BEFORE SEXUALITY

THE CONSTRUCTION OF EROTIC EXPERIENCE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD

David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler,
and Froma I. Zeitlin, Editors

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Imhoof-Blumer, F., and P. Gardner. 1964. *A Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*. Ed. N. Oikonomides (Chicago).
Lerat, L. 1952. *Les locriens de l'ouest*. Vol. 1: *Topographie et ruines*. Vol. 2: *Histoires, institutions, prosopographie* (Paris).
Massenzio, M. 1968. "La festa di Artemis Triklaria e Dionysus Aisymnetes a Patrai." *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 39:101–32.
Piccaluga, G. 1980. "L'olocausto di Patrai": 243–87 in *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité*, ed. O. Reverdin and J. Rudhardt. Entretiens Fondation Hardt, 27 (Geneva).
Vernant, J.-P. 1982–1983. "Etude comparée des religions antiques." *Annuaire du Collège de France* 83:443–58.
_____. 1985. *La mort dans les yeux* (Paris).

5

PUTTING HER IN HER PLACE: WOMAN, DIRT, AND DESIRE

Anne Carson

Your black veil pulls me open.
—*Bedouin song*

AS MEMBERS of human society, perhaps the most difficult task we face daily is that of touching one another—whether the touch is physical, moral, emotional, or imaginary. Contact is crisis. As the anthropologists say, "Every touch is a modified blow."[1] The difficulty presented by any instance of contact is that of violating a fixed boundary, transgressing a closed category where one does not belong. The ancient Greeks seem to have been even more sensitive than we are to such transgressions and to the crucial importance of boundaries, both personal and extrapersonal, as guarantors of human order. Their society developed a complex cultural apparatus, including such rituals as supplication, hospitality, and gift-exchange, which historians and anthropologists are only recently coming to understand as mechanisms for defining and securing the boundaries of everything in the habitable world. Civilization is a function of boundaries.

In such a society, individuals who are regarded as especially lacking in control of their own boundaries, or as possessing special talents and opportunities for confounding the boundaries of others, evoke fear and controlling action from the rest of society. Women are so regarded by men in ancient Greek society, along with suppliants, strangers, guests, and other intruders. But the threat which women pose is not only greater in degree than that presented by other transgressors of boundaries; it is different in kind. "Let a man not clean his skin in water that a woman has washed in. For a hard penalty follows on that for a long time," Hesiod advises (*Op.* 753–55). When we focus on Greek attitudes to and treatment of the female, we see anxiety about boundaries from a particular

[1]Crawley (1927), 1.78.

perspective—that of hygiene, physical and moral. Considerations of pollution, which do not noticeably predominate in other ruses of contact like gift-exchange or supplication, assert themselves when the crises of contact involve erotic relations between male and female. Why?

TRANSGRESSION

Female transgression begins in social fact. Woman is a mobile unit in a society that practises patrilocal marriage (which Greek society is generally agreed to have done), and man is not. From birth the male citizen has a fixed place in the *oikos* ("household") and *polis* ("city-state"), but the female moves.[2] At marriage a wife is taken not just (and perhaps not at all) into her husband's heart but into his house. This transgression is necessary (to legitimate continuation of the *oikos*), dangerous (insofar as the *oikos* incorporates a serious and permanent crisis of contact), and creates the context for illicit varieties of female mobility, for example that of the adulteress out of her husband's house, with attendant damage to male property and reputation. Both as subject and object of love, the unstable female presented Greek society with a set of tactical and moral problems that it never quite solved, but which it sought to clarify, during the archaic and classical periods, by recourse to pollution beliefs and the code of conduct governing *miasmata* ("defilements") in general.[3] To isolate and insulate female *erōs*, from society and from itself, was demonstrably the strategy informing many of the notions, conventions, and rituals that surrounded female life in the ancient world. I want to examine this strategy for its logic and its practice by asking, first, what the ancients meant by dirt and why they disliked it; second, what they did with their dirt and their dislike. It will not be possible, for the most part, to distinguish physical from metaphysical, nor concept from cause. But if we look closely at the dilemma posed by female dirt, we will begin to see the outlines of an ideology powerful enough to shape the major details of women's lives, even to the design of their wedding ceremonies.

First, let us consider the logic of female pollution.

[2]Vernant (1974) has analyzed the mythic world of Greek marriage in terms of space and movement, boundaries and displacement. See also, Visser (1986), 149–53.

[3]Many societies resort to codes of pollution to regulate and rationalize human situations where order and sense elude them, such as sex. "When moral rules are obscure or contradictory there is a tendency for pollution beliefs to simplify or clarify the point at issue," says Douglas (1966), 141. See, also, Parker (1983).

WETNESS

Physiologically and psychologically, women are wet.[4] Hippokrates (*Vict.* 27) differentiates male from female as follows:

> The female flourishes more in an environment of water, from things cold and wet and soft, whether food or drink or activities. The male flourishes more in an environment of fire, from dry, hot foods and mode of life.

Aristotle makes a similar distinction (*Probl.* 4.25.879a33–34; cf. 4.28.88a12–20), and suggests that this difference may arise from the inclination of the fetus in the case of a male embryo to lean to the right, a female to the left, given that "the right side of the body is hotter than the left" (*GA* 4.1.765b2).

It is the consensus of Greek thought that the soundest condition for a human being is dryness, provided it is not excessive dryness. "A dry soul is wisest and best," Heraklitos asserts (B118 *VS*). Mature men in a sound and unafflicted condition are dry. In Homer, the efficiently functioning mind of Zeus is characterized as "dry" (φρεσὶ πευκαλίμῃσι, *Iliad* 14.165).[5] Wetness of mind is an intellectually deficient condition, as we may infer from a passage of Aristophanes where a man speaks of the need to "dry his mind" if he wants to "say anything smart" (*Eq.* 95–96; cf. *Vesp.* 1452; ξηροὶ τρόποι), and from Heraklitos who describes the man whose *psyche* is wet with drunkenness as devoid of both self-control and proper perception, for he stumbles, doesn't know his way, and must be led by a boy (B117 *VS*). The dry state of mental alertness may be undermined by wine, sleep, or self-indulgence, according to Diogenes of Apollonia, who proposed in the fifth century that the conscious element

[4]Wetness and dryness, as appears from the citations below, are rarely considered apart from temperature, in the context of human physiology. But whereas the statement "women are wet" can be demonstrated fairly universally in ancient examples, the temperature of the female body is not so easily generalized. We are dealing not with physical fact but with cultural and rhetorical artifact; imputations of heat and cold vary in various authors, relative to the thrust of particular arguments. Disagreement between Parmenides and Empedokles, for example, on whether women are hotter than men, is examined by Aristotle, with a discussion of the ambiguities of the term "hot" (*PA* 648a29–649b). It is not surprising, then, if some inconsistency on this point emerges in the testimonia that follow. What is essential for our analysis is to note a clear trend in ancient interpretations of physiological data: women are presumed at home in conditions of physical and emotional extremity that discomfit male flesh and protocol, however these sort themselves as a temperature of life from one rhetorical moment to another in the ancient exegesis of desire. See further the researches of D. Halperin and A. Hanson (esp. at note 115) in this volume.

[5]Onians (1951), 31; on πευκάλιμος see Chantraine (1968–1980) 3.893.

in man consisted of air and that an individual's intelligence depended on the dryness of this air: "Understanding is the work of the pure and dry air. For moisture hinders intelligence, wherefore in sleep and in drunkenness and in surfeit understanding is diminished" (A19 *VS*).[6] The assault of emotion was also thought to be an endangering wetness. Emotion pours into a person and melts, loosens, dissolves him. Fear is "wet" (ὑγρόν, 122.4 W)[7] and causes Anakreon to "drip" (ἀνασταλύζω, 395.4 *PMG*). Painful anxiety "falls in drops" within the minds of Aiskhylos' chorus (στάζει, *Ag.* 179–80).[8] Envy melts the eyes and heart of the envious in a Hellenistic epigram (*AP* 11.193). The emotions of *erōs* are especially liquid and liquefying. *Erōs* pours, drips, heats, softens, melts, loosens, cooks, boils, dissolves.[9] Men pride themselves on being able to resist such assaults on their physiological and psychological boundaries. A fragment of Sophokles instructs us, "The chest of a good man does not soften" (fr. 195 P). Ancient medical theory endorses the view that dryness is best and is a masculine prerogative. According to Hippokrates, the maturity of the male physique is achieved when it attains and keeps its proper dry form, which occurs when the element of fire within "is no longer overmastering but standing still and the body no longer trembles with growth" (*Vict.* 33).

This condition of dry stability is never attained by the female physique, which presumably remains cold and wet all its life.[10] Partly by virtue of her innate wetness, woman is more subject than man to liquefying assaults upon body and mind, especially those of emotion. Aristotle tells us that the female is softer than the male (μαλακώτερον) and much more easily moved to tears, pity, jealousy, despondency, fear, and rash impulses (*HA* 9.1.608b); Empedokles calls woman πολυκλαύτων ("much in tears," B62.1 *VS*). Semonides catalogues the subjection of women to gluttony, extravagance, instability of mood, and sexual desire (7 W). Women are assumed to be markedly more open to erotic emotion than men and sexually insatiable once aroused. A long tradition concerning female lewdness derives from this assumption, of which a few examples may be mentioned. Aiskhylos warns against the "blazing eye" of a woman who has once "tasted man" (γυναικὸς . . . φλέγων ὄφθαλμός ἥτις ἀνδρὸς ἦ γεγευμένη, fr. 243 Nauck) and deprecates female license as "ready to dare anything" for love (παντόλμους ἔρωτας, *Ch.* 594). Sophokles observes that even women who have sworn to avoid the pain of childbirth cannot resist sexual desire (fr. 932 P). The lust of women is a frequent joke in Aristophanes (e.g., *Thesm.* 504ff.; *Ekkl.* 468–70; 616–20; *Nub.* 553ff.; *Lys.* 553ff.).[11] Alkiphron characterizes female sexual voracity as a "Kharybdis" (1.6.2), warning another man that his *hetaira* will swallow him whole (3.33). Both Hippokrates (*de Morb. Mul.* 1) and Plato (*Tim.* 91c) promote the theory of the "wandering womb," an explanation of feminine hysteria which is predicated on women's uncontrollable longing for sex. Aristotle takes female incontinence for granted as a consequence of feminine weakness (*EN* 7.7.1150b6) and a reason for marrying girls off not later than the age of eighteen (*Pol.* 7.14.1335a29). In the Greek historians, whenever mention is made of a society or state of affairs managed by women, it is assumed that such situations would feature total female promiscuity. For example, Philo of Byblos, accounting for traditions of matrilinear descent in antiquity, explains: "They traced their descent on the mother's side because women at that time had intercourse casually with any man they ran into." Philo takes it for granted that, unrestrained by an alternate system, women would incline to complete wantonness.[12]

What is the connection between wantonness and wetness? First, wetness makes women more vulnerable to Eros' onslaughts in psychic form than men. Second, female wetness gives women a weapon against excessive heat and dryness which men do not possess. The parching heat of the Dog Days, for example, is said by Hippokrates to be beneficial for those "phlegmatic by nature," a class which includes "women and watery men," but it causes the generality of men to "wither right up" (λίην γὰρ ἀναξηραίονται, *Aer.* 10.85f.). Aristotle pursues this matter in his *Problemata*. He asks the question, "Why are men less capable of sexual intercourse in summer but women more so?" and answers, "Because hot natures collapse in summer by excess of heat, while cold ones flourish. Now a man is hot and dry but a woman is cold and moist. So the power

[6]Kritias says that, in drunkenness, memory is melted out of the mind by forgetfulness, and the mind stumbles (B6.12 *VS*).

[7]The epithet is Valckenauer's conjecture for the unmetrical λυγρόν and is printed by most editors, although opinions remain divided on the wetness of fear: Kamerbeek in fact proposes αὗον ("dry"). See Renehan (1976), 37–38.

[8]See Fränkel, *ad loc.*, and cf. 1121; Eur., *Suppl.* 79–80.

[9]In the absence of any satisfactory etymology for ἐράω ("I desire") applied to one moved sexually, Onians suggests an original derivation from ἐράω ("I pour out"), related to ἔρση ("dew") and signifying in the middle voice "I pour myself out, emit liquid, am poured out." He compares στυγέω ("I hate") which began in the physical "I freeze, stiffen at": Onians (1951), 202 n. 4.

[10]Cf. Aristotle, *GA* 728a19–22; *Probl.* 879a; see also above, n. 4.

[11]See Dover (1973), 60–63; (1964), 31–32. Dover's account of this attitude is characteristically crisp: "A certain tendency to regard women as irresponsible and ever ready to yield to sexual temptation relieved a cuckolded husband of a sense of shame or inadequacy" (1973), 62.

[12]See Pembroke (1967), who discusses this tendency on the part of Greek writers to identify matriarchal situations with female promiscuity on the basis of little evidence, no evidence, or in the face of contradictory evidence. Also Pembroke (1965); Vidal-Naquet (1970).

of a man is diminished at that time but a woman's power flourishes because it is balanced by its contrary" (4.25.879a31–35).

We find in poetry too this concern for the withering effect of the Dog Days on the masculine physique. In a poem modeled on Hesiod (*Op.* 582–96), Alkaios represents the time of Seirios' rising as a season of blistering heat which parches men to incapacity while encouraging the license of women to burgeon (fr. 347 LP). As the poem shifts delicately from weather to sexuality, it becomes clear that the focus of male concern (and perhaps resentment) here is not a summer heat wave but the unwitherable appetite and capacity of the female sex:

> τέγγε πλεύμονας οἴνῳ, τὸ γὰρ ἄστρον περιτέλλεται,
> ἀ δ' ὥρα χαλέπα, πάντα δὲ δύψαις ὑπὰ καύματος,
> ἄχει δ' ἐκ πετάλων ἄδεα τέττιξ· πτερύγων δ' ὕπα
> κακχέει λιγύραν πύκνον ἀοίδαν, θέρος ὄπποτα
> φλόγιον †καθέταν ἐπιπτάμενον καταυδείη†
> ἄνθει δὲ σκόλυμος· νῦν δὲ γύναικες μιαρώταται,
> λέπτοι δ' ἄνδρες, ἐπεὶ δὴ κεφάλαν καὶ γόνα Σείριος
> ἄσδει.
>
> (347 LP)

> Wet your lungs with wine for the Star is coming round.
> The season is harsh, all things thirst beneath the heat.
> From the leaves the cricket sends sweet noise,
> pouring down from its wings
> one shrill song after another,
> whenever in blazing summer . . .
> the artichoke is blooming. And now is the time
> when women are at their most polluted
> but men are delicate, for the Dog Star
> parches head and knees.

One word calls for particular attention in this passage: μιαρώταται in line 6. Editors of the text generally advise us that we cannot know exactly what Alkaios means by "most polluted" here, and they reduce the word to a term of nonspecific abuse like "abominable" or "most pestilential."[13] However, Alkaios' style of abuse in other poems is anything but nonspecific, and a powerful clue to his meaning is contained in the passage of Hesiod on which he has very explicitly based this poem. In almost identical terms, Hesiod describes a midsummer scene where

[13]LSJ make a special category, "= μάχλος," for this passage. Page maintains "the usual meanings of μιαρός are inappropriate here" and renders "confounded," "damnable." Burnett (1983), 133, reminds us that Powell "gallantly proposed an emendation, φιαρώταται 'plumpest.'" See also Wilamowitz (1913), 63, n. 1.

artichokes bloom, crickets pour forth song after song, goats are rich and fat, wine is perfect, and women are "at their most wanton, while men are completely enfeebled" (μαχλόταται δὲ γυναῖκες, ἀφαυρότατοι δέ τοι ἄνδρες, *Op.* 586). Both poets agree on the physics of the situation: men are parched to impotence by the heat; women seem somehow to thrive in it, encouraged to burgeon alongside flora and fauna. In another passage Hesiod puts his anxiety more plainly.

> οὐ μὲν γάρ τι γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ λητίζετ' ἄμεινον
> τῆς ἀγαθῆς, τῆς δ' αὖτε κακῆς οὐ ῥίγιον ἄλλο,
> δειπνολόχης· ἥ τ' ἄνδρα καὶ ἴφθιμόν περ ἐόντα
> εὔει ἄτερ δαλοῖο καὶ ὠμῷ γήραϊ δῶκεν.
>
> (*Op.* 702–5)

> For a man wins no better prize than a good
> woman, and none more chilling than a bad one—
> always hunting something to devour.
> And no matter how strong he is,
> she roasts her man without fire,
> and hands him over to a raw old age.

Hesiod, in the midst of giving advice on choosing a wife, abandons metaphors of weather and identifies the withering factor as female sexual power itself. The voracious woman, by her unending sexual demands, "roasts her man" in the unquenchable fire of her appetite, drains his manly strength and delivers him to the "raw old age" of premature impotence.[14] We find a similar complaint in a later poet:

> ἐστι γυνὴ πυρὸς ἀντιδοθεῖσα
> δῶρον, ἀνιηρὸν τοῦ πυρὸς ἀντίδοτον·
> ἄνδρα γὰρ ἐκκαίει ταῖς φροντίσιν ἠδὲ μαραίνει
> καὶ γῆρας προπετὲς τῇ νεότητι φέρει.
>
> (*AP* 9.165.1–4; cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 57)

> Woman is the wrath of Zeus, a gift given in place of fire—cruel countergift!
> For she burns a man with cares and withers him up and brings old age on youth too soon.

And the archaic poet Arkhilokhos summarizes the female threat in two iambic verses:

> τῇ μὲν ὕδωρ ἐσφόρει
> δολοφρονέουσα χειρί, θητέρῃ δὲ πῦρ.
>
> (fr. 184 W)

[14]West (1978) adduces parallels *ad* Hes., *Op.* 700–5. See, also, Detienne (1977), 120.

She came carrying water in one hand
the tricky-minded female, and fire in the other.

The Greek poets find sexuality in women a fearsome thing;[15] it threatens the very essence of a man's manliness. The foundations of the threat appear to be two.

Congenitally more susceptible to the inducements of appetite than men, women do not experience either of the constraints which check the male. Women feel no physical need to control desire since, by virtue of innate wetness, female capacity is virtually inexhaustible. In addition, the female nature lacks the *sōphrosynē* ("soundness of mind" or "sobriety and self-control") by which men subject desires to rational mastery from within. *Sōphrosynē*, the essence of the power to keep one's physical and psychological boundaries intact, is a word of rich and varying overtones in its application to masculine exemplars, but feminine *sōphrosynē* always includes, and is frequently no more than, chastity.[16] From its first uses in Homer, *sōphrosynē* is the activity of checking some natural impulse or closing the boundaries of the *phrenes* ("wits") by will. The resulting "soundness" of *phrenes* is closely associated in Greek thought with *aidōs* ("shame"): both virtues concern self-containment. "What the classical *sōphrosynē* shares with the Homeric *aidōs* is chiefly a fear of overstepping boundaries," says Helen North. Aristotle concedes *sōphrosynē* to women but insists on defining it differently for female and for male, as for master and slave. For the man, *sōphrosynē* is rational self-control and resistance to excess; for the woman, *sōphrosynē* is dutifulness and obedience. A woman cannot control herself, so her *sōphrosynē* must consist in submitting herself to the control of others (*Pol.* 1260a20–24; 1277b20–24). Aristotle also denies to women a full measure of *aidōs*; the female is *anaidesteron* ("comparatively shameless," *HA* 608b12).[17] Exempt from shame as from all fear of drying up, woman goes at sex like a hippomaniac mare.[18]

[15]A man and woman in Theokritos debate this fear: 27.27–28.

[16]North (1966), 1.

[17]North concludes, "This view of feminine *aretē* aligns Aristotle with most of the Greeks except Sokrates and Plato. When the word *sōphrosynē* begins to mean 'chastity' for men as well as women (from the second half of the fifth century) masculine and feminine chastity prove to be differently defined: masculine chastity derives from self-control, the opposite of *hybris*, feminine chastity from obedience": *ibid.*, 76, n.105; see also 206; Dover (1978), 67–68; Freud, in a letter to Eduard Silberstein cited by Grosskurth (1980), 889: "A thinking man is his own legislator and confessor, and obtains his own absolution, but the woman, let alone the girl, does not have the measure of ethics in herself. She can only act if she keeps within the limits of morality, following what society has established as fitting. She is never forgiven if she has revolted against morality, possibly rightly so."

[18]"In eagerness for sexual intercourse," Aristotle explains, "of all female animals the mare comes first, next the cow. Mares become horse-mad and the term derived from this one animal is applied by way of abuse to women who are inordinate in their sexual desires" (*HA* 572a8–13).

Aristotle tells us that "the warmer the weather and the better their physical condition," the more eagerly do mares and cows seek intercourse. The female animal in heat cannot restrain herself; a bull-struck cow will mount the bull herself, warns Aristotle; no herdsman can check her (*HA* 572a30–b4).[19] Similarly, once initiated, women revel in sex and do not wish to stop. Being innately moist, they do not *need* to stop.[20] Having no *sōphrosynē*, they do not *think* to stop.[21]

The unfailing moisture and sexual drive of woman are part of a larger pattern, part of a larger harmony between women and the elements of nature in general. United by a vital liquidity with the elemental world, woman is able to tap the inexhaustible reservoirs of nature's procreative power. Man, meanwhile, holds himself fiercely and thoughtfully apart from this world of plants, animals, and female wantonness—doubly estranged from it, by his inherent dryness of form and by the *sōphrosynē* with which he maintains form. Marriage is the means, in the Greek view, whereby man can control the wild *erōs* of women and so impose civilized order on the chaos of nature. Thus we find a fifth-century bridegroom speaking of his bride as a wild animal which became, only after a period of confinement and kind treatment, "submissive to my hand and domesticated enough to make conversation" (Xenophon, *Oec.* 3.7–10).

[19]Cf. Arkhilokhos' eugenic anxiety in the *Cologne Epode* (39–41): δέδοιχ' ὅπως μὴ τυφλὰ κάλιτήμερα / σπουδῇ ἐπειγομένη / τὼς ὥσπερ ἡ κύων τέκῃ. ("I fear she'll give birth to blind pups / in hot haste like a bitch").

[20]It is noteworthy that, in Hippokratic theories about female *hysteria* and "the wandering womb," the factor which threatens to dry women is not sexual indulgence but rather deprivation (*De morb. mul.* 1; cf. Plato, *Tim.* 91c). Indeed, wetness itself may have been thought to be nourished by the heat of love. Plutarch proposes that "moisture, the most primary of all substances in nature, is the element that provides nourishment for heat. This is proved by the fact that flames increase when oil is added. Fire naturally feeds on liquid" (*Qu. conv.* 687a; 696b). Theophrastos takes a similar view: "Fire burns so long as it has moisture and moisture is its only food. Flame is made by the constant interchange between dry and moist" (*Meteor.* 2.2).

[21]Male homosexual activity seems not to have been regarded as drying and debilitating to the same degree as relations with a woman. Evidence mainly amounts to an argument from silence; the poets do not generally express this fear on the part of a male lover in connection with paederasty. Boys themselves, being comparatively moist creatures, were thought to share the feminine capacity for sex, but they were not similarly motivated by pleasure in relations with males and were presumably checked, even when pleasured, by the *sōphrosynē* innate in the male disposition. Risk of desiccation entered the picture, however, hand in hand with marriage plans, or so we may infer from Achilles Tatius' plea to his beloved boy: "Do not destroy the bloom of your youth before its time; for, among other things, this is the catastrophe of marriage: it dries up the prime of life. I beg you, Kharikles, for my sake, don't wither!" See also Hippokrates, *Vict.* 33; Xenophon, *Symp.* 8.21; Dover (1978), 52; 67.

The notion of female savagery persists in Greek thinking from prehistoric through classical times. "Woman is one great bestiality!" says Menander (μέγιστόν ἐστι θήριον γυνή, fr. 488 Kock). The Greeks were neither the first nor the last to subscribe to this notion; what is important for our purpose is to see where the notion led. The words of a later author, the second-century sophist Aelian, give some indication. In his treatise *On the Nature of Animals,* Aelian concludes his discussion of poisonous vipers by telling us that the asp is the most poisonous of all. Then he adds, "But a wild animal even more polluted [μιαρώτερον] than an asp is the woman who dabbles in poisons!" (*NA* 1.54).

The assimilation of woman to the world of raw nature is a coin with two sides. Its standard is sexuality. The presexual or asexual female in Greek thought is part of the wilderness, an untamed animal who, given a choice, prefers the wild life of Artemis, roaming the woods undomesticated and unloving of men.[22] The sexually initiated woman, on the other hand, soon proceeds through her licentiousness to bestialization, for to let oneself go in *erōs* is a bestializing experience.[23] We find these ideas put to full and precise use by Greek society, as part of a conceptual complex aimed at validating and perpetuating the civil institution of monogamous marriage and family life. This complex included the following notions: that a woman's life has no prime, but rather a season of unripe virginity followed by a season of overripe maturity, with the single occasion of defloration as the dividing line; that marriage is the means whereby a woman can be cleansed of bestiality and complete

[22]The unwed maiden is ἀγρότερα (Pindar, *Pyth.* 9.6; Homer, *Il.* 21.471; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 6.13; Pausanias, 1.19.6), or ἄδμητος (Homer, *Od.* 6.383; 4.637; 6.109; Sophokles, *El.* 1239), or ἀταύρωτος (Aiskhylos, *Ag.* 245; Aristophanes, *Lys.* 217). She is a fawn (Anakreon, 408 *PMG*), a heifer (Epikrates, fr. 9 Kock), a filly (Anakreon, 417 *PMG*), a viper (Sophokles, *Ant.* 531), a gazelle (*AP* 5.292), an unfledged bird (Aristophanes, fr. 582 Kock), a swelling bean (Aristophanes, *ibid.*), a ripening apple (Sappho, 105a LP).

[23]The mature and sexually active woman is a wild sow pawing to be loosed (Aristophanes, *Lys.* 683), a horse in need of tight reining (Plutarch, *Coniug. praec.* 139b), a bitch (Homer, *Il.* 3.180; 6.344; 6.356; *Od.* 11.424; 11.427; 8.319; 19.154; Arkhilokhos, *Col. Ep.* 35), an ass (Semonides, 7 W), a weasel (*ibid.*), a brood mare (Pindar, fr. 122 S–M). Prostitutes take their names from insects or animals; Anaxilas offers a compendium of such names (fr. 22 Kock), e.g., Phryne ("Toad"), Lykaina ("Wolf"), Muia ("Fly"). The word ἵππος ("horse") is an idiom for "lecherous woman"; Themistokles once yoked four prostitutes to a chariot and drove them into the marketplace (*FGrHist* 2.491; Athen., 533d). Plutarch tells us that Philip lost his enthusiasm for sleeping with Olympias when he entered her chamber one night to find a huge serpent stretched out beside her on the bed. "This more than anything else abated Philip's ardor" (*Alex.* 2.4–5). Woman, as we have seen, is a tame or tameable animal in Aristotle (*GA* 775b4–7) and in Xenophon (*Oec.* 7.10); for Aelian, "a wild animal more polluted than an asp" (*NA* 1.54; see further below). Many agricultural and animal metaphors for the female genitalia are enumerated by Henderson (1975), 117. See also duBois (1988); Golden (1988), 1–12.

herself as a human being; that the procreative act of sex between man and woman, especially within the context of marriage, is to be distinguished from all varieties of sexual flirtation, seduction, and dalliance as "work" is from "play"; that sexual "play" pollutes a woman while sexual "work" does not and may in fact retrieve her from pollution. Let us consider these notions in closer detail.

RIPENESS

It is one of the complaints urged against war by Aristophanes' Lysistrata that it leaves girls aging alone in their maiden apartments (*Lys.* 593). When her interlocutor retorts, "Do not men also age?" Lysistrata answers, "Well yes, but the word doesn't mean the same thing!" (μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' οὐκ εἶπας ὅμοιον). Let us test Lysistrata's assertion by examining some of the words used in Greek to describe women, and women's age, and see whether they mean the same thing when used of men.

Anakreon puts into a woman's mouth the plaintive words:

> κνυζή τις ἤδη καὶ πέπειρα γίνομαι
> σὴν διὰ μαργοσύνην.
>
> (432 *PMG*)
>
> I am becoming a wrinkled, rotten thing
> as a result of your debauchery!

The word πέπειρα ought to mean "ripe," "at the peak," "in its prime" (in Latin, *maturus*), as it does when used of fruit (Theophrastos, *H.P.* 3.6.9), or of disease (Hippokrates, *Acut.* 390), or of young boys who are like figs ripe upon the tree and in danger of being despoiled (*AP* 12.185), boys who are "good-looking" (καλοί) and "ripe for lovers" (φιλέουσι πέπειρος, *AP* 12.9).[24] Anakreon, however, appears to use πέπειρα as a synonym for κνυζή, a word which Herodian suggests means "shrivelled up and all but rotten," as of fruit ready to fall to the ground. The word

[24]To derogate a boy who is past his prime, Theokritos uses the adjective πέπειρα not in its positive degree, but in the comparative formulation "riper than a pear" (ἀπίοιο πεπαίτερος, 7.120), a phrase whose exact reference remains unclear (Gow, *ad loc.*, suggests "Theocritus is perhaps thinking of the rapidity with which ripeness passes into rottenness in this fruit"), but which in its context precisely underscores our argument for a misogynist usage. The boy in question is overripe by virtue of his actual years, *not* his sexual experience (erotic aloofness is the point of his lover's complaint), and his ἄνθος is described in the following verse by a verb (ἀπορρεῖ) in the present indicative tense: "Thy fair bloom is falling," Gow renders. Nowhere do we find, for it would be a contradiction in terms, the female ἄνθος falling in the present tense: woman's peak is a perfective experience. This Theokritean passage was brought to my attention by David Halperin.

πέπειρα here must mean not "ripe" but "overripe" and the cause of this condition is clearly stated: σὴν διὰ μαργοσύνην. Sexual indulgence brings the woman not to her peak but past it. Aristophanes uses this adjective as a synonym for γραῖα ("old woman," *Ekkl.* 876 and schol.), and Arkhilokhos applies it dismissively to the Neoboule whose "insane" sexual license (κόρον μαινόλις) has relegated her to the undesirable category (*Col. Ep.* 26–31). Proof of Neoboule's insatiable appetite for sex is straightforward: ἄνθος δ' ἀπερρύηκε παρθενήιον ("her maiden flower has fallen"). Her "overripeness" consists in this same fact. Its result is to deprive her of charm and render her a subject for curses. Clearly, here as in Anakreon's poem, πέπειρα is used without approbation in a way that somewhat distorts its lexical meaning.[25] And behind the distortion lurk some assumptions—namely, that a woman's first sexual experience catapults her into uncontrolled sexual activity and out of the category of desirable sex-object, for she is past her peak the moment the ἄνθος (flower) falls.

A comparable distortion can be seen in Greek usage of the word ὀπώρα. This word means "fruit-time," "the time between the rising of Seirios and of Arktouros when the fruit ripens," and also the fruit itself. When used metaphorically of males, ὀπώρα signifies "the bloom of youth" or "ripe manhood," and does not exclude the pursuit of sexual fulfillment.[26] But when used of females, ὀπώρα means virginity and is to be withheld from all erotic experimentation. Danaos warns his daughters:

τέρειν' ὀπώρα δ' εὐφύλακτος οὐδαμῶς.
(Aiskhylos, *Suppl.* 998)

The tender fruit-time is by no means easy to safeguard.

and they piously reply:

ἐμῆς δ' ὀπώρας οὕνεκ' εὖ θράσει, πάτερ·
(1015)

Don't you worry about my fruit-time, father!

When not thus guarded, a woman's ὀπώρα becomes blackened (as an overripe fruit?), undesirable and accursed:

[25]A similar ambiguity perhaps contributes to confusion between δρυπεπής ("ripened on the tree" of figs, e.g., Aristophanes, *Lys.* 564) and δρυπετής ("overripe, ready to fall" of prostitutes, e.g., Aristophanes fr. 141 Kock) which are constant variant readings for one another in manuscripts (see LSJ).

[26]E.g., Pindar, *Isthm.* 2.4–5: ὅστις ἐὼν καλὸς εἶχεν 'Αφροδίτας/ εὐθρόνου μνάστειραν ἄδιστον ὀπώραν ("whichever beautiful boy attained the sweet season of ripeness, wooer of fair-throned Aphrodite").

ἐρρέτω μέλαιν' ὀπώρα· πᾶσι γὰρ χαρίζεται·
(Alexis, fr. 165 Kock)

Her fruit-time is past: all gone black. To hell with her!
The truth is, she hands out her favors to everyone.

The word ἡλικία is also used differently of men and of women. For men it means a mature time of life during which they become, as Xenophon says, "useful" or "good" (χρήσιμοι) and then continue to improve with age (ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἐπιδιδόασιν, *Oec.* 2.10). For women it means virginity. Aiskhines, as an example, uses the word ἡλικία twenty-three times: twenty-two times of men in the sense "time of life" or "prime of life" or "bloom"; once of a woman, discovered by her father to have been unchaste and so walled up in a house with a horse, "since he found out that his own daughter had been ruined and had not preserved her bloom [ἡλικία] until marriage."[27]

Within these usages is operating an identification of female sexuality with voracious promiscuity and of virginity with the best moment of female life. Implicit here is a denial that free sexual activity and "blooming" are compatible for a woman. There is no such thing as sexually vigorous ripe womanhood in the Greek view. At her peak a woman is sexually untried, whereas the ἡλικία or ὀπώρα of a man emphatically includes sexual activity. "May the flower of my youth remain unplucked" (ἥβας δ' ἄνθος ἄδρεπτον ἔστω, Aiskhylos, *Suppl.* 663) is the impassioned prayer of the daughters of Danaos: they are praying to avert marriage. As soon as she lets her ἄνθος (flower) fall, the female is translated to the slippery slope of overripeness: "A woman's prime is an inch of time!" wails Lysistrata (τῆς δὲ γυναικὸς μικρὸς ὁ καιρός, 596).[28]

The analogy from nature, which we have noticed pervading Greek

[27]A fragment of Philemon suggests that the adjective σαπρός, when applied to a woman, could carry the connotations of excess and moral discredit which we have seen imported into πέπειρα. The adjective σαπρός (in Latin, *putridus*) means "rotten" of a rope (Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 1343–44) and "too old for sexual activity" of an aging woman (*ibid.* 1380; *Ekkl.* 884, 1098) or an old man (*Plut.* 1086; *Pax* 698). Philemon's verses, however, denounce a woman as σαπρός without any hint that she is old: σαπρὰν γυναῖκα δ' ὁ τρόπος εὔμορφον ποιεῖ· / πολὺ γὰρ διαφέρει σεμνότης εὐμορφίας (fr. 170 Kock). ("Her way of life makes her putrid, though she has a fine shape. For self-respect is a far different thing than shapeliness.") It is a way of life characterized by the absence of σεμνότης (personal dignity or self-respect). Like Neoboule, she has forfeited charm, replacing "shapeliness" with decay. Plausibly, as for Neoboule and the anonymous woman of Anakreon, fr. 432, this forfeiture is a consequence of sexual license, and σεμνότης has the sense "modesty appropriate to a maiden" (cf. Euripides, *IA* 1344). The overall purport of these jibes is clear: sexual activity rots a woman.

[28]Pindar sees the καιρός of female life as so fleeting a thing that Danaos must arrange "the swiftest possible marriage" (ὠκύτατον γάμον) for his fifty daughters, in the form of a foot-race, lest midday overtake them unwed (*Pyth.* 9.114).

notions of female *erōs*, underwrites these obliquities of diction. A woman who is being compared to an apple on a tree or a flower in a field can be said to wither the moment she is "plucked." Plucking is defloration. Sappho demonstrates this in two swift images, probably from a wedding song, comparing the bride to an apple and then to a hyacinth:

οἷον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὔσδῳ
ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπηες·
οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι·
(105a LP)[29]

As a sweet apple reddens on a high branch
high on the highest branch, and the apple pickers forgot—
well no, they didn't forget: weren't able to reach.

οἷαν τὰν ὐάκινθον ἐν ὄρει ποίμενες ἄνδρες
πόσσι καταστείβοισι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος·
(105c LP)

As a hyacinth in the mountains that shepherds
trample underfoot, its purple flower on the ground.

An epigram ascribed to Plato (Diog. Laert. 3.32) puts similar sentiments upon an apple thrown as an invitation to love:

μῆλον ἐγώ· βάλλει με φιλῶν σέ τις· ἀλλ' ἐπίνευσον,
Ξανθίππη· κἀγὼ καὶ σὺ μαραινόμεθα.

I am an apple, tossed by someone who loves you: now you,
Xanthippe, nod your head 'Yes!' You and I are both withering.

A Hellenistic epigram telescopes the female situation sourly:

πᾶσα γυνὴ χόλος ἐστιν· ἔχει δ' ἀγαθὰς δύω ὥρας·
τὴν μίαν ἐν θαλάμῳ, τὴν μίαν ἐν θανάτῳ.
(*AP* 11.381)

Woman is bile, and that's all. Her good seasons are two:
marriage bed and death bed.

[29]Himerios (*Declam.* 9.16) comments on this poem: "Sappho compared a virgin to an apple, allowing those who would pluck it before its time not even to taste it with their fingertips, but he who would pluck it in the right season might watch its beauty grow." Female beauty grows *until* the moment of plucking.

WORK AND PLAY

Somewhat at odds with the notion that virginity is the prime of female life, however, is the socially indispensable image of marriage as that function which can secure for a woman, against the ravages of time and putrefaction, some measure of fulfillment, personal and sexual. Ancient Greek society succeeded in recommending the institution of civil marriage by means of a complex machinery of cultural propaganda, surrounding both the progenitive act itself and the rituals of the wedding ceremony. Here, as with the ideal of "ripeness," linguistic usage reflects and reinforces a cultural program. Consider, for example, the metaphor of work and play.

Generally throughout Greek literature, the act of sexual intercourse that engenders or aims at engendering offspring is called "work," while all other varieties of erotic activity are "play." As he must labor with his land to produce food, so the Greek husband labors with his wife to produce children, by means of the πόνος ("labor") or the ἔργον ("work") or the κάμνος ("toil") of the sexual act.[30] Thus the Spartans defined the purpose of marriage as "for the work of begetting" (ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς τεκνώσεως ἔργον, Plutarch, *Comp. Lyc. cum Num.* 4.77). Ancient betrothal formulas specify this ἔργον as that of "sowing" (ἐπὶ παίδων γνησίων σπόρῳ, Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.23) or "ploughing" (γνησίων παίδων ἐπ' ἀρότρῳ, Menander, *Perik.* 435), while in comic contexts the verb "to hoe" (σκαλεύειν, or its cognate σκαλαθύρειν) is frequently used of sexual intercourse (Aristophanes, *Pax* 440; *Ekkl.* 611). In Homer, the act of love which engenders "splendid offspring" is called "love-work" (φιλοτήσια ἔργα, *Od.* 11.246). Aiskhylos refers to the procreation of Epaphos as "this work of Zeus, this engendering" (Διὸς τόδ' ἔργον καὶ τόδ' ἂν γένος, *Suppl.* 588; *cf.* 1034–37). When Hippokrates describes the activity of sexual intercourse as an exertion that reduces the flesh by melting, he terms it πόνος (*Vict.* 2.58). By means of the πόνος of sex, the Greek husband domesticates his wild bride and, just as he does for his land and the beasts on it, brings to fruition what would otherwise remain savage and unproductive.[31]

Distinct from the πόνος of sex in Greek diction we find the παιδία ("play") of erotic dalliance. Erotic "play" may include premarital, extramarital, homosexual, or even marital relations, provided these do not take the form of coitus for procreative purposes. What generally distin-

[30]Cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.11.

[31]Woman, like the Greek soil, reverts to wilderness if not "worked": see the extended discussion of duBois (1988).

guishes the two terms in Greek erotic theory is product. Erotic "play" produces pleasure. Erotic "work" can generate offspring.[32] Thus a poem of the *Anthology* designates as παίγνια ("games") the foreplay that precedes sexual ἔργα proper:

> ἔστω προύνεικα πρῶτα θιγήματα
> καὶ τὰ πρὸ ἔργων παίγνια.
> (*AP* 12.209)
>
> Let there be lewd touching first
> and games before the work.

Note the implication here that erotic "play" is lewd by definition (προύνεικα). This sentiment becomes overt moral theory in Plutarch, according to whom a "whorish" (ἑταιρικός) woman is distinguishable from a proper wife by her use of myrrh and rouge (instead of olive oil and soap) and her willingness to "play with her husband" (πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα παῖξαί τι, *Coniug. praec.* 142a). Elsewhere Plutarch expresses the view that the pleasure of sexual dalliance is not an aim of marriage but in fact has a debilitating effect, for women who "gain mastery of their husbands by means of sexual pleasure" (χειρούμεναι δι' ἡδονῆς) render them degenerate fools, just as Kirke did Odysseus and his men (*ibid.* 139a).

As far as women were concerned, Greek society made use of the work/play distinction in two ways. First, to exclude the female from erotic "play" and confine her to the utilitarian "work" of love within a domestic context. Second, to bracket together (as did metaphors of sterility and wildness drawn from nature) the prostitute and the virgin in one category, in order to oppose this category to that of legitimate wife, for the recommendation of the latter. Both the κόρη and the ἑταίρα are outside marriage, outside work. Both represent unproductive, unserious conditions, not to be lingered in.

Unwed girls are παῖδες ("children") and are thought to spend their

[32]Huizinga (1949), 52, shows the same distinction operating in the Blackfoot language of the Algonquin Indians, where the verbal stem *koani* has two major usages, to designate all children's games and to designate illicit erotic relationships. German has *Spielkind* for a child born out of wedlock. Huizinga lists other examples (Dutch, Old English, Sanskrit) of a widespread and fundamental equation between play and erotic activity, especially in illicit contexts. "It is not the act as such that the spirit of language tends to conceive as play; rather the road thereto, the preparation for and introduction to 'love' . . . but it would be erroneous to incorporate the sexual act itself, as love-play, in the play category. The biological process of pairing does not answer the formal characteristics of play as we postulated them. Language also normally distinguishes between love-play and copulation. The term 'play' is especially or even exclusively reserved for erotic relationships falling outside the norm" (pp. 62–63). Cf. Achilles Tatius, 1.10.

lives largely in play. With the image of Nausikaa and her handmaidens playing at their laundry (Homer, *Od.* 6.92), and then playing with their ball (6.100), we may contrast the married women of epic who seem to spend their lives at the loom.[33] The eccentric Kyrene of Pindar spurns not only domestic work but also passing time in τέρψιας ("play" or "amusements") with the girls of her house (*Pyth.* 9.18–19); τέρψιας is also the word used by Arkhilokhos for his sport with the maiden of the *Cologne Epode* (13). In his epithalamium of Helen, Theokritos says that, had she not been taken in marriage, the bride could have "played until deep dawn with her playmates" (παῖδα . . . σὺν παισὶ . . . παίσδειν ἐς βαθὺν ὄρθρον, 18.13–14). Theokritos goes on to describe how marriage will transform Helen's unproductive virgin state (likened to a cornfield without corn, a treeless garden, an untamed horse) into the ἔργα of the fruitful wife: spinning, weaving, childbearing, and song. In a fragment of Sophokles, young girls lament the abrupt difference that marriage makes in a female life and describe the carefree prenuptial period:

> αἳ νέαι μὲν ἐν πατρὸς
> ἥδιστον, οἶμαι, ζῶμεν ἀνθρώπων βίον.
> τερπνῶς γὰρ ἀεὶ παῖδας ἀνοία τρέφει.
> (fr. 583.3–5 P)
>
> We young girls have the sweetest time of our life
> in the house of our father, I think:
> carelessness keeps us delightedly children,
> day after day.

The Greek wedding ceremony dramatizes the bride's transition from her "wild" days of play to the civilized work of married life. On the day before the wedding, Pollux informs us, the bride performed preliminary rites (προαύλια or προτέλεια) in which she said farewell to her girlhood and consecrated her toys to Artemis (Pollux, 3.39; Pausanias, 2.33.1). A number of epigrams in the *Anthology* commemorate such an event; in the following, a girl dedicates her tambourine, ball,[34] headdress, and childish garments to Artemis with the words:

[33]Plutarch tells of the Kyrenaian heroine Aretephile, who saved her city from destruction, then promptly reentered the women's quarters and put on her proper female occupation like a garment of days: "And for the rest of her life she worked at the loom, leading a quiet existence with her friends and relatives" (*Mul. virt.* 257e).

[34]With the σφαῖρα (ball) of 6.280 we should compare Anakreon, 358 *PMG* and construe his adjective ἐρατεινή, usually translated "lovely," as a quasi-technical term referring to the ball's conventional use as a mechanism of seduction and flirtation. The ball, like the apple, is especially useful in love-play as a means of challenging another person's boundaries without incurring the risk and responsibility of personal contact by hand or gift. A touch or a proffered gift *demands* a response; a tossed ball may be missed or ignored without

Λατῶ, τὺ δὲ παιδὸς ὑπὲρ Τιμαρετείας
θηκαμένα, σώζοις. . . .

(*AP* 6.280)

Daughter of Leto, accept these offerings
from the child's hand of Timareteia
and keep her safe. . . .

An alternative ritual is mentioned by Photios, who says that as part of the wedding rite the bride's father sent to her new *oikos* gifts of gold and little dishes containing "the playthings of her girlhood" (παρθένια παίγνια, Photios, *s.v.* λεκανίς). Catullus' hymeneal chorus closes its song at the door of the nuptial chamber with the instruction: "Now we have played enough, it is time for you two to go to work!" (*Lusimus satis. At boni coniuges . . . exercete,* 61.225–28).

The wedding ceremony ritually replaces the bride's childhood toys with symbols of her new working life. Vase paintings show us that members of the wedding procession carried domestic utensils from the repertoire of women's work (spindles, pestles, sieves, winnowing baskets, loaves of bread), and Pollux records that the bride herself carried out of her house a pestle and a sieve, "symbols, obviously, of her own proper labor" (σημεῖα, ὡς εἰκός, αὐτουργίας, 3.37–38) to be hung above the door of the nuptial chamber. Solon ordained that brides should carry a vessel for roasting barley (φρύγετρον) in the wedding procession "as a symbol of barley work" (σημεῖον ἀλφιτουργίας, Pollux, 1.246). The wedding ceremony also dramatizes the shedding of virgin "wildness" and transition to civilized wifehood. The bride completes her preliminary rites by offering the ἀπαρχαί (first fruits or primal offerings) of her hair to Artemis, perhaps to symbolize trimming the wild foliage of her head in final tribute to the goddess of the wild condition.[35] After marriage she will wear her hair bound; loose or tossed hair is the sign of the bacchante or the prostitute.[36] The bride then takes her nuptial bath. The bath is a crucial moment in her transition from girlhood to wifehood. Girls in the Troad waded into the River Skamandros to wash off their wildness with the words: "Take, Skamandros, my virginity" (Λάβε μου, Σκάμανδρε, τὴν παρθενίαν, ps.-Aiskhines, *Epist.* 10.3.680).[37]

dishonor. Once she graduates to married work, the girl will have no further use for such tools of erotic play.

[35]On the haircutting ceremony, "a fusion of marriage custom and mourning custom," see Barrett (1964), 2–3; Reckford (1972), 416–18.

[36]E.g., Arkhilokhos, 31 W; Euripides, *Bakkh.* 695; *AP* 6.275; 276; 281.

[37]It is a familiar dogma of ancient thought, anthropologists tell us, that moments of transition from one state of life to another are high points of danger, especially vulnerable

The "wildness" of women, then, is a notion that cooperates with the work/play distinction to recommend marriage as the context wherein a female may transform savagery, sterility, and uselessness into a fruitful *kosmos* of life. Even biologically, according to Aristotle, the female nature needs the "work" of sexual relations with a man to fulfill itself: he regards the female menses as semen which is deficient by virtue of being "insufficiently worked on" (δεόμενον ἐργασίας, *GA* 728a). The fruitlessness of play and the futility of wild nature reinforce each other to discourage women from both self-indulgent eroticism and self-absorbed asceticism. The bride is fortunate to escape her wilderness of barren choices. This conviction is given point during the wedding ceremony when a young boy crowned with thorns circulates among the wedding guests, offering bread from a sieve and repeating the formula: ἔφυγον κακόν, εὗρον ἄμεινον ("I have fled evil, I have found what is better").[38] So the thorny child bride graduates to domestic productivity, grateful to have been salvaged for civilization by her husband's cultural insight.

WOMEN LEAK

Women, we have observed, are wet. Aristotle tells us that the wet (τὸ ὑγρόν) is that which is not bounded by any boundary of its own but can readily be bounded, while the dry (τὸ ξηρόν) is that which is already bounded by a boundary of its own but can with difficulty be bounded (*De gen. et corr.* 329b31–33). If we consider the ancient conception of gender in the light of this distinction, we see that woman is to be differentiated from man, in the ancient view, not only as wet from dry but as content from form, as the unbounded from the bounded, as polluted from pure, and that these qualities are necessarily related to one another.

The image of woman as a formless content is one that is expressed explicitly in the philosophers. Plato compares the matter of creation to a mother, in his *Timaios,* for it is a ὑποδοχή ("receptacle," "reservoir,"

to spirits, agencies, influences, and the whole "bacteria of invisible mischief" that swarm the air of human society, as Crawley puts it (1927), 1.19. See Gennep (1960), 26; Douglas (1966), 96. At such crisis points, rituals instigated as safeguards usually include purificatory measures to wash off the past and assimilate new strength for the future. Baths are standard. Transition is also marked by fire, fumigation, feasting, anointing, or exchange of clothes. An illicit or impure transition is one not marked by such ritual, an illicit transgressor is one who does not trouble to wash off the pollution of the old status so as to celebrate entry into the new. Thus the adulterer (μοιχός) invades the chamber of his mistress "without feasting or washing his hands" in a fragment of Sophokles (1127 P). On ritual bathing as a nuptial necessity, see Ginouvès (1962), esp. 265–82.

[38]Zenobios, 3.99; *Souda s.v.* ἔφυγον κακόν; Haropkration, *s.v.* λικνοφόρος; Samter (1901), 99; Detienne (1977), 174, n. 83; and see further below.

"admission," 49a, 50d) which is "shapeless" (ἄμορφος), "viewless" (ἀνόρατος), "all-receiving" (πανδεχής) and which "takes its form and activation from whatever shapes enter it" (κινούμενόν τε καὶ διασχηματιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν εἰσιόντων, 50b). Aristotle accords to the male in the act of procreation the role of active agent, contributing "motion" (κίνησις) and "formation" (γένεσις) while the female provides the "raw material" (ὕλη), as when a bed (the child) is made by a carpenter (the father) out of wood (the mother) (*GA* 716a6–7; 727b31–34; 729b15–21). Man determines the form, woman contributes the matter. Aristotle expresses a similar view about ὕλη in his *Physics* (192a20–25), and we might note that the Pythagorean table of oppositions sets πέρας ("boundary" or "limit") and ἄρρεν ("masculine") against ἄπειρον ("the unbounded") and θῆλυ ("feminine") (Aristotle, *Met.* 986a22ff).

The assumptions about women that underlie the views of Plato, Aristotle, and the Pythagoreans can be traced to the earliest legends of the Greeks. In myth, woman's boundaries are pliant, porous, mutable. Her power to control them is inadequate, her concern for them unreliable. Deformation attends her. She swells, she shrinks, she leaks, she is penetrated, she suffers metamorphoses. The women of mythology regularly lose their form in monstrosity. Io turns into a heifer, Kallisto becomes a bear, Medusa sprouts snakes from her head and Skylla yelping dogs from her waist. The Sirens and the Sphinx accumulate unmatching bestial parts, while Daphne passes into leaf and Pasiphae into a mechanical cow. The Graiai make themselves repellent by sharing one human form amongst them, passing an eye and a tooth back and forth as needed. Salmakis merges her form with that of Hermaphroditos to produce a bisexual monster. The Hydra generates heads as fast as they can be lopped off.[39] And of course the Amazons, as their name (a negative prefix attached to the word for "breast") implies, owe their fearsomeness to the zeal with which they adapt personal form—their own.

[39]There are male shape-changers too (e.g., Proteus in the *Odyssey*, Dionysos in Euripides' *Bakkhai*, and the amorous Zeus of various legends), but it is notable that men who shift shape seem generally able to shift it back at will—that is, to command form even within change. That Zeus can pass through bestialization (e.g., as a swan for Leda) or feminization (e.g., as a mother of Athene and Dionysos) to recovery of his proper form seems an assertion of his self-control, in sharp contrast to the helpless case of many of his paramours. Mortal men who transgress boundaries as adulterers, on the other hand, appear frequently to be feminized in the process, as Aigisthos is "Woman!" to the old men of Agamemnon's household (Aiskhylos, *Ag.* 1625). Athenaios tells us that the Lydian men "became thoroughly effeminate in their souls and adopted the life of women" after a certain outrageous act of public adultery, thereby bringing upon themselves the tyranny of Omphale, famed in myth as the woman who put Herakles in a dress (515f–516). From Aelian we learn that adulterers at Gortyn were made to wear a crown of wool "to indicate they were unmanly, womanish and lecherous" (*VH* 12.12).

At the same time, the women of myth are notorious adaptors of the forms and boundaries of others. They repeatedly open containers which they are told not to open (e.g., Pandora, the daughters of Kekrops, Danae) or destroy something placed in a container in their keeping (as Althaia does the *psyche* of Meleagros). They prove unreliable as containers themselves; both Zeus and Apollo find it necessary to snatch offspring out of a mother's womb and internalize it for safekeeping (as Zeus takes Dionysos from Semele, Apollo rescues Asklepios from Koronis), while Kronos swallows his children alive as soon as they emerge from Rhea.[40] Even more distressing are the numerous women of myth who submit masculine form to personal and violent revision. Skylla clips a vital lock from her father's head, Agave beheads her son with her bare hands, Medeia pulls the plug on Talos, Kybele unmans Attis with an axe, and Gaia gives her son a sickle to abbreviate his father in the same way. Mythical women deny male boundaries by enveloping male form in a fatal formlessness, as Klytemnestra encloses Agamemnon in a "garment that has no boundaries" (ἄπειρον ὕφασμα, Eur., *Or.* 25), as Deinaneira covers Herakles in a "cloud of death" (φονίᾳ νεφέλᾳ, Soph., *Tr.* 831) that eats the form of his flesh, as Nephele entraps Ixion in the delusion of her own body: "He lay with a cloud—sweet lie!" (νεφέλᾳ παρελέξατο ψεῦδος γλυκύ, Pind., *Pyth.* 2.36–37). Love is the principal motivation for female action throughout these legends; nor should we forget that Aphrodite herself was born from the sea-foam around Ouranos' castrated genitals. And it is significant to note that Greek myth confers upon the typical crime of women a stereotypical punishment in the story of the Daughters of Danaos. These forty-nine girls find it expedient to murder their bridegrooms on their wedding night and are therefore condemned to spend eternity in the underworld, gathering water in a sieve. The sieve is a utensil that we will encounter more than once in our investigation of feminine symbology. The sieve of the Danaidai sums up in a single hellish image all that is problematic in the relation between women and boundaries.[41]

This same mythological groundwork of assumptions can be discerned not only in the arguments of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, but also in the acts of legislators, the images of poets, the conventions of society, and the rituals of religion: women are formless creatures who cannot or will not or do not maintain their own boundaries and who are awfully adept at confounding the boundaries of others. When we begin to search for the aetiology of this conception, we encounter a deep and

[40]Kronos' motives are admittedly hostile, yet the action, structurally viewed, implies some disesteem for the female container. Rhea's name is pertinent, derived from the verb ῥέειν, "to flow, stream, pour, gush out."

[41]On the Danaids, see the recent survey by Garvie (1969), 234–35.

abiding mistrust of τὸ ὑγρόν ("the wet") in virtue of its ability to transform and deform.

We have already noted that Greek men ascribe to the female in general a tendency to "let herself go" in emotion or appetite, a tendency encouraged by her wet nature and by the liquid or liquefying nature of emotions and appetites themselves; men take pride in resisting such dissolution. This putative distinction between male and female tendencies was given early expression in Greek society by the legislation of Solon, which restricted the walks, feasts, trousseaux, mourning, food, drink, and sexual activity of women, and also later by the institution of the γυναικονόμοι ("supervisors of women"), special magistrates appointed to maintain feminine *eukosmia* ("decency" or "good order").[42] For whereas the male nature credited itself with possessing sufficient sobriety and self-control to maintain its own *eukosmia*, the female nature was not so credited. Solon's legislation is but one well-publicized example of a complex array of restrictions on the movements and attire and actions of woman, on the spaces and gestures and garments within which she lived. A similar resolve informs all these restrictions: since woman does not bound herself, she must be *bounded*. This is achieved by organization of her space, prescription of her gestures, ordering of her rituals, imposition of headgear, attendants, and other trappings.

A good woman does not exceed the boundary of her *oikos*.[43] On the shield of Akhilleus a wedding procession is depicted, moving past local matrons each standing in the doorway of her own house (*Il.* 18.490f; cf. Hesiod, *Scut.* 270f.). At news of the defeat at Khaironeia, the women of Athens ventured as far as their front doors to inquire after husbands, fathers, or brothers, and even this was considered unworthy of them and of their city, according to the orator Lykourgos (*Against Leokrates* 40). In Pheidias' statue at Elis, Plutarch says, the tortoise on which Aphrodite rests her foot symbolizes a woman's life, closed upon itself in its own domestic space (*Is. et Os.* 75). Within the *oikos* chaste women are lodged in the upper or inner rooms (ὑπερώιον or γυναικωνῖτις), and this is the space to be penetrated by lovers (e.g., *Il.* 16.134f.). Men are habitually leaving the house to confront the outdoors in war, commerce, political life, friendship, the fields, the sea, the *agora*. Man is made for ὑπαιθρία ἔργα ἔξω ("work outside in the open air") and woman for τὰ ἔνδον ("things within").[44]

Neither the body nor the speech of a "chaste and sensible" *(sōphrōn)*

[42]Wehrli (1962), 33–38; *RE*, s.v. *gunaikonomoi*.

[43]See especially Woodbury (1978), 296–97, with references.

[44]Xenophon, *Oec.* 7.20, 22, 30; cf. Demosthenes, *Contra Neaer.* 59.122; Plato, *Rep.* 9.579b. On distinctions of space, see further Vernant (1974), 124–70; Nagler (1974), 78; Padel (1983), 3–19.

woman is "for the public" (δημόσιος), Plutarch says; moreover, her feelings, character and disposition must be kept hidden (*Coniug. praec.* 142d; cf. Thoukydides, 2.45). Euripides distinguishes the hidden nature of women's virtue from the public nature of man's:

> μέγα τι θηρεύειν ἀρετάν,
> γυναιξὶ μὲν κατὰ Κύπριν κρυπτάν, ἐν ἀνδράσι δ' αὖ
> κόσμος ἐνὼν ὁ μυριοπληθὴς μείζω πόλιν αὔξει.
> (*IA* 568–72)
>
> The quest for virtue is a great thing:
> for women it is a secret quest concerned with love,
> but for men, the good order innate in each nature
> multiplies to make the city thrive.

A fragment of Sophokles warns women to keep their own shame closely concealed:

> σύγγνωτε κἀνάσχεσθε σιγῶσαι· τὸ γὰρ
> γυναιξὶν αἰσχρὸν σὺν γυναῖκα δεῖ στέγειν.
> (fr. 679 P)
>
> Cooperate, restrain yourselves in silence:
> women have an obligation to cover up womanly shame.

Herodotos includes among his details of the bizarre, reversed world of the Egyptians (2.35) that these people knead dough with their feet, write from right to left, and send their women out for marketing, while the men stay home and work at the loom.[45]

[45]In Xenophon's view it shames a man to stay at home (*Oec.* 7.2; 7.30); only artisans work indoors in shadow, sitting by the fire like women, and they are consequently effeminate (4.2). See also Plato, who specifies shadow-filled interiors as the domain of women (*Kharm.* 163b; *Phdr.* 239c); the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* shows us women living in rooms full of shadow, Demeter sitting in shadow (98ff, 105ff); the Aiskhylean Athene dismisses the maternal role in her birth using the phrase "in the shadows of the womb" ἐν σκότοισι νηδύος (*Eum.* 665); cf. the verb σκιατροφέω, which means "to rear in the shadow within doors" and in the passive "to live a sheltered, effeminate life" (e.g., Plato, *Rep.* 556d; Plut., *Aemil.* 31; Persius, *Sat.* 4.18.33). There appears to be some link between the shadowy environments where woman is at home and the deceit, doubleness, ambiguity, and ἀπάτη with which she is continually charged, from Pandora (Hesiod, *Th.* 570ff.) onwards. "Women are prone to secrecy and stealth," says Plato, "they are accustomed to creep into dark places and resist being dragged into the light" (*Laws* 6.781c). In *Iliad* 14, it is Hera who prefers to take cover for lovemaking, while Zeus is at ease in the open (cf. Apollo in Pindar's *Ninth Pythian*). Aristotle relates the incontinence of woman to the fact that "she is naturally in such matters weaker than a man: a man's love is passionate and open; woman feels both desire and cunning" (*EN* 1149b14–19). Craftiness in general is regarded as a feminine specialty (see Aiskhylos, *Ag.* 1636; Plutarch, *Mul. virt.* 256b), and deceit in sexual matters as particularly the province of women, whose typical arts are metaphors for the

Xenophon describes the female slave quarters of the house as "set off from the men's by a bolted door so that nothing could be carried off from inside which should not be carried off and so that the male servants might not beget children without our knowledge" (*Oec.* 9.5). Here we arrive at the core of male alarm on the subject of the pliancy and porousness of women. The core is sexual. A woman's sexual porousness poses a threat to the integrity of the *oikos* of which she is a part and to the integrity of the *polis* that encompasses this *oikos*. For this reason, adultery laws forbade a husband who had caught his wife in adultery to continue living in the same house with her. For this reason, women guilty of adultery were debarred by law from the public sacrifices. And this exclusion was necessary, Demosthenes explains, "in order that there not be pollutions nor sacrileges in the holy places" (ἵνα μὴ μιάσματα μηδ' ἀσεβήματα γίγνεται ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, *Contr. Neaer.* 59.86). Clearly there is more involved in such a stipulation than outrage to male *amour propre*. Demosthenes is talking about the topography of sacred and profane. Adulteresses pose a spatial threat to the public hygiene of his city; their dirt is something they carry with them like a contagion.

WOMEN AS DIRT

What is pollution and how do women come by it? Dirt may be defined as matter out of place. The poached egg on your plate at breakfast is not dirt; the poached egg on the floor of the Reading Room of the British Museum is. Dirt is matter that has crossed a boundary it ought not to have crossed. For the ancient Greeks, as for many other cultures with complex systems of pollution belief, impurity is *mixture*. That which confounds categories or transgresses boundaries is polluting, that which is so confounded or transgressed is polluted and threatens to pollute others. Mary Douglas calls pollution "a particular class of dangers which are not powers vested in humans but which can be released by human action" and she describes a polluting person as one who "has crossed some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone."[46]

Women are pollutable, polluted, and polluting in several ways at once. They are anomalous members of the human class, being imperfect men, as Aristotle informs us (*GA* 728a18–20; 737a25–35; 775a15). They are intimate with formlessness and the unbounded in their alliance with the

ensnaring wiles of love (weaving, spinning, cooking). "Desire is crafty, like Aphrodite" says Aristotle (above). See also Padel (1983); Vernant (1974), 124–70.

[46]Douglas (1966), 113.

wet, the wild, and raw nature. They are, as individuals, comparatively formless themselves, without firm control of personal boundaries. They are, as social entities, units of danger, moving across boundaries of family and *oikos*, in marriage, prostitution, or adultery. They are, as psychological entities, unstable compounds of deceit and desire, prone to leakage.

In sum, the female body, the female psyche, the female social life, and the female moral life are penetrable, porous, mutable, and subject to defilement all the time. So, when Aelian labels a woman "a wild animal more polluted than as asp," he goes on to explain that "an asp destroys with its poison but a woman has only to touch her victim to kill it" (*NA* 1.54). The female touch is a deadly crisis: pollution leaks out at the slightest contact.[47]

Women, then, are polluted because of a special tendency to go out of bounds, to lose their boundaries, to ally with the unbounded. Aristotle tells us that the unbounded is abhorrent because it is ἀτελές (lacking in fulfillment or completion, *GA* 715b15–16). It is in her erotic life that woman most vividly lacks completion. Sexually the female is a pore. This porous sexuality is a floodgate of social pollution, for it is the gate of entry to *oikos* and *polis*. As soon as a maiden's zone is loosed, immense possibilities of danger arise, upon which focus the alarm of men and the controlling instincts of society. The pores must be kept closed. The unbounded must be bounded. The purity of all that lies within depends on it. A house or a society that does not take adequate measures to contain the leakage of its women is sailing the sea of life in a Melian boat, as the ancients might say. The expression "Melian boat," connoting a proverbially leaky vessel, first arose in connection with a certain Hippotes who was sent out to found a colony. But the Melian men refused to sail with him. "They made excuses, some saying that the boats were leaking, others that their wives were unwell, and so they stayed behind. Hippotes then laid a curse on them: that they should never find a boat

[47]Abhorrence of mixture naturally surrounds the sexual act, "that loathsome commingling of male and female" as Parmenides calls it (B12 *VS*). To engage in sex is "to mingle" (μίγνυμι). The act itself defiles by mixing, Plato implies when he designates as ἁγνοί ("pure") prepubertal animals and humans who are ἀκήρατοι γάμων ("not tainted by marriage," *Laws* 840d6). Demosthenes records the oath taken by priestesses of Dionysos, who commit themselves to lives "clean of congress with men" (ἁγιστεύω . . . καὶ ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς συνουσίας, *Contr. Neaer.* 59–78). For Plutarch, diversity of sexual partners obstructs cleanliness and holiness. He urges married couples to keep themselves unpolluted (ἁγνεύοντας) by extramarital relations in order that the "nuptial sowing" (γαμήλιος σπόρος) may be "as pure as possible" (ἱερώτατος, *Coniug. praec.* 144b). Feminine sexuality particularly attracts loathing and mistrust, to the degree that the feminine nature more readily mingles and is mingled.

that was watertight, and that they should be ruled by women forever."[48] Hippotes' curse is a blow aimed at the very essence and sociocultural precondition of the ancient cosmos. Woman out of control is the danger, a boat filled with holes is its image. Hippotes is condemning Melian civilization to chaos.

PUTTING THE LID ON THE BRIDE

According to one ancient cosmology, the cosmos was first assembled out of chaos when Zeus threw a veil over the head of the goddess of the underworld and married her. So Pherekydes tells us (fr. 54 *VS*), and he goes on to describe the veil, on which were embroidered earth, ocean, and the houses of ocean—that is to say, the contours of the civilized world. Once veiled by her bridegroom, the dark and formless chthonic goddess was transformed and renamed Gē, goddess of the visible world, decorous and productive wife of Zeus.

I call attention to the cosmology of Pherekydes because it concerns the wedding of Zeus, important for our purposes insofar as the ancient wedding ceremony is one place where the theory of female pollution and the practice of pollution control can be seen to converge. We are introduced directly, in this cosmology, to the vestiary code that regulates female decency in the ancient world and informs the sacred symbolism of the marriage rite. The head is its focus. Headgear is crucial to female honor, an index of sexual purity and civilized status.[49] No decent woman is seen in public without her headdress; only children, prostitutes, and maenads run about unveiled. The most common Greek word for female headgear is κρήδεμνον, whose symbolic force can be read from its threefold usage. Properly signifying a woman's "headbinder" (e.g., *Il.* 22.470), κρήδεμνον is also used to mean "battlements of a city" (e.g., *Il.* 16.100) and "stopper of a bottle" (e.g., *Od.* 3.392). It is plain what these

[48]Aristotle, fr. 513 Rose; Pembroke (1967), 32. Pembroke interprets the proverb as corresponding to the more general stipulation "that the earth shall bear no fruit and the sea shall be impossible to sail" in conventional curses, but it seems likely that specific sexual alarm is not far beneath the surface of this story. In a society so "unwell" that wives dictate public policy, what man can navigate the waters of everyday life, what husband can even be sure he is the father of his children? Cf. the Odyssean situation: nineteen years of woman's rule in a house that lets in suitors like a sieve provoke from Telemakhos the comment "No one ever knows his own begetting!" (*Od.* 1.215; cf. 4.387; Lysias, *Erat.* 1.33; Euripides, fr. 1015 Nauck). A corollary reference to female menstruation is likely; cf. Aristotle on female imperfection: *GA* 728a; 737a.

[49]Nagler (1974), 44–60. Sappho adds that the Graces despise a woman whose head is without a στέφανος (81b LP) and associates the lack of a head-binder with exile and loss of civic status (98b LP).

three have in common. A corked bottle, a fortified city, a veiled woman are vessels whose contents are sealed against dirt and loss. To keep the lid on certifies purity.[50]

Putting the lid on female purity was the chief concern and ritual point of the ancient wedding ceremony.[51] So, in the cosmology of Pherekydes, Zeus marries the goddess of the underworld by bestowing on her a cosmic map of her own boundaries. So also, in the Attic legend of Kekrops' invention of marriage, we see masculine clarity and control imposed on a chaos of female promiscuity.[52] This invention was part of Kekrops' transformation of the Athenian democracy into an exclusively masculine organization, and of Athenian society into a patriarchy with descent through the male line. For Kekrops "found men and women having intercourse at random, so that no son could tell who his father was, no father who was his son" (*schol.* Aristophanes, *Plut.* 773). Kekrops accordingly devised the institution of marriage, to put an end to sexual license and clarify the lines of patrilineal descent; for this service he was regarded as a culture hero, who led the Athenians "out of savagery into civilization" (ἀπὸ ἀγριότητος εἰς ἡμερότητα, *schol.* Aristophanes,

[50]Nagler (1974), 67, has proposed that the two ἀμφίπολοι ("attendants" or "ones going on either side") who accompany a respectable woman everywhere (e.g., *Il.* 24.90–94; *Od.* 18.182–84) similarly betoken chastity, as if the two attendants were regarded as a surrogate personal boundary. An encircled woman is bounded against contact or leakage. A woman deprived of such encirclement is prey to seizure and rape (e.g., *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 5; *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 117; 120; Moskhos, *Eur.* 28–32). The decorous Nausikaa even sleeps with a handmaid on either side. When she must confront Odysseus unprotected by veil (cast off at 6.100) or companions (left behind at 6.139), Nausikaa maintains personal boundaries by "holding herself" (στῆ δ' ἄντα σχομένη, *Od.* 6.141). This seems a variation upon the conventional feminine gesture of *aidōs* which is to "hold the veil up in front or on either side of the face" (e.g., *Od.* 18.210). The sham *aidōs* of a whore perverts this gesture as it pollutes the veil she wears; so (according to the parodist Matron, cited by Nagler [1974], 67, n. 5) a *hetaira* enters the room "holding up to her cheeks her filthy veil" (ἄντα παρειάων σχομένη ῥυπαρὰ κρήδεμνα). The woman who has decided to abandon chastity compromises herself with oblique visual contact and action of the veil, e.g., Medeia, moved by desire for Jason (Apollonios Rhodios, 3.444–45). The association of a decent woman's headgear with her battle against pollution is further implied by the word that Sappho (110 LP) and Hekataios (*FGrHist* 1.25) use for such covering: χειρόμακτρον, primarily "a cloth for wiping the hands after washing." Crawley (1927), 1.273, discusses the use of veils as protection against infecting others or being infected by evil influences. On the female κρήδεμνον, see further Marinatos (1967), 20–22. Veiling practices in contemporary society are a subject of current anthropological interest, e.g., Abu-Lughod (1986); Anderson (1982); Makhlouf (1979); Mason (1975); Mernissi (1975); Sharma (1978).

[51]Cf. Latin *nubere*, "to marry," probably cognate with *nubes*, "cloud," and meaning literally "to veil oneself" (*OLD*). On the Roman "*pudicitia*-gesture," see Nagler (1974), 50 n. 33; Neumann (1965) 85–89.

[52]See Patterson (1986), 49–67, for a useful corrective to the treatment this myth has received from anthropologists.

Plut. 773). So too, in historical time, we find Plutarch describing the Boiotian wedding ceremony in these terms: "After veiling the bride they put on her head a crown of asparagus, for this plant yields the sweetest fruit from the roughest thorns" (ἥδιστον ἐκ τραχυτάτης ἀκανθῆς καρπόν), and so may the bride, if properly managed, provide "a civilized and sweet contribution to her husband's life" (ἥμερον καὶ γλυκεῖον συμβίωσιν), despite her original "roughness and sourness" (χαλεπότητα καὶ ἀηδίαν, *Coniug. praec.* 138d).

The ancient wedding undertook, systematically, to redeem woman from her original roughness and sourness, and to purify her of chaos, by means of certain very specific ceremonies aimed at the dramatization and reinforcement of female boundaries. So we find in the marriage rite much emphasis on doorways, thresholds, lintels, exits, entrances, and the whole ceremonial apparatus whereby the bride is relocated from her father's house to her husband's house, from maidenhood to married status. The wedding so conceived, as a rite of passage between households, has been the subject of much study by historians, anthropologists, and others.[53] But I think we can better articulate the meaning of this rite if we pay attention not so much to the boundaries of houses as to the boundaries of the bride herself, and insist upon one special moment in the ceremony—the climax of the whole proceeding, the moment when pollution danger is most acute and ritual counterterstrategy most outspoken.

The ancient wedding begins in the house of her father with preliminary rites carried out by the bride, including a formal farewell to her girlhood and a nuptial bath. After the bath she is dressed in nuptial attire and veiled in a veil that must cover her face. Sacrifices are offered to the divinities of marriage (Zeus Teleios, Hera Teleia, Aphrodite, Artemis, Peitho), and then a feast is spread where all the wedding guests share with the bride her last meal in the house of her father. During this feast the women all sit together on a special couch on the right side of the doorway, facing the men, who sit together to the left of the door. At some point in the feasting, a child crowned with thorns goes among the guests offering bread from a sieve and repeating the formula ἔφυγον κακόν, εὗρον ἄμεινον: "I have fled evil, I have found what is better." This action, which prefigures the climax of the ceremony, is a significant one for our interpretation. It symbolizes, as we observed above, that the thorny and savage bride is about to be salvaged for civilization by the nuptial function. And it represents that redeeming

[53]van Gennep (1960); Douglas (1966), 114; Redfield (1982). Lesbia, hesitating upon a creaking sandal in the doorway of adultery, is discussed by Baker (1960). The gods prepare for Hebe's wedding by rubbing the door of heaven, Catullus tells us (68.115–16).

function in the relation between the leaky vessel (the sieve in which bread is carried) and the good gift of bread itself that ritual calls forth from the leaky vessel. We should note that throughout the feasting and the distribution of bread, the bride remains very strictly veiled (πανὺ ἀκριβῶς ἐγκεκαλυμμένη, Lucian, *Conv.* 8), for it is not until the end of these events that the climax of the ceremony occurs. This is the moment when the bride rises or turns in her place and, facing her bridegroom and the men of his household across the room, takes off her veil.[54]

This action, called the *anakalyptēria* ("unveiling"),[55] gives its name to the whole first stage of the wedding ceremony. It signifies the official consecration of the marriage: henceforth, the bride is considered to *be married*. The elaborate gifts given to the bride by the bridegroom at this stage were generally called "unveiling gifts" (τὰ ἀνακαλυπτήρια); but they had an alternate name, τὰ διαπαρθένια, and were so called, Pollux tells us, because they were regarded as "gifts given in exchange for taking away the virginity of the bride" (Pollux, 3.39; Amphis, fr. 49 Kock).

In other words, as far as the bride is concerned, the *anakalyptēria* is the decisive sacral action of the wedding. At the moment of unveiling, for the first time, the intact boundary of her person is violated by contact: the contact of vision. Ancient lexical sources leave no doubt that visual exposure was the function and official point of the ritual of the *anakalyptēria*. "In order that she may be seen by the men" is the reason why the bride rises and unveils.[56] Once she has done so, the glance of the bridegroom from across the room penetrates her opened veil. She is no longer *parthenos* ("maiden"). She is touched.

The bride at her *anakalyptēria*, as a participant in the cultural game of the wedding ceremony, may be compared with the suppliant reaching for the hand of his supplicand or the fugitive seating himself in the ashes of the hearth. Each of these is someone who flouts the rules of social interaction and propriety in order to submit himself or herself to the mercy of the opponent in the game. "The essence of the notion of sanctuary," Pitt-Rivers says, "is that it is a place where the 'normal'

[54]A red-figure *loutrophoros* in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts has recently been identified as depicting this moment in the wedding: Oakley (1982).

[55]Sources of information on the *anakalyptēria* include the lexical entries for this term in Harpokration, Hesykhios, Pollux, and the *Souda*; Lucian, *Conv.* 8; Men., *Dysk.* 855ff; Eur., *IA* 718–26; Bekker (1814–1821); Hiller von Gaertringen in *RE*, *s.v.* See also Bruckner (1904), 64; Cunningham (1984), 9–12; Mark (1984); Mayo (1973); Oakley (1982); Redfield (1982); Roberts (1978), 185–87; Sutton (1981); Toutain (1940), 345–53. I am indebted to Professors John Walsh and David Armstrong for various of these references.

[56]Ἀνδράσιν ὁραθῆναι: *Souda*; Harpokration, *s.v.* ἀνακαλυπτήρια.

rules of aggression and retaliation are laid in abeyance."[57] Thus the suppliant or the fugitive deliberately takes up a position of utter abjectness, renouncing his power to affront the house, renouncing all agonistic relations with the owner(s) of the house, renouncing self-respect. Similarly, the bride voluntarily abases herself at the *anakalyptēria*, exposing to the glance of her bridegroom the virgin state that veils have hidden until this moment. The relinquishing of her own honor lays a claim upon his honor. He is no less responsible than he would be to a suppliant or a guest to play out his side of the game by taking her into his hearth and restoring the honor that she has freely forfeited.[58] She has opened to him her boundaries; it is his charge to take her in and seal them anew. He does so immediately by offering her gifts, then by leading her away to his own *oikos* and enclosing her there.[59]

We see in the ancient ritual of the wedding, then, the chief means by which the danger of women was used and defused. The act of marriage flouts boundaries of personal isolation that seal each person into his skin and each family into its *oikos*. To touch across boundaries means serious, dangerous leakage. Ritual defuses the danger by declaiming it, celebrating it, facing it head on. "Taboo against connection is broken by making the connection," as Crawley puts it. Ritual invites and enacts the paradoxes of a dangerous situation in order to exploit and reverse them, from isolation to contact, from exclusion to inclusion, from pollution to purity. The enactment is a cultural game in which someone from outside the *oikos* deliberately transgresses and pollutes it in order to provoke the *oikos* into absorbing him or her within it. Both players have winning cards to play (pollution of the *oikos*, sanctuary of the *oikos*), but virtuoso techniques of exploiting the rules allow each to play to a draw satisfying for all concerned. Readjustment of boundaries is the formal mechanism of such ritual gamesmanship. So the ancient wedding rite contrives to bring the inviolate bride into contact with her bridegroom, to touch what was untouchable, to veil and seal what was an exposed pore, to civilize and purify what was wild and polluted. Save for this ritual, ancient woman would be left hopeless as a Danaid in the underworld, with no prospect of sanctuary in a useful life, drops of water running down her hands.

[57]Pitt-Rivers (1970), 867.

[58]An admonition found in Iamblikhos' *Life of Pythagoras*, and also in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oikonomika*, expresses this responsibility of the husband to his bride: "It is not right for the woman to pursue the man. For she is a suppliant. Therefore we do the leading from the hearth and the gesture of acceptance with the right hand" (58C4 *VS*).

[59]The nuptial ceremony of the καταχύσματα undertakes to accomplish this, as I have argued in another context: Carson (1982).

* BIBLIOGRAPHY *

Abu-Lughod, L. 1986. *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley).

Allen, T. W., W. R. Halliday, and E. E. Sikes, eds. 1954. *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford).

Anderson, J. 1982. "Social Structure and the Veil." *Anthropos* 77: 397–420.

Baker, S. 1960. "Lesbia's Foot." *CP* 55:171–73.

Barbu, Z. 1960. *Problems in Historical Psychology* (New York).

Barrett, W. S., ed. 1964. *Euripides: Hippolytos* (Oxford).

Beare, J. I. 1906. *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition* (Oxford).

Bekker, I. 1814–1821. *Anecdota*. 3 vols. (Berlin; repr. Graz, 1965).

———. 1831–1870. *Aristotelis Opera*. 49 vols. (Berlin).

Bethe, E. 1907. "Die dorische Knabenliebe, ihre Ethik und ihre Idee." *RhM* 23:438–50.

Boardman, J. 1958–1959. "Old Smyrna: The Attic Pottery." *BSA* 53–54:152–81.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Tr. R. Nice (Cambridge, Eng.).

Braswell, B. K. 1976. "Notes on the Prooemium to Pindar's Seventh Olympian Ode." *Mnemosyne* 29:233–55.

Brown, C. "The Bridegroom and the Athlete": 38–41 in *Greek Poetry and Philosophy: Studies in Honour of Leonard Woodbury*, ed. D. E. Gerber (Chico, Calif.).

Bruckner, A. 1904. "Anakalypteria." *Archäologische Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 64:144–46.

Burkert, W. 1970. "Jason, Hypsipyle and New Fire at Lemnos." *CQ* 20:7–16.

———. 1977. "Air-imprints or *Eidola:* Democritus' Theory of Vision." *ICS*2: 97–109.

Burnet, J. 1902–1906. *Platonis Opera*. 6 vols. (Oxford).

Burnett, A. P. 1983. *Three Archaic Poets* (Cambridge, Mass.).

Callois, R. 1959. *Man and the Sacred*. Tr. M. Barash (Glencoe, Ill.).

Campbell, J. K. 1964. *Honour, Family and Patronage* (Oxford).

Canetti, E. 1966. *Crowds and Power*. Tr. C. Stewart (New York).

Carrière, J. 1962. *Théognis: Poèmes Elégiaques* (Paris).

Carson, A. 1982. "Wedding at Noon in Pindar's *Ninth Pythian*." *GRBS* 23: 121–28.

———. 1985. *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay* (Princeton).

Chantraine, P. 1968–1980. *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. 4 vols. (Paris).

Coulon, V. 1967–1972. *Aristophane*. 5 vols. (Paris).

Crawley, E. 1927. *The Mystic Rose*. 2 vols. (New York).

Crook, J. H. 1980. *The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (Oxford).

Cunningham, M. L. 1984. "Aeschylus' *Agam.* 231–247." *BICS* 31:9–12.

Damsté, O. 1927. "De matrimonio atheniensi": 31–35 in *Strena Petro Helberto Damsté a discipulis oblata*, ed. O. Damsté (Lugdunum).

Darcus, S. 1977. "*Daimon* Parallels the Holy *Phren* in Empedocles." *Phronesis* 22:175–90.

Darwin, C. 1904. *The Expression of Emotion in Men and Animals* (London).
Deonna, W. 1939. *Euodia. Croyances antiques et modernes: L'odeur suave des dieux et des élus* (Geneva).
Detienne, M. 1977. *The Gardens of Adonis*. Tr. J. Lloyd (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.).
Detienne, M., and J. P. Vernant. 1978. *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*. Tr. J. Lloyd (Sussex).
Deubner, L. 1900. "Epaulia." *JdI* 15:144–54.
_____. 1978. "Καταχύσματα und Munzzauber." *RhM* 121:240–54.
Devereux, G. 1967. "Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality and the 'Greek Miracle.'" *SO* 42:69–92.
Diels, H. 1965. *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin).
Dodds, E. R. 1951. *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley).
_____, ed. 1960. *Euripides: Bacchae* (Oxford).
Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London).
Dover, K. J. 1964. "Eros and Nomos." *BICS* 44:31–47.
_____. 1973. "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour." *Arethusa* 6:59–70.
_____. 1978. *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass.).
duBois, P. 1988. *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago).
Edmonds, J. M., ed. 1931. *Elegy and Iambus . . . with the Anacreontea*. 2 vols. (London).
Erdmann, W. 1934. *Die Ehe im alten Griechenland* (Munich).
Fasce, S. 1977. *Eros: La figura e il culto* (Genoa).
Fischer, E. 1973. *Amor und Eros: Eine Untersuchung des Wortfeldes "Liebe" im Lateinischen und Griechischen* (Hildesheim, Germany).
Foster, B. O. 1899. "Notes on the Symbolism of the Apple in Classical Antiquity." *HSCP* 7:32–41.
Frankel, E. 1950. *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford).
Fustel de Coulanges, N. D. 1882. *La cité antique* (Paris).
Gaisford, T., ed. 1822. *Ioannis Stobaei Florilegium*. 4 vols. (Oxford).
Garvie, A. F. 1969. *Aeschylus' Supplices: Play and Trilogy* (Cambridge, Eng.).
Gaselee, S., ed. 1917. *Achilles Tatius: Clitophon and Leucippe* (New York).
Gennep, A. van. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Tr. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago).
Gernet, L. 1954. "Observations sur le mariage en Grèce." *RD* 468–90.
Ginouvès, R. 1962. "Balaneutike." *BEFAR* 200:265–82.
Girard, R. 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Tr. P. Gregory (Baltimore).
Goffmann, E. 1956. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh).
Golden, M. 1988. "Male Chauvinists and Pigs." *EMC* 32:1–12.
Gould, J. 1973. "Hiketeia." *JHS* 93:74–103.
Gow, A. S. F., ed. 1952. *Theocritus*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, Eng.).
Grosskurth, P. 1980. [Review of Ronald W. Clarke, *Freud the Man and the Cause*.] *Times Literary Supplement* August 8:887–90.

Harrison, A. R. W. 1968. *The Law of Athens*. Vol. 1: *The Family and Property*. (Oxford).
Henderson, J. 1975. *The Maculate Muse: Obscene Language in Attic Comedy* (New Haven and London).
Huizinga, J. 1949. *Homo Ludens* (London).
Innis, H. 1951. *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto).
Ireland, S., and F. L. D. Steeles. 1975. "*Phrenes* as an Anatomical Organ in the Works of Homer." *Glotta* 53:183–94.
Jarcho, V. N. 1968. "Zum Menschenbild der nachhomerischen Dichtung." *Phil.* 112:147–72.
Jebb, R. C. 1883–1896. *Sophocles*. 7 vols. Repr. (Amsterdam, 1962).
Johansen, F. 1951. *Attic Grave Reliefs* (London).
Keane, A. H. 1915. "Air and Gods of the Air": 1.255–56 in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York).
Lacey, W. K. 1968. *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca).
Lasserre, F. 1946. *La figure d'Eros dans la poésie grecque* (Lausanne).
Latacz, J. 1985. "Realität und Imagination: Eine neue Lyrik-Theorie und Sapphos φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος-Lied." *MH* 42:67–94.
Littlewood, A. R. 1967. "The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature." *HSCP* 72:147–81.
Lucas, D. W., ed. 1968. *Aristotle: Poetics* (Oxford).
Macdowell, D. M. 1978. *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca).
Makhlouf, C. 1979. *Changing Veils: Women and Modernisation in North Yemen* (London).
Mannhardt, W. 1884. *Mythologische Forschungen* (Strasbourg).
Marinatos, S. 1967. *Kleidung, Haar- und Barttracht*. Archaeologia Homerica, 1.2 (Göttingen).
Mark, I. S. 1984. "The Gods on the East Frieze of the Parthenon." *Hesperia* 53:291–334.
Mason, J. P. 1975. "Sex and Symbol in the Treatment of Women: The Wedding Rite in a Libyan Oasis Community." *American Ethnologist* 2:649–61.
Mayo, M. E. 1973. "The Gesture of Anakalypsis." *AJA* 77:210–21.
Mernissi, F. 1975. *Beyond the Veil* (Cambridge, Mass.).
Monro, D. B., and T. W. Allen. 1920. *Homeri Opera*. 5 vols. (Oxford).
Moulinier, L. 1952. *Le pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris).
Murray, G. 1913–1915. *Euripidis Fabulae*. 3 vols. (Oxford).
_____. 1937. *Aeschyli Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoediae* (Oxford).
Nagler, M. 1974. *Spontaneity and Tradition: A Study in the Oral Art of Homer* (Berkeley).
Nawrath, A. 1914. "De graecorum ritibus nuptialibus e vasculis demonstrandis." Dissertation, Breslau.
Neumann, G. 1965. *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin).
North, H. 1966. *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca).

Oakley, J. H. 1982. "Anakalypteria." *JdI* 97:113–18.
Onians, R. B. 1951. *The Origins of European Thinking about the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate* (Cambridge, Eng.).
Padel, R. 1983. "Women: Model for Possession by Greek Daemons": 3–19 in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, ed. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London).
Page, D. L., ed. 1955. *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford).
Parker, R. 1983. *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford).
Patterson, C. 1986. "*Hai Attikai*: The Other Athenians": 49–67 in *Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity*, ed. M. Skinner. *Helios* 13.2.
Pembroke, S. 1965. "Last of the Matriarchs." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8:219–47.
———. 1967. "Women in Charge: The Function of Alternatives in Early Greek Tradition and the Ancient Idea of Matriarchy." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30:1–35.
Peristiany, J. G. *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago).
Pfeiffer, R., ed. 1953. *Callimachus*. 2 vols. (Oxford).
Pitt-Rivers, J. 1970. "Women and Sanctuary in the Mediterranean": 862–75 in *Echanges et communications: Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss*, ed. J. Pouillon and P. Maranda. 2 vols. (Paris and the Hague).
Preller, L., and C. Robert. 1894–1921. *Griechische Mythologie*. 2 vols. (Berlin).
Quinn, K., ed. 1970. *Catullus: The Poems* (London).
Reckford, K. 1972. "Phaethon, Hippolytus, Aphrodite." *TAPA* 103:401–12.
Redfield, J. 1975. *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago).
———. 1982. "Notes on the Greek Wedding." *Arethusa* 15:169–90.
Renehan, R. 1976. *Studies in Greek Texts* (Göttingen).
Robbins, E. 1968. "The Concept of Inspiration in Greek Poetry from Homer to Pindar." Dissertation, Toronto.
Roberts, S. R. 1978. *The Attic Pyxis* (Chicago).
Roscher, W. H. 1884–1937. *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (Leipzig).
Rudhardt, J. 1958. *Notions fondamentales de la pensée et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique* (Geneva).
Samter, E. 1901. *Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer* (Berlin).
Schneider, J. 1971. "Of Vigilance and Virgins." *Ethnology* 10:1–24.
Seaton, R. C., ed. 1900. *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica* (Geneva).
Sharma, U. 1978. "Women and Their Affines: The Veil as a Symbol of Separation." *Man* 13:218–33.
Shorey, P., ed. 1930. *Plato's Republic*. 2 vols. (New York and London).
Snell, B., and H. Maehler, eds. 1970. *Bacchylidis Carmina cum Fragmentis* (Leipzig).
———. 1975–1980. *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis* (Leipzig).
Solmsen, F. 1970. *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum* (Oxford).
Speier, H. 1952. *Social Order and the Risks of War* (New York).
Spies, A. 1930. "Militat Omnis Amans." Dissertation, Tübingen.

Stanford, W. B. 1963. *Sophocles: Ajax* (London).
Steuding, H. 1884–1937. "Windgötter": 6.511–516 in Roscher (1884–1937).
Studniczka, F. 1927. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der altgriechischen Tracht* (Berlin).
Sutton, R. F. 1981. "The Interaction between Men and Women Portrayed on Attic Red-Figure Pottery" Dissertation, North Carolina.
Taillardat, J. 1962. *Les images d'Aristophane* (Paris).
Toutain, J. 1940. "Le rite nuptial de l'anakalypterion." *REA* 42:345–53.
Tucker, T. G., ed. 1901. *The Choephoroi of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Eng.).
———. 1908. *The Seven against Thebes of Aeschylus* (Cambridge, Eng.).
Turner, V. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago).
Vernant, J. P. 1965. *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris).
———. 1973. "Le mariage en Grèce archaique." *La Parola del Passato* 28:51–74.
———. 1974. "Hestia-Hermès: Sur l'expression religieuse de l'espace et du mouvement chez les Grecs": 1:124–70 in Vernant (1965), 4th ed.
Vidal-Naquet, P. 1970. "Esclavage et gynécocratie dans la tradition, le mythe, l'utopie": 61–85 in *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'antiquité classique* (Paris).
Visser, M. 1986. "Medea: Daughter, Sister, Wife and Mother: Natal Family *versus* Conjugal Family in Greek and Roman Myths about Women": 149–66 in *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy: Essays Presented to D. J. Conacher*, ed. M. Cropp, E. Fanthan, and S. E. Scully (Calgary).
Voigt, E. M., ed. 1971. *Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta* (Amsterdam).
Vygotsky, L. S. 1962. *Thought and Language*. Tr. E. Hanfmann and G. Vakar (Cambridge, Eng.).
Wehrli, C. 1962. "Les Gynéconomes." *MH* 19.33–38.
West, M. L., ed. 1971–1972. *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*. 2 vols. (Oxford).
———. 1978. *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford).
Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, U. von. 1913. *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin).
———. 1924. *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos*. 2 vols. (Berlin).
Williger, E. 1922. *Hagios: Untersuchungen zur Terminologie des Heiligen in den Hellenisch-Hellenistischen Religionen: RGVV* 19 (Giessen, Germany).
Wolff, H. J. 1944. "Marriage Law and Family Organization in Ancient Athens." *Traditio* 2:29–48.
Woodbury, L. 1978. "The Gratitude of the Locrian Maiden: Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.18–20." *TAPA* 108:285–99.