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DOVER, FOUCAULT AND GREEK HOMOSEXUALITY: PENETRATION AND THE TRUTH OF SEX*

I

THE USE OF GREEKS

Scene 1. A brilliant impromptu performance. The final week of April 1895, the Old Bailey, Oscar Wilde in the dock, on trial. The charge: 'acts of gross indecency with another male person'. The prosecution elaborated. Wilde had engaged in 'an abominable traffic' in which young men were induced to engage in 'giving their bodies, or selling them, to other men for the purpose of sodomy'. A poem written by Alfred Douglas was cited in evidence against his friend. It referred to 'Two Loves', the one 'filling the hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame', the other the 'Love that dares not tell its name'. The prosecution put it to Wilde that this referred to 'unnatural love'. Wilde disagreed and was invited to explain on what grounds:

'The Love that dare not speak its name' in this country is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michaelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect . . . It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as 'the Love that dare not speak its name', and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so, the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.

* This article has remote origins in a paper given to the Seminar on Women in Antiquity in Oxford in 1990. Very different manifestations have appeared since then in Bristol, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Paris, Heidelberg, Philadelphia, London, and the Einstein Forum in Potsdam. Every occasion helped me, and I thank all hosts and participants for their often dogged, occasionally apoplectic, questioning and support. My thanks also to Keith DeVries, Oswyn Murray, Robin Osborne, Ian Ruffell, Alan Strathern and Chris Wickham who read, commented or encouraged more promptly, more often or more emphatically, than duty demands. Responsibility for the content is entirely my own.

The audience, or a certain section of it, burst into applause. It was possibly because of this speech, and despite some graphic evidence and impure testimony from male prostitutes, that the jury could not reach a decision and a third trial ensued on 22 May.¹

Scene 2: another impromptu performance. Berkeley, California, April 1983: Michel Foucault interviewed on tape and in English by Paul Rabinow and Hubert Dreyfus. The philosopher is agitated: 'The Greek ethics of pleasure is linked to a virile society, to dissymmetry, exclusion of the other, an obsession with penetration. . . . All that is quite disgusting'.² The change from nineteenth-century views could not be more radical. Whereas for Wilde the Greek example could be used to help refute charges of sodomy and evoke an asexual, spiritual and pure relationship, for Foucault, hardly a prudish man, the Greeks were so preoccupied with penetration as to provoke feelings of disgust.

As late as the 1930s, classicists who were brave enough to address the subject could more or less agree with Wilde's assessment. They did not deny the physical element in Greek homosexuality, but concluded that it was not central. In, for instance, *Sittengeschichte Griechenlands*, his comprehensive study of Greek sexuality, the classicist Paul Brandt (writing as 'Hans Licht') gave space to homosexual sex and even prostitution but appended a caveat: 'it would be entirely wrong to assume that sensuality denoted the only (or at least the most important) element of the Hellenic love of boys'.³ In the 1980s, however, and especially after Foucault, this view of 'Greek love' was turned upside down and a new consensus was established. The extent of this revolution can be most easily gauged by a look at the new edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, published in 1996. For the first time

¹ H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* (London, 1948), 190, 236. See also Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York, 1987); Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* (London, 1994); Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality* (Ithaca, NY, 1994).

² *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth, 1986), 346. The French translation of the interview — 'Tout cela est franchement répugnant' — was later amended by Foucault to 'Tout cela n'est pas très attrayant'. Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1994), iv, 388, 614; with editors' notes, 383, 609. Even Eribon's translation, 'C'est dégoûtant', is milder. Dider Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (Paris, 1994), 285. Foucault also amended the opening sentence to read, 'linked to the existence of a virile society'.

³ 'Hans Licht' [Paul Brandt], *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. H. Freese (London, 1932), 440.

it contains an entry for 'homosexuality', written by David Halperin:

The application of 'homosexuality' (and 'heterosexuality') in a substantive or normative sense to sexual expression in antiquity is not advised. Greek and Roman men generally understood sex to be defined in terms of sexual penetration and phallic pleasure, whether the sexual partners were two males, two females, or one male and one female. The physical act of sex itself required, in their eyes, a polarization of the sexual partners into the categories of penetrator and penetrated as well as a corresponding polarization of sexual roles into 'active' and 'passive'. Those roles in turn were correlated with superordinate and subordinate social status, with masculine and feminine gender styles, and with adulthood and adolescence. Phallic insertion functioned as a marker of male precedence; it also expressed social domination and seniority. The isomorphism of sexual, social, gender, and age roles made the distinction between 'activity' and 'passivity' paramount for categorizing sexual acts and actors of either gender; the distinction between homosexual and heterosexual contacts could still be invoked for certain purposes, but it remained of comparatively minor taxonomic and ethical significance . . . to be sexually penetrated was always potentially shaming, especially for a boy of citizen status. . . . In Classical Athens . . . free boys could be openly courted, but a series of elaborate protocols served to shield them from the shame associated with bodily penetration, thereby enabling them to gratify their male suitors without compromising their future status as adults.⁴

There have been no dramatic new finds, no coded diaries deciphered, yet the modern view of Greek love is almost the exact opposite of the view that prevailed in the nineteenth century and which lingered on until the 1960s: from essentially 'pure', to pure sex. The purpose of this article is simply to give an account of this revolution in our thinking about the Greeks, the sexualization of Greek love, and to describe the formation of the new consensus.

A proper understanding of the character of Greek homoerotic relationships and their representations is more than a matter of parochial interest for students of Greek private life. Such relationships seem to have much to say about a wide range of central topics in Greek history, culture and society — the gymnasium and the body, Platonic philosophy, archaic poetry, democratic politics, sculpture and so on. Moreover, because of its apparent peculiarity, the Greek example has had and continues to have a particular potency within the study of sexuality *tout court*; not only do the finished volumes of the most ambitious and influential modern history of sexuality, Foucault's, give an important role to the Greeks, but Greek homosexuality continues to be deployed

⁴ Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1996), 720–1.

in modern legal and constitutional debates about the rights of sexual minorities.⁵ Foucault, moreover, claimed to be not so much interested in sexuality per se, as in its potential as a 'royal road' to a history of the Western subject. For Foucault, says one of his modern commentators, 'The rudiments of the modern subject can be traced to the Greek problematization of the self in the practice of the love of boys'.⁶ Even outside the specific context of this Foucauldian project, inasmuch as sexuality is widely viewed or experienced as a natural and compelling part of identity, the radical difference of ancient Greek sexuality has been presented as one of the most vivid demonstrations of the efficacy of cultural constructions in the field of experience, desire and subjectivity, and one of the most widely credited;⁷ claims for the radical otherness of the early modern self, or for the power of culture to produce daylight visions of revenants and devils, or experiences of hysteria or possession, become much more cogent in the light of the demonstrable otherness of the ancient Greek experience of sexual desire.

⁵ Much ink has been spilled and web-space filled on the subject of the debate in the Colorado Supreme Court concerning the legality of the plebiscite to prevent legislation protecting gay people from discrimination, and whether the evidence from ancient Greece indicates such preventative legislation is specifically Christian in motivation or, rather, universal and natural, and on the use and abuse of classical scholarship in that debate. For a short survey of the issues, see Daniel Mendelsohn, 'The Stand: Expert Witnesses and Ancient Mysteries in a Colorado Courtroom', *Lingua Franca*, vi (1996). See also Lisa Keen and Suzanne B. Goldberg, *Strangers to the Law: Gay People on Trial (Law, Meaning and Violence)* (Ann Arbor, 1998). Ultimately, the question was decided on quite other grounds by the US Supreme Court, the majority opinion agreeing that the plebiscite was indeed illegal and giving short shrift to the contention that anti-discriminatory legislation conferred a special right: see www.fac.org/legal/supcourt/opinions/95-96/94-1039.20.htm. Dover was the authority cited by both sides in the Colorado debate, which demonstrates opportunely that there are real consequences in the failure of criticism which the current article attempts to highlight. On the other hand, some gay rights campaigners have also embraced constructionist theories supported by the Greek example: see Peter Tatchell, 'It's Just A Phase: Why Homosexuality Is Doomed', in Mark Simpson (ed.), *Anti-Gay* (London, 1996), 36.

⁶ Mark Poster, 'Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece', in David Couzens Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1986), 213.

⁷ See, for example, Michael Arditti's review of Chandler Burr, *A Separate Creation: How Biology Makes Us Gay*, in *The Independent*, 12 July 1996, 21: 'they suggest that there has been a constant number of homosexuals throughout history. This, as any student of classical Greece or other gay-friendly culture knows, is patently untrue'. Also Richard Horton, 'Is Homosexuality Inherited?', in *New York Rev. Books*, 13 July 1995, 39: 'As Foucault points out, at the time of Plato "People did not have the notion of two distinct appetites allotted to different individuals or at odds with each other in the same soul; rather they saw two ways of enjoying one's pleasure"'.

Potentially, therefore, there is a great deal at stake in the narrative of this revolution in our understanding of Greek homosexuality and, as will become apparent, this article presents a critical commentary on that narrative, focusing on the work of the two most influential progenitors of the new consensus, Kenneth Dover and Foucault himself. I will argue that the picture of ancient sex and sexual morality as a plus-minus 'zero-sum game', where one party can only 'win' at the expense of the other, is not only unsubstantiated, but contradicts what evidence there is. It is a fantasy — a fantasy based on modern preconceptions of sex as power; a fantasy driven by a desire to prove that (Greek) homosexuality was (is) not 'real'; a fantasy based, paradoxically, on a twentieth-century impulse to fight against Victorian inhibition and hypocrisy and to expose 'the truth of sex'. My aim, however, is not to provide a comprehensive alternative theory of Greek sexuality, so much as to examine the will to truth which insists on taking as its object of knowledge the undisclosed details of the sexual acts of a distant culture.

II

TOWARDS PENETRATION

According to Dover's autobiography, published forty years later, the modern paradigm for understanding Greek sexuality was born suddenly in 1954, when he realized that almost everything ever written about Greek homosexuality was confused and misleading. The way to cut this Gordian knot was to recognize the importance of the distinction between active and passive in sex, immediately putting penetration at the centre of Greek sexuality and sexual morality.⁸

Dover's first article on the subject, however, published in 1964, contradicts him; it is much more circumspect about the importance of sexual role. The article attempts to prove that the love approved by Plato was not asexual and contrasts the philosopher's attitude to homosexuality with comic sources. It takes as its starting point Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*, which claims that in Athens lovers were encouraged to 'pursue' the object of their affections, and the object to resist or 'flee', in order to test the lover's perseverance and seriousness of purpose. He brings

⁸ Kenneth Dover, *Marginal Comment: A Memoir* (London, 1994), 111.

into the discussion Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchus*, which will come to play a central role in the building of a new consensus. In 346, during the bitter struggle in Athens over how to respond to the growing power of Macedon, Timarchus, a politician close to Demosthenes, had charged Aeschines with accepting bribes from Philip on a recent peace mission. Aeschines retaliated by invoking a law which removed political rights, including, crucially, the right to prosecute, from speakers who had behaved improperly, by draft dodging, maltreating their parents, wasting their estates or serving as a prostitute. The speech concentrates on the latter two charges and contrasts the supposedly commercial relationships of Timarchus with the *erōs* ('passionate love') of heroic male couples in the past. A modern reader, says Dover, might think the distinction being drawn is between a non-sexual and a sexual relationship, but he rejects this interpretation. The crucial distinction is not sex, but commerce. Pausanias also is quite explicit that the manner of 'yielding', not yielding itself, is the problem, as Dover notes: 'the difference between good and bad *erōs* lies in the whole context of the ultimate physical act, not in the presence or absence of the act itself'. By contrast, argues Dover, in Aristophanes it is implied that any boy who has homosexual sex is effeminate. Dover briefly discusses two terms of abuse used in comedy, *euruprōktos* (literally 'wide-anus') and *katapugōn* (glossed in Liddell, Scott and Jones's *A Greek-English Lexicon* as 'given to unnatural acts: generally lecherous, lewd'), which he sees as attacks on men who take a passive role. He compares this comic attitude, which ridicules the passive partner much more than the active, with Aeschines' treatment of Timarchus, whose presumed passivity, rather than whorishness, now starts to dominate accounts of his trial and condemnation.⁹

By 1973, in an article on 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour', sexual role had already become much more important for Dover and had even begun to eclipse the superficial distinctions of gender. He linked penetration to power and politics through the figure of the male prostitute who assimilates himself to a slave by providing a service: 'In so far as the "passive partner" in a homosexual act takes on himself the role of a woman, he was open to the suspicion, like the male prostitute, that he abjured his prescribed role as a future soldier and defender

⁹ K. J. Dover, 'Eros and Nomos, Plato *Symposium* 182a-185c', *Bull. Inst. Classical Studies*, xi (1964), 33-4.

of the community'. By now he was more hesitant about the term 'homosexuality'. It would be more precise to talk of 'pseudo-homosexuality'.¹⁰

For this notion he cites an article of 1967, entitled 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality and the Greek Miracle', by George Devereux, director of studies in ethnopsychiatry at the École des Hautes Études, and an important theoretical influence on Dover's understanding of sexuality ever since he submitted an article to a journal Dover was editing in 1964. According to his autobiography, Dover was not entirely convinced by the psychoanalytic approach until, shortly before a lecture given by Devereux, he had a dream of a trip to the zoo. He gives only the 'punch-line: "Never walk under a giraffe!"', but every ingredient seemed explicable in terms of a Freudian 'primal scene' which, he says, had occurred at the age of twelve. On this basis he was converted, and recommended a book of Devereux's to Blackwell for publication.¹¹

Devereux's distinctive ethnopschoanalytic approach to ancient sexuality can best be illustrated by an article he wrote for the *Classical Quarterly* on Sappho in 1970. He argued that Sappho's poem which begins with a description of a male rival, 'He seems like a god to me', presented a list of clinical symptoms of anxiety, not jealousy, and that any emendation of the text should conform to the pathology of such symptoms, in particular that her mouth would be dry and her tongue must therefore be described as sticking to the palate. He cites a recent case of a man who had been abandoned by his girlfriend. He was anxious, but not jealous. The analyst concludes that it was because the girl was really a lesbian and that subconsciously he knew this, finding proof in the fact that she had 'tried to manoeuvre him into the feminine sexual role'. When the analyst explained this to him, the anxiety attacks ceased. Sappho was suffering from a similar condition. She was not jealous of her male rival, but anxious about her own inadequacies as a lover of women. He is described as 'god-like' because he could give her girlfriend something, a phallus, that she could not, something 'she would give her life to have'. She might try to repress her desires, initiating

¹⁰ K. J. Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour', *Arethusa*, vi (1973), 69, 66; see also 65–7, with errata.

¹¹ Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 122–3; George Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality and the "Greek Miracle"', *Symbolae Osloenses*, xlii (1967).

a relationship with a man, but this might provoke strong suicidal impulses. Such aggression is a feature of all homosexuality, even the socially approved ancient version, 'because the libido is contaminated by and fused with aggressivity'. There may, therefore, be a psychological truth underlying the story of Sappho's love for a man and consequent suicide. She was an authentic pervert, a masculine lesbian.¹² As its title suggests, however, Devereux's earlier article, on male pseudo-homosexuality, came to the opposite conclusion. 'Pre-Platonic' homosexuality 'while behaviourally real was psychologically spurious', the result of inadequate fathering; 'the *average* Greek ... was not *psychiatrically* a pervert'.¹³

Devereux is important because this notion of a 'behavioural' 'pseudo-sexuality' governs Dover's understanding throughout his seminal work on the subject, *Greek Homosexuality* (1978), and indeed he began the project with Devereux as co-author.¹⁴ In the preface Dover wrote: 'Established linguistic usage compels me to treat "heterosexual" and "homosexual" as antithetical, but if I followed my inclination I would replace "heterosexual" by "sexual" and treat what is called "homosexual" as a subdivision of the "quasi-sexual" (or "pseudo-sexual" ...)'. He cites Devereux's 1967 article in the opening discussion of 'Problems, Sources and Methods' for 'the important distinction between behavioural patterns and fundamental orientations of the personality', and again in the conclusion for 'the strikingly "adolescent" character of Greek culture. The prolongation of undifferentiated sexual exuberance into adult life was one aspect of this'. Devereux, however, was able to talk of four sexualities: 'authentic' homo- and heterosexuality and their 'pseudo-' versions. Dover on the other hand had already proved in his article of 1964 that 'Platonic' love was not defined by the absence of the sexual act. In his autobiography he adds that while lecturing on the *Symposium*, he remembered a time when mountain scenery at Mignano in Italy had provoked a physical sexual response and he had masturbated. This, I think, is one of the things he means by 'pseudo-sexual', and it enables him to incorporate Plato's appreciation of the 'visual stimulus' of male beauty within the compass

¹² George Devereux, 'Nature of Sappho's Seizure in fr. 31 LP as Evidence of her Inversion', *Classical Quart.*, new ser., xx (1970), 21, 22 and 25; see also 17-31.

¹³ Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality', 69-70.

¹⁴ Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 123-4.

of the behavioural. For Dover, there is no longer any reason to maintain Devereux's distinction between a true psychological homosexuality represented in Plato and pre-Platonic behavioural pseudo-homosexuality. Dover seems to say very clearly in his preface that any kind of homosexuality is 'quasi-sexual'.¹⁵

Another influence on Dover is also now apparent, the Pelican book on *Homosexuality* by D. J. West, to which readers of *Greek Homosexuality* were referred for 'the power of culture and society to determine sexual behaviour'. Among the Samoans, argued West, 'Homosexual practices, especially among the young, were very prevalent, but they were neither frowned upon nor given special consideration, being regarded as simple playfulness. They had no important or lasting consequences'. As a result, 'compulsive homosexuality' was 'almost unknown'. Such theories enable West to conclude with a chapter outlining a programme of prevention. Modern societies should adopt the carefree attitude to sex found in Samoa and some parts of the East, for far from impeding it, repression institutionalizes homosexuality: 'Paradoxically, a too repressive attitude and a too narrow view of what is natural and unnatural in the sexual field aggravates the situation by instilling at an early age the fears and anxieties that lead to adult neuroses and perversions'. A liberal approach to sex will produce a 'healthier' atmosphere. Homosexuality would be greatly reduced, if not necessarily eliminated, under this new liberal regime of 'mental hygiene'.¹⁶

The case against Timarchus dominates the first half of Dover's *Greek Homosexuality*, but now it is very much passive penetration rather than the commercial nature of the relationship which is the real problem. References to *hubris* in the speech are seen as references to 'homosexual submission' and the discussion of the law used against Timarchus culminates with a ten-page section entitled 'Dominant and Subordinate Roles'. It is to this section that readers are referred for enlightenment concerning 'the terms in which the important distinction between prostitution and "legitimate eros" was conventionally drawn', and 'the reasons

¹⁵ K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978), vii-viii, 2 (n. 3), 203 (n. 15); Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 123-4, 114. Cf. Plato, *Symposium*, ed. Kenneth Dover (Cambridge, 1980), 5: 'the homosexual response of a man to the visual stimulus afforded by a handsome boy or youth . . . (modern metaphysicians are apt to think first of a Beethoven symphony, though some prefer a Highland sunrise)'.

¹⁶ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 2 (n. 3); D. J. West, *Homosexuality*, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, 1960), 177-8, 180; see also ch. 11, 'Prevention'.

for making [the law]' in the first place, since it makes the grounds for hostility towards the choice made by male prostitutes 'sufficiently obvious'.¹⁷

The ten pages are concerned with 'Consideration of the modes of heterosexual copulation and of the circumstances in which homosexual anal copulation is practised'. The material consists of vase images, interpreted with the help of a wide range of comparative material, including animal behaviour and the film *Deliverance*. The crucial distinction, it emerges, is between penetration from the rear and face-to-face intercourse. In heterosexual images the 'woman is almost invariably in a "subordinate" position, the man "dominant"; the woman bent over or lying back or supported, the man upright or on top'. Homosexual images, however, are almost all of 'intercrural sex' between the thighs with both partners standing face-to-face. Dover treats these images as normative, as showing the proper way for a boy to 'yield'. This enables him to revise the conclusion he had reached in 1964, that it was the entire context of the relationship that was important rather than the presence or absence of sex. Now there are two distinct modes of homosexual sex and only rear entry is a problem.¹⁸

Most of the images considered in the book are decoded simply by invoking a universal (among mammals) sexual symbolism, but Dover does try to show that this symbolism was used by the Greeks also; so, introducing a wine-jug known as the 'Eurymedon vase', an image destined to enjoy a long career in the annals of the history of Greek gender studies, he notes:

A man in Persian costume, informing us, 'I am Eurymedon. I stand bent over', suits his posture to his words, while a Greek, half-erect penis in hand, strides towards him with an arresting gesture. This expresses the exultation of the 'manly' Athenians at their victory over the 'womanish' Persians at the river Eurymedon in the early 460s; it proclaims, 'We've buggered the Persians!'

In 1964 Dover had argued simply that in comedy the 'active' partner was not abused as much as the 'passive'. By 1978 the 'active' partner is viewed much more positively as a victor, while his mate is treated as correspondingly vanquished.¹⁹ The use of the insulting term *katapugōn* is cited as evidence again, although

¹⁷ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 100, 33, 104.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 100; cf. n. 81 and p. 102.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 105–6.

Dover notes that often the context will not allow so specific a designation as 'pathic' (a 'passive homosexual'). In those cases Dover translates it in terms of 'worthlessness, inferiority or shamelessness in general . . . a reflex of the contempt felt by the dominant for the subordinate'. He compares the usage with modern English 'bugger', 'louse' and 'bitch'. However, there are now some additions to the abuse against pathics. We have already seen how *hubris* has come to mean sodomy; now *kinaidos* too (a word of unknown etymology glossed by Liddell, Scott and Jones as '*catamite: generally lewd fellow*') is seen as having a more specific connotation. 'Vague as *kinaidia* may be', when Aeschines uses the charge against Demosthenes he clearly means to accuse him of 'homosexual submission'. In a footnote Dover even claims for the first time to have found in comic fragments a verb, *laikazomai*, which is used in the same aggressive way that 'fuck' is used in English. He translates the fragments accordingly: 'Get fucked!', 'Fuck you!', 'I'll be fucked!'²⁰

By 1978, then, Dover had put sex at the heart of Greek homosexuality, and rear entry at the centre of Greek anxieties about sex, by reading through reticence to 'concrete realities'. As a result he felt able to 'translate' Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium* 'from euphemism into plain English: acceptance of the teacher's thrusting penis between his thighs or in his anus is the fee which the pupil pays for good teaching'. Before this act of 'translation', the text read: 'It is creditable to grant any favour in any circumstances for the sake of goodness'.²¹ The emphasis on acts is in conformity with West's harmless homosexual 'playfulness' and Devereux's notion of pseudo-homosexuality which frames the whole book, a question of 'behavioural patterns' rather than 'fundamental orientations of the personality'. Devereux's insistence on an inherent 'aggressivity' in homosexuality is also clearly apparent. What distinguishes Dover from Foucault and his followers, however, is his belief in the existence alongside it of the 'truly' sexual: the heterosexual. When a Greek had sex with his boyfriend he was engaging in a behavioural pattern, a prolongation of adolescent horseplay; when he had sex with his wife he was being 'sexual'.

Meanwhile, in France heterosexuality was losing its privileged position. Apparently quite independently, the same year that

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 143, 113, 75, 142 (n. 12).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 91, on Plato, *Symposium*, 185b.

Dover published *Greek Homosexuality*, the distinguished historian Paul Veyne published an article on Roman sexuality in the journal *Annales* called 'La Famille et l'amour sous l'Haut Empire romain'. Veyne focuses on the act of penetration as a stabbing, rather than the different elevation of bodies in rear-entry sodomy, so that the missionary position is nothing special and any distinction between penetrated women and penetrated boys can be obliterated. He uses the verb *sabrer* ('to give a hammering to') to describe the Roman attitude. It was fine for slaves, wives and subordinates to submit to 'a hammering' from their master, but quite shameful for free youths to be subjected to such domination. This 'sexuality of rape [*viol*]' endured until at least the eighteenth century and is the origin of the distinction between what we call activity and passivity. Moreover the extreme emphasis on active and passive at Rome can still be found in 'more than one modern Mediterranean society', where to be active is to be male, no matter what the gender of the passive partner. Quoting Proust, he allows for the possibility of a hard core of homo- and heterosexuals representing 20 percent of a population but suggests casually that in any given population 80 percent will be more flexible. We should not really talk of homosexuality in the ancient world, he argues, but of bisexuality. Men did have sexual preferences but they were inessential, like preferring the racetrack to the stage. Greece provides something of a contrast to Rome. There too the passive position was shameful, but there was one important exception: 'adolescents, thanks to their youth, could be passive *without dishonour*'; the penetration problem only starts when they are grown men.²²

Veyne introduces the work of Foucault into the argument for the first time. For Foucault, he says, discourse has nothing at all to do with 'what is said' and the '*tartes à la crème* of semiology and linguistics', but properly speaking it denotes on the contrary what is 'preconceptual and unspoken'. Thus, although there were times when free Romans did succumb to penetration, nobody talked about it; it was 'a taboo subject'. Although the opposition between activity and passivity was critical in ancient discourse, this does not mean the distinction is apparent in texts.²³

Veyne's 1971 treatise on historiography, *Comment on écrit*

²² Paul Veyne, 'La Famille et l'amour sous l'Haut Empire romain', *Annales ESC*, xxxiii (1978), 50, 52-3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 52-3.

l'histoire: essai d'épistémologie, had not mentioned Foucault. Veyne took more notice of him, however, in his monograph on public benefaction, *Le Pain et le cirque*, which was published in 1976, and in March of that year he arrived at the Collège de France to become Foucault's colleague. He stayed with Foucault when he was in Paris, becoming one of his closest friends. An encomium, 'Foucault révolutionne l'histoire', was added to the second edition of *Comment on écrit l'histoire* in 1978. His article on Roman sexuality of the same year should be seen as a similar kind of tribute, for in 1976 Foucault had produced *La Volonté de savoir*, serving as introduction to a proposed multi-volume history of sexuality. His argument there, somewhat similar to that produced by D. J. West in 1960, was that 'repression' did not repress a pre-existing sexuality, but paradoxically produced it: 'Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check . . . It is the name that can be given to a historical apparatus [*dispositif*]'. In particular, until the nineteenth century, there had been only the regulation of forbidden acts, like sodomy, and little interest in defining the types who might perform them. In 1869, however, Carl Westphal had written an article on 'contrary sexual sensations', and the homosexual became 'a personage', 'a species'. Veyne's article in *Annales* can be seen as an attempt to illustrate with a Roman example a different sexual discourse and the non-existence of a historical homosexual subject.²⁴

If Foucault influenced Veyne, however, Veyne also influenced Foucault. For in 1979 Veyne gave an even more forthright account of his theories of sexuality to a conference sponsored by an organization called *Arcadie* (Arcadia). Arcadia was a club for discreet 'homophiles', founded in 1954. It provided a weekly dance and organized public-information lectures. It proclaimed a separate homosexual identity, but was dedicated to integration: 'that the heterosexual world will gain a better understanding of what homophiles are and will accept them for what they are, in

²⁴ Paul Veyne, 'Foucault Revolutionizes History', trans. Catherine Porter, in Arnold I. Davidson (ed.), *Foucault and his Interlocutors* (Chicago, 1997); Peter Garnsey, 'The Generosity of Veyne', *Jl Roman Studies*, lxxxi (1991), 164–6; Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (London, 1992), 322–3; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, i, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth, 1979), 43, 105; cf. Veyne, 'La Famille et l'amour', 52: 'il ne reflète pas la logique profonde d'une lutte éternelle entre la répression et le désir' ('it does not reflect the deep logic of an eternal struggle between repression and desire').

other words, with their homophile nature'. Its official title was CLESPAL, *Club Littéraire et Scientifique des Pays Latins*. At the 1979 congress, subtitled 'The Gaze of Others', there were four main speakers and numerous panels. Foucault gave a talk on hermaphroditism, and Veyne opened with 'A Heterosexual Testimony from a Historian on the Subject of Homosexuality', repeating the main points of his article but with more emphasis on the Greeks and with a running theme comparing gay people to the Jews. One could defend the Jews in two ways: firstly, by saying that they are not 'monsters and that, despite their race, they have a right to live'. The tone implies this is a condescending strategy. Alternatively we could say: 'there is no such thing; I mean there is no Jewish race with defined characteristics'. The same applies, of course, to the 'Aryan race'. In the same way we could say that homosexuality does not exist, not merely that homosexuals differ among themselves or that there is a continuum between heterosexuality and homosexuality, but that whether someone is 'homo, hetero, or bi' is no criterion for classification, any more than someone's race or the initial of their surname. Nor, by the same token, do heterosexuals exist: 'no one loves women in general, for the sole reason that they are biologically of the female sex'. These remarks form an introduction to the theme of sexuality in the ancient world which thus becomes a proof of this point: 'I would like to be able to tell you [sc. 'the Arcadians'] that in this happy period there were no prejudices against homosexuals and that Greek civilization was more liberal than our own. But if I said that, I would be lying: the Greeks were unable to be either tolerant or intolerant towards homosexuality for the good reason that they had no idea what homosexuality was. They did not classify sexual conduct according to sex, but according to social class and the categories of activity and passivity'.²⁵ The flexible, inessential Greeks, it is inferred, got the inessential nature of human sexuality right.

Originally the Greeks had formed no part of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, but after 1976 and the start of his close association with Veyne, pagan antiquity took up a prominent position in his work. In 1982 Foucault himself reviewed the French translation

²⁵ Paul Veyne, 'Témoignage hétérosexuelle d'un historien sur l'homosexualité', in *Le Regard des autres: actes du Congrès International 'Arcadie'* (Paris, 24–27 May 1979) (Paris, 1979), 17–18; see also 17–24. Cf. Eribon, *Foucault et ses contemporains*, 270–6; David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (London, 1993), 362–4.

of Dover's book — 'already a classic' — and discussed it in an interview with the journal *Masques*. He praises Dover's scholarship and accepts his conclusions. There were two important issues: whether you played the active or the passive role in sex and whether you had a beard. This led to an extremely complicated and regulated code of behaviour. Timarchus did not invoke the charge of prostitution through street-walking; it was the patent fact that he had been passive in sex and an object of pleasure. This was proof that the penetration problem was not easily dismissed by rules about beards. It was in fact as unthinkable for the Greeks as for the Romans that a boy once penetrated could ever assume a position of responsibility in society or the state.²⁶

When *L'Usage des plaisirs* eventually came out, it was not surprising that Dover was cited extensively alongside ancient authors. Foucault even uses Dover's ten pages demonstrating the universal symbolic meaning of homosexual penetration for 'the importance of not being dominated and the reticences with regard to sodomy and passive fellation in homosexual relations'. He follows Dover's notion of a zero-sum sexual battle between victor and vanquished: 'sexual relations — always conceived in terms of the model act of penetration, assuming a polarity that opposed activity and passivity — were seen as being of the same type as the relationship between a superior and a subordinate . . . one who vanquishes and one who is vanquished'. As for Timarchus: 'in the course of his youth [he] placed himself and showed himself to everyone in the inferior and humiliating position of a pleasure object for others. . . . What was hard for the Athenians to accept . . . was not that they might be governed by someone who loved boys, or who as a youth was loved by a man, but that they might come under the authority of a leader who once identified with the role of pleasure object for others'. The apparent double standard in the *Symposium* that Dover had identified in 1964 has now evolved into 'the antinomy of the boy': 'On the one hand, young men were recognized as objects of pleasure. . . . But on the other hand, the boy, whose youth must be a training for manhood, could not and must not identify with that role'. It was this fundamental problem of turning a sexual object, the boy, into a man, a 'subject in control of his own pleasures', a 'master',

²⁶ 'Entretien avec M. Foucault', in Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 286–7; 'Des Caresses d'hommes considérées comme un art', *ibid.*, 316–17.

that made the homosexual relation a preoccupation for the Greeks of greater intensity than any other. Indeed, the active–passive polarity can be seen as the centrepiece for the whole of Greek morality and the constitution of the Greek self: ‘for the Greeks, it was the opposition between activity and passivity that was essential, pervading the domain of sexual behaviours and that of moral attitudes as well. . . . In the eyes of the Greeks, what constituted ethical negativity par excellence . . . [was] being passive with regard to the pleasures’. Mark Poster seems quite justified, then, in arguing that, for Foucault, ‘The rudiments of the modern subject can be traced to the Greek problematization of the self in the practice of the love of boys’.²⁷

Following and reacting to Foucault the literature on Greek sexuality has burgeoned. It is beyond the scope of this article to summarize this large new corpus, but there are a few good review articles and even collections of articles which do, and readers can be referred to them. The important point for my purposes is that even Foucault’s severest critics (among whom I would include scholars such as the late John Boswell, David Cohen and Amy Richlin) accept the Dover–Veyne picture of the ancient world with the zero-sum game of penetration as its central preoccupation. Debate has focused instead on the extent to which the consequences of this central preoccupation are resistible in ancient societies and whether an ‘ethos of penetration’ can usefully be said to constitute an alternative to what we call sexuality.²⁸

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, ii, *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1985), 269 (n. 21), 215, 219, 221, 85–6; Poster, ‘Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece’, 213.

²⁸ While I do not always concur with her assessment of my contribution to the debate, the most useful survey for general readers is Ruth Mazo Karras, ‘Active/Passive, Acts/Passions: Greek and Roman Sexualities’, *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, cv (2000). See also David H. J. Larmour, Paul Allen Miller and Charles Platter (eds.), *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 1998), esp. ‘Introduction: Situating *The History of Sexuality*’; James Davidson, review of Larmour, Miller and Platter (eds.), *Rethinking Sexuality*, in *Classical Rev.*, 1 (2000); David Cohen, ‘Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Ancient Greece’, *Classical Philology*, lxxxvii (1992); David Cohen, ‘Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens’, *Past and Present*, no. 117 (Nov. 1987); ‘Debate: Law, Society and Homosexuality in Classical Athens’, *Past and Present*, no. 133 (Nov. 1991), Comment by Clifford Hindley, Reply by David Cohen; David Cohen and Richard Saller, ‘Foucault on Sexuality in Greco-Roman Antiquity’, in Jan Goldstein (ed.), *Foucault and the Writing of History* (Oxford, 1994); Mark Golden, ‘Thirteen Years of Homosexuality (And Other Recent Work on Sex, Gender and the Body in Ancient Greece)’, *Echos du monde classique*, xxxv (1991); David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays in Greek Love* (London, 1990), esp. 35 (Halperin has been a target of much criticism (Eribon, *Foucault et ses contemporains*, 56, calls his writing ‘rather terrorist’), but he has merely

A very few voices have spoken out, however, against the penetration consensus. As early as 1986, a non-classicist such as Poster could see problems with Foucault's analysis of ancient sexuality: 'It must be admitted that Foucault is not entirely convincing on this issue . . . it is not at all clear that in the sexual relation the boy is any more an object of another's pleasure than is the adult. Foucault relies on the work of historians of Greece to determine that such was indeed the case for the ancients. . . . It appears that Foucault assumes that a sexual relation in which one partner is required *exclusively* to play an active role and the other partner *exclusively* to play a passive role is possible, as if the fact of "activity" and "passivity" were not ambiguous from the start'. In 1988 Eva Cantarella re-examined Plato's discourses on love and the case against Timarchus. Like Dover in 1964, she found in Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium* explicit evidence 'which makes it hard to imagine that boys were forever engaged in the pointless game of diehard resistance imagined by some scholars'. Again, like Dover in 1964, she finds a 'complete coincidence between what Plato writes for an intellectual public and what Aeschines writes for a public made up of average citizens'. In conclusion: 'I believe that it was absolutely normal throughout the course of Greek history for a boy to "submit" to his lover, and that this did not necessarily involve any loss of honour. Honour . . . was lost . . . only by *paides* who yielded without respecting some rules of what might be called a procedural nature'. Nicole Loraux also found it hard to square the implications of the gender-blind penetration theory with the

(n. 28 cont.)

taken penetration to its logical conclusion — cf. K. J. Dover's review of *One Hundred Years*, in *Classical Rev.*, xli (1991) — re-emphasizing a Devereux-style psychoanalysis and insisting on compulsiveness: 'Just because my sexuality is an artefact of cultural processes doesn't mean I'm not stuck with it': Halperin, *One Hundred Years*, 51; cf. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, 1990), 44–7; John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire* (New York, 1990), ch. 2 and index s.v. 'protocols'; Amy Richlin, 'Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men', *Jl Hist. Sexuality*, iii (1993); Camille Paglia, 'Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders: Academe in the Hour of the Wolf', *Arion*, 3rd ser., i (1991); Bruce S. Thornton, *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality* (Boulder, 1997), esp. 110–15 and 217; Bruce S. Thornton, 'Greek Appetite and its Discontents', *Arion*, 3rd ser., vii (1999–2000); John Boswell, 'Concepts, Experience and Sexuality', *Differences: A Jl of Feminist Cultural Studies*, ii (1990), 72–3; John Boswell, 'Revolutions, Universals, and Sexual Categories', in George Chauncey, Jr, Martin Duberman and Martha Vicinus (eds.), *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (Harmondsworth, 1991); John Thorp, 'The Social Construction of Homosexuality', *Phoenix*, xlvi (1992), 58–9.

manifest Greek concern with gender: 'And the study of the Greek man and the feminine quickly leads to the hypothesis that an entire range of Greek thought focused on sexual differences (or, at least, that the Greeks thought a great deal about them) and ways to put them to male advantage, much more than on the endless verification of man's active role in the opposition between passive and active'.²⁹

III

'GIVING THEIR BODIES OR SELLING THEM'

Why then did Dover reject his conclusions of 1964 in order to focus on 'Dominant and Subordinate Roles'? Did he take a wrong turning when Devereux's article arrived on his desk from Paris or after that dream of a trip to the zoo? He had concluded in 1964 that it was the 'whole context' of the relationship which Pausanias used in the *Symposium* to distinguish good *erōs* from bad. The problem was explicitly not 'yielding', but yielding immediately or for payment. Likewise he had concluded that it was the commercial nature of his relationships which was at issue in the case of Timarchus. This seems to me absolutely right.

Aeschines makes no distinction between sodomy and intercrural sex and gives no details of sexual acts. On the other hand, he goes to some lengths to 'prove' that Timarchus had been kept by a number of lovers and was ready to take a new one at the drop of a hat, neatly, if not always logically, linking his readiness to sell his body, his patrimony and the state. Corrupt politicians were often described as 'selling themselves', and the theme of prostitution allows Aeschines to throw Timarchus' accusations of corruption back at him. This was the reason, he states explicitly both at the beginning and end of his speech, that prostitutes were barred from a civic role: 'for the lawgiver thought a man who

²⁹ Poster, 'Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece', 213; Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven, 1992), 21, 27; Nicole Loraux, *The Experiences of Tiresias*, trans. Paula Wissing (Princeton, 1995), 16–17. More recently, T. K. Hubbard, 'Popular Perceptions of Homosexuality in Classical Athens', *Arion*, vi (1998), has reverted to a position similar to Dover's in 1964, playing down the sexual role and emphasizing (in my view overemphasizing) class antagonism centring on the question of homoerotic behaviour. Elites of status, of wealth and of power are not identical or interchangeable, in Athens especially, and comic attacks on politicians, framed in terms of homosexual behaviour, are not simply responses to an alien elite lifestyle; they have a political context.

had sold his own body to be abused would have no difficulty selling the common interests of the city'. The commercial nature of the transaction, the process, the mode, is what the law and the speech are explicitly concerned with.³⁰

Even comic sources agree that it is the whole context and in particular prostitution rather than penetration in itself which is the problem. In Aristophanes' *Wealth*, for instance, the slave Cario and his master are discussing the power of money. The master begins:

'They do say those Corinthian *hetaeras* [courtesans] pay no attention whatsoever when a man without means tries to seduce them but if a rich man comes along they bend over and present themselves in no time at all.' 'Yes and they do say that boys do the same, not for the sake of their lovers, but for money.' 'Only the whores among them, not the decent ones; decent boys never ask for money.' 'And what do they ask for, then?' 'Well, one might ask for a thoroughbred, another might ask for a pack of hunting dogs.' 'That's just euphemism. They are ashamed to ask for money and gloss over their vice with words.'

As this passage shows, the difference between decent and indecent behaviour might be hard to pin down, but that does not mean the 'real' problem lies elsewhere. Both 'decent boys' and whores bend over for their lovers, but 'decent boys never ask for money'. Likewise it is 'context' that must define sexual *hubris*: Aristotle says that Hellanocrates of Larissa was betrayed by his lover 'thus making it clear that the connection between them had originated not in loving desire, but in *hubris*'.³¹ If *hubris* was buggery, Hellanocrates would have realized sooner.

In 1964 Dover thought abuse found in comedy and elsewhere revealed in *homo Aristophaneus* a different, more simple set of attitudes, and his work after 1964 can be seen as an attempt to apply the hostility towards sexual passivity he saw in this abuse onto the discourses of Plato and Aeschines. There is no reason why sexual morality should be homogeneous, but this comic abuse does seem to fit quite readily with the emphasis of Plato, Aeschines and the law. Much of the abuse directed at pathics, for instance, is clearly attacking excess or readiness, rather than

³⁰ Aeschines 1.29, 188; cf. 2.23, and Isocrates 12.140. See James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London, 1997), ch. 8.

³¹ Aristophanes, *Wealth*, 149–59; cf. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, ch. 4. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1311b; cf. D. M. MacDowell, 'Hubris in Athens', *Greece and Rome*, xxiii (1976), 17–19. All translations from the Greek and French are mine, unless otherwise stated.

a man's 'loss of virginity' or 'submission'. It is his willingness which is used by Timaeus to attack Agathocles: 'in his earliest youth he was a common prostitute, ready for the most dissolute, a jackdaw, a buzzard, a randy buzzard, putting his behind in front of anyone who wanted'. *Euruprōktos*, literally 'wide-anused', should also be seen as an attack on whorishness (excessive penetration, or even what we would have to call 'anal eagerness'), rather than on 'submission' in itself. When Aristophanes talks of the 'yawning-arsed Ionians' in *Acharnians*, he is noting how easily they are corrupted by Persian gold.³²

Both Dover and a more recent study of the word concur that, by the classical period, *katapugōn* is used in a general sense. It has a comparative and an abstract noun. In Aristophanes, as I have argued elsewhere, the word and its cognates make a lot of sense if we understand a reference to a general sexual excess (i.e. 'more lecherous', 'lecherousness') and less sense if we translate them in terms of passive anal penetration. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, for instance, is worried that her sex strike is falling apart because of women's irresistible desire for the penis. She despairs of her whole sex, insulting it as 'completely *katapugōn*': that is, 'completely lecherous'. To translate as 'completely pathic' or, in Dover's version — derived from the contempt felt by the active for the passive — as 'What a miserable bloody lot we women are!', misses the point she is trying to make about women's lack of sexual self-control.³³

³² Timaeus, in *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. Felix Jacoby et al. (Berlin and Leiden, 1923–) (hereafter *FGrHist*) 566 F124b; Aristophanes, *Acharnians*, 106–7. Cf. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 167–82; Aristophanes, *Knights*, 720–1: 'I can make the people dilate and contract [literally, 'wide or narrow']', boasts the Paphlagonian. 'My arse knows that trick too', is the whorish Sausage-seller's reply.

³³ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 113, 142–3; Mario Lombardo, 'Il Graffito', *Parola del passato*, xl (1985), 301–2; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 137. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 142, argues that, despite this general usage, the 'original', more specific reading referring to pathics could have been adduced by an Athenian. The word looks as if it consists of a preposition *kata* ('right into' or 'towards') and *pugai* ('buttocks'), sounding exactly like 'right up the bum' or 'bum-oriented'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae*, 364, *tis tōn kataprōktōn* (*prōktos* is 'anus'). See also Alan Johnston, 'Katapugos', *Parola del passato*, xlv (1990), 41. T. K. Hubbard, 'Popular Perceptions', 58–9, 75 (n. 35), suggests that the term means simply 'anal', i.e. without designating any sexual role, but the fact that we cannot be definite does not mean that the term was indefinite. The actual origin of the word is obscure and may not be so obvious, but any Athenian who performed a bit of folk etymology and analysed the word (an entirely plausible thing for an Athenian to do) would most likely adduce in the first place an active, not a passive, sense when hearing 'up-the-bum man', in the same way that an epitaph (*epi*, 'on'; *taphos*, 'tomb') refers to what is on a tomb and not to a tomb with something on it. Beyond probabilities, there is some evidence for the

Another word which is supposed to indicate hostility towards pathics is *kinaidos*, but Dover concedes this word too can be 'vague'. It is a very rare word in classical Greek and its usage seems quite respectable: it is found in Plato and Aeschines, who try self-consciously to maintain standards of propriety, but in only one (doubtful) comic fragment, enough in itself to make an explicit reference to anal penetration unlikely. Aeschines never uses the word of the supposedly passive Timarchus, referring only (and without apologizing for his explicitness) to the *kinaidia* of his sponsor Demosthenes, and here and elsewhere the word is associated with effeminate dress like that of an adulterer, *moichos*. When Plato refers to 'the life of the *kinaidoi*' in *Gorgias* he seems to refer to an entire existence devoted to pleasure, the life of men completely lacking self-control. The evidence is not plentiful, but largely consistent. The classical *kinaidos* is an effeminate seducer whose sometimes secret nature is revealed in his clothes and personal style. Indeed, the charge of seducing rich and vulnerable youths is used by Aeschines to attack the *kinaidos* Demosthenes both in the speech *Against Timarchus* and elsewhere.³⁴

(n. 33 cont.)

active reading: in Aristophanes, *Knights*, 638–42, the Sausage-seller describes with clear sexual innuendo his initiation into public life. An 'up-the-bum man' farts on his right, and at that sign 'I bent over and dashed against the *kinchlis* [the barrier into court], thrusting with my arse, and gaping wide I let out a great howl'. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 142–3, uses jokes he has heard about the peculiar timbre of farts produced by passive men and thinks therefore that the *katapugōn* man must be passive. Thornton, *Eros*, 111, extrapolates: 'Presumably the anus of a *kinaidos*, widened and loosened by buggery, produced propitious tones'. Aristophanes does not indicate that the fart had a recognizable, let alone a propitious, timbre; the joke lies simply in the Sausage-seller's interpretation of a fart on the right as a lucky omen, as if it were a clap of thunder, a sign from Zeus. With regard to sexual role, exactly the opposite conclusion is required. The Sausage-seller is undoubtedly bending over — immediately, indiscriminately and whorishly, exactly like Timaeus's Agathocles — which means that in this case, at least, 'the up-the-bum man' is performing on him exactly the role his name suggests. A similar-sounding compound, *katakardios* (*kardia*, 'heart'), refers to 'heart-penetrating' objects, not to 'heart-penetrated' people. Likewise, a finger extended in an obscene gesture is described as the *katapugōn* — i.e., to spell it out, the 'up-the-bum finger'. Pollux, 2.184; cf. Diogenes Laertius, 6.34.

³⁴ Plato, *Gorgias*, 493a–494e; Phylarchus, in *FGrHist* 81 F45; Plutarch, *Moralia*, 126a, 705e; Aeschines, 1.131, 171, 2.99, 166; cf. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 75–6. *Kinaidos* is often assumed to be synonymous with *katapugōn* (cf. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 173), but its usage certainly is very different. Whereas the latter is above all a word of power, a vulgar speech-act or graffito, used to attack men and women, preferably to their face, *kinaidos* has a more epistemological emphasis, sign of discovering a man with a particular effeminate and degenerate quality, through personal phenomena: dress, movement, discourse, 'snorting'. In a later period there is evidence that assumptions about his passive sexual role are more definite and prominent in his typology, but he remains above all a personage to be identified. In the third

Another piece of comic evidence can be dealt with succinctly, the use of the verb *laikazō* in the aggressive sense of modern English 'fuck'. In 1980 H. D. Jocelyn demonstrated that the verb refers to fellatio. Dover accepts this in a supplementary note to the second edition of his book, but he insists it makes no difference and leaves his translations — 'Get fucked', etc. — unchanged.³⁵ A couple of passages in Greek literature, however, treat oral sex performed on either sex as an intrinsically disgusting act. Robert Parker, in his study of Greek ideas of pollution, sees the source of the revulsion in an offence against the body's hierarchy: 'The most honourable part of the body, and the purest is the head, and of the head the purest part should be the mouth, which receives food, utters prayer, and implants chaste kisses; it is thus in particular danger of contamination by contact with dirty and shameful organs'.³⁶ Crucially it is because of fear of contamination that contact even with *acquaintances* of a practitioner of cunnilingus is refused: 'Whoever does not utterly loathe such a man will never drink from the same cup with me'.³⁷

This failed attempt to find examples of sexual verbs used to indicate aggression highlights a remarkable difference between

(n. 34 cont.)

century BCE, Sotades of Maronea was said to have invented a genre of '*kinaidos* poetry', imitating their particular language and characteristics, poetry characterized, if Sotades' work is anything to go by, by a novel metre, riddling form, palindromes, obscene language and important political targets. Keith DeVries has directed me to reliefs on late third-century BCE bowls called 'Megarian'. Some depict *kinaidoi*, to my knowledge the only pre-Roman images so labelled; see Ulrich Sinn, *Die Homerischen Becher* (Berlin, 1979), 117–20, nos. 64–7. M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1941), i, 176–7, illustrates two of these and suggests a link with mime. In one, the label '*KINAIIDOI*' seems to designate five men with hats (*piloi*), and (in most cases) prominent erections, behaving badly in a flourmill; one of them, under the word 'Avenger', is tied to, or possibly uprooting, a post. One might observe that *piloi* are traditionally worn by Odysseus and his companions, in, for instance, scenes depicting the escape from the Cyclops; that other bowls in the series have Homeric scenes; and that Sotades wrote Homeric parodies. The other example also has a man with an erection tied to a post and the legend '*KINAIIDOS MOICHOS*' — quite possibly a *kinaidos* caught in adultery and made prisoner. Papyri from Egypt refer to *kinaidoi* as hired entertainers; one is referred to as *mousikos*, another was accused of raping a woman. Dominic Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (London, 1996), 117; cf. Gerald Sandy, '*Scaenica Petroniana*', *Trans. Amer. Philol. Assoc.*, civ (1974), 340 (n. 25).

³⁵ H. D. Jocelyn, 'A Greek Indecency and its Students: *Laikazein*', *Proc. Cambridge Philol. Soc.*, new ser., xxvi (1980); cf. Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 204–5.

³⁶ Robert Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983), 99–100, and refs. at n. 101; cf. Veyne, '*La Famille et l'amour*', 53.

³⁷ Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1288–9.

ancient Greek and English, not to speak of other languages. The Greeks did not tell enemies, 'Fuck you!' Defeated armies or sportsmen did not describe themselves as 'shafted', and worsted bargainers did not leave the agora muttering they had been 'screwed'. The aggressive connotations of the English slang used to translate verbs of sexual congress are, in fact, quite misleading. The word which corresponds to 'screw' in Greek is 'move'. The use of sex-roles to indicate victory or defeat may well belong to 'vulgar idiom in many languages', but it is lacking in Greek. Without this background it is illegitimate to interpret Greek scenes of penetration in terms of domination. Indeed, the sex-as-triumph interpretation of the 'Eurymedon vase', which has been used in numerous articles as a unique illustration of Greek phallocentrism, was rejected on different grounds as long ago as 1984. Far from being a hero, 'the Greek' seizing a sexual opportunity would be seen as a degenerate, like those who took advantage of Agathocles.³⁸

Gender too fits into this sexual morality of self-control. Female sexuality was not constructed along Victorian lines as an inert frigid receptivity, but, on the contrary, in terms of an inability to master sexual desire. Whereas men ejaculated, so finding a release and an end for desire, women's desire for sex was never-ending. Lysistrata's sex strike performs a reversal by getting women to master their urges, forcing men to experience desire as a womanish never-ending itch, and it is through evidence of female desire that a man is assimilated to a woman in sex. The Aristotelian *Problemata* describes the womanish pathic as one unable to ejaculate and therefore to find a release from desire; it is explicitly his 'insatiability', his *aplēstia*, not his mere 'receptivity', which makes him like a woman. Self-control in Greece is not really a matter of finding a limit like a speed limit and keeping

³⁸ G. Ferrari Pinney, 'For the Heroes Are at Hand', *Jl Hellenic Studies*, civ (1984), 181–2. Her arguments are that the 'Greek' is specifically characterized, wearing a cape and a goatee beard, rather like a Thracian; that 'the Persian', relatively rare on vases, would be more readily perceived as a Scythian, relatively very common; and that it would be strange to insult the river where the battle was fought. On the other hand, Eurymedon was a rather common name, shared by several mythological, literary and historical personages, including Perseus, and a character abused by the archaic poet Hipponax. Amy C. Smith, 'Eurymedon and the Evolution of Political Personifications in the Early Classical Period', *Jl Hellenic Studies*, cxix (1999), reviews the evidence undogmatically and confirms that such a 'personification' would be quite unique. It would indeed. More plausible would be the writing itself, or the wine-jug, proclaiming itself a river.

within it. The focus is on avoiding the terrifying abyss of limitlessness, conjured up in images of the endless torture undergone by the wicked in Hades: Tantalus; Sisyphus; the Danaids endlessly filling leaky jars with leaky sieves, a central motif in Greek eschatology and images of desire, linked by Plato to 'the life of the *kinaidoi*'.³⁹ This contrast between the libidinal economies of men and women or womanish men meant that men were vulnerable to being used or 'instrumentalized' in intercourse. According to a late source, male crocodiles attacked females if by looking into their eyes they discovered them prolonging sex beyond what was necessary to get pregnant. On an archaic vase, a man penetrating a slave-girl from behind says 'Keep still!' — not a useful mirror of Greek patriarchal norms for the benefit of posterity, but a joke about sex as a struggle between 'mover' and 'moved', between a finite and an infinite pleasure.⁴⁰

Some Greeks may have thought buggery, indeed all homosexual sex, should be avoided. Plato later adopts such a position. This is not evidence that for the Greeks buggery contained some intrinsic, insistent, decontextualized meaning, which some tried, with varying degrees of success, to defer or avoid. Buggery became a problem through the meaning it acquired in the context of other symbolic structures, in particular those of prostitution and commodification, excess and self-control. Dover's sharp distinction between bad sodomy and good intercrural sex seems a red herring in this context. Occasionally the homosexual intercrural is placed alongside images of heterosexual copulation in a series of positions as simply another schema in an elaborate array; one of the rare textual references to intercrural sex comes in Aristophanes, in a speech of the Sausage-seller describing his early life as a whore.⁴¹

³⁹ Plato, *Gorgias*, 493a–494e; Aristotle, *Problemata*, 4.26; cf. Anne Carson, 'Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire', in David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Before Sexuality* (Princeton, 1990); Giulia Sissa, *Greek Virginity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

⁴⁰ Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 23; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 116 (ill. R577).

⁴¹ Aristophanes, *Knights*, 424, 484; cf. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 98, plate B634 [= Berlin 1798]. Robert F. Sutton, Jr, 'The Good, the Base, and the Ugly: The Drunken Orgy in Attic Vase Painting and the Athenian Self', in Beth Cohen (ed.), *Not the Classical Ideal* (Leiden, 2000), 87, fig. 7.2: a black-figure amphora from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection, New York. *Paiderastai*, like gods at a sacrifice, are interested in 'thighs and tail': Plutarch, *Moralia*, 751c; Eubulus, *The Fragments*, ed. R. L. Hunter (Cambridge, 1983), fr. 130, with commentary, p. 226 (= *Poetae comici Graecae*, ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin (Berlin and New York, 1983–), Eubulus 127), although by 'tail' the base of the spine is meant. Cohen, 'Reply', 189; for Plato's attitude see Dover, 'Eros and Nomos', 35.

In sum, in a wide range of sources — comedy, oratory, law and Socratic dialogues — we find a similar moral emphasis. Athenian law banned prostitutes from speaking, and a wide range of authors indicate it was whorishness, revealed by acceptance of payment, excessive eagerness or random promiscuity that was to be avoided rather than any specific act. Some texts, like Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*, insist on this 'complexity' (*poikilia*) quite explicitly. This sexual morality sits very comfortably within a general morality which emphasized self-mastery (*enkrateia*). *Enkrateia* is of course a major element in Foucault's work on the Greeks, but his attempt to reconcile it with the polarities of penetration (passive or active with regard to pleasure), which is our main concern here, must fail. The Greeks did not use a metaphor of penetration to describe their mastery of, or submission to, desire, and the penetration model is quintessentially bipolar, a zero-sum game with two players, victorious active *necessitating* vanquished passive, the subject objectifying the object by means of his desire. It is hard to see how such a bipolar structure, derived from roles in penetration, can be usefully applied to self-control without resorting to nonsense. In the case of a man whose lack of self-control is seen in excessive eating, drinking or gambling there is no *other* subject to objectify him, no active to render him passive, no other ethical vanquisher, so to speak, ethically to vanquish him, no 'plus' to balance his 'minus' and arrive at zero-sum. It is a solitary protocol in which one yields or does not yield to one's own desires.

Whorishness, of course, includes an interpersonal element, but the distinction (intrinsically hard to pin down) made by sociologists and anthropologists between commodity exchange, which establishes a relationship between objects (i.e. 'buying someone', 'selling yourself'), and gift exchange, which establishes a relationship between subjects (i.e. 'doing someone a favour in return at your discretion'), provides a much better account of the symbolic production of both objects and of autonomous subjects in ancient Greece than Foucault's simple-minded series of parallel oppositions: active/passive, desiring/desired, doer/done-to, sexual subject/sexual object. A link between *enkrateia* and interpersonal relations is more helpfully discovered not in penetration but in maintenance of autonomy. It is possible that Foucault's bizarre metaphor of 'penetration by desires' may have originated as nothing more than a convenient link between the two separate

books, one on self-mastery, one on sexual relations, which were later blended, he says, in *L'Usage des plaisirs*; nevertheless he made the penetration metaphor the centrepiece of his Ancient Greece.⁴²

The evidence that the Greeks were secretly 'obsessed' with penetration and the polarity of active and passive turns out to be very flimsy indeed, based on the imposition of 'comic attitudes', deduced from hasty interpretations of comic invective, onto the supposed 'reticence' of laws and other texts, even those which argue explicitly that not sex but the context of sex, in particular whorishness, was the problem. Moreover the evidence which is adduced bears in itself all the marks of being meagre — the undescribed timbre of the *katapugōn*'s fart, the aggressive use of 'fuck' found, curiously, only in short fragments of comedies, the use of animal behaviour and Hollywood films to elucidate the meanings ascribed by Greeks to sexual positions. What induced Dover to abandon his complex but cogent conclusions of 1964 and how could such an unsubstantiated and simplistic system of unspoken protocols be imposed on the material with so much unanimity?

IV

MACHISMO

One answer is that the model of an ancient macho culture was already assumed, and each individual piece of evidence no matter how ambivalent or 'reticent' was seen as confirming the model, rather than as a step in a careful reconstruction of Greek sexual culture from scratch. One such model was provided by Rome, where there does indeed seem to be evidence (still less than in modern cultures) of a metaphorical use of sex as domination and triumph. We can still see the Roman model at work in the scholarship of Greek sexuality. After an exhaustive search for Greek use of *pugizō* ('bugger') in an aggressive sense to match Roman examples, for instance, David Bain could come up with only one classical example, on an early fifth-century cup from Gela in Sicily. It reads simply, 'He who wrote this will bugger him who is reading it'. It might refer to a specific object of desire,

⁴² *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Rabinow, 341; cf. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, ch. 4.

designated by the lost context of the vase, or it might refer precisely to a random reader taken unwillingly or promiscuously; but, thanks to the Roman model, this tiny, equivocal text becomes 'Clear evidence that such practices [aggressive uses of the verb] existed also in the Greek world'.⁴³ It was from Rome that Veyne approached Greek sexuality and through him the Roman model influenced Foucault too. It was especially important in convincing scholars that the penetration of youths in Greek society was anomalous, putting free citizens in the position of a Roman slave: anomalous, that is, in the context of a system which did not yet exist and of which the Greeks could have had no inkling.

Veyne introduced another model, 'Mediterranean society', which has been especially influential on the ideas of John J. Winkler and David Cohen. Winkler was quite open about his use of such a model to bring out 'unspoken assumptions' in the ancient Greek evidence. He compares it to 'an artist's penciled outline which is erased when the picture is finished'. In his more recent work Cohen has shown greater awareness of the dangers of arguing that because a set of Don Juan attitudes exists in Andalusia in the twentieth century they must have existed in Athens four hundred years BCE, but often it is only when placed alongside such 'comparative' material that ancient texts bear the meanings he adduces. He uses accounts of animal behaviour and homosexual rape at the Palio in Siena, for instance, not merely as comparisons, but to infer the meaning of *hubris* as 'sodomy' in Aeschines.⁴⁴

This macho model is responsible for one of the most violent distortions, the notion that ancient Greeks awarded points of honour for penetration, that the active role was always assigned positive manly values. An enormous range of sources ascribes negative values to penetrators. Adulterers were considered womanish, close to *kinaidoi*, sometimes even painted in the white tones used to indicate female skin, and Aegisthus, Clytaemnestra's

⁴³ David Bain, 'Six Greek Verbs of Sexual Congress', *Classical Quart.*, new ser., xli (1991), 68–9.

⁴⁴ Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 10, cf. 13, 70, 71; Cohen, 'Homosexuality in Classical Athens', 7–8 (n. 18); Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society* (Cambridge, 1991), index s.v. 'Mediterranean, anthropology of'; Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 31: 'Like many Mediterranean peoples, [the Greeks] were puritans about virility'. The latest attempt to resurrect 'Mediterraneanism', for some a sin equivalent to 'Orientalism', is from Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 12. Classical Greece is largely omitted from this discussion.

seducer, is addressed as 'Woman' by the chorus of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. In Greek representations of Sardanapallus, an archetype of oriental effeminacy, he is surrounded by his harem, and Aeschines is happy to refer to Timarchus' 'conquests' of other men's wives, his use of flute-girls and courtesans. These 'active' excesses only add to the impression of a womanish man with itching desires beyond control. Cohen argues that since competition for women was either impossible in the case of wives, or too easy in the case of *hetaeras*, penetrators scored few points from penetrating them. Even if we accept this contradictory argument, however, there is plenty of evidence for negative values being applied to those men whom modern scholars consider homosexual penetrators — most macho of all, according to Cohen's scoring system. Timarchus' client Misgolas, for instance, was ridiculed in several comedies for his fondness for *cithara*-boys. Aeschines too refers to this comic reputation. He is saving his most poisonous barbs, however, for another client and 'penetrator' of males, Hegesander, whom he describes, in exactly the terms he uses for Timarchus himself, as a 'whore'. Theopompus similarly attacks the Macedonian Companions as effeminate, simultaneously prostitutes and male-whore-keepers. Likewise the men who take advantage of Agathocles' *porneia* ('whorishness') are rebuked for their complete lack of self-control, and Menon is vehemently attacked for having an *erōmenos* ('male who is loved') older than himself, a relationship which according to the macho model should have meant hitting the jackpot.⁴⁵ When we look at images of randy satyrs we are surely not supposed to distinguish macho, positively pictured penetrators from effeminate, negatively pictured penetratees. All are illustrating bestial sensuality. Similarly it is absurd to suppose that the greedy, bibulous, lustful characters found in comedy dangling their bestial phalluses are being held up as models of a civic masculine ideal when they are depicted in an active role, or that Lamachus in *Acharnians* would 'conquer' the hero Dicaeopolis if he accepted his apparent invitation to bugger him. Despite Foucault's imaginative attempt to reconcile them, the idea of an essential meaning to penetration, a zero-sum game of winners and losers, is quite incompatible with the

⁴⁵ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 1625; Aeschines, 1.41, 70, 75, 107–8, 115; Athenaeus, 8.339ac; Theopompus, in *FGrHist* 115 F224–5; Polybius, 8.9, 10; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 2.6, 28. Cf. Cohen, 'Homosexuality in Classical Athens', 10–12; Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 165–6.

morality of self-mastery, which sees any kind of sexual excess as negative. There is no bargaining between these two models of morality. The negative portrayals of Timarchus as enslaved to desire, of Hegesander or the Macedonian Companions as 'prostitutes', are not ameliorated one iota by allusions to their 'positive' role as 'penetrators'.

It would not be difficult to supply examples from modern America for the attitudes ascribed to Mediterranean men, and one suspects that this model is being used to disguise the universalizing tendency of arguments about penetration. Why refer to mock homosexual rape among baboons and in Siena and not in the fraternity house on the other side of campus? In this respect Dover, typically, is much more honest, and we can trace the development of the use of a single modern comparison throughout his work. In his autobiography he accounts for his discovery of the double standard of penetration by the fact that he had recently read a survey of modern attitudes among the young. Change the gender in Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium* and it turns into 'a startlingly familiar description of a heterosexual ethos which many of us are old enough to remember: good girls say "no", but a boy who doesn't try to make them say "yes" is a wimp'. This survey of contemporary attitudes turns out to have been an article from the *Observer* in 1963, and he uses it to begin the 1964 article. There, however, its role is not as a parallel for Pausanias' speech, but to illustrate a difference; it seems at first sight a good parallel, but in fact it is not — the parallel only applies to the attitudes of 'Aristophanic man'. Yet after 1964 the same modern survey no longer helps to illustrate a difference, but is used as a cogent parallel.⁴⁶ Similarly, modern English slang — 'fuck you!', 'louse', 'bitch', etc. — is preferred even to dictionary definitions in adducing Greek comic usage, to the extent that Dover misses the point of Lysistrata's specific despair over women's randiness, and accusations of prostitution levelled against Timarchus are compared with 'the use of "prostitute" as a term of abuse against any girl who has pre-marital intercourse'.⁴⁷

By 'translating' Greek homosexuality into modern heterosexuality, Dover was able to re-establish empathy with a world that seemed at first rather alien: 'These Aristophanic jokes could be

⁴⁶ Dover, 'Eros and Nomos', 31; Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 112. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ed. K. J. Dover (Oxford, 1968), lxiv.

⁴⁷ Dover, 'Eros and Nomos', 33.

converted into heterosexual jokes'; 'the well-known passage of *Charmides* (155b9–e2), which, if we turned Charmides into a girl and changed the gender of the pronouns, would pass in a modern context as a light-hearted description of the effect which the proximity of a very pretty girl may have on a courteous, middle-aged, rather nervous bachelor'; 'If we translate this scene into heterosexual terms, so that Socrates' glimpse inside the cloak of Kharmides becomes a glimpse of the breasts of a young woman of extraordinary beauty, as she leans forward to ask an unaffected question, we come as close to seeing through Greek eyes as we are likely to come'; 'Get to the heart of the feelings, attitudes and traditions which underlie this illogicality, change the gender of some of the pronouns in Pausanias' speech'. For an empathetic historian like Dover the temptation of 'startling familiarity', the illusion of seeing 'through Greek eyes', reduced the incentive to interrogate the relevance of the modern analogy. Was the 'horri-fied' reaction of parents at the loss of their daughter's virginity really the same as discouraging an Athenian boy from 'yielding' in order to test his *erastēs*'s seriousness of purpose? In what sense might a classical Greek male be thought to have 'lost' something in intercourse or to have 'fallen'?⁴⁸

A more personal parallel also seems to inform Dover's understanding not of Greek hypocrisy but of the nature of (Greek) homosexuality itself. In his autobiography Dover refers to an incident of adolescent horseplay during which a friend proposed a 'nance', which Dover understood to mean sodomy. Dover refused, but the incident led to 'very far-reaching reflections on morality'. It is not difficult to see this scene lurking behind Dover's description of Greek homosexuality as 'strikingly "adolescent"', a 'prolongation of undifferentiated sexual exuberance into adult life' in the final note of *Greek Homosexuality*; it is an excellent candidate moreover for the the site of the 'primal scene' at age twelve, recalled by the dream of a trip to the zoo, which converted him to Devereux and pseudo-sexuality.⁴⁹ His insistence in the preface that the 'homosexual' is not the antithesis

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 156; Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 112. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ed. Dover, lxiv–lxv; Kenneth Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), 215; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 88, 90; Plato, *Symposium*, ed. Dover, 4.

⁴⁹ Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 7, 19, 123. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ed. Dover, lxiv: 'The undifferentiated sex-play characteristic of puberty in most cultures was prolonged into adult life'.

of the 'heterosexual' but 'a subdivision of the "quasi-sexual"' can be seen as part of this attempt to re-establish empathy. Dover understands Greek homosexuality not in terms of an antithetical subjectivity but in terms of the margins of his own sexual experience, the zone of the 'quasi-sexual': masturbation over a beautiful view, adolescent fooling around, the residual gestural elements of the sexual act revealed in the colloquial use of the words 'sod' or 'fuck' to signify aggression.

The resemblance between modern and (supposedly) ancient views has not gone unnoticed. Foucault noted the similarity himself: 'Today homosexuals still have the same problem. Most gays feel the passive role is in some way demeaning'. Again, however, only Poster seems worried about the resemblance: 'there are enough superficial similarities to cause concern'. To disguise the use of modern universalizing models to supply the details of ancient sexual protocols, scholars have resorted to a particular rhetoric. So Dover in 1994 finds the familiarity retrospectively 'startling', and Walter Burkert finds it 'astounding' that Greek ritual parallels primate behaviour so closely, while for Halperin Jack Abbott's Greek-like experience in a modern American jail is 'stunningly apropos'. Stephen Greenblatt observed that in travellers' descriptions of the New World the rhetoric of the marvellous became particularly intense when things started looking dangerously similar: 'What function of the imagination can erect absolute difference at the point of deepest resemblance? The answer is wonder'.⁵⁰

V

HOMOPHOBIA AND PRESENTIST HISTORY

The practice of locating the true problem within Greek homosexuality on the field of sexual action may have been informed by Roman, Mediterranean or modern models, but for Dover it also seemed to fit with the emphasis on mere homosexual behaviour as opposed to true perversity found in D. J. West and

⁵⁰ Foucault *Live (Interviews, 1966–84)*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. John Johnston (New York, 1989), 227; Poster, 'Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece', 209; Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 112; Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 38–9 (and cf. Halperin's review of Leo Bersani, *Homos*, in *London Rev. Books*, 23 May 1996, 24); Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley, 1983); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions* (Oxford, 1991), 134–5.

Devereux. According to Dover, Devereux did not like homosexuals, announcing 'I hate queers' shortly after agreeing to collaborate with him on his book, and Devereux's concept of pseudo-homosexuality is a clear attempt to distance the Greeks from perverts (the emphases are his own): 'Homosexual *behaviour*' was '*less* pathological' than 'psychological homosexuality'; 'pre-Platonic homosexuality, while behaviourally real, was psychologically spurious', 'a *by-product* of the unfortunate *manner* in which the Greeks implemented a psycho-social constellation'; 'the *average* Greek . . . was not *psychiatrically* a pervert', although 'what *Plato* calls love, is for the clinician quite as much as for the normal, heterosexual man, abnormal in every sense of the word'.⁵¹ Devereux's announcement worried Dover but did not lead him to abandon their proposed collaboration, and the notion of pseudo-homosexuality is the theory which lies behind all his work after the article on 'Eros and Nomos' of 1964. Modern commentators have not picked up on it, but Dover seems well aware that the prefix 'quasi-' or 'pseudo-' might be seen as homophobic, and after insisting that 'the heterosexual' alone is truly 'sexual', he issues a challenge: 'Anyone who wishes to make an impression on me by ascribing my inclination to prejudice must first persuade me that he has made a serious attempt to distinguish between prejudice and judgment'. I have no wish either to impress Dover or to accuse him of homophobia, but it is clear that *Greek Homosexuality* shares Devereux's goal of shielding the Greeks from attacks that homophobia might inspire. In the final paragraph Dover says he has heard people say 'It's impossible to understand how the Greeks could have tolerated homosexuality'. Such attitudes, he says, are the product of a culture which, thanks to religious prohibition, fails to inquire about 'the variety of sexual stimuli which can arouse the same person or about the difference between fundamental orientations of the personality and episodic behaviour at a superficial level', a distinction for which, at the beginning of the book, he refers to Devereux's 1967 article. Homophobes should relax. What happened in Greece was not homosexuality, just sex, part of the marginalia of any normal person's sexuality — superficial, episodic or gestural, but always quasi-sexual sex. More specifically, by distancing the

⁵¹ Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 123; Devereux, 'Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality', 69–70; Devereux, 'Nature of Sappho's Seizure', 25.

Greeks from modern homosexuals he was, moreover, making them less other to himself.⁵²

The same desire to distance the Greeks and Romans from modern homosexuality is manifest also in Veyne and Foucault, not in order to absolve the Greeks from charges of perversity but to undermine the very notion of sexual identity. While Dover accepted invitations to address gay societies in British universities, informing them that Greek homosexuality was not the same thing at all, and, as I recall in Oxford in 1986, writing 'pursuing' and 'fleeing', 'lover' and 'beloved' on the blackboard in Greek to underline the gulf, Veyne addressed the homophiles of Arcadia in Paris, advocates of an equal but other sexual nature, informing them the Greeks 'had no idea what homosexuality was' as proof of his contention that homosexuals, like Jews (and Aryans), did not exist. In the spring of 1982 Foucault gave a précis of Dover's conclusions to the readers of the gay journal *Masques*. He begins the interview as follows: 'What seems to me the most important thing in this book is that Dover shows that our division of sexual behaviours between homo- and heterosexuality is absolutely irrelevant for the Greeks and Romans. This means two things: on the one hand, they had no notion of it, no *concept*, and, on the other hand, they had no experience of it. A person who slept with another of the same sex did not *feel* homosexual. That seems to me fundamental'.⁵³ It was generous of such distinguished academics, not identified as gay, to speak to gay organizations when other invitations to less distinguished speakers went unanswered, but the price to be paid became clear in the first few minutes. The audience or readership would be disabused of the fantasy that Arcadia had ever existed, that Greek homosexuality had anything to do with them, that the sense of identity which led to the invitation to speak on antiquity, which gave their organizations their *raison d'être*, was meaningful, that there was any otherness for heterosexual academics to be frightened of; or perhaps it is a coincidence that on each occasion what seemed 'the most important point' was always the same. Perhaps there were invitations to speak to heterosexual groups which I have overlooked.

In the same interview with *Masques*, Foucault discusses the

⁵² Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, viii, 203; cf. 2 (n. 3).

⁵³ Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 286.

issue of 'coming out', describing the affirmation 'I am a homosexual' as 'the affirmation of a right, but at the same time, a cage, a trap'.⁵⁴ Inasmuch as Foucault himself was gay and not 'out' in any straightforward sense, the existence or not of homosexuality was for him more than an abstract question. Foucault's integrity on the issue of 'coming out' is controversial, especially in the light of the offensive denials put out by his friends when it was suggested that his death had been caused by AIDS, but despite his fearlessness in other regards, it seems quite clear that this quintessentially in-the-world philosopher was not able ultimately to transcend the common prejudices of his time. He did not want his work, says Leo Bersani, a friend in his later years, 'taken as talk about a potentially sequesterable minority'. Jean Le Bitoux, another friend and defender of Foucault's reputation, recalls many discussions of 'coming out', the philosopher explaining to him that 'if he had been labelled a "gay intellectual" he wouldn't have had the audience that was his here and in the United States'.⁵⁵

Although Foucault sometimes refused to talk about the question, his hostility to the notion of homosexual identity was evident and was expressed, if anything, more sarcastically when he was not addressing a gay audience. In the review of Dover for *Libération* he wrote: 'Of course there will still be some genial characters good enough to suppose [*ésprits aimables pour penser*] that in the final analysis, homosexuality has always existed . . . To such *naïfs* Dover gives a good lesson in historical nominalism . . . Dover, one suspects, is having a good laugh at those for whom homosexuality had been unrestricted'. Dover may or may not have been laughing. Foucault certainly was. This is evident in a commentary he wrote for *Libération* in June of the same year under the name of Didier Eribon. (Foucault had asked Eribon to sign the piece with his own initials.) The subject was the decision of Arcadia's founder, André Baudry, to disband the organization. Foucault compares him to Moses leading his homosexual people out of Egypt. Now, by disbanding Arcadia, he was abandoning his people to the 'stupre des villes' ('debauchery of the cities'), while in America the people of Sodom were welcoming fire and brimstone, 'the gay cancer', as a punishment from God.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁵⁵ James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (London, 1993), 258, 256, 25; see also 21–5.

According to Eribon, the sarcasm of his concluding sentence — ‘Roll on the day when God becomes a woman and homosexuals finally may be shot of her’ — had to be toned down to ‘homosexuals may finally cease to believe in her’ before publication. Whatever one may think about the cogency of their conclusions, it is undeniable that after 1964 the most influential research was motivated by a profound, even bitter, hostility to the notion of a transhistorical gay identity: ‘We have to dig deeply’, says Foucault, ‘to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such a reason intelligible but not necessary’.⁵⁶ It is ironic that a passionate desire to establish the cultural contingency of sexuality depended on, and reinforced, the notion of a culturally transcendent, sociobiological, ‘natural’ meaning of the sexual act as domination.

The apparent paradox that an Oxford academic, impelled by a desire to re-establish empathy with a distant historical subject, and a French philosopher, who had spent his career undermining claims to truth and universal ‘natural’ categories on which empathy might be based, found it so easy to agree about the Greeks can be resolved with reference to the place occupied by their antithetical sexual identities in a homophobic environment. Dover tried to understand his Greeks in terms of the superficial non-essential elements of his own heterosexuality. As a gay man who, for very good reason, did not want to be labelled ‘gay’, Foucault was concerned to undermine the notion of a transhistorical homosexual people so he could not be ‘one of them’. The one was rescuing his subject, the other his identity, from homophobia.

VI

THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT . . . SPEAKS

There is something else, more important than this. One reason why scholars have been able to impose modern models of sexual attitudes, posing as radically other, onto the Greeks is that the Greeks have in fact very little to say on the subject of penetration themselves. This absence, however, has been interpreted as more than a blank sheet of paper. The critical epistemological reversal

⁵⁶ Foucault *Dits et écrits*, iv, 315–16; Eribon, *Foucault et ses contemporains*, 277–81; *Foucault Live*, ed. Lotringer, 209.

from 'pure' Greek love to precisely its opposite extreme in penetration-obsessed Greeks comes with the notion that this silence is attempting to cover something up, that is, that the Greeks are obsessed with penetration precisely because they do not talk about it. Dover acknowledges this 'reticence' or 'inhibition', terms which already prejudge the nature of Greek silence, throughout his work. In the commentary on Aristophanes' *Clouds*, he even suggests that a history of Greek sexual inhibition would be a great contribution to our understanding of their art, language and society. The campaign against reticence was continued in 1973: 'A great deal is written about homosexual eros from which the innocent reader would not easily gather that any physical contact at all was involved'. Foucault too was struck by the 'extreme prudishness of these texts', their 'excessive bashfulness': 'It is not possible to infer from this text the acts and gestures that honour would compel one to refuse . . . the acts are never designated'. 'There was a reluctance to evoke directly and in so many words the role of the boy in sexual intercourse.'⁵⁷

One of the characteristic features of Dover's work, however, is that he fills these silences graphically. A Greek would not mind, he says, if his claims that he was 'in love' were taken to imply 'that he desired more than anything to ejaculate in or on the boy's body. I put the matter in these coarse and clinical terms to preclude any misapprehension arising from modern application of the expression "Platonic love" or from Greek euphemism'. This elision between modern and ancient euphemism is important, for Dover is famously and self-consciously explicit. In the preface to his (often graphic) 1968 commentary on *Clouds* he asks why adolescents should be protected from sexually explicit jokes, while being encouraged to read the 'grossest dishonesties' of orators. He insists in his famously 'truth-telling' autobiography, in a discussion of what he considers his own physical deformity, that he prefers 'nasty truths' over 'silly lies'. The sexual explicitness of his work can be seen as the result of carrying this campaign against modern hypocrisy onto the field of Greek sexual morality, eliding 'modern application of the term "Greek Love"' with 'Greek euphemism'. What looked to reviewers methodical, objective and matter-of-fact, is in fact something much more

⁵⁷ Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ed. Dover, lxx (n. 2); cf. Dover, 'Eros and Nomos', 33; Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes', 67; Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, 209, 223; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 328.

aggressive, a crusade to reveal what is hidden, to expose hypocrisy, to make embarrassed silence speak.⁵⁸ For all that Dover's truth-telling has a powerful personal motivation and is not confined to confessions of a sexual nature, it is also true that, on the one hand, phallogocentric metaphors of 'penetrating through to deep truth' have been said to lie (deep) in a Western epistemological tradition said to go back to the Greeks, and, on the other hand, that the practices of truth-telling about sex have been said to have a particular intensity in the modern period, especially since the 1960s — an intensity which links the modern era of 'sexual liberation' to the 'repressive', confession-demanding past, in particular to the 'Victorian' nineteenth century.

This latter observation was, of course, one of the main themes of the first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, known in France as *La Volonté de savoir*, published in 1976: 'one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell'. 'A great sexual sermon — which has had its subtle theologians and its popular voices — has swept through our societies over the last decades; it has chastised the old order, denounced hypocrisy, and praised the rights of the immediate and the real.' The affirmation of a subjugated sexuality 'is coupled with the grandiloquence of a discourse purporting to reveal the truth about sex'. Dover's work on homosexuality seems like a perfect exhibit to demonstrate Foucault's 'will to know', a desire to expose sexual hypocrisy carried over from the 1960s and 1970s to the classical period. All that talk of 'favours' and 'chasing' was hiding the truth of sex: 'It is only when we insist, *as we must*, on translating such words as "pursue" and "accomplish" into concrete realities that the extent of the disguise which convention imposed upon the expression of homosexual eros becomes apparent' (emphasis added) — or, likewise, translating 'in love' as desire 'more than anything to ejaculate in or on the boy's body', or 'gratify' 'from euphemism into plain English: acceptance of the teacher's thrusting penis between his thighs or in his anus'. It is hard to think of a more pertinent example of phallogocentrism in action.⁵⁹

In *Greek Homosexuality* we can see this will to penetrating truth in operation, as *katapugōn*'s true 'original' (albeit obsolete)

⁵⁸ Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes', 65; Aristophanes, *Clouds*, ed. Dover, viii–ix; Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 3, cf. 19–20, 229.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, i, *Introduction*, 59, 7–8; Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes', 65; Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 91, 59.

meaning is discovered in passive sex, or as the hidden referent of discourse moves inexorably from a treat to foreplay to penetration:

the substance of any given homosexual relationship could only be, for everyone but the *erastes* and *eromenos* themselves, a matter of conjecture. Was the 'service' or 'favour' that A desired from B a kindly smile, a readiness to accompany him to watch a race, or what? In Xenophon's *Symposium* 8.24 Socrates apologizes for his 'coarseness' in mentioning homosexual bodily contact in a generalization, even though he speaks only of kissing and caressing. . . . We do not and cannot know whether there were *erastai* and *eromenoi* who abstained from bodily contact; perhaps they would always have said they did, if asked, but in educated society, convention protected them from direct questioning; in most heterosexual cultures, after all, it is not common form to ask A, 'Yes, but haven't you screwed B yet?', no matter how greedily the question may be discussed by C and D.⁶⁰

This algebraic example, it seems, relates to Dover's experience during the war. He explains his lifelong distaste for sexual euphemism, again, by the fact that he fought alongside men of working-class origin. If A showed B a photograph of A's girlfriend, it was normal for B to ask 'Has thou fucked her?' Dover seems to identify Plato's reticence with the 'Victorian' sexual repression of the English middle classes, Aristophanes' outspokenness with working-class honesty. The strange paradox that the most important thing in Greek sexual morality is something the discourse of sexual morality leaves out makes more sense if we see it in this context. Omission marks sodomy out as the doily-covered, the source of the greatest anxiety. When writing his autobiography Dover was able to use the letters he had written to his parents: 'Of course I omitted one or two things; but what a son omits in writing to his parents is the kind of thing he is in least danger of forgetting'. It seems inevitable, if we believe Foucault, that research initiated by a desire to discover the repressed secret of Greek homosexual anxiety would end up with a sexuality of sex.⁶¹

This will to truth in sex lies behind not only the telescoping of the 'very general' meanings of *katapugōn* and *kinaidos* into specific references to sodomy but also the elision of the dichotomy between *erastēs* and *erōmenos* into the sexual polarity of active

⁶⁰ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 53–4; cf. 91.

⁶¹ Anthony Clare, *In the Psychiatrist's Chair III* (London, 1998), 113; Dover, *Marginal Comment*, 2.

and passive, an elision immediately effected when Dover compared the pursuit and flight discussed by Pausanias to modern boys and girls and their polarized sexual roles.⁶² The *erastēs* is simply 'a male who loves', the *erōmenos*, 'a male who is loved'. (Discussions of penetration often seem to confuse grammatical and sexual activity/passivity. Perhaps we should refer to the *erastēs* as 'the smitten'; this would avoid confusion and also be more appropriate to the rather pathetic characters we find in Greek texts.) Certainly the relationship might involve only two men and it might be close and physical. Often, however, the relationship is clearly remote. One *erōmenos* is often said to have many *erastai*. He is certainly not assumed to be being penetrated by all of them and may be only distantly acquainted with them as writers of graffiti or poems. His *erastai* are simply his admirers and their admiration or love is what connects them to him and defines their role. It is absurd to see sodomy as the (deferred) substance of the relationship. Dover, of course, is perfectly aware of this, but nevertheless tends to close this distance and reduce the number of admirers to create a single couple. A character in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, for instance, best described as a hypocritical dirty old man, relates how in the past a boy would cover over the sand where he had been sitting so as not to leave an imprint of his genitals in the sand for 'the admirers' (*erastai*, plural) who hang around gymnasia. Dover translates this accurately, but when he comes to analyse the passage the plural has become singular and we are left with the impression of a bipolar couple.⁶³ The terminology of *erastēs* and *erōmenos* does not in itself refer to 'couples' or to two males 'in a relationship' at all, and says nothing in and of itself about penetration. The polarity is first and foremost a polarity of *erōs*, of love and admiration, a similar kind of polarity to that which might operate between a pop star and fans.

VII

FOUCAULT'S POSITIVISM

However, if Foucault's theory about the 'repressive hypothesis' does help to explain so neatly the distinctive explicitness of Dover's work on Greek sexuality, it only serves to make

⁶² Cf. Veyne, 'La Famille et l'amour', 51: 'The word *impudicus* . . . designated, by euphemism, "passivity"'.
⁶³ Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 124–5.

Foucault's own use of Dover's phallogocentric truth-telling that much more mysterious. I offer the following digression inasmuch as I think that, for historians, Foucault, and, for Foucauldians, his use of history, are ultimately worth trying to understand.

After 1976, Foucault's work conformed much more to the manner and appearance of mainstream scholarly work, with footnotes and references, a feature missing from earlier volumes. This 'philological turn' can be explained in several ways. Firstly, by the suggestion that Foucault was reforming his approach in the light of criticism. He wanted recognition for his revised version, defending his 'probity' and insisting his work was 'scientific', even taking on (with some success) Lawrence Stone, who had criticized his work in a review. Arlette Farge, who worked closely with him, says that Foucault was genuinely frustrated that his research was not taken more seriously.⁶⁴ As it happened, moreover, the topic of Greek homosexuality, uniquely, seemed to enable a comfortable alliance between Foucault and Dover, a more traditional scholar, if anything, than Stone.

In fact, Dover was by no means a suitable ally for Foucault, and his work, I have argued, was founded on the notion not that sexuality was a construct but that (Greek) homosexuality specifically was (is) inauthentic. In his reviews, however, Foucault demonstrably fails to see this and elides the privilege given by Dover to the 'truly sexual', that is the heterosexual. He refers to Dover's 'historical nominalism' and claims, 'One can see affirmed throughout Dover's study, what is the greatest difference between the Greek experience of sexuality and our own. For us, it is preference of object (hetero or homosexual) that marks the essential difference; for the Greeks it is the position of subject (active or passive) that fixes the great moral frontier'. More bizarre is what Foucault claims lies at the very heart of Dover's study: to discover the meaning of gestures, 'gestures we consider universal (and what could be more familiar, finally, than the *gestuaire de l'amour* [love's gestural system]) yet, once analysed in their historical specificity, these gestures contain a quite singular discourse'. Yet Dover's analysis of sexual positions is universalizing and sociobiological.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Miller, *Passion of Michel Foucault*, 235, 339, 436 (n. 99); Macey, *Lives of Michel Foucault*, 433–4.

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 316–7. For biologists' explanations of homosexuality in animals as dominance, see Bruce Bagemihl, 'The Dominant Paradigm', in his *Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity* (London, 1999).

Any understanding of Foucault and his project must account for this misreading of Dover. If one thinks the misreadings are deliberate one is faced either with a rhetorical, propagandistic Foucault whose main concern was 'to *show* how things have been historically contingent' (emphasis added),⁶⁶ and who would use whatever aids to cogency he could lay his hands on, or with a radical ironist who saw through Dover's will to truth, and decided to play the historians at their own truth-games. The truth probably lies between the two; maybe he simply did not read Dover critically. Foucault did not bother to investigate Dover's use of nature and discovery of truth in sex because an authoritative *Greek Homosexuality* was so powerful a weapon in achieving his more momentous objective, of some particular personal importance: the undermining of the transhistorical category 'homosexual'.

There is also evidence that, long before 1976, Foucault's project had worked along two axes — the negative, destroying natural assumptions (about sanity, reason, etc.) by making them visible and deconstructing them as not necessary but historically contingent, and the positive, demonstrating that those constructed assumptions existed, that they produced experiences, that there had been a different experience which the formation of those constructions had occluded or destroyed. So, the aim of his history of sexuality 'was to understand how, in modern western societies, something like an "experience" of "sexuality" had been constituted, since this familiar notion hardly appeared before the beginning of the nineteenth century'.⁶⁷ Experience, of course, is an elusive quarry for a historian, but Foucault had discovered some first-person narratives, most notably the autobiography of Herculine Barbin.⁶⁸ In an early version of the preface to *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault argued that this emphasis on experience had always been a theme in his work, even if his usage of the word had been 'very floating'.⁶⁹ In the original preface to *Folie et déraison* he claimed that the object of his study was 'the structure of the experience of madness', not a 'history of recognition, but of the rudimentary movements of an experience. History not of

⁶⁶ *Foucault Live*, ed. Lotringer, 209.

⁶⁷ Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, 320.

⁶⁸ *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Rabinow, 336; *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century Hermaphrodite*, introd. Michel Foucault, trans. Richard McDougall (Brighton, 1980).

⁶⁹ *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Rabinow, 334–9.

psychiatry, but of madness itself, in its vivacity, before any capture by knowledge'. He was after 'the degree zero of the history of madness, where it is undifferentiated experience, an experience, not yet divided, of division itself'.⁷⁰

Foucault was looking for vivid experience and thought he had found it in Dover. Dover deals with doubtful texts and pottery shards, he says, but his meticulousness enables him to 'recapture in all its vividness' the sexual world of two and a half thousand years ago. Foucault picks out the use of vase images, 'infinitely more explicit' than texts: 'The Greeks showed more than they told'. The vases were silent, of course, and they remained silent until now, when Dover can make them speak once more. Foucault seems to think that because the vase images are 'explicit' in our terms (i.e. obscene) they are therefore revealing about Greek sexual experience. Foucault treats these vases almost like a discovery in the archive or a coded text suddenly deciphered giving vivid access to a previously occluded experiential reality. Foucault seems to have mistaken Dover's determined, and specifically modern, hypocrisy-exposing explicitness for a true, vivid, ancient, sexual-before-sexuality experience: 'Dover, in effect, clears a way through a conceptual landscape that was blocking our view'. This, too, is a misreading. For Dover images are inhibited, often more so than, say, comic texts. The change in frequency of sexual images is discussed in terms of changes in reticence, in how much of reality they can reveal; images of rear-penetrated women are seen as stand-ins for repressed images of rear-penetrated boys.⁷¹

This brings us to a final crux, the relationship between Dover's and Foucault's understanding of 'reticence'. Veyne's encomium

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris, 1961), vi-vii, i. He was already talking in similar terms about sexuality, 'exposing . . . the tragic division of the happy world of desire'. For Foucault, history is not simply the neutral succession of different synchronic structures, or games of truth, which by succeeding one another disclose their contingency and inauthenticity and the possibility of other arrangements; as a devoted student of Heidegger and Nietzsche, there is always a residual etymological nostalgia for the primordial or original 'unbound powers' that precede naming, structuring and division altogether. See Miller, *Passion of Michel Foucault*, 46-51, 66-79. Judith Butler calls this bucolic tendency a 'sentimental indulgence': Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London, 1990), 96, referring to Foucault's talk on Herculine Barbin at the Arcadia conference. Foucault, like Veyne, was offering an alternative Arcadia to a minority, a 'happy world' before the 'tragic division'.

⁷¹ Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 35; cf. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 95 (n. 66); Dover, 'Classical Greek Attitudes', 66.

of a Foucault who 'revolutionizes History' insists that Foucault is 'the first completely positivist historian'. However, his 'discourse' is neither what is said nor even what is 'implicit'; it is the 'big translucid kernel' of precisely 'what goes without saying'. Veyne illustrates: 'when I speak . . . I do not have a conception of the grammar I am using instinctively . . . I am not aware that I am applying restrictive rules'. The Foucault known to Veyne is a historian above all of preconceptual *practices*, which brings him close to Bourdieu, although Veyne insists Foucault's 'discourse' is not a 'historical unconscious'; it is '*the same thing we* [sc. historians?] *talk about*, for example, the practical conduct of a government; only he shows it as it really is, by stripping away the veils'.⁷²

Veyne's interpretation of Foucauldian discourse is very plausible. In the interview for *Masques*, Foucault claims that something had come to him in the past year, 'something which is not to be found in Dover'. There are all these ancient theoretical texts about the love of boys, but they keep bumping up against a basic problem, the impossibility of imagining that a boy once penetrated could ever assume a position of dominance in the state. All this theory about true love is designed to render this love of boys acceptable, by denying what actually happened. It is a sign not of tolerance but embarrassment.⁷³ Again, I think Foucault underestimates Dover, who certainly thinks the Greeks were embarrassed and comes to see speeches like that of Pausanias, if not as produced by a hidden discourse exactly, then at least as an energetic beating about the bush. On the other hand, Foucault's understanding of the problem of penetration does indeed sound very like Veyne's 'translucid kernel'. The fact that the Greeks do not talk about penetration may not have been a problem, it may even have been a prerequisite for Foucault, and indeed his quasi-grammatical scheme — active-passive, subject-object — might fit very easily with Veyne's reading of preconceptual discourse, as a kind of grammar, a kind of immaterial 'biopticon' (viewer-viewed). The problem is that Foucault's Heideggerian unconcealment, his 'stripping of the veils' to reach simple unarticulated practice, and Dover's positivistic stripping

⁷² Veyne, 'Foucault Revolutionizes History', 147, 157, 156; cf. Garnsey, 'Generosity of Veyne', 166.

⁷³ Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, iv, 286–7.

away of hypocrisy to reach the penetrating truth, happened on this occasion, when the key practice was a sexual one, to coincide.

VIII

CONCLUSION

For all that it is valuable to consider Foucault's project through the prism of his work on Greek sexuality, it is Greek sexuality, not Foucault, which is my main concern here and on that subject I offer some conclusions. The modern consensus about Greek sexuality was created by the foregrounding of sexual behaviour. This sexualization of Greek homosexuality was impelled above all by two powerful tendencies: a desire to uncover more and more of the truth of sex that modern historians and ancient sources were thought to be covering up, and a desire to demonstrate the spuriousness of Greek homosexuality (Devereux), of homosexuality (Dover), of 80 per cent of sexuality (Veyne), of sexuality *in toto* (Foucault). These two desires were aligned in two ways in particular. Inasmuch as Greek (homo)sexuality was said to be concerned with roles in sexual acts rather than gender-orientation it was demonstrably different from modern (homo)sexuality, thus proving that (Greek) (homo)sexuality was a cultural phenomenon. Secondly, inasmuch as Greek (homo)sexuality was a sexuality of roles and was 'social', it demonstrated, in itself, a non-essential, gestural, social performativity in the field of (Greek) (homo)sexual identity. In other words, the Greeks understood the true spuriousness, the constructed nature, of human sexuality.

This sexualization of Greek homosexuality had its own momentum and did not depend on evidence. Indeed the very silence of the sources and the absence of images of sodomy was interpreted as an embarrassed reticence and used to demonstrate the centrality of anxiety about penetration. For cogency the theory depended instead on models derived from elsewhere: universalizing and sociobiological models, Roman models, Mediterranean and modern models. Sparse, ambivalent and obscure references were interpreted according to these models. The strategy was highly effective and has led to the sexualized view of Greek homosexuality being widely accepted not only throughout the discipline of classics, but also by anthropologists

and sociologists and students of gender and sexuality working in other periods and places and in modern political debates about gay rights. A very few scholars rejected this emphasis on penetration on the grounds of its implications for gender, its readings of individual texts and/or its *a priori* assumptions.

There is little or no evidence for the particular view that for the Greeks sex was a zero-sum competition producing an active winning subject on the one hand and a passive losing object on the other. All work on Greek sexuality which depends on that model needs to be carefully scrutinized and reassessed alongside the interpretations of particular words, images and texts produced in the light of that model.

There are dangers in overreacting to this false picture, however. In the first place, there is a danger of reverting to a pure, asexual view of Greek homosexuality. 'Erotic' relationships between males clearly covered both sexual and asexual relationships and every degree in between. There is also a risk of playing down the cultural component in Greek sexuality; if it is not other, it certainly appears rather different. Homoerotic relationships were clearly associated by Greeks, albeit non-exclusively and differently at different times, with certain groups, in particular with aristocrats and with themselves, the Greeks as a nation. Other characteristic features of Greek culture, such as the gymnasium and the male nude, are clearly relevant to its apparent homoeroticism.

Thirdly, there may be a temptation to resist all attempts to characterize Greek sexuality, morality and sex and their symbolic structures in favour of an open-ended playful multiplicity. I have argued here that it is in fact possible to characterize Greek sexual morality in terms of the solitary ethics of self-mastery and the interpersonal ethics of gift versus commodity exchange. If the distinction between good and bad sexual behaviour is not always clear, this is because the distinction between these two modes of exchange is not absolute, not because the real problem lies elsewhere or because the distinction is not really important. While this model is, I think, consistent in itself and clearly very significant in the Greek culture we know, there was room for other ideas. The Greeks used erotic metaphors to describe conquest and military metaphors to describe erotic events, for instance. Most commonly the metaphor used is at a couple of steps removed from, and certainly not equivalent to, penetration, the metaphor

of seduction or making an advance. *Peiran* means both 'to tempt' and 'to make an attempt on' a city, a woman or a boy. A woman or a boy could be described as 'ruined' if they were thereby compromised. An insurgent in a geopolitical sphere of influence could be described as 'entering like an adulterer' (*moichos*). Seducers 'went on campaign'. A city's walls could be described as its 'veil'. Virgin Athena was guardian of the citadel, and so on. Moreover, metaphors were not policed. In *Lysistrata* women talk of turning the tables on men and exchanging sexual positions, ending up 'on top'. Yet as Veyne, for one, noted, the racehorse position in which women were on top is usually represented as a great sexual favour granted to men by prostitutes reluctantly and at a price, which leads to the unsurprising conclusion that sex could sometimes be rich in potential meanings which might be tangential to one another.⁷⁴

Finally, there is the related danger, to which few apart from myself are currently vulnerable, of insisting that the Greeks had no concept of penetration, were completely neutral about it if they did, or never assigned different values to different roles in intercourse. Male genitals could be compared to weapons, and an analysis of the word *katapugōn* could readily have conjured up in itself an image of a missile driving into a body. In one comic fragment the anus is riddlingly described as 'wounded without a wound'. Proverbially, cuckolds seized the opportunity granted by law to torture adulterers without using a knife, by inserting uncomfortable objects, such as what is translated as 'radish', into this ready-made aperture.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 1.6, 15, and *Symposium*, 4.52–4; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 773; cf. Machon, *The Fragments*, ed. A. S. F. Gow (Cambridge, 1965), 252ff.; Veyne, 'La Famille et l'amour', 53–4; Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 196–7.

⁷⁵ Eubulus, *Fragments*, ed. Hunter, fr. 107 l. 8, with commentary, p. 202 (= *Poetae comici Graecae*, ed. Kassel and Austin, Eubulus 106); S. C. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Oxford, 1993), 278. Cf. Alan Davidson (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford, 1999), 648–9, s.v. 'radish'. In his review of my book *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, in *Classical Rev.*, 1 (2000), 509, Nick Fisher reasserts belief in the traditional free-associative interpretation of the 'Eurymedon vase', listing five passages from Aristophanes (*Acharnians*, 592; *Knights*, 355, 364, 962–4; *Thesmophoriazusae*, 157–8) and one from the Hellenistic author Theocritus (5.41–4) as showing that 'the Greeks could often see anal rape or forced masturbation as a means of asserting power or inflicting revenge'. I would not view such things, if demonstrated, as a challenge to my argument, but in fact the passages cited tend to confirm the negative image of casual penetrators in Athens. On Fisher's own (apparent) interpretation, one character (in *Acharnians*) invites buggery — 'These are the words you speak to your general, you beggar?' is the reply; one (in *Thesmophoriazusae*) imagines himself as a satyr bugging another satyr; one passage (in Theocritus) is a piece of rustic rough-and-

None of this, however, requires us to resurrect the zero-sum model of intercourse. We have alternative and much better-attested models for the structure of sexual morality and sexual practice in Greece, which require neither winners nor losers and which relate much more directly and explicitly to central concerns about appetite, gender and status, and we should require an entirely new array of texts and images from classical Greece before sex as 'zero-sum competition' is allowed to stalk our texts once more. At worst it represents an obnoxious myth-making of sexual intercourse as essentially dominating, and of gay sex as gestural and instrumentalizing, motivated by a quite self-conscious and opportunistic desire to undermine the already strongly contested identity of a sexual minority. At best it has been a distraction.

Beyond the problem of this particular zero-sum model, however, is the more general problem of the sexualization of Greek love, which has played down other elements traditionally included in study of Greek homoeroticism, such as the idealization of the male body, and love poetry. It is no coincidence that the most promising and interesting recent work has emerged from precisely these areas of study, from the homoerotic at greater distance: particularly the study of sculpture, of gymnastic culture, of lyric, of pederastic acclamations in public places and of friendship and reciprocity.⁷⁶

Historians who have studied sexuality in other societies have

(n. 75 cont.)

tumble — 'I hope you're buried no deeper in your grave than you were in my arse', is the retort of the 'victim'; while the lines from *Knights* are traded between two degenerates engaged in a moral limbo dance. None is equivalent to an English 'Up yours!' Indeed, they make perfect sense in context without recourse to assumptions about the 'active' being in an inherently positive 'vanquishing' role. Every one of the examples offered represents the words of lewd lowlifes, 'active' or 'passive' or, indeed, 'active-and-passive', most of them sporting prominent phalluses onstage and prone to use whomever or whatever is at hand in order to 'service' them. They seem therefore to present confirmation of the otherness of this kind of ribald, opportunistic sexuality — using others to gratify casual lusts — and of its articulation, even in the generally ribald context of comedy. For these reasons they provide an excellent context for the 'Eurymedon vase', and a guide to its tone.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Robin Osborne, *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (Oxford, 1998), ch. 9; François Lissarrague, 'Publicity and Performance: *Kalos* Inscriptions in Attic Vase-Painting', in Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 1999); Claude Calame, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, 1999); Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, 1997), chs. 3 and 4; Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture* (London, 1996), ch. 5.

detailed material, provided by inquisitors and police records. Students of Renaissance homosexuality have very precise information about the sexual practices of particular couples: where the penis was placed, whether ejaculation was reached inside or outside the body.⁷⁷ The reason they have this information is that the perpetrators had it tortured out of them. The reason they were tortured is that the penetration of men was considered a matter of great concern capable of bringing the wrath of God on the city if allowed to go unchecked. This, I suggest, is a society truly obsessed with penetration, and it is because of that terrifying obsession that historians have the details, even if some of the confessors were not sufficiently impressed by the wrath of God always to be accurate with them.

There are many reasons for our ignorance and confusion about Greek sex and homosexuality, and no possibility of cutting the Gordian knot with a single blow. In the first place cultures are not equally talkative about all aspects of life and a particular silence does not necessarily reflect a particular degree of importance. Moreover, sex was more private before anxiety about the fate of Sodom made it an issue requiring urgent investigation by the state. There is a quite different epistemological context for sexual knowledge and a different heuristic emphasis in the production of such knowledge in the ancient world. The public gaze focuses above all on what individuals are seen to be doing, whose houses they are spending time in, with whom they are seen in public, the company they appear to keep. Then, specificity (of relationships, of acts) is itself an important issue in anxieties about prostitution and commodification, anxieties which are explicitly attested.

In classical Greece neither law, religion nor society erected a barrier at the point of penetration that impelled strenuous efforts to investigate its crossing. No inquisition tortured the truth out of Timarchus and Greek men were perfectly free to say nothing at all. We need to take a step back from phallogocentric probings, and look at what is available to us, the role of the homoerotic in

⁷⁷ Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford, 1996); Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1985), ch. 6; Rafael Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia: historia de los sodomitas* (Barcelona, 1985). It is startling and instructive to contrast the wealth of sexual data produced by these repressive societies with its absence from classical Greece, where *homoeroticism* is so much more on display.

Greek culture, its appearances in and conspicuous disappearances from surviving texts and monuments. There seems no doubt that there was a real ambivalence about the sexual element in homosexuality in classical Greece, and of that Oscar Wilde, if not his audience, was very well aware.

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