Agôn kainos

Suffering and Salvation in the Ancient Greek Novel

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Abstract: The ancient Greek novels (1st–4th cent. CE) are novels of travel and adventure in which two lovers, both characterized by their exceptional beauty, become entangled in dangerous and distressing situations. In the end, however, according to the conventions of the genre, both are saved from their sufferings. This paper examines the relationship between suffering and salvation in the novel, and asks whether the narrative is informed by religious patterns, including specifically Christian motifs. For this question, religious ordeals and the potential exaltation of suffering are of central importance.

Since the early 20th century, scholarship on the ancient Greek novel, particularly in Germany, has tried time and again to read these works exclusively or in part as religious texts.1 For someone unfamiliar with the novels, this might at first glance appear quite surprising, since it is not self-evident that a love story combined with numerous adventures and travels should provide a strong religious message. Seen retrospectively, the earlier interpretation of the novels as religious writings seems to be strongly related to the allegedly precarious status of this text corpus, which was, for a long time, considered inferior to the 'high' literature of the classical age. Allegorical readings that understood the novels as the sacred texts of mystery cults, as most notably in the approach

On the other hand, religion and gods are undeniably ubiquitous in the novels. Their plots rely heavily on the significant influence of various divinities. Almost every turn of the action is explained by the plotting of a god, a *daimon*, or fate, sometimes benevolent, sometimes begrudging, regardless of whether the respective event occurs by providence or at random.³ Additionally, from an ancient Greek

of Reinhold Merkelbach (1962, 1994), were potentially able to increase the value of the novels as literature and to uncover a deeper meaning behind their plots. This way of reading the novels, however, has been felt to be somewhat narrow and pragmatic, for which reason it has since become obsolete.²

¹ The leading proponents of this approach in the older scholarship are Kerényi 1927 and Merkelbach 1962 and 1994. For a critical overview and evaluation of this line of interpretation, see Beck 1996; Henrichs 2006; Stark 1989; Suarez de la Torre – Pérez Benito 2013; Zeitlin 2008. – The extant corpus of complete (i.e. non-fragmentary) Greek novels comprises five texts, written between the 1st and the 4th century CE: Chariton, *Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesiaca* or *Anthia and Habrocomes*, Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, and the *Ethiopian Stories* (or: *Charicleia and Theagenes*) by Heliodorus.

² But see Beck 1996, 150, who, following Frye 1976, compares the plot of the novels and the experience of initiation into mysteries: 'Journeys out and back, descents to suffering and disintegration, ascents to joy and reintegration, these are the stuff of mysteries, and of novels too.' Zeitlin 2008, 97–98 comments on this analogy, but does not see it as the symptom of a society in crisis longing for salvation (as earlier scholarship has often claimed). Bierl 2007 emphatically bases his interpretation of the novels on the mystery metaphor.

³ The gods as agents in the novels have been examined by Alperowitz 1992; Baier 1999; Bargheer 1999; Weißenberger 1997.

perspective, it might not come as a complete surprise that the love gods, Eros and Aphrodite, also take part in the action of a love story. Both of these observations could be taken as arguments for reading the ancient Greek novels as religious texts in a very general sense. This assumption, however, leads in the wrong direction, as it ignores the fact that the ancient literature of non-Christian cultures could present divine characters and ritual practices as part of its story without having a specifically religious message.

The search for a religious dimension in these novels implies a further central question regarding the relationship between pagan and Christian literature. Interestingly, there is not a single explicit reference to Christian discourse in the novels – even crucifixion, which we tend to associate with a specifically Christian context, was a common form of the death penalty in the centuries in which the novels were written. On the other hand, we can assume that the general mentality depicted in the novels - particularly in the latest novel of the corpus, Heliodorus' Aethiopika – has been influenced at least in part by the dissemination of Christian morality, especially in regards to notions of sexuality and marriage as well as abstinence and virginity.4 The same Christian morality, however, had been anticipated by Stoic philosophy and was developed over the centuries in which the novels were written into a distinct 'care for the self', or souci de soimême, to use the words of Michel Foucault.⁵ The fundamental question, however, is whether this care for the self is dominated in the discourse of the novels by an overarching theological system that demands complete submission to a higher power and an otherworldly realm. In this regard, it is crucial to ask how and when Christian concepts became influential, and which elements of pagan religion provided

an appropriate point of contact for old and new ideas to merge together.

Just how odd the mixture of pagan and supposedly Christian religious plot elements in the novels may appear to the reader can be illustrated by a first example from the novel *Callirhoe* by Chariton, written in the 1st century CE. At the beginning of the eighth and final book of the novel, the goddesses Tyche and Aphrodite and their respective plans concerning the fate of the protagonist are brought into direct opposition to each other. Eventually, it is Aphrodite who gains the upper hand and achieves her goals:

Fortune was now planning a blow as grim as incredible [...] But Aphrodite thought this excessive; by now she was becoming reconciled to Chaereas, though earlier she had been intensely angered at his intemperate jealousy; for, having received from her the fairest of gifts, surpassing even that given to Alexander surnamed Paris, he had repaid her favor with insult. Since Chaereas had now made full amends to Love [Eros] (καλῶς ἀπελογήσατο τῷ Ἐρωτι) by his wanderings from west to east amid countless tribulations, Aphrodite took pity on him, and, as she had originally brought together this handsome pair, so now, having harassed (γυμνάσασα) them over land and sea, she resolved to unite them again.⁶

One of the main questions I would like to examine here is, how suffering and salvation, trials and survival interrelate with one another. The many wanderings and misfortunes endured by the protagonists in the first seven books of Chariton's novel function, from a structural point of view, to extend the narrative time between the moment of the first encounter and the concluding reunion, which is thus delayed

⁴ This context has been discussed thoroughly by Brown 1990a and 1990b; see further Cooper 1996; Elm 1994; Perkins 1995.

⁵ Foucault 1984/1986; on Stoic features in the ethics of the novels see Doulamis 2007.

⁶ Chariton 1995/2004, VIII, 1, 2–3.

and desired throughout the novel by both the couple and the reader.⁷

The passage just quoted creates a second - moral - reason for these sufferings: Chaereas' jealousy, which had been enflamed by the scheming of his rivals at the very beginning of the novel and had provoked him to kick Callirhoe in the stomach. The reasoning which the narrator ascribes to Aphrodite obeys the logic of crime and punishment; the tribulations imposed on Chaereas by Aphrodite are divine retribution for his failure to master his passions. This retribution, however, includes both the idea of juridical procedure and moral testing. The phrase 'since Chaereas had now made full amends to Love' translates the Greek word apologeisthai, which means 'to speak in defence, to defend oneself [sc. in a court of law]'. In order to deliver his defence, Chaereas must prove that he is able to endure so many torments and pains; this is meant at the same time to appease the goddess and to attest his true and strong love for Callirhoe. The word apologeisthai is here used in a metaphorical sense: the tribulations undergone by Chaereas are the equivalent of a defence speech before a court of law and may therefore be regarded as a rhetorical showpiece meant to demonstrate his innocence and virtue. And if we think of the widespread use of the noun apologoi (here in the Plural) for the stories told by Odysseus at the court of Alcinoos, we notice another connotation in Chaereas' apologia: in later literature and rhetoric, apologia commonly refers to miraculous tales and has become a terminus technicus for a novella that primarily provides entertainment.⁸ The adventurous experiences of the protagonist serve both as an apology

⁷ The analogy between adventurous and narrative desire is one of the central research topics of the 'Philology of Adventure' research group; see Schuler forthcoming.

before Eros (it is in this sense that Chaereas 'made full amends to Love [Eros]') and are the stuff of diverting storytelling.

Chaereas' wanderings might be described as oscillating between punishment and proving oneself. This interpretation is supported by a further highly ambivalent term in the passage, namely gymnazein. George Goold translates the word as 'to harass', thus emphasizing the aspects of torment, pain and victimization, but again, this is not a literal translation. The verb gymnazein means firstly 'to exercise, train or practise'. The active form can also have the meaning 'to teach' (in the sense of 'to train or coach someone'). It therefore has a much more 'positive', educational sense than comes through in Goold's translation, which foregrounds a second meaning and implies that too much physical exercise has a negative effect on the body and wears it out.9 If we consider the full meaning of the verb gymnazein, Chaireas' dangerous adventures during his search for Callirhoe can be seen as a (physical) exercise in constancy.

Having now considered the moralistic sense of Chaireas' sufferings, I would like to turn briefly to the first sentence of the novel: 'I, Chariton of Aphrodisias, clerk of the lawyer Athenagoras, am going to relate a love story which took place in Syracuse.' Here, Chariton introduces his novel very simply as a *pathos erôtikon*, literally an 'erotic suffering' or, in a more positive sense, an 'erotic experience'. Goold translates this phrase rather laconically as 'a love story', implying that any 'passion', whether positive or negative, and especially an erotic one, provides excellent material for a literary composition. In ancient literature, love

⁸ See Adler 1994–2001, Vol. I, 3402 and Crusius 1895, 168. The proverbial expression can also indicate an excess of narrative and refer to 'long and tedious

stories': cf. Liddell – Scott – Jones (1843/1940), s.v. *apologos* I.

⁹ This second meaning can also be found in Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus* 586, 592, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 540, and Euripides, Fr. 682. On *gymnasion* as an instance of trial in Achilles Tatius, see Bouffartigue 2001, 132, n. 22.

¹⁰ Chariton 1995/2004, I, 1, 1.

almost never exists without *pathos*. The novelists, however, extend the notion of *pathos* and construct love as attainable only after an ordeal of 'passion' in the etymological sense of 'suffering' (cf. the 'Passion' of Christ).

The first Chariton passage illustrates a tendency that pervades the entire corpus of Greek novels: not only do the many adventures and misfortunes suspend the telos, they also provide opportunities for the protagonists to prove their constancy and faithfulness. In this sense, they may be understood as a kind of 'test'. The causality of suffering and gratification, however, is not always as explicit as in the passage quoted. Very often the novels display the protagonists' incapacity to make any sense out of their fate. From this perspective, suffering results from the irrational scheming of a playful and mocking daimon. In Achilles Tatius' novel, the male protagonist, Clitophon, when his beloved Leucippe has suffered an attack of madness and been bound with ropes to calm her agitation, laments with a certain cynicism that they had become 'a toy of madness':

Is it for this that Fortune saved us from the bandits, so that you could become the toy of madness? Oh, how unlucky we are whenever good luck comes our way! We escaped from our fears at home, to meet with bad luck at sea; we survived the sea; we were saved from the bandits; all because we were being kept for this madness! If your sanity returns (σωφρονήσης), dearest, I for one fear that the god will devise some new calamity for you. Who has suffered more divine persecution than us? We fear even good fortune! But may your sanity only return (σωφρονήσειας) and may you come to yourself again, and Fortune is welcome to devise some new game.11

Leucippe's madness is, of course, emblematic of the protagonists' loss of control, the opposite state from the ideal *sophrosyne*, often

translated as 'endurance', 'chasteness' or 'sanity', as in this passage. The raging of Fate, Tyche or the daimon is here joined with madness as a controlling and personified force which plays with the couple as if they were helpless pieces on a gameboard. Clitophon expresses his despair in this passage not only with the personification of madness, who controls the game, but also by means of a paradox: any stroke of luck means being unlucky at the same time, because good luck is only the precondition of an unlucky turn of events. The Greek phrase makes clear that there is no way to enjoy a happy moment to the full. In this unstable world, happiness always entails unhappiness. The irrationality of this situation, however, leaves no room for rationalizing or a theologically tenable link between suffering and salvation.

Far from embarking on a deliberate quest for suffering or accepting it as an opportunity to demonstrate their virtue, the protagonists time and again are presented as contemplating whether they should resign and kill themselves in order to avoid further pain. As a second example of the idea of a cruel and unjust Fate and of a daimon who mocks the protagonists, I quote a passage from Heliodorus in which a similar lament is voiced. The lament again comes not, as might be expected, from the female partner, but from the male, Theagenes:

How much longer shall we flee from a destiny that pursues us wherever we turn? Let us yield to fate! Let us embrace the current that sweeps us along! What do we have to lose? A life of exile and vagrancy! Heaven's incessant mockery (τὴν ἐπάλληλον τοῦ δαίμονος καθ' ήμῶν πομπείαν)! Can you not see the glee with which it forges the chain of our misfortune? [...] To wage this campaign against us is heaven's sport (πόλεμον), as if our lives were a drama played on stage for its

¹¹ Achilles Tatius 1955/2001, IV, 9, 5–7.

pleasure. So why do we not cut short its tragic plot (ὑποτέμνομεν [...] τὴν τραγικὴν ταύτην ποίησιν) and give ourselves up to those whose desire it is to kill us? Otherwise heaven in its desire to bring our play to a melodramatic conclusion (ὑπέρογκον τὸ τέλος) may compel us to die by our own hands!¹²

The metaphor of a game or theatrical play indicates the control of the dramatist, who takes the place of the gods, and the dependence of the characters, who are mere puppets in the hands of the director. Theagenes, in a metapoetical sense, uses the phrase 'to cut short [the daimon's] tragic plot' (hypotemnein)¹³ and thus implies that suffering the blows of fate and travelling the routes that it provides can be compared to writing a play – or, of course, a novel.

Although the last two quotations are meant to demonstrate that, from the point of view of the protagonists, suffering is *not* seen as meaningful, the metaphor of life as a drama suggests at least the possibility of a well-designed closure composed by an author. By describing this closure as ὑπέρογκον, however, – the word is translated as 'melodramatic' here, but literally means 'immoderate, excessive' or, when applied to style, 'ponderous, verbose' – Heliodorus hints at a certain disproportionality and describes a fatal ending as a violation of a stylistic and poetic ideal.

The novels – and in this point they can be assessed collectively – do not exhibit a straight and dogmatic programme of salvation by *means* of suffering, let alone imbed such a programme in an explicitly theological concept. Even if the protagonists admit that their suffering has been apportioned to them by fate, ¹⁴ they

do not believe that this is the volition of a just and good divinity. The question, however, whether they reach the goal of marriage in the end after – and in spite of – many tribulations and dangers, or precisely because they have endured these incidents, remains a significant one. The repetitive feature of danger and rescue and the motif of survival work towards creating the illusion of causality between the two phases of the narration, although this is almost never explicitly. expressed What the reader internalizes after having read more than one of these novels is that there is no happy ending without the preceding turmoil.

I would now like to discuss three passages that seem to indicate a positive evaluation of suffering. When the boorish husband of Melite, Thersander, falls in love with Leucippe in book 6 of Achilles Tatius and violently wants to possess her, she delivers a courageous speech and defends her virginity by offering her body to the instruments of torture. Achilles Tatius here presents the heroic behaviour of a female protagonist who is no longer the passive victim of misfortune, but instead takes an active role and fights, as the text has it, a 'novel kind of contest' against her morally inferior and brutal enemy. After having enumerated the various types of torture she is prepared to withstand, Leucippe continues with the words: 'You will behold a novel kind of contest (ἀγῶνα [...] καινόν): one woman competes against all your tortures (βασάνους), and conquers them all!' 15 The Greek word $ag\hat{o}n$, 'contest', here recalls the earlier discussion of Chariton's use of apologeisthai and gymnazein. imagines herself as viewed by an audience of spectators, and presents her endurance as a competition from which she will emerge victorious. As soon as suffering becomes part of such a trial and can be rewarded with a prize, it

¹² Heliodorus 1960/1989, V, 6, 2-4.

¹³ On this feature see Hardie 1998, 23, n. 3.

¹⁴ E.g. Xenophon of Ephesus 1926/2009, I, 11, 4: 'but if fate has some misfortune in store ...' (αν δ' ἄρα τι $\tilde{\eta}$ πεπρωμένον παθεῖν).

¹⁵ Achilles Tatius 1995/2001, VI, 21, 1–2. The passage is also discussed in King 2012, 151–157.

becomes a way to stand out and excel by demonstrating moral or physical qualities. This scene, which has been compared to descriptions of Christian martyrs, ¹⁶ establishes a symmetrical relationship between suffering and excellence: as she implies in her speech, the more Thersander tortures her, the more this adds to her future praise:

You do not know it, but your shameless deeds will redound all the more to my praise (ἐγκώμιον). Even if you kill me in your mad passion, someone will say: "Leucippe was a virgin after the Herdsmen, a virgin even after Chaereas, a virgin even after Sosthenes ..." (that will be the moderate version, but the more glorious praise (ἐγκώμιον) will continue as follows). "... a virgin even after Thersander, who was even more lecherous than the bandits: because he could not commit his outrage upon her, he even killed her.¹⁷

Leucippe is ready to die in order to maintain and prove her devotion to her virginity, but at the same time she claims that not only the praise of her deeds will survive, but also her freedom, since the fire will not be hot enough to burn it away:

So, arm yourself, bring on the whips, the wheel, the fire, the knife, and use them on me! Let your counsellor Sosthenes fight by your side! I am unarmed, alone, a woman: freedom is my only weapon ($\kappa\alpha$ ì $\tilde{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tilde{\delta}\pi\lambda$ ov $\tilde{\epsilon}\chi\omega$ $\tilde{\tau}$ $\dot{\eta}\nu$ $\tilde{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\rho(\alpha\nu)$, but it will not be battered by your blows, nor cut up by your knife, nor scorched by your fire. My freedom I will never renounce – not I! Even if

you set it ablaze, you will find the fire is not hot enough. 18

The overall message of the novels is that chastity always triumphs, but the passage just cited further implies that it can also be heightened when threatened by violence. The same correlation between virtue and the endurance of pain which we find here can also be found in Heliodorus. The following passage is, in fact, one of the few places where it is asserted that the protagonists can improve the state of their soul proportionately to the amount of bodily pain suffered – contrary to Bachtin's famous observation that the heroes of the Greek novel do not develop and mature. 19 Theagenes, who, at the palace of Arsake, the sister of the Persian king, has to ward off her courting, is described by Heliodorus as follows:

But on the contrary [Theagenes] was more of a man than ever and rebuffed her advances ($\pi\epsilon i\rho\alpha\varsigma$) with redoubled firmness. Though his body was in torment, his spirit had the strength of virtue ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi\dot{\iota}$) $\sigma\omega\rho\rho\sigma\dot{\nu}\nu\eta$ $\dot{\rho}\omega\nu\nu\dot{\nu}\mu\epsilon\nu\sigma\varsigma$), [...].²⁰

The rest of the passage explains that pain and suffering are even welcomed by Theagenes, because they give him the opportunity to 'display his love and devotion to Charicleia' (εὐνοίας τε καὶ πίστεως could be translated literally as 'benevolence' and 'faith').²¹ This reasoning makes it clear that the mechanism in operation here is one by which the experience of pain and turmoil leads to an increase in value. A second passage from the same book also presents the endurance of hardships as proof of the right sentiment and has the two protagonists compete

 $^{^{16}}$ Compare Leucippe's demand that Sosthenes witness (μαρτύρησον) her actions in VI, 20, 3. On connections between Leucippe's speech to Sosthenes and martyrdom see King 2012, 151–157 (with references to Morales 2004, 201–206 and Goldhill 1995, 117). We find a similar scene of female martyrdom in Heliodorus VIII, 9, 11–15, where Charicleia prepares to be burnt alive on a pyre; on this novel's relation to Christian martyr literature, see Andújar 2013.

¹⁷ Achilles Tatius 1995/2001, VI, 22, 2–3. Bouffartigue (2001, 137) sees Leucippe in this scene as becoming a Stoic.

¹⁸ Achilles Tatius 1995/2001, VI, 22, 4.

¹⁹ Bachtin 1975/1981, 89–90.

²⁰ Heliodorus 1960/1989, VIII, 6, 4.

 $^{^{21}}$ Ibid.

with one another in their punishment, neither wishing to suffer less than the other:

But on the contrary, this [i.e. being shut up in the same cell] proved a great solace to them, and they were glad that they were both enduring identical hardships (τὸ ἐν ὁμοίοις τοῖς πάθεσιν ἐξετάζεσθαι κέρδος ἐνόμιζον), for each felt that to undergo less severe punishment would have been a defeat at the other's hands, a sign of deficiency in love (εἰ **ἔλαττον** αὐτῶν τις κολασθήσεται νενικήσθαι ύπὸ θατέρου καὶ μειονεκτεῖν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν οἰόμενος). Besides they were able to be together, to provide mutual consolation, to inspire in one another the courage to face with resolution and bravery whatever befell them, and not to flinch from the struggle for their chastity and devotion (τοὺς ὑπὲρ σωφροσύνης τε καὶ πίστεως [...] $\dot{\alpha}$ γ $\tilde{\omega}$ ν α ς).²²

The centrality of suffering and the implicit connection between suffering and salvation brings us back to the search for religious elements in the novels. Since the appearance of Karl Kerényi's influential study on the ancient novel in 1927 griechisch-orientalische (Die Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung), scholars have become obsessed with trying to find an underlying religious pattern, whether aretalogy or initiation into the mysteries, in the ancient Greek novels. In his chapters 'Göttlichkeit und Leiden' ('Divinity and Suffering') and 'Rettung vom Kreuze und Verklärung' ('Salvation by the Cross and Transfiguration'), Kerényi asks essentially the same questions that I have examined in this

The historical appreciation of these authors cannot begin until we recognize their intention to secularize, as it were, religious assets, to use cultic material in profane contexts, and to elevate a non-literary narrative form – that of divine sagas, mythical stories and fairy tales, aretalogies, and the stuff of folkloric novels – to high literature.²⁷

The assumption that romance is a secularization of earlier 'sacred' myths also stands at the centre of Northrop Frye's study *The Secular*

paper. He does not he sitate, however, to use religious terminology in explaining the connection between suffering and salvation. He reads the novels as 'Passionsgeschichten' ('Passion narratives'), assesses their language as at times religious and liturgical,²³ and compares the romances excessively with Christian literature, although he rules out the direct influence of Christian genres on the novel and points instead to the martyr acts in the pagan philosophical tradition as the predecessor of the novels and of Christian martyrdoms.²⁴ The passivity of the heroes, which, in his view, dominates the plots, reminds him of the initiate in the mysteries who has to endure ritual flagellations without any resistance.²⁵ The many scenes of pyres and near encounters with death, should, according to Kerényi, be understood as variations on the motif of resurrection.²⁶ But a remark in the final chapter of the book modifies this strong (and, in our eyes, exaggerated) religious reading in a significant way. Kerényi here adds the detail that the religious pattern in the novels has been secularized and the originally cultic material transformed into *profane* plots:

²² Id. VIII, 9, 22. – The 'economics of virginity' have been discussed by von Koppenfels 2006 in connection with Cervantes (see especially 330 and 332). On the economic value of virgins in the ancient novel, see Herrenschmidt 2003. Hirschberger 2010 has also examined virginity as a value in a power game in the Greek novels, as has Perkins 1995, 46–47, who sees chastity as 'the actual embodiment of social control'.

²³ Kerényi 1927, 103.

²⁴ Kerényi 1927, 125–126.

²⁵ Kerényi 1927, 127–129.

²⁶ Kerényi 1927, 138.

²⁷ Kerényi 1927, 230 (translated by Emrys Schlatter). With his emphasis on the features of 'demythologization' and 'profanation', Kerényi differs significantly from Merkelbach, who adheres to an assessment of the novels as mystery texts. For further elaboration on aretalogy as an important link between religious and profane literature in Kerényi's genealogy of the novel, see Henrichs 2006, 64–65.

Scripture. A Study of the Structure of Romance from 1976. In my view, however, even the thesis of secularisation posits an overly 'sacred' background for the Greek novels, inasmuch as secularisation always refers back to and remains bound up with an earlier sacred context which it transforms. The literature which precedes the ancient novel - epic, tragedy, historiography, and New Comedy, amongst others - should not be classed as 'sacred', not even in the case of tragedy, although this genre relies almost exclusively on mythological material.²⁸ In the absence of sacred texts. ancient Greece lacked the background for developing anything like secularization or secular tendencies in its literature.

There is no doubt that the five extant Greek novels praise the virtues of endurance and self-control. At first glance, however, and in the logic of the text itself, this is part of a philosophical or ethical rather than a religious programme. This is suggested by the fact that terms such as 'chastity', 'virginity', 'purity', and 'innocence' in our translations almost always stand for *sôphrosynê* in the original Greek, a word which describes a philosophical or moral ideal.²⁹ At the same time, it is clear that these novels demonstrate a moral in which the heightening of suffering and turmoil creates

an increase in value. This is true even when the protagonists themselves do not recognize their future reward in the course of their sufferings. The literary feature of the happy ending, however, sets the stage for a new ethics which praise suffering as the precondition of salvation and can be transformed easily in a religious – and more specifically, Christian – device.

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²⁸ On the relation between religion and literature in ancient Greece, especially with regard to tragedy, see Gödde 2015 and 2016.

²⁹ On *sophrosyne* in the novels see Kasprzyk 2009.

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