



BEFORE SEXUALITY

THE CONSTRUCTION OF
EROTIC EXPERIENCE IN THE
ANCIENT GREEK WORLD

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LAYING DOWN THE LAW: THE OVERSIGHT
OF MEN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN
CLASSICAL ATHENS

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FOR "NATURE," READ "CULTURE"

IF SEX were simply a natural fact, we could never write its history. And then one of our favorite modern projects—to describe the development and periodization and dialectical interaction of the sex/gender systems of the varied societies we know—would have to be abandoned.¹ But sex is not, except in a trivial and uninteresting sense, a natural fact. Anthropologists, historians, and other students of culture (rather than of nature) are sharply aware that almost any imaginable configuration of pleasure can be institutionalized as conventional and perceived by its participants as natural. Indeed, what "natural" means in many such contexts is precisely "conventional" and "proper." The word "unnatural" in contexts of human behavior quite regularly means "seriously unconventional," and is used like a Thin Ice sign to mark off the territory where it is dangerous to go. Such warnings may be couched in absolute terms, but all such claims have been eroded by time: like the geological changes in the earth's surface over millennia, the moral landmasses and "natural" boundaries can be shown to have undergone radical shifts.

There certainly was a time when the contrast of nature and convention, of *physis* and *nomos*, as applied to sexual activity and to everything else, was not exploited, a time before that particular contrast was developed as a linguistic or ideological turn. In our records the

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¹ "In any approach that takes as predetermined and universal the categories of sexuality, real history disappears" (Padgug [1979], 5).

contrast seems to be a product of the sophistic enterprise of the fifth century B.C.E.² Before that time there were no doubt other ways of condoning and condemning sexual behavior,³ but the use of "nature" appears not to have been among them. It is important to underline that the contrast of *physis* and *nomos*, of nature and culture, is itself a cultural item, a habit of thought once discovered, promoted, and eventually adopted as a convention. Over time it has become an automatic cliché, a deeply imbedded habit of the sort that is almost (as we say) a second nature such that we can hardly imagine not thinking in those terms.⁴ Although it seems natural to us to discuss sex in terms of nature and "unnature," the "naturalness" of these categories is itself a sort of cultural illusion. Like sexuality, "nature" (as applied to sex) has a history.

But how should we write such a history? It certainly will not do (though it is often done) to latch onto isolated bits of moralizing texts, snip them from the page, and pin them to a drawing board so that they form a "systematic" narrative—Plato to Paul to Philo to Plotinos. Above all, it is a methodological mistake to invest such clippings with a cultural authority derived only from projections into their future. We know what kinds of person possessed cultural authority in a typical assembly of Athenian citizens in Plato's day because we know who is constantly appealed to by those delivering political speeches and courtroom arguments (Lykourgos, *Against Leokrates* 82–110, Aiskhines, *Against Timarkhos* 141–53, and Demosthenes, 19.243–56, are good examples): Homer, Hesiod, Tyrtaios, Solon, Sophokles, and Euripides have such authority, along with various culture-heroes from history. Sokrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the like count for nothing—in this context. Athens was a society in which philosophers were often ignored and, when noticed, were easily represented not as authority figures but as cranks and buffoons.⁵ If we focus our attention not on that eccentric coterie but on

²Sorof (1899), Ehrenberg (1923), Heinemann (1945), Pohlenz (1953), Adkins (1970), Guthrie (1971b), de Romilly (1971), Köster (1974).

³Peisistratos had sex with Megakles' daughter *ou kata nomon* (not in the conventional way), Hdt., 1.61.1; Pindar calls Ixion's intercourse with a cloud who was not his wife "an uncustomary bedding" (*eunai paratropōi*, *Pyth.* 2.35) and advises that one should both lust and concede to another's lust "in due season" (*kata kairon*; fr. 112 Bowra = Ath., 13.601c).

⁴"Nature" and 'culture,' as culturally defined rather than natural concepts, are unstable, historically relative assumptions" (Foley [1981], 147). Kelly-Gadol (1976), Mathieu (1978), MacCormack and Strathern (1980).

⁵Aristophanes prided himself on being an exceptionally witty and intelligent Athenian, but he does not see philosophers as his rivals on this score. Philosophers as buffoons: Ameipsias' *Konnos* had a chorus of "thinkers" or "worriers" (*phrontistai*); Eupolis' *Flatterers* represented the wealthy Kallias and his household of philosophers; Aristophanes, *Clouds*; Epikrates fr. 10 PCC (fr. 11 Kock). Carrière (1979), 62–66; Gailly (1946); Frischer (1982), 55–60.

the citizen body (in its own way an elite in the population of Athens), we get quite a different picture, one in which the debates of philosophers have no discernible impact.⁶

But our critique must go further. Aside from treating philosophical or theoretical texts as if they possessed prophetic weight, we err in a more general way when we reconstruct cultural history simply or primarily in terms of ideas, no matter whose, rather than in terms of the competing variety of social practices.

Plato's spokesman in the *Laws* (835b–842a) toys with the idea of inventing a social order that would conform to "nature" as Greek society supposed it was before Laios invented pederasty. To do so would require a massive restructuring of common belief and practice, placing pederasty on a par with incest so that everyone acquired a horror of it. Plato's legislator confesses his idea to be a pipe-dream. Yet even though that dream, or rather nightmare, came true—and did so in the very terms employed in the *Laws*, with pederasty coming to be stigmatized as "unnatural"—what should stand out about Plato's text is the despair there felt about the impossibility, almost the inconceivability, of the project. It was clearly a thought-experiment on the same order as censoring traditional poetry in the *Republic*, one that went utterly against the grain of the values, practices, and debates of Plato's society. These speculations of Plato are unrepresentative—not the opening move in a new game of moralizing sex—and hence are only obliquely useful for writing the history of sexual mores and practices.

It cannot be said too strongly or too frequently that the selection of book-texts now available to us does not represent ancient society as a whole. The social and editorial conventions within which most public speaking and published writing took place tended to give voice to a select group of adult male citizens and to mute the others—female, adolescent, demotic (working persons with a minimum of leisure), metic (noncitizens). Those conventions are well known and roughly correspond to proprieties still observable in the family of cultures around the Mediterranean basin.⁷

⁶"But in order to understand [*Clouds*] we must make an imaginative effort to adopt an entirely different position, the position of someone to whom all philosophical and scientific speculation, all disinterested intellectual curiosity, is boring and silly." Dover (1968), lli.

⁷The principal systematic work on the Mediterranean area is Davis (1977), though he pays scant attention to questions of gender. His bibliography is supplemented by Gilmore (1982). For Greece there are Friedl (1962); Campbell (1964); Blum and Blum (1965); Blum and Blum (1970); Walcot (1970); Bailey (1971); Schein (1974); du Boulay (1974); Loizos (1975); du Boulay (1976); Dionisopoulos-Maas (1976); Danforth and Tsirias (1982); Clark (1983); Doumanis (1983); Handman (1983); Danforth (1983); Pault (1985); Herzfeld (1986); Dubisch (1986); and Friedl (1986). There are, of course, great differences between the regions, e.g., between herdsmen and farmers (Denich [1974]), and between what each

But our current intellectual interest is not to pay allegiance to the values of that hegemonic group (and thus indirectly to support its equivalent in our own society). We are not trying to “map” a culture and find its system. As Bourdieu has shown for the conflicting genealogies, calendars, and other sorting systems of the Algerian Kabyle, the very act of drawing a map, insofar as it implies an established and unarguable regularity and system, falsifies important uncertainties, smoothes out the wrinkles, and regularizes all matters that are still to be negotiated between actors in the social conglomerate.⁸ Rather, we would like to make some statements about that social conglomerate which manage both to characterize the fundamental conventions or protocols and to show the limits of their application to real lives. This interest, which may be designated anthropological, does not preclude other uses of the same texts. One may still decide to study the history of ideas; what one should not do is misrepresent those ideas as having a weight, a power, a dominance which they did not possess.⁹

By calling the fundamental conventions “protocols,” I mean to emphasize two basic points. On the one hand, like the preliminary definitions and agreements¹⁰ within which the terms of a specific treaty are hammered out, fundamental conventions such as androcentrism, the symbolism of the phallos, and zero-sum competition would not generally have been regarded as negotiable items. A public world that was not androcentric, such as that imagined in Aristophanes’ *Ekklesiastousai*, was by that very fact marked as not a real public world but a fantasy. On the other hand, androcentrism is an utterly conventional arrangement, not a natural order—an arrangement limited in many ways to the public realm of business between competing households. As such, it does not adequately represent the entire social world, as we would describe it, but rather serves to mark off a restricted area of importance (that of public transactions) and to speak of it in absolute terms as if it were the whole.¹¹

observer notices; Handman (1983), 194, is so struck by the violence and deception of Greek social life that she wonders why any Greeks bother to live together.

⁸Bourdieu (1977), 2, 37, 105.

⁹E.g., Guthrie (1971b), who operates on two false premises, that the *nomos/physis* contrast was taken seriously and that philosophers were important.

¹⁰Literally, “glued on first,” from *proto* + *koll-*, at the head of an official document.

¹¹A chief example is the discourse and the significant silences concerning females. As long as the discussion is centered on *gynaikes* (citizen-wives), there is a large interference in the data from the speakers’ sense of propriety: even to mention the name of a citizen-wife in the company of men was a shame and an insult, implying an intrusion into another man’s symbolic privacy: Schaps (1977); Sommerstein (1980); Gould (1980), 45; Bremmer (1981); Skinner (1987). The busyness of metic women, by contrast, can be discussed without danger of insulting anyone but the woman herself: Zobia hid Aristogeiton from the police, gave him money, was beaten for her trouble, and then, “typical meddling woman, she

If it is indeed the case that the nature/culture contrast, as it applies to sex, was not exploited before the sophistic movement of the fifth century B.C.E., it is also the case that, when it *was* exploited, it did not possess the same valence that it does today. The terms “natural” and “unnatural,” in other words, did not function (as they have since the Enlightenment) as equivalents of “normal” and “abnormal,” “healthy” and “diseased,” “ordinary” and “monstrous.” A glance at some of the contexts in which the contrast between nature and culture was applied clearly reveals that the content assigned to “natural” behavior in the ancient world is surprisingly different from modern conceptions, and further, that its mode and range of application (that is, who counts as its proper subjects) are far from universal.

If we juxtapose the passage from the *Laws*, quoted earlier, which seems an uncanny anticipation of modern condemnations of “unnatural” sex, to some passages from other texts (less favored by historians of ideas), a new picture starts to emerge. Seneca, for example, inveighing against luxury in *Epistle* 122.7–8, declares *contra naturam* not only banquets after sunset (requiring wakefulness at night and sleep in the daytime) but also hot baths and potted plants. When he goes on to treat sex between men in the same passage, he makes it clear that what he condemns is either men dressing in clothing appropriate to women or making themselves look youthful—both of which suggest to Seneca the wish to serve as the sexual object of other men.¹² “Contrary to nature” means to Seneca not “outside the order of the cosmos” but “unwilling to conform to the simplicity of unadorned life.” This Stoic view, though articulated as universal, is obviously directed at a very small and wealthy elite—at those who can afford the sort of luxuries Seneca wants “all mankind” to do without.

The worldview that frames Seneca’s diatribe against luxury is nicely drawn by Dio Chrysostom in his idealized depiction of Euboian hillbillies (*Oratio* 7), two families who live directly from their own farming and hunting, pay no taxes, buy no goods, and are unfamiliar with the normal amenities of urban life. It would be better if barber shops and house paint were forbidden altogether (117–18) so that people

went around to her acquaintances and complained of what he had done.” ([Dem.], 25.57: Zobia is not called *gynē* but *hē anthrōpos* and *gynaion*.) Aristotle appears to notice the de facto independence of Athenian wives in managing their households at *EN* 1160b33–34: “The husband rules concerning the things which a husband should rule; what is appropriate for a wife he assigns to her.” Lacey (1968), 159–61, 167–69; Aiskhines refers to widows controlling their property as a regular, though not praiseworthy, state of affairs (1.170–71). Schaps (1979), Ste. Croix (1970).

¹²That is not what Plato was calling unnatural in the *Laws*. What is weird about that passage is its condemnation of the desire of the typical adult boy-lover as unnatural.

would not have their minds turned from a simple life in accordance with nature (103).¹³ Dio contrasts this simple life with city life, where brothels flourish, adultery is tolerated, the wealthy seduce one another in private, and men, tired of their easy conquests of women, corrupt boys contrary to nature (134–36, 149). The content given to this use of “nature” has more to do with the general theme of expenditure and loss, of thrifty and prudent behavior in a scarcity society, than it does with modern conceptions of universal law based on the paradigms of natural science.

In what follows, I try to assess, from various angles, the power of moral conventions as they operated in Athens of the fourth century B.C.E. Simply knowing the protocols does not tell us how people behaved. We must attempt to see through and beyond social prescriptions to that usually unspoken fund of knowledge about their application, their bending, their observance “in the breach,” and the hidden agendas they sometimes concealed. There is a relatively dense record of literary and social data for the Athenian *polis* in the years 430–330 B.C.E., and its sexual prescriptions have been read to good effect against the honor/shame system of morality in a scarcity economy by Gouldner (1965), though he is not good on things sexual, by Dover (1974), and by Foucault (1985). I propose to take a closer look at the social operations by which deviance was articulated, inspected, and managed in that community during the period when the *nomos/physis* contrast was supposedly well-established, paying attention not to the statements of its intellectuals but to the everyday functioning of the community, and in particular to its practices of “self-control” (or control of selves).

I begin with the cultural images of right and wrong manhood, and try to illustrate how they are at times loose-fitting hand-me-downs that do not reveal the shape of individual behavior. The fundamental protocols are personified, positively, in the figure of the hoplite (citizen-soldier, wealthy enough to provide himself with a set of armor) and, negatively, in the *kinaidos*. The latter constitutes a powerful image—whether for serious reproach or humor—of a socially and sexually deviant male. The meaning of the term will be explored below. It is important at this juncture, however, to distinguish the meaning of *kinaidos* from that of “homosexual” in modern parlance. Scholars of recent sex/gender history have asserted that premodern systems classified not persons but acts, and that “the homosexual” as a person-category is a recent invention.¹⁴ The

¹³Dio’s “nature” has also laid down rules about sex: the nonreproductive is unnatural (134–36, 149).

¹⁴McIntosh (1968), Weeks (1977); there is a fuller bibliography in Halperin (1989b), esp. nn. 21, 52.

kinaidos, to be sure, is not a “homosexual,” but neither is he just an ordinary guy who now and then decides to commit a *kinaidic* act. The conception of a *kinaidos* was of a man socially deviant in his entire being, whose deviance was principally observable in behavior that flagrantly violated or contravened the dominant social definition of masculinity. (Of course, it is quite another question whether, outside the amusing or vituperative arenas of discourse where the image of the *kinaidos* is found, there actually were any real-life *kinaidoi*.)

Though neither ideal type is frequently or obsessively spoken about in fourth-century prose, both are there, like training wheels on a bicycle, whenever a man begins to lose his proper balance. While the hoplite warrior is the ideal self to which every well-to-do citizen looks, the *kinaidos*, mentioned only with laughter or indignation, is the unreal, but dreaded, antitype behind every man’s back.

I then go on to ask how that image was brought to bear on individuals. Both public scrutiny by the state and privately initiated lawsuits could charge a male citizen with fundamental derelictions of social responsibility. The laws having to do with sexual morality were framed, of course, not in terms of sexual deviance, which was never as such actionable in court, but in terms of prostitution. The crime was to have confused incompatible categories—those of male citizen and male prostitute (Halperin [1989a]). The *kinaidos* is a scare-image standing behind the more concrete charges of shaming one’s integrity as a male citizen by hiring out one’s body to another man’s use. The three components of the accusation are promiscuity, payment, and passivity to another man’s penetration.

Yet the evidence suggests that such surveillance and punitive actions were only employed by a very restricted class of players in the high-stakes game of policy management, where they were used as a weapon to knock opponents out of the game. The rules, that is, and the enforcement procedures against social deviants were a moral fiction normally held in abeyance and only put into operation as a political strategy within a relatively tiny—though conspicuous—fraction of the social body.

In the final section I turn to the popular languages of moral evaluation, those of comedy and public speaking rather than that of philosophy. In these domains there was a rich appreciation of individual characteristics—personal styles, predilections, and bents—and here *physis* indicates not a universal norm but the personal difference. Even in a text of specialized scientific discourse which analyzes *kinaidoi* as having an “unnatural” constitution, a contradictory analysis is found alongside it, maintaining that *kinaidoi* are not so because their nature is unnatural but because habit and its attendant pleasures are more powerful than nature—are, in fact, a kind of second nature.

HOPLITES VS. KINAIDOI

I am astonished, Demosthenes, that you dare to criticize Philōn—in the presence of the most reputable citizens of Athens, who have assembled here to pass judgment on the city's policy and who are now noting and weighing our lives rather than our rhetoric. Which do you think they would rather pray to have—ten thousand hoplites like Philōn, with bodies as well-made as his and souls so disciplined, or thirty thousand *kinaidoi* exactly like you? (Aiskhines, 2.150–51)

Aiskhines' alternatives—hoplites sound in mind and body or *kinaidoi* like you, Demosthenes—are not very common expressions in Athenian public speaking, but they pinpoint the boundaries within which ordinary public discourse and behavior always took place. The structure of such discourse is that typical polarization between extreme opposites (Lloyd [1966]) which found its social correlative in ancient Athens in zero-sum competition. The cultural understanding of competition was not simply that winners gained rewards and honor, but that losers were stigmatized with shame and penalties in proportionate amounts, or, to put it another way, winners won at the direct expense of losers.¹⁵ The logic of a zero-sum calculus underlies many of the most characteristic predicates and formulae that were applied to issues of sex and gender. Thus, not to display bravery (*andreia*, literally “manliness”) lays a man open to symbolic demotion from the ranks of the brave and manly to the opposite class of women.¹⁶

The heft and weight of a problematic term like *kinaidos* cannot be estimated in isolation; it has to be measured within the system of cultural images used in public discussions about the proper behavior of citizen-soldiers. Each time there was an official gathering of the men who held citizen rights in Athens, whether in a full assembly of the entire body (held four times a month, one of which was principal) or in smaller representative groups such as juries, the self-definition of the community as a vigorous elite ran close to the surface.¹⁷ In calling that group an elite, I mean to emphasize that a majority of the population of Attika did not have the rights to attend the Assembly, sit on juries, or be elected to office.¹⁸

¹⁵Gouldner (1965, 45–55); an explicit statement of the “zero-sum” rule is found in the sophistic extract known as the *Anonymus Iamblichii* in *VS* (vol. 2, 400): “People do not find it pleasant to give honor [*timān*] to someone else, for they suppose that they themselves are being deprived of something.” Plato, *Laws* 1.626b is close: “All the goods of the vanquished become the victors’.”

¹⁶Plato, *Timaios* 90e: cowardly males are reincarnated as women. Dover (1974), 95–102.

¹⁷Dover (1974), 41, 160–67.

¹⁸Population figures are at best estimates of the reliability of ancient estimates, them-

It was a “vigorous” elite in that the proper citizen-soldier saw himself as a householder defending the interests of the dependents in his *oikos* (household) and ready to face danger in person by standing in the ranks of a phalanx and meeting the external enemy in honorable, rule-bound combat, a kind of corporate-duel between cities, on the plains of Greece.¹⁹ All citizens were soldiers, and from the ages of eighteen to sixty they were subject to military service on a rotating basis during each summer, though the twenty- to forty-year-olds were called before the older and the younger.²⁰ For all that the military reality was more complex, with heavy dependence on the navy and the strategic use of mercenaries, the community image consistently evoked in public speaking was that of the hoplite-citizen.²¹ All the private discipline exercised by the household administrator over his body, his luxuries, and his dependents, so well traced by Foucault (1985), was framed and justified by this public discourse on the necessary manliness of each responsible, duty-sharing citizen.

Citizen-soldiers must support each other when fighting a common enemy, but within the *polis* the competition between citizens, particularly the enterprising or the conspicuous or the young, is fierce enough to require rules about the physical person. The speaker of Demosthenes, 22 makes it clear that, according to the laws, the body of a citizen is sacrosanct: in certain situations his property may be confiscated, but his physical person may in no case be touched (Dem., 22.53–55, cf. Dem., 21.178, 21.180). Inviolability of the person is a marker separating slaves from citizens: slaves may be manhandled in any way; citizens are literally untouchable. To put your hand on a citizen's body is to insult him profoundly, implying that he is a social inferior.²² Included in the body

selfes contradictory. The citizen body (ballpark figures: 30,000–40,000 in the fifth century B.C.E., 21,000 in the later fourth century B.C.E.) was roughly matched by their wives, outnumbered both by their children and by their other statutory subordinates (prostitutes, domestic and industrial slaves), and, when we can measure it in 316, was just double that of resident aliens. Gomme (1927); Gomme (1933); Jones (1957), 161–80; Gomme (1959); Meiggs (1964); Ruschenbusch (1979), 137–40; Rhodes (1980); Duncan-Jones (1980); Hansen (1981); Ruschenbusch (1981a, 1981b); Patterson (1981), 40–81; Hansen (1986).

¹⁹Pritchett (1974), chaps. 7–9.

²⁰Andrewes (1981).

²¹Ridley (1979). Thouk., 8.97.1–2, regards the rule of an unremunerated hoplite class as ideal; similarly [Arist.], *Ath. Pol.* 33.2. Navy service, as corporate and not personally confrontative, did not have the same glory; cf. the contemptuous analysis of [Xen.], *Ath. Pol.* 1.2: boatswains and deckhands have more political power in Athens than “the hoplites and the noble and the good.” The general Philokles sponsored a law that prisoners of war should have their right thumbs cut off “so that they could not wield a spear, though they could still ply an oar” (Plut., *Lys.* 9.5).

²²It is not the gesture itself but the social meaning of the gesture that counts: “If a man has struck someone, it does not necessarily imply that he has insulted [*hubrisen*] him, but

language of social position is sexual dominance, and physical contact with a citizen that expressed a "master's" touch was a deadly serious gesture. Enslavement of freeborn women and youths, which was punishable by death, implied the possibility of sexual aggression as one component of social dominance.²³

In Athens, according to one editorializing observer ([Xen.], *Ath. Pol.* 1.10), free persons, slaves, and metics dressed so much alike that in a crowd one might not be able to tell them apart, which made it difficult for citizens properly to chastise insolent slaves who did not show due deference on the street.²⁴ The fact that slave/free or citizen/metic status was less visible in Athens as compared to other Greek *poleis* meant that such status distinctions had to depend all the more heavily on invisible markers: the privileged citizen class was defined as a group by their untouchability as persons who could throw their weight around to intimidate metics and slaves: see Aiskhines, 1.43, and Demosthenes, 25.57 (citizens bullying metics), and Aiskhines, 1.195 (let Athenians who are boy-hunters turn their attention to foreigners and metics, so that citizen-boys will not be injured by being declassed as prostitutes).

Of course, insulting behavior between citizens occurred aplenty, particularly in the conspicuous echelons of the ambitious and well-to-do. Inviolability of the person may have been the rule; violence was not infrequently the practice. Lysias, 3, documents two street fights, with stone-throwing and broken heads,²⁵ between rival lovers of a Plataian boy.²⁶ The regulations for social clubs (*eranoi*) contain long passages

only if he has done it for a motive such as dishonoring [*atimasai*] that man or gratifying himself" (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.13.1374a13–15). On physical abuse as a marker of status, see Golden (1985), 101ff. (As Professor Golden reminds me, a citizen can be guilty of *hubris* against a slave: Aiskhines, 1.17.)

²³Three cases are cited in Deinarkhos, 1.23, all of which may involve sexual aggression of citizen over slaves-who-are-really-free: a youth kept in a mill, a woman from Rhodes who played the lyre at the Eleusinia and was "disgraced" (*hubrisen* = "raped"), a girl from Olynthos put into a brothel.

²⁴In the seriously democratic city, according to a Platonic fantasy, not only do slaves and women behave with insolence as if they were the equals of free men, but "the horses and jackasses walk along the streets freely and proudly, bumping into people who don't get out of their way" (*Rep.* 8.563b–c).

²⁵"This colourful speech [Dem., 54] . . . brings out the violence that is a neglected feature of Athenian life" (Osborne [1985], 50).

²⁶The youth is Plataian, and probably free (Bushala [1968]), but does not have Athenian citizenship since he can be tortured to give evidence (33). Rivalry for boys was so common an occasion for fighting to break out (e.g., Xen., *Anab.* 5.8.4) that one tradition was able to maintain that Oidipous killed Laios because both of them were in love with the same boy, Khryssippos (Scholiast on Euripides, *Phoinissai* 66). On *hubris* (insolent behavior which dishonors another), see MacDowell (1976), Fisher (1976, 1979).

dealing with fights, assaults, and disturbances.²⁷ Perhaps the most revealing such incident left in the records is a grudge fight in the agora one evening in which Konon and his sons not only knocked down their opponent but held him upside down in a mud puddle while Konon put his hands under his armpits, flapped his arms like a victorious rooster in a cockfight, and crowed (Dem., 54.7–9).²⁸ It would be wrong to over-emphasize the lines of tension among citizens. Daily life in Athens for the average citizen was surely not a perpetual, near-violent squabble. But for the conspicuously wealthy (the speakers of Lysias, 3, and Demosthenes, 54, belong to the liturgical class)²⁹ and for young men (Konon's sons were the principal actors)—i.e., those for whom honor is a leading concern—life could certainly be lived by hair-trigger rules of contentiousness.

The enemy was also within. Plato's *Laws* opens with a general characterization of social life in terms of zero-sum competition: "according to nature" (*kata physin*) there is a perpetual war between equivalent units at all levels—city versus city, village versus village, household versus household, male versus male, and person versus self (625e–626e). That last item is not a Platonic peculiarity but a faithful reflection of the common moral language which praised a good man as "stronger than himself" (*kreittōn heautou*), that is, able to manage³⁰ and control his various appetites, and condemned a bad man as "weaker than himself" (*hēttōn heautou*).³¹ The temptations in question are food, drink, sex, and sleep. At all levels of practical morality and advice-giving we find the undisciplined person described as someone mastered or conquered by something over which he should exert control, usually conceived or conceivable as part of himself. Whether choosing a general to save the city (Xen., *Mem.* 1.5.1) or a bailiff to manage the farm (Xen., *Econ.* 12.13), one wants a man who is the honorable master of his pleasures,

²⁷I.G. n² 1368, 1369; Raubitschek (1981).

²⁸Cockfighting took place in taverns and gambling shops (Aiskhines, 1.53) and is depicted on either side of the central throne in the theater of Dionysos, a sign that theatrical performances were organized as a competition according to the same canons of manliness that are found in public speaking (Winkler [1985], Zeitlin [1985]). Cockfighting was a supremely clear representation of zero-sum competition: "You'll never see a cock that is a *kinaidos*," said an unidentified comic playwright (Com. adesp., 1213 Kock); Aristophanes, *Birds* 70–71; Plato, *Laws* 7.789b–c; Aelian, *VH* 2.28; Lucian, *Anakharsis* 37. Schneider (1910), Hoffmann (1974).

²⁹Lys., 3.20, 47; Dem., 54.44. For the significance of this criterion, see Davies (1981).

³⁰*Prohlistasthai* + genitive ("manage") was not a common locution for these concerns, though it is found in the classical period (Hdt., 2.173; Xen., *Mem.* 3.2). Plutarch happens to use it in a context appropriate to our subject: "Verres had an adolescent son who seemed not to be managing his youthful beauty in a manner befitting a free person. When Verres criticized Cicero for softness [*malakia*], he replied 'It is your sons at home who should be criticized.'" *Life of Cicero* 7.864c.

³¹Foucault (1985), 63–77.

not (by the logic of zero-sum competition) the shameful slave of them (*tais hēdonais douleuōn aiskhrōs*, Xen., *Mem.* 1.5.5). The polarized expressions strike us as odd, particularly when the transformation from self-mastery to lust-slavery is said to be instantaneous: “‘Miserable wretch,’ said Sokrates, ‘are you reckoning what will happen to you if you kiss a beautiful youth: instantly [*autika mala*] to be a slave instead of a free person . . . ?’” (Xen., *Mem.* 1.3.11).

Such cautionary attention to behavior is premised on the beliefs that male life is warfare, that masculinity is a duty and a hard-won achievement, and that the temptation to desert one’s side is very great. This odd belief in the reversibility of the male person, always in peril of slipping into the servile or the feminine, has been noted by Greenblatt (1986), who observes that for the ancient world the two sexes are not simply opposite but stand at poles of a continuum which can be traversed. Thus, “woman” is not only the opposite of a man; she is also a potentially threatening “internal émigré” of masculine identity. The contrast between hoplite and *kinaidos* is a contrast between manly male and womanly male, and therefore rests on a more fundamental polarity between men and women. The cultural polarity between the genders is made internal to one gender, creating a set of infra-masculine polarities between hoplites and *kinaidoi*.

One can find rare instances in which the class of women is similarly divided into the feminine and the manly. Aristotle refers to dark-skinned women as masculine and light-skinned women as feminine (Aristotle, *GA* 728a3–5). The author of the Hippocratic treatise on *Diseases of Women* notes that the healthiest sort of woman is masculine, but less given over to maternity and conception (1.6). But the vast preponderance of anxious attention and thought in our surviving texts was directed to men. One axis along which masculinity could be measured was hardness/softness. “‘Tell me, Kharmides, if a man is capable of winning a crown at contests and thus being honored in his own person and making his fatherland more renowned in Greece but does not wish to compete, what kind of person do you think this man would be?’ ‘Obviously a soft [*malakos*] and cowardly one’” (Xen., *Mem.* 3.7.1).³²

³²Nature itself, it could be claimed, had segregated the sexes by physical and psychological toughness: *malakōteron gar to ēthos esti to tōn thēleion*, “the female character (in all species, as a rule) is softer” (Aristotle, *HA* 9.1.608a25); Saïd (1983). The zero-sum logic here described seems to be a common denominator in the gender clichés of the entire family of Mediterranean cultures. It is attested just as vividly in Roman texts: a cook who has just been beaten in Plautus’ *Aulularia* complains that he is “softer than a *cinaedus*” (422); the verb which expresses the transformation of Ovid’s Hermaphroditos into a woman is *mollescere* (*Met.* 4.386). That is why there is no word for (anatomical) sex in Greek. “The notion of sex never gets formalized as a functional identity of male and female but is expressed solely through the representation of asymmetry and of complementarity between male and

In daily life the contrast of hard men and soft women was more often assumed than expressed; hence we find most of our proof texts in the more speculative and editorial forms of composition, including comedy.³³ For instance, the appropriate social relations between the hard and the soft are illustrated on a unique red-figure oinochoe of 465–460 B.C.E., which shows a young, short-bearded Greek man, wearing only a cape and holding his erect penis in his right hand, approaching a Persian soldier in full uniform who is bending over away from the Greek and looks out at the viewer with his hands raised in horror. The inscription identifies the about-to-be-bugged soldier as a representative of the losing side in the Athenian victory over the Persians at the battle of Eurymedon (465 B.C.E.): “I am Eurymedon, I am stationed bending forward.”³⁴ Outside of such cartoons, the hard-male-hoplite/soft-female-*kinaidos* polarity does not frequently surface in our extant documents, but the pressure it could exert on reality was surely felt when Peisistratos’ son Thessalos, having failed to win Harmodios’ special friendship, insulted him as *malakos*.³⁵

But, having described this broadly shared self-image of the righteous citizen as hoplite rather than *kinaidos*, we have only assembled prescriptive utterances, utterances which did not have the force of law. How can we specify their force? When Foucault ([1985], 12) announces that he will deal with prescriptive texts, he means “as opposed to theoretical ones,” but we need to take a further step to comprehend the limits of such prescriptive texts as public fictions. Beyond such images and recommendations we need to know whether they were obeyed like homicide laws (almost universally), like traffic regulations (when the police are watching), or like Vatican pronouncements (in Italy, not at all). So let us now notice some ways in which they might be circumvented, ignored, or teased.

First, a pair of snapshots from Plato’s *Republic*. The opening gives us Sokrates walking home from Peiraios. A group of friends come up be-

female,” female being merely the opposite to the male. Sex as an abstract, homogeneous, unified notion, something *common* to each of the two genders, has no place in this asymmetrical system. See Manuli (1983), 201 n. 1.

³³The *agōn* of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* contrasts the manly discipline of a well-trained soldier’s body with the physical laxness of sophists. At *Clouds* 529 the poet refers to his *Banqueters* (produced 427 B.C.E.), which featured two young men in a similar opposition, called *ho sōphrōn* (responsible, mature, and self-controlled) and *ho katapugōn* (lax of body, pleasure-bent, and anally receptive). From comedy, or perhaps some other byway of heroic narrative, comes the story that Philoktetes suffered the “female disease” after killing Paris: he left for shame and founded a city called *Malakia* (Softness). Schol. *Thouk.*, 1.12.

³⁴Schauenberg (1975).

³⁵[Arist.], *Ath. Pol.* 18.2; Lavelle (1986).

hind him and ask him to stay the night at their house. But a close look at the style and tone in which the invitation is delivered shows that we are not dealing with simple hospitality, but with a mock-kidnapping. First, a slave catches up with Sokrates and makes him wait for Polemarkhos and his friends to saunter along. When Polemarkhos arrives, he says, "You see how many men I have with me? You have to choose between showing yourself stronger than we are [*toutōn kreittous*] or else remaining here." Sokrates plays along with the joke, saying meekly, "But isn't there another option? I might persuade you to let us go." "How could you persuade us if we chose not to listen?"

In a culture where issues of strength are continuously at stake, the threat of violence does not lie very far beneath the surface. But the interesting fact is that Polemarkhos is playing, not uttering a real threat. At least among intimates a certain skating near thin ice is not only possible but likely, for it is a way of sharing the pressure of constraints. Thus it is possible for Sokrates, among friends, to allude to what was most unspeakable for any man, namely, softness (*malthakia*). In face of a very difficult argument, Sokrates begs to be allowed to relax, to fantasize a bit about his desires as men do when they're on holiday or just walking alone along the road. It is reprehensible, of course, but Sokrates says *malthakizomai* ("I succumb to this softness," 458b). Again, it is only a playful touch to the argument, but significant for all that.

As meetings of friends and the private symposium were occasions at which men might play and tease each other about the rules of decorum, so the City Dionysia was in some respects like a symposium for the entire *polis*. Although we do find in the comedies of that festival some grumpy criticism of contemporary youth and their effeminate art forms as degenerations from the military rigor of the Good Old Days, such enunciations are amusing rather than editorially serious. At least, they are no more serious than an equally typical gag in which the actual members of the audience are surveyed and declared to be *euryprōktoi* (literally, "wide-anused") to the last man (*Clouds* 1083–1104).³⁶ In assessing the image of personal discipline held up for themselves by Athenian citizens, we should never underestimate the home truth that "most men enjoy joking around and teasing more than is proper."³⁷ The City Dionysia

³⁶To spell out the implications, *kinaidoi* were automatically assumed, according to the protocols that polarized penetrators and penetrated, to desire to be penetrated by other men, which assimilates them to the feminine role.

³⁷Aristotle, *EN* 4.8.1128a13–14. In an academic study of proper behavior, we should never forget the obvious fact that, as Aristotle reminds us, serious things are not pleasant, unless one is accustomed to them, whereas jokes and naps and carefree behavior are pleasant (*Rhet.* 1.11.1370a12–16). One man who had it both ways was Autolykos, a dignified member of the Areopagos, who in speaking to the Assembly used some uproarious double

was surely not the only occasion on which soldiers grumbled about going to the field (*Peace* 1127–90) or entertained the fantasy of peace for one's own *oikos* while the generals went on patrol and came back battered (*Akharnians* 1071–1234).

Since I have suggested that men could adopt an insouciant attitude to the ideology of self-mastery, let me also underscore the real horror that could be felt, especially in competitive contexts, at the possibility of being assimilated to *kinaidoi*. The scene is in Plato's *Gorgias* (494c–e). Kallikles has urged that the good life is one in which a man regards his desires as all-important and does not try to check them. Sokrates refutes him with an argument about itches. "Well said, my good friend; now go on as you began and see that you don't give in to shame. I too will have to face down my shame. Now if a man felt very itchy and had unlimited opportunities for scratching himself, happiness for him would be a life of perpetually scratching his itches, yes?" "You're ridiculous, Sokrates." "Well, I managed to shame Polos and Gorgias, but don't you give in to shame. Be a real man and give me your answer." "O.K., I admit that the scratching man would have a pleasant life." "And if it's pleasant, it's also happy?" "Yes." "Now if he were to scratch only his head—do I have to take the questions any further? You see what your answers will be, Kallikles, when I lead you along the entire series that starts here? The end point to which such questions are directed, the life of the *kinaidoi*, isn't that a terrible and shameful and awful thing? Or would you dare to say that such people are happy when they have unlimited access to what they want?" "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Sokrates, taking the argument in that direction?" "Such people," "the life of the *kinaidoi*"—the references are quite definite, quite well-defined in their minds, and become even more so when we hear Kallikles' horror within the Athenian framework of rigorous body-obsession I outlined. Sokrates and Kallikles know what they are talking about and they do not want to talk about it.³⁸

We are clearly in a different realm from the romantic pursuit of young men in their teens by young men in their twenties known as paederasty, an activity well illustrated on Athenian vases of the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.E. and portrayed in Plato's dialogues as an experience

entendres but gravely pretended not to notice his own jokes—or else he was so virtuous that he did it innocently and, like Margaret Dumont, could not figure out what was funny (Aiskhines, 1.81–83).

³⁸"I have heard that this man practiced misdeeds and insolence on the body of Timarkhos of such a kind that—by Olympian Zeus—I would not dare to mention them to you. The acts that this man was not ashamed to do in very fact—I could not bear to live if I uttered them clearly before you" (Aiskhines, 1.55).

sometimes heartbreaking,³⁹ sometimes delicious, but always of general interest and approval. In pederasty, as Dover, Golden, and Foucault have carefully demonstrated, a variety of conventions combined to protect the junior partner from the stigma of effeminacy, of being a *kinaidos*. Kallikles' *ho tōn kinaidōn bios* ("the life of the *kinaidoi*") is not just a joke or a possibility without reality for him; it is a way of life that he and Sokrates can imagine being led in fourth-century Athens, and their imagination is horrified at the prospect.

The protocols explain why. Since sexual activity is symbolic of (or constructed as) zero-sum competition and the relentless conjunction of winners with losers, the *kinaidos* is a man who desires to lose. Contrary to all social injunctions prescribing the necessity of men to exercise their desires in a way that shows mastery over self and others, the *kinaidos* simply and directly desires to be mastered. Women, too, in this ideology, are turned on by losing, a perception which is at the core of Greek misogyny.⁴⁰ Women are cast as the necessary supporting players in that social script. The quite different fact of *male* desire to be penetrated simply could not be accommodated as a legitimate actor's role in the public sexual categories.⁴¹ Note that Sokrates' argument to Kallikles implies that even a man could find being a *kinaidos* pleasurable if he were to seek pleasure alone and weigh no other consideration. In other words, male pleasure at penetration is a social, but not a sexual, impossibility. Honor, not *erōs*, is offended.

Anecdotes of this sort add an elusive holographic texture to our sense of how some Athenians lived with the boundary marker of *kinaidia*. But as long as we stay in the universe of cultural images, that is, vituperative or amusing talk, we still cannot say very much about the prevalence of the horror or the humor so far documented. Instead we must turn to the procedures for social enforcement. What was the relation between this image of self-mastery and the real-life behavior of citizens in public forums? When was that corporate fiction brought to bear on individuals whether by the state or by other individuals or by themselves?

ANUS-SURVEILLANCE

Kleon: I put a stop to the fornicatees, erasing Gryttos from the rolls.

Sausage-Seller: Well, isn't that amazing! You practiced anus-surveillance

³⁹Aristotle describes the bittersweet feeling of falling in love and thinking about an absent boyfriend: *Rhet.* 1.11.1307b15–29; *EN* 8.3.1156a31–b6.

⁴⁰See the essay by Halperin in this volume, p. 271.

⁴¹Halfway between humor and horror we should place the use of the extended middle finger, known as *katapugōn* (*kinaidos*). Diog. Laert., 6.34, and *Priapea* 56.6 illustrate the gesture; Pollux, 2.184, 6.126, records the name. Sittl (1890), 101–2; Courtney (1980), 45.

and put a stop to the fornicatees! Truth is, you were envious and would stop at nothing to prevent them being Speakers. (Aristophanes, *Knights* 877–80)

The procedure by which Kleon successfully booted "Gryttos" and others out of the citizen body was probably that known as *dokimasia* ("testing" or "scrutiny").⁴² There were two types of regular occasion when the corporation of Athenian men clarified their community self-definition by applying it to individuals: entry into the group (new citizens, ephebes) and emergence into the limelight of public administration (men allotted to the annual magistracies and to the Council).⁴³ The interrogation was officially conducted by two groups representative of the citizen-body, first the Council, then a jury, but as symbolic forums where communal identity was figured and confirmed they were also open to the public and were attended by citizens at large.⁴⁴ The numbers involved annually—five hundred prospective Council members, several hundred public officers, and probably that many ephebes⁴⁵—must have prevented any detailed inspection of private lives, but the apparatus was certainly in place and seems to most observers to have come down from archaic times.⁴⁶ The impression of antiquity is based on the questions put concerning ancestry, family cult (Apollo Patrōos and Zeus Herkeios), family tombs, and care of parents. Candidates were also asked whether they had made their proper contribution to the defense and welfare of the *polis* through taxes and military campaigning.⁴⁷ At the *dokimasia*, perfunctory as it must often have been, any candidate could be challenged by another citizen: the formula was "Does anyone wish to accuse this man?" ([Aristotle], *Ath. Pol.* 55.4). Since rivalry and enmity were the electricity of

⁴²It may also have been a *graphē hetairēseōs* ("indictment for prostitution"), which was not an indictment for prostitution as such but rather for trying to exercise citizen-rights after conducting oneself as a prostitute. The penalty for that was theoretically death (Lipsius [1908], 436–37), and Gryttos has merely been removed from the rolls, so *graphē hetairēseōs* might seem to be out of the question; however, the loss of citizen-rights was sometimes spoken of as civic death. Timarkhos is deprived of civic rights (*ētīmōsetai*, *Dem.*, 19.284), Aiskhines "killed" him (285); Timarkhos "died and was insulted" (287). Full *atimia* (loss of citizen-rights) included a ban on entering the agora: Hansen (1976), 62. In general, penalties depended a great deal on the type of legal process set in motion, rather than on the offense itself: Hansen (1976), 120.

⁴³Lipsius (1908), 269–85; MacDowell (1978), 167–69.

⁴⁴Rhodes (1981), 619. Philokleon likes to attend the *dokimasia* of ephebes because he gets to see their genitals (*Wasps* 578); he may be attending as a member of the general public or, more likely, as a jury-member.

⁴⁵Jones (1957), 150 n. 28.

⁴⁶Rhodes (1981), 617; (1972), 178. Instances of routine *dokimasia* not resulting in a trial: *Dem.*, 40.34, 59.3 and 72; Aiskhin., 3.31.

⁴⁷Lysias, 16, 25, 26, 31; Kratinos, *Kheiron*, fr. 9 Kock; Xen., *Mem.* 2.2.13; Deinarkhos, 2.17.

that social machine, particularly at its top level, challenges did occur,⁴⁸ and, as at any Athenian trial, they could easily expand from a single issue into a review of the opponent's entire life.

Generals and Speakers (*rhētores*), according to Deinarkhos (1.71, cf. 2.26), could be held to even higher standards: they must own land in Attika and have legitimate children.⁴⁹ These are the men who "manage" the citizen body (*prohēstanoi tou dēmou*, Deinarkhos, 1.71), and must therefore be seen, in a more visible and representative way than the rest, to have managed their own, to have acted the roles of prudent patriarch and ready warrior—the symbolism described in the previous section. Although the role of Speaker (*rhētōr*) was not an elective or formal office, the men who frequently spoke in the citizen Assembly (and were, hence, so named) were readily recognizable ("the customary and established Speakers," Dem., 22.37) by their conspicuous activity in the city's affairs—proposing legislation⁵⁰ and delivering major speeches to the Assembly. Speakers do not as such constitute an official category; they are simply the men with political interests and experience who regularly address the Assembly.⁵¹ In their case, it was possible for individual citizens to introduce a special challenge known as *dokimasia rhētorōn*, questioning the fitness of any citizen who chose to play that role. The only surviving example of a *dokimasia rhētorōn* is Aiskhines, 1, *Against Timarkhos*. This is the text which K. J. Dover used as the basis of his excellent study, *Greek Homosexuality*. As we can infer from that speech, the law governing the scrutiny of Speakers contained four qualifications for anyone who would address the people: (1) he must not have abused or neglected his parents; (2) he must not have refused military service or deserted the ranks ("thrown away his shield") in battle; (3) he must not have sold himself for the sexual pleasure of another man, either in a stable relationship (*hētairēkōs*) or to multiple partners (*peporneumenos*); and (4) he must not have "eaten up" his patrimony or any inheritance.⁵²

Each of these charges picks up a different light wave refracted through a single prism—the image of the stout-hearted citizen who can be trusted to exercise his military duties and to control the pressure he may feel from his dependents, his circumstances, or from his own needs. The man

⁴⁸Meidias' accusation against Demosthenes during his *dokimasia* for Council membership was just one of a string of public attacks: Dem., 21.111.

⁴⁹Rhodes (1981), 510–11, takes Deinarkhos, 1.71 as referring to a real *nomos*, but that would amount to a property qualification for speaking in the Assembly. Deinarkhos' wording may be deliberately misleading on this point. (I owe this observation to Professor J. Ober.)

⁵⁰Hypereides, 4.9: "The first part of the law applies to all citizens . . . the latter part to the Speakers alone, for it is their task to draft decrees."

⁵¹Hansen (1974), 22–23.

⁵²Pollux, 8.44–45.

who kisses Alkibiades' beautiful son will instantly become a slave instead of a free man and will expend vast sums of money on harmful pleasures (Xen., *Mem.* 1.3.11).⁵³ Timarkhos, according to Aiskhines, originally controlled property sufficient to put him in what we might call the highest tax bracket, the liturgical class (1.97), but in his mania for erotic pleasure (with the most expensive flute-girls and *hetairai*, 75) and for all forms of self-indulgence he turned to consuming his paternal real estate (95–105).⁵⁴ The key element in this accusation is not that Timarkhos' sexual desire itself was wayward or exorbitant but that his lust for luxury became an addiction that destroyed his sense of careful accountancy: "He didn't even sell his pieces of property for their fair market-value: he was unable to wait for the better offer or the advantageous deal but sold each for what it would instantly fetch—so impetuously was he driven to satisfy his pleasures" (1.96). Can such a man be entrusted with advising and managing public affairs? Stability of land and property was a deeply rooted caution; each citizen swore in the archaic oath of the ephebes to "hand down the fatherland (to the next generation) not diminished but enhanced and improved"⁵⁵—a corporate ideal reflected in the somewhat trickier but no less fundamental goal of keeping one's individual patrimony intact.

Obsessive indulgence in the wild life⁵⁶ will obviously lead one to other fundamental crimes of the gravest sort, such as slighting one's parents or betraying the state, since addicts and maniacs will violate *any* fundamental rule that we reasonable people observe: "Their impulsive bodily lusts and their insatiability—these are what drive men to mugging, to piracy on the high seas, these are the Fury that drives them to slit the throats of fellow-citizens, to enslave themselves to tyrants, to subvert the democratic constitution" (1.191). The point that people like Timarkhos are potential traitors is made by Aiskhines in his gloss on the law forbidding

⁵³The hyperbolic features of this cultural image make it easier for us to detect its unreality and to see its use as a weapon of self-discipline. In modern American culture a similar scare-figure is the psychopathic sex maniac: Freedman (1987).

⁵⁴Davies (1981), 84. The significance of this dereliction only becomes apparent when one realizes that the military budget of Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. was supplied annually by a fairly restricted class. Rhodes (1982) estimates 1,200 for the trierarchy, somewhat more for the *eisphora* ("war levy") (except for what we might call their "Reagan years," 357–340, when the wealthiest were substantially remitted much of that burden: so argues Davies [1981], 19; see also Thomsen [1977], 140–43).

⁵⁵Tod (1948), no. 204.

⁵⁶Timarkhos not only "wolfed down" his patrimony like food, he "gulped it down" like wine, 1.96. The mythic narrative that captures these fears is that of Erysikhthon, who devoured his father's estate (Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4, fr. 7; Kallimachos, *Hymn to Demeter* 31–117) and repeatedly sold his daughter (Nikandros = Ant. Lib., 17.5; Lykophron, 1393–96).

citizen-prostitutes to be Speakers: the person who has sold himself will be ready to sell out the common good of the city.⁵⁷ It might seem that the sex addict who sells his property cheap to get ready money is rather different from the calculating politician who amasses a fortune by accepting consulting fees from foreign clients.⁵⁸ The former is an image of treachery through fiscal irresponsibility, the latter of treachery through calculating profit. But the point is that Athenian ideology did not employ our more careful distinction between sex and politics; instead, it assumed that good men were those who in the cause of social solidarity exercised control over their personal impulses to acquisitiveness.

The defendant in Deinarkhos, 2, is on trial for taking a bribe, but the prosecution manages to mention everything in his past that might be held against him, including his refusal to pay for his father's funeral and his temporary *atimia* (loss of citizen-rights) because he had inherited his father's debt to the state treasury. Similarly, in the surviving *dokimasiai* for Council-membership and magistracies, men are attacked for a range of basic faults, often supported only by rumor or innuendo. Philōn mistreats his mother and was a cowardly soldier (Lysias, 31). Mantitheos tries to defend his military service and his management of his estate, and alleges his distance from the young men who gamble and drink, from which we may infer that he was accused of the same rowdiness that common knowledge held against Timarkhos (Lysias, 16). These performances are not so much trials in the modern sense as they are showcases for criticizing or defending an entire career, including all the rumor and gossip that circulate through such a community. They are specialty displays of the tactics of innuendo that may be employed in any mustering of public opinion against a political enemy.⁵⁹

Aiskhines is quite explicit about the role of rumor or common knowledge (*phēmē*, 129). He tries to make a virtue of necessity by claiming that

⁵⁷1.29. If it can be proved that an Athenian has taken pay for sex, all the normal ambiguities are resolved and his disenfranchisement is certain. "But which of the citizens have I hired for sex, as you have done, Phormio? Show me. Whom have I deprived of the city . . . and the freedom of speech enjoyed in it, as you have done to this man whom you disgraced?" Dem., 45.79.

⁵⁸As in Deinarkhos 2.16–18, against Speakers who are "receivers of gifts," with a similar appeal to the qualifications for *dokimasia rhetorōn*.

⁵⁹Alkibiades prostituted himself and committed incest with his sister (Lysias, 14.26–28, 41). "If I had to give an individual account of his adulteries, wife-stealing, and all his other violent and lawless behavior, there would not be enough time to do so" (Andok., *Against Alkibiades* 10). Another innuendo of incest: Isaios, 5.39. Andokides charges Epikhares not only with having prostituted himself at a low price to any comef, not only with having made a living wage at this occupation, but with being ugly to boot (*De myst.* 100—in reply to similar charges from Epikhares). "What Nikomakhos' father practiced when he was a young man . . . it would be very troublesome to relate" (Lysias, 30.2). Dem., 45.77–79; Dem., 24.126, 181.

Timarkhos is so well known and has such a reputation as an easy lay that common knowledge itself dispenses him from the need for witnesses or proof (44). The notoriety of Timarkhos' companions and their open display of symptomatic luxuries have only one possible meaning (73–76).⁶⁰ The de facto certainty is as great as when one sees a male prostitute in front of his brothel take a client inside and close the door: "Now if someone were to ask you when you were right there on the street what that prostitute was doing now, without seeing it happen and without knowing who the client was but only knowing the prostitute's chosen profession, you would know for a fact what he was doing" (74).

Gossip, rumor, and common knowledge are very intense in a community like that of ancient Athens, even though it was a comparatively large *polis*. But Timarkhos was well known to the audience for other reasons. He belonged to that small circle of public Speakers who were clearly distinct, in numbers, in prominence, and often in wealth, from the "private citizens" (*idiōtai*).⁶¹ Demosthenes contrasts "the speakers" (*hoi legontes*) with "the majority" (*hoi polloi*) who are *idiōtai* (Dem., 22.37). Hypereides answers a prosecutor: "You treat Euxenippos, who is an *idiōtēs*, as if he were in the rank of a *rhētōr*" (4.30).⁶² Those who enter as Speakers into the political arena, as into a cockfighting ring, are playing a high-stakes game: "the life of private citizens [*idiōtai*] is safe and free from care and danger, while that of the politically active [*politeuomenoi*] is subject to censure and risky and full of confrontations and problems every day" (Dem., 10.70).⁶³ Though Speakers derive honor and gain from their activities, they also are continuously exposed to risk (Hyp., 4.9)—not least from the watchful gaze of their enemies, who will jeer at them and try to expose their every fault. "Mr. X—I won't mention his name since I don't want to make him an enemy—was not a private citizen but one who attended to the city's business and [therefore] subject to abusive remarks [*loidoriai*]" (Aiskhines, 1.165). Personal enemies, that

⁶⁰Since sexual *desire* is excluded as a motive, being an "easy lay" means being willing to sell oneself, which may be prompted by any number of motives besides desire.

⁶¹*Poson gar edēmēgorai chronon Timarkhos; polun* (Dem., 19.286). Timarkhos authored more than a hundred pieces of legislation during his long and famous career (hypothesis to Aiskhines, 1). He was also conspicuous from youth for his beauty, according to Aiskhines.

⁶²Perlman (1963), Hansen (1983), (1987), 50–69. "If the subject were a new one, men of Athens, I would have waited until the majority of those who are accustomed to deliver their opinion had spoken and if I agreed with one of their opinions I would have held my peace": Dem., 4.1. Of course, every citizen had in theory a right to speak: Dem., 25.29.

⁶³The small class who strove to be part of the city's affairs thought of themselves as exemplifying the highest standards of masculinity: "The pursuit of honor [*philotimia*] is not a natural component [*emphyetai*] of the irrational animals nor of all human beings; those who have a natural desire in them for praise and honor are at the greatest distance from cattle—they are considered to be men, no longer merely human beings": Xen., *Hiero* 7.3.

is, competing Speakers, are always standing nearby and watching every move a political player makes (*ekhthron ephestekoton*, Aiskhines, 1.108). This could be touted as a virtue of the system: "What is commonly said of public trials is no lie—many public affairs are rectified by private enmities."⁶⁴ The role played by gossip and common knowledge in the *dokimasiai rhētorōn* is so great because Speakers are not just citizens, they are featured players in the public spotlight—star performers on the political stage.⁶⁵

We have an interesting paradox here. On the one hand, the regular *dokimasiai* were an apparatus of public scrutiny applied to all citizens, which provided an opportunity for challenges to the moral fitness of citizens and officials. The hoplite vs. *kinaidos* ideology could have been brought to bear against any individual—the apparatus was in place for doing so. But, on the other hand, it appears that no significant application of that cultural image was made to the citizen body as a whole but only to the conspicuous representatives of it who managed public affairs.⁶⁶

Aiskhines employs a feint at the beginning of his speech against Timarkhos, promising to cite rules of decorum that will apply "not only to private citizens but also to Speakers" (7, 8). But when it comes time to redeem that promise, all he can cite are laws concerning *eukosmia* ("orderly conduct") in the Assembly, such as speaking in order of seniority (22–24). He does this to give himself an opportunity to refer to Timarkhos' flamboyant and undignified speaking style (26). Aiskhines himself is our best witness to the gap between ordinary *dokimasiai* and the political weapon of *dokimasia rhētorōn*: "The law scrutinizes not those who mind their own private business [*idiōteuontes*] but the politically active [*politeuomenoi*]" (195).

The same distinction is made in a speech against another Speaker accused, among other things, of prostitution (*hetairēsis*):

[Solon's law] forbade citizen-prostitutes to speak in the Assembly or to propose decrees. For he saw that most of you, though you have the right to speak, do not speak—so that this law, he reckoned, was not burdensome. If

⁶⁴Aiskhines, 1.2. "In the forensic speeches prosecutors usually justify their indictments by referring to personal enmity and an apparently disinterested prosecutor was almost invariably stamped as a sycophant" (in modern terms, an ambulance chaser). Hansen (1976), 121; Roberts (1982), 55–83.

⁶⁵In the case of families whose wealth is old rather than new, their preeminence can be perceived as "natural": Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.9.1387a17.

⁶⁶"If an Athenian citizen made no secret of his prostitution, did not present himself for the allocation of offices by lot, declared his unfitness if through someone's inadvertence he was elected to office, and abstained from embarking on any of the procedures forbidden to him by the law, he was safe from prosecution and punishment": Dover (1978), 29.

he had wanted to punish such people, he could have imposed a much harsher law. But he did not lay any stress on that [the existence of citizen-prostitutes], rather in the interests of you and your political order he specifically forbade them to be Speakers, for he knew, yes, he knew that men whose lives are shameful cannot flourish in a political order in which anyone may openly criticize their vices. What political order is that? A democracy!" (Dem., 22.30–31)

This is a remarkable passage, for it is at once a justification of applying a rigorous scrutiny to the sexual behavior of the politically active, with an implied endorsement of the mechanism for doing so through watchful enemies, and a statement that *laissez-faire* about the private lives of "private citizens" was a long-standing (Solonian) tradition. The crucial point seems to be not sexual behavior in itself but rather some notion of preserving the political order by restrictions placed on its directors at the top. Demosthenes goes on to argue that if a sufficient number of such "shameful" Speakers were to be active at the same time, they would not only be bad administrators of the commonwealth but they would overturn the democracy (in which they can be criticized) and set up an oligarchy (in which they would be free to do as they pleased without fingers of shame pointing at them).

It begins to look as if the entire procedure had very little to do with sex and everything to do with political ambitions and alliances in the high-stakes game of city leadership according to the rules of honor/shame competition. This impression is confirmed by the fact that Aiskhines' prosecution took place many years after the events in question,⁶⁷ and was unabashedly motivated by a desire to remove Timarkhos from the ranks of the prosecutors who had indicted Aiskhines for treason.⁶⁸ The case was not brought forward as a sexual charge on its own merits. It just happened that Aiskhines, looking for a way to disqualify one of his opponents, found a potential weak spot in Timarkhos' public reputation and attacked it with all his might. In general, it appears that all aspects of a Speaker's private life were open to scrutiny and that his erotic self-management was not a special locus of danger.

That such charges were both restricted to politicians and were politically motivated makes sense of the earliest reference we have to such an action, that of Kleon against Gryttos in 424 referred to in the epigraph.

⁶⁷The only one mentioned as of recent occurrence is Timarkhos' speaking to the Assembly in an undignified style with his arm outside his cloak (26).

⁶⁸Dem., 19.284, 286. Similarly, Hegesandros was presenting himself as a Speaker (*parēiei epi to bēma*) and was "waging war" (*prosepolemei*) with one Aristophon; Aristophon apparently got Hegesandros to back off by threatening to challenge him to a *dokimasia* focusing on his sexual behavior (Aiskhines, 1.64).

Kleon boasts of having removed a *binoumenos* (“fucked male”) from the citizen rolls. The saucy hero of the play, an unnamed *idiōtēs* whose trade is selling sausages, replies that Kleon was in fact envious (*phthonōn*) and wanted to get rid of competitors, literally, “to stop them becoming Speakers.” The chafing of interpretations that occurs between Kleon and the Sausage-Seller neatly frames the paradox of sexual surveillance. On the one hand, the Speaker who tries to foment public indignation against another Speaker does so on the basis of “fundamental” values, the contrast of hoplite and *kinaidos*. Although the technical charge would have been that Gryttos had confused the roles of prostitute and citizen, calling him a *binoumenos* shows that the force of the charge resides in the application of the hoplite/*kinaidos* imagery. On the other hand, as the Sausage-Seller points out, the prosecutor’s indignation is largely a fiction. It is not really concerned with either sex or surveillance as such but is simply a maneuver to attack a political opponent.⁶⁹

In such attacks, prosecutors no doubt tried to muster the audience’s moral indignation in the grandest terms against the defendant. A fragment of Hypereides (215) calls Nature herself to witness that a kinaidic man has forfeited his very manliness, becoming in effect a woman. “What then if we were conducting this case with Nature as judge—Nature who has distinguished male and female so that each performs his/her own proper duty and office—and what if I were to show that this man has misused his own body in a feminine way? Surely Nature would be shocked and astonished that any man would not think it a most blessed gift for him to have born a man and that he had spoiled Nature’s kindness to him, hastening to transform himself into a woman?”⁷⁰ What the preceding social analysis reveals is that such fulminations were heard in a context that gave them a very different force from identically worded fundamentalist appeals in more recent societies. At the moment of ut-

⁶⁹In general, “a blind eye was often turned to *atimoi* [disenfranchised persons] who behaved as *epitimo* [full citizens]”: Hansen (1976), 59–60. Professor Mark Golden has remarked to me on this point that citizen-wives were not treated so lightly. The sanctions against proven sexual misconduct on the part of women could be enforced by any member of the community; a Solonian law against women caught in adultery forbade them to wear finery or to appear at public events and allowed anyone who saw them violating this ban to rip her clothes and beat her, short of maiming or death (Aiskhines, 1.183). Presumably this would be done in part to shame her *kyrios* as derelict in his control of her. The clansmen involved in Neaira’s case did not turn a blind eye to her sexual misconduct, refusing to acknowledge the marriage of her daughter ([Dem.], 59.85–87).

⁷⁰“Quid si tandem iudice (naturā) hanc causam ageremus, quae ita divisit (virilem et) muliebrem personam ut suum cuique opus atque officium distribueret, (et) ego hunc ostenderem muliebri [codd. tui liberi] ritu esse suo corpore abusum [codd. adlusum]: nonne vehementissime admiraretur, si quisquam non gratissimum munus arbitaretur virum se natum sed depravato naturae beneficio in mulierem convertere properasset?” (Latin translation in Rutilius Lupus, 2.6). Barabino (1967).

terance, of course, the Athenian audience would have temporarily misrecognized that force, led by the rhetoric to think literally in terms of universal law. But they also knew that “law” to operate differentially in social practice.

The Sausage-Seller had earlier alluded to the possibility of his own youthful prostitution. His trick as a boy was to distract the butcher, swipe a piece of meat, and hide it between his buttocks, swearing that he was innocent: “One of the Speakers who saw me doing this said, ‘Undoubtedly this boy will grow up to govern the people.’” To which the Chorus replies: “A good guess, and it’s clear how he reached that conclusion: you swore a false oath after embezzling, and your anus held onto the meat” (*Knights* 425–28). The series of jokes in Old Comedy characterizing both Speakers and the liturgical class in such crude terms has been interpreted as the average Athenian’s criticism of practices he does not share—the plain man’s sneer at the lifestyles of the rich and famous.⁷¹ But the orators’ references to the limitations on sexual surveillance and the interchange between Kleon and the Sausage-Seller support a somewhat different reading. It is not that active players in the political game—a class that considerably overlaps that of the wealthy—have a different lifestyle, but rather that, because they move in the limelight, they are subject to more intense viewing and to more widespread talk, both favorable and unfavorable. The young, in particular, are watched: they are subject both to the erotic praise of being called *kalos*⁷² and the erotic abuse of being called *katapugōn* or *pornos*.⁷³ As potential players in the fiercely competitive game of Athenian city management, where friendships and alliances must be assiduously courted, the young are particularly interesting, because their futures are still uncertain, and particularly vulnerable, because convention casts them in the chased-but-chaste role.⁷⁴

There is no record that anyone was ever prosecuted simply for prostituting himself, nor even that such a legal action was ever conceived. The cases we know of were framed not in terms of sexual behavior but in terms of political participation. The alleged crime was not that a citizen sold his body but that, having sold his body, he then presumed to act as a policy manager for the *polis*. The penalty, fitting the crime, is loss of the citizen-rights to participate in corporate deliberations—in the Assembly,

⁷¹Henderson (1975), 209–10, 216–18.

⁷²Robinson and Fluck (1937).

⁷³Two of the five *katapugōn* graffiti found in the agora are also *kalos* names: Milne and von Bothmer (1953); Fränkel (1955); *pornos* has been added near the name of Enpulos on a rock covered with erotic graffiti near the archaic ephebes’ gymnasium on Thera (*I.G.* xii.3.536, cf. 537, 542).

⁷⁴Vlastos (1987), esp. 95–96.

on juries, as a Council-member or magistrate. This raises an interesting question about citizens who were not politically active. *Philotimia*, of course, should impel all capable men to exert themselves to the maximum in garnering honor and recognition for themselves in the service of their city, but reality must have occasionally whispered to some that the tests of action in the sudden-death arena were not worth it. Were there any citizens whose predilections led them not to seek prominence in legislative debates?

Xenophon constructs a little dialogue between Sokrates and the pre-Epikourean Aristippos at *Memorabilia* 2.1. Aristippos, available to us largely in unfriendly reports,⁷⁵ is there characterized as “rather undisciplined” in regard to “practicing self-mastery [*enkrateia*] over the desire for food and drink and sex and sleep and cold and heat and hard work” (2.1.1). The argument is focused on the issue of fitness to rule (*arkhein*), taken in a very general sense to include masters overseeing slaves (chastening their wantonness with starvation and blows, 16), one nation conquering or dictating policy to another (10), and conducting the government of Athens (*ta tēs poleōs*, 2). Aristippos unabashedly declares that he does not put himself in the ranks of those who wish to govern the city (8), agreeing with Sokrates’ division of people into the self-mastered who can rule others and those without self-mastery who have no pretensions to rule (7). Perhaps we might have looked to Aristippos, if the sources were not so antipathetic, for a serious critique of the zero-sum protocols underlying the honor-shame system, but as it is the best our conventional sources can do is to portray his position in terms that make it fundamentally unacceptable. In the terms available to Xenophon, Aristippos’ refusal to compete for eminence in the city’s ruling class is fully explained by his preference for self-indulgence and personal comfort over the culturally approved style of toughness.

Aiskhines mentions a group of men who, in contrast to the chaste and honorable lovers known to the city at large (155–57), are notorious for “sinning against their own bodies” (*eis heautous exhamartanontas*, 159)—Diophantos, who sued a resident-alien for nonpayment of his prostitute’s fee, Kephisodoros the Beautiful, Mnesitheos the butcher’s boy, and “many others whose names I would willingly forget.” They seem to represent a class of citizen little studied in Athenian politics, men who freely and deliberately chose not to live by the fictions of self-mastery for reasons that in some cases approach what we might nowadays formulate in terms of lifestyle preference (not sexual preference, since Aiskhines never suggests that desire could be a motive for prostitution). It is at least clear that Aiskhines recognizes the possibility that some young men will

⁷⁵Giannantoni (1958); Mannebach (1961); Guthrie (1971a), 170–79.

choose a life of prostitution that entails their voluntary apostasy from the arena of political warfare: “[Solon] commanded that whoever engaged (in prostitution) should not participate in the common affairs of the city; for he thought that anyone who *as a young man stood aside [apestē] from the competitive struggle for high honors* should not as an older man receive such honors” (160). When Aiskhines says that some young men who are eligible for leadership roles may choose not to compete, he does not say that they do so because they like being *kinaidoi* or that they have a personal inclination toward that type of activity (often called “passivity”). We may ourselves wonder whether anyone in that group felt so inclined, since the modern notion of a sexual identity is constructed around that issue, but the salient fact about Aiskhines’ charges is that they do not include the *desire* to submit oneself sexually to other men.

If it is correct to regard the forum of Athenian politics as a closely watched arena where the comparatively few—who enjoy rhetorical training, family connections, and all the subtler splendors that come from wealth and breeding—dueled for preeminence, and if the actors were watched with all the enthusiasm and partisanship that we associate with sports and entertainment, then perhaps it would be right to detect a note of peevish disappointment in Aiskhines’ response to the case of Kephisodoros (158): “Which citizen was *not* peeved [*edyskheraine*] at Kephisodoros, called Molon’s son, who wasted his magnificent beauty in a life without honor [*kallistēn hōran opseōs akleestata diephtharkota*]?” The translation could be adjusted to yield different emphases, but it is worth suggesting that the popular attitude toward Kephisodoros, as a young Robert Redford or “magnificent beauty” of his day, was not one of outrage at his sexual behavior but of mild regret that his personal choices barred him from that public stage where it would have been a pleasure to watch him. That pleasure in watching the Young and Beautiful make their way through the minefield of political friendships, patronage, and enemy traps is the other side of Old Comedy’s barbed remarks about the unmanliness of ambitious young Speakers.

DIFFERENT STROKES

To round off the picture drawn in the previous section of a society in which a certain idea of male sexual deviance was strongly articulated but only very selectively applied and even more rarely enforced, let us briefly notice that common language used *physis* (nature) which some time later became an “enforcement” word, on the opposite side of the issue. In comedy and public speaking *physis* could be readily and unselfcon-

siciously employed to name not a common denominator that everyone had to obey but rather one's own unnegotiable bent.

There was no lack of expressions for personal predilections and individual character in fourth-century Athens.⁷⁶ *Tropos*, *ēthos*, *phil-* compounds, *prohairesis*, and *physis* could all be used to say that someone just was a certain way or just happened to like a certain class of objects.⁷⁷ In Alexis' *Linos*, Herakles is invited to pick a book from the library, "for thus you will display your *physis*, what it has a special tendency toward." (Herakles chooses a cookbook.) "All of human life . . . is regulated by nature and by laws: nature is disorganized [*ataktion*] according as each man has his own, but the laws are common and organized and the same for all" (Dem., 25.15). When old Philokleon, who used to have an unwonted passion for juries and Kleon, starts to enjoy the finer things in life, the Chorus comments that he is learning new ways and will undergo a major transformation in the direction of softness and luxury: "but perhaps he won't want to, for it is hard for any man to depart from his individual nature [*physeōs . . . aei*], whatsoever it is" (*Wasps* 1456–58). People differ by age but even more by *physis*, says Lysias (19.18).⁷⁸

Of course individuating characteristics are not unique: many such uses of *physis* refer to types, such as the stubborn farmer (*Peace* 607) or the unscrupulous wheeler-dealer (Dem., 25.30, 45, 50, 96, and his supporters, 45), including body types (Isok., 15.115). Political sympathies are also traceable to one's personal nature ("Old Solon had a pro-democratic nature," Ar., *Clouds* 1187), an assertion which is just as easily denied ("No one is naturally oligarchic or democratic," Lys., 25.18). Isokrates goes so far as to praise Demonikos' father for paying more attention to his serious (presumably political) friends than to his relatives, "for he considered that when it came to allies a man's nature was far more important than convention, his behavior more important than blood relation, his chosen convictions more important than necessity."⁷⁹

One can sometimes be proud of one's *physis*. Xenophon asks what

⁷⁶Each species has a single *physis* but we humans have as many *tropoi* as there are individual people: Philemon, 1.89 Kock; "From my earliest childhood I have had a desire for a certain something, just as everyone else does for something or other—horses, dogs, money, public office," Plato, *Lysis* 211d; Aristophanes, *Wasps* 67–88. From earlier Greek literature one can cite Homer, *Odyssey* 14.228, *allos gar t' alloisin anēr epiterpetai ergois* and, using an earlier form of *physis*, Arkhilokhos, 25 W. Dover (1978), 62.

⁷⁷Dover (1974), 88–90; Holwerda (1955), 70–71, 112; Thimme (1935). *Orgē* is an older, perhaps poetic, term.

⁷⁸A young man defends his right to speak: "It is not the quantity of our years that differentiates us from each other in respect to good counsel but rather our nature and practices" (Isok. 6.4).

⁷⁹*Hēgeito gar einai pros hetairian pollōi kreittō physin nomou kai tropou genous kai prohairesin anangkēs* (Isok., 1.10).

kind of nature Kyros had that gave him such special power for ruling men⁸⁰ (*Kyr.* 1.1.6). Demosthenes frequently refers to the admirable *physis* of the young man who is the subject of his *Erōtikos*.⁸¹ Themistokles "displayed the force of his nature" (Thouk., 1.138.3). Or it can name something of which one ought to be ashamed. Theramenes was a traitor by nature (Xen., *Hell.* 2.3.30). Men summoned before the Areopagos abide by the conventions and restrain their base natures (Isok., 7.38). Demosthenes calls Aiskhines a tragic ape, a counterfeit Speaker, a *kinaidos* by nature (*physei*, 18.242). The argumentative purpose often latent in the use of *physis* rather than another word to describe a person's character or lifestyle may be defensive ("It's my *physis*—I cannot do otherwise") or dismissive ("It's his *physis*—what else can we expect?"). These locutions tend to cast personal character as inevitable ("He couldn't change his *physis*, he was and remained a gentleman," Isok., 15.138).

The point of noticing that *physis* sometimes occurs on the side of what needs to be regulated is simply to underscore the variety of actual discourse in fourth-century Athens and to suggest that when speakers or writers shifted into natural law language ("Nature lays down that all men should . . .") it would have been relatively easy to perceive the pretense. Perhaps the principal missing rubric of those which once governed the comprehension of ancient Greek discourse is the expectation that people will stake out as much territory as they can, making assertions with confidence and unshakable personal authority. (Directions are given to travellers this way in modern Greece.) The friendly description of this is that a man's *aretē* is shown by his decisiveness; the unfriendly description is that they are all bluffing. Correlative to this agonistic rubric for Speakers, an Athenian listener's response was properly guided by doubt, by a reluctance to acquiesce in any man's claim to anything. "There is one quality that the nature of sensible people intrinsically possesses as a common protection—a good and saving quality for all, but most especially for citizen bodies against tyrants. And what is this? Distrust [*apistia*]! Guard this, hold on to this; if you preserve this, you will surely suffer no calamity" (Dem., 6.24). Note the characteristic use of "nature" to indicate a fundamental cultural rule, of which one should not need reminding.

The selective enforcement of manhood rules, analyzed in the previous section, is not the same as a laissez-faire attitude. On the contrary, parallel to the procedures for public inspection, social control is exercised by gossip, close observation, reading suspicious signs, and imagining the worst. Of special interest in this connection is the informal practice of

⁸⁰On *physis* meaning individual talent, see Shorey (1909).

⁸¹*Erōtikos* 6, 24, 29, 32, 51, 55.

reading people's "natures" by the observation of their physical characteristics and style—the science of physiognomy.⁸² The *physi-* in physiognomy is not a completely individualized "nature"—people fall into types—but it is the unarguable substratum that shapes each person's character. Though later writers said that Pythagoras was the first to use physiognomy,⁸³ the earliest document to discuss it was probably *Zōpyros*, a work by Sokrates' disciple Phaido.⁸⁴ The elementary notion that people's character can be seen in their looks and behavior is not new: Idomeneus gives directions for spotting a coward before battle (Homer, *Iliad* 13.275–87). But the first surviving manual for the practice is probably a work of the fourth century, collected with the writings of Aristotle.⁸⁵ One of the "natures" that can be detected in the [Aristotelian] *Physiognomonics* is that of the *kinaidos*: "The signs of a *kinaidos* are an unsteady eye⁸⁶ and knock-knees;⁸⁷ he inclines his head to the right;⁸⁸ he gestures with his palms up and his wrists loose; and he has two styles of walking—either wagging his hips⁸⁹ or keeping them under control. He tends to look around in all directions. Dionysios the sophist would be an instance of this type"⁹⁰ (808a12–16).

If common language was labile in its use of *physis*, so were fourth-century attempts to think systematically about the fixity and flexibility of behavior patterns. Another Aristotelian text that tries to establish that *kinaidoi* are physically unnatural ends up by proclaiming that habit is stronger than nature. It is the twenty-sixth problem in the fourth book of the Aristotelian *Problems*, and it begins by asking, "Why is it that some men enjoy being acted upon sexually, whether or not they also enjoy being active?" The word I have translated as "acted upon sexually" is simply the passive participle *aphrodisiazomenoi*—they enjoyed being aphrodite'd. What is puzzling to this author is the enjoyment: this text strives

⁸²See Gleason, chap. 12 below, with bibliography there cited.

⁸³"He was the first to systematize this human science so as to learn each man's *physis*" (Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 13).

⁸⁴The sources on physiognomy, Cicero and ps.-Plutarch, tell tales of one *Zōpyros* who brought the science to Athens; a *Zōpyros* is listed as a work by Phaido in Diog. Laert., 2.105. The texts and testimonia are collected and analyzed by Förster (1893).

⁸⁵Translation in Barnes (1984), 1:1237–50.

⁸⁶Also a sign of cowardice: 808a7–11.

⁸⁷All female animals have knock-knees: 809b8.

⁸⁸Arkhíppos, fr. 45 Kock (= Plutarch, *Alkibiades* 1); Com. adesp., 339 Kock; Clem. Alex., *Paid.* 3.69.

⁸⁹Ar., *Wasps* 686–88, describes the stride of a *katapugōn*; cf. Eupolis, 163 Kock; Suet., *Peri blasphemion*, s.v. *chalaibasis* (Taillardat [1967]), 52.

⁹⁰Later descriptions of the effeminate male, called *androgynos*, in Adamantios, *Physiognomonika* 1.19, 23; 2.21, 38, 39, 41, 42, 52, 59 Förster; and anon., *De physiognomonika* 98 (Förster [1893] 2.123); see Gleason, chap. 12 below.

to find possible connections between two concepts that conventionally never overlap—"men" and "the enjoyment of being aphrodite'd."

The first point to make is that the author is not just idly speculating, not wondering if such a thing *were* to occur what he *would* say (the future less vivid construction), but rather he wonders why it is that they do. It is not a question of appearances alone or a pretense of enjoyment. They *enjoy* it, and inquiring minds want to know why.

This text contains the most complex and many-sided theory of "natural" sexual desire known to me from ancient sources. The factors involved are nutrition and its dispersal throughout the body into natural places, also fantasy (which is assigned an equal role in prompting desire), natural ducts leading to the testicles or the anus, and finally habit (*ethos*), which has nothing to do with *physis* and may even replace it and become (as this author says) *physis*.

It is normal in problem-literature for multiple explanations to be advanced; what is worth noting here is that we have a unique opportunity to watch a highly articulate text assert first the all-dominant power of nature to distinguish the proper from the improper, and then abandon that line of thought and assert that mere habit has just as strong an explanatory value. What is more, this author does not simply forget that he had employed earlier on the same page an argument based on physical nature; he maintains that habit itself is as powerful as nature, saying it three different ways.

Let us review the main points of the text. The first answer is that there is a natural place (*kata physin*) for every excretion that is separated out from our nourishment.⁹¹ Urine goes into the bladder, dehydrated food into the bowels, tears into the eyes, mucus into the nostrils, blood into the veins, and sperm into the testicles. Another factor in the process is the *pneuma*, the hot breath, which is the result of exertion, the cause of that digestive separation and also a concomitant of any desire that is aroused.⁹² *Pneuma* rushes to the natural place where any excretion has gathered and hastens its expulsion. Now, desire may arise from two causes, the accumulation of an excretion in its natural place (holding it in is unnatural)⁹³ or from thinking—*dianoia*. As he puts it, "desire is felt both as a result of food and as a result of thinking," for which we might put the marginal gloss "fantasy."

So much is laid down in nature. But it happens in this case, as in every other, that what is natural is not always realized. There are men whose

⁹¹Arist., *Physics* 230a18–b10: "place" is the favored category for discriminating natural from unnatural.

⁹²GA 718a2–4, 728a10–17, 738b28–a6.

⁹³"The friction [of sexual activity] is pleasurable, being the emission of pneumatic fluid which has been unnaturally enclosed": [Arist.], *Prob.* 4.15.

internal conduits are not arranged *kata physin*: the conduits leading to the testicles may be dead-ends, in which case alternate channels exist leading to the *hedra* (literally, “seat”). In some cases men have both sets of channels open. “Those whose conduits end exclusively in the seat desire to be acted upon sexually, those whose conduits terminate in both places desire both to act and to be acted upon, and whichever place has more is the locus of greater desire.” So the system is flexible (which in theories is a virtue) but at the same time unfalsifiable (which is not).

The notion of spermatic fluid going to the seat might seem a weak point in this theory, but the author has at least thought about it.⁹⁴ He has a notion that in some people the excretions may tend to be thin and airy, hardly noticeable because dispersed rather than gathered together and expelled in a mass. But excretion there is: here he actually appeals, as an observable proof of his theory, to the fact that there is “a colliquescence of the area around the seat” during anal intercourse. The thinness and dispersal of this fluid is, in his view, comparable to female sexual response. “Thus it is that they are insatiable, like women, since the fluid is very little and is not ejected and loses heat quickly.”

In this text nature is both the norm and the culprit, for it is nature who (in one way of speaking) has made certain men unnatural: “Men who are naturally womanish,” *physei thēludriai*. The explanation of their observable behavior is that “their constitution is *para physin* [against nature].” The most interesting part, however, is the conclusion.

This situation comes to be true for some men out of habit [*ethos*], since whatever they regularly do they come to enjoy, even emitting their fluid in this fashion. So they desire to do whatever it happens to be that brings this pleasure, and actually habit [*ethos*] becomes, as it were, their nature [*physis*]. Therefore any man who not before adolescence [*hēbē*], but at *hēbē*, develops the habit of being acted upon sexually, since memory follows the experience and pleasure follows the memory, because of the habit they, as it were naturally [*hōsper pephukotes*], desire to be acted upon. The repetition and the habit become for them a sort of nature. And if a male is both hypersexual and effeminate [*malakos*], all the more so.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Not only is the labor of the buttocks during intercourse essential to the act, and hence thin buttocks are one of the most revealing signs of too much indulgence in *aphrodisia*, but “it is impossible for a man to ejaculate without constricting the region around the seat and keeping the eyes open”: [Arist.], *Prob.* 4.2.

⁹⁵The strategy of labelling something “against nature” is deployed from time to time in Plato’s dialogues, when his characters offer a radical critique of contemporary ethical assumptions. Thus Kallikles in *Gorgias* 484a asserts that all democracy’s *nomoi* are *para physin*. The notion of practice becoming second nature is found at *Republic* 395d: “When men persist in imitations long after youth is past, that imitative behavior becomes their established habit and nature.”

The doctrine that habit becomes a second nature is good Aristotelian opinion,⁹⁶ as is the notion that some naturally occurring characteristics or even whole species are unnatural.⁹⁷ The subject of unnatural pleasures in general is analyzed at *EN* 7.5.1148b15–49a20, where Aristotle speaks of plucking hairs, biting fingernails, gnawing coal or earth, and *aphrodisia* with males as unnatural.⁹⁸ Again, either nature or habit may be the explanation.

One could say much more about this text and about the subject, but let me close by underlining the strategy of reading that I mean to promote. Behind sentences that begin “The Greeks believed . . .” there lies a fairly small set of elite canonized texts. Many of them are what I would broadly call legislative rather than descriptive. One culturally specific turn of language that developed on a small scale in the fifth century was the contrast of nature and convention. “Nature” in that usage, though it can be made to sound impressively absolute, refers precisely to convention: it is norm-enforcing language.

Further, the content assigned to standards of proper sexual behavior (whether or not they are designated as “natural”) is dramatically different from our modern conventions.⁹⁹ The calculus of correctness operated not on the sameness/difference of the genders but on the dominance/submission of the persons involved. Sex was perceived, as Halperin says, in terms of “either act or impact,”¹⁰⁰ giver or receiver, doer or done to. “Nature” busies herself about hierarchies and dependence, evidently, not about such peripheral matters as hair-color or gender. As Aristotle puts it, nature gave us warfare so that we could sort out the natural masters from the natural slaves (*Pol.* 1.8.1256b20–26).

Finally, even when the correct protocols have been identified so that we can see exactly why our current sexual categories do not translate into Greek, we must further notice the many limitations on the enforcement of or obedience to those protocols. The texts we study are, for the most part, rather like men’s coffeehouse talk. Their legislative intent contains

⁹⁶*Rhet.* 1.11.1370a6–9.

⁹⁷Lloyd (1983), 40–43.

⁹⁸We can tell that the subject here is really *kinaidoi* rather than the desire of men for young males for three reasons: Aristotle refers to the persons as having been “aggrieved upon from boyhood”; he compares their morally inculpable state to that of women, “whom no one would blame for being penetrated rather than penetrating”; and his other casual references to paederasty (see note 39) show that it was unproblematic for him as it was for most Greek males (Dover 1978, 169). On the flexibility of Aristotle’s “nature” in political contexts, see Michelakis (1968).

⁹⁹Davidson (1987–1988); Halperin (1989b).

¹⁰⁰Halperin (1989b), 30.

a fair amount of bluff, of saving face: they regularly lay down laws which are belied by the jokes those same men will later tell.

What we do not have written down are the stage directions (as it were) for those texts—the crossed fingers, the knowing nods of conspiratorial agreement. Yet there are revealing moments—hesitations, refusals to speak, backtracking—that can be assembled into a more convincing ethnography, one that posits a plurality of norms, of practices and authorities, some more vocal than others and all busy ignoring or outlawing the rest. Within such a (typically Mediterranean) ethnography, impartiality, scrupulous objectivity, and fairness to opposing views are not to be expected. They would be unnatural acts.

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