

of naked adult men apparently do not show measurable arousal to pictures of naked prepubescent boys. (3) Very few if any men show significant amounts of sexual arousal *both* when viewing naked adult women and when viewing naked adult men. (4) Substantial numbers of heterosexual women can be aroused by descriptions of group sex. (5) The best stimuli for separating homosexual from heterosexual men are those in which several members of the preferred sex are shown participating in sexual behavior. Thus, pictures of two women are typically more arousing to groups of heterosexual men than pictures of heterosexual copulation are.

*Implications.* The use of such studies and techniques in political or social contexts of course cannot be ignored. It is hotly debated among sexologists whether plethysmography is scientifically valid if used on nonconsenting subjects (i.e., pedophiles or others whose sexual fantasies involve acts that remain illegal). Masturbating several times just before the procedure would, of course, make it useless in men and nearly useless in most women. Repressive regimes would also have difficulty using it surreptitiously. Nevertheless, the potential for abuse is clear, and it is fortunate that so many of those who used it in dangerous ways have now disavowed those uses.

*Erotic Taxonomy.* Scientifically, plethysmography's best successes have been in erotic taxonomy. It has helped show that male-to-female transsexuals can be dichotomized into two groups: those sexually attracted to men and those sexually attracted to women, and that those sexually attracted to women always or almost always have been aroused by cross-dressing. (Asexual and bisexual male-to-female transsexuals are now considered subtypes of the group attracted to women.) It has helped sharpen definitions by showing that certain types of bisexuality are very uncommon in men but not rare in women. In theory, it could be used over

time to establish precisely how (and whether) one's erotic inclinations change as one gets older, and to throw light on situations where one's genitals are doing one thing and one's mind is doing another. And perhaps most important, it has established the validity of talking about one's sexual orientation, since it can establish that it exists independently of what one consciously reports. In so doing, it has challenged the notion that one's sexual proclivities are mere preferences on the level of what route one prefers to drive to work, even as it has made explicit the dangers and consequences of assuming that one's sexual orientation is far more important than one's handedness or one's leggedness.

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## PLUTARCH (CA. 50-CA. 120)

Greek eclectic philosopher and biographer. Widely traveled in the Mediterranean, this noble, who became a priest at Delphi but resided at his native Chaeronea in Boeotia, knew many leading Greeks and Romans and may have received appointments from Trajan and Hadrian. He

advocated partnership between Greeks and Romans. An ancient catalogue of his works listed 227 items, of which 87 survive, most lumped together under the title *Moralia*, in addition to 50 biographies in *Parallel Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans*. His "On Moral Virtues" is Aristotelian and anti-Stoic: piety being a mean between superstition and atheism. In his dialogues, Plutarch, essentially a Platonist, discussed the fate of the soul after death. His antiquarian works are a mine of information about paganism, music, and education.

Plutarch's "Dialogue on Love" presents an imaginary debate (an example of *contest literature*), between a pederast and an advocate of the love of women. Declaring that "the one true love is the love of youths," the pederast, reciting a list of famous heterosexual lovers, attacks heterosexual love as self-indulgent, vulgar, and servile. The advocate of the love of women, equally cutting, condemns pederasty as unnatural and innovative in the bad sense. With passionate arguments on both sides, this example reveals that the days when the superiority of pederasty could be taken for granted had long passed.

In a vivacious sketch, Plutarch sets forth a conversation between Odysseus and one of his men who, through enchantment, has been turned into a pig (Gryllos). To the hero's surprise the pig who was once a man does not want to return to his human state: he prefers to remain a beast because, in his view, animals live a life in conformity with nature, while human beings do not. According to Gryllos, one evidence of the superiority of animals is the supposed fact that they do not practice male or female homosexuality. While this claim has been disproved, over the centuries Plutarch's little dialogue exercised a good deal of influence as a touchstone of the "happy beast" conceit (see *Animal Homosexuality*), which argued that human conduct could be reformed for the better by adopting the "natural, healthy" standards of animals.

In his vivid and gripping *Lives*, Plutarch stressed the vices and virtues in the personalities of the great as well as their family, education, personality, and changes of fortune. Their accuracy varies according to the sources available to him. Many portray pederasty flatteringly, particularly in the case of heroes of Sparta and Thebes, sometimes unflatteringly as in Otho and other Roman emperors, and amusingly as in the case of Demetrios Poliorcetes. They were extremely influential and much read from the Italian Renaissance through the Napoleonic era, when they were central to the Exemplar Theory of history—the concept that history teaches through the lives of great men who excelled either in virtue or vice. With the emergence of the idea of history as a supra-individual process, the accomplishment above all of the nineteenth-century German school, the centrality of Plutarch's biographies faded.

Plutarch shows that if pederasty was an ambivalent and disputed subject in late pagan antiquity, still no general taboo on the discussion or even more, the practice of it existed before the Christian church began to exert its influence on law and public opinion.

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## POETRY

Through most of history, poetry has been a vital form of literature, and one which has often lent itself to the expression of erotic or romantic sentiment. At the same time, poetry displays an inherent capacity for ambiguity which has provided a cover for homoerotic elements which might otherwise never have reached the printed page. In light of these considerations, and the long period during which the poetry of ancient Greece and Rome