Boy, Oh Boy: Homoeroticism in the Ancient Greek Novel

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It is all too easy to idealize the civilizations of yesteryear as golden ages, social utopias where the problems of today were unknown to the carefree and wholly liberated individuals of these earlier eras. But though their solutions to these problems may have differed, the Ancients wrestled with the same questions we continue to confront in our modern, post-Foucault, Western world.

We see that "placing the theme of Eros at the center of their moral and political reflections, the [Greek] philosophers-or at least some philosophers-found themselves faced with…the coexistence, among men, of impulses stimulated by love objects of different sexes."[1] In light of the current interest in all things sexual and, in particular, *homo*sexual, as well as our tendency to hearken back to the example set by previous periods, it is fitting to thoroughly examine just how the authors of three Ancient Greek novels (*Chaereas and Challirhoe*, *An Ephesian Tale*, and *Leucippe* and *Clitophon*) present men who desire and have relations with other men.

In dissecting the few instances and characters depicting homoeroticism within each work, I will seek to prove that the Ancient Greek conception of inter-male erotic relationships, at least as far as one can glean from these romances, is overall one which disfavours them-particularly when such relationships overstep the boundaries of the rigidly formulated institution of pederasty-while simultaneously, and perhaps paradoxically, tolerating homoerotic desire.

[1] Eva Cantarella, Bisexuality in the Ancient World, trans. Cormac O Cuilleanain (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 54.

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At its most simple, pederasty is "*quand un homme adulte aime, non pas un autre adulte, mais un adolescent*."[2] Eva Cantarella intelligibly outlines the general characteristics of an ideal Greek pederastic relationship. A physically matured, older male is smitten by the beauty of a younger man; however, the lover "does not choose boys who are too young…but only those who are already close to puberty and thus to the age of reason."[3] Furthermore, the social institution mandates that the lover woo his beloved through a full-out courtship. The pursuant thus "courts [the beloved] with perseverance, and tries to show the serious nature of his intentions in every possible way." We can see that in Ancient Greek society the event of an older man, the erastes, desiring and courting a younger individual of the same sex is entirely acceptable, for "the observation of the rules of courtship guarantees the goodness of the sentiment," i.e. ensuring that the motivation is more *élévée* than mere base desire.[4]

The appropriate reaction to these overtures on the part of the young man who is the pederastic love object, or the *eromenos*, was prescribed with equal rigour. "First of all, the object of affection should start by resisting the courtship, running away from the lover, showing himself stubborn, difficult to win over, almost incorruptible."[5] In this way the beloved would retain his status as one on the cusp of a fully self-possessed manhood. For a male, voluntarily surrendering oneself is viewed as a grave breach in the integrity of one's masculinity, for "the active role belong[s] to the adult male, and the passive one to boys and women."[6] The construct along gender lines is clear and strict. Thus, the Greek young man would have "lost his honour only if he showed himself impatient and eager concerning his lover's choice,"[7] that is, if he were anything more than unresponsive and apathetic.

All these conditions being met, the relationship could then blossom into something "first of all spiritual, intellectual and educational by nature" but at the same time "also erotic."[8] It seems, however, that the expiry date of this pederastic couple is invariably limited to a few years after its inception. Aristotle describes the short 'shelf-life' of these quickly truncated partnerships in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1157a, 3-12): essentially, the eromenos matures physically (namely, grows a beard), which signals the fading of the "beloved's bloom." The younger man, at least in theory, is no longer attractive to his

[2] Félix Buffière, Eros adolescent: la pédérastie dans la Grèce antique (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980), 11.

[3] Cantarella, 18.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Cantarella, 31.

[7] Cantarella, 19.

[8] Cantarella, 22.

erastes and therefore no longer courted by him. The relationship is hereby ended, and the *eromenos* becomes a man and eventually, if he chooses, an *erastes* in turn for another *eromenos*.

Of the three novels, Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* presents us with perhaps the most superficially meager depiction of all things pederastic or even generally homoerotic. Nothing so blatant as swashbuckling figures with same-sex predilections strut their way into the plotline, nor do any lewd letches make aggressive sexual passes at a vulnerable Chaereas. What we do encounter quite early on, however, is a seemingly minor insult from Callirhoe, the heroine, directed at her husband Chaereas, the novel's hero. Chaereas has accused his new wife of having held a raucous party at her home the night before, though in actuality it was suitors envious of Chaereas's marital success who had framed her. In hot indignation, Callirhoe responds to the unjust claims: "There has been no riotous party at my father's house! Perhaps your house is used to parties, and your lovers are upset at your marriage!"[9] The key word in this short speech is 'lovers,' or *eromenos* in the Greek.

It thus seems clear that our hero, Chaereas, was quite possibly involved in not one, but several, relationships with other males. This is the only mention of Chaereas's alleged lovers in the entire novel, and Callirhoe's condemnation of the fact that her new husband had countless male loves before her does not seem to extend beyond the heat of the present situation. In other words, Callirhoe does not appear to be indignant over the lovers in themselves, but of Chaereas's presumptuous accusations of her infidelity, particularly when he himself is equally suspicious.

Callirhoe's remark, however, becomes more revealing when one takes into account the basic premise of the ancient Greek novel, as put by Massimo Fusillo: "[a] couple of exceptionally beautiful adolescents who fall in love at first sight swear fidelity to one another and consummate their bond after various obstacles."[10] The Ancient Greek novel offers an idealistic heterosexist paradigm, since it "revolve[s] about a primary couple…that is invariably heterosexual" as well as of noble birth, character, and physique.[11] Thus, we find with the protagonists "a pattern of symmetrical or reciprocal love, in which the attraction is both mutual and between social equals…not discriminated into an active and a passive partner."[12]

[9] B.P. Reardon, ed. Collected Ancient Greek Novels. (Berkeley 1989), 25.

[10] David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton, 1994), 161.

The active-passive model provided by pederasty is therefore secondary to a more mutual and balanced love-one that is without an exception heterosexual. This is meaningful for the character of Chaereas, for he thereby becomes the exemplar of the ideal *eromenos* (or perhaps *erastes*, since the details here are far too scant to make an accurate assessment of his specific role), who relinquishes his same-sex affiliations when the time comes to pursue a more solid, higher bond with a member of the opposite sex. It is suggested that Chaereas had his moment in the company of men and, upon experiencing the enamoring beauty of a woman for the first time, recognized his duty to move on, to settle down, to essentially claim his manhood. Thus, Chaereas has done what any good presumed *eromenos* ripened into a strapping heterosexual lad during his stay in the world of pederasty, or an *erastes*, who regrettably finds it time to let his lover(s) go, should do.

Shortly after Callirhoe's comment, we encounter for the first time Chaereas's friend Polycharmus, whose questionable relations with our hero seem to have gone unnoticed by critics. With regard to Chaereas, Polycharmus is apparently "a special friend of his, as Patroclus was of Achilles in Homer."[13] One's 'homo-sensitive' alarms immediately sound off at this aside, for, as Halperin describes, "the classical Greeks, who, looking at the love of Achilles and Patroclus from the perspective of their own social and emotional institutions, tended naturally to assume that the relation between the heroes was a paederastic one."[14]

Like a pup with a blind, unquestioning loyalty for its master, Polycharmus follows his friend Chaereas about wherever he may go while in the pursuit of the abducted Callirhoe.[15] When Chaereas and Polycharmus are later enslaved and laboring, enchained, in Caria, the latter "completed both their allotted portions of work practically single-handed; he gladly took on most of the work to save his friend."[16] Chaereas appears here as weak, feebly overcome by the immensity of his love and sorrow for Callirhoe. He is an *eromenos*-like figure in the sense that he is a powerless subject to both the overseer and his own motions, passive in the face of his overwhelming situation. Polycharmus, pro-active and resourceful, also adds to the conspicuous hints of pederasty in their relationship, in this case appearing as an *erastes*-esque individual protecting his dainty, puerile beloved.

[11] Konstan, 14.

[12] Konstan, 7.

[13] Reardon, 27.

[14] David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York, 1990), 86.

[15] Reardon, 58.

However, Chariton is quick to point out that though Polycharmus is "a strapping young man," it seems that he "was not enslaved to Love."[17] So, though a most eligible mate in every way, Polycharmus is conveniently asexual, thereby precluding the possibility of a true pederastic relationship between the two characters. Otherwise, it would seem, Polycharmus would loom as too large a threat to the sanctity of the love between Chaereas and Callirhoe, which, according to the framework of the genre, must by all means come to a glorious fruition in the end. Furthermore, Polycharmus's asexuality and *erastes*-minus-the-sexual-component status serve as a foil, effectively highlighting the profundity of the throes of Chaereas's heterosexual passion, all the while serving to advance the plot. For example, Polycharmus convinces Chaereas innumerable times to refrain from murdering himself, without whom there would of course be no tale to tell and no joyful ending for the smitten couple.

Thus, we find through the character of Polycharmus that Chariton picks and chooses the elements of pederasty that are conducive to the success of the novel's heterosexist paradigm. Polycharmus is a friend who possesses the fierce loyalty and admiration needed in a practical sense to carry Chaereas through the scrapes and pickles they have come upon; he is one who also possesses sufficient concern and affection for his "special friend" so that Chaereas' attempts at suicide will be frustrated, ensuring that the heterosexual couple will be able to triumph and come together after all is done; and finally, he is a friend who very conveniently has no sexual relationship with Chaereas, for this would endanger the integrity of the larger-than-life passion of the opposite-sex couple.

When held up to comparison with *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale* provides a much richer portrayal of homoerotically inclined personages. In this particular novel we encounter Habrocomes and Anthia, yet again a devastatingly beautiful heterosexual pair of wealthy origin and with passions for each other of equal ardor. Captured by pirates while on voyage together, they come upon Corymbus, the head of a ribald crew of brigands, who falls madly in love with Habrocomes. Correspondingly, we soon find out that his fellow pirate, Euxinus, has in fact fallen madly in love with Anthia, Habrocomes's girl.[18]

Corymbus and Euxinus confess to each other the secretly burning passions they have been harboring, and they make a pact to speak highly and persuasively on behalf of the other to his respective love object. This scene is significant, for it "presents a homoerotic

[16] Reardon, 67.
[17] Reardon, 67.

and hetero-erotic passion in strictly parallel terms, emphasized by the fact that each lover pleads the case of the other."[19] When each pirate presents the other's proposal to Habrocomes and Anthia in turn, he indicates nothing but a pure *eros* replete with promises of a life shared together in either marriage or quasi-marriage (the latter in the case of Corymbus and Habrocomes).[20] The *eros* of Corymbus would thus seem to refute the pederastic rule, since it appears to be a positive portrayal of a noble pirate's homoerotic desires and intentions, placed on par with opposite-sex love. Most importantly, Corymbus' desire to spend the rest of his life and to share "all he possesses" with Habrocomes presents an example directly opposed to the ephemeral model that pederasty offers.

Unfortunately, several things combine to make this *eros* leave a lasting impression to the contrary. The very act of undertaking the seduction and persuasion of the object one desires is indicative of the pederastic paradigm, in which the *erastes* works tirelessly to woo the resisting *eromenos*.[21] The loves of the pirates are doomed to a secondary status on the 'love hierarchy,' since they are not mutual and reciprocated, like that of the main couple. Further, "the pirates' protestations of love, made from a position of power, are coercive. Euxinus views the captive pair as a fair reward for services rendered in the trade of piracy."[22] This means that the desires of the two pirates "seem to conform to the pattern of transitive or asymmetric sexuality."[23] Euxinus' love for Anthia revolves about an inherent lack of symmetry, which relegates it to an inferior status when compared to the symmetrical relationship of the hero and heroine, so idealized in the ancient novel. Since Corymbus' passion is indeed on par with that of Euxinus, his too for Habrocomes is asymmetrical, secondary, and inferior; but, since it is also homoerotic, Corymbus' love is evidently nothing more than a typical pederastic infatuation instigated by a smitten *erastes*. Thus, Corymbus' promise of a future with Habrocomes loses credibility. As we have seen, it is the essence of pederasty to be both transitive and asymmetrical.

It is important to look at the scene of Corymbus and Euxinus in the context of the story as an entirety.[24] Heiserman, who tends to see homosexual characters in the novels simply as one of the "many incidents appeal[ing] to the fantasies and dreads that must underlie the idealization of erotic love," views Corymbus' seduction as "meant primarily to enhance the emotive powers of the story itself."[25] Again, Corymbus is not a unique champion of long-

[18] Reardon. 137.

[19] Konstan, 37.

[20]Reardon, 137-138.

[21] Akihiko Watanabe, 'The Masculinity of Hippothoos,' Ancient Narrative 3 (2003): 7.

[22] Konstan, 36.

term same-sex love. Instead, he is perhaps merely a hollow plot device used to illuminate the main couple's strict and all-important mutual fidelity and thereby the hauteur and grandeur of their love. In this way, the pirates simply provide a convenient pretext allowing the two main lovers to showcase early on the equality of their mutual love and adoration, an equality which is brought out by the parity of the proposals from the two pirates. In other words, Corymbus' promises to Habrocomes may be employed by Xenophon for no other reason than to enable Habrocomes and Anthia to repel equally strong advances from rivals.

Overall, what seemed like a promising example of pederasty surpassing its restrictive temporal and emotional confines by being compared to heterosexual desire is really nothing of the kind. On the contrary, the heterosexual love Euxinus fosters for Anthia is reduced to the level of a pederastic infatuation, essentially 'dragged down' by its comparison to that of Corymbus. This episode is an example of a larger trend found within the ancient Greek novel:

> "The passion ascribed to rival figures in the Greek novel produces instances not of symmetrical love but rather of an unequal or what we may call a transitive relationship, in which neither the feelings nor the positions of the parties are alike -a structure that bears a resemblance to the canonical form of homo erotic relationships."[26]

Since all rival loves are inherently inferior to the idealized love of the main, heterosexual couple because they are invariably ineffectual and vehemently repelled, and since we now find that these rival loves are essentially based on the homoerotic (i.e. pederastic) paradigm, homoerotic relationships must necessarily be the paradigm of love that is inferior.

More often than not, same-sex relationships in Greek literature end in tragedy, evoking a shroud of pervasive sadness, as Dr. T. Wade Richardson noted in a class lecture on February 10, 2004. "For as a number of critics have remarked, the world of the ideal Greek novel, at least as far as we have it represented in the surviving examples, is not a place where pederastic couples enjoy relationships that are as stable as those of the hetero-

[23] Konstan, 39.

[24] One must also consider that our hero and heroine are indeed on a pirate ship, a setting inherently devoid of women who are not slaves. Ergo, if Xenophon insists upon providing adequately menacing rivals at this early stage in the story to test the bond of the main couple, the only logical option is for a male, rather than a female, to approach Habrocomes. Furthermore, since the two men are pirates, and essentially lowly employees of their pirate chief, Apsyrtus, can it really be believed that they have possessions, that they really want to settle down into a stable, long-term relationship? Right off, both Corymbus' and Euxinus' assurances thus seem a bit absurd.

[25] Arthur Heiserman, *The Novel before the Novel* (Chicago, 1977), 48.

sexual heroes and heroines."[27] The pederastic relationship between Hippothous and Hyperanthes is by no means an exception.

Hippothous, arguably Xenophon's most colorful creation in *An Ephesian Tale*, is at one time or another a bandit, an aristocratic city-dweller, a lover of males, and a married man. To be sure, he "presents the reader with a puzzling set of attributes."[28] What here concerns us most, however, is Xenophon's portrayal of Hippothous as a man enamored by members of his own sex, in particular his beloveds Hyperanthes and later Cleisthenes.

Having befriended Habrocomes in Mazacus, Hippothous pours forth to him the tragic tale of his lost love, Hyperanthes.[29] One discovers immediately that "his love affair with Hyperanthes is in accordance with the classical pederastic paradigm."[30] Indeed, as the *erastes*, "Hippothoos takes the initiative in starting the relationship, for not only is he the one who falls in love but he also ventures to approach the youth and to beg him take pity on his erotic suffering (3,2,3)." As for Hyperanthes? Like a good little *eromenos*, all that he "has to do is to listen to him and comply."[31]

Xenophon relates that a certain Aristomachus, a Byzantine aristocrat, fell in love with the charms of the youthful Hyperanthes, paid off the father of the boy, and whisked him away from Hippothous to Byzantium under the pretense of teaching him rhetoric; there, the two formed a new pederastic relationship together.[32] Immediately, the actions of Aristomachus add to the work's denigration of same-sex love, for his purchase of Hyperanthes smacks of prostitution, an asymmetrical relationship at its ephemeral best.

What is more, one can begin to see the growing distance between the qualities of the main couple's relationship and that of Hyperanthes and Hippothous, for "[Anthia's] willingness to die is worlds apart from the submissiveness of Hyperanthes."[33] So, while Hyperanthes is a completely passive sex object dragged this way and that without uttering a sound, Anthia is represented as a lover who will go to any extreme, even death, to preserve the sanctity of her relationship with the hero Habrocomes. Indeed, she knifes one of the men making unseemly overtures upon her.[34] In keeping, therefore, with the traditional role of the *eromenos* as an apathetic partner, Hyperanthes' flippancy marks the pederastic relationship as amorously inferior to the intense bond of the heterosexual couple.

[26] Konstan, 9.
[27] Watanabe, 12.
[28] Watanabe, 1.
[29] Reardon, 147.
[30] Watanabe, 5.

Hippothous, in a jealous and vengeful rage, hastens to Byzantium, kills Aristomachus, and takes Hyperanthes away. While fleeing the region upon a ship bound for Asia, a furious storms strikes, the ship is sunk, and the couple finds itself flailing in the water. Hippothous, being too weak to go on, drowns in the ocean beside his lover.[35] This tragic death of the *eromenos* sends a clear message: the pederastic couple is destined for a sorrowful termination, after which despair will reign (it is despair that leads Hippothous into banditry in the first place), while the main couple is fated for success, in spite of the ridiculously insurmountable obstacles standing in its way. Truly, in a morbid sort of irony, "Hippothous's action [to save his beloved actually] leads to the death of his beloved, whereas Anthia, like her lover, will survive this and other trials through her own steadfastness."[36]

An interesting chain of events involving Hippothous occurs at the end of *An Ephesian Tale*. Having inherited the fortune of an old woman whom he married for pecuniary reasons, and who then died, Hippothous comes upon "a young Sicilian aristocrat named Cleisthenes [who]… was a handsome young man who shared all Hippothous's possessions."[37] This would seem to indicate that Hippothous was essentially in a stable, long-term relationship with another man. However, certain references strongly suggest that it was in fact a typical pederastic relationship: Cleisthenes is referred to as "young" several times; he never speaks and in fact fades out of the story completely until the very end; when he does resurface, Xenophon tells that "all the others lay down as they were-Leucon with Rhode, Hippothous with the handsome Cleisthenes."[38] The structure of this last phrase parallels Cleisthenes with Leucon, a woman. This likening to a female provides a further indication of his role as *eromenos*-but perhaps a long-term *eromenos* in a stable pederastic relationship?

Not exactly. In the meantime, after daily contact with Anthia, Hippothous "too fell in love with her, wanted to sleep with her, and offered her many inducements."[39] It is not clear whether Hippothous becomes attracted to Anthia because of her astounding beauty, which has continually been described as of a level such that could melt even the hardest of rocks, or whether Hippothous' sexuality is merely just fluid and indiscriminating. Regardless, he is obviously not particularly stringent in his fidelity to Cleisthenes, who like

[31] Ibid.

[32] Reardon, 147.

[33] Konstan, 27.

[34] Reardon, 157.

[35] Reardon, 147.

a proper, spineless minion or *eromenos*, "had followed him from Sicily to Italy."[40] This idiosyncratic, spontaneous love for Anthia succeeds in depicting the lack of fierce faithfulness inherent in this relationship and pederastic relationships in general, a lack that is perhaps necessary in the pederastic coupling so as to safely ensure its timely termination upon the wilting of the boy's bloom.

The story ends with a bizarre bit of information: Hippothous has adopted Cleisthenes as his son. This is an ambiguous turn of events, but one which could very well mean that Hippothous (or rather, Xenophon) has devised an ingenious method by which a man might live permanently with a male lover in a way that does not invoke social reprobation. However, as Konstan has suggested, the meaning could also be simply that "Hippothous's adoption of Cleisthenes marks the termination of the pederastic relationship,"[41] and the two have merely retained a permanent, non-sexual bond like that which Aristotle describes as possible for certain particularly well-suited pederastic couples.[42] Nevertheless, Konstan continues, the parallel drawn by Xenophon between Anthia and Habrocomes and Hippothous and Cleisthenes "at the end of the novel seems to echo in a positive key the twin desires of Corymbus and Euxinus, and to offer a model for an enduring domestic association, comparable to marriage, arising out of an original pederastic relationship."[43]

At the end of the day, the fact still remains that there is ambiguity and that the status of the same-sex relationship between Hippothous and Cleisthenes is moot. Furthermore, if Hippothous' adoption of his beloved is in fact only nominal, and the two remain an active couple full of passion, Xenophon and presumably the greater Greek world evidently still felt compelled to disguise it as something else, thus expressing, if not outright condemnation, then at least a reaffirmation of the same-sex couple's secondary status.

Leucippe and Clitophon by Achilles Tatius reasserts many of themes found within *An Ephesian Tale*. Like the main couples in the other two previous novels, "the relationship between Cleitophon and Leucippe conforms in principle to the parity of hero and heroine that is characteristic in the Greek novel."[44] The heterosexual couple is ravishing in its beauty, wealthy, and utterly alight with the flames of mutual love.

[36] Konstan, 27.
[37] Reardon, 164.
[38] Reardon, 169.
[39] Reardon, 165.
[40] Reardon, 169.

Comparable to the scene between Euxinus and Corymbus in An Ephesian Tale, Kleitophon confesses his debilitating love for a woman, Leukippe, to his cousin, Kleinias, who in turn spills forth the story of his love for a male, Charikles.[45] Again, neither of the two men seems at all put out by the fact that his love object is of a different sex than the other's. They relate their trials with equal candor, and Kleinias even gives Kleitophon advice on how to successfully seduce a woman. "Gender in sexuality is treated as a matter of comparable preferences, not of innate or inveterate disposition."[46] Again, the author seems to be presenting same-sex relations as perfectly equivalent to those that are between members of the opposite sex.

Charikles, the *eromenos*, interrupts their conversation with the announcement that his father has arranged that he be married to a girl-and a hideous one at that. With ample help from Kleinias, he proceeds to lament his fate and to elaborate upon the evils of marriage to a woman. Charikles finally ends the invective against females by simply shrugging his shoulders, assuming that the gods will somehow save him from such a ghastly fate, and scampers off to try out the new horse that Kleinias has bought him (in perfect *erastes* fashion) as a token of his affection.[47] Charikles' reaction here occasions the first direct comparison with the characteristics of the main heterosexual couple: while the *eromenos* passively awaits an intervention by fate, Leukippe, on the other hand, boldly, voluntarily, and actively seeks an elopement with her lover Kleitophon.[48] The inequality between the pederastic and the heterosexual couple is apparent: the former is relatively laisser-faire about its destiny, while the latter actively strives to secure its success.

A few pages later, we learn the shocking news that Charikles is dead, tossed by the horse and dragged along, "pelted by the branches, gashed with as many incisions as there were points on the broken wood… He was one continuous wound, at the sight of which no bystander could hold back his tears."[49] A homophile has 'bit the dust' in a horrifically gruesome and gory manner. First, it ought to be noted that Achilles Tatius describes the scene between the horse and Charikles in a somewhat erotic way: legs energetically vying with legs, the young man bouncing with the surges of the stallion, arching of the back, and Charikles, "while trying to ride out the squall… lost control… and surrendered himself to the hurricane of his mad career, a plaything of Chance."[50] The scene seems to evoke sexual

[41] Konstan, 39.

[42] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, 1999), 1157a, 3-12..

[43] Konstan, 39.

[44] Konstan, 70.

[45] Reardon, 181-183.

intercourse-in particular, sexual intercourse between two men, with Charikles having "surrendered himself" as the *eromenos* does. This subtle linking on the part of Achilles Tatius, between the bloody, terrible death scene and homosexual intercourse, cannot be entirely unintentional.

In this episode, "one suspects a hint of cynical nemesis: Clinias himself has just been ridiculing the love of women, and is quickly punished by events."[51] Thus, this terrifying occurrence seems to be symbolic, a sort of admonition against two men who are seeking to prolong the extent of their pederastic relationship beyond its fated lifespan. Essentially, we see that a young man who shuns women, like Charikles, is struck down by Fate and dies a horrible death. A similar episode is related once again when cousins Kleitophon and Kleinias befriend a man from Egypt, named Menelaos. Out one day hunting with his beloved, Menelaos and his *eromenos* came upon a wild boar charging out from the brush. In an attempt to save his beloved's horse, which was surely going to be gashed up by the beast, Menelaos let loose his javelin. The beloved "veered straight into its trajectory and intercepted the weapon," dying minutes later.[52]

Again, the *eromenos* dies most tragically. The fact that he is speared to death by a long, phallic shaft thrust into his body by his *erastes* is certainly highly symbolic and makes the event even more poignant. Furthermore, we can compare this episode to one at the beginning of *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, in which Chaereas, it was thought, had killed his fiancée by his own blow. However, while this incident in Leucippe and Clitophon leaves Menelaos with nothing but a sad story to be told, the false death of Callirhoe actually propels the two principal characters into a whirlwind of plot action in which they are allowed to prove and defend their profound love for each other. Again, the dichotomy between the pederastic, or homoerotic, and the heterosexual is evident.

Akihiko Watanabe maintains a slightly different view on these tragic deaths, believing that "pederastic relationships in the Greek tradition were bound to end with the physical maturation of the eromenoi, and the erastai's laments over the growth of hair on the cheeks of their beloved boys, presaging the termination of their love affairs, [are] a common motif."[53] Thus, the deaths can be viewed as solely symbolic mechanisms used to vividly

[46] Konstan, 28-29.
[47] Reardon, 182.
[48] Konstan, 28.
[49] Reardon, 185.
[50] Ibid.

portray the depth of an *erastes*' sorrow upon the loss of his *eromenos* due to physical development. What is more, "as matters stood thus, [an] end of a relationship brought about by the boys' death could actually be conceived as one of the more aesthetically pleasing options" (13). Why is this so? Watanabe holds that the "continuation of the erotic relationship into the adulthood of the beloved would have been stigmatized as a perverse act, while the maturation of the boy and his inevitable marriage with a woman was a prospect thought to cause anguish to the *erastes*." Essentially, a premature death would prevent "the embarrassment of losing the boy to a woman."[54]

Watanabe's analysis seems sensible in part. If we do grant that the deaths of the eromenoi are illustrated in this heart-wrenchingly tragic manner so as to represent the depth of the anguish and pathos felt on the part of the *erastes* at the end of the pederastic relationship, we are then forced to admit that the abrupt termination of the pederastic relationships is not due to the fact that the *erastes* wants it to end, as indicated by Aristotle, but simply that he wills it to; and he willed its demise simply because this is what was prescribed by the Greek social code. His feelings had most likely not diminished. After all, if a man is smitten by a boy who is sixteen, will he not likely still be smitten by him two years later when he is eighteen? It seems highly improbable that such minor physical changes as increased muscle mass and increased body hair would have completely and utterly altered, essentially eradicated, an *erastes*' erotic appetite.

However, in this world where the end of the pederastic relationship is so strictly enforced, it does not seem probable that an *erastes* would feel any great amount of embarrassment at the loss of his *eromenos*, as Watanabe implies, since it is by no means necessarily a reflection of the *eromenos*' decreased affections for him, but instead a mutual agreement to adhere to the prevailing tradition and moral regulations. Thus, it does not seem likely that the utter death of the *eromenos* would be the most "aesthetically pleasing" option; and, even if it were so for reasons other than "embarrassment", surely it need not be so grisly and tear-stained as those depicted in the ancient Greek novel.

The discussion of these tragic deaths in *Leucippe and Clitophon* is quickly followed by a brief and playful debate over the supremacy of women or boys as love objects.[55] The two sides are more or less presented with equal force, each detailing the physical merits of the woman and the boy which would make her or him the most toothsome overall. In the end,

[51] Graham Anderson, *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Graeco-Roman World* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1984), 112.
[52] Reardon, 204.
[53] Watanabe, 13.

it is simply a matter of taste, a conclusion (or lack thereof) that would seem to send a strong message in favor of same-sex relations.

During the debate, though, Kleitophon rebuts a remark made by Menelaos with the following: "A lover cannot come to the end of an affair with a boyfriend feeling unqualified gratification, for he is invariably left thirsty for something more." Menelaos responds that "to be unsatisfied is always a desirable state. Constant recourse to anything makes satisfaction shrivel into satiation."[56] Menelaos makes no attempt to refute Kleitophon's claim that same-sex relationships are always ephemeral and unsatisfying. Indeed, he could very well have made a protestation in defense of relationships that could continue beyond their allotted death knell, such as the possibility offered at the end of *An Ephesian Tale* when Hippothous adopts Cleisthenes. Evidently, though, this practice was not commonly accepted enough for Menelaos to even hint at it. Instead, he maintains that all things have an ideal threshold of satisfaction and that pederasty is no exception. Pederasty thus seems to afford to men the necessary amount of fulfillment to maintain its status as a social compromise: it is recognized and accepted that men may desire other men; therefore, they are allowed to pursue them, free of contempt, but only within very strict temporal and emotional boundaries that do not diminish in any way the *eromenos*' approaching manhood and which are not fully satisfying.

The incidents in the works examined support the observation that the ancient Greek novel possesses an inherent tension and confusion regarding same-sex relations, like that found within the greater institution of pederasty. Male same-sex desire in and of itself is tolerated and accepted as a natural condition of human nature. However, acting upon this desire becomes problematic. As far as these three romances are concerned, homoerotic relationships are doomed with respect to their duration, they are marginal, and they are invariably held as inferior to the ideal, heterosexual relationship. Indeed, when all is said and done, one never finds as a pair of protagonists two men passionately in love with each other, wealthy, divinely beautiful, whose relationship is tested to the maximum but triumphantly consummated in the end. There is no 'happily ever after'-as there is for Chaereas and Callirhoe, Habrocomoes and Anthia, and Leukippe and Kleitophon-for the pederastic, homoerotic couple.

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[54] Watanabe, 13.
[55] Reardon, 205.

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[56] Reardon, 205-206.