CHAPTER II:  
THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, 431-404: DEBATE AND CRITICISM

BATTLES AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

ARISTOPHANES AND THE OLD COMEDIANS

Aristophanes and presumably others who wrote Old Comedy ridiculed two types of "homosexual": boy-crazed boy-lovers, particularly those who were middle-aged, paunchy, ostentatious, nouveaux riches, and gauche and effete, passive adults (cinaedi and malthakoi). Few commentators have fully appreciated the difference or that the generally conservative playwright in no way condemned boy-love as such. Eupolis was supposed drowned by order of Alcibiades on the way to Sicily in 415, whom he had ridiculed in Baptai (Men Who Die Their Hair). Eratosthenes of Cyrene published On Ancient Comedy, consisting of at least twelve books. Even earlier Cratinus' Hoi Malthakoi (The Effeminates) satirized such behavior. I believe that it is rash to suppose that the New Comedians entirely abjured such ready objects of ridicule as effeminate, over-dressed, middle-aged adults or even boy-crazed young men. Social rather than political like the Old Comedy, from 404 to Alexander's death the Middle Comedy stressed typical characters and relationships of persons according to the Aristotelian categories: soldiers of fortune, young lovers, grouchy fathers, accommodating if slaves. Alexis, Anaxandrides, Aristophanes, Antiphanes, Eubulus, who wrote 101 of which the titles of 58 survive--even the Romans read him, were the main representatives.

Comedy is rich in vocabulary but unfortunately many of the sexual double entendres are possibly not yet recognized. Moderns have all been handicapped in reading them. Buffizre, like his antecedent Pogey-Castries, as usual has merely compiled references. Licht, who was very sympathetic and thorough, confused proper boy-love, which the Greeks approved, with adult effeminacy which they abhorred and ridiculed as a common type of homosexuality that was being defended by his German allies. Less sympathetic and usually less insightful than Licht, Dover, who still insisted on using that term, did not succeed in freeing
himself from the confusion between approved pederasty and reproved effeminacy.

Understandably none of the comic poets, of whom we know of ___, portrayed the heroic side of pederasty. As Dover said, Aristophanes dragged everything down to the lowest common denominator. We must discriminate between the comedians' references to pederasts and those to effeminates, as neither Licht nor Dover, both rooted in the notion of a uniform homosexuality, bothered to do. Although the dandyism and the foppishness of the over-ardent boy-lover could resemble the over-dressing and fastidiousness of the adult passive, the two phenomena were socially clearly distinct. Moderation in passivity did not, of course, gain acceptability. The male prostitutes, very numerous according to Halperin, resident foreigners and more slaves or freedmen, were apparently never (unlike females) older than about 20, but the playwrights satirized them for effeminacy—apparently they were normally sodomized. The lower classes, of course, never experienced the exquisite form of upper-class pederasty. They were often manipulated. There are references to hustlers.

The word "comedy" stems from comos, the serenading of boys usually after the cottabos (drinking bout after the meal at symposia). The strictly Athenian Old Comedy perfected by Aristophanes came from another tradition than the satyr play and involved high politics rather than slapstick. Of the old comedians whose names are known to us, the only one of whom a complete play survives was Aristophanes, who has eleven, and the audience for which he wrote may not have differed substantially from that of the tragedians. Fifth-century comedians took gibes at everyone who was vulnerable, from country bumpkins to aristocratic effeminates, from crude sausage-sellers to learned philosophers, from assertive women to braggart soldiers, from corrupt politicians to servile clients.

The personages we meet in Plato virtually all belong to a leisured class, some of them to the richest and noblest families in Athens, whereas in Aristophanic comedy it is a compliment to call a man ergates, 'hard worker,' 'good worker' (Ach. 611); the same word is used of the poor farmer in Eur. El. 75. In Peace 632 the countrymen, men of good sense (603) and good morals (556), the salt of the earth, sufferers from war (588-97) and the saviours of peace (508-11), are 'the ergates folk,' and Trygaios himself boasts . . . of being 'a skilled cultivator of vines.' Aristophanes himself, a knight, never ridiculed pederasty
practiced in conformity with accepted mores. He and his fellow comedians attacked Euripides's uncanonical ideas.

The first prominent comedian before Aristophanes is Cratinus, one of whose fragments refers to Cimon's death as having just occurred (c.450). The oldest of the classical comedians, Cratinus won six prizes beginning in 453. His last work Pytine, performed incredibly when he was 96, according to Macrobius, beat The Clouds in 423. As far as we know, for we have no earlier evidence, he began the comic tradition of ridiculing effeminate (not proper boy-lovers). At least three of Cratinus' 27 comedies contrasted modern vices with idyllic purity: Hoi Malthakoi, Plutos, and Chirons. In other ways too he resembles Aristophanes, although a little less crude and direct. Fragments from his Archilochus attack catamitic prostitutes and effeminate.\(^90\) When in 424 Aristophanes depicted him as a boozers who had abandoned poetry, Cratinus struck back a year later in a piece where Aristophanes forsakes his wife Comedy to pursue boys ("Wine-bottles") and a whore ("Drunkenness") and won first prize in competition with his rival's Clouds—where he savagely lampooned Socrates.\(^91\) Another comedian, however, Pherecrates (c.430) praised a boy adorned with fair curly hair: "O thou, who shinest in curly golden hair" (Fr. 189; Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta ed. T. Kock, I (1880), 201).

An old-fashioned country-gentleman who satirized promiscuity of all sorts and took sentiment out of heterosexual as well as pederastic affairs, Aristophanes (446-388) severely criticized Euripides for making eroticism central in drama (Clouds, 1372; Frogs, 850, 1043ff., 1081). In the Acharnians (425) and Thesmophoriazusae (411) he brutally lampooned homosexual behavior when it was unseemly to contemporaries: a passive adult, "wide asses," which he accused all prominent Athenians of having (Clouds, 1085-1104), young citizens serving as prostitutes, effeminates of any type, and anyone engaging in oral sex. The nickname of "pirouette" refers to the "twirls and contortions" performed by Carcinus's sons, among them three dancers (Peace, 864). Aristophanes ridiculed an effeminate flute-player named Batalos. Like other comedians, Aristophanes gave men's names feminine forms to lampoon effeminates: Sostratus is Sostrate and Cleonymus is Cleonyme (Clouds, 678, 680). He as well as other comedians often ridiculed anal sex between adults, as opposed to intercultural contact with a boy, more for humor than from animosity. Ridiculing elderly, fat, uninspiring suitors who inevitably resorted to payments for a boy's affections, Aristophanes yearned for yesteryear, "the good old days," when boys were modest and reserved (Clouds, 423, Birds, 414, and Plutos, 388). Like other comedians, he attacked "oglers of boys" and "oglers of boys with golden curls." His barbs never struck proper young lovers with suitably unbearded beloveds. Aristophanes tended to satirize all novelties:
RIGHT LOGIC: To hear then prepare of the Discipline rare
which flourished in Athens of yore
When Honour and Truth were in fashion with youth
and Sobriety bloomed on our shore;
First of all the old rule was preserved in our school
that "boys should be seen and not heard:"
And then to the home of the Harpist would come
decorous in action and word
All the lads of one town, though the snow peppered
down,
in spite of all wind and all weather:
And they sang an old song as they paced it along,
not shambling with thighs glued together:
"O the dread shout of War how it peals from afar,"
or "Pallas the Stormer adore,"
To some manly old air all simple and bare
which their father had chanted before.
And should anyone dare the tune to impair
and with intricate twistings to fill,
Such as Phrynis is fain, and his long-winded train,
perversely to quaver and trill,
Many stripes would he feel in return for his zeal,
as to genuine Music a foe.
And every one's thigh was forward and high
as they sat to be drilled in a row,
So that nothing the while indecent or vile
the eye of a stranger might meet;
And then with their hand they would smooth down the
sand
whenever they rose from their seat,
To leave not a trace of themselves in the place
for a vigilant lover to view.
They never would soil their persons with oil
but were inartificial and true.
Nor tempered their throat to a soft mincing note
and sighs to their lovers addressed:
Nor laid themselves out, as they strutted about,
to the wanton desires of the rest:
Nor would anyone dare such stimulant fare
as the head of the radish to wish:
Nor to make over bold with the food of the old,
the anise, and parsley, and fish:
Nor dainties to quaff, nor giggle and laugh,
nor foot within foot to enfold.
WRONG LOGIC: Faugh! this smells very strong of some
musty old song,
and Chirrupers mounted in gold;
And Slaughter of beasts, and old-fashioned feasts.
RIGHT LOGIC: Yet these are the precepts which taught
The heroes of old to be hardy and bold,
and the men who at Marathon fought!
But now must the lad from his boyhood be clad
in a Man's all-enveloping cloak:
So that, oft as the Panathenaea returns,
I feel myself ready to choke
When the dancers go by with their shields to their
thigh,
not caring for Pallas a jot.
You therefore, young man, choose me while you can;
cast in with my Method your lot;
And then you shall learn the forum to spurn,
and from dissolute baths to abstain,
And fashions impure and shameful abjure,
and scorners repel with disdain:
And rise from your chair if an elder be there,
and respectfully give him your place,
And with love and with fear your parents revere,
and shrink from the brand of Disgrace,
And deep in your breast be the Image impressed
of Modesty, simple and true,
Nor resort any more to a dancing-girl's door,
nor glance at the harlotry crew,
Lest at length by the blow of the Apple they throw
from the hopes of your Manhood you fall.
Nor dare to reply when your Father is nigh,
nor "musty old Japhet" to call
In your malice and rage that Sacred Old Age
which lovingly cherished your youth.
WRONG LOGIC: Yes, yes, my young friend, if to him you
attend,
by Bacchus I swear of a truth
You will scarce with the sty of Hippocrates vie,
as a mammy-suck known even there!
RIGHT LOGIC: But then you'll excel in the games you
love well,
all blooming, athletic and fair:
Not learning to prate as your idlers debate
with marvellous prickly dispute,
Nor dragged into Court day by day to make sport
in some small disagreeable suit:
But you will below to the Academe go,
and under the olives contend
With your chaplet of reed, in a contest of speed
with some excellent rival and friend:
All fragrant with woodbine and peaceful content,
and the leaf which the lime blossoms
fling,
When the plane whispers love to the elm in the grove
in the beautiful season of Spring.
If then you'll obey and do what I say,
And follow with me the more excellent way,
Your chest shall be white, your skin shall be bright,
Your arms shall be tight, your tongue shall be slight,
And everything else shall be proper and right.
But if you pursue what men nowadays do,
You will have, to begin, a cold pallid skin,
Arms small and chest weak, tongue practised to speak,
Special laws very long, and the symptoms all strong
Which show that your life is licentious and wrong.
And your mind he'll prepare so that foul to be fair
And fair to be foul you shall always declare;
And you'll find yourself soon, if you listen to him,
With the filth of Antimachus filled to the brim!
(Clouds, 960-1023).

It is to be noted that when Aristophanes refers to "down" (Clouds, 978) it is definitely not that of lips and cheeks.

Aristophanes' heroes do not fall in love. Trygaius and Peisetairus win Opora and Basileia as unexpected bonuses of political triumphs. If they develop passion for their prizes, it is the product, not the cause, of sexual relations. A generation younger than Euripides, Aristophanes criticized all eccentricity, exaggerating for effect as did the orators. Particularly indebted to his senior rival, the inventive Cratinus, he included brief scenes resembling the contemporary Dorian farces. Neither Pericles nor Cleon could silence his scurrility. He charged the politicians Cleisthenes and Agyrhion with effeminacy and compared demagogues to bad lovers, when describing a boy who stole a sausage by hiding it between his thighs, he declared: "Some day this boy will make his mark as leader in the Pnyx [Assembly]" (Knights, 428, ff). In the Lysistrata particularly, the chief of the Athenian men fears that, deprived of sex by their rebellious wives, they will resort to mounting Cleisthenes, a beardless stock character suspected of being a eunuch in several of his comedies. Aristophanes supported feminism with women taking charge to end a disastrous war. In his utopian Birds, where he derided Socrates, he quipped:

Where the father of a good-looking boy will meet me and go on at me as if I'd done him a wrong: 'That was a nice way to treat my son, Stilbonides! You met him when he'd had a bath, leaving the gymnasium, and you didn't kiss him, you didn't say a word to him, you didn't pull him close to you, you didn't tickle his balls—and you an old friend of the family!' (137-42)

Before an audience primarily of commoners it was natural for the
comedians to satirize and censure pederasts, still identified with the upper classes, as many lost comedies did: the Syracusan Sophron's Paidika and Eupolis' Baptae.\textsuperscript{93} The older Cratinus' Malthakoi, however, was aimed at effeminates, not boy-lovers.

Like Cratinus and Aristophanes Eupolis, the last of the great Old Comedians, who drowned at sea c.411 fighting in the Peloponnesian War, ridiculed passive males. Of his fourteen or seventeen comedies, seven won the first prize. The Flatterers (423) was fully pederastic. Autolycus (421) presents the love between the youth Autolycus, celebrated by Xenophon, and the wealthy Callias, disapprovingly (Athenaeus, V, 216e; Eupolis, fr. 56). Baptae satirized the homosexuality of Alcibiades and his circle, depicting them as lewd revelers simulating dancing women and undergoing lascivious purifications and baths during nocturnal orgies in honor of Cotytto, the goddess of lewdness. Centuries later the satirist Lucian was to ask: "And did you not blush to read this piece?" (Adv. Ind., 27). In 420 he caricatured the demagogue Hyperbolus in Marikas, a word synonymous with passive homosexual or, as others think, used by the barbarians as a tender word for a young boy. This play so much resembled the Knights that Aristophanes accused Eupolis of plagiarizing him.

The first recorded attacks of philosophers, as contrasted with tyrants or statesmen, on pederasty occurred during the Peloponnesian War. Surviving fragments of pre-Socratic philosophers in fifth century Athens or even elsewhere do not discuss pederasty at all, however pederastic their conduct. In a momentous change noted by Foucault, sex, beginning with Socrates, gained in importance among philosophers until it displaced other bodily appetites, as well as eventually even such group concerns as civic duty, to become the act most regulated and restricted by Christians. It seems likely that some Sophists did at least mention pederasty in passing, but we have no proof. Pausanias, the lover of the boy Agathon in Plato's Protagoras (193B) and also in Xenophon's Symposium (8.32), the disciple of Prodicus, the Sophist of Ceos, may have written an Apology for Eros or Eroticus earlier, but Xenophon (Symposium, VII, 32) and Athenaeus (216 EF), were probably referring to his speech in Plato's Symposium.\textsuperscript{94}

\textbf{EURIPIDES AND LYRICISTS}

During the catastrophes of the Great Peloponnesian War, Greeks questioned all the basic assumptions and criticized all institutions upon which their society rested, including pederasty. The most famous pair of lovers, Socrates and Alcibiades, may not, it is true, have had sexual contact with each other, but Socrates may have been the eromenos of Archelaus, and of Alcibiades it was said that as a youth he had stolen husbands from their wives. As portrayed by his best student Plato, Socrates' whole circle, being aristocratic and wealthy, frequented gymnasia and symposia, in which many dialogues were set, was preoccupied to the point of
frenzy with pederastic affairs. The most effeminate beauty, Agathon, was the most mocked by Aristophanes, who, like the other comedians, joked incessantly about homosexuality and effeminacy. The greatest sculptures, those on the Erichtheum, dominated by the caryatids, were not as pederastic as those on earlier temples. But those who led Sparta to victory were enthusiastically pederastic: Lysander and the harmosts that he placed over the conquered cities.

The epic struggle between Sparta's Peloponnesian League, favoring oligarchies, and Athens's Delian empire, favoring democracies, devastated the entire Aegean world from 431 to 404 and even drew in Syracuse and the Persian Empire. As usual, more died from plagues, the worst of which, that of Athens in 430, carried almost one third, including Pericles, than war itself. Though defeated Athens lost more people in the long run, victorious Sparta was less able to rebuild its manpower, to the great benefit of Persia, which by playing one against the other avoided a serious threat. The economic destruction may have exceeded the demographic and many have thought that the moral decline caused by the brutalities and duplicities of war to be the greatest disaster of all. Though Thucydides did not mention it, surviving inscriptions show that in 425 Athens greatly upped the tribute her subject-states, officially styled allies, had to pay her. With such tribute the Athenians built the Erechtheum on the Acropolis between 421 and 407--characterized by clothed caryatids, the first time women had predominated in the decoration of a Greek building. In spite of these calamities, or perhaps because of them, intellectuals endeavored as never before to find solutions to problems of politics and ethics.

"The Peloponnesian war had clearly demonstrated that the existing regime could not be permanent, and that the whole Greek world had to be rebuilt." Dramatists, orators, and philosophers questioned all accepted assumptions and proposed new ones. Socrates and his followers questioned everything: existence and nature of the gods, concepts of justice, relationship of individual to polis, methods of pedagogy, and value and nature of pederasty, which came under increasing scrutiny and criticism. Wartime criticism of athletics and pederasty increased after the war began and a general seriousness and lack of manpower militated against the easy-going ways.

Tolerated in palmier days, atheism also came under attack. Almost all trials of agnostics and atheists took place between the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War and 399, when philosophers, seemingly about to destroy order based on religion, became scapegoats. Soon the populace turned against innovators, those who questioned basic values and the existence of the gods. Several of them were foreigners who had migrated there before the war. Protagoras's denial of the existence of gods had won favor
among intellectuals in spite of Diagoras's and Anaxagoras's banishments and Socrates's execution. Diagoras was prosecuted and condemned to death for atheism and fled Athens c.415, perhaps for mocking the Eleusinian Mysteries (Melanthios, FGH 326 F3, Cicero, De Natura Deorum, 1, 2.3.89, Aelian, Varia Historia, 2, 31, Tatian, Adversus Graecos, 27). The nature of his relation with the Sophists is disputed. Anaxagoras's startling scientific theories and association with the hated Persian foe gave Pericles's enemies the opportunity to indict him of medism as well as impiety, but Pericles abetted his escape to his home town where, having founded a school, he spent his last years basking in honor. Convicted of impiety because of his treatise On The Gods, at 70 between 415 and 411, Protagoras fled Athens but was lost at sea on the way to Sicily.

During the war, more intellectuals if fewer immigrants were drawn to Athens. Two ambassadors stayed there to teach. More rhetorician than philosopher, Gorgias of Leontini in Sicily (c.483-376), arrived in 427. A character in Plato's Symposium, in his Encomium he spoke of the love of Helen but not of that of boys. Praised by Socrates, Prodicas of Ceos (c.465/450-after 399) arrived either in 431 or 421 and, although conservative, made a great impression as rhetor. Our best source for him is Plato's Protagoras. According to the Suda he was condemned, but that may be legendary. Plato's suggestion that he was hedonistic is probably wrong (Xenophon, Memorabilia, 2.1, 31-34). He authored On Nature, On the Nature of Man, and On the Propriety of Language.

**EURIPIDES, SOCRATES AND ALCIBIADES**

First competing with Sophocles in 455, the year after Aeschylus' death when the Athenians decreed that future tragedians had to compete with reperformances of his works, Euripides (c.485-c.406) wrote 75 plays, of which 19 survive and produced the only full satyr play that has come down to us, the Cyclops. The most critical of tradition of all the tragedians, Euripides had his characters, like those of Plato's dialogues, argue all sorts of conflicting moral opinions, an approach that won more approval in happier days than towards the close of the war, when he, who associated with Sophists and in whose home was read Protagoras's On the Gods, may have been prosecuted by the demagogue Cleon for impiety.

His Chrysippus, allegedly written to please his eromenos Agathon, has Laius utter in defense of his act: "Nature constrains me though I have sound judgment." Indeed, it has been surmised that Agathon was the prototype of Chrysippus and Euripides of Laius. Another fragment (652) states: "O what a magic comfort are boys to men!" The title of his Peirithous, the eromenos of Theseus, seems homoerotic. We have a fragment from his Dictys,
which suggests a high moral conception of friendship, a view personified in the generosity and devotion of Pylades in the Oresteia:

He was my friend; and never may love lead me to folly, nor to Kupris. There is, in truth, another kind of love—love for the soul, righteous, temperate and good. Surely men ought to have made this law, that only the temperate and chaste should love, and send Kupris, daughter of Zeus, a-begging.\(^8\)

The complete tragedies Electra, Hippolytus (Phedra), Iphigenia in Tauris, and Orestes are also suggestive of pederasty.

This misogynist, who even in his 70s was the lover of the once extremely beautiful Agathon, then about 40, often portrayed women as vindictive, spiteful, and deceitful, contrasting them with a charming youth in Ion. On the other hand, his heroines from Medea to Phedra, if evil, were strong and courageous like men, in a way most Greeks of that period thought they could not be and they fought for their rights and dignity. Euripides continued after sixty to love boys ( ) although Sophocles said of him that however he portrayed women on the stage he liked them in bed (Atheneus, XIII, 557).

Agathon won at the Lenaea his first victory in 416 and died in 401 in Macedonia where Archelaus had drawn him to his court. Aristophanes parodied and ridiculed him in Thesmophoriazusae c.407, when he was about 40, for his effeminate voice, transvestism, excessive ornamentation, and mincing gait as well as for being "wide assed," pale complexioned, and smooth-cheeked (thanks to several razors), meaning at least on buttocks as well as cheeks. Famed for his beauty, this beloved of Euripides and Pausanias, the host of Plato's Symposium, nevertheless enjoyed great popularity. The first to reduce the choral odes to mere interludes and thus thoroughly to modernize tragedy, he, influenced by Gorgias and other Sophists, invented plots not based on myths or history. Agathon must have had pederastic themes among his many plays of which only forty lines survive. Perhaps after the three masters he was the most innovative and significant of tragedians, though criticized in Aristotle's Poetics. The Alexandrian critics, however, did not place him in the front rank, with the consequence that fewer copies of his works were made, and Christian fanatics, who must have detested him, if they did not destroy his works at least did not preserve them.

The genius of Socrates (469-399), which transformed Greek thought, is as elusive as that of Jesus because no writings of either survive. As many interpretations have arisen from the reminiscences, none of which was written even within a decade of
the death of either master, Plato's being the longest and most important, as from the canonical gospels. In his old age at least, Socrates, who apparently began philosophical discussion of pederasty, seems to have recommended and practiced chastity, if we believe his disciples Plato and especially Xenophon. He married twice, probably because there were so many widows in the Peloponnesian War and the state needed soldiers, although some said he was a bigamist:

Aristotle says that he married two wives: his first wife was Xanthippe, by whom he had a son, Lamprocles; his second wife was Myrto, the daughter of Aristides the Just, whom he took without a dowry. By her he had Sophroniscus and Menexenus. Others make Myrto his first wife; while some writers, including Satyrus and Hieronymus of Rhodes, affirm that they were both his wives at the same time. For they say that the Athenians were short of men and, wishing to increase the population, passed a decree permitting a citizen to marry one Athenian woman and have children by another; and that Socrates accordingly did so (Diogenes Laertius, II, 26).

Aristophanes lampooned Socrates while he was still alive, but his prosecutors did not even charge, much less convict him of illicit or unseemly sex. His recognition of the inspiration of Eros, mad passionate love, in the Phaedrus, however, seems to imply experience if not approbation. He is said to have become at 17 the eromenos of the Athenian physicist Archelaus, who was "very fond of him" (Diogenes Laertius, II, 19), a student of Anaxagoras of Miletus, and Porphyry wrote that when young Socrates was highly sensual (Xenophon, Memorabilia, ii, 6, 28; Diogenes Laertius, II, 17-19). "I profess to understand nothing but love affairs," declared Socrates (Plato, Symposium, 177d, 198d). Plato reports the following exchange:

FRIEND: 'Whence come you Socrates? And yet I need hardly ask the question, for I know that you have been in chase of the fair Alcibiades. I saw him the day before yesterday, and he had got a beard like a man--and he is a man, as I may tell you in your ear. But I thought that he was still very charming.

SOCRATES: 'What of his beard? Are you not of Homer's opinion, who says that 'Youth is most charming, when first the beard appears'? And that is now the charm of Alcibiades. (Protagoras, 309)
On another occasion Socrates remarked:

And perhaps I may be able to help you in the search for good and noble boys, since I am given to love; for whenever I terribly love men I strive with my whole heart that, while loving them, I may in my turn be loved; and desiring them, may in my turn be desired; and that, when desiring to be with them, my society may be sought in return (Xenophon, ).

He also said: "I can mention no time, when I was not madly in love with someone" (Xenophon, Symposium, i, 9). Autolycus drove him mad:

As a fire flaming up in the night draws all men's eyes to him, so the beauty of Autolycus at first captivates all men's looks, none who looked upon him remaining unmoved in heart (Xenophon, Symposium, iii, 27).

But did that son of a stonemason and a midwife, not a member of the upper class, have sexual relations with any of those youths? He developed an erection when the beautiful Charmides sat between him and Critias: "I was on fire, absolutely beside myself" (Charmides, 155c-e; see next chapter). The dying Socrates, who had an erection, as many dying men do, alluded to pederasty, remarking that he owed a cock to Asclepius (Phaedo, 118). "The rooster was not only a standard offering to Asclepius, but also a conventional homosexual love gift." 95

Many disciples of Socrates, who humbly learned of love from Diotima, a priestess of Mantinea, and never claimed to be an expert in anything else except love, evinced hubris. Of these Plato's brilliant uncle Critias (c.460-403), leader along with some others from the Socratic circle, of the short-lived Thirty Tyrants set up by Spartans to rule Athens in 404 who executed, exiled, and confiscated the property of many Athenians, was the most hated. Another, first the darling of the demos, the organizer of the disastrous Syracusan expedition, whom his enemies charged with sacrilege for mutilating the Herms, was Alcibiades. For his outrages Socrates, who "cherished the tenderest affection" for him (Diogenes Laertius, II, 23), was also held responsible. As a boy he had many erastai and later as a man mistresses including the wife of the king of Sparta because "he wished to be the father of a Spartan king." Of this most famous lover of men and women, unusually aggressive, brashest practitioner of "phallic dominance," 96 the philosopher Bion of Borysthenes (c.325-c.255) quipped: "Alcibiades as a boy made husbands unfaithful to their wives, as a youth wives unfaithful to their husbands" (Diogenes Laertius, IV, 49). An earlier version from the comedian Pherecrates reads: "Alcibiades who formerly, as it seems, was no
man, is now every woman's husband" (fr. 135). Dover recounted and commented on a famous anecdote:

The story (Plu. Dial. 762c and Alcibiades 4.5f.) that an erastes of Alkibiades, insolently robbed of half his gold and silver drinking-vessels by his drunken eromenos in front of guests, exclaimed at the kindness of Alkibiades in leaving him the other half, suggests the possibility that on occasion eros satisfied an eromenos's need to be cruel and a kind of religious need on the part of the erastes (a blend of Job with Pollyanna) to grovel and insist that bad fortune is good.97

If Alcibiades was Socrates' favorite pupil, Plato, Critias' nephew, the greatest theorist of pederastic love, who was his best, is still today denounced for his aristocratic hauteur and scholarly disdain for his intellectual inferiors, but he along with Xenophon, Socrates' next most productive student, who also scorned the democratic system and condemned physical acts between lovers, will be discussed in the next chapter. There too is treated Antisthenes, normally termed the founder of the Cynics, who though often popular scorned all the goods after which normal souls strove --another sort of reverse attribution.

Whatever emotions the relationships between erastai and eromenoi unleashed, there is no firm evidence that widespread pederasty, at least among the upper classes, led to misogyny or the repression and exploitation of females.

**ATHENIAN AND LESBIAN LADIES**

It cannot be imagined that female homosexuality did not occur, especially amongst those cloistered in gynaeceae. If the husband neglected the wife, her only alternative, as it was for the carefully watched young virgins, to celibacy was adultery or recourse to the female slaves or relatives secluded there with her. Thus, as in Muslim countries, segregation of the sexes tended to encourage occasional or situational homosexual acts among females as among males.

Lesbianism probably became more pronounced about the time when pederasty was institutionalized for males and females were more completely secluded. Females had separate schools such as Sappho's which were later suppressed except in conservative Sparta.

In the gynaeceae upper-class women particularly during the fifth century in Athens must have had love affairs and sexual
encounters frequently because they were shut in and denied contact with males. The figures for lesbianism in twentieth-century America—30% try it at least once, 15% do it over long periods, and 5% do it exclusively—may or may not have been exceeded in classical Greece, but because virtually all married, there being because of the more frequent exposure of female infants a great imbalance, by a contract between the husband and the father, virtually none could have been exclusive.

Presumably the lower classes being less secluded were less prone to lesbianism. However, being more independent because they worked to support themselves, ones so inclined were less inhibited by domineering husbands and families. Slaves, at the beck and call of master or mistress, and generally not able to marry had the least choice but deprived of matrimony perhaps the greatest incentive to experiment with their own sex.

As in modern societies female prostitutes often loved one another. Philaenis of Leucadia, perhaps the one often mentioned by Martial, was the first to write and illustrate a work on the different positions lesbians can assume. However, Aeschrion of Samos denied she wrote such a book.

Women's religious festivals, Orphic revelries and in Rome the Bona Dea excluded men and letting out inhibitions may have produced lesbianism. Besides Sappho, other women stood out, of whom many may have been lesbians, as is so often the case with women who achieve and lead.

Sources about lesbianism are extremely exiguous because males, whether writers or artists, tended not to portray it and of the works of what few female writers and artists after Sappho there were, hardly any survived. Wrote Dover:

Classical Attic literature refers once, and once only, to female homosexuality. 'Aristophanes' in Pl. Smp. 191e derives hetairistriai from that category of original double beings who were all female. The word is not attested elsewhere, any more than its masculine analogue hetairistēs, though Pollux (vi 188) found the latter in an Attic source (unspecified); it clearly means a woman who stands in a relationship to another woman comparable to a male relationship of hetairēsis. . ., and it may acquire a derogatory nuance from laikastria, 'whore', though that is by no means certain, since Pl. Euthd.

1 Kinsey (1953)
297c introduces us to *sophistria* as the feminine of *sophistēs* in the sense 'ingenious', resourceful'.

Licht explained that the term *tribade* (from the verb *tribein* "to rub") is the usual though late one; in fact it is attested in Latin (Phaedrus, IV, 14; Martial, VII, 67, 1) before its earliest appearance in Greek in second-century astrological texts. Its Latin calque is *frictrix* (from *fricare* "to rub"; Tertullian, *De Pallio*, 4). The word *dietairistria* is found solely as a lemma in Hesychius.

No sculpture in any medium of the classical age provides anything at all about lesbianism: neither freestanding, large or miniature nor relief, low or high:

An archaic plate from Thera shows two women apparently courting; one puts her hand to the face of the other, and both hold garlands. Vase paintings in which two women are wrapped in one cloak should probably be associated not with two males similarly wrapped (or partially veiled by a 'backcloth'. . .) but with scenes in which the number of women may exceed two and they may not be facing one another but facing all in one direction. An exceptional Attic red-figure vase (R207*) shows a kneeling woman fingering the genital region of another woman.

A number of vases depict and some literary texts refer to *olisboi* (dildoes) which can be used for lesbian pleasure as well as for masturbation. There is no doubt at all about the use of dildoes during the classical period. As in Hellenistic times, they seem earlier to have been used for masturbation as well as in lesbian and heterosexual acts.

In Plato's *Symposium*, Aristophanes theorized that lesbianism (like male homosexuality) was natural to types made by dividing an all-female being, each half of which sought its missing part, although in Greek mythology there is no lesbianism in contrast to the frequent male pederasty and no heroic lesbian couples like Harmodius and Aristogiton. No one can seriously entertain Pastre's arguments that Amazons actually existed.

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2 Dover (1978) 172.
3 Licht (1932) 316.
4 Dover (1978) 173.
5 Pastre (1987).
In the comedies the verbs lesbiōzein and lesbhzein ("to play the Lesbian") and other references to the women of Lesbos refer to fellation of males—which is what prostitutes did in antiquity but exactly what a modern lesbian would not do.6 Lesbos is the home of Megilla, the homosexual protagonist of Lucian's Dialogues of Courtesans, as well as of Sappho, and the ambiguity of certain passages in Ovid and Lucian led to the use of French Lesbienne in the sense of "woman addicted to tribadism" and in the late nineteenth century of "female homosexual."

Unlike male pederasty, lesbianism was regarded as an eccentricity or a vice instead of socially useful or honorable. Unlike Sappho's Mytilene and Sparta, where Alcman and Plutarch testify to relations between women and girls and between girls (see above), there is no solid evidence for lesbianism at Athens except for prostitutes.7

As Mary Lefkowitz cogently argued [Women in Greek Myth]

The arguments, however, about the capacities and roles of women, as well as about the nature of lesbianism, continued and perhaps increased during the philosophic century which followed, reaching its height in the ancient world in the dialogues of Plato and treatises of Aristotle who disagreed with each other sharply, Plato radically favoring the equality of women, but adopting an inconsistent position on homosexuality and lesbianism, while Aristotle, who denigrated the nature and abilities of women, felt that some men were born with homosexual inclinations and some acquired the taste.

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6 West 1970b

7 Pomeroy (1975) 88.