

Generic self-awareness in a Komnenian novel: the hero in *Drosilla and Charikles**

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This article examines the twelfth-century novel Drosilla and Charikles by Niketas Eugenianos from the perspective of cognitive frames. Based on the analysis of two key passages (1.230–57 and 3.341–50), I argue that the hero recognizes himself as part of the novelistic plot. While such metanarrative features of the Komnenian novels have been recognized previously, the cognitive approach offered in this article allows for a better understanding of the narratological complexities at play in Eugenianos' novel and in the ancient and Byzantine novelistic genre at large.

Keywords: Niketas Eugenianos; *Drosilla and Charikles*; characterization; genre; cognitive frames

Drosilla and Charikles (*D&C*) was composed by Niketas Eugenianos in Constantinople by the mid-twelfth century, a time often described as a revival of the novel genre.¹ It is well known that the so-called Komnenian period was marked by the recovery of classical Greek, Hellenistic, and Second Sophistic literature, and that during this period

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1 For translation of and introductions to all four Komnenian novels, see E. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine novels* (Liverpool 2012), esp. 339–458 on Eugenianos (introduction and translation). See also R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (2nd edition, London 1996) and more recently I. Nilsson, 'Romantic love in rhetorical guise: the Byzantine revival of the twelfth century', and P. Roilos, "I grasp, oh, artist, your enigma, I grasp your drama": reconstructing the implied audience of the twelfth-century Byzantine novel', both in C. Cupane and B. Krönung (eds), *Fictional Storytelling in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond* (Leiden 2016), 39–66 and 463–78 respectively.

composition was taught through *progymnasmata*.² This is why their literary products came out as ‘creative imitations’,³ so it is not surprising to find elements in the novels that establish intertextual links with the earlier tradition. The Komnenian novels entered a dialogue both among themselves and with their predecessors, the Greek novels of the Second Sophistic. In this article, I will therefore offer comparisons of *D&C* with novels from both periods, especially with the ancient *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, and *Aethiopika*, and with the Komnenian *Hysmine and Hysminias* and *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*.

The relationship of Eugenianos’ *D&C* with the literary tradition has been the subject of numerous studies. Some scholars have focused on its intertextual relationship with the novels by Heliodorus and Prodromos,⁴ others have analysed its reworking of passages from Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*,⁵ its recovery of Theocritus’ poetry,⁶ and its links to religious literature.⁷ This novel might accordingly be seen as rather thoroughly researched, but there is one aspect that has attracted only limited attention from modern scholars.

In Book Six of *D&C*, a new and rather antagonistic character appears: Kallidemos, a peasant who falls in love with the heroine and competes with the hero for her attention.⁸ In his attempt to conquer Drosilla, Kallidemos delivers two long speeches in which he uses certain love stories from the literary tradition as *exempla*.⁹ In this context he explicitly mentions some characters from Heliodorus’ *Aethiopika*, the protagonists of Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*, and the love stories of Polyphemus and Galatea (Theocritus) and Hero and Leander (Musaeus). In general, scholars have

2 A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformations of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition* (Cambridge 2008) 225–316. See also I. Nilsson, *Raconter Byzance: la littérature au XIII^e siècle* (Paris 2014) 139–45.

3 M. Mullett, ‘No drama, no poetry, no fiction, no readership, no literature’ in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester 2010) 227–38.

4 Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romance*, 52–90; P. Agapitos, ‘Narrative rhetoric and “drama” rediscovered: scholars and poets in Byzantium interpret Heliodorus’ in R. Hunter (ed.), *Studies in Heliodorus* (Cambridge 1998) 125–56, and ‘Writing, reading and reciting (in) Byzantine erotic fiction’ in B. Mondrain (ed.), *Lire et écrire à Byzance* (Paris 2006) 125–76.

5 C. Jouanno, ‘Nicétas Eugénianos: un héritier du roman grec’, *Revue des études grecques* 102 (1989) 346–60; Nilsson, *Raconter Byzance*, 178–85.

6 J. B. Burton ‘A reemergence of Theocritean poetry in the Byzantine novel’, *Classical Philology* 98.3 (2003) 251–73, and ‘The pastoral in Byzantium’ in M. Fantuzzi and T. D. Papanghelis (eds), *Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral* (Leiden 2006) 549–79.

7 P. Roilos, *Amphoteroglossia: a poetics of the twelfth-century medieval Greek novel* (Cambridge, MA 2006); F. Meunier, ‘Les romans de l’époque comnène: des réminiscences bibliques ?’, *Revue des études byzantines* 69 (2011) 205–17.

8 For Kallidemos’ role as a pseudo-antagonist, see F. Conca, ‘Il romanzo di Niceta Eugenio: Modelli narrativi e stilistici’, *Sicilorum gymnasium* 39 (1986) 115–26.

9 Niketas Eugenianos *D&C* 6. 333–558 and 6.566–643.

maintained that Kallidemos is a parodic character, who adds comedic value,¹⁰ and that the essence of his characterization is defined by his role as a reader of the ancient novel – or even as a bad reader.¹¹ These assertions are supported by the fact that he misinterprets his resemblance to the characters he mentions – that is, he uses ill-chosen *exempla* – and, moreover, by the fact that he misreads the situation he experiences, misinterpreting the heroine’s gestures. I am not going to deal with the character of Kallidemos here, but it is relevant to take previous analyses of him into account when analysing the words of Charikles, whom I will deal with in what follows.

The purpose of this article is not simply to study different aspects of intertextual relationships, but to argue that Charikles, the main character, is conscious of his condition as a novelistic hero. I will argue that he who makes allusions, and who therefore presents himself as a reader of the tradition, is the fictional character when he becomes the narrator of his own story. Such meta-discursive references in the Komnenian novels have been noted by Panagiotis Roilos, who argues that they exhibit an aesthetic refinement shared by authors and audience.¹² Roilos highlights the role of the protagonist narrator in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, manifesting – throughout the intertextual allusions – a self-awareness of being a narrator and a sense of belonging to a literary tradition; in the case of *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, he points out a link between the reception of the genre and the voices in the novel in the character of Rhodanthe, in whose words may be recognized a recovery of the moral ideal of the heroine of the novel.¹³ As regards *D&C*, Roilos mentions ‘the co-existence of diverse, even antithetical discourses’ in Kallidemos’ speech, which provides dialogues with the audience about cultural conventions.¹⁴ In addition to these observations by Roilos, Ingela Nilsson has pointed out that the heroine Drosilla too has a certain knowledge about the love story tradition, suggesting that there is a literary consciousness in the heroine that comes to the fore in the scene in which Kallidemos speaks in order to seduce her.¹⁵ What I propose to do here is to further develop this recognition and interpretation of the meta-discursive comments expressed by the hero Charikles.

The idea that the characters in *D&C* are readers of fiction has been expressed in a study by Joan Burton, who reflects on the intertextual references to Theocritus’ work and states that the characters in this novel in general are recipients of the literary tradition:

10 A. Kazhdan ‘Bemerkungen zu Niketas Eugenianos’, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 16 (1967) 101–17; Jouanno, ‘Nicéas Eugénianos’.

11 Nilsson, *Raconter Byzance*, 181. For an alternative interpretation, see F. Meunier ‘Les romans de l’époque comnène: des réminiscences bibliques?’, *Revue des études byzantines* 69 (2011) 205–17.

12 Roilos ‘I grasp, oh, artist, your enigma’.

13 *Ibid.* On this female ideal, see J. Bértola ‘Book epigrams bizantinos sobre novelas griegas antiguas’, *Anales de Filología Clásica* 31 (2018) 25–36.

14 Roilos ‘I grasp, oh, artist, your enigma’, 471.

15 Nilsson ‘Romantic love in rhetorical guise’, 44–5.

They acknowledge the weight of the past, of tradition, as well as the difficulty of originality in love, in poetry, in life. There is pleasure in all this intertextuality, the pleasure of recognition, of memory. All the characters do this. Eugenianus simply has some characters do it more successfully (that is, with more self-awareness, more self-irony) than others.¹⁶

In a similar vein, Katalin Delbó states that almost all characters in Eugenianos' novel become poets and/or rhetoricians in some scenes.¹⁷

Against the background of these scholars, interpreting the novelistic characters as readers and as poets, I will analyse the hero's words with the intention of showing that he recognizes himself as part of a novelistic plot. I will argue that he activates, as soon as the adventure-time begins, a specific cognitive frame: that of the Greek novel.¹⁸ To demonstrate this, I will offer a close reading of two passages. The first is a scene in Book Three (3.341–50) which coincides with the starting point of the story, given that it begins *in medias res*. The second is one of the hero's laments in Book One (1.230–57) when he is separated from his beloved and expresses his fears regarding her physical and moral integrity. In both passages, the hero imagines forthcoming events that coincide with central motifs of the novelistic genre. These predictions will then be linked with the generation of expectations, both those made explicit by Charikles and those putatively generated in the audience.

Entering the novelistic plot

D&C combines an extradiegetic narrator with intradiegetic narrators each time that characters tell their own story in embedded narratives. It begins *in medias res*, at the moment when the Parthians capture the protagonists in the city of Barzon.¹⁹ Once they are locked up in separate cells, Charikles starts lamenting his fortune. His cellmate Kleandros, a fellow Greek, listens to him and, to console each other, they decide to tell the experiences that led them to fall captive to the barbarians. Charikles' narrative begins at a festival in honor of Dionysus, where he meets other young men and they exchange epigrams and love songs. This reunion in which he participates is located at the chronological starting point of the story and works as the inception of the entire novel – it triggers all future events. It has been noted that this scene is

16 Burton, 'The pastoral in Byzantium', 565.

17 K. L. Delbó, 'Der byzantinische Roman im theatron' in Z. Farklas, L. Hortváth, and T. Mészáros (eds), *Byzance et l'Occident V. Ianuae Europea* (Budapest 2019) 31–41 (38).

18 On cognitive frames, see M. Minsky, 'A framework for representing knowledge' in D. Metzger (ed.) *Frame Conceptions and Text Understanding* (Berlin 1979), 1–25. On adventure-time, see M. M. Bakhtin, 'Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel' in *The Dialogic Imagination: four essays* (tr. M. Holquist and C. Emerson, Austin 1981) 84–258.

19 On this kind of opening scene *in medias res* and its model in Heliodorus, see Agapitos, 'Narrative, rhetoric, and "drama" rediscovered', 148–51.

constituted as a didactical instance for the hero, an initiation into the mysteries of Eros.²⁰ Listening to these stories allows Charikles to know what *eros* is, how it is experienced on a bodily level and how it can be mitigated. Having listened to his companions, the hero runs anxiously to see the maidens dancing at the festivity, and it is then that he falls in love at first sight with Drosilla. The character describes this event as follows:

Τί γὰρ παθεῖν μου τὴν τάλαιναν καρδίαν
δοκεῖς, φίλε Κλέανδρε συμφυλακίτα,
ἐρωτικῶν πληγεῖσαν ἐξ ἀκουσμάτων;
᾿Ωδευον οὖν, ἔμπροσθεν ἔτρεχον τότε,
ὡς ἂν στάσιν σχῶ δεξιὰν πρὸς τὸ βλέπειν
τὰς τηνικαῦτα συγχορευούσας κόρας.
Ἐκεῖ σελήνην εἶδον ἐν τῇ γῆ κάτω,
κύκλω μετ' αὐτῶν ἀστέρων φορουμένην·
τοῦτο Δροσίλλα συγχορευούσαις κόραις.
Καὶ τοὺς ἐρῶντας ἄχθος ἄλγος λαμβάνειν
γνοὺς ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν προηνωτισμένων
"καλὸν μὲν ἦν, Δροσίλλα" πρὸς νοῦν ἀντέφην,
"εἰ μὴ Χαρικλεῖ νῦν κατέστης εἰς θέαν·
ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦτο τοῦ θεοῦ Διονύσου
θέλημα – τί; Κλέανδρε, μὴ συνδακρύης –,
οὐ μέμψις ἐν σοὶ τληπαθῆσαι, παρθένε,
τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ σοὶ νυμφίον Χαρικλέα
καὶ καρτερῆσαι κἂν φυγὴν κἂν κινδύνους
κἂν ἀρπαγὴν σὴν, πρὶν τυχεῖν σου τοῦ γάμου·
καὶ πᾶν τι δεινὸν ἄλλο συγκλώσειέ μοι
μίτος πονηρὸς ἐξ ἀλάστορος Τύχης."

What do you think my wretched heart
suffered, friend Kleandros, my fellow prisoner,
when it was wounded by love songs?
So I made a move, then I ran forward
so that I could find a suitable position from which to see
the girls who were at that moment dancing together.
There I saw a moon that had come to earth below,
circled about by the stars themselves
– that was Drosilla with the girls dancing round her.
And knowing from what I had just heard,
that those in love take on a burden of grief,

20 Conca, 'Il romanzo di Niceta Eugenio'; P. Cortez, 'Locus amoenus y plátano: iniciación erótica en Drosila y Caricles' *Bizantinistica* 21 (2020) 145–58.

I said to my mind, 'It would have been good, Drosilla,
had you not come to Charikles' attention.
But since this was Dionysos'
wish – what? Kleandros, you should not weep for me –
it is no reproach to you, maiden,
for Charikles, your bridegroom bestowed by the god,
to suffer long and to endure flight or danger,
or even your abduction before he wins you in marriage,
and whatever other dreadful thing
the evil thread of vengeful Fate might spin for me.'²¹

Charikles here makes explicit the importance of having listened to these erotic stories which first cause his heart deep pain: Τί γὰρ παθεῖν μου τὴν τάλαιναν καρδίαν / δοκεῖς, ... ἐρωτικῶν πληγεῖσαν ἐξ ἀκουσμάτων; (3.330–2). As the passage cited above makes clear, his feelings are a consequence of the erotic stories that he listened to. This encourages him to run and see the girls where he witnesses the beauty of Drosilla for the first time and experiences a feeling that he can only understand thanks to those previous stories: Καὶ τοὺς ἐρῶντας ἄχθος ἄλγος λαμβάνειν / γνοὺς ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν προηρωτισμένων (3.339–40).

After that moment of self-reflection, Charikles continues his narrative. He describes his beloved as a moon, appropriating a commonplace of amorous discourses well known from the novelistic tradition. In the *Aethiopika*, Kalasiris, who acts as the hero's assistant and partly as the heroine's surrogate father,²² relates the first encounter between the lovers Charikleia and Theagenes; to the question whether the young woman had excelled in the ceremony, he answers: ὡσπερ καὶ τὴν σελήνην εἰ διαπρέπει τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων ἠρώτας ('That is like asking whether the moon shines more brightly than the other stars!').²³ In one of the Komnenian novels, Hysminias uses this image for describing the appearance of his beloved in a dream: καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπεφύσησα, εἰ μὴ καὶ τὴν Ὑσμίνην εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ κατὰ σελήνην ἐν ἀστράσι ('I would have all but expired had I not seen Hysmine in their midst, like the moon amid the stars').²⁴

21 Ed. F. Conca, *Nicetas Eugenianus, De Drosillae et Chariclis amoribus* (Amsterdam 1990) 3.330–50. Tr. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 384, adapted.

22 J. Winkler 'The mendacity of Kalasiris and the narrative strategy of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*' in J. Winkler and G. Williams (eds.), *Later Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1982), 93–158.

23 Heliodorus, *Aethiopika* 3.64. Tr. J. R. Morgan in B. P. Reardon (ed.), *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (Berkeley 1989), 415.

24 Eumathios Macrembolites, *Hysmine and Hysminias* 5.6.17. Ed. M. Marcovich, *De Hysmines et Hysminiae amoribus* (Leipzig 2001), tr. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 213. On the chronology and internal sequence of the Komnenian novels, see S. MacAlister, 'Byzantine twelfth-century romances: a relative chronology', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15 (1991) 175–210; Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, esp. 161–5; Nilsson, *Raconter Byzance*, 72–86. Regardless of their differences, it is agreed that the composition of *D&C* is later than that of *Hysmine and Hysminias* and *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*. A

Within Eugenianos' novel the same metaphor appears in the words of Kleandros to describe his beloved in Book Two: φεῦ φεῦ, μὰ τὰς Χάριτας, εἶπες ἂν βλέπων ... μητρὸς Σελήνης, πατρὸς Ἡλίου τέκνον. (*D&C* 2.74 and 76: 'alas, alas, by the Graces, you would have said if you saw her ... that she was a child whose mother was Selene and father Helios'). It is relevant to recall that the hero thus hears these words just moments before he begins his own narrative.²⁵ Moreover, we find this formulation in Kallidemos' words for describing the superlative beauty of the heroine: Γυνὴ γὰρ εἶ σύ ... γυνὴ δὲ πασῶν τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς καλλίων, ... ὡς ἡ σελήνη τῶν προλοίπων ἀστέρων (*D&C* (6.420–4: 'For you are a woman ... a woman lovelier than all those among us ... as is the moon among the other stars'). These are all more or less equivalent expressions.

Charikles then mentions the will of Dionysus. So far in the story nothing has been made known about this god, and it is not until *D&C* 3.409–11 that it becomes clear that the god had in fact appeared to Charikles in a dream and led the maiden to him. The presence of a tutelary god of the union between the protagonists is a commonplace of the genre, to be noted for instance in *Hysmine and Hysminias*, where Eros himself plays this role, and in *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, with the figure of Hermes.²⁶ An audience familiar with the genre notices that these two elements are characteristic of it, and that goes also for the final element in his enumeration: the setbacks Charikles will have to suffer before being able to obtain marriage: the flight, the dangers, the abduction (*D&C* 3.346–8). As pointed out by Niklas Holzberg, the adventures of the Greek novel in general consist mainly of the experimentation with these kinds of situations: 'The adventures ... consist mostly of separation and between times brief reunions, enslavement and threats to their lives, be it from robbers, a storm, shipwreck or from rivals.'²⁷

Pain is another constant of the genre. An analysis of the different scenes of falling in love in the ancient novels reveals that the heroes feel a deep pain that they sometimes find inexplicable. Kleitophon experiences a succession of contradictory emotions: admiration, amazement, trembling, shame and embarrassment, and eventually loss of appetite, unbearable pain and difficulty in falling asleep.²⁸ In *Daphnis and Chloe* 1.17.2–4, the hero takes on a taciturn air, suffers from chills, blushes at the sight of his beloved, loses his appetite, and grows pale; and even his flock is discouraged like him and does not understand the cause of his emotions: 'Whatever is Chloe's kiss doing to me?' and 'Oh, what a strange disease! I don't even know what to call it!'²⁹ – doubts which will be settled in a dialogue with Philetas,

different alternative is offered by C. Cupane, "Ἔρως-Βασιλεύς: la figura di Eros nel romanzo bizantino d' amore", *Atti dell' Accademia di Arti di Palermo* IV.33, II (1974) 243–97.

25 The narration of Kleandros' experiences appears in 2.57–3.44 and that of Charikles' in 3.45–4.68.

26 *Rhodante and Dosikles* 3.69–75 and 6.394–6; *Hysmine and Hysminias* 3.1.1–5 and 7.18.1–19.1.

27 N. Holzberg, 'The genre: novels proper and the fringe' in G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in The Ancient World*. (Leiden 1996) 11–28 (14).

28 Achilles Tatius, *Leukippe and Kleitophon* 1.4.5; 1.5.3; 1.9.1–2.

29 Tr. C. Gill in Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 296.

telling him and Chloe about Eros. In the *Aethiopika*, Theagenes is crestfallen, absent, restless, distressed (*Aethiopika* 3.10.4–11.1) and declares his situation to Kalasiris, although he is ashamed to specify the cause: ‘I am in terrible trouble, but I am too ashamed to tell you what it is’; then it is the old man who puts it into words ‘You are in love, my son!’ (*Aethiopika* 3.17).³⁰ In the Komnenian novels too, the protagonists experience the pain of love. When it comes to understanding such emotions, Hysminias in the novel by Makrembolites receives assistance and sentimental education from his cousin Kratisthenes,³¹ and is initiated by Eros and Hysmine through a series of dreams.³² In the novels by Prodromos and Eugenianos, the heroes understand the cause of their grief: Dosikles in Prodromos’ novel understands automatically after seeing the girl;³³ Charikles, as noted above, has been instructed by listening to erotic epigrams and songs.

Seen in the light of these shared features, Charikles’ sense of the impending dangers is striking for its novelty: he is the only novelistic hero who can predict the adventures that arise after falling in love and prior to marriage, which is the point of arrival in both ancient and Komnenian plots – the very closure of these novels. It should be noted that in Prodromos’ novel too, the hero predicts potentially forthcoming events in a lament: for instance, he imagines his beloved being forced by a barbarian.³⁴ Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference here: in *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, this is the first lament (since the novel begins *in medias res*), but Dosikles utters it only after he has been captured by the barbarians and not immediately after he has fallen in love.

I argue that Charikles’ knowledge of future events can be explained by the hypothesis that he is a connoisseur of the literary genre in which he acts and exists. The epigrams and love songs that he listens to in the first scene of the novel (according to the story time), and that are the concrete sources from which he learns about love, are mainly about the pain provoked by female beauty and by Eros, but none of them mentions a series of dangers to be experienced before concluding the union. The knowledge of the dangers to come could not have been gained from instruction by the epigrams, since no such mention is made in them. On the other hand, we cannot neglect that they are *topoi* of the Greek novel genre. The protagonists’ elopement occurs in *Aethiopika* 4.17.3–5, in *Leukippe and Kleitophon* 2.30–5, in *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* 2.458–85 and in *Hysmine and Hysminias* 7.7.1. In all cases, except for in Prodromos’ novel, the elopement is followed by shipwreck (*Aethiopika* 5.27.7;

30 Tr. J. R. Morgan in Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 422.

31 In *Hysmine and Hysminias* 2.11, Kratisthenes explains to Hysminias who Eros is.

32 *Hysmine and Hysminias* 3.1.1–5. On these dreams of Hysminias, see I. Nilsson, *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: narrative technique and mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites’ Hysmine and Hysminias* (Uppsala 2001), 103–10.

33 *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* 2.188 and sqq. When Dosikles tells his story to Glaukon, he explains that he fell in love immediately after seeing the girl; there is no indication that he needed someone else to help him understand his feelings.

34 *R&D* 1. 88–131.

Leukippe and Kleitophon 3.4.3–3.5; *Hysmine and Hysminias* 7.8.1). As for the abduction, it occurs only in *Daphnis and Chloe* 2.20, where the heroine is taken away by the Methymneans.³⁵ A consideration of the main events of the novelistic tradition supports my argument that the wisdom of Charikles comes from his knowledge of this literary genre.³⁶

As a theoretical underpinning, I rely on the concept of cognitive frame. According to Marvin Minsky, ‘a frame is a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation.’³⁷ It can be thought of as a network of nodes and relations that has a fixed part, which is adapted to different contexts, and a variable part. The information contained in the fixed part comes from long-term memory, that is, the content it possesses is acquired by previous experiences or cultural consumption. The variable part archives content in specific situations, as they are experienced or perceived. These frames are lodged in our memory and allow us to understand the appropriate behavior in a given situation and also to predict what will happen next. As other cognitive scholars have pointed out, narratives participate in the construction of our mental schemas and, consequently, influence our interpretation of experience. In David Herman’s words: ‘Narratives, thanks to the way they are anchored in a particular vantage point on the storyworlds that they evoke, and thanks to their essentially durative or temporally extended profile, do not merely convey semantic content but furthermore encode in their very structure a way of experiencing the world.’³⁸

In light of this reasoning, Charikles can predict the flight, the perils and the abduction of his beloved, because they are three of the main events in the traditional novelistic plot. The experience of that initial scene in which he learns about *eros* and falls in love at first sight activates the cognitive frame of the novels in the character Charikles, and thus his ensuing behaviour will be influenced by this knowledge. With this in mind, let us move on, or rather, back to the lament of Charikles in Book One.

Predicting fate on the basis of contemporary stories

The scene that concerns us here is found in Book One of the novel, but within the story it is chronologically later than the one analysed above. Towards the end of Book One of *D&C*, the protagonists, who have been captured by the invading Parthians, are locked up in separate cells and both lament the situation in which they find themselves. In one

35 In *Aethiopika*, Kalasiris arranges a fictitious abduction to help Charikleia escape with her beloved (4.17.3–5) and in *Rhodanthe and Dosikles* it is the hero who abducts the heroine (2.436–54), so these two situations differ from the one feared by Charikles.

36 For a more complete enumeration of the main motifs, see Bakhtin, ‘Forms of time and of the chronotope’; Holzberg, ‘The genre’, 14.

37 M. Minsky, ‘A framework for representing knowledge’, 1.

38 D. Herman ‘Directions in cognitive narratology: triangulating stories, media, and the mind,’ in J. Alber and M. Fludernik (eds), *Postclassical Narratology: approaches and analyses* (Columbus, OH 2010) 137–62 (156).

of the laments uttered by Charikles, we find a series of predictions that, once again, coincide with events known from other novels.

Ἵμοι, Δροσίλλα, ποῦ πορεύῃ; Ποῦ μένεις;
 Ποίαις ἐτάχθης δουλικαῖς ὑπουργίαις;
 Ἀνηρέθης πρὸς τίνος ἐχθρῶν ἀγρίων;
 Ἴη ζῆς ἀμυδρῶς, ὡς σκιὰ κινουμένη;
 Κλαίεις; Γελάς; Ὀλωλας; Ἐρρύσθης φόνου;
 Χαίρεις; Θλίβῃ; Δέδοικας; Οὐ φοβῆ ζίφος;
 Ἀλγεῖς; Κροτῆ; Πέπονθας; Οὐ πάσχεις φθόρον;
 Τίνος μετέρχη λέκτρον ἀρχισατράπου;
 Ποῖός τις ἐχθρὸς νῦν φανείς σοι δεσπότης
 ἐκ δακτύλων σῶν τὸν κρατῆρα λαμβάνει;
 Ἴη πού σε πολλῆς ἐμφορούμενος μέθης
 τυχὸν πατάξει βαρβαρώδει κονδύλω
 πταίουσαν οὐχ ἐκοῦσαν; Ἵμοι τῆς τύχης·
 ἢ καὶ Κρατύλος οὗτος ὀφθαλμὸν λίχνον
 ἐπεμβαλεῖ σοι καὶ φθονήσει τοῦ γάμου;
 Πρὸ τοῦ τυχεῖν δὲ τῆς Χρυσίλλας ὁ φθόνος
 διαφθερεῖ σκύφω σε δηλητηρίου.

Alas, Drosilla, where are you going? Where are you living?
 To what servile tasks have you been set?
 Have you been killed by one of our brutal enemies?
 Or do you have a frail hold on life, with a shadowy existence?
 Do you weep? Do you laugh? Are you dead? Have you been
 saved from death?
 Are you happy or sad or afraid? Do you not fear the sword?
 Are you in pain or being beaten or suffering? Surely you are
 not enduring rape?
 Which chief satrap's bed are you sharing?
 Which enemy, now declared your master,
 is receiving his wine-bowl from your fingers?
 Or perhaps in his advanced intoxication
 he will strike you with his barbarian fist
 for some unwitting offence? Oh, woe upon our fate!
 Or perhaps Kratylos here will cast his lascivious eye
 on you and envy our marriage?
 Before he succeeds, Chrysilla's jealousy
 will destroy you with a cup of poison.³⁹

39 Niketas Eugenianos, *Drosilla and Charikles* 1.230–46 (Conca), tr. Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels*, 358.

Charikles here echoes the misfortunes that other novelistic heroines have suffered and imagines that Drosilla may suffer the same. Roilos has noted how the lamentations of both Drosilla and Charikles (their *pathētikai ēthopoiiai*, as he refers to them), ‘suggest interesting intertextual affinities of the author with his Byzantine predecessors.’

The allusion of Charikles’ words to this genre motif is further expanded into three main possibilities: Drosilla may be forced by some enemy to serve him wine (1.238–239); her master might strike her (1.240–242); or, finally, Chrysilla, the wife of their Parthian master, may poison her out of jealousy (1.245–246).⁴⁰

Roilos moves on to how these situations might be read as allusions to the novel by Prodrornos, an important model for Eugenianos, and how there are also similar scenes in that by Makrembolites. Importantly, however, ‘Eugeneianos’ narrative does not develop these fears into reality.’⁴¹ While Roilos thus recognizes these features as intertextual and metanarrative, I wish to expand that textual perspective by seeing them as part of cognitive frames along the lines described above. Charikles’ enumeration is extensive and mentions also other experiences typical of this novelistic genre. In his study of the mind of fictional characters and their readers, Alan Palmer highlights that characters ‘create their own narratives, their own perspectives on the storyworld of the novel; and the extent to which their own narratives are consistent with the narratives of the narrator and of readers will obviously vary’.⁴² This explains well what we have observed in the quoted passages from Eugenianos’ novel: how Charikles builds a narrative in his imagination, based on events from ancient and contemporary novels.

It has been noted above that Charikles, in *D&C* 3.347–8, predicts the abduction of Drosilla. This idea appears also in verse 230 of Book One, the difference being that here it is no prediction but a past event. She, like him, has been abducted by the Parthians and is held captive in a cell. Charikles then details a series of experiences that she might suffer during her confinement. The first is to become a sex slave: Τίνος μετέρχη λέκτρον ἀρχισατράπου; (*D&C* 1.237). This is what happens to Rhodanthe with the barbarian Gobryas, who considers himself the owner of her body and (unsuccessfully) tries to force himself on her (*Rhodanthe and Dosikles* 3.150–289). The second is to become a house slave: Ποῖός τις ἐχθρὸς νῦν φανείς σοι δεσπότης / ἐκ δακτύλων σῶν τὸν κρατῆρα λαμβάνει; (*D&C* 1.238–9), a situation experienced by Hysmine who becomes a slave after the separation and shipwreck (*Hysmine and Hysminias* 9.5.3–10.9.3). The third fear expressed by Charikles is that his beloved will be the object of the barbarian chief’s possessive passion: ἢ καὶ Κρατύλος οὗτος ὀφθαλμὸν λίχνον / ἐπεμβαλεῖ σοι (*D&C* 1.243–4). As already mentioned, this situation is experienced by Rhodanthe, as well as

40 Roilos, *Amphoteroglossia*, 107

41 *Ibid.*, 108.

42 A. Palmer, *Fictional Minds* (Lincoln, NE 2004), 121.

by Charikleia, who in the *Aethiopika* becomes the object of Thyamis' passion, incapable as he is of restraining himself when looking at her (*Aethiopika* 1.24). The last danger anticipated by Charikles is that a jealous woman will poison his beloved in order to eliminate her: Πρὸ τοῦ τυχεῖν δὲ τῆς Χρυσίλλας ὁ φθόνος / διαφθερεῖ σκύφῳ σε δηλητηρίου (*D&C* 1.245–6). A similar situation is experienced by Rhodanthe (*Rhodanthe and Dosikles* 8.428–59) and also Charikleia is about to be poisoned but is saved by a maid's mistake (*Aethiopika* 8.7.2).

I have argued that the activation of the cognitive frame is what generates the predictions of Charikles in 3.345–9, and this passage from Book One can be used to support that argument. The imagination of Charikles coincides with the motifs or topoi of the novel genre. In the other novels, the heroes do not display this knowledge in advance but only experience these situations as the plot creates them. Therefore, I argue that Charikles has some knowledge of the literary genre that allows him to make predictions about future events.

Last but not least, I would point out that Charikles' predictions in Book Three are general – that is, they coincide with the primary motifs appearing in almost all the extant works of the genre – whereas those pronounced in Book One are more specific, clearly alluding to the novels of Prodromos and Makrembolites. The temporal structure of *D&C* not only serves the purpose of linking this work to the novels of Heliodorus and Prodromos, but is relevant for the construction of the hero, whose awareness of being part of a novelistic plot becomes greater with the passing of time.

The result of the expectations of Charikles and his audience

I close my analysis with a few words on reception. Seen in a cognitive perspective, the activation of certain frames that we have seen in Charikles is the same that occurs in the mind of the readers. I have set out to show how Charikles has the knowledge that is necessary to recognize similarities between his own story and any other novelistic plot. The audience, in turn, can recognize the common elements between this and other novels since, from the very first lines they notice the generic affiliation and thanks to their previous reading their understanding of the storyworld and the plot are facilitated.⁴³ It is worth noting that the plot of *D&C* departs from many of the commonplaces of the genre. The situation of Drosilla in the captivity of the Parthians is surprising: she does not suffer any of the actions her beloved predicts. She only experiences some of the inner emotional states he mentions, like lamentation and eyes brimming with tears, and she also shares with her beloved her fear of Kratylos being consumed with passion and gazing at her lasciviously (*D&C* 1.289–352), but the action of the barbarians that the hero expects is not triggered.

43 M. E. Segal, 'A cognitive-phenomenological theory of fictional narrative', in J. F. Duchan, G. A. Bruder and L. E. Hewitt (eds), *Deixis in Narrative: a cognitive science perspective* (New York 2009) 61–78 (72).

In the first passage analysed here I noted that the epigrams did not include the information that Charikles turned out to know. We can connect that now with the fact that the only coincidence between Charikles' predictions and the real situations experienced by Drosilla is attached to the physical-emotional and inner sphere, but not to the events. It shows that there is a difference between what we may consider common knowledge about love and tales of love, and the specific knowledge displayed by Charikles which has a close affiliation with the novelistic tradition.

Finally, one should note that the effect generated by the expectations shared by the main character and the audience at the end is not fulfilled. In this sense, *D&C* generates a surprise effect in its audience by not fulfilling the expectations of reworking the anticipated motifs of the genre.⁴⁴ In a genre with stereotypical motifs and sequences of events, such as the Greek novel, Charikles' predictions, placed in the early part of the narrative, emphasize prior reading expectations and are thus expected to be confirmed through the novel as a whole. Here too, I rely on cognitive narratology to argue that the development of the plot generates a surprise effect in the audience, as well as in the hero, given that both share the same expectations. According to Yuan Yuan, such surprise takes place when there is a discordance between what is actually happening and the initial expectations, which depend on the frame activated by the audience (and, in this case, the main character).⁴⁵

Concluding remarks

My analysis of Charikles' words in comparison with scenes from the novelistic tradition indicate that the hero of Eugenianos' novel alone predicts a novelistic plot immediately after falling in love. He clearly has an awareness of the characteristics of the genre and, moreover, a self-awareness as a novelistic character. On the other hand, the narrative structure of the novel, distributing narrative portions that complement the main narrative in the mouths of different characters, merits close attention. The fact that the allusions to other works of the genre are made by the hero and not by the external, heterodiegetic narrator indicates that they are not mere allusions to stereotypical motifs, but must be considered in relation to the conceptualization of the character. The generic awareness that I identify, then, is not only attributable to Eugenianos as belonging to a particular literary circle and a particular context of production, but is expressed by the hero of the novel and thereby indicates a specific knowledge of the genre. I would like to add that since the character of Charikles was constructed as a

44 On unfulfilled expectations as regards violence among male characters in *D&C*, see J. B. Burton 'Abduction and elopement in the Byzantine novel' *Greek, Roman and Bizantine Studies* 41 (2000) 377–409; as regards non-Greek characters, see P. Cortez, 'Innovación en torno al *tópos* anti-bárbaro: la representación del árabe en *Drosila y Caricles*', *Erytheia* 42 (2021) 59–77.

45 Y. Yuan 'Framing surprise, suspense, and curiosity: a cognitive approach to the emotional effects of narrative' *Neohelicon* 45.2 (2018) 517–31.

recipient of ancient and, especially, contemporary novels, then he himself could be redirected to the twelfth century, even though the novel presents a time and space without correlation to the factual world. The introduction of elements proper to the socio-cultural context of production of the novels is not surprising, and has also been recognized in the works of Prodrornos and Makrembolites.⁴⁶

At the beginning of this article, I noted the relevance of considering previous analyses of Kallidemos when investigating the construction of Charikles as a reader of the genre. In light of the analysis performed here, what then is the main difference between Charikles and Kallidemos? And why do we laugh at the one and not at the other, if both of them act as if being *in* one of the novels they read? The answer lies on the one hand in the actantial distribution – that is, in what kinds of character they are and which roles they have to play.⁴⁷ Charikles is still the hero, and the genre demands that he triumphs; Kallidemos, though a mismatched antagonist, indeed is one. More importantly, within the novel, Kallidemos is a source of laughter while Charikles is a source of admiration. Most importantly, the prior information that Charikles has about the novel genre turns out to be reinforced by the stereotypical situations that he experiences – while one might think that he exaggerates the risk of his situation, he certainly does not misinterpret it. The information stored in his memory, thanks to his previous reading, is complemented by the recognition of similarities in his actual experience, and therein lies the basis of his fears.

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46 See Burton, 'Abduction and elopement' on the connections with civil and canon laws; Nilsson 'Romantic love in rhetorical guise', on marriage practices; Roilos 'I grasp, oh, artist, your enigma' on cultural conventions in general.

47 The actantial model was developed by Greimas in 1966; tr. D. McDowell, R. Schleifer and A. Velie, A. J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: an attempt at a method* (Lincoln 1984).