

**PINDAR, THEOXENUS,  
AND THE HOMOEROTIC EYE**

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Χρῆν μὲν κατὰ καιρὸν ἐρώτων δρέπεσθαι, θυμέ, σὺν  
    ἀλικία·  
τὰς δὲ Θεοξένου ἀκτῖνας πρὸς ὅσων  
μαρμαρυζοίσας δρακείς  
ὅς μὴ πόθῳ κυμαίνεται, ἐξ ἀδάμαντος  
ἢ σιδάρου κεχάλκευται μέλαιναν καρδίαν  
ψυχρᾷ φλογί, πρὸς δ' Ἀφροδίτας ἀτιμασθεῖς  
    ἐλικογλεφάρου  
ἢ περὶ χρήμασι μοχθίζει βιαίως  
ἢ γυναικείῳ θράσει  
ψυχρὰν φορεῖται πᾶσαν ὁδὸν θεραπεύων.  
ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὰς ἑκατὶ κηρὸς ὥς δαχθεὶς ἔλα  
ἱρᾶν μελισσᾶν τάκομαι, εὖτ' ἂν ἴδω  
παίδων νεόγυιον ἐς ἥβαν·  
ἐν δ' ἄρα καὶ Τενέδῳ  
Πειθώ τ' ἔναιεν καὶ Χάρις  
υἷὸν Ἀγησίλα.

One must pluck loves, my heart, in due season and at the  
proper age.

Ah! But any man who catches with his glance  
The bright rays flashing from Theoxenus's eyes  
And is not tossed on the waves of desire,  
Has a black heart of adamant or iron

Forged in a cold flame, and dishonored by Aphrodite of  
     the arching brow  
 Either toils compulsively for money  
 Or, as a slave, is towed down a path utterly cold  
 By a woman's boldness.  
 But I, by the will of the Love Goddess, melt  
 Like the wax of holy bees stung by the sun's heat,  
 Whenever I look upon the fresh-limbed youth of boys.  
 And surely even on the isle of Tenedos  
 Seduction and Grace dwell  
 In the son of Hagesilas.<sup>1</sup>

Pindar fr. 123 S.–M.

This splendid little poem, quoted by Athenaeus, is usually taken as Pindar's personal declaration of love for the boy Theoxenus. Through an examination of the conventions of first-person discourse in Greek poetry, we intend to suggest that the poem was more likely commissioned by the boy's *erastês* for delivery as a symposiastic *skolion*, and should be understood in the context of the symposium and athletic competitions as homosocial institutions. This context will be delineated through parallels both from Pindar's other poetry and from contemporary vase painting. Finally, an analysis of the poem's visual dynamics will suggest that the traditional phallocentric reading of Greek pederasty, foregrounding the active agency of the adult *erastês* as the privileged term in a relationship of fundamental power asymmetry, is too reductive to provide an adequate understanding of its actual complexity.

## I. THE "I" OF THE POEM

Pindar's encomium for Theoxenus has long been appreciated as a choice specimen of pederastic verse. This is the poem that Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, the early twentieth-century German gay rights pioneer, called "one of the most perfect love songs in the Greek language."<sup>2</sup> The picture of an aged lover melting away for a fair youth inspired the story recorded by Valerius Maximus (9.12 ext. 7) that Pindar died in Theoxenus's arms. Of

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

2 Hirschfeld 1914.655. For an assessment of Hirschfeld's Hellenism and his role in the early movement for gay rights and gay consciousness, see Steakley 1975.23–33.

course, this anecdote can easily be dismissed on both chronological and geographical grounds.<sup>3</sup> What then is the motivation and social context of this short poem? The famous opening of *Isthmia* 2 (verses 1–11) distinguishes between the present age of writing poems for hire and the poets of old, who composed pederastic songs out of personal enthusiasm. This dichotomy has led some to view fr. 123 as just such an effusion of personal feeling; Athenaeus, our source for the poem, took it as such, as have several modern commentators.<sup>4</sup> However, *Isthmia* 2 implies that Pindar, in the 470s, already considered this kind of poetry obsolescent, more common in the generation of Anacreon and Ibycus than in the present age of commissioned song.<sup>5</sup>

I believe that a preliminary step toward unraveling the mysteries of the Theoxenus ode may lie in a reexamination of the use of the first person in the poem. Even if this poem is monody, as seems probable,<sup>6</sup> the first person here need not be understood strictly as the poet's own persona, but may be better viewed as the conventional "first person indefinite," shown by Fraenkel, Young, and others to be a common feature of the epinicia: a generalized, gnomic first person that includes poet, patron, audience, and all men who

3 Pindar lived in Thebes and Theoxenus on the other side of the Aegean, making for a long-distance relationship that would surely tax the resources of an eighty-year-old man in an age of primitive transportation. Our oldest surviving manuscript of Pindar (the twelfth-century Vaticanus gr. 1312 [=B]), as corrected by Maas) identifies Theoxenus's father Hagesilas as also the father of Aristagoras in *Nem.* 11.11; the variant reading of the scholia and later manuscripts is undercut by their also misreading ἀτρεμία in *Nem.* 11.12 as the name of another relative (see also Wilamowitz 1909.833 and van Groningen 1960.74–75). If this is correct, Theoxenus had a brother who was already old enough to have a record of sixteen athletic victories and to be elected a *prytanis* of Tenedos; this would require us to date *Nem.* 11 to the very end of Pindar's life and still assume a wide age difference between the two brothers. As in the case of most such biographical anecdotes, we may assume it to have been a deduction from Pindar's own poetry. For the same view, see Welcker 1844.1.234, followed by von der Mühl 1964.171–72. For general criticism of ancient scholars' overly literal and credulous ways of misreading Pindar's first-person statements, see Lefkowitz 1991.72–110, 127–60.

4 Athenaeus 13.601D, Dissen *apud* Boeckh 1821.2.2.643, Farnell 1932.1.343–44 and 2.441, van Groningen 1960.76–81, Méautis 1962.447–48, Bowra 1964.274, 362, Fraenkel 1975.504.

5 See especially verses 30–46, and the discussions of Woodbury 1968.527–42, Nisetich 1977.133–56, and Hubbard 1985.161–62. Kurke 1991.245 stresses that the negative depiction of the prostituted muse in verses 6–8 is drawn from the point of view of the older erotic poets, not from Pindar's own perspective.

6 Van Groningen 1960.15–17 classifies this poem, along with several other fragments of Pindar, as a *skolion* rather than a true encomium, and therefore considers it monodic. Kirkwood 1982.337–38 still opts for choral delivery based on the triadic structure, but this criterion has been challenged by Davies 1988.52–64.

participate in the same community of values.<sup>7</sup> A typical example is *Pythia* 11.50–54:

θεόθεν ἐραίμαν καλῶν,  
 δυνατὰ μαιόμενος ἐν ἀλικίᾳ.  
 τῶν γὰρ ἀνὰ πόλιν εὐρίσκων τὰ μέσσα μακροτέρῳ  
 ὄλβῳ τεθαλότα, μέφομ' αἶσαν τυραννίδων·  
 ξυναῖσι δ' ἄμφ' ἀρεταῖς τέταμαι· φθονεροὶ δ'  
 ἀμύνονται.

I would prefer good things that come from god,  
 Desiring what is possible for a man of my age.  
 In political matters, I find that the middle station has  
 flourished  
 With a longer-lasting prosperity, and I disapprove of the  
 lot of tyrants.  
 I have been intent on shared accomplishments; thereby  
 the envious are held off.

Here too, as at the opening of fr. 123, we have a reflection on doing what is appropriate for one's age. Contrary to the common assumption that the speaker of fr. 123 is an old man, his age is, in fact, completely unspecified. Indeed, we do not even have a first person pronoun until verse 10. The lines leading up to this point describe a generic foil, designated by the relative clause of characteristic, ὅς μὴ πόθῳ κυμαίνεται. Various explanations for his indifference to Theoxenus are proposed in *priamel* form: he is hard-hearted and cursed by Aphrodite, he is a miser, or he is, worst of all, a heterosexual, enslaved to the path of coldness.<sup>8</sup> The first person sets himself

7 See Young 1968.58–59; Fraenkel 1975.475 n. 12, 514; Hubbard 1985.145–48. For the lyric first person generally as the voice of the poet's social group, see Jarcho 1990.31–39. Stehle 1997.288–96 applies this concept to the interpretation of the erotic first person in lyrics such as Sappho fr. 31 LP.

8 The interpretation of verses 8–9 is controversial, with some translators accepting Schneider's emendation ψυχάν. But I favor the translation of Kirkwood 1982.340, based on the detailed discussion of van Groningen 1960.60–67: "or by the impudence of women he is carried along a road of unrelieved coldness, enslaved." See also Gentili 1988.277 n. 48 and Race 1997.353 n. 1. For a different interpretation, see Irwin 1974.223–27. This passage has been little noted by those who argue against any concept of "sexual orientation" in ancient Greece (e.g., most prominently, Halperin 1990.15–53), but does

apart from this priamelistic foil by means of an emphatic ἀλλ' ἐγώ, what Bundy would call a pronominal cap.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the imagery of hardness and coldness in the priamel, the first person melts like wax in the heat of the sun; where the priamel posited a hostile relation with Aphrodite, it is τῶς ἕκατι that the first person experiences his rapture. Nothing identifies the first person specifically with Pindar: he is just as generic as the foil, arguably even more so.

Nothing even says that Theoxenus is the object for whom the first person melts in love: it happens whenever he sees the “young-limbed adolescence of boys” (12). After this general praise of boys, the poet then names Theoxenus again in a separate sentence, perhaps alluding to Ibycus’s praise of Euryalus (fr. 288 PMG),<sup>10</sup> but not directly connected with the first person. The encomiastic formula of setting up a generally praiseworthy quality in one sentence and then naming a *laudandus* who illustrates it in the next sentence has been well documented by Bundy.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the one first-person statement we find in this poem could apply equally well to any lover of boys, of any age; taken together with the first line of the poem and the following negative foil, the implication is that one can *feel* such love at any age, even if it is right to *practice* it (= 11: ἐρώτων δρεπέσθαι) at only one age, conventionally the years before marriage.<sup>12</sup> As such, the first-person

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appear to set up a clear dichotomy between those who are susceptible to boy love and those who are entirely devoted to women.

9 For a definition of the term, see Bundy 1962.5–6, especially n. 18. The most famous example is Sappho’s ἐγὼ δὲ . . . in fr. 16.3 LP.

10 Like Pindar, Ibycus associates his boy with Peitho and the Graces. They are also paired in Hesiod *WD* 73–74, adorning Pandora. Their mutual connection with Aphrodite was a topos by the time of Plutarch *Pelop.* 19.2.

11 Bundy 1962.54–57 discusses this formula particularly in terms of a preceding sentence phrased as a condition, with a protasis describing the praiseworthy qualities of a hypothetical *laudandus* and an apodosis, usually gnomic, enjoining praise; this is followed with praise of a specific named *laudandus*. Here we are dealing with a variant of the formula, in which a present general temporal clause (11–12: εἴτ’ ἄν . . .) takes the place of the protasis (to which it is syntactically equivalent) and a first-person general statement (10–11) exhibits an honorific response, parallel to the usual gnomic apodosis enjoining praise.

12 See also fr. 127 S.–M., where it is the *praxis* that one must not pursue beyond the right age: Εἴη καὶ ἐρῶν καὶ ἔρωτι / χαρίζεσθαι κατὰ καιρόν· / μὴ πρεσβυτέρων ἀριθμοῦ / δῖωκε, θυμέ, πρῶξιν. Evidence concerning the age of pederastic lovers is less clear-cut than one might wish, but vase painting shows the lovers either as bearded men in the prime of life or as unbearded youths only slightly taller and older than the *erômenoi* (or, in some cases, indistinguishable from them). The embarrassment expressed by the speaker in Lysias 3.3–4 suggests that boy love was considered unusual for men above a certain age. Cantarella

indefinite statement speaks for the whole pan-Hellenic community of boy-lovers, including the many who have never seen Theoxenus. But if they should see Theoxenus, the poem implies, they would not react to his beauty like the hard-hearted negative foil of verses 2–9: instead they, too, would melt at the sight of his young-limbed adolescence.

## II. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE POEM

If fr. 123 does not owe its origin to a personal relationship of the poet and youth, what then is its social context? My argument has been that this poem is not a love song but an encomium. For comparanda, we should look to Pindar's other encomiastic poems—namely, his epinicia, especially those written for boy victors. The early *Pythia* 10 provides an interesting parallel, in that this poem was commissioned by the Thessalian prince Thorax on behalf of an apparently unrelated boy named Hippocleas, who was probably Thorax's *erômenos*, as suggested by a scholium.<sup>13</sup> The ode concludes by commending to the boy Thorax's character and friendship (61–72), after a priamel (55–60) describing the new erotic opportunities that may now be available to him as a famous athlete: celebrated by Pindar's songs, he will be still more beautiful to look upon in the eyes of both youths his own age (ἄλιξι) and mature men (παλαιτέροις),<sup>14</sup> and he will be a care

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1992.40–42 claims that there was no upper limit on the age of *erastai*, but she bases this view on biographical anecdotes about the loves of Sophocles or Euripides at an advanced age that are to be trusted no more than those about Pindar and Theoxenus. Ion of Chios may well have observed Sophocles admiring a serving boy at a banquet, but that is hardly the same thing as the *praxis* of having an actual ongoing romantic relationship.

13 Σ *Pyth.* 10.99a (Drachmann) calls Thorax the ἐταῖρος of the boy, which is probably to be understood as a synonym for *erastês*. Among modern commentators, only Schroeder 1922.91 and Coppola 1931.29 have explicitly acknowledged the likely nature of the relationship. The remarks on Thorax's *xenia* to the poet in verses 64–66 and his gold being put to the touchstone in verses 67–68 make it clear that he, not the boy's father Phrikias, was the one who commissioned the epinician. For a more detailed exposition of this passage and its significance, see my remarks in Hubbard 1995.41–45.

14 That homosexual activity could take place among youths of the same age, as well as with older partners, is suggested not only by texts such as Theognis 1063–64, 1320, Plato *Charm.* 154C (on which, see Foucault 1986.194), *Phaedrus* 240C, and Xenophon *Symp.* 4.23, but also by abundant vase evidence: for a few examples among many where there is little or no apparent age difference among boys, see plates R189, R200, R223, R243, R954 in Dover 1978 and R495 in Kilmer 1993, as well as the series of vases by the Eretria Painter that we discuss in Part IV below. Golden 1984.321–22 lists such vases, but fails to recognize some key examples such as Dover's R189 and R223, Kilmer's R495, or the Eretria Painter's work.

to young maidens (νέαισιν τε παρθένοισι).<sup>15</sup> Verse 60 (ἐτέροις ἐτέρων ἔρωτες), which one might loosely translate as “different strokes for different folks,”<sup>16</sup> encapsulates the sequence in a neat summary priamel. In contrast to this priamelistic foil, Pindar warns the boy not to look too far afield, but stick with the good that is at hand. Verses 64ff. make it clear that the boy’s present good is Thorax, presumably his present *erastês*, whose virtues Pindar warmly recommends in the lines that follow. Girls and marriage are among τὰ δ’ εἰς ἐνιαυτόν, which the poet warns the boy not to try foreseeing right now.

If my interpretation of this passage is correct, Pindar’s ode and its public celebration could be viewed as an extravagant love gift from Thorax, even as Callias’s feast (the setting of Xenophon’s *Symposium*) was a public love gift celebrating the Panathenaic victory of his *erômenos* Autolycus. Calame has called attention to the function of some *kalos*-vases as artful, if less expensive symposiastic gifts acclaiming and honoring a beloved boy.<sup>17</sup> However, these were not love offerings from the potter to the named boy, but artifacts that were sometimes commissioned by the boy’s wealthy lover for presentation among a sympathetic male company. We should perhaps see fr. 123 as something analogous: an encomium commissioned by Theoxenus’s unnamed *erastês* to showcase in public the boy’s universal attractiveness and, moreover, to make the boy’s brief moment of efflorescence in some sense immortal. As in the case of Callias’s feast for Autolycus, the performative setting is the symposium, a preferred venue for the romantic companionship of men and boys, as is clear from numerous vase depictions.<sup>18</sup>

15 This passage is parallel to *Pyth.* 9.97–100, on the young victor’s enhanced sex appeal to women, in an ode critics have long seen as pervaded by concerns with marriage. In *Pyth.* 10, females are the climactic term in a series, represented as the final goal (in the form of marriage) after a period of homoerotic and homosocial involvement. The Pelops myth in *Olym.* 1 suggests that Pindar did, in fact, view pederasty as in some way an initiatory preparation for adult sexual responsibilities: after a pederastic interlude with Poseidon on Olympus, Pelops, with Poseidon’s help, competes for and wins the hand of Hippodameia, upon whom he fathers a race of heroes.

16 For the idea that men are differentiated by sexual preference, compare Archilochus fr. 25.1–4 W. As we shall see, it is also implicit in verses 4–9 of the Theoxenus poem.

17 Calame 1999.85–88; cf. Robinson and Fluck 1937.4–5. See, however, the more skeptical remarks of Dover 1978.114–22, who argues that not all *kalos*-vases served this function; see also Buffière 1980.131–43.

18 Commonplace representations on red-figure vases are of men and youths seated together on banquet couches (e.g., Munich 8935 = *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1619.3, illustrated as pl. 35.1 in Vienneis and Kaeser 1990; Rome, Villa Giulia 50458 = *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 173.5, illustrated as R283 in Dover 1978; see also the early fifth-century tomb painting from Paestum illustrated as pl. 2 in Dover 1978) and of men or youths admiring handsome serving boys or musicians (e.g., Munich 2646 = *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 437.128, illustrated as pl. 39.3 in Vienneis and Kaeser 1990; New

The social and cultural significance of the Greek symposium has been the object of much recent critical discussion, particularly with reference to the social dynamics of the man-boy relationship.<sup>19</sup> Van Groningen and others have rightly argued that fr. 123 is a *skolion* or drinking song and thus, by definition, embedded in the social rituals of sympotic entertainment.<sup>20</sup> Although its initial performative occasion may have been destined for a specific *erastês* on the island of Tenedos wishing to honor a historical *erômenos* named Theoxenus, its repetition, like that of the familiar Harmodius song,<sup>21</sup> turns the poem's first person into a general first person and Theoxenus into an eternal icon of the beautiful boy. Theognis (237–43) envisioned his verses for Cynrus having a similar future of repetition by sympathetic symposiasts. The effect is not unlike that posited by Lissarrague for *kalos*-inscriptions on vases, which, even when attached to a specific image or name, have a generic character applying to the symposiastic *hic et nunc* of any feaster reclining among beautiful boys (Lissarrague 1999.359–73).

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York 07.286.47 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 175, illustrated as R295 in Dover 1978; London E49 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 432.52, illustrated as no. 96 in Buitron-Oliver 1995). Some vases combine both motifs (e.g., Munich 2410 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 1069.1, illustrated as pl. 36.8 in Vierendeel and Kaeser 1990). For earlier Laconian and Attic black-figure examples, see Fehr 1971.44, 55 and Dentzer 1982.87–91, 97–106. Somewhat less typical is a vase like Munich 2619A = ARV<sup>2</sup> 146.2, illustrated in Vierendeel and Kaeser 1990 as pl. 49.4, showing men and naked youths dancing around a krater with accompanying *kalos*-inscriptions; see the discussion of Lissarrague 1990.32–33.

19 See especially Levine 1985.176–96, Bremmer 1990.135–48, Booth 1991.114–17, Calame 1999.94–98. Booth believes that only youths above the age of eighteen could attend the symposium; however, Bremmer is more convincing in arguing that younger boys were present in other positions and capacities, but were not allowed to recline until they were eighteen. Although not focusing on the issue of homoeroticism, Stehle 1997.227–49 sees the symposium as an all-male preserve defining itself in terms of a fundamental “disconnection” from women and the world of marriage. The connection between banqueting and Greek moral degeneracy, including homosexuality, was a topos in Roman discourse: see Corbeill 1997.99–128.

20 Van Groningen 1960.15–17, Vetta 1983.xxvii, Calame 1999.86. Athenaeus 15.694A–C tells us that many *skolia* were, in fact, sung by the entire group in unison or by each member of the group in relay form.

21 Various versions of this song are recorded in fr. 893–96 PMG; 893 and 895 also use a first-person voice. It was certainly familiar by the time of Aristophanes (*Ach.* 980f., *Vesp.* 1225, *Lys.* 632f. and  $\Sigma$  *ad loc.*). Ostwald 1969.121–36 dates the songs to soon after the Cleisthenic reforms of 507 B.C.E.; see also Bowra 1961.391–97 and Ehrenberg 1956.57–69. Podlecki 1966.139–40 prefers a later date around 477. In any event, the songs were probably very familiar in Pindar's time. Compare also fr. 873 PMG, a Chalcidian *skolion* that Plutarch tells us commemorates the legendary lovers Anton and Philistus.

Whether presented as *skolia*, elegy, or tales of paradigmatic heroes, song was an integral part of a boy's instruction at the symposium in the political values of his social class, as well as in the proper forms of self-fashioning as an elite adult male. Through hearing such songs recited by others and ultimately performing them himself, a boy apprehends, enacts, and promulgates the values he is supposed to learn.<sup>22</sup> Bremmer and Calame, in particular, have argued for an initiatory model of the Greek banquet in which boys progress through a series of steps as in a *rite de passage*: initially sitting on the ground or serving wine as their elders ate, mutely listening to the conversation, then, at the age of eighteen, moving up to the couch to recline along with their *erastês*, possibly performing with the lyre when asked, but still adopting a posture of deference and respect toward their elders. Even when not explicitly homosexual, the symposium was always "homosocial," a site of male bonding and concelebration of values imparted from one male age class to another.<sup>23</sup>

Another primary locus for such male bonding across generations was the gymnasium or *palaestra*.<sup>24</sup> If Theoxenus is indeed the brother of

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22 Several of the images listed in note 18 show the youths with lyres or flutes (e.g., Munich 2410 and 2646, New York 07.286.47, and the Paestan tomb painting). See Bremmer 1990.137–38 and, more generally, Pellizer 1990.177–84.

23 On the concept of "male homosocial desire," or the need for non-sexual male bonding which nevertheless forms a seamless continuum with actual homosexuality, see Sedgwick 1985.1–5. Stewart 1997.161–67 has recently applied this concept to the interpretation of nominally heterosexual scenes of group sex at symposia: the collective enactment of male solidarity takes place in and upon female bodies. It is worth adding to Stewart's thesis the observation that the iconography of multiple penetration frequently shows mature men and youths together engaged in sex with women, as if the act of sexual denigration is also part of the values education imparted to the young: see, for example, Paris G13 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 86, illustrated as R156 in Kilmer 1993, where a young man penetrates a woman orally while a bearded man whips her with a sandal and penetrates from the rear. Interestingly, the older man's gaze is fixed not on the woman he penetrates but upon his male companion; the woman's body is effectively a mere accessory to the man's desire to watch the youth's body in motion. For other examples, see Berlin 3251 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 113.1626 (R192 in Kilmer), Basel BS440 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 326.86 (R464 in Kilmer), ARV<sup>2</sup> 339.54 (R489 in Kilmer), ARV<sup>2</sup> 339.55 (R490 in Kilmer), Florence V, 491 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 325.81 (pl. 106–07 in Peschel 1987). The presence of wine accoutrements suggests a sympotic setting for most of these scenes. Compare Aeschines in *Timarchum* 42, where flute girls and female prostitutes are among the enticements Timarchus's male lovers buy him.

24 It is well known that the gymnasium and *palaestra* were the center of pederastic cruising action, as is clear from the setting of Plato's *Lysis* (206E–207B) and *Charmides* (153A–154C), as well as references in Attic comedy (Aristophanes *Nub.* 973–76, *Vesp.* 1023–28, *Pax* 762–63, *Av.* 139–42). See the discussions of Dover 1978.54–55, Buffière 1980.561–72, Reinsberg 1989.179–80, Steiner 1998.126–29, Fisher 1998.94–104.

Aristagoras of Tenedos, celebrated in *Nemea* 11, he may well have been an athlete too, like Autolyclus and Hippocleas: the phrase νεόγυτον ἦβαν in verse 12 suggests that the pleasure taken in seeing him relates to the strength and vigor of his young limbs, displayed in all of Nature's glory on the race course or in the wrestling ring; the reference to the lover melting like beeswax in the heat of the sun (10–11) could imply an outdoor location. Just as *Nemea* 11 celebrates an athlete on a non-athletic occasion, namely Aristagoras's election as *prytanis*, the Theoxenus ode may do the same. Both poems may function as non-epinician "epinicia" for athletes who had no major pan-Hellenic victories to celebrate, but did have other praiseworthy achievements or qualities. There is, of course, no proof that Theoxenus was an athlete, and the suggestion that he was must be considered speculative. But it is a speculation that makes sense, given the widespread eroticization of Greek athletic culture in this period and Pindar's particular reputation as an enthusiastic encomiast of young athletes.<sup>25</sup>

The implied homoeroticism of athletic group scenes on numerous Athenian vases (see Part IV of this essay) supports the notion that many forms of athletic exercise and competition were additionally contests of beauty and physical display that engendered a community of homosexual sensibility in the youths themselves as well as in the audience. The evolution of Greek athletic nudity must have had something to do with the development of a homoerotic aesthetic based on appreciation, and even adoration,

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25 Athenaeus 13.601C, in quoting fr. 127 S–M, calls Pindar οὐ μετρίως ἐρωτικός. However, among Pindar's other fragments, only one (fr. 128) seems erotic in content. But Pindar does use erotic motifs frequently in the epinicia, particularly as an extension of the symposiastic relationship of *philôtes* between poet and victor. See von der Mühl 1964.168–72, Lasserre 1974, Crotty 1982.92–103, Instone 1990.30–42, Steiner 1998.136–42. Less well recognized than it should be in this regard is *Olym.* 10.16–21, which I intend to discuss at greater length in a forthcoming article; see also Mullen 1982.186 and Steiner 1998.140. That the boy Hagesidamus should give thanks to Ilas as Patroclus does to Achilles suggests more than the usual relationship of athlete to trainer, given the special prominence afforded Ilas relative to the conventional praise of trainers (as noted by Fraccaroli 1894.294–95 and Viljoen 1955.72–85), the comparison of Hagesidamus to Ganymede in *Olym.* 10.105, and Aeschylus's well-known contemporary dramatization of the Achilles-Patroclus relationship in explicitly pederastic terms (fr. 135–37 *TGrF* and Plato *Symp.* 180A). For evidence that a boy athlete's trainer or financial backer in some cases would be his *erastês*, see Fisher 1998.96–98; for the conflation of these roles in vase painting, see also Osborne 1998.138–39.

of the male physique.<sup>26</sup> The addition of separate athletic competitions for boys may have been part of the same process.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, Nigel Crowther has gathered together a wealth of epigraphical evidence for contests called *euandria* at several local athletic festivals, including the Panathenaea, as well as festivals at Sparta, Rhodes, and Sestos; these appear to have been male beauty contests, including some kind of performance that displayed bodily size, strength, and agility.<sup>28</sup> The *euandria* at the Athenian Theseia were closely linked with the *euoplia*, and the prizes for the winning tribe at the Panathenaic *euandria* were oxen and shields, also suggesting an association with military training. Even more widely attested are the contests of *euexia*, which appear to have been a kind of body-building competition. Athenaeus 13.609D–610A attests female beauty contests on Tenedos; it may not be a far stretch to wonder whether that island also hosted a male contest of this nature in which Theoxenus could have gained distinction.

Even if there was no *euandria* on Tenedos, it would be natural to situate the Theoxenus ode within the generally body-conscious homoerotic culture of Greek athletics and the corresponding celebratory institution of the symposium, which was equally pervaded by homoerotic and homosocial bonds. However much the poem's imagery and vocabulary may share with the earlier pederastic verse of Anacreon and Ibycus, the social context is quite different from the admiration of androgynous slave boys we see there.

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26 The problem of athletic nudity and its intersection with artistic nudity has received considerable attention in recent years. The best treatment is that of Bonfante 1989, who emphasizes its connection with ritual initiation of the young, a context in which archaic pederasty may also have evolved. See also Stewart 1997.24–42. For a brief survey of other recent scholarship, see Golden 1998.65–69.

27 Pausanias 5.8.9 dates the addition of separate boys' contests at Olympia to 632 B.C.E. Evidence suggests that they became part of the other major festivals during the same general period; see Golden 1998.104–12. Significantly, this is also the period to which we owe our earliest evidence of generalized male and female homosexuality (Sappho, Alcaeus, Alcman, the Thera graffiti). Percy 1996.42–49 locates the origins of institutionalized pederasty in the late seventh century as a response to demographic pressures.

28 Crowther 1985.285–91. On their Athenian version as represented on Attic vases, see Neils 1994.154–59. For their connection with Greek homoeroticism, see Spivey 1996.36–39.

### III. THE “EYE” OF THE POEM

To summarize our conclusions so far, we have seen that the first person of the poem should not be taken as the biographical persona of the poet but as a generalized first person representing both the specific *erastês* who may have commissioned the poem and, more generally, the whole pan-Hellenic community of boy-lovers. Equally Theoxenus was, in the first instance, a specific historical *erômenos* on the island of Tenedos, but in the broader pan-Hellenic perspective, he became frozen in time as an icon of the beautiful boy. A *skolion* that might be repeated at banquets throughout Greece, the song was embedded in the homoerotic culture of the symposium just as firmly as the *kalos*-cups out of which the feasters drank, glorifying and immortalizing the youthful flower of Leagros and other beautiful boys.<sup>29</sup> The song’s appreciation of νεόγυιον ἦβαν reflects a homoerotic culture situated in the *palaestra* and gymnasium as well; indeed, this may have been the environment in which the historical Theoxenus originally gained distinction. The symposium and gymnasium were both sites of male desire generated by looking upon the naked bodies of the young in their powerful but evanescent moment of physical glory.

The visual dimension is foregrounded in fr. 123. It is when he “looks upon” (11: ἴδω) the fresh-limbed youth of boys that the poem’s speaker melts like beeswax. Aphrodite is characterized by the epithet ἐλικογλέφαρος, “with curving eyebrow,” calling attention to her devastating gaze (see below on Ibycus, fr. 287 PMG). Moreover, it is when any man prone to boy love sees “the rays flashing from the eyes of Theoxenus” (2–3: τὰς δὲ Θεοξένου ἀκτῖνας πρὸς ὄσσω / μαρμαρυζοίσας δρακεῖς) that he is tossed by passion. What exactly are these flashing rays and why do they have such a violent effect on the men who see them? Are we to understand them as “glints” of reflected light in the boy’s eyes as he moves his gaze about the room?<sup>30</sup> If so, it is difficult to understand why the viewer should be

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29 These cups could be gifts to the boys not only in the literal sense but also in the sense of providing them fame. See Slater 1999.

30 At least two readers of this essay have made this suggestion to me based on the participle μαρμαρυζοίσας. It is true that the verb ἀμαρύσσω sometimes (but not always) refers to a moving object as the source of light (whether reflected or not); see Irwin 1974.216 and Brown 1989.8–9. But Pindar’s verb μαρμαρύζω and its cognates, although derived from the same root (\**mar-*), have a different semantic range, far more likely to refer to stationary sources of light: e.g., marble (μάρμαρος), the temple of Poseidon at Aegae (*Il.* 13.22), armor hanging on a wall (Alcaeus Z34.2 LP), a palace gleaming with gold and ivory (Bacch. fr. 20B.13), golden tripods (Bacch. 3.17–18), the night sky (Aesch. *Sept.* 401),

so strongly affected. One is also troubled by the lack of any clear literary parallels for light reflected in the eyes, particularly as a source of erotic appeal. It is more attractive to connect these flashing rays with the concept of intraocular fire expounded by some of the pre-Socratic philosophers and commonly assumed in poetic texts as a medium of erotic seduction, as for example with the glance of Eros (always portrayed as a beautiful adolescent in Greek art of this period) in Ibycus fr. 287.1–2 PMG:<sup>31</sup>

Ἔρος αὐτέ με κυανέοισιν ὑπὸ βλεφάροις τακέρ’  
 ὄμμασι δερκόμενος  
 κηλήμασι παντοδαποῖς ἐξ ἄπειρα δίκτυα Κύπριδος  
 ἐσβάλλει·

Eros, melting me once more with his gaze from under  
 dark lids,  
 With all manner of charms throws me again into the  
 boundless nets of Cypris.

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Olympus (Soph. *Ant.* 610), a plain (Eur. fr. 229.2 Nauck). When referring to eyes, there is no reason to think that the term designates reflected light or rapidly shifting ocular movements: both Aphrodite (*Il.* 3.397: ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα) and Lyssa (Eur. *Her.* 884: μαρμαρωπός) are goddesses whose character is to target their victims deliberately, like Eros in the Ibycus fragment cited below; indeed, the whole plot of Euripides’ play is predicated on Lyssa’s doing so. Compare also Zeus’s thunderbolt in Hes. *Th.* 699. The late optical treatise of Damianos, which is based on the theory of visual rays emitted from the eyes, makes it quite clear that these are evidenced by αἱ τ’ ἀπολάμπουσιν τῶν ὀμμάτων μαρμαρυγαί (2); see also the late physiognomic treatise of Adamantius, featuring a whole section on eyes that “flash” (1.16: Ἐὰν μαρμαρύσσωσιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί . . .), where it is again clear that this discussion has to do with emitting light, not with rapid eye movements. Even ἀμαρύσσω, when connected with eyes, refers to shooting out flashes of fire actively, not reflected light: cf. Hes. *Th.* 827 (of Typhon) or *Hymn to Hermes* 415 (where it is also evident that Hermes’ eyes are stationary, fixed to the ground) and 45 (where ἀμαρυγαί sent out from the eyes are a simile for Hermes’ deliberate intellectual focus).

- 31 The idea of a glance full of erotic persuasion certainly did not originate with Ibycus, nor is it uniquely homosexual: consider also the Graces in Hes. *Th.* 910–11: τῶν καὶ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ἔρος εἵβeto δερκομενῶν / λυσιμελής. Cf. Alcman fr. 1.21, 3.61–62 PMG, Anacreon fr. 360 PMG, Simonides fr. 22.12 W<sup>2</sup>, and Pindar *Nem.* 8.1–2. For other possible examples, see Pearson 1909.256–57, West 1966.409, MacLachlan 1993.65–67, and, for later examples, Davies 1980.255–56. This erotic force emanating from the eyes is explicitly described in terms of fire in Aesch. fr. 243 Radt, and Soph. fr. 474 Radt. The topos of fiery looks that set the lover aflame becomes commonplace by the time of Hellenistic epigram: see Rhianus *AP* 12.93.9–10; Dioscorides *AP* 5.56; Meleager *AP* 5.96, 12.63, 12.72, 12.101, 12.109, 12.110, 12.113, 12.122, 12.144; Strato *AP* 12.196.

One can understand the glance of Eros in the Ibycus fragment as a metaphor for choosing his victim (a function assumed in fr. 123 by ἑλικογλέφαρος Aphrodite). That Eros looks “meltingly” (τακέρ’) implies fire and heat in his glance, and is echoed by the speaker’s melting (11: τάκομαι) in fr. 123. This type of erotic gaze need not be a sustained or fixed stare; the semantics of δέγκομαι (the verb in verse 1 of the Ibycus fragment) suggest that a quick glance is enough to unsettle the desiring subject.<sup>32</sup> What is clear, however, is that the light that burns a lover is not a reflected glint but the result of a direct look at the lover, however brief.<sup>33</sup>

In light of this conclusion, what then are we to make of Theoxenus directing his regard at various men, apparently of various ages (as implied by the vague relative clause ὃς μή . . .)? And why does his visual attention produce such a violent effect on these men? Can it be, by analogy with the conventions of vase painting (see below), that he reciprocates their admiration and attention by meeting their glance? This might seem immodest behavior in a youth whose proper role is to be highly selective in choosing partners.<sup>34</sup> In what is meant, after all, to be an honorific poem, probably commissioned by an established *erastês*, it will not do for Theoxenus to be tossing seductive glances at all comers. Or, as Calame proposes, is Theoxenus himself inhabited by the god Eros, who uses his gaze, as in the Ibycus fragment, to target victims?<sup>35</sup> One is still troubled by the lack of selectivity. Moreover, Theoxenus may be inhabited by Peitho (“Seduction”) and Charis

32 See the semantic discussion of Prier 1989.29–31.

33 For the same conclusion about fr. 123.2–3, see Pearson 1909.256, Calame 1999.20, and MacLachlan 1993.66.

34 The typical pose of the modest *erômenos* in courtship scenes on Attic vase painting is a downcast visual line that does not meet the wooer’s eyes: e.g., Berlin 2279 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 206.124 (R348 in Dover 1978), ARV<sup>2</sup> 421.83 (R547 in Dover), Munich 2655 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 471.196 (R637 in Dover). Alternatively, the *erômenos* may look stiffly straight ahead in a way that avoids the lover’s glance: see Nicosia C490 = ABV 109.28 (B65 in Dover). On the significance of the avoided look as an expression of *aidôs*, making a youth even more desirable, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.82–84, Stewart 1997.80–82, Steiner 1998.134–36. For the ideal figure of the modest and discreet youth, see the praise of Epicrates in the Ps.-Demosthenic *Erotic Essay* 17–21; selectivity in choosing lovers is the basis of Plato’s discussion of pederasty in the *Phaedrus*. See Foucault 1986.204–14, for the Greek institutionalization of adolescence as a period of testing future citizens in their capacity for self-regulation and control of the appetites.

35 Calame 1999.20–21. Many critics interpret the Ibycus fragment itself as combining the figures of Eros and the *erômenos*, but see the cautionary remarks of Davies 1980.256–57.

("Grace/Gratitude"),<sup>36</sup> but the violent predator Eros is nowhere mentioned in the poem, and, in any event, it is quite unlike Pindar to subsume his mortal *laudandi* entirely into the agency of a god: Pindar's athletes and heroes always excel through a combination of personal initiative, skill, and divine assistance.<sup>37</sup>

A preliminary approach to understanding the ocular dynamics of fr. 123 may be opened up by reviewing the theories of vision likely to have been current in Pindar's time. Most Greek theories of vision involved one form or another of either extramission or intromission. For example, Alcmaeon of Croton, working in the early fifth century and possibly influenced by the Pythagoreans,<sup>38</sup> considered the eye to contain fire and send out beams that would bounce off objects and then double back to form mirror images in the watery part of the eye.<sup>39</sup> The notion of intraocular fire seems likely to have been a deeply embedded traditional assumption, possibly even of Indo-European provenance, given the linguistic association of "light" and "eye" (Gk. φῶς, Lat. *lumen*). Popular notions of the "evil eye" or mythemes such as the Gorgon's stare were predicated on a concept of potent energies emanating from the eye and severely impacting its object.<sup>40</sup> The notion of "looks that kill" was clearly familiar to Pindar, witness the ἰδοῖσα δ' ὀξέι'

36 For erotic *peithō*, see *Pyth.* 9.39–40 and fr. 122 S.–M., and the discussion of Buxton 1982.31–41, 45–46. For the various erotic connotations of *charis* as an attribute of youthful beauty, see MacLachlan 1993.56–72 and n. 10 above.

37 For example, Pelops in *Olym.* 1 seeks the hand of Hippodameia and prays to Poseidon for help, which comes in the form of divine horses who can defeat those of Oenomaus; but Pelops must still guide the chariot to victory with his own hands. Bellerophon in *Olym.* 13 seeks to tame Pegasus, but can do so only with the help of a bridle Athena presents him in a dream. The gods' help is typically instrumental. In this regard, Pindar perpetuates Greek notions of double motivation familiar since Homer; see Lesky 1961.

38 For Alcmaeon's date and general relationship to the Pythagoreans, see Guthrie 1962–81.1.341–47, 357–59.

39 Theophrastus *de Sensu* 26 = Alcmaeon A5 D.–K., as interpreted by Beare 1906.11–13. That this doctrine bears close analogies to that of the Pythagoreans is suggested by Plutarch *de Placitis Philosophorum* 4.14 and Apuleius *Apol.* 15 = Archytas A25 D.–K.

40 On the evil eye as a trans-cultural archetype including, but not limited to, ancient Greece, see the books of Elworthy 1895 and Seligmann 1910; on Greece specifically, see Bonner 1950.96–99. Pindar's almost obsessive concern with avoiding overpraise and averting envy attests to a healthy belief in the power of the evil eye; on the connection of envy and the evil eye in Greek culture and their relationship to a doctrine of visual emanations, see Brillante 1993.14–24. On the Gorgon's visage, which is perhaps the oldest evidence for the evil eye among the Greeks, see Vernant 1991.111–38 and Stewart 1997.182–87.

Ἐρινύς (*Olympia* 2.41) who kills the sons of Oedipus. Indeed, the concept of fiery, light-projective vision seems pervasive in Pindar's poetic language.<sup>41</sup>

Intromission theory, on the other hand, received its fullest and most explicit formulation from the atomists Leucippus and Democritus, probably in the decade immediately after Pindar's death.<sup>42</sup> They held that material effluences (*eidōla*), consisting of fine corpuscular bodies, streamed off objects and subsequently impinged on the eyes.<sup>43</sup> However, this concept surely had precedent in Empedocles' doctrine about vision, which was likely formulated a generation earlier and was thus contemporary with Pindar.<sup>44</sup> Traditionally scholars have interpreted Aristotle's and Theophrastus's statements about Empedocles' theory of vision to suggest that he somehow combined extramission and intromission concepts to explain vision, but, in more recent examinations of the problem, both Long and O'Brien, on different grounds, argue that Empedocles explained vision primarily as a function of effluences from objects received into the eyes, with intraocular fire either not leaving the eye (Long) or not actually affecting vision (O'Brien).<sup>45</sup>

Interestingly, the philosophers themselves saw analogies between their theories and the conventions of erotic vision assumed by the poets, as if they were merely giving a more detailed explanation of long-entrenched commonsense notions of how the visual process worked. Empedocles, for whom Φιλότης constituted the cosmic force of union among elements,

41 See especially *Paean* 20.13: ὄμματων ἄπο σέλας ἐδίνασεν and *Nem.* 7.66: ὄμματι δέркоμαι λαμπρόν. See also *Pyth.* 5.56 and *Nem.* 10.41. The notion is deeply embedded in the Greek language and doubtless reaches back to the formulaic language of epic: cf. Odysseus, πῦρ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι δεδορκώς (*Od.* 19.446), Hermes, χῶρον ὑποβλήδην ἐσκέψατο, πῦρ ἀμαρύσσων (*Hymn to Hermes* 415), or Typhon (*Hes. Th.* 827).

42 On the likely date of their collaboration, see Guthrie 1962–81.2.384–86.

43 The primary texts are gathered together in Leucippus A29 D.–K. See Beare 1906.23–37, von Fritz 1953.83–99, van Hoorn 1972.49–57, Simon 1988.36–41, Taylor 1999.208–11.

44 On Empedocles' dates, generally recorded as 492–32 B.C.E., see Guthrie 1962–81.2.128–32.

45 The primary texts here are Plato *Meno* 76C = Empedocles A92 D.–K., Aristotle *de Sensu* 437b23–438a5 = B84 D.–K., Theophrastus *de Sensu* 7–8 = A86 D.–K. See also Aetius 4.13.4 = A90 and Philoponus *de Generatione et Corruptione* 324b26–35 = A87. See Long 1966.259–64 and O'Brien 1970.140–46. For the best expositions of the traditional view, see Beare 1906.14–23 and Verdenius 1948.155–64. A very full bibliography of earlier views is given by O'Brien 1970.157–59.

regarded Aphrodite as responsible for the eyes and their operation (B86, 87, 95 D.–K.). In a well-known passage of the *Phaedrus* (251B–C), Plato describes the soul sprouting wings at the sight of the beloved (trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff):

δεξάμενος γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐθερμάνθη ἢ ἡ τοῦ πτεροῦ φύσις ἄρδεται, θερμανθέντος δὲ ἐτάκη τὰ περὶ τὴν ἑκφυσιν, ἃ πάλαι ὑπὸ σκληρότητος συμμεμυκότα εἶργε μὴ βλαστάνειν, ἐπιρρυείσης δὲ τῆς τροφῆς ὥδησέ τε καὶ ὥρμησε φύεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ρίζης ὁ τοῦ πτεροῦ καυλὸς ὑπὸ πᾶν τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εἶδος· πᾶσα γὰρ ἦν τὸ πάλαι πτερωτή. ζεῖ οὖν ἐν τούτῳ ὅλη καὶ ἀνακηκίει, καὶ ὅπερ τὸ τῶν ὀδοντοφυούντων πάθος περὶ τοὺς ὀδόντας γίγνεται ὅταν ἄρτι φύωσιν, κνησὶς τε καὶ ἀγανάκτησις περὶ τὰ οὖλα, ταῦτόν δὴ πέπονθεν ἡ τοῦ πτεροφυεῖν ἀρχομένου ψυχῇ· ζεῖ τε καὶ ἀγανακτεῖ καὶ γαργαλίζεται φύουσα τὰ πτερά. ὅταν μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα πρὸς τὸ τοῦ παιδὸς κάλλος, ἐκεῖθεν μέρη ἐπιόντα καὶ ῥέοντα—ἃ δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ἵμερος καλεῖται—δεχομένη ἄρδεται τε καὶ θερμαίνεται, λωφᾷ τε τῆς ὀδύνης καὶ γέγηθεν.

The stream of beauty that pours into him through his eyes warms him up and waters the growth of his wings. Meanwhile, the heat warms him and melts the places where the wings once grew, places that were long ago closed off with hard scabs to keep the sprouts from coming back; but as nourishment flows in, the feather shafts swell and rush to grow from their roots beneath every part of the soul (long ago, you see, the entire soul had wings). Now the whole soul seethes and throbs in this condition. Like a child whose teeth are just starting to grow in, and its gums are all aching and itching—that is exactly how the soul feels when it begins to grow wings. It swells up and aches and tingles as it grows them. But when it looks upon the beauty of the boy and takes in a stream of particles flowing into it from his beauty (that is why this is called “desire”), when it is watered and warmed by this, then all its pain subsides and is replaced by joy.

The imagery of the soul's warmth and moistness recalls the symptoms of love as described in many poetic texts<sup>46</sup> and the "melting" of the body we find in fr. 123. Most striking about this passage, however, is that these familiar symptoms of love are attributed directly to the effects of seeing the beautiful object of affection, which sends off material effluences that collide with the eye and soul of the viewer, generating the painful effects Socrates describes. This intromission theory, not noticeably distinct from that of the atomists and possibly Empedocles, differs from the more developed doctrine expounded in later dialogues such as the *Theaetetus* and *Timaues*.<sup>47</sup> It may therefore be legitimate to see in this passage not so much a declaration of Plato's own theory as a metaphorical appeal to what he considered popular notions of visual processes.<sup>48</sup>

Returning to Pindar's text, we see clear evidence of both extramission and intromission concepts. The beams flashing from Theoxenus's eyes (2–3), which appear to have an unsettling impact on the men he looks at, can only be explained in terms of extramission theory. Indeed, both Alcmaeon and Empedocles were interested in the physiology of the "flashing eye," implied here in ἀκτῖνας μαρμαρυζοίσας.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the speaker's declaration in verses 10–12 that he melts when looking at beautiful boys implies nothing about the boys looking at him, such that his symptoms could result from the impact of their visual rays. Rather, it seems that their mere brilliance as objects of vision is enough to weaken him in a physiological process very much like that explained in the *Phaedrus*, which, as we have seen, employs an intromission concept. That he melts like beeswax is even more significant: wax is notable precisely for its ability to receive and preserve imprints and impressions.

46 For the poetic character of Plato's language here, see de Vries 1969.154–57, who regards the passage as particularly dependent on Empedocles, du Bois 1985.99–100, Ferrari 1987.153–54, Nightingale 1995.159–61, Foley 1998.46–49. For moistness as a symptom of love, see Onians 1951.202–03.

47 *Tim.* 45B–D comes much closer to an extramission theory, with the modification that the pure fire of our eyes must be united with the fire of daylight to take imprints off objects. But *Theaet.* 156D–E and *Tim.* 67C–D make it clear that objects also give off emanations, which particularly affect our perception of qualities such as color. On Plato's theory, see Beare 1906.42–56 and van Hoorn 1972.57–64.

48 This assumption also seems to be behind Plato's fanciful etymologies of ἔρωξ (= "flowing into [the eyes]," from ἐξ and ῥεῖν) and ἵμερος (= "the stream flowing with desire," from ῥοῦς and ἵμενος) in *Cratylus* 419E–420B.

49 See Alcmaeon A5 D.–K., Empedocles B84 D.–K., as interpreted by O'Brien 1970.143–46.

## IV. THE ICONOGRAPHY OF VISION

A second preliminary avenue to understanding the dynamics of vision in the poem may be to examine the optics of the eroticized look in Greek vase painting.<sup>50</sup> As we have observed, the normative convention in red-figure painting is for an *erastês* to look directly at his (usually younger) beloved, while the *erômenos* looks modestly to the ground. This scenario has encouraged a one-dimensional view of the lover's perspective as a simple objectification or reification of the desired beauty, whose value exists only as confirmed and constructed by the lover's eyes.<sup>51</sup> But a number of vase paintings challenge and problematize these conventions by showing youths who autonomously break out of their stereotypical passivity.

The early fifth-century painter Douris was one of the most prolific producers of wine cups with courtship scenes. While most of these exhibit conventionally modest youths, there are some interesting experiments with other possibilities: one fine specimen (figure 1) foregrounds the issue of viewing by showing a man in the interior, turning around to look at something that holds his attention. On each side of the cup are five figures, divided into two pairs and a spectator. On one side, we have what are clearly age-differential man-boy couples: a bearded man holds out a flower to a youth who looks directly at it (not at the man) and stretches out his hand to receive it. The other couple are both unbearded, but one is clearly taller than the other and is about to crown his partner, a naked athlete. Again, his eyes are properly focused on the gift, not the face of his older admirer. All this is conventional enough. But, on the other side, all five figures are youths of apparently the same age and stature; nevertheless, they are clearly articulated into two pairs and an excluded fifth vainly seeking attention, with the three wooers demarcated by the possession of staffs. What is significantly different from the first side is that here the boys are offered nothing, but meet their admirers' eyes with what appears to be fully engaged personal interest. Could it be that the two sides are meant to contrast relationships based on gift-giving and those actually based on reciprocal and mutual attraction, as one might expect among those who are closer to being age-equals?

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50 Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.81–100 treats in some detail the conventions of the eroticized look in Athenian vase painting, which, in her view, were transparent to an audience of consumers adept at decoding instantly the significance of gestures, positions, and accompanying iconographical signals that eroticize a look. But she does not examine the particular series of vases with which I am here concerned.

51 See, for instance, Steiner 1998.129–33, 144–45.



Figure 1a, b, c. (*Above and facing page.*) London E52 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 432.59, kylix attributed to Douris. © Copyright The British Museum.

Another cup, inferior in technique and probably earlier (figure 2), features *kalos*-inscriptions on both sides. One side shows a typical scene: bearded men watch naked youths, exercising or bathing, who look down and avoid their admirers' eyes. On the other side, however, two naked youths holding strigils turn around to look at each other eyeball-to-eyeball.<sup>52</sup> Were they trying to steal a peek at the other and then, surprised, find their partner doing the same thing? Even more interesting is the man-youth pair on the right, each leaning on a staff: here the formula is reversed and the youth looks straight at the face of the bearded man, who, in turn, looks down at the ground with outstretched hands. Is this meant to be a gesture of shame or despair? It is hard to know, but, in some sense, the tables are turned and the youth seems to be the one in control of the situation.

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52 See Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.82–83 for the significance of the backward glance as an accentuation of desire.



That we are not dealing with a simple formula in which age-equal interactions entail reciprocated vision and age-unequal relations do not is shown by some vases in which we have full eye-contact among man-boy pairs.<sup>53</sup> Another cup of Douris (figure 3) shows that eye contact between

53 Among Douris's cups, we find this on at least one side of Hannover L1.1982 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 437.115 (illustrated as no. 154 in Buitron-Oliver 1995) and on both sides of Paris G123 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 435.93 (illustrated as no. 140 in Buitron-Oliver 1995). Interestingly, the interior of the latter cup shows Zeus carrying off a swooning Ganymede; the implication may be that in the world of the gods there is no refusal. Similarly, in Macron's work, we find that age difference is not necessarily an impediment to reciprocal vision: see Paris G148 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 470.180 (illustrated as no. 74 in Kunisch 1997).



Figure 2a, b. (*Above and below.*) Palermo V663 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 430.30, kylix attributed to Douris. By permission of Museo Archeologico Regionale "A. Salinas."



men and boys can have very different meanings. On one side, a youth holds out his hand to a man, but modestly lowers his gaze, while, in another pair, a naked boy eagerly rushes forward to snatch an object from the withdrawn hand of a teasing suitor. He looks straight ahead at the man's face and beyond it to the object in his hand; that his eagerness is tantamount to sexual availability is suggested by the position of the man's other hand, about to grab the boy's genitals as he moves forward. The image shows us quite literally that to reach the material object he covets, the boy must come into the man's sexual grasp, and to see the object that fascinates him, he must meet the eyes of the man who is fascinated by him. As if to reinforce the point about the persuasive power of material incentives, the interior of the cup shows a bearded man approaching a seated boy (presumably a *pornos* in his stall; note the inscription ὁ παῖς καλός) with a money bag in hand on which the boy's eyes are fixed.<sup>54</sup> The other side of the cup, however, shows another man offering a flower to a youth, this one a musician rather than an athlete. Here the youth does not look at the flower but straight ahead into the man's eyes and holds his hand up in what appears to be a gesture of refusal.<sup>55</sup> That direct eye contact can also occur in situations of overt rejection is confirmed by its use in scenes where a youth is clearly running away from his erotic pursuer.<sup>56</sup> Rejection, just like reciprocated love, can be a form of emotional engagement with one's wooer and therefore appropriate for face-to-face interaction.

Similar in genre to these cups of Douris is a striking series of kylixes attributed to the Eretria Painter (active 440–415 B.C.E.). There are over a dozen extant examples, as well as numerous fragments: each cup

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54 Macron takes this cynicism one step further in Vienna 3698 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 471.193 (illustrated as no. 95 in Kunisch 1997), showing three man-boy pairs. One man merely talks to a boy, who looks to the ground; another offers the boy a hare, and the boy looks at the hare; the third offers the boy a money bag, and receives fully reciprocated eye contact.

55 One cannot, of course, be certain that it is not a gesture of acceptance, but the position of the hand is unusual for someone who is reaching to take something, and seems far more typical of a hand raised in alarm.

56 Compare two cups of Macron: Boston 08.293 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 475.265 (illustrated as no. 522 in Kunisch 1997) and Munich 2658 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 476.275 (illustrated as no. 475 in Kunisch 1997). However, Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.83, 87–88 suggests that such returned looks could form an implicit consent despite the boy's pretense of flight, a typical rapist's fantasy (i.e., s/he says no, but means yes). In contexts of divine pursuit, this might be plausible, but seems less likely to me here. There can certainly be no implied consent in Cambridge 37.26 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 506.21 (illustrated as R684 in Dover 1978), where a youth hits a man over the head with his lyre, while looking straight into his eye.



Figure 3a, b, c. (Above and facing page.) New York 52.11.4 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 437.114, kylix attributed to Douris. All rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



exhibits a crowd of age-equal youths on the sides, usually grouped into four pairs, and another pair is highlighted in the tondo.<sup>57</sup> The erotic appeal of the scenes is frequently (although not always) accented by *kalos*-inscriptions. In some vases, all the youths are naked, in some, all clothed and merely engaged in conversation, and, in some, the wooer is clothed and the beloved is a naked athlete; some show youths with lyres or in a sympotic setting with wine cups; one vase shows two man-youth pairs in addition to the usual age-equal pairs. But what is constant throughout this series is the significance of eye contact between the male pairs as a visible sign of admiration and romantic interest, whether it be in the gymnasium, outside the gymnasium, or at a party.<sup>58</sup> That this romantic interest is poised to assume explicitly

57 These are catalogued and discussed by Lezzi-Hafter 1988.135–41.

58 There can be little doubt that the interaction between these pairs is romantic: on one fragment (Leipzig T544 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 1254.90, illustrated as pl. 18 in Lezzi-Hafter 1988) a youth holds a little bird (a typical love gift) on the end of his strigil, while his partner gazes deep into his eyes. The partners are certainly more than just trainers, as Lezzi-Hafter captions them, or if they are trainers, they are romantically engaged trainers; see n. 25 above.

sexual overtones is suggested by a cup composed with pairs of youthful athletes, all nude, in which one youth looks down and points directly toward another's penis, his hand represented as scarcely six inches away from its target of attention.<sup>59</sup>

One of the most interesting and romantically intense couples found in this painter's work is in the interior of a cup (figure 4) decorated by athletes and their admirers on the outside:<sup>60</sup> indoors the context is *mousikê*, even as outdoors it is *gymnastikê*. One youth, standing on a slightly higher platform, holds a lyre, while the other is about to proffer a crown. Although the admiring youth's face is tilted shyly downward, the line of his eyebrow nevertheless makes his visual fixation on the face of the musician apparent; this admirer is so overpowered with sight and sound as to be simultaneously diffident and unable to resist. He holds the crown limply at his side as a gift, but has not yet summoned the courage to raise it for presentation. It is, if anything, the admired musician who looks into the face of his admirer with complete poise and self-possession.

We have therefore seen that there may be a variety of valences attached to a boy's meeting his wooer's look; it could be reciprocated interest and admiration, contemptuous or fearful rejection, hope of material gain, or a superior self-assurance grounded in knowledge of his control over an insecure fan. There is, however, another form of exchanged glance that occurs on Greek vases, namely what Frontisi-Ducroux calls *apostrophê* or "interpellation of the spectator"—a figure in the scene turning to face us frontally, staring back into our eyes (1995.126–30, 1996.85–89). She notes that although one sometimes finds frontality on vases involving female characters, it is only on vases with homosexual contexts that it becomes a true interpellation of the viewer, summoning him into the scene as a participant who may assume the position of the male figure turned frontally toward him like a mirror reflection.<sup>61</sup> These vases thus destabilize the categories of viewing subject and viewed object in yet another, almost metatheatrical way.

To give merely one example of this phenomenon, we can look at an early red-figure amphora by the Andocides Painter, active in the last quarter

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59 Ferrara T915 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 1254.76 (illustrated as no. 24d in Lezzi-Hafter 1988). For a similar use of deixis by a youth to focus attention on a fetishistic object of desire, see Warsaw 198514 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 113.4 (illustrated as R189 in Dover 1978) and the remarks of Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.93.

60 This is reproduced and discussed in Shapiro, Picón, and Scott 1995.186–87.

61 See especially Frontisi-Ducroux 1995.128–29.



Figure 4. San Antonio 86.134.80, kylix attributed to the Eretria Painter. Gift of Gilbert M. Denman, Jr. Courtesy of the San Antonio Museum of Art.

of the sixth century (figure 5). We see a *palaestra* scene with two pairs of wrestlers: one pair consists of a bearded man and unbearded youth, but the age relation of the other pair is impossible to determine since the face of one is hidden. That this vase in some sense thematizes the aesthetics of viewing is indicated by the presence at the left of a long-haired, willowy youth with a rod, who has been variously labeled a trainer or judge.<sup>62</sup> This very un-athletic figure regulates the athletes, but he is also apparently an aesthete captivated by their beauty and superior masculinity. With his thin, delicate

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62 Frontisi-Ducroux 1995.127 calls him a judge, but Kilmer 1993 (who illustrates this as R4) captions him a "trainer," following Simon 1981.92.

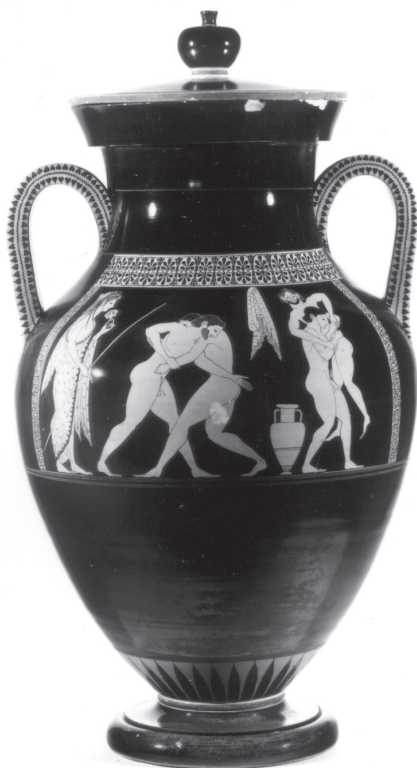


Figure 5. Berlin F2159 = ARV<sup>2</sup> 3.1, amphora attributed to the Andocides Painter. Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

hand, he holds up to his face a rose to sniff, as if to imply that the pleasure of viewing is an analogous sensual delight.<sup>63</sup> Most interesting for our purpose, however, is the figure of the bearded athlete on the extreme right, raised over a foot off the ground by his younger and apparently stouter rival, who embraces his waist in a powerful chokehold. Like his counterpart at the left edge of the scene, he seems somehow out of place in the wrestling ring. While not as thin as the flower-sniffing judge/trainer, this man is clearly much smaller than any of the three other athletes in the arena: his legs and

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63 Simon 1981.92 suggests a more mundane interpretation: he holds the rose to his nostrils to avoid being overcome by the stench of oil and sweat in the ring. Even if true, this would still suggest a more delicate and sissified constitution than those of the athletes themselves.

buttocks look almost childlike in comparison with the young beefcake who lifts him. This figure turns his head to face us directly, not so much to appeal for help as to signal to us that here, too, we might be, helplessly lifted up and carried away by the beauty of the younger man who holds him/us captive. As if to emphasize that we are in the picture, an amphora stands between the two pairs of wrestlers; the image thus represents itself reflexively amid its surroundings. All the usual roles and “power relations” are reversed in this picture. The judge/trainer/teacher, rather than a figure of authority, is an effeminate weakling. The older wrestler is a puny plaything of his young counterpart, and it is implied that we adults in the audience, rather than being the objectifying consumers of male beauty, are perhaps the captivated objects after all, just like the helpless man who looks at us and interpellates us into the scene.

To be sure, Greek vase painting must be interpreted as a discourse of ideal and often symbolic representations rather than a direct transcription of social reality as lived and experienced. But, in this regard, it is no different from poetry and other systems of cultural discourse and can be appropriately used as an aesthetic and ideological comparandum. The conventions of male erotic scopology that we have seen here suggest a greater complexity to Greek visual consciousness than is often recognized by literary critics, and may even call for a fundamental reformulation of how we regard visual subject and object.

## V. SUBJECT AND OBJECT

What is significant in Pindar’s text is that beautiful boys are accorded power over their lovers in their capacities as both visual subjects (2–3) and objects (10–12). Equally, the lover becomes both subject and object, even simultaneously as he “sees” (3: δρακείς) the boy’s gaze at him (2–3: τὰς . . . ἀκτῖνας πρὸς ὅσων / μαρμαρυζοίσας). That we dealing here with a phenomenon more complex than mere intersubjectivity (as in the exchanged glances of Douris and the Eretria Painter) can be understood through reference to certain strands of modern French philosophy, particularly the phenomenology of the gaze advanced by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, as refracted through the seminars of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, whose model is, in turn, extended and applied by the film theorist Kaja Silverman in her reading of R. W. Fassbinder’s cinematic technique.<sup>64</sup>

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64 For a review of this whole tradition in twentieth-century French thought, see Jay 1993.

Silverman's essay is founded on the distinction between what she calls the "look" and the "gaze," or what Lacan had called *l'oeil* and *le regard*; she criticizes much contemporary feminist film theory for oversimplistically conflating the two.<sup>65</sup> The "look" is a specific act of subjective focus, often with affective content, whereas the "gaze" is the all-seeing panopticon of the world surrounding the subject, a judgmental audience that may be represented synecdochically by another single viewing subject. But even in the form of this synecdochic reduction, the "gaze" is distinguished from the "look" by the absence of affective arousal: a "look" may therefore be eroticized, but a "gaze" cannot be.<sup>66</sup> Lacan cites Sartre's metaphor of the voyeur "looking" through a keyhole, only to be surprised and overcome with shame at hearing a footstep on the staircase or hallway behind him: the voyeur "looks" through the keyhole at a woman undressing with feelings of longing or curiosity that turn into shame as he himself is exposed to the "gaze" of the person behind him.<sup>67</sup> Ideally the gaze is without a personality of its own and need not even be animate. Lacan recounts an epiphanic anecdote drawn from his youth, when he was working on a fishing boat: he saw a sardine can floating in the water reflecting light at him and recognized, contrary to the joke of a mate ("you see it, but it doesn't see you"), that the can indeed did "see" him just as surely as he saw it (1978.96). Lacan's diagram of the gaze therefore identifies its source merely as a "point of light" (1978.91). The discarded sardine can was a synecdoche for the entire objective world surrounding and judging the subject.

Commenting on Lacan, Silverman likens the gaze to a lit-up spectacle, whose very luminosity allows it to look back at the audience (1992.151). Spectator and spectacle are therefore interchangeable but not in a relation of constructive intersubjective reciprocity, as Merleau-Ponty would have it, since there remains a fundamental difference in terms of affective commitment. The concept of the illuminated stage gazing back at the audience reminds us of the performative institution of Attic Old Comedy, which, from the stage, singled out for ridicule and shame various members of the audience looking at the stage, and thus put them at the center of the theatrical panopticon, now the spectacle rather than the spectator.

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65 Silverman 1992.129–30, 152, and 409 n. 30 (for the targets of her polemic).

66 On the look's tendency to foreground desiring subjectivity, see Silverman 1992.142–43.

67 Lacan 1978.84, drawing on Sartre 1956.259–61. Sartre's notion of the gaze has been interpreted as a metonymy for the omniscient paternal = divine gaze, incorporated into the subject's own self-consciousness, see George 1976.303–39 and Jay 1993.276–78.

Returning once more to our little poem, we see the immediate relevance of the distinction between the “look” and the “gaze.” When the speaker looks at the “fresh-limbed youth of boys” and melts in verses 10–12, we, at first, seem to be dealing with the stereotypical “look” of a male subject, erotically invested and even fetishistic, objectifying naked boy flesh in a projection of phallic desire. But he melts “like beeswax stung by the sun’s heat” (10: κηρὸς ὥς δαχθεῖς ἔλα). The Sun, of course, was the Greek symbol for the all-seeing panopticon: the great Eye in the Sky who can see everything down below, even islands before they have emerged from the surface of the sea (*Olympia* 7.61–63).<sup>68</sup> The gaze of the Sun is unemotional and disinterested, Lacan’s “point of light,” truly a metaphor for the gaze of the object world. But, under its glare, the desiring subject melts like Sartre’s embarrassed voyeur caught at the keyhole.

The inversion of spectator and spectacle in the tension between “look” and “gaze” is even more clearly delineated in verses 2–3, where the hypothetical lover “glances at” (δρακεῖς) Theoxenus, only to see flashing beams streaming out of his eyes directly at the lover himself. The marked verb δέркоμαι, as opposed to the unmarked ἴδω in verse 11, refers to a quick and darting glance at an object.<sup>69</sup> In the case of a lover, particularly a lover who may be, as verse 1 implies, past his prime, one can imagine that the glance is nervous and tentative, a furtive voyeuristic delight to be enjoyed without detection.<sup>70</sup> But again, our desiring voyeur is caught at the keyhole by a gaze, only this time it is the gaze of the beloved himself, staring directly back at him through the same keyhole. The discomfiture that

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68 Not only do Helius’s powers of vision extend to everything in the phenomenal world of human experience, but they penetrate even deeper into the realm of future potentiality—not just that the island of Rhodes will be born, but that it will be fertile and populous. For the Sun as an eye, see *Paean* 9.2, where it is called the “mother of eyes,” a phrase which, like Saddam Hussein’s notorious “mother of battles,” is merely intended as a superlative. See also *Il.* 3.277, *Od.* 12.353, Sophocles *Ant.* 104, Euripides *IT* 194, Aristophanes *Nub.* 285. Similarly, the Moon is called an eye in *Olym.* 3.19–20, and is characterized as “flaming back” (ἀντέφλεξε), in other words, looking back at Heracles, like the Lacanian sardine can.

69 See the semantic discussion of Prier 1989.29–31.

70 Interestingly, Theocr. 30.7–10, which may be influenced by Pindar, reverses the situation and makes the boy’s glance (ἔδρακε) furtive and embarrassed, as if he did not want the aging lover to know that he was even aware of the lover’s attention. But even that brief meeting of the eyes was enough to set the lover on flame. See Plato *Phaedrus* 253E and 255C–E for the meeting of eyes as the moment of erotic crisis.

Pindar's anonymous lover feels upon meeting Theoxenus's gaze is in the knowledge that the unapproachable boy knows his feelings, and, moreover, that he has lost his mask of voyeuristic anonymity.<sup>71</sup> The gaze of Theoxenus is not an eroticized look that in any way reciprocates desire, but, like the gaze of the Sun in verse 10, is a vector of knowledge and recognition, synecdochic for the object world's knowledge and recognition of the subject's lack and desire. Indeed, it is in our very act of reading or hearing this poem as an audience that the subject's embarrassed glance does become known to the entire world.

We can imagine that Theoxenus's gaze was just as much a mystery for his admirers as it is for us. It is precisely the openness and indeterminacy of the object's gaze that are unsettling to the desiring subject, like Mona Lisa's smile. Does he judge me? Does he secretly laugh at me? Can it be that he might be looking at me because he actually finds me, an eccentric middle-aged intellectual, interesting? Could he be reciprocating my admiration of him? Or is he playing games with me, coquettish beauty that he is? How could he, the cynosure of all eyes, possibly find me attractive? This manic-depressive alternation of thrill and doubt is surely what Pindar means by πόθῳ κυμαίνεται (4), being "tossed on the waves of desire/lack." We have noted a similar polysemy in the optics of visual interchange on Greek vases.

Lacan introduces the concept of "elision of the gaze," by which he means an internalization of the originally objective gaze into a form of self-consciousness: instead of the subject seeing an object looking back at him, he sees himself seeing himself, as, for instance, when looking in a mirror or narrating a dream in psychoanalytic therapy.<sup>72</sup> Particularly in verses 10–12, it may be this internalized sense of the gaze (for which the Sun operates as a simile) that causes the subject seemingly to disintegrate in the self-consciousness of his desire. Sappho's famous "seizure" and inability to be near her beloved in fr. 31 L.–P. may derive from a similar self-consciousness, an internalized sense of the gaze, but the poem elides the gaze of the beloved girl herself. In the homoerotic sphere particularly, the desired object may become a projection or mirror image of the subject's own idealized self:

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71 Lacan 1978.75: the gaze is like "a woman who knows that she is being looked at, on condition that one does not show her that one knows that she knows."

72 Lacan 1978.75; see also Silverman 1992.127.

the self as it once was or wishes it had been, or perhaps as it wishes it still were.<sup>73</sup>

Lacan, in fact, developed his theory of the gaze out of his concept of the “mirror phase” of infantile development (around eighteen months), in which the ego first becomes aware of itself as an object. However, Lacan sees this constituting of the self by internalization of the gaze of the Other as continuing throughout adult life. In part influenced by Lacan, Frontisi-Ducroux has investigated Greek notions about the mirror.<sup>74</sup> She finds that it is inevitably a female appurtenance, and when associated with men, as in the case of Narcissus or Theocritus’s Polyphemus, it feminizes them. The only proper “mirror” for men is in the public arena of fame and reputation, not the enclosed, private, domestic realm typically associated with women. Plato (*Phaedrus* 255C–E) speaks of the adult *erastês* as a “mirror” in which the young *erômenos* may recognize his own beauty, but does not see the mirror effect working in the opposite direction; it may be legitimate for the *erômenos* to have a mirror, since he is in some ways androgynous, still in contact with the female-dominated world of childhood and not yet fully an adult male citizen whose only proper mirror is public scrutiny. The problematic perspective suggested by fr. 123, however, is one in which the gaze of the beloved does more than recognize his own beauty in the mirror of the lover’s eye, he also holds up a destabilizing mirror to the lover’s own masculine subjectivity. For a Lacanian, this constitution of the Self through encounter with the Other, indeed in the mirror phase with the Self as Other, is normative and universal, not annihilating but the key to self-consciousness. The lover comes into being only through confrontation with his own desire in the gaze of the Other.

As we observed in Part I of this paper, fr. 123 operates from a position of fundamental confusion in subjective identity. The “I” of the poem is not merely the poet, nor merely the patron who commissioned it, nor merely each subsequent symposium guest who chooses to sing this short *skolion* in later times: it is the whole community of boy-lovers whose gaze at the text becomes elided and appropriated into the text’s own subjectivity.

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73 Stewart 1997.63–70 sees this phenomenon of subject-object confusion operative in the aesthetics of archaic *kouros* statues as funerary monuments: the idealized youth becomes a repository of aristocratic self-identity.

74 Frontisi-Ducroux 1997.53–250. See also McCarty 1989 and Stewart 1997.171–81.

Anyone who is not characterized by the negativity of ὄς μή . . . (4) can legitimately be co-opted as the subject of the poem. As a result, the objective gaze of the literary spectator inevitably becomes reincarnated as a spectacle in its own right, as each of us turns into the “I” of the poem, actor instead of audience. The dynamics of this process are exactly the same as those we observed with the “interpellation” of the viewer in homoerotic vase painting, where a frontal character stares out at us as a mirror image and draws us into the action of the vase.

Whoever sings this poem within the cultural context of a symposium (what Lacan would call the “screen”) is positioned in the gaze of the symposiastic audience, including potentially the youth he desires. But any lover in that audience will be interpellated into the first person of the poem and will see in the singer a mirror image of his own subjective vulnerability. Even the desired youth may see reflected in the lover a prediction of his own erotic future,<sup>75</sup> just as the lover sees in him an idealized reflection of his past. A song like this one therefore operates to produce a sense of common vulnerability among men of all ages within the socially cohesive group setting of the elite symposium; boy love was one of the cultural *praxeis* that could legitimately be viewed as a distinguishing mark of membership in the elite.<sup>76</sup> Shared vulnerabilities strengthen group bonds, even as, in the broader perspective of the *polis*, the sense of common mortality affirmed in Athenian tragedy or funeral oratory promoted civic identity and cohesion.

Our examination of the complexity of homoerotic visual dynamics should therefore help call into question the regnant modern construction of Greek pederasty in terms of a penetration-centered regimen of phallic subordination. Popularized by Dover and Halperin, and often wrongly attributed to Foucault, this conceptual model has recently been challenged from several angles.<sup>77</sup> Applied to vision, this approach would hold boys, women, slaves, and non-citizen prostitutes as all fundamentally objectified sources of pleasure to an adult, male, citizen viewing subject. But any

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75 Hence the frequent warnings to beloved youths that they, too, will one day be in the same position: Sappho fr. 1.21–24 LP, Theognis 1305–10, 1331–34, Strato *AP* 12.16, Statyllius Flaccus *AP* 12.12.

76 I establish this point at some length in Hubbard 1998.

77 See Cohen 1991.171–202, Thornton 1997.99–120, Davidson 1997.168–72, Hubbard 1998. For iconographic studies that challenge this orthodoxy, see De Vries 1997 and Kilmer 1997.

examination of the conventions of erotic looking (not to mention of actual lovemaking) in Greek vase painting shows an enormous difference between women and boys.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, Pindar highlights the difference for us in fr. 123 by calling devotion to women a “path that is utterly cold” (9: ψυχρὸν πᾶσαν ὁδόν), in marked contrast to the images of heat and melting applied to love of boys in verses 10–11: his implication seems to be that heterosexual involvement lacks emotional content and the potential for reciprocity. The most desirable boys were precisely those from elite families, like Theoxenus, and the goal of a pederastic mentorship was not to objectify and subordinate them (if this were the object, surely slaves or non-elite boys would be preferred, as at Rome), but to advance their socialization into the elite male world of the symposium, athletics, and, eventually, politics and the life of the mind. Indeed, the goal was to make them as much like their lover as possible, a true mirror image. Such was never the case with women, slaves, and non-citizen prostitutes.

Talk of a “power differential” between men and boys is fundamentally misguided. Whatever advantage an older lover might have in experience and social connections (and as many vases show, the age differential between wooer and beloved was often minimal), the youth had the countervailing power of Beauty on his side. Every piece of evidence we possess from classical Greece, whether iconographic or literary, tells us that it was emphatically a sellers’ market. Simple demographic reckoning tells us that eligible *erômenoi* in that short-lived window of adolescent efflorescence (from about 14 to 18) were far fewer in number than the adult *erastai* who might pursue them. And even among the demographically eligible, many boys would either not be interested or would be closely guarded by their fathers or pedagogues. Vases seldom show more boys than wooers but often the reverse; vases often show boys rejecting advances or acting non-committal. Boys like Lysis and Charmides are surrounded by a crowd of admirers in Plato’s dialogues, and even the hypothetical boy addressed in Lysis’s and Socrates’ discourses in the *Phaedrus* is assumed to have his choice among several lovers and non-lovers (the latter being less emotionally heated versions of the former). Theognis continually complains of his many rivals for Cyrnus’s favor. The young Timarchus certainly had no shortage of older companions who were willing to pay extravagantly for the pleasure of his company. Any *erômenos* who did not like the way he was

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78 See Frontisi-Ducroux 1995.113–30, 1996.84–85.

treated by his *erastês* could easily find another, and the evidence is that they frequently did, sometimes even with no provocation. Within this sexual economy, the notion that *erômenoi* were generally “dominated” or victimized seems almost surreal, a fabrication of modern prejudices against age-differential relationships.<sup>79</sup>

Within this context, the references to Love’s devastating power over men in this poem and many others should not be dismissed as merely an empty convention.<sup>80</sup> The odds were against a lover, and the longer he lived, the longer the odds. Hence, when a lover’s admiring eyes are met by the gaze of the beloved, as in this text, a moment of epiphanic crisis occurs, in which he is, for an instant, unbalanced by uncertainty. The visual interaction is certainly not a one-way act of objectification on the part of a secure, controlling erotic subject. It has been one of the ambitions of this essay to suggest that the dynamics of the homoerotic eye in Greek culture resist any reading in one-dimensional phallic terms. Whether viewed in the light of the original Greek concepts of visual extramission and intromission or with the more contemporary rubrics of “look” and “gaze,” the scopic transactions create a dialectic in which subject and object constantly change position and visual “penetration” moves both ways. The reductive fallacy inherent in phallic readings of Greek pederasty is to assume that the subject-object relation is static and, moreover, that subject-object positionality is necessarily imbricated with a one-way power differential.<sup>81</sup>

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79 The concomitant notion that “sexual passivity” was somehow uniquely disgraceful in homoerotic relations I have dismantled at length in Hubbard 1998. To the extent that there was negative sentiment about same-gender relations in classical Athens, it applied to both the active and passive partner.

80 See, for instance, Halperin 1990.32fn.: “The citizen-lover could afford to luxuriate in his sense of helplessness or erotic dependency precisely because his self-abandonment was at some level a chosen strategy and, in any case, his actual position of social preeminence was not in jeopardy.”

81 The author expresses his thanks to Marilyn Skinner, Michael de Brauw, and Alan Shapiro for commenting on an earlier version of this essay, as well as to the anonymous referees of *Arethusa* and to audiences in Washington, D.C., and New Haven. All faults and eccentricities are the author’s sole responsibility.

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