas he has to find out ways for seducing Leucippe. It will be difficult and sometimes frankly comic<sup>22</sup>. Thus Achilles Tatius skilfully inserts in his novel the cliché of the love approach, largely spread by the New Comedy. For instance, to escape detection by Konops,<sup>23</sup> a character bringing to mind the *durus ianitor* of the New Comedy, and get to the room of Leucippe, Clitophon resorts to his *servus callidus* Satyros, Clitophon's attempt to have a sexual intercourse with Leucippe is prevented by the intervention of her mother, awoken in the middle of the night by a macabre premonitory dream that echoes the one dreamt by Sostratos' mother in Menander's *Dyskolos* (406-417). Longus' novel is in some respects atypical because the two children gradually initiated to Eros but it takes up the themes of the “foundling” (a key-element in Heliodorus' novel, but for the sole Charicleia) and the recognition, two classical features of the New Comedy.

## 2.3- A happy dénouement recalling New Comedy

The peripeties the two protagonists are involved in are multiplied<sup>24</sup> in space and

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19 *Daphnis and Chloe* 4.20-30, until Dryas, like Lamon, shows the tokens he once found with the baby.

20 See e.g. CANFORA 1987 (ref. ??? à préciser).

21 Rousset 1981; Létoublon 1993, 137-40; KONSTAN 1994. (ref. p. ???).

22 Partly because of his own awkwardness, which contributes to make him a “anti-hero”, according to Brethes 1999.

23 His name means 'Mosquito', and Satyros tells him an interesting fable on the lion and the Mosquito.

24 According to Perry (1967, 140) “the novel is drama in a new quantitative dimension, not different in the nature of its substance and purpose from stage-drama, whose limits it transcends, but multiplied in respect to the number or length of its acts and capable of indefinite extension

extension and are finally paid off by a marriage and/or a banquet to which both of the families take part, and in the novel, the whole city may sometimes be involved. Unlike the New Comedy, in the ancient novel the problem of the different social classes seems to be marginal and limited to Longus' novel, since Daphnis first happens to be recognized, and his family does not accept Chloe as a fitting fiancée, until she also encounters wealthy parents. On the other hand, the concern with the legitimacy of the love and the importance of virginity occurs both in the New Comedy and in the novels.<sup>25</sup> In a fragment of the Menandrian comedy *Sikyonos* (361-374), a father expresses his joy after finding out that his daughter is alive and has not lost his virginity: Likewise, the concern with the virginity of the heroine is central in the end of Achilles Tatius' plot: the crowd rejoices when Leucippe succeeds in the test of the cave of Syrix (8.14.1-2) proving that she is still a *parthenos*. Heliodorus' novel ends with a virginity test as well, that concerns both Theagenes and Charikleia, and ironically, since they are pure, they are fitting offerings to be sacrificed.

Other features appear to remind tragedy rather than comedy, though they could be seen in New Comedy as a parody of tragedies.

#### 2.4. *Oimoi ego*

As already said through the remark on theater- lexical tools occurring in the novels, the main characters in the novels often see themselves as tragic heroes or heroines. Nevertheless, the narrator remains always the leader of the play. He knows how to cut the tragic thread at the moment where it could outpass the limit: for instance, when the hero or heroine feels the situation as desperate that death only seems possible for her or him, an unforeseen event or unexpected friend interposes, who impells suicide and draws a progress in the plot and new peripeties. It happens even in the unsophisticated *Ephesiaca*: thus Habrocomes exclaims “ὦ κακοδαίμονες, ἔφησεν, ἡμεῖς” (2.1.2), and Anthia echoes “φεῦ τῶν κακῶν, ἔφη” (2.1.5); again Anthia “ὦ πάντα ἄδικος ἐγώ, φησί, καὶ πονηρά”, “οἴμοι φησὶ τῶν κακῶν” (4.6.6), οἴμοι τῶν κακῶν λέγουσα (5.8.7), Habrocomes “φεῦ, ἔφη, τῶν κακῶν” (5.10.4). They develop their laments into tragic monologues (Habrocomes: 2.1.2, Anthia: 5.4.11) and topically decide to die as soon as possible (2.1.6 ἀποθνήσκωμεν), and they accuse their fatal beauty to have drawn all their unhappiness (2.1.3 ὦ τῆς ἀκαίρου πρὸς ἑκατέρως εὐμορφίαν; 5.5.5 ὦ κάλλος ἐπίβουλον, λέγουσα, ὦ

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<sup>25</sup>See CRISMANI 1997, 77.



δυστυχῆς εὐμορφία, 5.7.2 ὃ κάλλος δίκαιως ὑβρισμένον). Without quoting the whole of the passages, we may put forward a statement: the more sophisticated the novel, the more brilliantly those laments will be introduced and develop, but they follow the same schematic model borrowed from the classical tragedies.<sup>26</sup> The repetition of the *topoi* sometimes produces a comical effect. It is difficult to decide if the novelist wanted his audience to laugh or at least to smile. Nevertheless, the frequency of Clitophon's attempts to kill himself after each apparent death of his beloved (five times, if our sum is right) lead us to think of a parodic feature.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.5 theatre tools in the novel plot

In several cases, the novel characters meet theatre actors with their apparatus (cloathes, sceneries, tricks), and those tools are sometimes used by the main characters as a disguise (Heliodorus. 6.11, Charikleia and Kalasiris disguise as beggars, and joke about the effect they obtained),<sup>28</sup> whereas they may entrap them in other ones: in Achilles Tatius' novel, the theatrical tools are actually on the scene: Satyros retrospectively tells that Menelas and he feigned to sacrifice using a blade-retractable sword which had once belonged to a declaimer of Homer who bravely died fighting against robbers (3.20.4-7) and Leucippe will endure an apparent sacrifice with bloody entrails filling a fake stomach hidden under garments (3.21.1-2).

The role of disguise may even be noted in the *Ephesiaca*, where Thelxinoe happened to wear man's clothes for escaping from Sparta with Aigialeus, as the latter tells Habrokomes (*Eph.* 5.1.7), and Anthia lies twice about her identity (4.3.6 and 5.5.4). In Achilles Tatius, as usually more brilliantly, it is Clitophon who flies from Thersander's house disguised as a woman, with Melite's robe (6.1.2). Fusillo (1990) evokes for this passage the tradition of Achilles hidden among Lykomedes' daughters. In Heliodorus, Theagenes and Anthia, prisoners in powerful Arsake's luxurious house, pretend they are brother and sister.

## 2.6. retardation effects

Like on the stage, a common feature in the novel shows a frequent effect of retardation (delay???) of the characters one to another. It is particularly striking in the *Ephesiaca*

<sup>26</sup> Pletcher 1988: 21 saw that when Charikleia "kept on 'tragedizing', she was not only lamenting tragically, but she was also quoting from Euripides' *Hecuba* 349: τί γὰρ με δεῖ ζῆν;"

<sup>27</sup> Létoublon 2006.

<sup>28</sup> On this passage, see Fusillo 1990: 41.

because of the extreme schematism of the novel. Habrocomes nearly constantly arrives in the very place where he could have found Anthia one day or some days before, but he realizes that she just left when he arrives there. The device is also present, in a less caricatural way, in *Chaireas and Callirhoe*: as soon as Chaireas, because of an unjustified jealousy, kicks in Callirhoe's belly, the whole narrative will rely on symmetries and delays in their research, the empty graves each of them builds for keeping the other one's memory is the best symbol of. Another example is Chaireas' letter telling her 'I'm living!', read by Callirhoe's husband who faints with the very words used in the *Iliad* for describing the heroes' death, but will act thereafter to avoid a gathering of his rival and his wife.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.7. Apparent death

A well-known motif in Greek novels is that of the apparent death of the heroine,<sup>30</sup> which occurs in Achilles Tatius several times, and leads Clitophon to wish for dying himself. In Heliodorus, Thisbe dying instead of Charikleia may appear a variant of the motif: at least Theagenes believes she actually died. A more specific motif occurs both in the *Ephesiaca* and *Chaireas and Callirhoe* in a strikingly parallel: Anthia and Callirhoe both fall in a kind of catalepsy as if dead for their family.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, the apparent death lasts so much that they are mourned for and buried with rich funerary offerings. Robbers who saw the funerals plan to steal the tomb, and in both cases, when they find the dead woman living, they first believe they meet a ghost. The reason of Anthia's catalepsy is a poison she drunk because she wanted to dye, while Callirhoe was stricken by the jealous Chaireas. The following of both stories are very similar, although Chariton's style makes his novel much more interesting. The details in both of the texts are similarly dramatically told, as if they came from the same model, maybe a play seen on a stage.

## 2.8. Actors and audience

Theatre consists in a show incarnated on a stage by actors before an audience glancing at them. In the novel, we meet some actors and their tricks as said in the former paragraph, but we never follow an actual play staged. However, as said in the beginning of this

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<sup>29</sup>Létoublon 2003.

<sup>30</sup> See Bowie 1996: 101 among many references to the so-called *Scheintod*.

<sup>31</sup>Char. 1.8-9; cp. *Eph.* 3.5.9-8.3.

article, the novelists make an extensive use of a technical vocabulary of theatre: as Walden already shew, those words are taken as metaphors. The actors met by the protagonists became themselves heroes of miniature novels, taken in a tempest or an attack by pirates. Thus the genres seem to mix themselves, or at least exchange some of their specific characteristics.

Among the metaphorical uses of the novel, we thus sometimes find actors in the bysides of their profession, we also meet some occasional audiences for an unforeseen spectacle, which seems to happen several times in Heliodorus: in Alaux-Létoublon 1998, we noticed the fight between Thyamis and Petosiris, the two sons of the Egyptian priest Kalasiris, seen by the whole audience as a revival of Kastor and Polyneikes' fight under Thebes; the end of the novel, with the sacrifice of both Theagenes and Charikleia intended by king Hydaspes for Sun and Moon Ethiopian gods, Charikleia's try for leading her father to recognize her, the already mentioned race of Theagenes on a horse and a bull, his fight against a giant, the asking by Charikleia for awaiting for Persinna, who is called the instigator or playwrighter of the show, the intervention of Sisimithres, the leader of the Gymnosophistes, and the painting of Andromeda delivered by Perseus brought on the public space under the eyes of the crowd in order to prove Charikleia's ascendance by her resemblance with the heroine on the painting: a big amount of details in the narrative show a strong dramatic character; but we want to emphasize particularly the episode of the first sight and love between Theagenes and Charikleia, that happened in the large stadium of Delphi under the attentive look of Kalasiris, who even tells for Knemon that « the whole of Greece was there, looking at them»: the narrative puts under our eyes a splendid panhellenic feast, reminding the best of Epinikia in Pindar's and Simonides' times.

Thus the vocabulary of theatre in the novel introduces the readership to « see » some episodes as plays inserted in the novel, be it by the author or by a secondary character who stages a scene for the other ones, and produces thus a strong presence (which was called *enargeia*).<sup>32</sup>

Among the uses of the word *theatre*, in Heliodorus, let us stress an interesting description of a ring, that Charikleia owned as a *symbolon*. On the ring, a stone had been incised, and the brilliant *ekphrasis* shows a pastoral world represented as a *poimenikon theatron*:

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<sup>32</sup> Auerbach's *Mimesis* may still be referred to, though we do not agree with the analysis of the recognition scene with Eurykleia in *Odyssey* 19.

A young boy was shepherding his sheep, standing on the vantage point of a low rock, using a transverse flute to direct his flock as it grazed, while the sheep seemed to pasture obediently in time to the pipe's melody. One might have said that their backs hung heavy with golden fleeces; this was no beauty for art devising, for art had merely highlighted on their backs the natural blush of the amethyst. Also depicted were lambs, gamboling in innocent joy, a whole troop of them scampering up the rock, while others cavorted and frolicked in rings around their shepherd, so that the rock where he sat seemed like a kind of bucolic theater; others again, reveling in the sunshine of the amethyst's brilliance, jumped and skipped, scarcely touching the surface of the rock. The oldest and boldest of them presented the illusion of wanting to leap out through the setting of the stone but of being prevented from doing so by the jeweler's art, which had set the collect of the ring like a fence of gold to enclose both them and the rock.

This piece of Heliodorus' art may induce to the hypothesis that [Longus'] pastoral was not inspired uniquely by Theocritean poetic tradition, but that some theater plays existed staging shepherds and their pastoral and musical loves. So does also the episode in *Daphnis and Chloe* where after the tale told by Lamon, Philetas plays music on the pipe he sent his son Tityros for, and both of the young protagonists mime the erotic pursuit of the nymph called Syrinx by the goat-footed god, until she wishes to escape and disappears among the reeds; in his anger, the disappointed god cuts the reeds, and then transforms his anger by playing music out of the instrument he thus invented. This episode in *Daphnis and Chloe* will lead us to develop the relationship of theater and myth, but the *ekphrasis* in Heliodorus suggests that theatre might be with poetry at the very origin of pastoral narrative.

The point we want to point to here is that in the novel, characters may turn sometimes either to actors or spectators of a scene on an extempore / improvised stage. Thus on Charikleia's ring, the stone and the sheep are turned to a theatre with actors.

### 3. Theatre and myth meet in the novel

We develop elsewhere in more detail the four or five myths met in *Daphnis and Chloe* (Phatta, Pitys, Syrinx, Eros in Philetas' garden, and Echo), stressing their paradigmatic use.<sup>33</sup> In the other novels, we find other more literary ways of alluding to both myth and theater. Three of the main myths of Greek theatre find a particular development in the novels, particularly in the *Aithiopica*: Phaidra and Hippolytus, the Oresteia and Oidipous and his family. Phaidra was known mainly from Euripides, the Oresteia from Aischylus and the two *Electras* by both Sophocles and Euripides, and Oidipous from both Aischylus' *Seven against Thebes* and *Phoenician women*. Sophocles' *Oidipous Rex* and

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33 Létoublon, to appear in ANS.

*Oidipous in Kolonai* are also a possible source for the character of Kalasiris, so that it may be supposed that all of the three great Tragic authors were known from the novelists' culture. When Theagenes and Charicleia eventually join Ethiopia, they are supposed to be sacrificed to goddess Artemis, which reminds also Euripides *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, since she is actually king Hydaspes' daughter (who does not know it however), and when Theagenes whom she often calls her brother is promised to be sacrificed to the same goddess, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* is close too. Besides, this tragedy could be alluded to by a sophisticated reprise in the macabre scene of the false sacrifice of Leucippe<sup>34</sup> (Ach. Tat. 3,15).

In the *Ethiopica*, Theagenes has to ride on both a horse and a bull, jumping from one to the other in a very striking race in which his life is in danger, which refers to several well-known pieces of epic (the horse race in *Il.* 23) and theatre (Hippolytus' death entangled in his reins in Euripides' eponym tragedy, but also in Sophocles' *Electra* the fiction of Orestes' death in a horse race told by himself for deceiving Klytaimestra and Aigisthus). In Achilles' novel, the episode of Callicles's fatal horse fall (1,12), announced by a messenger with typical tragic features has a clear correspondence with Euripides' *Hippolytus* as Degl'Innocenti Pierini has exhaustively shown<sup>35</sup>.

Phaidra and Hippolytus appear in Heliodorus' novel through 'Knemon's novel' mainly,<sup>36</sup> but also through Theagenes' relation to Arsake and her servant. The character of Thisbe stands at the crossing of Theagenes and Charicleia's story and Knemon's novella: she dies as a substitute to Charicleia since her killer Thyamis believes in the shadow of the cave she is Charicleia; and a writing tablet will be found on her corpse, which resumes a part of Knemon's and her story still unknown as well for the reader than for Knemon himself. This tablet relates her also to Euripides' Phaidra.

The novels remind us of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* mainly with Knemon's father accusing his son to forget a son's duty in a straight parody of Hecuba with Hektor and Klytaimnestra with Orestes in the *Choephoroi*. Once more, it appears difficult to decide whether the writers intended the readership to recognize the source alluded to, to laugh or at least to smile at the subtlety of those allusions when recognizing such references.

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<sup>34</sup>MIGNOGNA 1997.

<sup>35</sup>DEGL'INNOCENTI PIERINI 2003.

<sup>36</sup> The parallel between Knemon and Hippolytus on one hand, between Demainete, his father's wife, and Phaedra on the other is very close. Instead of dying like Hippolytus, Knemon fled from Athens to Egypt. Demainete left an inscribed tablet like Phaidra. The trial narrated in 0000 appears as the result of the avoided tragedy.

#### 4. Theatre in the mind

In another range of cases, the novelists seem to invent a kind of dialogue held by the main character between himself and Eros or in himself alone: thus in *D&C* Daphnis speaks with himself looking for plausible reasons he could invent for seeing Chloe during winter:

He screwed up his courage to make some excuse and push his way through the doors: and he asked himself what was the most convincing thing he could say. "I've come to get a light for a fire." -But didn't you have neighbors two hundred yards away?"

"I've come to ask for some bread." -"But your bag's full of food."

"I need some wine." -"But it was only the other day you had the grape harvest."

"A wolf chased me." -"And where are the wolf's footprints?"

"I came to hunt the birds." -"Well, you've caught them: why don't you go away?"

"I want to see Chloe." -"Who'd admit that to a young girl's father and mother?"

Stumbling against obstacles on every side, he said to himself: "All of these remarks sound suspicious. It'll be better to say nothing. I'll see Chloe in the spring, since it doesn't seem fate for me to see her in the winter." (3.6.2-4, tr. Gill in Reardon).

In Achilles Tatius, Clitophon looks also for a way of entering in closer contact with Leucippe, and he finds help from his servant Satyros:

Satyros went outside, and, left to myself, I took his advice to heart, I tried to whip up my courage to face the maiden. "How long will you keep silent, sissy boy? What use is a spineless soldier in the service of a virile god? Are you waiting for her to make the first move?"

Then I answered myself: "Come to your sense, you fool. Aim your love shafts at the proper target. You have another softly maiden in your own family: desire *her*, gaze at *her*; marriage with *her* is in your power."

I thought I had convinced myself, but the voice of Eros replied from deep down in my heart:

"Such insubordination! So, you would take up the sides with arrows and fire? If you dodge my arrows, you won't evade my fire. And even if you douse that with your high-minded self-control. I will catch up with you on my wings." (2.5)

In Chariton 2.11, we read a similar monologue by Callirhoe who thinks Chaireas dead and discovers she is pregnant, while she has awoken wealthy Dionysios' passion; she is lying on her bed with Chaireas' portrait on her belly, and she thinks of deliberating with herself: there are three voting persons about her suicide, her husband, thought to be dead,

the child she is bearing and herself. The result of the vote is two against one -her own vote actually. Thus the majority wants her to live, in a parody of Greek democratic habits in the classical period, long passed away.

This kind of theatre, neither comic nor tragic, seems to happen in life itself. It may be related to the idea that the world is a stage. In fact, as it has been said before, the stage-terms massively permeate the vocabulary of the ancient novel whose characters often qualify the vicissitudes they undergo as “*dramata*”. Different reasons can be given for the massive presence of stage-terms in the novels. In the Hellenistic era theatre had profoundly changed at the benefit of the spectacles of mimes and pantomimes<sup>37</sup> and, as Perry puts it, “the great tide of drama, that is to say fondness for the spectacle of men and women in action with all its excitements, peripeties, personal emotions, and character displays, had long since overflowed the dike of the stage, which had once contained it, and now was pouring into all the literary forms where narrative could be anywise employed.”<sup>38</sup>

In addition, it is perhaps worth considering that at the Imperial Age the association between life and theatre-play enjoyed a great success among the Stoic and Cynic philosophers<sup>39</sup> by whom novelists may have been influenced.<sup>40</sup> The metaphor owed its celebrity to Platon who, in the *Laws*, compared the human being to a puppet moved by his passions and having his only chance of salvation in holding to the “golden string” of the reason (644d-e-645a). Though, Platon's condemnation of the actors remained very harsh for they are capable of imitating and propagating any behaviour and value, included those opposed to the good Constitution of the City, the only and authentic reflection of the Good<sup>41</sup>. A turning point probably took place in the Hellenistic era, when the Cynics and the Stoics put forward the idea that living like an actor could be a virtue given his capacity of adjusting himself to the changing and unpredictable circumstances of life.<sup>42</sup> This idea was taken up by such authors as Lucian<sup>43</sup> or Marcus Aurelius,<sup>44</sup> and

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37WALDEN 1894.

38PERRY 1967, p. 146. According to Perry (1967, 140) “the novel is drama in a new quantitative dimension, not different in the nature of its substance and purpose from stage-drama, whose limits it transcends, but multiplied in respect to the number or length of its acts and capable of indefinite extension”.

39See CURTIUS 1951, DODDS 1965, TRÉDÉ 2002.

40 The special issue of *ANS* on this subject proves it did.

41See e.g. CATONI 2008, 275 ff.

42 Rohde already thought that the collective values of the city had disappeared in Greek culture under the Roman empire, giving way for expressing individual pulsions through the synthesis of the novels.. For recent accounts of this remark, see Goldhill 2000 and 2001.

43See e.g. Lucian, *Necyomantia*. 16.

their representation of the human condition seems to be shared by the novelists who were living at the same time. The idea that the *Tyche* presides over the human lives is repeatedly stressed by the characters of the ancient novels<sup>45</sup>, who lay curse on the playwright of their life<sup>46</sup>, narrate their vicissitudes qualifying them as *dramata*<sup>47</sup>, and try to persuade themselves that it is inevitable to play their role till the end<sup>48</sup>. Though important the philosophical reflection was for the novelists, the metaphor of the human being as a puppet was deeply rooted in their works and destined to continue and increase its success in the following centuries<sup>49</sup>.

The lexicon used by the protagonists confirms the close relationship they perceived between novel and theatre and gives the impression that characters have freshly come out of a play and therefore feel the necessity to break the scenic illusion<sup>50</sup>.

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44 Marcus Aurelius, 7,3.

45 Hld. 5,6,3; Ach. Tat. 1,3,3, Char. 4,4,2.

46 Hld. 5,6,3.

47 Hld. 2,29,4; 6,8,5; Ach. Tat. 8,15,4; 6,3,1; 8,5,2.

48 Ach. Tat. 6,16,6.

49 See CURTIUS 1951.

50 Some cases of possible passage from the novel to theatre or viceversa are attested. Lucian reports that a Ninus (*Pseudologista* 25) and a Parthenope (*De Saltatione* 2,54), namesake of the protagonist of the fragmentary novel *Metiochus and Partenope*, were characters of pantomimes; Persius (1, 134) mentions a Callirhoe protagonist of a mime. A mime featuring a Leucippe is attested by Pap. Ber. Inv.13927: see MANTEUFFEL 1929, CUNNINGHAM 1987, MIGNOGNA 1996.