

This paper seeks to establish the concept of sentimentality as a potentially useful tool in studies of the Greek novels. Sentimentality, I argue, is a fundamental component of the novels' artistry and emotional appeal, an element analogous to the tragic in Athenian tragedy. To this end I first propose a definition of this slippery term, then analyze three illustrative scenes, and finally consider the relevance of sentimentality to current scholarly trends.

In opposition to the common view of sentimentality as a flawed variety of pathos, my proposed definition seeks a meaningful distinction between the characteristic emotional appeal of the novels and that of other genres and types. To define sentimentality as the calculated appeal to the tender emotions of an audience (love, pity, and the like, emotions that bind as opposed to the divisive emotions of aggression and conflict) is a promising start, but this definition fails to distinguish sentimentality from tragic pathos. I suggest then that sentimentality in the novels be understood as the development of an audience's affection for a character in conjunction with a calculated appeal to the tender emotions. Whereas tragedy creates an uneasy relationship between audience and character (pity competes with horror, awe overrides affection), sentimental literature instead seeks an unobstructed association of audience with character; it develops in the audience an affectionate attitude akin to friendship.

My three examples, all involving the sentimental conditioning of the reader by means of an internal audience, invite consideration of sentimentality in conjunction or competition with other forms of appeal to an audience: rhetoric, the arousal of admiration, and eroticism. (1) In fragment A of the *Ninus Romance* (P. Berol. 6926) the passionate response of the protagonists' aunts to the rhetorical display of the hero and the emotional turmoil of the heroine anticipates a similarly sentimental response from the audience. At the same time, the opposition between the hero's verbal eloquence and the heroine's silent turmoil questions the nature of the relationship between sentimentality and rhetoric. Can sentimentality be understood as a form of rhetoric, or is sentimentality distinct? (2) The opening of the *Aethiopica* raises the issue of sentimentality with artful misdirection: the bandits through whose eyes the scene is focalized adopt an unmistakably unsentimental attitude toward the protagonists, disregarding their suffering and gathering loot instead. The bandits' complementary error, mistaking Chariclea for a goddess, humorously introduces another form of audience appeal as a potential partner to sentimentality: awe or admiration. (3) At Achilles Tatius 6.7 the sight of Leucippe's tears inspires in the villain Thersander a mixture of desire and compassion; and he responds by displaying his own tear, presenting himself as a sentimental character in an attempt to arouse the compassion and desire of the heroine. Clitophon's elaborate rhetorical description of the scene, a verbal parallel to Thersander's visual display, while not necessarily indicating insincerity, similarly tinges sentimentality with eroticism and artificiality. As elsewhere in this work, humor bordering on parody threatens to disrupt sentimental conventions.

I conclude by surveying the relevance of the concept sentimentality to several scholarly interests: (1) research on the emotions in antiquity, (2) studies of the symmetrical relationship between hero and heroine and studies of gender in the novels, (3) consideration of the genre of the novel and its distinction from other forms of ancient literature, (4) links between the novels and (a) Hellenistic literature and (b) the Second Sophistic, and (5) sentimentality in modern literature.