

Akihiko WATANABE
The Other Hero of the Greek Novel

This paper examines secondary male characters in the novels who are as physically and socially privileged as the heroes but differ in displaying marked independence, aggressiveness and resourcefulness. Despite these differences, the secondary elite males are as narratively favored as the heroes and perform pivotal roles in reuniting the heroic couple. The function and treatment of these secondary males manifest the conservatism and support for traditional patriarchy inherent in the genre.

The secondary males are joined to the heroes in friendship but the relationship is not equal. The heroes are perpetually under the debilitating influence of eros and are hardly able to take care of themselves, while their friends provide the necessary physical and mental resources to ensure their survival and eventual reunion with the heroine. The secondary males fulfill the classical and Aristotelian requirements for character-based friendship, while the heroes fail to live up to these ideals.

A number of secondary males are also pederastic *erastai* actively pursuing and jealously guarding their beloved. In this respect they again offer a contrast with the heroes, who are engaged in a more equal and symmetric relationship with the heroines. If the love between the heroic couples represents a new development seen only in this genre, then the relationship between the secondary males and their *eromenoi* is consciously patterned over the older Greek paradigm, as mythical, classical and Hellenistic traditions of pederasty are evoked in the narrative.

Another area in which the secondary male characters differ from the heroes is their interaction with bandits. While the freedom and lives of the heroes are constantly threatened by these criminals, two of the secondary characters, Hippothoos of the *Ephesiaka* and Thyamis of the *Aithiopika*, are themselves arch-bandits. Since they are of elite citizen background, however, their crimes are readily forgiven and they are restored to their former privileged status in the end. Past scholars have criticized the amnesty and have attributed it to the incompetence or insensitivity of the authors, but a better approach may be developed from an understanding of ancient gender ideals. Hippothoos is like Odysseus in surviving against all odds, while Thyamis is likened to Achilles when chasing his arch-enemy around the walls of Memphis. The happy endings attributed to these two characters may be interpreted as another reflection of the classically and patriarchally minded audience's approval of their masculine qualities.