MEMORY AND DESCRIPTION IN THE ANCIENT NOVEL

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In the introduction to his translation of *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*, a Greek novel of the second century c.e., Jack Winkler gives the following advice to its readers:

> The unanswerable enigma of its contradictory style should be enjoyed directly as a lascivious surface and nothing more, making us conscious that the quest for depth, for meaning, and for unity is a fraud of the ages. That cannot quite be the author's intention, since he could not have foreseen the time when tentative endeavors for unity of meaning, perspective, and point of view would one day have created a system of seeing and reading that knew no other possibility, but as children of that system it must be part of the author's meaning for us. Otherwise we will misread his stressful irresolutions as bad rather than purposefully ineffable.[1]

Winkler here faces up to a difficult fact about many kinds of ancient literature: the circumstances of their production and circulation are either unknown or alien to us, and hence our ordinary modes of reading are necessarily

1 Winkler 1989.174. Quotations from *Leucippe and Clitophon* are from this translation, slightly modified; Greek text is that of S. Gaselee in the Loeb edition.

Arethusa 31 (1998) 99–122

ahistorical to some degree. In the case of the ancient novels, the application of our own standards for a well-made story necessitates either the judgment that they are incompetent, or it necessitates a more subtle reading that recuperates a "unity" of questionable historical provenance. The old battle between the "Analysts" and "Unitarians" in Homeric scholarship is analogous: both sides took for granted the same standards of reading, the former rejecting various parts of the received texts of Homer as the interpolations of an incompetent *Arbeiter*, the latter spinning out ever more complicated justifications for the inclusion of those suspected parts. It is now well known how the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition provided a third way of viewing Homer, one in which the process of production and circulation itself provided the basis for viewing the texts as self-consistent in a different way. Is it possible to find a third way of looking at the ancient novels based on a "theory of prosaic composition" analogous to the theory of oral composition for Homer? I would like to advance such a project by investigating the status of description in the novel of Achilles Tatius to which Winkler alludes in the quotation above, taking my cue from two studies that correspond roughly to an "analyst" and a "unitarian" approach to *Leucippe and Clitophon*. Dorit Sedelmeier identifies a clear structure in the novel *once the various descriptions and digressions have been discounted*.[2] Shadi Bartsch, on the other hand, focuses on these very elements of the text to identify a complex authorial strategy of hermeneutic hide and seek in the novel (Bartsch 1989). Each of them takes for granted that the meaning of the novel must be grasped as a whole, that the parts either resonate with the whole or are to be set aside as extraneous or "merely" ornamental.

In assuming these positions, Bartsch and Sedelmeier implicitly rely on the general view that description, when it occurs in narrative, is either ornamental or symbolic: in the first case, description produces *enargeia*, vivid visual realization that contributes to some specific rhetorical impact; in the second, description serves to foreshadow events, delineate character, or otherwise reflect or figure the key interpretive issues raised by the text.[3] In the latter case, description is sometimes seen as a

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2 Sedelmeier 1959.113. Cf. Mittelstadt 1967.753: pictorial descriptions in *Leucippe and Clitophon* "have no organic connection with the plot in his novel and are hardly more than irrelevant digressions intended to dazzle and entertain the reader."

3 Most useful for my understanding of literary description have been Fowler 1991, Walker 1993, Goldhill 1994, Becker 1992, Beaujour 1981, Hamon 1982, Blanchard 1980. I also

miniature version of the themes or poetic design of the text, a *mise-en-abyme* "reduplicating, reflecting, or mirroring (one or more than one aspect of) the textual whole."[4] Such accounts, however, often take for granted an instrumental view of the switch from narrative to description: description is selected at some point in a narrative from a set of available options because it suits the author's overall purpose best. I will argue that in *Leucippe and Clitophon* descriptions can perform a *generative* role in the unfolding of the story: rather than "reflecting" or "mirroring" the narrative as a whole, descriptions sometimes present a tentative "first draft" or preliminary sketch of it. That is, rather than being elements of a design that is clearly articulated from the start and instantiated at every step along the way, descriptions are elements that, when first introduced, have many possible futures, and are deployed by the author as part of a more local strategy to get and keep things going and in this way *create* possibilities for the course of the story.

This is not to say we must imagine our author plunging forward without ever revising anything—although the logistical problems in substantially revising a work of this scope would have been daunting in antiquity—but rather that the actual articulation of the story, how one thing leads to another, is itself an important part of the creative process and that the linear unfolding of the work will bear the traces of that creative process. This is especially true in the ancient novels, whose non-traditional character (namely, they are "novel" plots in prose) means more energy must be allocated to constructing the story as it goes along, and not just to ornamenting an already well-plotted narrative. Such texts especially require what Godzich and Kittay call, in a partially analogous context, a "prosaics" approach:

> Trained as we are to perceive texts as totalities, we seek to apprehend their structure and, in the description of that structure, to assert our mastery over the text. Prosaics seeks instead to espouse the movement of the text as it manages the economy of its discourses, to establish where the thresholds of decision arise, what the decisions

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would like to acknowledge the criticisms and suggestions of James Creech, Joseph Farrell, Mitchell Greenberg, Susan Jarratt, David Konstan, Donald Lateiner, and Peter Rose.

4 Becker 1995.4, citing Graff's *Dictionary of Narratology* (Norman 1987).

> are, and what their motivations and determinations as well as their consequences have been. In other words, we must learn to follow the processive threading of the text.[5]

If assuming that our novel is already complete at every point produces one set of conclusions, assuming that it is "under construction" at any point along the way will produce others. Such an approach may allow us to identify better the forces and interests that have produced this peculiar narrative, while remaining alive to the radical differences such a text presents to us modern readers.

Achilles Tatius' novel begins with a description of the harbor of Sidon where an unnamed narrator lands after a storm. This is followed by yet another description, this time of a votive tablet depicting the rape of Europa. This second description is what modern critics call an "ekphrasis," a description of a work of art, of which there are two others in the novel.[6] Each ekphrasis has numerous links to the text that follows, and Bartsch, citing contemporary evidence for the "proleptic" character of such descriptions, argues that they function to foreshadow these events. Second sophistic readers, she shows, would have expected these descriptions to presage the plot of the story. However, there is another level of complication since the events in the story are not quite what the ekphrases would lead one to expect. Hence Bartsch concludes it was the author's intention to lead the reader astray, to set up expectations that are then frustrated, leading to the undermining of the reader's confidence in his or her ability to read. Thus, for example, there are a number of parallels between the description of the rape of Europa and the story of the main characters, Clitophon and Leucippe. The ekphrasis sets the erotic tone and foreshadows the character of Leucippe by referring to her virginity and her willingness to be abducted (Bartsch 1989.49–54). Imagistic links, such as the description of flowers, springs, and hedges in both ekphrasis and narrative, also establish parallels. But the scene also, to the reader's surprise, foreshadows the rape of Calligone, the hero's half-sister, and "the correspondence of small details serves to confirm the fulfillment of what was foreshadowed." But the reader

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5 Godzich and Kittay 1987.48. For a general account of such a project's appropriateness to the ancient novels, see Nimis 1994.

6 The term "ekphrasis" occurs first in the second sophistic, but with the more general meaning of any kind of description. I will use the term only in the narrower sense of a "literary description of a graphic description" (Heffernan 1991.300).

is resurprised when Clitophon elopes with Leucippe, for this turns out to be the real event foreshadowed by the ekphrasis of Europa (Bartsch 1989.63–65).

Bartsch's account of the motives of Achilles Tatius is perhaps over ingenious, but it is clear that she considers the ekphrasis of Europa to be the kind of beginning that is added on at the end of the composition process, the kind of beginning that prepares for what follows because it already knows what follows. Hence she often speaks of the necessity for readers to exercise "hindsight" and "post-hindsight." This could be the case in Achilles Tatius' novel, for this introductory scene is a kind of prologue that has a different narrative status than the rest of the novel. The unnamed narrator is greeted by a stranger, Clitophon, whose autobiographical account of his amorous misfortunes constitutes the rest of the narrative. It is thus possible that our author composed the ekphrasis of Europa last, designing it—after the novel had been finished—to foreshadow thematically the events that shortly follow in Clitophon's narrative. But it is more likely that this ekphrasis is a real beginning, that our author has a general idea for a story, is casting around for a good way to get underway, and that details he introduces at this point become, as the story unfolds, generative or determinative of events that follow in ways that were not clearly foreseen when they were introduced. Indeed, it has often been noted that the ending of this novel fails to take into account the way the story began; for the novel ends with the happy couple sailing off to Byzantium and we are never returned to the initial scene of the unnamed narrator and the apparently unhappy Clitophon speaking in Sidon.[7] Moreover, Achilles Tatius attributes an explicit "generative" function to the ekphrasis: the effect of the picture on the first narrator prompts Clitophon, who overhears his reaction, to introduce himself and tell his tale. The description thus seems to function as a "grounding" device comparable to the invocation of the Muses by the epic poet or the prologue in a drama.[8] Its placement here suggests a certain anxiety about how this discourse will be taken. What does the author really

7 Most 1989 argues that the novel's happy ending precluded a return to the initial autobiographical scenario, since autobiographies always end tragically in antiquity. If true, this confirms that the author started out in a way incongruous with what he ended up with. Others see the ending to be imitative of abruptly ending Platonic dialogues like the *Symposium*.

8 Godzich and Kittay 1987.139–75, discuss numerous "prosaic" versions of grounding devices. See also Maeder 1991.

want to say? What kind of story should he write? There is no reason to believe that these questions are completely answered for the author until he has actually finished the novel, and there is no reason to assume that he has finished it already as he composes this opening scene. Rather, this description could serve the author as a sort of preliminary outline or heuristic premise, a semantic and narrative resource that the author proceeds to unfold.[9]

Descriptions of paintings—real or imaginary—by second sophistic figures like Lucian and Philostratus, roughly contemporary with Achilles Tatius, are good examples of how a picture can function as a prompt for narrative elaboration. Philostratus' *Imagines*, for example, consists of a series of explanations of paintings for a pupil, which take the form of narratives that clearly go far beyond what could actually have been represented in a painting. Also of interest are Lucian's *prolaliai* ("prologues"), which survive as independent pieces, but seem to have performed an introductory function not unlike the ekphrasis of Europa in *Leucippe and Clitophon*.[10] General discussions of literary description often identify a generative relationship between graphic and narrative articulation. Heffernan, for example, states that "ekphrastic literature typically delivers *from* the pregnant moment of graphic art its embryonically narrative impulse, and thus makes explicit the story that graphic art tells only by implication" (Heffernan 1991.302). M. Beaujour calls description an "instrument of *anamnesis*, and as such, a vector of psychic energy" (Beaujour 1981.33). Philippe Hamon, finally, maintains the role of description is "to organize narrative and, through the redundancy which it introduces into the narrative, to act as its memory" (Hamon 1982.168).

These last two quotations draw attention to the link between description and memory in antiquity, an association that lends support to the

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9 Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, roughly contemporary with Achilles Tatius, also begins with an ekphrasis consisting of a bare enumeration of a sequence of scenes, which the author's story subsequently elaborates. Xenophon's *An Ephesian Tale*, also roughly contemporary with Achilles Tatius, contains an obscure oracle near the beginning that is a vague outline of that novel. For the originality and inventiveness displayed in such opening scenes, see Maeder 1991.

10 These and other second sophistic examples of ekphrasis are discussed fully by Bartsch 1989.7–39. Harlan 1965.135 states that "description of paintings as a literary device is rooted in the rhetorical practice of evolving an imagined painted scene as an introduction to a discourse." Whether such ekphrases describe real or imagined pictures, see now Bryson 1994.

view of description I am suggesting. Simonides of Ceos, who is credited with the remark that painting is "silent poetry" and poetry "speaking painting," is also credited with the invention of memory systems based on description, a well-attested practice of ancient orators.[11] According to the rhetorical handbooks, this art of memory consists in setting up in the mind a series of places (*loci*, τόποι) and inhabiting them with "vivid images" (*imagines agentes*, εἴδωλα), a process Cicero compares to painting a picture.[12] Once this is done, the *loci* can be revisited in the mind and the associations will act as reminders. The rhetorical tradition thus had a specific practice that linked images and places to discourse so that the former generated the latter. This is not to say that behind every ekphrasis is some complex set of *loci* and *imagines* used to memorize the discourse that follows, but rather that description, in the rhetorical tradition, was used to create imaginative vectors that indicated the direction and movement of a discourse. The very terms τόπος and *communis locus* for "subject matter" and "common idea" indicate the degree to which the ancients conceived of the universe of thought as a map of regions able to be traversed along metonymic paths of association. As Bettina Bergmann says, the orator is the "topographer of the imagination" (Bergmann 1994.226).

The importance of the connection between memory and description is that it allows us to see such non-narrative elements serving a function in the *management* of the novel's discourse. Bartsch cites Eco's notion of an "inferential walk" to describe the process by which readers make tentative assumptions about the future of a story as it unfolds, assumptions that may have to be modified as new incidents and information are introduced. But Eco explicitly compares this process of *reading* narratives with the process of *producing* them:

> [Various levels of textual organization] are interconnected in a continuous coming and going. The cooperation of the interpreter at the lower levels can succeed only because some hypotheses which concern upper levels (and vice versa) are hazarded. *The same happens also for a generative process: frequently an author makes decisions concerning the deep semantic structure of his story*

11 For ancient mnemotechnics, see Yates 1966 and Farrell 1997.

12 Cicero *de Oratore* 2.87.358, discussed by Bergmann 1994.

> *only at the moment in which he chooses at the lexical level, for merely stylistic reasons, a given expression.*[13]

Like Godzich and Kittay, Eco is thinking of texts as "processive threadings" rather than as static objects brought forth whole, like Athena from the head of Zeus. The experience of the linear unfolding of the story need not at every point be qualitatively different for the reader and the author, as if that unfolding were staged by an author who has absolute control over its every aspect. "The author," writes P. Macherey, "is the first reader of his own work" (Macherey 1978.9). Moreover, Bartsch's thesis that Achilles Tatius has carefully constructed an elaborate hermeneutic game that thematizes reading and interpretation makes the novel into a sophisticated diversion only incidentally concerned with exploring issues of gender and desire. But it seems to me that Achilles Tatius has embarked on a more radically experimental narrative adventure in which he deploys a whole range of elements from a variety of genres that take up issues of *eros*, without having a monolithic strategy from beginning to end. The character of the descriptive "digressions" that occur throughout the novel may be rooted in a more tentative and vaguely defined impulse to try out new ideas. Such a view of the novel's narrative agenda resonates with Bakhtin's characterization of novelistic discourse as "unfinal" and "open-ended," part of the "centrifugal forces of language."[14] It also takes account of the fact that any complex text—and *Leucippe and Clitophon* is not simple in any way—will inevitably exceed the *conscious* intentions of its author. As we shall see, this novel cries out for attention to manifestations of *unconscious* intentions.

If we take the position that the initial ekphrasis is a real beginning that serves a managerial function in the creative process of composing the novel, the circumstances of the other two instances of ekphrasis in the novel suggest that they have a parallel function.[15] The second ekphrasis occurs near the beginning of Book 3, when the characters see a pair of paintings: one depicting the rescue of Andromeda by Perseus, the other the rescue of

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13 Eco 1984.17; my emphasis.

14 Bakhtin 1981 and Fusillo 1988. Compare Winkler's characterization of Longus as an author who "may have no single intention but rather experiments with a variety of possibilities and perspectives, shifting from scene to scene" (Winkler 1990.111).

15 Harlan 1965.136 concludes that these two other descriptions of paintings are "adaptations of the introductory technique for use in the middle of the story."

Prometheus by Heracles. The third ekphrasis occurs at the beginning of Book 5, when the characters see a painting of the rape of Philomela. Once again there are many uncanny correspondences between these paintings and the narrative that follows in which the heroine Leucippe is apparently killed twice, once by disembowelment and once by decapitation.[16] Here it is useful to take into account Dorit Sedelmeier's analysis of the "structure" of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, an analysis that depends, as I have said, on ignoring all the non-narrative digressions. Once that is done, she argues, a clear narrative structure emerges that falls into four parts (Sedelmeier 1959.113):

> Books 1–2: The love plot proper
> Books 3–4: The adventures of the lovers
> Books 5–6: Temptation by seducers
> Books 7–8: Resolution and happy ending.

Within this schema, Sedelmeier identifies a number of structuring elements, like ring composition and thematic symmetries, that give coherence to each of the segments. Like Bartsch, she must assume that the whole novel is somehow already composed in detail before its actual articulation in writing; in addition, she assumes that the non-narrative digressions are added in an independent process that is unrelated to the structure of the novel she has identified. Whereas Bartsch sees these descriptions as central to the novel's purpose, Sedelmeier sees them as extraneous. Her analysis is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, but like "analyst" discussions of Homer, it does identify passages and qualities of the narrative that require explanation. In particular, Sedelmeier draws our attention to the shift in the *character* of the narrative after Book 2 and again after Book 4.[17] It is noteworthy that these two sections of the novel each begin—like the opening scene—with an arrival by sea followed by an ekphrasis describing works of art. Moreover, in each case the ekphrasis is inserted into the

16 Bartsch 1989.55–60 and 65–76 where her explanation of these correspondences is once again that the reader is being drawn into a clever game of interpretation and reinterpretation.

17 Sedelmeier's division of the novel into four sections rather than the three I here propose does not seem justified to me. There is certainly no significant break in the story between Books 6 and 7 comparable to the others. The account by Reardon 1994 of the significant changes of the story's character coincides better with my view.

narrative as an independent description, so that we no longer seem to be listening to Clitophon, the character and narrator of his own story, but to an omniscient narrator.[18] The three scenes that involve ekphrasis are thus positioned at the beginning of these larger narrative divisions, and the numerous connections between ekphrasis and subsequent narrative suggest that in each case the descriptions have a generative role. In the following brief summaries I will try to focus on the way the *character* of the story changes in each of these three sections.

Books 1–2: the description of the rape of Europa is followed by the story of the "seduction" of Leucippe by Clitophon and their subsequent elopement. This portion of the novel is dominated by representations of *eros* and marriage derived from the traditions of elegy and New Comedy. As David Konstan has shown, the *eros* that Leucippe engenders in Clitophon produces not a desire to marry her, but a desire to seduce her, on the recommendation of his confidants Kleinias and Satyros, who produce the standard advice on how to go about manipulating an object of desire (Konstan 1994.65–69). Besides the rape of Europa, other mythic exempla of unequal relationships of *eros* are given in the novel, such as Apollo's rape of Daphne. The second book ends, while Leucippe sleeps, with a philosophical/rhetorical disquisition on the relative merits of heterosexual and homosexual love (2.35–38), which picks up on earlier references to Plato's discussions of love.[19] As the lovers make their escape, although they have yet to consummate their union, there is a certain sense of resolution and closure given by this lengthy digression, what Fusillo calls "the narrative equivalent of a caesura" (Fusillo 1997.225).

Books 3–4. Book 3 begins with a shipwreck, a convenient way of changing the story and a typical entree into the world of romance and adventure. Clitophon's friends, Kleinias, Menelaos, and Satyros, all disappear into the sea leaving the hero alone with Leucippe. Arriving in Pelusion, they catch sight of paintings of Prometheus' rescue by Heracles and Andromeda's rescue by Perseus that are described in detail (3.6–8). The incidents narrated next all have parallels in the other extant novels and,

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18 Bartsch 1989.50 makes this observation. For the vicissitudes of the novel's "ego–narrative," see Hägg 1971 and Reardon 1994.

19 Anderson 1982 argues that Books 1–2 are an "anti-Phaedrus." Goldhill 1995.82–92 shows that this serio-comic dialogue is an example of Achilles Tatius' complex twisting of the philosophical and rhetorical discourses on *eros*, and is the climax of the *praeceptor amoris* theme of the first two books.

indeed, the character of the story here is quite different from that of the first two books. There follows capture by pirates, the apparent death by disemboweling of Leucippe in a way that has uncanny parallels to the ekphrases of Prometheus and Andromeda,[20] followed by the eventual reappearance of Menelaos, Satyros, and Leucippe. In Book 4, two erotic rivals make attempts on Leucippe, one of them rendering her insane with a drug. A new character, Chaereas, is introduced who helps Leucippe recover from her fit. The book ends with learned and seemingly irrelevant disquisitions on the Nile river (4.18) and the crocodile (4.19). This "shift of gear" into the mode of description, like the philosophical discussion that ended Book 2, produces a sense of closure to this segment of the story.

Books 5–8. The opening of Book 5 has the character of a new beginning. The lovers arrive in Alexandria, which was their original destination when they left Tyre back in Book 2. There is an important description of the city that also parallels the opening description of Sidon and its double harbor. This is followed by the ekphrasis of the rape of Philomela, which bodes "lawless sex, adultery without shame, women degraded," according to one of Clitophon's companions (5.4).[21] The characters thus decide to scuttle their plans for the day, but only long enough for Clitophon to redescribe the painting at the request of Leucippe. Subsequently, the lovers and their friends do go off and have the disastrous adventure that seems to have been augured by the picture: Leucippe is stolen by bandits and apparently decapitated before the eyes of her lover. Bartsch, however, notes the thematic continuities between the painting and the new story that now begins, involving a new pair of characters, Melite and her husband Thersander. The mutual fidelity of the hero and heroine now becomes the center of attention, as Melite and Thersander each press themselves on one of the lovers, apparently—like the "barbarian" Tereus in Clitophon's description—unsatisfied with a single spouse.[22] With the appearance, at the end, of a series of New Comedy motifs (reconciliation with parental blocking figures, trials, recognitions, and marriage), the

20 See Bartsch 1989.55–60, Montague 1992.244–45.

21 ὁρᾷς οὖν ὅσων γέμει κακῶν ἡ γραφή· ἔρωτος παρανόμου, μοιχείας ἀναισχύντου, γυναικείων ἀτυχημάτων.

22 Bartsch 1989.69 argues that these "love triangles" are what is really foreshadowed by the ekphrasis of Philomela, but this part of her argument is the least convincing.

parallels between ekphrasis and narrative, however vague, weave a thematic continuity between rape and marriage.[23]

This brief and highly selective summary indicates how the three ekphrases could be seen as part of a strategy of production aimed forward, rather than a strategy that is oriented from the end: as places where, as P. Hamon characterizes them, "the narrative comes to a temporary halt, while continuing to organize itself" (Hamon 1982.170). In this way, the ekphrases can be seen as part of the resources the prose author has at his disposal to manage the flow of his discourse as it is being constructed. Rather than non-narrative ornaments "added" to the text after the fact, so to speak, they are places where decisions are in the process of being made, places where the creative process itself is at work. Such, in particular, seems to be the case with the passage combining a description of Alexandria and the ekphrasis of Philomela that occurs roughly half way through the novel. I will conclude my remarks by considering this important passage in more detail, for it ties together issues of memory, description, and the management of discourse in a remarkable way.

As I have already mentioned, the arrival of the hero and heroine in Alexandria has the earmarks of a new beginning, with some reminiscences of the opening description of Sidon and its harbor. As Clitophon approaches Alexandria, he focuses on two aspects of the unfolding sight: the astonishing beauty of the city, on the one hand, and, on the other, its remarkable spatial organization (5.1). This latter aspect recalls the mnemotechnics of the orators:

> A double row of columns led straight across from the entrance of Helios to the opposite entrance of Selene, Sun and Moon being the guardians of the city gates. Between the columns there lay the city's open area. Crossing it is such a long journey that you would think you were going abroad, though you were staying at home. Proceeding a little distance into the city, I came to the quarter (*topos*) named for Alexander himself, where I saw a whole other city, one whose beauty was split up in separate sections: for a row of columns went in one

23 Heffernan 1993.61. Segal 1984 discusses the novel's end as an attempt to mediate between the ideals of Aphrodite and Artemis, the "dual aspects of the archetypically feminine."

> direction, and another just as long crossed it at right angles (5.1).[24]

This description resembles the kind of *loci* that the author of the *ad Herennium* recommends be used as memory devices, scenes "that are naturally or artificially set off on a small scale, complete and conspicuous, so that we can grasp and embrace them easily by natural memory—for example, a building, an intercolumnar space, a recess, an arch or the like."[25] But if the spatial character of Alexandria's plan suggests the memory techniques of the orators, the other aspect of Clitophon's description implies a different characteristic of memory; for the plan of the city is so beautiful and magnificent that it is incapable of being comprehended:

> My eyes tried to travel along every street, but I was left an unsatisfied spectator. The totality of its beauty was beyond my eyes' scope. At every moment when I was actually glimpsing some parts, I was on the point of seeing more and pressing on to others still but reluctant to pass some by. The things to see outstripped my sight; the prospects lured me on. Turning around and round to face all the streets, I grew faint at the sight and at last exclaimed, like a luckless lover, "Eyes, we have met our match." But then I saw two new and unexpected contests: one between the magnitude of the city and its beauty, and another between the population and the space of the city itself; and both won. The space of the city was larger than a continent; the population more numerous than a nation. If I considered the city, I well might doubt that any

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24 στάθμη μὲν κιόνων ὄρθιος ἑκατέρωθεν ἐκ τῶν Ἡλίου πυλῶν ἐς τὰς Σελήνης πύλας· οὗτοι γὰρ τῆς πόλεως οἱ πυλωροί. ἐν μέσῳ δὴ τῶν κιόνων τῆς πόλεως τὸ πεδίον. ὁδὸς δὲ διὰ τοῦ πεδίου πολλὴ καὶ ἔνδημος ἀποδημία. ὀλίγους δὲ τῆς πόλεως σταδίους προελθὼν ἦλθον εἰς τὸν ἐπώνυμον Ἀλεξάνδρου τόπον. εἶδον δὲ ἐντεῦθεν ἄλλην πόλιν καὶ σχιζόμενον ταύτῃ τὸ κάλλος. ὅσος γὰρ κιόνων ὄρχατος εἰς τὴν εὐθυωρίαν, τοσοῦτος ἕτερος εἰς τὰ ἐγκάρσια.

25 *ad Her*. 3.16.29: "Locos appellamus eos qui breviter, perfecte, insignite aut natura aut manu sunt absoluti, ut eos facile naturali memoria comprehendere et amplecti queamus: ut aedes, intercolumnium, angulum, fornicem, et alia quae his similia sunt." See Yates 1967.7.

> swarm of men might fill it; but if I looked at the populace,
> I was amazed that any urban space could contain them
> (5.1).[26]

This elaborate adynaton seems to conceive of the city as a memory space too large to be filled completely with *imagines agentes* and as a population of *imagines agentes* too numerous to fill up any series of *loci*. Contemplating this space and its occupants leads one irresistibly from one image to another, as though the onlooker cannot control what does and does not come into his purview. This representation suggests to me the vast array of narrative possibilities lying before our author at this particular place in the novel. What should happen next? What sequence of events will best suit his purposes? For an ancient author to pose these questions is to conjure a swarm of images and a series of ordered places in which to organize them. Commenting on Quintilian's discussion of this use of places and images for mental organization, Bryson states that, "architecture not only stands for the control of self; it is the actual material means by which the self exercises control over its words and its world."[27]

All the more striking, therefore, is the emphasis in the description on the fact that this space is unable to be mastered by the mind, for it is larger than a "continent" (ἤπειρος: probably from ἄπειρος and hence an "unbounded" region), its inhabitants numerous beyond counting. Such a space inevitably suggests the unconscious, that boundless region teeming with images, feelings, and creative impulses, which, at some level, must be the generative source for this novel narrative.[28] Traversing this vast memory space gives Clitophon the strange feeling of making a journey abroad in one's native land (ἔνδημος ἀποδημία). This expression recalls that peculiar

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26 ἐγὼ δὲ μερίζων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐς πάσας τὰς ἀγυιὰς, θεατὴς ἀκόρεστος ἤμην καὶ τὸ κάλλος ὅλως οὐκ ἐξήρκουν ἰδεῖν. τὰ μὲν ἔβλεπον, τὰ δὲ ἔμελλον, τὰ δὲ ἠπειγόμην ἰδεῖν, τὰ δὲ οὐκ ἤθελον παρελθεῖν· ἐκράτει τὴν θέαν τὰ ὁρώμενα, εἶλκε τὰ προσδοκώμενα. περιάγων οὖν ἐμαυτὸν εἰς πάσας τὰς ἀγυιὰς καὶ πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν δυσερωτιῶν, εἶπον καμών· "Ὀφθαλμοί, νενικήμεθα." εἶδον δὲ δύο καινὰ καὶ παράλογα, μεγέθους πρὸς κάλλος ἅμιλλαν καὶ δήμου πρὸς πόλιν φιλονεικίαν καὶ ἀμφότερα νικῶντα· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἠπείρου μείζων ἦν, ὁ δὲ πλείων ἔθνους. καὶ εἰ μὲν εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπεῖδον, ἠπίστουν εἰ πληρώσει τις δῆμος αὐτὴν ἀνδρῶν, εἰ δὲ εἰς τὸν δῆμον ἐθεασάμην, ἐθαύμαζον εἰ χωρήσει τις αὐτὸν πόλις.

27 Bryson 1994.278. See also Elsner 1995.76–80.

28 The comparison of the space to a "continent" calls to mind Freud's comparison of female sexuality to a "dark continent" (presumably Africa).

sensation that Freud calls the "uncanny," *unheimlich*: the sensation that one feels when encountering something familiar (*heimlich*) that has been estranged by the process of repression.[29] As the novel is about to make a new beginning, as the narrative itself gives way to description and the text seems in this way to pause and gather its semantic resources before plunging ahead into a new set of uncanny adventures—adventures that will see Leucippe apparently beheaded, her headless trunk the subject of an elaborate lament by Clitophon, followed by her "return" shortly afterward—it is most appropriate that we find at such a point this peculiar evocation of the workings of the imagination and the unconscious and, more particularly, of a kind of surrender to those workings, an inability of the symbolic order, represented by the grid of streets, to master the effects of the unconscious, represented by the swarming population surging forward at every turn.

The ekphrasis of Philomela that follows shortly in the narrative is certainly at one level about the return of the repressed as well:

> It showed the violation of Philomela, the violence of Tereus, the cutting of her tongue. The plot of the drama was there in every detail—the robe, Tereus, the banquet table. A maid was holding the unfolded robe; Philomela was standing beside it and kept pointing her finger and indicating the pictures: Prokne nodded that she understood: her eyes glowed fiercely and angrily at the picture. *King Tereus of Thrace was embroidered there, wrestling Philomela to his lust: her hair had been torn, her waistband broken, her dress ripped open, one breast exposed; she planted her right hand against his eyes and with her left tried to hold the torn shreds of her garment across her breasts. Tereus held Philomela tightly in his arms, drawing her body as close as he could to his own and tightening his embrace on her flesh*—so deftly had the artist designed the robe's picture**.** In the rest of the icon the women are showing Tereus his dinner—scraps in

29 Freud 1919. Freud cites the Greek word ξενικός as an equivalent, but the pair ἔνδημος ἀποδημία based on δῆμος is a remarkable parallel to the pair of German terms based on *heim*.

> a basket—the head and hands of his infant son. They are laughing, at the same time terrified. Tereus is shown leaping up from his couch and drawing his sword against them. He plants one leg on the table, which is neither standing nor fallen, a picture of impending collapse (5.3).[30]

A second description of this painting given by Clitophon to Leucippe only a few sentences later focuses on the crime of Tereus—particularly his betrayal of the marriage arrangement—the terrible revenge of the sisters against him and their transformation into birds. This first description, however, focuses on the robe that Philomela weaves in order to reveal the truth that Tereus has kept hidden by cutting off her tongue. When we are told what is depicted on the robe, we have a kind of "ekphrasis within an ekphrasis" (the part italicized in the above passage), that involves a complex *mise-en-abyme* of the representation of narrative voice and the reader's gaze.[31] Tereus' crimes against Philomela are not described as a separate part of the painting, but only as they appear on Philomela's robe, so these deeds are specifically represented as a form of repressed discourse returning: the "voice of the shuttle," in Sophocles' words.[32] The focus of the

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30 Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομήν. ἦν δὲ ὁλόκληρον τῇ γραφῇ τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος, ὁ πέπλος, ὁ Τηρεύς, ἡ τράπεζα. τὸν πέπλον ἠπλωμένον εἱστήκει κρατοῦσα θεράπαινα· Φιλομήλα παρειστήκει καὶ ἐπετίθει τῷπέπλῳ τὸν δάκτυλον καὶ ἐδείκνυε τῶν ὑφασμάτων τὰς γραφάς· ἡ Πρόκνη πρὸς τὴν δεῖξιν ἐνενεύκει καὶ δριμὺ ἔβλεπε καὶ ὠργίζετο τῇ γραφῇ· **Θρᾲξ ὁ Τηρεὺς ἐνύφαντο Φιλομήλᾳ παλαίων πάλην Ἀφροδίσιαν. ἐσπάρακτο τὰς κόμας ἡ γυνή, τὸ ζῶσμα ἐλέλυτο, τὸν χιτῶνα κατέρρηκτο, ἡμίγυμνος τὸ στέρνον ἦν, τὴν δεξιὰν ἐπ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἤρειδε τοῦ Τηρέως, τῇ λαιᾷ τὰ διερρωγότα τοῦ χιτῶνος ἐπὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκλειεν. ⟨ἐν⟩ ἀγκάλαις εἶχε τὴν Φιλομήλαν ὁ Τηρεύς, ἔλκων πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἐνῆν τὸ σῶμα καὶ σφίγγων ἐν χρῷ τὴν συμπλοκήν.** ὧδε μὲν τὴν τοῦ πέπλου γραφὴν ὕφηνεν ὁ ζωγράφος. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τῆς εἰκόνος, αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν κανῷ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ δείπνου τῷ Τηρεῖ δεικνύουσι, κεφαλὴν παιδίου καὶ χεῖρας· γελῶσι δὲ ἅμα καὶ φοβοῦνται. ἀναπηδῶν ἐκ τῆς κλίνης ὁ Τηρεὺς ἐγέγραπτο, καὶ ἕλκων τὸ ξίφος ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας τὸ σκέλος ἤρειδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν· ἡ δὲ οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε πέπτωκεν, ἀλλ' ἐδείκνυε γραφὴν μέλλοντος πτώματος.

31 Moreover, the *peplos* of Philomela is already a privileged icon of *mise-en-abyme* by its association with the *peplos* of Athena. See Thomas 1983, speaking of Athena's *peplos* in the ekphrasis at Carthage in the first book of the *Aeneid*. LaPlace 1991 discusses other examples of *mise-en-abyme* in *Leucippe and Clitophon*.

32 ἡ τῆς κερκίδος φωνή: Aristotle *Poetics* 16.1454b, quoting the lost *Tereus.*

description is thus not the deeds themselves, but the way deeds come back to haunt the perpetrator who had tried to suppress them. If the second description of the painting by Clitophon casts it in its more traditional light as a cautionary tale about infidelity and revenge, the first description of the painting highlights the unofficial forms of discourse that women have available to them to circumvent the measures men take to limit their circulation, both physical and linguistic. Note the emphatic way in which Philomela's presence, remarkable enough in itself, is foregrounded by the use of tenses of continuous action. Not only has she woven the picture but she "was standing beside it and kept pointing her finger and indicating the pictures" (παρειστήκει καὶ ἐπετίθει τῷ πέπλῳ τὸν δάκτυλον καὶ ἐδείκνυε τῶν ὑφασμάτων τὰς γραφάς). The male dread that women will define themselves as a group with their own parallel universe of language is being centralized here.[33] At the same time, what is actually described as woven on the *peplos* is a highly eroticized version of what happened to Philomela, designed to appeal to a male gaze, revealing another level of ambivalence about the picture's meaning. This whole scene suggests to me thematically the novel's "uncanny" juxtaposition of desire and aversion, of pleasure and pain, of *eros* and violence, like the mixture of laughter and fear on the faces of Philomela and Prokne (γελῶσι δὲ ἅμα καὶ φοβοῦνται).[34]

Also remarkable in this passage are examples of what seem to be revisions and adjustments to the plot. Between the description of Alexandria and the first description of the painting, Clitophon prays to the great god for an end to his adventures. He then uncharacteristically switches from his usual narrative voice, as someone who narrates events only as they unfold and as he himself and the reader simultaneously come to understand them, to the more omniscient voice of one who has already experienced the events about to be narrated:

> But the god, I suppose, did not listen to our prayers, and further trials were in store for us on Fortune's obstacle

33 Marder 1992 and Joplin 1984 discuss this theme of the Philomela myth.

34 Compare this with the other ekphrases: the faces of the companions of Europa are marked by joy and fear (χαράς καὶ φόβου) and then desire and fear (βούλεσθαι . . . φοβεῖσθαι); Andromeda's face has both beauty and fear (καλλός καὶ δέος); the face of Prometheus has hope and fear (ἐλπίδος ἅμα καὶ φόβου); Philomela and Prokne are also laughing and afraid simultaneously in the second description (γελῶσαι φόβῳ).

> course. For, unbeknownst to us, Chaereas had long been lusting after Leucippe . . . (5.2–3).[35]

The revision of the role of Chaereas from a helper in Book 4 to an aggressor madly in love with Leucippe in Book 5 is something Clitophon the character won't find out till the end of the story, so that its abrupt introduction here in a breach of narrative decorum seems to be a kind of adjustment made by the author on the fly. Returning to his blow-by-blow narrative, Clitophon relates an ominous event that occurs on the way to meet the treacherous Chaereas: Leucippe is buzzed by a swallow. Clitophon then prays for a confirmation of this evil omen, whereupon his eyes fall upon the painting of the rape of Philomela that confirms the omen (5.3). After the description of the painting, Menelaos recommends changing their plans for the day, foregrounding in his recommendation the power of pictures to generate narrative:

> Interpreters of signs tell us to consider the stories of any paintings we chance to see as we set out on business and to liken the future to the plot of the story (5.4).[36]

The characters thus delay their plans, but only long enough for Clitophon to give an explanatory description of the picture at the request of Leucippe, after which the story is resumed where it left off. All readers have noted that this second description introduces elements not mentioned in the first one, usually taken as an oversight on the author's part. But this second description seems motivated by a desire to supplement or revise the first one, as though the first description had not adequately fulfilled whatever function had called it forth, signaling that the narrative itself is "under construction" at this point. Clitophon's exegesis seems to be a corrective, more reassuring version of something that had been left too open-ended. Thus, whereas the first description ends with "the image of an impending fall" (γραφήν μέλλοντος πτώματος), a moment of transition that must immediately change (but with what outcome?),[37] Leucippe asks specifically

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35 οὐκ ἐᾠκει δὲ ἄρα ὁ θεὸς ἐπινεύειν ταῖς ἡμετέραις εὐχαῖς, ἀλλ᾽ ἔμενεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἄλλο τῆς Τύχης γυμνάσιον. Ὁ γὰρ Χαιρέας πρὸ πολλοῦ τῆς Λευκίππης ἐλάνθανεν ἐρῶν . . .

36 λέγουσι δὲ οἱ τῶν συμβόλων ἐξηγηταὶ σκοπεῖν τοὺς μύθους τῶν εἰκόνων, ἂν ἐξιοῦσιν ἡμῖν ἐπὶ πρᾶξιν συντύχωσι, καὶ ἐξομοιοῦν τὸ ἀποβησόμενον τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας λόγῳ.

37 "Motion in suspense is the last feature of the painting" (Garson 1978.84).

about the metamorphosis that is the conclusion of the story, something not mentioned at all in the first ekphrasis: "What does this picture mean?" she asks, "In the story, who are these birds?"[38]

Clitophon's more traditional rendering of the story ends with the transformation of the women into birds, speechless bodies that are, as Heffernan notes, "forever powerless to speak or weave any more graphic stories of rape" (Heffernan 1993.52). From the standpoint of the management and organization of the novel's discourse, the double elaboration of the story of Philomela thematizes the problem of telling a story all the way to a satisfactory conclusion.[39]

It is remarkable the way this concentration of issues of narrative organization dovetails with the novel's thematic concerns. Philomela's ekphrasis is perhaps the "uncanniest" moment in this very uncanny novel, for it combines many elements Freud enumerates as provoking this sensation: dismemberment with its obvious overtones of castration, but also revenants, repetition, and the envoicing of silent objects. The last of these is a characteristic of ekphrasis itself, which means literally to "speak out" or "tell in full," indicating its connection with tomb inscriptions that frequently "envoice" the buried person (Heffernan 1991.302). But as an object offered up to readers to visualize, the *mise-en-abyme* of an ekphrasis within an ekphrasis brings out another often recognized characteristic of the story: its voyeurism. Although ekphrasis allows something silent to "speak out," voyeurism is the opposite process by which living things are "objectified" by the male gaze.[40] That Philomela "speaks out" a version of her story that is addressed, it would seem, not to her sister but to male readers, thus crystallizes what David Konstan notes is a central tension in the novel. For he argues that, like the other Greek novels, *Leucippe and Clitophon* projects a new vision of *eros* in which a lover and beloved of equal status are bound

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38 Τί βούλεται τῆς εἰκόνος ὁ μῦθος; καὶ τίνες αἱ ὄρνιθες αὗται; (5.5). This request of Leucippe thus puts the swallow, which seems to have prompted the story of Philomela in the first place, *back* into the picture.

39 Note that the first ekphrasis begins with an enumeration of three images that constitute "the whole plot of the drama" (ὁλόκληρον τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος): the robe, Tereus, the table. These three items are then elaborated one by one as though they made up a table of contents. The second ekphrasis also begins with an enumeration of three images, but this time the list consists of the very things that make up the conclusion left out of the first ekphrasis: nightingale, swallow, hoopoe.

40 Joplin 1984.34. The classic discussion of the "male gaze" in film is Mulvey 1988. In a more apposite context, see Walker 1992, Egger 1994, Elsom 1992.

together by a mutual and reciprocal commitment that eventuates in marriage. But the difficult (and only partially successful) task of maintaining an ego-narrator rather than an omniscient narrator seems designed to maximize the sensational pleasure of the objectifying and unequal gaze reminiscent of the older model of domination and submission (Konstan 1994.59–72).

The mnemonic techniques of the orators, like Homer's oral poetics, are methods for managing discourse, for maintaining a set of relationships among discursive objects. The ekphrases of Achilles Tatius' novel are descendants of the formula system of Homer and the memory spaces of the orators: with their combination of narrative linearity and spatial density they reproduce the meandering, associative quality of Achilles' novel—indeed, all the novels—which often present to the careful reader the appearance of a thematic deep structure, perhaps because their looser, experimental character gives freer rein to unconscious structures. Free association, uncanny repetition, apparent randomness that suddenly takes on the appearance of structure: these characteristics describe the dream work of individuals as well as the dreaming up of a "novel" story like *Leucippe and Clitophon*. The ekphrases of Achilles Tatius could be self-conscious acts of foreshadowing by a careful author plotting his every move from the perspective of the outcome. More likely, they are similar to one's first attempt to recall a dream, a recollection that is already fundamentally constructive, the first of a series of revisions that is necessarily the way that consciousness encounters unconscious stirrings. The narrative traces of the ekphrase that Bartsch identifies scattered and transformed throughout the novel are thus generated by impulses that are articulated and given form precisely in the process of writing the novel. The double elaboration of the story of Philomela—the ekphrasis followed by Clitophon's redescription—parallels the way in which successive accounts of dreams result in revisions activated by the censorship of consciousness, or the way our symbolic structures intervene to make order out of strange and uncanny experiences.[41]

To return to the dichotomy with which I began, I would argue that ekphrasis in *Leucippe and Clitophon* is neither an irrelevant decoration nor an integral part of a unity focused on reading and interpretation. Similarly, what Winkler calls the "stressful irresolutions" of the novel are neither a "lascivious surface" devoid of any deeper purpose, nor a hermeneutic

41 Plantiga 1992, Wooffitt 1992.

labyrinth in which we confront the blind alleys of postmodern aesthetics. The evolving practice of what I would characterize as "prosaic composition" is one that is inherently innovative, exploratory, and resistant to the kinds of closure and unity that we generally expect of the verse genres of antiquity. Ekphrasis is often seen as a point where issues of readability are explicitly raised in a self-conscious manner.[42] It is perhaps our own desire as literary critics that makes us hasten to put the word "self-conscious" into that assertion. A better formulation is that of Don Fowler, who argues that ekphrasis is a place that manifests a desire for integration and a simultaneous resistance to integration (Fowler 1991.35). Thus it is the perfect place to look for the contradictions—conscious and unconscious—that both generate a novel like *Leucippe and Clitophon* and that the novel seeks imaginatively to overcome.

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42 Goldhill 1994. More specifically on Achilles Tatius, Goldhill 1995.70–72.

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