
EKPHRASIS IN
ACHILLES TATIUS:
EXPLORING THE
LITERARY, VISUAL AND
RHETORICAL ARTS

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List of Abbreviations:

Ael. – Aelius Theon

Aeth. – *Aethiopica*

Call. – *Callirhoe*

DC. – *Daphnis and Chloe*

Dom. – *de Domo*

Eph. – *Ephesiaca*

Herc. – *Heracles*

Il. – *Iliad*

Long. – Longus

Luc. – Lucian

LSJ – Liddell, H. G. and Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised by Jones, H. S. (ed. 9, 1940).

Met. – *Metamorphoses*

Ph. – *Phaedrus*

Prog. – *Progymnasmata*

Rep. – *Republic*

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Introduction:

Achilles Tatius exemplifies the intense intellectual climate of the second century AD within his novel, *Leucippe and Cleitophon*. In particular, *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is abounding in rich descriptive passages (that is, ekphraseis) which show us an author extremely well versed in rhetorical theory, as well as one who is clearly educated in philosophical discourse. This dissertation is comprised of a close analysis of the three ekphraseis of paintings in the novel. The first takes place in Book One, depicting the Rape of Europa. The second, in Book Three, is made up of two images: one of Andromeda and Perseus, the other of Prometheus. The third and final painting is in Book Five, portraying Philomela weaving the story of her rape. I have chosen to structure my analysis in this order, using each chapter to analyze each ekphrasis and discuss the various themes which arise. Through close readings of these ekphraseis, themes emerge which indicate the author's interest in the complex relationship between the visual, literary and rhetorical arts. Underlying these themes there is also a philosophical subtext to be investigated. My analysis shall touch on the philosophical, and especially Platonic, subtext in order to understand further why Achilles is so interested in depictions of visual arts and their relationship with both speech and the written word.

Modern definitions of ekphrasis do not necessarily align with how the Ancients approached it; it is necessary to determine what the differences in definition are in order to contextualize Achilles' ekphraseis. To a modern reader, an ekphrasis is primarily a literary description of a work of art. In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* the term is defined as "an extended or detailed description of any object, real or

imaginary”.¹ However, it is important to consider the fact that the ancients saw ekphrasis in a broader sense, rooted in the rhetorical background of descriptive passages: *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is full of various ekphraseis, and these are not all of objects; at the beginning of Book Five, for example, is an extended description of Alexandria which is, by ancient rhetorical definition, an ekphrasis.² Indeed, rhetoric was extremely influential on the Greek novel, as will become clear through an exploration of Achilles’ writing.³ The *Progymnasmata*, ancient rhetorical handbooks, have been much explored in terms of what they may suggest to us about ancient views of ekphrasis. Ruth Webb notes that in these handbooks it is only Nikolaos who mentions works of art as a distinct category in descriptive passages.⁴ Much of this dissertation investigates the influence of the rhetorical climate of the period and a rhetorical education on the author, and how he clearly utilizes this background playfully in manifold ways. There is much within the novel’s ekphraseis which would have signaled rhetorical theory to a reader just as immersed in a rhetorical world as Achilles himself was.

Although it is clear that the definition in antiquity was broader, for the purposes of this dissertation I have taken Heffernan’s definition of ekphrasis as “the verbal representation of visual representation”.⁵ This allows for a narrower focus and elucidates more clearly the author’s interest in the visual arts in particular. Of the authors of the Ancient Greek Romances, Heliodorus and Achilles are those who most commonly make use of extended descriptions of visual forms, and it is Achilles who

¹ Hornblower, Spawforth and Eidinow (2012), s.v., ekphrasis.

² See Morales (2004), 100-106 for an in depth analysis of the description of Alexandria.

³ Laird (2008), 215-16 on the influence of rhetoric and the so-called ‘Second Sophistic’ on the Greek prose authors.

⁴ Webb (2009), 44-45. See also Bartsch (1989), 8-10 and Elsner (2007), 20.

⁵ Heffernan (1993), 3. See also Becker (1995) who uses the modern sense of ekphrasis as a description of a work of art in his discussions of the Shield of Achilles.

pays most attention to painting. He does this, in part, to explore ideas of the mimetic nature of various artforms. As will become clear, Achilles is constantly playing with ideas of fiction and reality and an ekphrasis of a painting is a perfect canvas for such a discussion. There is a much wider scope of descriptive passages in Achilles Tatius; ekphrasis of places, other objects and animals are all present.⁶ However, a focus on the paintings allows one to consider how a visual narrative can be incorporated into a literary one and contemplate the dialogue which the author is creating between literary and visual artists, exploring what different τέχνηαι can achieve. Such ekphrasis raise questions of the multifaceted and complex layers of narrative in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* and invite the reader to consider ideas of fictionality and the role which different artforms have to play in it.

It is also interesting to look at the ekphrasis of paintings in terms of interpretation and narration within the text. *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is the only extant Ancient Greek Romance with an ego-narrator (the first narrator is unnamed; the majority of the story is told by Cleitophon, who happens upon the primary narrator just after the first ekphrasis). This dissertation also looks at how the subjectivity of the describer may affect an ekphrasis and whether this should, in turn, affect a reader's interpretation. It will be suggested that the author utilizes his narrator within the ekphrasis to fool and play with his reader as they initially interpret the artwork in a particular way only to discover, on closer reading and deeper consideration, that they have been led into fallacy or that there is far more complexity to what may seem on the surface to be a purely descriptive passage.

⁶ See Webb (2009), 180 on the descriptions of animals in *Leucippe and Cleitophon*.

Chapter One: The Rape of Europa

Leucippe and Cleitophon begins with an ekphrasis of a painting. The anonymous narrator, perhaps meant to represent the author, is wandering in Sidon when he comes across a picture which depicts both the land and the sea (ὁρῶ γραφήν ἀνακειμένην γῆς ἅμα καὶ θαλάττης, 1.1.2). In the following, succinct summation we are told that the subject matter is Europa, that the land is Sidon and the sea the Phoenician. There follows a vivid description of a meadow, the sea, and the maidens, culminating with Europa on the bull with Eros leading it (Ἔρως εἴλκε τὸν βοῦν, 1.1.13). After describing this painting to us the primary narrator comes across a man, Cleitophon, who takes the role of the ego-narrator of the rest of the novel and describes his own tale of love.

Paintings of the scene of Europa and the bull were popular in antiquity.⁷ It is not an unusual subject matter, and thus it is a possibility that Achilles' literary description is based off of a real painting.⁸ This connection to the real artistic world is further emphasized by Achilles' description of the craftsman. He refers to a craftsman or painter multiple times (ὁ τεχνίτης (1.1.4), ὁ γραφεύς (1.1.5), ὁ τεχνίτης again (1.1.7)) and this draws the reader's attention to a physical world. I would argue that Achilles Tatius is particularly interested in this connection between fictional literary and physical worlds of art. To compare with the other Greek Romances, *τεχνίτης* is used only once by Heliodorus in an ekphrasis of a carved stone (*Aeth.* 5.14.4), and in no place in Longus or Chariton; Achilles uses it twice in ekphrastic context (1.1.4 and 1.1.6). Interestingly, Xenophon of Ephesus uses it once, in a rhetorical context. Describing the

⁷ Bartsch (1989), 71.

⁸ However, Laird (1993), 18 makes the important point that "artwork is as much of a literary construct as anything else mentioned or described in the text". Once implanted in literature, it is perhaps not important if the author had seen some original painting or not.

wealthy Aristomachus, Hippothous says that he is a “craftsman” (τεχνίτης) “of speeches” (λόγων) (*Eph.*3.2.8). The fact that the same word can be used for a rhetorician and a visual artist is highly significant when it is put into the context of Achilles Tatius’ work; as this dissertation will continue to discuss, the author was clearly interested in the way in which various artforms interacted. The word γραφεύς is used five times by Achilles (1.1.4, twice at 3.3.4, 3.7.1 and 3.8.2) and not at all by the other three novelists. Finally, ζωγράφος is also used five times by Achilles (1.1.12, 3.6.3, 3.7.3, 5.3.4 and 5.3.7). It is used once by Chariton, not in ekphrasis, but in a description attempting to evoke a beautiful image of Callirhoe holding her baby, the sort of image which not even a painter had created (καὶ ὄφθη θέαμα κάλλιστον, οἷον οὔτε ζωγράφος ἔγραψεν, *Call.*3.8.6). These comparisons are not to suggest that ekphraseis of paintings or works of art by other authors do not take into account the role of the visual artist, but Achilles is the one for whom the physical visual arts, and an artist’s role in their creation, seem to hold the most interest.⁹

This interest in the visual arts can be seen further in the way the physicality of a painting is described. The breeze around Europa and her flowing garments is evoked at 1.1.12, the description ending with: καὶ ἦν οὗτος ἄνεμος τοῦ ζωγράφου. Gaselee, rather loosely, translates this as “giving the impression of a painted breeze”. However, Vilborg’s “this was the way the artist represented the wind” more successfully translates the notion that the wind is “of the painter”.¹⁰ We are thus reminded by the author that his words are an imitation of something created by a different type of artist. Andrew Laird distinguishes between “obedient” and “disobedient” ekphraseis; an

⁹ Of the novelists, it is particularly Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus who make use of extended descriptive passages. Of these two, Achilles has a greater focus on paintings and artworks; the “verbal representation of visual representation” which this dissertation is focused upon.

¹⁰ Literally, the narrator is saying “this was the painter’s wind”, a statement which very much reminds us that it is a created object which is being described.

“obedient” ekphrasis is more able to be visualized in the mind and draws attention back to the physical object of description, whereas a “disobedient ekphrasis” (Laird gives the example of the tapestry of Catullus 64, particularly focusing on the use of sounds and speech in the ekphrasis) is one where it would be impossible to render the literary work of art into an actual object.¹¹ Achilles’ Europa ekphrasis is more “obedient”, as the direct attribution of the sea to the artist makes clear.

Moreover, there is description of emotion, as stated above, in the maidens; this is made interpretative through the verb ἐώκεσαν and so cannot be said to be going beyond the medium of visual art.¹² Furthermore, when Achilles does suggest speech or sound in the artwork, he ensures that there is an ‘as if’. The girls’ lips are parted, “as if they were about to let out a shout through fear” (ὥσπερ ἀφήσειν ὑπὸ φόβου μέλλουσαι καὶ βοήν, 1.1.8); Eros smiles “as if he were laughing at him [Zeus]” (ὥσπερ αὐτοῦ καταγελῶν, 1.1.13). We are constantly reminded, therefore, of the visual medium which is being described, just as we are by the numerous references to an artist. Achilles’ narrative here is, indeed, very vivid. This can be seen in the complex image created of the sea with its “twofold colour” (ἡ χροῖα διπλῆ, 1.1.8), a mixture of red and purple with the tricolon of foam, rocks and waves painted. The movement of the waves is lively as they “rise to a head” (κορυφούμενον, 1.1.9) before “washing into foam upon the rocks” (περὶ τὰς πέτρας λύομενον εἰς τοὺς ἀφρούς, 1.1.9). However, in the description of the bull, which succeeds this, we are immediately brought back to the hand of the artist, as the bull is ἐγέγραπτο (1.1.9). Therefore, a certain type of liveliness and vibrancy is created in this vivid ekphrasis, but the description is not a fantastical one which tries to

¹¹ Laird (1993), 19-20.

¹² The use of this verb will be discussed further below.

use a painting to create a living narrative.¹³ Instead, the ekphrasis attempts to bring the brilliance of a piece of artwork as close to a reader's 'eyes' as possible, turning them into a 'viewer'. However, the 'viewer' is mindful that what they are 'seeing' is a static painting.

This first ekphrasis also raises questions of viewer subjectivity, allowing one to consider the role of literature in enabling different interpretations and expanding on what may not be discernable from a mere painting. Before an analysis of the ekphrasis itself, this fact can be seen by the presence of two narrators; the primary narrator has his own interpretation of the painting, and to Cleitophon it leads to a different response and inspires a long narrative. It is clear that the scene described in the ekphrasis is of Europa, sharing characteristics with other versions of the myth.¹⁴ However, at 1.4.3 Cleitophon first sets his gaze on Leucippe and recalls: *Τοιαύτην εἶδον ἐγὼ ποτε ἐπὶ ταύρω γεγραμμένην Σελήνην*. Some reject the manuscript *Σελήνην* here, replacing it with *Εὐρώπην* for continuity with the initial ekphrasis.¹⁵ However, Vilborg, and Morales following, give arguments for the retention of *Σελήνην*.¹⁶ It is the *lectio difficilior*, as both note, and so at a base level of textual criticism it is unlikely that the text was corrupted in its favour. It could be conjectured, then, that Cleitophon is thinking of an entirely different painting to that which has been described by the primary narrator; his painting just so happens to have been of Selene on a bull.¹⁷

¹³ For an interesting summation of the "four levels" of ekphrasis, see Becker (1995), 42-3. The Europa ekphrasis is in part *res ipsae* (where the subject matter and elaboration of the story is important) but the focus on the physical medium falls under Becker's category of *opus ipsum*. Becker's categories help one determine what an author is specifically interested in communicating through his ekphraseis; in the case of Achilles Tatius, there is certainly a crossover of the distinct types which indicates the complexity of his ekphraseis.

¹⁴ Such as Moschus, *Europa*.63-166 and Ovid, *Met.*2.833-875.

¹⁵ E.g. Gaselee (1984), 14n where the reading Europa is adopted "to give some point to the introduction of the story".

¹⁶ Morales (2004), 37-48; Vilborg (1962), 21-22.

¹⁷ Comparison of women in novels to works of art is a "common novelistic trope" according to Morales (2004), 38.

Obviously, though, this will then draw the reader's mind back to the depiction of Europa on a bull which has just been elaborately described for them. Morales sees Cleitophon's simile as suggestive of a "bivalent" reading of the initial ekphrasis; that is, it can be interpreted in diverse ways depending on factors such as the viewer's cultural background. Morales asserts that Cleitophon is referring to the painting described in the ekphrasis. However, although the author inserts the mention of Selene with the intention of recalling the earlier ekphrasis, to say that Cleitophon is viewing the painting as Selene and the primary narrator sees the same one as Europa is insupportable. Indeed, as Vilborg notes, the particle ποτέ which is used is not fitting if Cleitophon was referring to the painting just described; instead, something like ἄρτι would be more appropriate.¹⁸ Contrary to what Morales suggests, the difference in interpretation should not be attributed to Cleitophon. It is, instead, the *reader* who is able to reflect and make considerations upon the similar subject matter of two different paintings: that which is narrated to us, and that which Cleitophon has seen at a previous point which he just so happens to recall.

There are no outstanding lexical links between the ekphrasis of Europa and Cleitophon's recollection of a painting. His recollection is incredibly short, without extended description. He then goes on to describe a girl in detail, from her eyes "fierce in their pleasure" (γοργὸν ἐν ἡδονῇ, 1.4.3) to her mouth, described as a rose (τὸ στόμα ῥόδων ἄνθος ἦν, 1.4.3). It is difficult to determine if this description is to be attributed to Leucippe herself or the painting to which she is being compared; perhaps it is both as they are equated by τοιαύτην. This raises interesting questions of the relationship between the painted character of Selene, and the literary character of Leucippe. Both

¹⁸ Vilborg (1962), 21. Morales (2004), 42 comments that the ποτέ does withhold certainty, but dismisses this without explanation.

are created through some art form, and in this sense are not real. However, this description (whether of Leucippe herself or the painting) cannot be directly linked to that of Europa earlier on as none of her facial features or her coloring are described. Indeed, the focus in the primary ekphrasis is entirely on Europa's body and clothing. Thus, Achilles does allow his reader to see a link between the paintings in that both have a girl on a bull. However, he leaves it entirely open to reader's interpretation as to whether Cleitophon is thinking of the primary narrator's ekphrasis. Indeed, as stated above, the use of *ποτέ* suggests that he is not. The word only indicates that "at some point" he saw this painting, not "just now" (as Gaselee translates it).¹⁹ The fact that we are now fully within Cleitophon's narrative (told in past tense), and the verb used is the aorist *εἶδον*, suggests he saw this work before he saw Leucippe and thought of it at the time he saw her. This would make it unlikely to be the painting which he has seen after the main story, in Sidon, and if it were there would likely be a much more demonstrative pronoun to indicate it. Achilles is, therefore, using echoes within his narrative to create confusion and cause the reader to pause and think; this is typical of *Leucipppe and Cleitophon*, where the reader is often tricked and fooled just as the narrator is.

As Bartsch asserts, Achilles allows both his characters and his reader to interpret.²⁰ The author is communicating to his reader that there is a significance to the topic of Europa in terms of Leucippe herself, with Selene as an intermediate point. This leads on to a question of the deceitful nature of both visual arts and literature. Whether or not Cleitophon is to be seen as interpreting one painting in a different manner to the primary narrator, or he has just been reminded by its similarity to a separate painting,

¹⁹ Gaselee (1984), 15.

²⁰ Bartsch (1989), 36-8 on the fact that literary characters in Achilles Tatius (and Heliodorus) are interpreters as viewers within the text, but that the reader, too, is left by the author to formulate their own interpretation.

the reader is able to see that this interpretation *could* be made. As Reardon has shown, the use of an ego-narrator in the novel allows for it to be impossible for the reader to see things which the narrator does not; that is, the reader is limited to seeing whatever the narrator tells them, in this case a description of a painting.²¹ It is only through subtle hints from the author, and perhaps our *a priori* knowledge of the myth, that the reader can look back in hindsight and reevaluate the reliability of the original narrator's interpretation. If painting (within the novel) is open to such interpretation, we then ask if literature is, too. Whereas the visual artist has not told anyone how to interpret his painting, Achilles the writer (through the primary narrator) informs us that the painting is Europa (Εὐρώπης ἡ γράφη, 1.1.2). By cementing this in words the reader knows, without a doubt, the subject matter; it is only with hindsight, through the introduction of the idea of the visual, that one can begin to consider multiple interpretations. Thus, although on the surface one might see the literary world as more concrete than that presented in a painting, Achilles craftily informs us that both are equally fluid in terms of what they may represent.

An ekphrastic painting allows an individual's interpretation to take place, and this can be seen by taking a more in-depth look at the language used within the first ekphrasis. Describing the maidens and their reaction to the bull, the narrator states: ἐώκεσαν δὲ βούλεσθαι μὲν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν ταῦρον δραμεῖν, φοβεῖσθαι δὲ τῇ θαλάττῃ προσελθεῖν (1.1.8). The use of the subjective verb ἐώκεσαν here is significant in reminding the reader that this is a narrator's interpretive statement. In commenting on this description, Bartsch and Heffernan both draw attention to the fact that Europa

²¹ Reardon (1999), 245. However, Reardon does also comment that Achilles, at points, allows for his narrator to be in a position to tell the reader what he found out subsequently, thus giving a bigger picture. The author makes use of both the constricted and 'big picture' narrator in *Leucippe and Cleitophon*.

herself is not detailed in such terms; we are not told of her emotions at all.²² Bartsch suggests acquiescence on Europa's part, which is later reflected in Leucippe's compliant attitude towards marriage and the yielding of her virginity to Cleitophon. Heffernan takes Bartsch's interpretation, but allows for a more violent undertone of the connection between marriage and rape suggested by the ekphrasis. However, while both are correct in noting the distinct lack of description of Europa's emotion, no comment is made on the fact that the emotions presented in the maidens are only interpretative, as is made clear by ἐφ' ἑσσαν. That is, a viewer other than the primary narrator could interpret emotions portrayed in the painting differently, and might have commented on Europa's own expression. The author, therefore, manipulates the ekphrasis to lead the reader to what he intends for the meaning of the painting within his novel (that is, Europa as a reflection of Leucippe) but then complicates this by allowing for further interpretation of that (seen by the varying ideas of Bartsch and Heffernan).

It has become clear that Achilles Tatius plays with, and deceives, his reader through ekphrasis. This can be seen in the different interpretations of a single painting; what the reader is made to believe is the truth can, on further inspection, be put down to subjectivity. However, there is a question as to whether the author's deceit is a veritable truth as it may not be intended as a representative of the 'real'. Within ekphraseis of artworks, there is a trifold layer of deception. In reverse order, there is the work as described by literature, then the physical artwork itself and finally the real object which is being depicted in the painting. Plato handles a similar trifold layer of deception in his *Republic*, where there is the original form of something created by 'God' (θεός), the copy of this made by a craftsman (a τέκτων/ποιητής/δημιουργός), and the imitation of a painter (ζωγράφος) or writer (particularly the tragic poet

²² Bartsch (1989), 54; Heffernan (1993), 57-58.

(τραγικός)).²³ Painters and poets are refused admittance to the Republic because they are detrimental to reason: ὅτι τοῦτο ἐγείρει τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τρέφει καὶ ἰσχυρὸν ποιῶν ἀπόλλυσι τὸ λογιστικόν (*Rep.*605b).²⁴ This might suggest that it is, in part, the fictional aspects (that is, the *mimesis*) of certain types of literature and of artworks that are unappealing to Plato's ideal state. Through a reading of Plato, one can see the visual arts as *mimesis*; he even terms the painter a μιμητής (*Rep.*597b).²⁵ Therefore, they are far from the truth. However, when looked at in terms of a literary description of an artwork, it is not as easy to determine to what extent the 'painting' is a copy. Is Achilles' description of a painting of Europa an attempt by the author to create a perfect literary description of some true painting, or is it wholly original in the sense that the author is attempting to create his own original through intangible words? That is, what is important is not the existence of a physical painting, but the literary artist's ability to evoke something which is almost visual. As has been commented upon by Ruth Webb, in the rhetorical conception of ekphrasis it is *enargeia*, an ability to create a vivid, almost visual image in speech, which is of the utmost importance.²⁶ This suggests that Achilles, clearly embedded in the rhetorically charged intellectual climate of the 2nd century AD, is in part using the ekphrasis to show off his own skill as an author and attempting to compete with, and overcome, a painter through his written words.

²³ See, for example, *Rep.*595a-605b.

²⁴ Plato and Aristotle following do not directly refer to the novel in discussions of fiction and *mimesis* as the genre was not cemented until a later period. Morgan (1993), 176 says that the novel in antiquity was "drastically undertheorized". However, discussions of poetry by Plato seem to adumbrate upon the later genre of novel in terms of fictionality and *mimesis*.

²⁵ For a discussion of Plato's somewhat ambiguous attitude towards the visual arts, and the progression from a more positive to an increasingly negative view of them see Keuls (1974), 100-127. This dissertation does not have the scope for an in-depth analysis of Plato's views on art and how they developed, but it is very clear that Achilles Tatius was aware of Plato and plays with the philosopher's ideas of art and its mimetic role.

²⁶ Webb (2009), 5 describes *enargeia* as the "defining quality" of ekphrasis. See also Morales (2004), 90.

From the setting of this ekphrasis already, it is clear that Achilles is recalling Plato and Platonic ideas. The setting described after the first ekphrasis is clearly Phaedran, as the initial narrator takes Cleitophon and leads him to a grove of plane trees for discussion:

Καὶ ταῦτα δὴ λέγων δεξιοῦμαί τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τινος ἄλλους ἄγω γείτονος, ἔνθα πλάτανοι μὲν ἐπεφύκεσαν πολλαὶ καὶ πυκναί, παρέρρει δὲ ὕδωρ ψυχρόν τε καὶ διαυγές, οἷον ἀπὸ χιόνος ἄρτι λυθείσης ἔρχεται. (1.2.3)

This can be compared with the setting at the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, where Phaedrus and Socrates go to have their dialogue at Phaedrus' suggestion of cooling their feet in a stream, and sitting where there is the "tallest plane-tree" (ὄρᾳς οὖν ἐκείνην τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην πλάτανον;, *Ph.*229a). Socrates himself then undertakes his own ekphrasis of sorts in describing the *locus amoenus*. He says:

νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, καλὴ γέ ἡ καταγωγὴ. ἢ τε γὰρ πλάτανος αὕτη μάλ' ἀμφιλαφὴς τε καὶ ὑψηλὴ, τοῦ τε ἄγνου τὸ ὕψος καὶ τὸ σύσκιον πάγκαλον, καὶ ὡς ἀκμὴν ἔχει τῆς ἀνθης, ὡς ἂν εὐωδέστατον παρέχοι τὸν τόπον: ἢ τε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεστάτη ὑπὸ τῆς πλατάνου ρεῖ μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος, ὥστε γέ τῳ ποδὶ τεκμήρασθαι. (*Ph.*230b)

The plane-tree grove is important in both texts, and both contain references to a cool stream flowing by. Achilles' ἔνθα πλάτανοι μὲν ἐπεφύκεσαν πολλαὶ καὶ πυκναί, παρέρρει δὲ ὕδωρ ψυχρόν τε καὶ διαυγές surely took its inspiration from the ἢ τε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεστάτη ὑπὸ τῆς πλατάνου ρεῖ μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος of Socrates; the reader of Achilles Tatius is, therefore, awakened to the idea that they may read the text through a Platonic lens. The discussions in the *Phaedrus* are seemingly about love, but are in fact primarily about the art of rhetoric; Achilles was embroiled in a literary culture

which was preoccupied with rhetoric, and so it is fitting that he would be drawing upon this dialogue in his own work (especially after an ekphrasis, itself a technique steeped in rhetoric).²⁷ But what significance do these rhetorical connections hold for the preceding ekphrasis? Karen ní Mheallaigh, in her discussion of the Phaedran influence on *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, suggests that the painting of Europa “represents the textuality of the novel”.²⁸ She draws upon the painted figures’ inability to actually emit sound to back up this point; although the setting is one of “pseudo-orality”, we are in fact very much within a textual world. These ideas suggest that it is not only the visual and literary artists and their differences which Achilles is concerned with. The art of rhetoric, too, must be considered, and the author counts both the visual and literary as silent, static arts which cannot replicate the abilities of rhetoric.

One might consider Lucian’s *de Domo* in this, where Lucian questions a rhetorician’s ability to bring a work of beauty (in this case a magnificent hall) to life. There is a suggestion that an ordinary man, on seeing such beauty, is content to look upon it and not try to express equal beauty in speech. However, in terms of an educated man we are told:

ὅστις δὲ μετὰ παιδείας ὄρᾳ τὰ καλά, οὐκ ἂν, οἶμαι, ἀγαπήσειεν ὅψει μόνη
καρπωσάμενος τὸ τερπνὸν οὐδ’ ἂν ὑπομείναι ἄφωνος θεατῆς τοῦ κάλλους
γενέσθαι, πειράσεται δὲ ὡς οἶόν τε καὶ ἐνδιατρῖψαι καὶ λόγῳ ἀμείψασθαι τὴν
θέαν. (*Dom.3*)

²⁷ See Yunis (2011), 1-7 for a discussion of the art of rhetoric within the *Phaedrus*.

²⁸ Ní Mheallaigh (2007), 231-237.

This suggests that a beautiful work of visual art must be contested with by a rhetorician who is skilled and educated. Lucian, too, makes reference to the *Phaedrus* (specifically the same scene of the *locus amoenus*), stating:

καίτοι Σωκράτει μὲν ἀπέχρησε πλάτανος εὐφυῆς καὶ πόα εὐθαλῆς καὶ πηγὴ διαυγῆς μικρὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἴλισσοῦ, κἀνταῦθα καθεζόμενος Φαίδρου τε τοῦ Μυρρινουσίου κατειρωνεύετο καὶ τὸν Λυσίου τοῦ Κεφάλου λόγον διήλεγχε καὶ τὰς Μούσας ἐκάλει, καὶ ἐπίστευεν ἦξιεν αὐτὰς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐρημίαν συλληψομένας τῶν περὶ τοῦ ἔρωτος λόγων, καὶ οὐκ ἠσχύνετο γέρων ἄνθρωπος παρακαλῶν παρθένους συνασομένας τὰ παιδευαστικά. ἐς δὲ οὕτω καλὸν χωρίον οὐκ ἂν οἴομεθα καὶ ἀκλήτους αὐτὰς ἐλθεῖν; (*Dom.4*)

We can see, then, that Lucian and Achilles may very well be drawing on the *Phaedrus* for a similar reason. They mesh together a beautiful scene with the idea of words and speech, suggesting that one compliments the other. In *de Domo*, ὁ λόγος argues with the primary speaker, claiming that the beauty of such a marvelous surrounding would be detrimental to the speaker, and what is said “vanishes and is absorbed” (τὸ λεχθὲν καὶ ἀμαυροῦται καὶ συναρπάζεται, *Dom.15-16*). Then, in a list of ekphraseis of the paintings in the hall, ὁ λόγος suggests that they are all distracting to the listener and thus undermine the rhetorician himself (*Dom.22-32*). Lucian does not tell us which side of the argument wins; perhaps it is ὁ λόγος, who has the last word, in which case one might read whatever a speaker says, including an ekphrasis, as inferior to the actual visual image or surroundings. The parallels to Lucian, and the *Phaedrus*, strongly suggest that Achilles has these ideas of the tension between words and the visual in mind. By inserting this vivid ekphrasis, a rhetorical technique, at the beginning of his novel, the reader is made overtly aware of these tensions. A question can then be raised of whether Achilles is aware of the constraints of literature and oratory to bring visual

imagery to life, or whether he believes this can be overcome by a skilled enough author or rhetorician. Achilles' constant references to an artist indicate that he is aware that such a work is not reality and cannot be reality; a skilled describer may create the *enargeia* that is needed for ekphrasis, but neither the written description nor the artwork is actually a reality of whatever is being imitated.

Particularly interesting in terms of the mimetic role of painting is the description of the figure of Europa and her tunic:

ἡ συνάγουσα ζώνη τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκλειε, καὶ ἐγένετο τοῦ σώματος
κάτοπτρον ὁ χιτῶν. (1.1.11)

There is certainly eroticism here which is suggestive of a voyeuristic viewer.²⁹ However, the fact that the tunic is a *κάτοπτρον* stands out and might also be significant in terms of the imitative nature of art. The tunic is a mirror of her body, but the viewer does not see her true body. This is further complicated by the fact that she is a painted figure; it would not be possible to see a 'real' body by these means anyway. Much like the artwork itself, the mirror of Europa's tunic is a mere representation of a reality. The use of the mirror in this imagery can perhaps be connected to Platonic ideas. At *Republic* 595c7-597e9 Socrates is discussing *mimesis* and the role of both the artist and tragic poet in this.³⁰ He is discussing the craftsman (*δημιουργός*), using an analogy of the creation of *κλῖναι καὶ τράπεζαι* (*Rep.*596b). He says that the craftsman works by looking at the "idea" or "form" (*ιδέα*); that is, what the craftsman produces is a step removed from reality. Already it is clear that Achilles is drawing from such ideas, as the painted work is also this step removed. Socrates goes on to say that it is not difficult

²⁹ Bartsch (1989), 12; Heffernan (1993), 59; Morales (2004), 158-9.

³⁰ See Murray (1997), 189-198 for an in-depth commentary on these sections. I am focusing here particularly on the use of the word *κάτοπτρον* at 596d.

for a craftsman to imitate anything; all one needs to do is hold up a mirror: οὐ χαλεπός, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀλλὰ πολλαχῆ καὶ ταχὺ δημιουργούμενος, τάχιστα δέ που, εἰ 'θέλεις λαβὼν κάτοπτρον (*Rep.*596d). With such an object, he can then reproduce all sorts of things including the sun, animals and plants (*Rep.*596e). There follows an acknowledgment that although one can produce copies of these things, it is an appearance and not a true reality (φαινόμενα, οὐ μέντοι ὄντα γέ που τῆ ἀληθεία, *Rep.*596e). Significant to our discussion, Socrates proceeds to include the ζωγράφος with the δημιουργός before deciding that it is the painter's product which is the farthest removed from reality; as already mentioned above, the painter is the μιμητής (*Rep.*597b).

From the Platonic intertext we can see, therefore, that Achilles likely utilized the word κάτοπτρον with such philosophical ideas in mind; the clothing as mirror is not merely part of a description used to highlight a voyeuristic viewer. More significantly, it points to the fact that the depiction of Europa is not reality and that the clothes are reflecting something to the viewer which is entirely fabricated. The fact that in Plato Socrates immediately goes on to mention the ζωγράφος further indicates that Achilles is hinting at the role of a painter in philosophical discussion, questioning the extent to which an imitative art can achieve a reality. Indeed, the fact that the painting is itself embedded in a literary work may also cause the reader to ponder over the similarities and differences between producers of literary and visual arts. Is the author just as far removed from reality, or is he perhaps closer in that he has produced everything, including the *enargeia* of the visual description, with his own words?³¹

³¹ For an interesting discussion of *mimesis* in Lucian's *Verae Historiae* see Ní Mheallaigh (2014), 209-16. As a near contemporary to Achilles Tatius, it is interesting to explore ideas of fiction in Lucian and how, as Ní Mheallaigh discusses, literary texts engage with things written before them in a mimetic manner. Yet Lucian uses his work to “forge something radically new which can compete with and even eclipse the literature of the past.” (216). Achilles, too, seems to be engaged in questions of *mimesis* in literature, and whether one can produce in writing something which is truly original.

Chapter Two: Andromeda, Perseus and Prometheus

The second ekphrasis of painting in the novel occurs after Cleitophon and Leucippe's arrival at Pelusium, as they happen upon the temple of Zeus and come across "double images" (εἰκόνα διπλῆν, 3.6.3) which have been signed by the artist Euanthes (3.6.3). This artwork is comprised of two paintings: one of Andromeda, and one of Prometheus. Cleitophon informs the reader of the connected themes between the two: both are chained to rocks, wild beasts are the "executioners" of both and members of the Argive family are protectors of both (Πέτραι μὲν ἀμφοῖν τὸ δεσμοτήριον, θῆρες δὲ κατ' ἀμφοῖν οἱ δήμιοι ... ἐπικούροι δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἀργεῖοι δύο συγγενεῖς, 3.6.4). The ekphrasis has an abrupt end at the close of 3.8, and then immediately the main narrative begins again at 3.9. This abrupt ending gives no closure to the description, and no interpretation with Cleitophon as an exegete. In commenting upon the voice of the ekphrasis in Leucippe and Cleitophon, Bartsch argues against Anderson's view of Cleitophon as a voyeuristic viewer by suggesting that in the descriptions "the author seems to have forgotten that we are listening to a first-person account, and to have placed in this account "independent" descriptive passages".³² The abrupt ending might account for this; there is no internal exegete, and Cleitophon does not further comment on the paintings after the description. Therefore, it is possible that it is more the author's voice which we are to read into the description. Indeed, the lengthy, elaborate and balanced description of the two paintings indicates a mere pleasure in pure description; the reader is left to try and interpret. Hägg asserts that Achilles' primary motive for introducing ekphrasis into his work is because he likes describing and his audience likes to read description; this is why he describes the picture of Andromeda.³³ This view

³² Anderson (1984), 79; Bartsch (1989), 49-50.

³³ Hägg (1971), 241.

is highly oversimplified. Delight in pure description may be a factor in this ekphrasis, but there is quite clearly proleptic significance to it which I will discuss further, as well as an interest in reality and fiction and the role of an ekphrastic painting within this.

Before the description of the two works of art, we are informed that the artist had signed the paintings and are even given his name: καὶ ὁ γραφεὺς ἐπεγέγραπτο: Εὐάνθης μὲν ὁ γραφεὺς (3.6.3). The naming of the artist raises the question of whether Achilles is writing a description of a real work of art, by an artist perhaps known to his readers, or whether this is in itself a deceitful construct used to lend more veracity to his upcoming ekphrasis. Phillips is of the opinion that Euanthes was a real artist (although attested to nowhere else) and that Achilles' description is of a painting by him; he notes similarities of Achilles' description with Roman wall paintings and determines that these are based off a Hellenistic model which was by Euanthes.³⁴ There is not any definitive evidence that Euanthes existed and so an argument that it is purely a love of description and attempt to exactly replicate an artwork which is Achilles' purpose is a weak one. It is certainly true that, like the image of Europa and the bull, that of Andromeda was very popular in artistic representations in antiquity. Furthermore, it is not just Achilles as an author who picks up on this common subject in his work. For example, Lucian also describes a painting of the same theme in *de Domo* 22. However, as has been shown by the Europa ekphrasis, Achilles is interested in much more than just description, often causing his reader to ponder philosophical

³⁴ Phillips (1968), 4-6; 15. Determining that Achilles was referring to a specific painter due to a similarity in the composition of some Roman wall paintings with the description in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is over-zealous. Phillips does not consider that Achilles may have based his description off of works he saw of a popular topic, but that it is not referring to one in particular and is instead the author's creation. In his article, Phillips argues for a *terminus ante quem* for a Hellenistic artist Euanthes, establishing this date through a sculptural group of Herakles and Prometheus which it is claimed is a copy of a painting also by the same artist (as the second painting in Achilles Tatius is also of Prometheus). This link, however interesting an idea, is highly tenuous and there is no other evidence provided to prove it.

undertones and the literary questions which arise from a description of artwork. Thus, there is more to be considered in this case; an in depth look at the name ‘Euanthes’ provides clues as to the author’s intentions.

Achilles does not elsewhere refer specifically to any real persons (artists, writers, historical figures) and thus it stands out that Euanthes is named here. As already noted, Euanthes is not known as an artist from any other source. This does not, of course, prove whether or not he existed. However, it seems quite inconsistent with the rest of the novel for the author to suddenly insert a real figure into what is otherwise a fictional world. Perhaps, instead, Euanthes is himself fictional; the author has created a name for the artist in order to suggest factual accuracy to his narrator’s account, but as the reader already knows the novel is fictional they might also see the artist as just another character in this.³⁵ It is, moreover, interesting to explore the root of the name Euanthes to determine whether it might be a name created intentionally by Achilles, perhaps connected to the meaning of the word as flowery or colorful.³⁶ Indeed, an investigation into the word and its use in rhetorical and ekphrastic contexts in particular may prove fruitful. It has been well-established that Achilles Tatius is interested in rhetoric and rhetorical theory, as has been commented upon in Chapter One through the Phaedran setting, for example. It therefore seems significant that in Aelius Theon’s *Progymnasmata*, in his section on ekphrasis, the word appears. The rhetorician talks about the “virtues of ekphrasis” (ἀρεταὶ δὲ ἐκφράσεως, Ael.*Prog.*119-20) and in this says that the whole description should be similar to the subject matter, giving the example: εἰ μὲν εὐανθές τι εἶη τὸ δηλούμενον, εὐανθῆ καὶ τὴν φράσιν εἶναι

³⁵ Vilborg (1962), 69 writes that the name is “certainly ... fictitious”, although without providing any reason for this comment. I shall try to lend more weight to this statement and suggest why it seems more likely that the name is fictional.

³⁶ *LSJ*, s.v., εὐανθής, II.

(Ael.*Prog.*120).³⁷ It is generally agreed that Achilles Tatius was well-versed in rhetorical theory and the exercises of the sort in the various *Progymnasmata* which pervaded the literary culture of his contemporary world.³⁸ Aelius Theon's work is considered to be the earliest of these collections of rhetorical exercises to give ekphrasis a definition and place within rhetorical theory.³⁹ It is, therefore, not too much of a stretch to suggest that Achilles was aware of Aelius Theon's definition and discussion of ekphrasis, perhaps even of the example with εὐανθής. It is possible that the artist's name, then, is a reference to the world of rhetoric and the origins of ekphrasis; perhaps Achilles uses it to hint at rhetorical teaching of what a good ekphrasis is, telling his reader that his own descriptive language can rival that of a great speech. This conjecture alone might not prove that the name of the painter was created by Achilles and was not of a real figure.⁴⁰ However, some evidence from Lucian further shows that the word was important in a rhetorical context, lending more credence to the idea.

Lucian uses εὐανθής multiple times in rhetorical, and more importantly ekphrastic, context. In *de Domo* he describes the paintings on the walls in the hall (τὰ τῶν τοίχων γράμματα, *Dom.*9) and says that one might well compare them to “the face of spring and a flowery meadow” (ἔαρος ὄψει καὶ λειμῶνι δὲ εὐανθεῖ καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι παραβαλεῖν, *Dom.*9). Moreover, in the *Heracles* the word is used by the Celt who is an exegete of a painting of Heracles (again, it is present in ekphrastic context). The Celt is describing the representation of Heracles to Lucian, and tells him that Celts see

³⁷ I follow Spengel (1885) in the numbering of Theon's *Progymnasmata*.

³⁸ See Bartsch (1989), 7-13; Morales (2004), 89-90.

³⁹ Kennedy (2003), 1; Webb (2009), 14.

⁴⁰ It is, however, interesting to note that Cleitophon's name (“famous-speaker”) is also connected to rhetoric, as Ní Mheallaigh (2007), 240 notes. This lends credence to another name with similar associations. Cleitophon's name also has Platonic allusions, considering the Platonic work of the same name. It is, therefore, more likely that Achilles is using names for allusive purposes elsewhere as well.

Heracles, not Hermes, as λόγος (τὸν λόγον ἡμεῖς οἱ Κελτοὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ ὑμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες Ἑρμῆν οἰόμεθα εἶναι, ἀλλ' Ἡρακλεῖ αὐτὸν εἰκάζομεν, *Herc.4*). He goes on to explain that Heracles is represented as an old man because “an old man has wiser things to say than the youth” (τὸ δὲ γῆρας ἔχει τι λέξαι τῶν νέων σοφώτερον, *Herc.4*) before giving the example of the Trojan counsellors: καὶ οἱ ἀγορηταὶ τῶν Τρώων τὴν ὅσα ἀφιᾶσιν εὐανθῆ τινα· λείρια γὰρ καλεῖται, εἴ γε μέμνημαι, τὰ ἄνθη (*Herc.4*).⁴¹ From these two examples it is clear that εὐανθής was a word associated with rhetoric and the “flowery” nature of a powerful speaker, and that this in turn has been translated by authors of the Imperial period into the context of ekphrasis. It seems that both Lucian and Achilles Tatius have picked up on the term as one associated with these things, and perhaps the usage can thus be associated with the cultural milieu of the 2nd century AD and the influence of a rhetorical education on these authors. The usage elsewhere also provides evidence that the artist is indeed Achilles’ own creation and that he is using a word he knows to be associated with ekphrasis, which in turn is associated with rhetoric, in order to send a sign to his readers who were educated in a similar environment and would be aware of the mischievous play on words. Therefore, Euanthes is most likely a fiction of the author; Achilles has used a common theme of visual imagery at the time to lend realism to his fiction, but if one considers the various layers of readership there might be for the novel it is clear that a reader educated in the same world as Achilles or Lucian would pick up on the associations of the artist’s name and immediately recognize that there will succeed an ekphrasis which has been highly influenced by the world of rhetorical teaching. Euanthes is a sort of joke for these readers who are aware of the literary and rhetorical nuances of the word. It may also suggest that Achilles is hinting

⁴¹ This is clearly a reference to *Iliad* 3.146-155 and the Trojan elders who speak like cicadas with “lily-like” voices (the word used is λειριόεις).

that his ekphrasis is going to be a good one, in following with the teaching of those such as Aelius Theon and his ἀρεταὶ δὲ ἐκφράσεως. The author indicates that it is not just rhetoric or a visual work of art which can produce visual energy and lifelike quality, but an ekphrasis which takes place in the very literary world of words on a page.

In addition to being steeped in a rhetorical world, this ekphrasis also contains philosophical undertones which add depth to pure description. As in the painting of Europa, in this ekphrasis questions of the mimetic nature of artworks arise. This can be seen from the very first description of the work as εἰκόνα. An εἰκών is an image or a *likeness*, etymologically connected to the verb ἔοικα used in the Book One ekphrasis which highlights the interpretive nature of a literary or spoken description of an artwork.⁴² The image as a likeness can be connected to *mimesis* (and subsequently to Plato) as it suggests a representation of some other reality. Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* provides an interesting parallel to this as the introductory section of the novel also contains an ekphrasis; it is an εἰκόνοσ γραφήν (Long.DC.praef.1.1). This is a “representation of a representation” or “painting of a likeness”, creating a similar double layer of mimetic deceit to that which Achilles creates. Similar language of a near contemporary to Achilles suggests a wider interest of the Greek novelists in the relationship between reality and fiction, and how a work of visual art might be considered within such philosophical ideas.

The ekphrasis indicates that the paintings are not just a reflection of their individual subject matters, but also of each other. They are linked by the fact that they are “double” (διπλῆν) and the repeated use of ἄμφω (3.6.3 and 3.6.4) stresses a connection. Cleitophon also calls them ἀδελφαὶ ... γραφαί (3.6.3-4). On a level of the

⁴² *LSJ*, s.v., εἰκών, I, II.

proleptic nature of paintings within the novel, the two are a pair because they, as Bartsch comments, “foreshadow different aspects of the same event”.⁴³ That is, the (false) sacrifice and disembowelment of Leucippe at 3.15. Clearly this is the case; both Andromeda and Leucippe are chained up, waiting for death. Andromeda’s position chained to the rock-hollow is described, and the narrator says that if someone were to see her beauty she would be like “a new statue” (ἀγάλματι καινῷ, 3.7.2), but if they saw the chains and the sea-monster, they would see the rock as an “improvised/contrived tomb” (αὐτοσχεδίῳ τάφῳ, 3.7.2). Leucippe, too, is tied up (ὀπίσω τῷ χεῖρῃ δεδεμένην, 3.15.1) and a σορὸς has been made for her near to the altar (3.15.1). In terms of the painting of Prometheus, the violent image of the bird feeding upon his belly after having ripped it open (Ὅρνις ἐς τὴν τοῦ Προμηθέως γαστέρα τρυφᾷ: ἔστηκε γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀνοίγων, ἤδη μὲν ἀνεωγμένην, 3.8.1-2) is clearly reflected in the disembowelment of Leucippe, where her entrails “immediately leapt out” after she was cut open (τὰ σπλάγχνα δὲ εὐθὺς ἐξεπήδησεν, 3.15.5). The bird eats the insides of Prometheus, and after cutting her open the brigands, too, feast on their victim. Bartsch discusses how the “proleptic similes” which are the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus at first cause the reader to feel confident that they have discovered the link between the paintings and what later happens, but that this is Achilles’ deceit as it then turns out that the sacrifice and disembowelment of Leucippe was ultimately fake.⁴⁴ Achilles is thus utilizing ekphrasis for a learned and thoughtful reader whilst also undermining them with his double deceit.

It is, however, also interesting to look at the idea of reality within the paintings themselves as opposed to purely how the painting might be falsely reflected in the main

⁴³ Bartsch (1989), 55.

⁴⁴ Bartsch (1989), 58-59.

narrative. As I have noted above, Andromeda is compared to a new (or strange) statue in her beauty. In comparing a figure in a work of art to another work of art, Achilles further removes the image in the painting from reality. Yet, at the same time, his description is incredibly vivid and brings Andromeda to life:

Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν προσώπων αὐτῆς κάλλος κεκέρασται καὶ δέος. Ἐν μὲν γὰρ ταῖς παρειαῖς τὸ δέος κάθηται, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀνθεῖ τὸ κάλλος. Ἀλλ' οὔτε τῶν παρειῶν τὸ ὠχρὸν τέλειον ἀφοίνικτον ἦν, ἠρέμα δὲ τῷ ἐρεύθει βέβαπται, οὔτε τὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἄνθος ἐστὶν ἀμέριμνον, ἀλλ' ἔοικε τοῖς ἄρτι μαραιομένοις ἴοις (3.7.2-3).

The mixture of emotions, beauty blooming forth *out of* her eyes and the blush tinting her cheeks all create the strong image of a living woman. But just before this she is like a statue, and just after we are told: Οὕτως αὐτὴν ἐκόσμησεν ὁ ζωγράφος εὐμόρφῳ φόβῳ (3.7.3-4). The ζωγράφος is again important, just as in the first ekphrasis of Europa, in cementing the role of the artist in creation. Thus, Achilles is writing ekphraseis in compliance with the rhetorical ideas of creating *enargeia* and bringing things to life before his reader's eyes, but he then undercuts this by immediately drawing the reader back to the idea that it is all a visual creation of man.

Webb asserts that ekphraseis in the novels have a meta-fictional function, making the reader experience “the disjunction between the fictional world and reality”.⁴⁵ Achilles certainly does this by reminding the reader that the painting is fictional, even though it can be so vividly described. Yet one must consider that it is a fiction within a fiction; that is, although within the novel itself the painting is fictional, in the reader's reality it is both novel and painting which are fiction. The double deceit

⁴⁵ Webb (2009), 185.

of Leucippe's sacrifice and disembowelment as false comes in here; although at 3.15 her apparent death seems very real to the reader, and to Cleitophon narrating, we ultimately find that it is just as false as the torture within the paintings.

From the ekphrasis in Book Three we can see that literary falsity and visual falsity are associated. Although initially we see the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus as proleptic, the fact that this is proved to be false and that later Leucippe's own death is proved to be as such indicates that within any world of fiction (visual or literary) the audience can be manipulated. The reader can ultimately discover that the creative outputs of man are all imitations of reality which are not able to faithfully represent what is real. The power to deceive is put in the hands of the author and he can utilize his narrator to blur the boundaries of fiction and reality and cause his reader, when they are in possession of hindsight, to attempt to reinterpret what they have read before. Moreover, the naming of Euanthes, which is likely to be a witty reference to rhetorical teaching, situates the paintings in an entirely fabricated world of an intelligently playful author who is communicating to his reader on a variety of levels.

Chapter Three: Philomela

The final ekphrasis of a painting in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* takes place in Book 5, after the arrival at Alexandria. Leucippe has just been hit by the wing of a hawk, an event which Cleitophon calls a τέρας (5.3.3) in an exclamation to Zeus, asking for a clearer sign. He then turns around and sees the painting, for he “happened to be standing by the workshop of a painter” (ἔτυχον γὰρ παρεστῶς ἐργαστηρίῳ ζωγράφου, 5.3.4). The subject of the painting is of the “defilement of Philomela, the violence of Tereus and the cutting out of her tongue” (Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομήν, 5.3.4). This myth is extremely fitting within the themes of the nature of different artforms (writing, the visual arts, rhetoric) which are prevalent in the novel. Philomela loses her ability to speak, and thus the art of rhetoric is inaccessible. Instead, she communicates by means of the visual arts:

Φιλομήλα παρειστήκει καὶ ἐπετίθει τῷ πέπλῳ τὸν δάκτυλον καὶ ἐδείκνυ τῶν ὑφασμάτων τὰς γραφάς (5.3.5)

She is able to use her finger to point to images and communicate her story, despite lack of vocal power. Already, Achilles is indicating that there is a close link between speech and the visual arts and their expressive abilities.

To further indicate that the author is interested in the combination of rhetoric and art, the ingredients of an ekphrasis, one can explore Cleitophon’s response to the subject of the painting. At 5.5.4, as exegete to Leucippe, he says: ἡ γὰρ Φιλομήλας τέχνη σιωπᾶσαν εὔρηκε φωνήν. Clearly we are to see the connections between different τέχνη and the fact that Philomela has used one (her weaving/artistic ability) in place of

the other (rhetoric).⁴⁶ Just before this, Cleitophon tells Leucippe that Tereus “took away the flower of speech” from Philomela (κείρει τῆς φωνῆς τὸ ἄνθος, 5.5.4). The metaphor of the flower here seems to be suggestive of the power of rhetoric associated with the voice; it can be tied back to the name of the artist Euanthes described in the previous chapter, and the association of flowers with both the rhetorical arts and, concurrently, ekphrasis itself.⁴⁷ Indeed, the equation of Philomela’s power of speech as τὸ ἄνθος supports the assertion of Euanthes being a playful reference to rhetoric and the role of ekphrasis as a technique within the art. The elimination of τῆς φωνῆς τὸ ἄνθος allows the reader to see that the power of Philomela’s visual art is equal to the communicative ability of her voice. Morales comments upon the silencing of Leucippe, and how the ekphrasis of Philomela is the culmination of this, “adumbrat[ing] and reflect[ing] her voicelessness”.⁴⁸ Ekphraseis in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* do reflect events in the main narrative, and one might therefore see the lack of Leucippe’s voice reflected in Philomela, yet in this instance the rhetorical, dramatic undertones are what Achilles seems to be emphasizing. Morales focuses more specifically on the proleptic and allusive function of the ekphrasis, without pinpointing the very technical aspect of

⁴⁶ See Roisman (2006), 9-11 and her discussion of Helen’s weaving in *Iliad* 3 for another example of a female character within literature utilizing her own feminine τέχνη as a means of (silent) communication. Roisman then discusses the progression of Helen in the *Iliad* from a powerless figure who speaks through her weaving into a “public speaker”, talking at Hektor’s funeral in *Iliad* 24. Interesting parallels can be drawn between this, and Helen’s metaphorical speaking through weaving, to that of Philomela in *Leucippe and Cleitophon*. Achilles uses a story of a woman’s weaving, a common trope, for his own purposes of examining the art of rhetoric and how its traits might be applied to other arts; a theme very fitting for the intellectual climate of the time.

⁴⁷ The cutting or picking of flowers or fruit is a common trope in Greek literature, symbolizing a plethora of things such as the taking of virginity (e.g. Daphnis picking an apple at *Daphnis and Chloe* 3.33-34). Within the story of Philomela, it seems likely the cutting of the flower also contains some sexual undertones. However, here the author’s agenda of its association with the art of speech seems clear; within the literal rape of Philomela, Achilles has also emphasized how one form of τέχνη has been seized from her.

⁴⁸ Morales (2004), 201.

Achilles' play with words and allusions which are not just intratextual, but which refer to the art of writing, and its interplay with other arts, more generally.

The rhetorical associations here can be tied in to the idea that an ekphrasis is, in part, 'putting on a show' to grab an audience's attention and create vivid imagery. This can be seen in the description of Philomela's weaving and its results:

Ὑφαίνει γὰρ πέπλον ἄγγελον καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα πλέκει ταῖς κρόκαις (5.5.5)

Philomela is weaving her δρᾶμα for an audience, recalling ideas of a tragedy and theatrical show.⁴⁹ The fact that the cloth itself is described as a "messenger" further cements the close association of speaking with the art she has produced, and indicates that she is using her τέχνη to bring life and voice to a static art. Moreover, the verb ὑφαίνω is significant as a verb which is often used metapoetically in the art of composition.⁵⁰ It is also used, in a manner very pertinent to this context, in the famous scene in *Iliad* 3 where the rhetorical styles of Menelaus and Odysseus are described: ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ μύθους καὶ μήδεα πᾶσιν ὕφαινον (*Il.*3.212).⁵¹ Within the μύθους καὶ μήδεα of Odysseus and Menelaus we can see what Achilles Tatius also does; creating a story but adding his "wiles", knowledge and sometimes deceit, just as rhetoric can do.⁵² In using this verb for Philomela's work, Achilles is himself interweaving the physical

⁴⁹ *LSJ*, s.v., δρᾶμα, II.

⁵⁰ Heffernan (1993), 47 draws upon the Latin equivalent of this verb (*texo*) which is, interestingly, used in Ovid's own description of the myth of Philomela and her weaving (*Met.* 6.576). He questions whether Ovid intends the verb as compositional, meaning that Philomela is actually weaving words, or whether we are to read it literally as her weaving an image. In Achilles the long ekphrasis clearly shows us that she has woven an image, but perhaps the same underlying metapoetic qualities of the verb can be seen as well.

⁵¹ See Σ bT ad *Iliad* 3.212 for discussion of the rhetorical styles of Odysseus and Menelaus (as well as Nestor), in which they are compared to Lysias, Demosthenes and Isocrates. It is clear, then, that this scene was drawn upon in rhetorical context and as representative of paragons of rhetoric. ὑφαίνω as a verb of rhetorical composition was evidently in use from the time of Homer, and Achilles is sure to be drawing on the long history of its tradition.

⁵² See Snyder (1981), 194-6 on the Homeric background of weaving metaphors for intellectual activity and the idea of a poet creating a tapestry with words.

weaving with the performative act of rhetoric; like much of the novel, and ekphrasis itself, multiple layers of interpretation are created as the physical act is representative of a more complex dialogue in keeping with the intellectual climate of the author's time. Interestingly, within the actual ekphrasis itself ὑφαίνω is also used of the painter: ἼΩδε μὲν τὴν τοῦ πέπλου γραφὴν ὕφηνεν ὁ ζωγράφος (5.3.7). Thus, we can see that “weaving” is used of all forms of τέχνη: rhetorical, visual and written. Furthermore, the ambiguity of γραφή (which can connote both words and drawings) adds to the general intermingling of skills, words and what they can achieve which Achilles draws upon.⁵³

Although it seems clear that Achilles has utilized this painting of the Rape of Philomela in order to raise questions of art and rhetoric which he does throughout the novel, there is a unique difference in this particular ekphrasis which must be explored. Unlike the other two paintings discussed, this one has the narrator (Cleitophon) as exegete, describing the significance of the work to Leucippe. Bartsch has noted that all other paintings in Achilles Tatius are not given interpreters, and the one which is raises doubts.⁵⁴ The glaring inconsistency between Cleitophon's narrated ekphrasis and the exegesis which arises from Leucippe's questioning is that he does not describe to the reader the transformation of Philomela and Procne into birds, yet Leucippe asks: τί βούλεται τῆς εἰκόνοσ ὁ μῦθος καὶ τίνες αἱ ὄρνιθες αὐται (5.5.1), resulting in him expanding on the myth which the painting depicts. Gaselee explains this inconsistency incorrectly, calling it “an inadvertence of the author's or an imperfection of the text”.⁵⁵ Bartsch attempts to shed light on the matter by saying that Cleitophon “is interpreting

⁵³ *LSJ*, s.v., γραφή, I, II.

⁵⁴ Bartsch (1989), 45, 66-68.

⁵⁵ Gaselee (1984), 244n1.

a painting that is different from the one just described to us”.⁵⁶ That is, the painting which Leucippe asks about is a different one from that which Cleitophon describes in the main narrative to the reader. Bartsch’s conclusion that we are given a “misleading and meaningless” interpretation, with Achilles attempting to deceive his reader and cause them to recognize that they themselves are being misled by the author, does seem to concur with the playful games of the author elsewhere (such as the deceitful nature of the Andromeda and Prometheus paintings, when the seemingly foreshadowed death of Leucippe ends up being a false allusion). There is no question that the inconsistency would cause the reader to stop and think, wondering how Leucippe is asking about a scene which has not at all been narrated to them. Bartsch’s interpretation is more in keeping with how the author plays with his reader and leads them down paths of deceit and is a plausible reason for the discrepancy. It also brings forth the theme of reality and fiction, and fiction’s ability to toy with and change what a reader sees as “real”, which is again characteristic of Achilles Tatius. However, Achilles’ omission of a description of painted birds does not categorically mean that they were not there. Perhaps one can consider the fallibility of Cleitophon as a narrator in this; as Hägg asserts, Achilles’ use of an ego-narrator means that the reader is relying on the authority of an eye-witness.⁵⁷ The reader is only aware of what the narrator tells them; thus, it is not Achilles at fault in his description (as Gaselee asserts) but Cleitophon, the unreliable narrator. Achilles plays with the fact that his story employs an ego-narrator. At some points the reader can only see what Cleitophon can in the moment, such as here or the ‘sacrifice’ of Leucippe at 3.15. In other places, as Reardon has noted, the ego-narrator

⁵⁶ Bartsch (1989), 75-76.

⁵⁷ Hägg (1971), 126.

turns into an “omniscient narrator”.⁵⁸ Thus, Bartsch is correct in attempting to add more complexity to the painting and its interpretation. However, as opposed to it being a different painting, it seems more likely that Cleitophon is the source of confusion for the reader, and acts as Achilles’ tool in creating uncertainty of interpretation.

In considering the questions of reality and fiction, the third ekphrasis also contains some of the underlying Platonic themes which are present in the other artistic descriptions. In his exegesis, Cleitophon says that Philomela’s “hand copied her tongue” (μιμεῖται τὴν γλῶτταν ἢ χεῖρ, 5.5.5), making use of the Platonic verb μιμέομαι.⁵⁹ The hand here is representative of Philomela’s visual art, which is imitating the art of speech; this can be compared to Achilles’ own literary art imitating the visual art of paintings in an ekphrasis. We can see, therefore, the close ties between and the intertwining nature of various types of artform which are toyed with throughout the novel. Moreover, we question which is more true; one artform copies another, but is any more close to what we deem ‘reality’? Ní Mheallaigh discusses *Phaedrus* 275d4-7 and Socrates’ use of an analogy of painting to pinpoint writing’s deficiency, in order to highlight his point that spoken discourse is of greater value than the written word.⁶⁰ She applies this to the initial ekphrasis of the novel in her discussion of the Phaedran setting, commenting on the inability of the figures in the painting to actually communicate vocally. Philomela encapsulates this issue within painting, yet the painted figure is able to find a way to communicate without the spoken word. At *Phaedrus* 275d4-7, Socrates says:

⁵⁸ Reardon (1999), 248-249. The example is given of descriptions of Thersander at 6.11 and 6.18, where the narrator is clearly aware of, and describes, the internal emotions of Thersander which there is no way Cleitophon could have known about in the present situation.

⁵⁹ See Chapter One and the artist as μιμητής at *Republic* 597b.

⁶⁰ Ní Mheallaigh (2007), 236-237.

δεινὸν γάρ που, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τοῦτ' ἔχει γραφή, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὅμοιον ζωγραφία. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἔστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ' ἀνέρη τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾶ. ταῦτόν δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι: δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὡς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρη τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί.

Considering the Phaedran allusions of *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, discussed more in depth in Chapter One, it seems likely that Achilles was aware of, and hinting at, such ideas in his own writing. The ending of this statement (ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί) suggests a static-ness within painting and the written word which, it seems from Socrates' words, is unable to reach the true lively nature of dialogue. Thus, although within the static world of the painting Philomela is able to communicate through her own art, in the real world, separate from her weaving, the painting in which she is housed and the novel itself, she can only represent a singular moment in time which is a copy of what occurred in reality. Phaedrus, at 276a, says: τὸν τοῦ εἰδότος λόγον λέγεις ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον, οὗ ὁ γεγραμμένος εἶδωλον ἂν τι λέγοιτο δικαίως. Here the word εἶδωλον stands out, as a “phantom” or “image” of the “living and breathing word of he who knows”. It suggests that the spoken word is the truth, and something written down (or, indeed, painted) is a mimetic copy of this.

The ekphrasis of Philomela, with its multi-layered complexity, is reflective of the intricate nature of *Leucippe and Cleitophon* as a whole. Achilles is playing with such ideas of *mimesis* and art's role in it both in his ekphraseis and within the very genre which he has chosen to showcase his own τέχνη: the novel. He is evidently immersed in Platonic ideologies of fiction, rhetoric and representation, appealing to his educated reader. Within his novel he employs rhetorical techniques which can be tied in with the intellectual period in which he was working. Perhaps Ní Mheallaigh's comments that it raises questions as to whether “our life-story is equally a fiction ... a mere textual

vestige in some other author's novel" are too strong, but it is certainly the case that Achilles wants his reader to recognize the philosophical discussions underlying his text and to deeply consider the role which various artforms have to play in one's life, and the complex, mimetic relationships between them.⁶¹

⁶¹ Ní Mheallaigh (2007), 242.

Conclusion:

Through analysis of the ekphrastic paintings in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* it becomes clear how thoughtful the descriptions are and how the author utilizes them for manifold purposes. They are not purely there for the love of description but are instead imbued with various underlying themes: philosophical, rhetorical, literary.

One of the primary purposes of this dissertation has been to suggest that Achilles is utilizing ekphraseis to extend the claim that narrative fiction is no lesser, and indeed is comparable, to other arts (the rhetorical and visual). The ekphraseis highlight the author's interest in rhetorical theory and education, made particularly clear in the naming of Euanthes as well as in the themes which the myth of Philomela brings forth. They also suggest a strong interest in the visual arts, with vocabulary which focuses specifically on the artist and their role and descriptions highlighting the physicality of a painting. The attention given to the physical artwork enables the reader to almost see that which is being described; it is full of the *enargeia* required of an ekphrasis and thus showcases the author's skill as both writer and rhetorician. Achilles is attempting to create an amalgam of various τέχναι through the novel, and the ekphraseis are a perfect vessel to show off his skills and learning. The description of Philomela's weaving, and the various metaliterary and rhetorical ideas which arise from this, encapsulates the author's own attempts to incorporate all his τέχναι into his novel and create a complex, multi-layered showcase of skill.

This dissertation has also reflected on the role of narrator in *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, and the idea of viewer subjectivity within an ekphrasis. Achilles' use of Cleitophon as ego-narrator allows for this subjectivity to be explored perhaps to a greater extent than if we had a third person narrator. Cleitophon is not a perfect narrator;

his fallibility shines through in his exegetic excursus to Leucippe on the Philomela painting. His inner thoughts, projected through his own voice, also serve to confuse the reader. This is clear from the Europa-Selene problem discussed in Chapter One; Achilles has made use of Cleitophon's recollection of a painting, similar but not the same to that of the ekphrasis we have just been given, to create confusion for the reader and cause them to reconsider what they have just read. This is a typical technique of Achilles Tatius, and within the novel the ekphraseis serve as springboards for such deceits as the reader initially thinks they understand the meaning before they are proven sorely wrong.

Finally, the ekphraseis described in this dissertation serve the wider aim of Achilles' novel; that is, to create a multifaceted work which can be read on several layers and through different lenses. There is no question of the Platonic, particularly Phaedran, allusions within *Leucippe and Cleitophon*. The ekphraseis serve as microcosm of such themes in the wider novel. Within the Phaedran setting of the first ekphrasis, for example, is a description of a painting which is itself permeated with Platonic ideas. The mimetic features of the first ekphrasis (and indeed of the succeeding two), bringing to mind ideas from the *Republic* of artist as imitator, also draw the reader into a Platonic world. Whilst on a base level of pure entertainment the ekphraseis provide lively and entertaining descriptions, they are also available as vehicles for deeper thought for the reader who is interested in further exploration. Just as the main narrative of *Leucippe and Cleitophon* is itself multifaceted and complex, with the author tricking and playing with his reader throughout and getting them to consider questions of reality and fiction, so do the ekphraseis focus in on these questions and make the attentive reader reflect and ponder about the various levels of the text which they are reading.

The paintings described in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* are indicative of a much more complex work than what one might initially perceive a romance novel to be. They showcase the intellectual abilities and knowledge of the author, who is steeped in a world of rhetorical and philosophical discourse which stems from the intellectual environment of his contemporary world. They allow the reader to become a part of this complex world as they are embroiled in the author's games and try to determine the significance of the ekphraseis. Perhaps there is not one significance to the paintings; they do have an (often deceitful) proleptic function, but they are also imbued with all manner of themes which go far beyond the text itself. Achilles seems to be well aware of questions of fiction and reality and utilizes ekphraseis for these purposes; he does not provide an answer, nor does he suggest a particular judgment, as to the imitative nature of the visual arts and literature and the role which rhetoric plays in creating fiction. However, he certainly raises such questions and allows for the interested reader to ponder more deeply over the roles of various τέχνηαι. It is, perhaps, left to the reader to determine what they themselves think about how far literature can go in creating something which is itself a reality, or whether they perceive all arts to be entirely deceptive.

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