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Enacting Eros
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I. Roman Greece

Among the *Dialogues of the Gods* composed by Lucian is a brief skit between Zeus and Eros (number 6 in the OCT edition). Zeus is on the point of shackling Eros for his sins. When Eros protests that he's but a boy (*paidion*), Zeus retorts: "You, Eros, a boy? You're older than Iapetus, by far."¹ The joke, which Lucian enjoyed enough to tell more than once, depends of course on Hesiod's account of Eros as one of the primal deities in the universe, a point that Plato too exploited in the *Symposium*. "Just because you haven't sprouted a beard or gray hairs," Zeus continues, "you think you should be treated as a baby, though you're a dirty old man?" Old man or not, says Eros, "what's the big harm I've done you?" To which Zeus replies: "Look here, you rascal: is it small stuff, when you make so much fun of me that there's nothing you haven't made of me: satyr, bull, gold, swan, eagle? What you haven't made is any woman to fall in love [*erasthēnai*] with me. I've never become pleasing to a woman thanks to you, so far as I'm aware; no, I always have to play tricks on them and disguise myself. What they love [*philousin*] is the swan or bull; if they catch sight of me, they die of fear."

Eros answers that it is only natural that mortal women cannot endure the sight of him. When Zeus remarks that Branchus and Hyacinthus love (*philousin*) Apollo, Eros answers that

Daphne, at all events, fled from him, despite his long hair and beardlessness. "If you want to be loved [*eperastos einaí*], stop brandishing the aegis and carrying the thunderbolt, and make yourself really pleasing and soft to look at; let your curls grow and tie them in a ribbon, wear a purple gown, strap on gold sandals, walk to the beat of a flute and tambourines, and you'll see, more of them will tail you than Dionysus' maenads." Zeus, however, indignantly rejects the idea: "Get out of here! I don't want to be loved [*eperastos einaí*] by becoming that sort." "Okay, Zeus, then stop falling in love [*mède eran thele*]. It's easier that way." "No," Zeus shoots back, "I want to love [*eran*], but catch them with less trouble [*apragmonesteron*]. On these terms I release you."

Let us begin with the conclusion. Clearly, Zeus has altered the terms of his original complaint. He began by protesting that his love was not reciprocated. Though he succeeds, in his various metamorphoses, in having his way with mortal women, their affection ends up being directed to his outer form as bull or swan, and not to himself -- or not, at all events, to himself in his own, proper shape. Zeus wants to be loved for what he is. In the end, however, he frees Eros on the condition that he obtain what he wants more effortlessly, as though the problem with assuming the guise of a satyr or an eagle were merely the discomfort it involves.

Zeus shifts his goal because Eros has convinced him that he is, in fact, unlovable in his own shape. The reason is not, as Eros hints, that the undissimulated glory of a god, or at all events a thunder- and lightning-god like Zeus, annihilates human beings: the allusion is manifestly to the incineration of Semele, who, at Hera's suggestion, demanded to see the true shape of Zeus. It is rather that tough-guy looks, complete with fierce weaponry, do not arouse passionate love in others. If Zeus wants reciprocal enamoration, he must adopt an effeminate manner like that of Dionysus, whom the maenads pursue, it is implied, because he is attractive to them. Such an alteration in Zeus' appearance, moreover, is more than a disguise, like the swan or gold he turns into to gain his amorous ends. If he dresses and struts as Eros advises, women will fall in love with the real Zeus. But looking soft and sweet is too high a price to pay for requited passion, and Zeus elects instead to keep his traditional image and content himself with further conquests, provided only that they are a little easier to achieve.

The story is cleverly constructed to suggest that for real he-men, erotic love is necessarily asymmetrical: they pursue the objects of their desire, but there is no possibility of being loved in return. Yet the dialogue acknowledges that men do want to be desired. What is more, it is open to them to be so, provided they sacrifice the macho style for a gentle and decorous manner. Zeus, as the very model of the aggressive lover, cannot make the switch, but then he is something of a boor. Apollo, with his boyish looks, has more success, especially with

youths like Branchus and Hyacinth, as opposed to girls, while Dionysus, who is even more dandified, has loads of women in train. True, Apollo is still young; being loved, however, does not depend on age, but on style. This is the reason for the by-play concerning Eros' antiquity at the beginning of the dialogue: he appears to be a boy, and we may assume that he is sexually attractive, but in fact he is more ancient than the Titans. Gods, after all, are ageless. The question is, how do they choose to present themselves?

Nor is the issue one of sexual identity. The costume that Eros proposes is not so much effeminate as effete. Zeus refuses to play the pretty-boy. The choice is between two ways of being masculine: macho vs. mild. With the one, you overpower women or boys (Zeus' guise as eagle alludes to the rape of Ganymede); with the other, you gain their love -- and not just the affection suggested by the word *philein*, such as Leda and Europa may have experienced for the swan and bull (unless *philein* here means simply "kiss"), and Branchus and Hyacinth feel for Apollo, but the active passion connoted by *eran*. The latter, Lucian implies, is the more civilized way.² In his desire to be desired, and his simultaneous fear of seeming soft, Zeus is rather a pathetic figure, though he remains intimidating. He's like a bully who suffers because he does not know how to play with others.³

Lucian's comic dialogue seems subtly to subvert the prevailing structure of erotic relations in the classical Greek city-state. David Halperin, for example, who has contributed brilliantly to elucidating the pattern, offers the following summary (Halperin 1993: 418):

In classical Athens a relatively small group made up of the adult male citizens held a virtual monopoly of social power and constituted a clearly defined élite within the political and social life of the city-state. The predominant feature of the social landscape of classical Athens was the great divide in status between this superordinate group, composed of citizens, and a subordinate group, composed of women, children, foreigners, and slaves.... Sexual relations not only respected that divide but were strictly polarized in conformity with it.

Halperin adds: "sexual penetration was thematized as domination: the relation between the insertive and the receptive sexual partner was taken to be the same kind of relation as that obtaining between social superior and social inferior."

The desire characteristic of women and boys was correspondingly imagined to be different in kind from that of adult males. Women were typically represented as yielding to sex rather than commanding it, and feminine desire, like that of boys, was expressed as a willingness to be penetrated rather than as an urge to penetrate. This polarity did not necessarily coincide with the distinction between genders, but depended rather on differences of power. Adult

citizen males were the subjects of erotic passion, while women, boys, and others of inferior status were its objects. Free men might assume the role of *erastês*, never of *erômenos*; it was demeaning to be perceived as an object of sexual desire.⁴

Lucian's Zeus, then, in seeking to be loved in turn, has implicitly compromised his masculinity and his status as all-powerful god. In recommending that he dress in the effeminate style of Dionysus, Eros is simply drawing the logical conclusion from Zeus' request, given the traditional code of sexual relations. At the same time, Eros also suggests that another style of erotic interaction is possible and no less proper to divinities. In this regard, Lucian seems to reflect the ethos of the Greek novels, which bear witness to a valorization of reciprocal *erôs* between men and women. Here too, symmetrical love entails an equivalence of sexual roles. The novelistic hero, like the heroine, is young and physically desirable to adult males. In Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesiaka*, both Habrocomes and Anthia are wooed by the pirates who capture them. Daphnis, in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, is pursued by Gnatho, a parasite attached to the household of Daphnis' true father. In Chariton's *Callirhoe*, the rejected suitors for Callirhoe's hand seek to disrupt the marriage between the protagonists by leaving wreaths and other signs of a *kômos* at the couples' door, thereby rousing the young groom's suspicions concerning the fidelity of his bride. Callirhoe, however, parries the charge: "There has been no riotous party at my father's house! Perhaps *your* house is used to parties, and your lovers are upset at your marriage!" (1.3, tr. Reardon in Reardon 1989). Commentators have remarked that this suggestion of homoerotic behavior on the part of the protagonist is exceptional in the Greek novels, but I am inclined to think that it is of a piece with the parallel representation of both the hero and heroine in the novels as objects of erotic attraction.

We may appreciate better the quality of Eros' advice in Lucian's dialogue by comparing (and contrasting) it with a passage in the orations of Dio of Prusa, to which David Halperin (1990: 34) has called attention. Writing a half-century or so prior to Lucian, Dio castigates the loose morals of cities where adultery is common practice. He concludes his speech:

Well then, among those people for whom affairs with girls are so simple, what can we expect concerning boys...? Is there any way that a licentious people will refrain from the violation and corruption of males, and establish this as the sufficient and clear boundary of nature? Will they not rather, having fulfilled in every way their intemperance in the case of women, and having now become satiated with this kind of pleasure, pursue another outrage, greater and more illicit? For the business with women, and those for the most part free and virgins, proved easy, and there was no great effort for those who engaged in this kind of

hunt with the help of money.... But the rest is pretty obvious, since it happens to many: the one who is unsatiated with this kind of passion, when he finds nothing scarce or resisting in that sex, comes then to despise what is easy and feels contempt for Aphrodite among women, as being an available thing and in truth utterly feminine; and he will switch over to the male type, passionate to dishonor those who someday will be magistrates and judges and generals, in order to find there some difficult and unavailable form of pleasure. (*Orations* 7.148-52).

The lawless citizens of Dio's vicious city act in accord with the schema that David Halperin has educated. They are imagined as well-to-do adult males, and they seek to corrupt first women, then upper-class boys. The difference in roles is thus grounded in a distinction in station, whether in respect to gender or age. True, the boys will grow up to be "magistrates and judges and generals," but while they are still young, they are assimilated to women as the receptive partner in sex, whereas the active role of pursuit and penetration is reserved for men.

Dio disapproves of this behavior, which he takes as exploitative of feminine weakness and degrading to citizen youths. Though he represents the desire for boys as the inevitable consequence of an excessive passion for women, he nevertheless, and somewhat contradictorily, portrays pederastic sex as contrary to nature. In well-ordered communities, *erôs* is subject to strict control, and citizens are taught to exercise restraint. But this is not to say that Dio rejects the asymmetrical and hierarchical construction of erotic relations that Halperin has described for classical Athens. On the contrary, it is just because he takes it for granted that he is concerned to regulate erotic behavior. Men are by nature hunters, women and boys their prey. Dio does not imagine that these roles might be reversed or collapsed; his view of sexual morality is predicated on temperance, not equality.

The tension that animates Lucian's dialogue, on the contrary, does not depend, like Dio's, on an opposition between licentiousness and self-control. Correspondingly, Lucian's Eros is not concerned with the status or reputations of Zeus' victims. Lucian's theme is reciprocity, not moderation. What Eros proposes is, accordingly, a kind of unisex comportment which, however much it may repel Zeus, the crude heavy, is, on Eros' view, necessary to mutual love. Lucian thus pokes fun at manliness, and seems to adumbrate a style in which sexual roles are less polarized, and desire is evenly distributed between the erotic partners.

II. Greece

Like Dio's ideal of masculine self-control, Lucian's evocation of bilateral passion and the collapse of gender differences also has roots in the sexual discourse of classical Athens. Taking our example from Eros in Lucian's dialogue, we may instance the representation of Dionysus in the late fifth century B.C. When Pentheus comes on stage in Euripides' *Bacchae*, his first words reveal his suspicion that the women who have left their homes to perform Bacchus' rites have in fact been drinking wine and "slinking off ... to lonely places to serve the lust of males" (222-23, tr. Dodds 1960 ad loc.). He then turns to the stranger who has incited the women, "with sweet-smelling hair in blond ringlets" (235), who has the charms of Aphrodite and "who day and night keeps company with young girls, dangling before them his mysteries of joy" (237-38, tr. Dodds 1960 ad loc.). Later, Pentheus addresses the god directly: "Well, stranger, you're not physically ugly, as to women, which is why you're here in Thebes; for you have long locks, no thanks to wrestling, that trickle down your cheeks, laden with longing [*pothos*], and you've pale skin on purpose, from shade instead of the sun's rays, as you chase Aphrodite with your loveliness" (453-59). Dionysus, then, is both lewd and attractive to women, a subject of erotic desire and the sort who rouses it in others. Both these qualities, moreover, are associated with his effeminate appearance: the white skin and girlish curls which mark him as unathletic and are suited to the pursuit of sex rather than real hunting. The qualities in Dionysus that disgust Pentheus include both his supposed lustfulness and his sex appeal.

Dionysus, then, poses a challenge to the rigid distinction between erotic roles inscribed in the prevailing phallic model of sex that Halperin has delineated. Any binary opposition, of course, is vulnerable to deconstruction by the assimilation of its extremes, but the image of an effeminate but erotically threatening figure like Dionysus derives in this case, I believe, from an inconsistency internal to the Athenian sexual ideology. As Foucault has explained, the hierarchical relation between the sexes was both projected outward onto the domain of politics, in which only free adult males had the right to participate in governing the community, and inward onto the construction of the individual psyche. For Foucault, the central principle of the moral life in the classical epoch was self-mastery (*enkrateia*), which was achieved by practices of self-discipline (*askêsis*). Self-mastery was conceived as a masculine virtue: "Just as, within the house, it is the man who commands, and just as, within the city, it falls neither to slaves nor children nor women to exercise power, but to men and men only, so too must each one make his manly qualities prevail over himself" (Foucault 1984: 96). That women constitute the more libidinous sex follows directly from Foucault's model, since they are by nature less

capable of controlling themselves. We thus have the paradox that men are lovers, women and boys beloveds or *erômenoi*, but it is the erotic passion of women that is the more ungovernable: hence the obsessive jokes in Aristophanic comedy, for example, on women's irrepressible desire for sex.

But if women, rather than men, are less capable of temperance and more susceptible to lust, then the same should hold true of effeminate men, to the degree that they lack masculine *enkrateia*. The ideological move of analogizing men's domination over women with their control over their own appetites has the paradoxical consequence that less manly males are perceived as erotically more active. Simultaneously, however, by virtue of their assimilation to women, effeminate males are naturally constituted as objects of sexual desire in the eyes of men, or least of those men who are sexually overcharged or indiscriminate, and also in the eyes of women, inasmuch as they succumb the more readily to sexual cravings. Hence the representation of Dionysus as simultaneously wanton and sexually appealing.⁵

Visual images of Dionysus as effeminate are characteristic of the latter part of the fifth century, as opposed to the fully bearded and masculine type that regularly appears on black-figured vases (Dodds 1960: 133-34 ad vv. 453-9). This development is coordinate with a change in the representation of men in pederastic scenes from bearded to beardless; in addition, a new predilection for soft physiques among *erômenoi* seems to have emerged in the fourth century B.C. (Dover 1978: 71-73, 76-81).⁶ If, however, an ideology of phallic domination, together with a high valuation on self-control as a masculine ideal, generated a paradox that was, perhaps, especially characteristic of the classical city-state, the combination of an unruly sexual drive and sex appeal was already associated with an effete style in the Homeric epics, most conspicuously in the figure of Paris. Having brashly challenged the Achaean chieftains to a duel, Paris slinks away when Menelaus, the least of the Achaean warriors, confronts him. Perceiving Paris' faint-heartedness, Hector rebukes him:

Evil Paris, beautiful, woman-crazy, cajoling,
Better had you never been born, or killed unwedded....
Surely now the flowing-haired Achaians laugh at us,
thinking you are our bravest champion, only because your
looks are handsome, but there is no strength in your heart, no courage....
And now you would not stand up against warlike Menelaos?
Thus you would learn of the man whose blossoming wife you have taken.
The lyre would not help you then, nor the favours of Aphrodite,
nor your locks, when you rolled in the dust, nor all your beauty

(3.39-40, 43-45, 52-55; tr. Lattimore 1951).

Hector is contemptuous of Paris' sexual attractiveness, which may give him the look of a fighter but is in fact a sign of softness. But this in no way compromises Paris' erotic energy. Having been wafted by Aphrodite from the battle-field to his chamber, he bids Helen:

Come, then, rather let us go to bed and turn to love-making.

Never before as now has passion enmeshed my senses (3.441-42, tr. Lattimore 1951). Paris loves and inspires love, just as Lucian's Zeus had hoped to do until Eros advised him of what it required.⁷

In early Greek culture, then, men who fell short of the macho ideal, which was represented by figures like Hector, were perceived as both more given to erotic behavior and more liable to stimulate erotic desire in others, even though the role of lover was normally conceived of as dominant or active, and thus characteristic of the free adult male. The sexual bivalence of a Paris or a Dionysus, in which the contrast between masculine and feminine identities is subdued, suggests the coexistence of active and passive roles and the possibility of reciprocal desire, in which each partner is simultaneously *erastês* and *erômenos* or *erômenê*. In the complexly determined ideology of *erôs*, women were capable of erotic desire, but it was directed not so much at brawny heroes like Heracles as at the softer sort of male whom other men might also experience as desirable. As lovers, women's erotic role was assimilated to that of men.⁸

Euripides' *Hippolytus* represents a manifestly virile youth who is passionate about hunting (109-10) but at the same time betrays an odd prudishness in respect to the pleasures of Aphrodite (106). Hippolytus resembles Pentheus in this respect, and, like Pentheus, he too will be destroyed by a normally mild deity whom he recklessly offends. Euripides does not indicate why Phaedra falls in love with Hippolytus, and the question may be irrelevant: the tension in the play requires her quasi-incestuous passion, and that is reason enough for its existence.⁹ Nevertheless, Hippolytus' commitment to virginity serves, I think, to feminize him, as does his identification with the goddess Artemis, and thus renders him a natural object of sexual desire. When Phaedra, in her love-sickness, expresses her passion (*erama*) to call to the hounds, let down her hair, and brandish javelin and spear (219-22), her wish is, of course, to share the activities of Hippolytus, but by taking on an identity as hunter she may also be assuming the masculine role of pursuer, thereby implicitly casting Hippolytus in the role of *erômenos*.

After Phaedra's death, Theseus, having been persuaded by her suicide note she had been raped by Hippolytus (885-86), accuses his son of parading his vegetarianism as well as Orphic and Dionysian doctrines, although he in fact hunts his prey with a show of fine words (952-57).

As Barrett plausibly argues (1964: 342-45), the charge of Orphism is merely a jibe, and is inconsistent, among other things, with the representation of Hippolytus as a hunter. But why this jibe? Hippolytus' sexual abstinence has put Theseus in mind of ascetic practices generally (cf. the co-existence of continence and vegetarianism in the cult promoted by Empedocles), which he sees as a cover for licentiousness. Hippies are presumed to lack self-control.

While Phaedra seems to become enamored of Hippolytus for his virginal forbearance, Theseus sees in his youthful eccentricity evidence of his libidinousness. Thus, in forestalling Hippolytus' defense, he asks rhetorically: "Such foolishness is not in men but innate in women? But I know that young men are no safer than women when Aphrodite excites their adolescent hearts: their own masculinity assists them" (966-70). Young men, like women, are especially subject to *erôs*, as well as being potential objects of sexual desire in others. The tragedy plays on the equal plausibility of two scenarios: in the one, which constitutes the plot of the drama, a mature woman is passionate for a chaste youth; in the other, which is initiated by Phaedra's letter and finds a willing believer in Theseus, a youth, by virtue of his immaturity, is presumed to be subject to an excessive desire for a woman. Taken together, the two versions position the woman and the young man as both lover and beloved.¹⁰

Even if it is the case that Greek men might wish to be desired actively by the women they loved, it does not automatically follow that a similar pattern of reciprocal erotic attraction was acknowledged in regard to homoerotic relations, in which, as Dover (1978: 16) puts it, "the distinction between the bodily activity of the one who has fallen in love and the bodily passivity of the one with whom he has fallen in love is of the highest importance." Although the analogy with women's position in erotic relations suggests that boys too could in theory be seen as playing a sexually active role, they might nevertheless be differentiated from women as being too young to be subjects of erotic desire.¹¹ Furthermore, an adult male lover would have a stake in maintaining control of erotic subjectivity in order avoid the stigma attaching to the passive role in a relationship with a man; Greek pederastic poetry is scrupulous in not ascribing *erôs* to the *paidika*. But, as scholars have observed, the lover's own subjection to *erôs*, expressed by verbs such as "dominated" or "mastered" (e.g., *dameis*, Theognis 1344), signifies a loss of masculine control, and the *erastês* is further feminized by being at the mercy of his beloved. Though it is the lover's voice that is heard in pederastic literature, the beloved is implicitly empowered, and the lover is in danger of being relocated as the dependent partner. Since the *erômenos* is typically portrayed as inveterately fickle, his behavior may seem to be entirely determined by the will of competing lovers, but the choice nevertheless remains his, and it is not altogether

reducible to a passive gesture of acquiescence. Much depends on how the beloved plays his part.

III. Greek Rome

Though Catullus is in many ways a special case, his poetry interestingly illustrates the dynamics of the pederastic relationship.¹² When it comes to marriage, Catullus is content to represent the bride as the object of a transaction between males. Thus, in his antiphonal epithalamium (62), the girls recite:

Hesperus, what crueller star than you rides in the sky?
For you can tear a daughter from her mother's embrace,
from her mother's embrace tear clinging daughter
and give the chaste girl to an ardent youth.
What crueller deed does the foe commit when a city falls?
(62.20-24, tr. Goold 1983).

Later, the boys respond:

And you, maiden, fight not with such a husband.
You must not fight with him your father gave you to himself,
your father himself with your mother, whom you have to obey
(62.59-61, tr. Goold 1983).

When it comes to Lesbia, however, Catullus resorts to various strategies to indicate the reciprocity of their relationship. For example, he exploits the terminology of familial affection to express their mutual love, as in poem 72: "I was fond of you then not so much the way common folk feel for a girlfriend, but as a father is fond of his sons and sons-in-law." The verb is *diligere*, which is equivalent to the Greek *philein* and the term of art for the sentiment experienced by an *erômenos* (cf. 81.2); elsewhere (76.23) he says he used to wish that Lesbia could like him back in this way. In poem 109, Catullus invokes the language of *amicitia* to express his ideal of erotic reciprocity:

You promise me, my life, a pleasant love (*amor*) --
that ours will be so and be forever, too.
Great gods, make her able to promise honestly,
and say it sincerely and from the heart,
so that we may continue our whole life through
this eternal pact of holy friendship.¹³

Catullus may also make *amare* a bilateral expression, as in poem 92:

Lesbia always disparages me and never shuts up
about me; I'm damned if she doesn't love me.

My proof? It's ditto for me: I constantly
insult her, but I'm damned if I don't love her.

Though *amare* has a wider range than the Greek *eran*, and often corresponds to *philein*, the context here suggests an erotic attachment, as it does in *vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus* ("Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love," 5.1), where Catullus bids Lesbia to kiss him (*da mi basia*), and speaks of their exchange of kisses (*fecerimus [basia]*, 10). It is no surprise that the sixteenth-century French poetess, Louise Labé, should have found in Catullus' poem inspiration for her racy sonnet:

Baise m'encor, rebaise-moi et baise;
Donne m'en un de tes plus savoureux,
Donne m'en un de tes plus amoureux:
Je t'en rendrai quatre plus chaud que braise.

Kiss me again, kiss me and kiss me more;
Give me one of your juiciest,
Give me one of your sexiest:
Hotter than coals, I'll give you back four.

By contrast, in the cycle of six poems that Catullus addresses to Juventius (the name suggests *iuvenis*), the boy is never represented as the subject of *amare*, and the kissing is all on Catullus' part (c. 48):

If anyone would let me kiss those honeyed
eyes of yours thoroughly, Juventius,
I'd kiss you three hundred thousand kisses
nor do I think I'd ever be satisfied,
not if the crop of our kissing were
thicker than dry ears of grain.

Catullus is insatiable, while Juventius is portrayed as desirable rather than desiring.

In poem 99, Catullus describes an occasion on which he was punished for stealing a kiss from Juventius:

I stole a kiss from you at play, honey-sweet Juventius,
a teeny kiss sweeter than sweet ambrosia:

but not with impunity, since for more than an hour,
I remember, I was impaled at the top of a cross,
trying to excuse myself to you and unable for all my tears
to wash away the least little bit of your anger.
For the moment it was done, you washed your lips with plenty
of water and wiped them clean with your dainty fingers,
in case any contagion from my mouth remained
as though it were some filthy whore's foul spit.
Then you hastened to hand me over, poor wretch,
to angry Love and torture me in every way,
so that from being ambrosia that teeny kiss
became nastier than nasty gall.
If that's the penalty you set on my unhappy love,
I shan't steal kisses from you any more (tr. Goold 1983).

Catullus represents himself as the aggressor and Juventius as a pouting boy who refuses him: it is not that Juventius fails to reciprocate Catullus' passion but that he does not yield to it. But the division between active and passive roles in the poem is nevertheless unstable. The image of Catullus "impaled at the top of a cross" (*suffixum in summa ... cruce*) suggests that penetration is reversible, and from his tears it is clear that he deems himself to be the injured party, as though he, and not Juventius, had been assaulted. Although Juventius' only mode of resistance is an expression of distaste -- there is no suggestion, for example, that he tried to fend Catullus off -- the gesture is construed as a punishment, and Catullus is the victim. Indeed, Catullus even appropriates Juventius' disgust, as the kiss he himself planted turns bitter for him, and his refusal to bestow more -- despite the bravado of the word "steal" (*surripiam*) -- is in fact a gesture of non-compliance, like Juventius' own, designed to sting the boy into seeking Catullus' favor. The poem's argument thus implicitly recasts Juventius as pursuer, Catullus as pursued, and intimates that Catullus, perhaps, will cease to requite the boy's feeling for him.

Catullus turns the tables on Juventius and casts his refusal to be kissed as a hostile act by representing his sentiment for the boy not as a possessive and domineering passion but as a helpless submission to love. What he professes to suffer, accordingly, is not just resistance but rejection, the psychological wound resulting from the want of caring. In the whining finale, Catullus sounds like an injured child: by depicting Juventius as guilty of denying him love,

Catullus has assumed the position of his juvenile *erōmenos* -- has colonized, we may say, the space of the love object.¹⁴

Catullus' poem conveys the impression that Juventius' behavior is unexpected: at an earlier time he presumably welcomed Catullus' kisses. Perhaps Juventius is being coy, and what looks like flightiness is in fact a ploy further to inflame Catullus' passion. There is the possibility, then, of self-conscious role-playing on Juventius' part, and a measure of experience and calculation that belie the apparent innocence or naiveté of the boy. Then again, perhaps Catullus is deliberately representing him as a sophisticated tease in order to coerce his compliance by publicly shaming him in his verses. Or is Juventius simply a sulky brat?

The difficulty in interpreting Juventius' behavior may be due not only to the rhetorical purpose of the poem, but also to the fact that both Catullus and Juventius are acting out positions in an amatory duet. The poem, which is quite remarkable in the corpus of Roman pederastic literature, makes the reader aware of the extent to which such scenes of seduction depend on a particular construction of roles and performances.¹⁵ In wiping away the kiss, and in accepting rather than giving kisses in the first place, Juventius appears both as a spoiled but callow child and as an actor who assumes mastery in the situation by a canny manipulation of his part.

It is through dramatic strategies of this sort that the complex game of sexual roles is normally negotiated in practice. As Judith Butler (1993: 315) has argued:

To claim that there is no performer prior to the performed, that the performance is performative, that the performance constitutes the appearance of a "subject" as its effect is difficult to accept. This difficulty is the result of a predisposition to think of sexuality and gender as "expressing" in some indirect or direct way a psychic reality that precedes it.¹⁶

It is conceivable that what we today interpret as a matter of essence or identity was, for the Roman poet and his audience, at least in part a function of rhetoric and play-acting.¹⁷

Among the poems of the Juventius cycle (15, 21, 24, 81) that deal with Catullus' rivals for the boy, the performative nature of sexual roles is especially evident in 21, where Catullus accuses Aurelius of attempting to seduce Juventius:¹⁸

Aurelius, father of famines,
not just of these, but of all that were
or are or will be in years to come,
you wish to buggery my boy. And not on the quiet:
for you're always with him, always laughing with him,

and fussing over him you leave nothing untried.
It's no good: for though you plot against me,
I'll get in first and stuff you.
If you did it on a full stomach, I'd keep quiet:
as it is, I'm vexed that the boy is going
to learn from you to starve and thirst.
So stop it, while you decently can,
or else you'll finish by getting stuffed (tr. Goold 1983).

Aurelius' hunger is on the one hand a sign of poverty, which renders him an unfit lover for a youth who is "the flower of the Juventii" (24.1), an ancient aristocratic family. But Aurelius' hunger also signifies his sexual appetite, manifested in his desire to penetrate Juventius. The sexual and class hierarchies are thus crossed (cf. c. 24). Catullus' threat to bugger Aurelius realigns the axes of wealth and desire by forcing Aurelius into the passive position. Simultaneously, it assimilates him to Juventius's role as receptive partner. However, the cravings that Juventius is likely to acquire in the company of Aurelius derive not from Aurelius' indigence but from his lust; Juventius will thus become, thanks to Aurelius, an active subject of desire. By these means, too, the vectors of status and erotic dominance are synchronized. Once again, moreover, the roles of Juventius and Aurelius are rendered parallel, allowing, indeed, for the possibility that they will hunger mutually for one another. The poem thus intimates that Aurelius and Juventius are each potentially both passive and active, their roles shifting according to act and opportunity.

In their research on sexuality and the spread of AIDS in Mexico, Ana Maria Alonso and Maria Teresa Koreck record that men who play only the active or "insertor" role are not conceived of as homosexual, while those who play the passive role in anal intercourse "are demarcated as a particular category of beings -- *jotos* or *putos*."¹⁹ Alonso and Koreck observe: "There is no distinct linguistic term to designate *machos* who have sex with *jotos*, nor are they socially or culturally set off in any way" (p. 117). Alonso and Koreck note that in the rural areas of Mexico that they investigated, all males occupy either the active or the passive role, but in urban areas "men playing both roles are called 'internationals,' a term which indexes the 'foreignness' of practices which are much more like those of American gays."²⁰

In the Greco-Roman world, young men like Juventius are not classified as a distinct type; on the contrary, their role is fluid, and is understood to vary both with age and with such factors as class, wealth, and the company they keep.²¹ But these roles are nevertheless contained by an ideology of phallic sexuality that inhibits the simple, stable parity of relations among

"internationals." In this situation, performance is particularly salient in the representation of pederastic relations.

In his last book, John Boswell sought to demonstrate that same-sex unions based on reciprocal love were valorized in classical antiquity as well as in the middle ages. Unfortunately, Boswell made free with the evidence; his claim, for example, that friendship might designate a romantic relationship (Boswell: 1994: 75-77) is simply false. Boswell himself recognized the difficulty:

Since most ancient concepts of male sexuality presupposed that the "active" or insertive party somehow dominated the "passive" or receptive partner, sex would appear to introduce an element of subordination or inequality into a friendship, and thus complicate it (79).

This account is consistent with, indeed derived from, David Halperin's characterization, but Boswell seeks to evade the manifest consequences for his argument by asserting that it "should not be confused with a description of reality" (ibid.). Despite the public conflict, as he calls it, between friendship and sexuality, Boswell concludes that "there is no reason to believe that a sexual friendship was any rarer or more (or less) difficult then than now" (79-80). The business of philology, however, is not to intuit the true feelings of the ancients but to understand how they were realized and constrained within the context of the prevailing social codes. The argument of this paper has been that contradictions in the sexual ideology of the classical world opened up a space for a conception of mutual *erôs*, as indicated in Lucian's witty dialogue, and that pederastic literature was, or could be, in the hands of a poet like Catullus, a dynamic site in which conventional erotic roles were both enacted and subverted. The result was not a valorization of sexual reciprocity as such but rather the recognition of a possibility that surfaced as inexorably as it was repressed.

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Notes

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.
 2. For the distinction between erotic passion (*erôs*) and affectionate love (*philia*), see Faraone 1999: 27-30, 96-97, 146-51, who shows that magical spells fall into two distinct categories; typically, married women seek to induce *philia* in their beloveds, while men and courtesans are more likely to employ charms in order to instil erotic desire.
 3. On the attractiveness of effeminate-looking men, see Edwards 1993: 81-84; Edwards cites (pp. 82-83) Arrian *Dicourses* 3.1.27-33, where Epictetus is said to have "chastised a young man, alleging that he cultivated an effeminate appearance in order to appeal to women."
 4. Recently, Nicole Loraux has sought to trace "another tradition that is equally Greek, a tradition that, from Homeric epic to heroic legend, postulates that a man worthy of the name is all the more virile precisely because he harbors within himself something of the feminine" (1995: 4). To the extent that such an alternative tradition exists, however, it is largely an unconscious one and its manifestations are characteristically symbolic; Loraux' arguments do not, in my view, vitiate the model of sexuality educed by Halperin.
 4. Hubbard 1998: 55-59 illustrates "the fluidity and interchangeability of sex roles" (p. 57) in Athenian Old Comedy, and remarks: "The concept behind this curious mixture of roles is, as Foucault has emphasized, that any form of sexual excess, whether adultery or, as here, pederasty, is a state of moral passivity toward physical appetites, a weakness of character like that of women" (p. 56). Hubbard rejects, however, the model of domination and subordination developed by Dover and Halperin, and argues rather that ordinary people in classical Athens were suspicious of homoerotic behavior, whether active or passive, and associated both roles particularly with upper-class attitudes. Hubbard summarizes his view as follows (p. 69): "it has been my argument that the active/passive dichotomy was of far less salience to ancient Greek judgments of homosexuality than the class-dynamics associated with its practice. Inasmuch as pederasty was perceived as an upper-class phenomenon, any practioner, whether man or boy, was suspect in the eys of the masses." In my view, the evidence for the polarization of sex roles in both Greece and Rome is overwhelming; I prefer, therefore, to interpret the fluidity of the active and passive positions as symptomatic of a contradiction in the classical ideology of

sex.

5. During and after the French revolution, French painting exhibits an analogous fascination with the epicene male figure; see Solomon-Godeau 1997, with the review by Warner 1997: 19, who compares the figure of Cupid in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

7. Cf. Monsacré 1984: 41-50, who contrasts the beauty and weakness of Paris with the virile image of Hector, and notes that epic warriors are feminized in defeat (64-65).

7. Cf. also Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 414-15, where an Athenian official complains that husbands contribute to corrupting their wives by having craftsmen visit them at home: "Another says to the shoemaker, who is a youth [*neanian*] and has a penis that is not a child's [*peos ekhont' ou paidikon*]..."; the implication is that the wife will be attracted by the boy's youthful appearance, although in the event it will be he who plays the active role of *erastês* rather than the passive role of *paidika*. This and related passages are discussed in Konstan 2001 = Paper 2.

8. Seneca, in his *Phaedra*, is more explicit about the causes of Phaedra's infatuation (646-58); she is seduced by the image of the young Theseus that Hippolytus' features reproduce, at the age when his beard first sprouted, "golden modesty tinged his tender cheeks, and strong muscles lay beneath his delicate arms" (652-53). The emphasis on Hippolytus' youth elaborates a suggestion in Ovid's *Heroides* 4.71-72, where Phaedra writes to Hippolytus: "your hair was bound up on flowers, and a modest blush tinged you golden cheeks" (cf. Boyle 1987 ad loc.), though Ovid's Phaedra is rather more interested in Hippolytus' rugged good looks (4.73-86). Hippolytus' resemblance to Theseus in Seneca's version was perhaps inspired by Virgil *Aeneid* 4.84-85, where Dido seeks to ease her passion for Aeneas by holding Ascanius in her lap, "captivated by the resemblance to his father" (*genitoris imagine capta*).

9. Various sources report that Phaedra's sister, Ariadne, fell in love with Theseus when he came to Crete to challenge the Minotaur and provided Theseus with the thread by which he escaped from the labyrinth (after she eloped with him, Theseus abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos). What explains Theseus' attractiveness? Apart from the fact that he was then a youth, we may note his condition of weakness and dependency; compare Odysseus' appeal to Nausicaa's pity (*Odyssey* 6), or Jason's to Medea's (Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3). Dido's passion for Aeneas is inspired by a similar compassion; in his dalliance with Dido, moreover, Aeneas is feminized as a Phrygian with a taste for finery. It is also worth noting that Cupid

ignites Dido's desire by assuming the form of Aeneas' young son, Ascanius; Dido's love is thus initially directed at the father's likeness in the boy. For further discussion of the objects of women's passion, see Konstan 2001 = Paper 2.

10. Adolescent boys, making the transition from passive children to active adults, had an ambiguous sexual identity. Cf. the quip, already old in Terence's time, comparing an erotically active youth to a hare (considered a delicacy as well as prey) feasting on meat (Terence *Eunuch* 426). The saying was proverbial in Greek as well; see Barsby 1999 ad loc., and cf. Konstan 2001 = Paper 2.

11. For an excellent overview of Roman attitudes toward homosexuality, see Williams 1999.

12. For the translation of the first couplet, see Konstan 1972-73: 102-06.

13. See Skinner 1993: 120: "Although their helplessness is gendered as 'feminine,' men are expected to engage with it vicariously -- to identify with their sense of powerless yearning and capitulate, as they do, to tumultuous passion.... Ostensibly the assumption of such a passive feminized posture might seem acutely degrading. Paradoxically, however, it may also have been a channel for imaginative escape."

15. There is a growing literature on the instability of sexual identities in Roman literature, and specifically in the poetry of Catullus; see especially Skinner 1993; Miller 1998.

15. On performance, cf. also Friedman 1996: 21-22; Lindheim 1998: 63, who remarks of the episode of Hercules' cross-dressing in Propertius 4.9 that "the split predicated upon anatomy ... dissolves before the reader's eyes as a fixed and ascertainable dichotomy and emerges as no more than an alternative performance or construction."

17. We may thus, perhaps, reorient the quarrel between constructionist views of sexuality and the essentialism defended, for example, by Richlin 1993 and Boswell 1990: 67-78 (discussion in Skinner 1996: 103-123): not even the asymmetries of status and power were wholly reified in antiquity. Cf. Clark 1993: 195: "some theorists argue that any unified conception of gay/lesbian identity is reductive and ahistorical"; on essentialism and constructionism, see also Fuss 1989: 3.

17. That the boy in this poem, though not named, is to be identified with Juventius is plausibly argued by Wiseman 1969: 7 and others.

19. Alonso and Koreck 1993: 115, following Carrier 1985; cf. also Lancaster 1988.

20. Alonso and Koreck 1993: 119, following Carrier 1989; cf. Almaguer 1993, reporting on Carrier's research in Guadalajara: "Only a segment of the homosexually active youth ... develop a preference for the anal receptive, *pasivo* sexual role, and thus come to define their individual sense of gender in a decidedly feminine direction" (261).

21. Cf. Skinner 1993: 111: "Ancient gender identities seem to have been more fluid, at least in the case of men"; Gleason 1990: 391.