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Looks of Love and Loathing: Cultural Models of Vision and Emotion in Ancient Greek Culture

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My aim in the following paper is to look at the role of the eyes in Greek ways of thinking about love and envy, specifically in the light of the relation of these cultural models to wider folk and scientific models of vision in ancient Greek culture. The question to be considered is what difference the typical Greek belief that vision is a material, 'haptic' process (analogous to touch) makes to models of emotion which lay great stress on the role of the eyes.

Love is an emotion (or perhaps a syndrome of emotions and emotional states) in which, for us as for ancient Greeks, the degree of intimacy is typically correlated with increased eye-contact. Envy, on the other hand, is regularly constructed in terms of one's being the unwanted focus of others' visual attention. We are all familiar with role of the eyes in modern accounts, both scientific and popular, of these emotions.¹ In broad terms, the role of the eyes in Greek scenarios of love follows this familiar pattern. Danaus (for example) warns his daughters at *A. Supp.* 1003-5 how the gaze of the lover seeks to enchant its object:²

¹ The BBC Science website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/hottopics/love/flirting.shtml>, accessed 29 April 2008) contains the following information:

New York psychologist, Professor Arthur Aron [SUNY Stony Brook], has been studying the dynamics of what happens when people fall in love. He has shown that the simple act of staring into each other's eyes has a powerful impact. He asked two complete strangers to reveal to each other intimate details about their lives. This carried on for an hour and a half. The two strangers were then made to stare into each others [*sic*] eyes without talking for four minutes. Afterwards many of his couples confessed to feeling deeply attracted to their opposite number and two of his subjects even married afterwards.

See further A. Aron, D. G. Dutton, E. N. Aron, and A. Iverson, 'Experiences of Falling in Love', *Journal of Social and Personal Relations* 6 (1989), 243-57.

² Cf. Aeschylus fr. 243 Radt, *Prometheus Bound* 654, 902-3; Sophocles *Trachiniae* 107; Plato *Euthydemus* 274c, *Phaedrus* 251ac, 253e, 254b; Xenophon *Symposium* 1. 8-10; *Anthologia Palatina* 5. 100. 2, 12. 92, 12. 106; Achilles Tatius 1. 9. 3, 5. 13. 2-3; Heliodorus 1. 2. 5, 7. 7. 5; Longus 1. 13, 1. 17. 2-3.

καὶ παρθένων χλιδαῖσαν εὐμόρφοις ἔπι
παῖς τις παρελθὼν ὄμματος θελκτήριον
τόξευμ' ἔπεμψεν ἡμέρου νικώμενος.

At the luxuriant beauty of maidens
every passer-by shoots an arrow of enchantment
from his eye, overcome by desire.

In a great number of such passages, the eye of the lover is certainly an active force; but its focus is typically the eyes of the beloved, and it is the beloved's eyes that typically exert the attractive pull on the lover in the first place.³ A good example is Ibycus 287.1-4 *PMG(F)*:

Ἔρος αὐτέ με κυανέοισιν ὑπὸ
βλεφάροις τακέρ' ὄμμασι δερκόμενος
κηλήμασι παντοδαποῖς ἐς ἄπει-
ρα δίκτυα Κύπριδος ἐσβάλλει·

Once again Love, with melting glances from under his dark eyelids, entices me with all kinds of enchantments into the vast hunting nets of Aphrodite.

The glance of personified god of Love stands for irresistible effect of a beloved's eyes on the lover.⁴ Once a mutual relationship is established, mutual looking and eye-contact follow: εὐθὺς γὰρ παρὰ τοῦ ἀντιφιλοῦντος ἡδεῖται μὲν αἰ ἀντιβλέψεις — 'For immediately

³ As in the direct glance of Charmides that so inflames Soc. at Plato, *Charmides* 155cd.

⁴ M. Davies, 'Symbolism and Imagery in the Poetry of Ibycus', *Hermes* 114 (1986), 399-405 at 403 retracts his earlier insistence, in 'The Eyes of Love and the Hunting-net in Ibycus 287 P', *Maia* 32 (1980), 255-7, that the eyes of Eros do not stand for those of the beloved. For desirability in/emanating from eyes of beloved, cf. Hesiod *Theogony* 910-11, *Shield* 7-8; Alcman 1. 20-1, 3. 6-12 *PMG*; Sappho 138. 2 L-P; Anacreon 360 *PMG*; Simonides fr. 22. 12 West; Pindar *Nemean* 8. 1-2, *Encomium* fr. 123 Snell-Maehler; Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 742-3 (cf. 418-19 for the absence of 'Aphrodite' in the blank eyes of the statues in the palace of Menelaus), fr. 242 Radt; Sophocles *Antigone* 795-7, fr. 157 Radt; Euripides *Hippolytus* 525-6, *Bacchae* 236; *Anacreontea* 26 (cf. 17. 12-17); *Anthologia Palatina* 5. 56. 3, 5. 96, 5. 177. 9-10, 12. 63. 5-6, 12. 72. 3-4, 12. 93. 9-10, 12. 99, 12. 101. 2, 12. 109, 12. 110, 12. 113, 12. 122. 4, 12. 144. 3; Chariton 6. 7. 1.

from the one who loves you back come counter-glances that are sweet' (Xenophon *Hiero* 1. 35).⁵

The eyes are also emblematic of envy, but envy is not as interactive as love: typically, for the Greeks as for us, it involves a malicious stare from a distance. Its hateful look is the chief characteristic of the personified figure of Envy from Hesiod (C8-7BC) to Gregory Nazianzenus (C4AD).⁶ It is an envious look from afar that is the focus of the fears of Aeschylus' Agamemnon, a great victor tempted by his wife into excessive display of his success, as he walks to his death on the crimson cloths that she has spread before him.⁷ Agamemnon knows that it is an ambivalent thing to be the centre of others' visual attention — some look with admiration, but others with resentment, begrudging his success. This is why Pindar, a poet whose job it is to celebrate the height of agonistic male achievement by displaying the victor's success, frequently contrasts the positive regard the victor should receive with the gaze of the malicious and envious, of the *phthoneros* who 'rolls an empty thought in darkness'.⁸ In the Greek physiognomic and iconographic traditions the *phthoneros* can be recognized by his frown, his staring, open, sunken eyes, and other signs such as his pale, wasted complexion.⁹

The question is, how might these familiar scenarios be affected by popular and quasi-scientific beliefs in vision as a material process. At both levels, ancient Greek optical theories are typically materialist in conception, in that they presuppose some form of

⁵ Sophocles fr. 474 Radt; Euripides *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 584-6; Plato *Phaedrus* 255ce; Plutarch *Quaestiones convivales* 5. 7, 681BC; Chariton 1. 1. 6; Xenophon of Ephesus 1. 3. 1; Achilles Tatius 1. 9. 4; Heliodorus 3. 5. 5.

⁶ See Hesiod, *Works and Days* 195-6, Gregory Nazianzenus, *Epigram* 8. 121. 5, *PG* 38. 25. For envy expressed in eyes cf. (e.g.) Euripides fr. 403 Kannicht (*Ino*: ἐν χερσὶν ἢ σπλάγχνοισιν ἢ παρ' ὄμματα, 'in the hands, the guts, or the eyes'); cf. *Suda* s.v. ὀφθαλμιάσαι.

⁷ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 946-7 (καὶ τοῖσδέ μ' ἐμβαίνονθ' ἀλουργέσιν θεῶν | μή τις πρόσωθεν ὀμματος βάλοι φθόνος, 'And as I tread on these tapestries let no eye's envy strike me from afar').

⁸ Pindar, *Nemean* 4. 39-41 (φθονεῖ δ' ἄλλος ἀνὴρ βλέπων | γνώμαν κενεῖαν σκότῳ κλίνδει | χαμαὶ πετοῖσαν, 'With an envious look another man rolls an empty thought in darkness that falls uselessly to the ground'); *Pythian* 8. 71-2 (θεῶν δ' ὄπιν | ἄφθονον αἰτέω, Ξέναρκες, ὑμετέρας τύχαις, 'I pray that the gods' eye be free of envy with regard to your fortunes').

⁹ See K. Dunbabin and M. Dickie, 'Invidia rumpantur pectora: The Iconography of Phthonos/Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art', *JbAC* 26 (1983), 7-37. For the face of the *phthoneros*, cf. Lucian *Calumnia* 5 (cf. Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 5. 7, 681D); Adamantius 1. 12 (i. 324 Foerster), 1. 21 (i. 344 Foerster); [Polemo] 75 (i. 428 Foerster); Anonymous Latinus 86 (ii. 116 Foerster).

physical contact between the eyes and the object of vision.¹⁰ The active (emissionist) theory, that the eyes see by means of the fiery rays which they cast on the external world, is the common one in early poetry;¹¹ it is apparent also in the notion that the sun is an all-seeing eye,¹² and finds expression in some scientific optical theories (e.g. those of Alcmaeon of Croton and of Euclid).¹³ Fire within the eyes also figures in the optical theory of Empedocles,¹⁴ where it co-exists with a belief that the eyes receive physical emanations from objects; for Aristotle, this indicated that Empedocles followed an interactionist theory (in which the eye emits rays which then merge with emissions from the objects of vision) of the sort that appears in Plato's *Timaeus*;¹⁵ but recent interpreters place more emphasis on the eye's reception of emanations.¹⁶ The theories of the Stoics, on the other hand, seem more clearly interactionist — vision involves a flow of *pneuma* from the *hegemonikon* to the eyes, whereupon a 'cone' of stretched air is formed between the eyes and the object through which contact is effected and information transmitted back to the *hegemonikon*.¹⁷ There are also passive, emanationist views, such as the view of Democritus and the other atomists that the eye is the passive recipient of impressions

¹⁰ See J. I. Beare, *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition from Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (Oxford 1906); W. van Hoorn, *As Images Unwind: Ancient and Modern Theories of Visual Perception* (Amsterdam, 1972); G. Simon, *Le Regard, l'être, et l'apparance dans l'optique de l'antiquité* (Paris, 1988).

¹¹ See (e.g.) *Odyssey* 4. 150, 19. 446; Hesiod, *Theogony* 826-7; *Hymn to Hermes* 45, 415; Aeschylus fr. 99. 13, 243 Radt; Sophocles, *Ajax* 69 (cf. 85), fr. 157 Radt; Euripides, *Andromache* 1179-80, *Hecuba* 367-8, 1104 (cf. 1035, 1067-9), *Heracles* 130-2, *Phoenissae* 1561-4, *Rhesus* 737.

¹² For the sun as an eye which looks with rays see (e.g.) *Homeric Hymn* 31. 9-11; *Hymn to Demeter* 70; Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 606 etc.: cf. L. Malten, *Die Sprache des menschlichen Antlitzes im frühen Griechentum* (Berlin, 1961), 39-45; Mugler, 'La Lumière', 63, 66-9. For the Sun as a model for the human eye, see Pindar, *Paeon* 9, fr. 52k. 1-2 Snell-Maehler (Ἀκτίς ἀελίου, τί πολύσκοπε μήσσει, | ὃ μᾶτερ ὀμμάτων, 'Sun's shaft . . . o mother of eyes'); Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* 17 (ὀφθαλμὸν ἀντίμιμον ἡλίου τροχῶ, 'the eye that imitates the sun's disc').

¹³ Alcmaeon of Croton A 5 DK; Euclid, *Optics*, introd. axioms 1-7. On the continuity between poetic and scientific models of vision, see C. Mugler 'La Lumière et la vision dans la poésie grecque', *REG* 73 (1960), 40-73.

¹⁴ See Empedocles A 86, B 84 DK; cf. B 89, 109a DK.

¹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 45bd (cf. *Theaetetus* 156ab); Aristotle *De sensu et sensibilibus* 2, 437b10-438a5, esp. 437b24-5, 438a4.

¹⁶ See A. A. Long, 'Thinking and Sense-Perception in Empedocles', *CQ* 16 (1966), 256-76 at 260-4; D. J. O'Brien, 'The Effect of a Simile: Empedocles' Theories of Seeing and Breathing', *JHS* 90 (1970), 140-79 at 140-6; id., 'Plato and Empedocles on Evil', in J. J. Cleary (ed.), *Traditions of Platonism: Essays . . . Dillon* (Aldershot, 1999) 3-27 at 7-10 (against the traditional interpretation of e.g. Beare, 14-23).

¹⁷ See Chrysippus, *SVF* 2. 836, 856, 861, 863-71; cf. the implicit and explicit criticism of the Stoics in the (still interactionist) account of Galen, *De plac. Hippocr. et Plat.* 7. 5 (5. 618-28 K). See R. E. Siegel, *Galen on Sense-Perception* (Basel, 1970), 37-117, esp. 39, 71-8.

created by ‘images’ (*deikela, eidōla*) derived from the objects of sight.¹⁸ The apparent exception to the dominant view of vision as involving physical contact between perceiver and perceived is Aristotle, who decisively rejects the materialist theories of his predecessors.¹⁹ In his view, perception in all its forms is a qualitative change in the subject, involving reception of the form but not the matter of the object. None the less, his theory retains a notion that the object of vision, in so far as it is coloured, effects a qualitative but still physical change, both in the transparent medium between object and perceiver and in the eye itself – our perception is of the shape of the apple and its redness, not of the apple itself, but there is still a material change both in the air that is the medium of perception and the eye that receives it, a change caused by the qualities of the apple. This is suggested above all by an example not of vision (of the eye’s undergoing a qualitative change) but of a converse process, the eye’s *causing* a qualitative change. I refer here to Aristotle’s acceptance and explanation of the belief that the eye of a menstruating woman can cause discoloration of a mirror: this happens because the change in the transparent medium of the eye (believed to result from menstruation) affects that of the air and the mirror.²⁰ The change in the transparent medium is qualitative (i.e. colour), but still material. Thus even Aristotle’s passive and anti-materialist theory of vision can retain an active role for the eye in causing physical changes in the world (albeit not as an aspect of its activity of seeing).²¹

These folk and scientific models are important because in their different ways they are compatible with beliefs that the eyes may cause or lay one open to a variety of profound and often unwelcome physical changes. Such, for example, is the belief that diseases such as eye-infections and epilepsy, and physical-cum-spiritual afflictions such as *miasma* (pollution) may be transmitted by sight.²² But they are also relevant to our scenarios for

¹⁸ See Leucippus A 29-30 DK; Democritus A 77, A 135, B 123 DK (*deikelon*); cf. Epicurus, *Epistulae* 1. 49-50; Lucretius 4. 26-468. On Theophrastus’ account of Democritus’ theory of vision, see C. C. W. Taylor, *The Atomists* (Toronto, 1999), 208-11.

¹⁹ *De Anima* 2. 7, 418a26-419b3, *De sensu et sensibilibus* 2, 437a19-438b16, 3, 440a15-20.

²⁰ See *De insomniis* 459b27-460a26.

²¹ For the physicality of Aristotle’s ‘qualitative change in a transparent medium’, cf. S. Everson, *Aristotle on Perception* (Oxford, 1997), 98-9; contrast (e.g.) T. K. Johansen, *Aristotle on the Sense-Organs* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. 288.

²² Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1384-5 (pollution), 1424-9 (pollution); Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1437-8 (‘deadly exhalations’ threaten the eye of the goddess Artemis), *Heracles* 1153-62 (shame and pollution);

the expression of emotions of love and envy. In the case of love, the active (emissionist) theory makes its presence felt in frequent references to the fire, rays, or arrows which emanate from the eyes of the beloved.²³ This sense that the gaze of the beloved can make him (or her) an active party to the interaction can be accentuated by imagery which presents the beloved as ‘hunting’ the lover by means of the arrows or snares of his eyes.²⁴ Typically, however, the beloved is not (or not yet) an active party to the relationship; his burning, melting looks incite desire, but do not express it, and indeed they incite desire whether the beloved is actively seeking to ensnare the lover, modestly resisting his advances (οὐ με κακῶν πόθος, ἀλλ’ ἀκέραιον | σύντροφον αἰσχύνῃ βλέμμα κατηνθράκισεν — ‘It’s not desire for wickedness, but the pure glance of modesty that has burnt me to cinders’, *Anthologia Palatina* 12. 99), or entirely unaware of or indifferent to the lover’s intentions, as in Pindar fr. 123. 2-6, 10-12 Snell-Maehler:

τὰς δὲ Θεοξένου ἀκτῖνας πρὸς ὄσσω
μαρμαρυσσοῖσας δρακεῖς
ὄς μὴ πόθῳ κυμαίνεται, ἐξ ἀδάμαντος
ἢ σιδάρου κεχάλκευται μέλαιναν καρδίαν

ψυχρᾷ φλογί.

. . .

ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τᾶς ἑκατι κηρὸς ὧς δαχθεῖς ἔλα
ἱρᾶν μελισσᾶν τάκομαι, εὐτ’ ἂν ἴδω
παίδων νεόγυιον ἐς ἦβαν.

Anyone who glimpses the rays
glinting from the eyes of Theoxenus
and does not feel his heart swell with desire
has a black heart forged by frigid fire from adamant or iron . . .

Orestes 512-15 (cf. 459-69, shame); *Iphigeneia in Tauris* 1217-18 (pollution); Theophrastus, *Characters* 16. 14 (the superstitious man spits into his bosom when he sees a madman or an epileptic); Heliodorus 3. 7. 4 (eye-disease and plague); cf. 3. 8. 1 (on the beneficial gaze of the bird, *charadrios*), 3. 8. 2 (the harmful gaze of the basilisk); pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Problemata* 2. 42 (eye-disease; cf. and contrast ps-Aristotle, *Problemata* 7. 8, 887a22-7); *ibid.* 2. 53 (rays from the viewer’s eyes reflected back from corpses affect the viewer’s soul). Cf. Heliodorus 10. 14. 7 (a girl’s pale skin said to be the result of her mother’s looking at a painting of Andromeda during copulation).

²³ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 742-3, Sophocles fr. 157 Radt, *Anacreontea* 26, *Anthologia Palatina* 5. 36. 3-4, 5. 96, 12. 63, 12. 72, 12. 93. 9-10, 12. 110, 12. 144.

²⁴ *Anthologia Palatina* 12. 101. 1-3 (τόν με Πόθοις ἄτρωτον ὑπὸ στέρνοισι Μυῖσκος | ὄμμασι τοξεύσας τοῦτ’ ἐβόησεν ἔπος | τὸν θρασὺν εἶλον ἐγὼ — ‘shooting from his eyes an arrow at me, hitherto unwounded by desire, Myiskos shouted, “I’ve caught that bold one”’), 12. 109, 12. 113.

But thanks to Aphrodite, I melt
like the wax of holy bees bitten by the sun's heat,
whenever I look on the new-limbed youth of boys.

This passage in particular shows that, where it occurs, the active eye of the beloved is focalized from the perspective of the lover – the beloved may be casting rays from his eyes, but the look that is charged with emotion is that of the lover, and all stress is on the lover's helpless, passive experience of *erōs*.²⁵ We note in particular how in lines 2-3 the lover's eyes focus on the eyes of the beloved, while in 10-12 it is the entire body of the beautiful youths that attracts his attention. In this way, the 'active', quasi-emissionist model of infatuation (in which the lover is affected by rays or glances from the beloved's eyes) proves to be something of an 'optical illusion', because it shades into a more passive conception, in which the lover is the passive recipient of emanations which may come from the beloved's eyes, but may just as well emanate from his or her entire body. The latter is the case in the celebrated account of *erōs* in Plato's *Phaedrus* (251bc), where the lover's desire is the result of the effluence (*aporrhoē*) of particles from the beautiful body that enter the lover's soul *via* his eyes.²⁶ This passive model is also the 'scientific' explanation of *erōs* preferred in the Greek novel — the novelists employ the Platonic/Democritean terminology of *eidōla* and *aporrho(i)ai*, and describe the onset of love as a result of the influx through the lover's eyes of emanations from the object of the gaze.²⁷ The erotic model of vision, then, can appropriate the emissionist point of view, but does so in a modified and asymmetric way: the beloved whose flashing rays melt the lover may sometimes intend this effect, but the effect is the same whether he does or not, and the counterpart of the (sometimes) active eye of the beloved is the passive, receptive eye of the lover — though the lover's eye is a greedy eye that actively seeks out the

²⁵ Cf. and contrast on this poem T. K. Hubbard, 'Pindar, Theoxenus, and the Homoerotic eye', *Arethusa* 35 (2002), 255-96.

²⁶ See esp. δεξάμενος γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐθερμάνθη . . . ὅταν μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα πρὸς τὸ τοῦ παιδὸς κάλλος, ἐκεῖθεν μέρη ἐπιόντα καὶ ρέοντ' . . . δεχομένη ἄρδεται τε καὶ θερμαίνεται – 'For once he has received the effluence of beauty *via* his eyes he becomes hot . . . Whenever [the soul] looks towards the boy's beauty and receives the particles that it emits and that flow from it . . . it is moistened and warmed'; cf. *Cratylus* 420b.

²⁷ E.g. Achilles Tatius 1. 9. 4 ('efflux from the beautiful'), 5. 13. 4; Heliodorus 3. 7. 5.

beautiful,²⁸ it is at the same time the passive victim of the beloved's beauty and generally has no power to affect the object of its desires unless that individual happens to be subject to the same, passive experience of falling in love. In the novelists, falling in love can be simultaneous and mutual, in the sense that the beauty of person A affects person B and vice versa, but the emotion expressed by person A's eyes does not excite emotion in person B; instead, each undergoes the same passive experience of being affected by the other's beauty.²⁹ In short, the eye of the beloved, even when dispassionate, is powerful, while that of the lover, despite the ardour it expresses, is typically impotent; and this is the case whether the author's (implicit/explicit) optical theory is active or passive.

The reason for this is to be sought first of all in the phenomenology of love in general and of *erōs* in particular. One of the features that is common to many of the phenomena that we classify as emotions and the Greeks as *pathē* of the soul is their phenomenological passivity – erotic infatuation, like other emotions, is conceived as a loss of control.³⁰ A further distinguishing mark of Greek *erōs* is its one-sidedness: the relevant relationships are seen as involving an active *erastēs* and a passive recipient of that person's attentions, an *erōmenos* or *erōmenē*.³¹ This does not mean that such relationships can never be mutual, but only that my *erōs* is conceived as something that happens to me as a result of my interest in another party who need not reciprocate that interest. In terms of the 'commitment model', proposed by Robert Frank as a (universal) evolutionary explanation for the emotions, the way in which the lover's gaze is passionate, but powerless, and that

²⁸ Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 548-9 (the eye loves to pluck the flower of youth); Xenophon, *Symposium* 1. 8-10 (the eyes of lovers are drawn by the beauty and deportment of the beloved); *Anthologia Palatina* 5. 100. 2 (the lover hunts with his eyes, but is a slave to Love), 12. 92 (the lover's eyes actively hunt boys, but are set ablaze by the sight); Heliodorus 1. 2. 5 (the lover is compelled to look), 7. 7. 5 (the eye of the lover can discern the beloved even at a great distance by the latter's movement or gesture; so Charicleia is stung by sight of Theagenes), 7. 7. 7 (when Theagenes recognizes Charicleia he fixes his eyes on her and is lit up by the shafts from her eyes).

²⁹ Chariton 1. 1. 6, Xenophon of Ephesus 1. 3. 1, and Achilles Tatius 1. 9. 4

³⁰ For the fundamental conception of (some, many) emotions as forces to which a person succumbs in the cultural models of a variety of languages, see Z. Kövecses, *Metaphor and Emotion: language, culture, and body in human feeling* (Cambridge, 2000); on symptoms, metaphors, metonymies, and models of *erōs*, esp. in the novel, see M. Fusillo, *Il romanzo Greco* (Venice, 1988); H. Maehler, 'Symptome der Liebe im Roman und in der griechischen Anthologie', *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 3 (1990), 1-12; P. Toohey, 'Love, Lovesickness, and Melancholia', *ICS* 17 (1992), 265-86; F. Létoublon, *Les Lieux communs du roman: stéréotypes grecs d'aventure et d'amour* (Leiden 1993), 137-48; D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton 1994), 47; H. Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon* (Cambridge, 2004).

³¹ See most recently J. Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love* (London, 2007), 23-32.

of the beloved dispassionate, but powerful would reflect the strategic objective of *erōs* in convincing the beloved of the strength and durability of the lover's commitment.³² To this there may also be a further ideological dimension, at least in the pederastic relations between an older and a younger male that are the focus of the archaic lyrics and Hellenistic epigrams that we have looked at. The rhetoric of the (active) lover's helpless enslavement to the passive *erōmenos* disguises the hierarchical and self-centred nature of these relationships. Though the real power lies with the adult male citizen in pursuit, as an object of pleasure, of a boy who is not yet a citizen, the powerful represent themselves as in thrall to object of their desires. Ideology and phenomenology thus combine to influence the adaptation of models of vision to the model of *erōs*: both active and passive models of vision are adapted to focus on the desiring subject's sense of himself as a passive victim.

The supposed reality of the physical affections caused and undergone by the eyes in the case of love forms part of an argument used in both Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* 5. 7 and Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 3. 7. 5 to convince a sceptical audience of the reality of the evil eye (*baskania*) — if the eyes are the medium of a physical affliction in the case of love (which, it is assumed, everyone accepts) then so can they be in malicious emotions such as envy.³³ Both these passages seek (Plutarch seriously, Heliodorus probably parodically)³⁴ to provide a supposedly scientific rationale for a belief that could be stigmatized as popular superstition, but was clearly widespread.³⁵ Though the typical explanation of the evil eye is that a concentration of malign emotion is expressed *via* the eyes at the target,³⁶ it is not only malevolent emotions such and anger and envy that can

³² See R. Frank, *Passions within Reason: The Strategic Role of the Emotions* (New York, 1988).

³³ Plutarch, *Quaestiones convivales* 5. 7, 681AC, Heliodorus, 3. 7. 5. On the question of the relation between Plut. and Heliod. see M. Dickie, 'Heliodorus and Plutarch on the Evil Eye', *CP* 86 (1991), 17-29 (cf. Dunbabin and Dickie 'invida rumpantur pectora', 10-11); T. Rakoczy, *Böser Blick: Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter* (Tübingen 1996), 186-212.

³⁴ See Dickie 'Heliodorus', 21-4, 26-9.

³⁵ See most recently the comprehensive account of Rakoczy, *Böser Blick*.

³⁶ Cf. Apollonius Rhodius 4. 1661-73 (expresses malice, anger, and resentment); cf. pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata inedita* 3. 52 Bussemaker; pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Problemata* 2. 53 Ideler (unbalanced *krasis* (mixture) of envious affects *krasis* of target *via* rays (*aktines*) which pass from eyes of one to the other). Contrast St. Basil, *Homilia* 11 (*De Invidia*), PG 31. 380. 28-37 (*baskania* expresses envy, but the materialist theory is an old wives' tale; rather, 37-42, evil spirits use the eyes of *baskanoi* for their own purposes).

harm: in a passage from Theocritus' twentieth *Idyll*, a woman who expresses her contempt for her suitor (by fixing him with a sidelong glance) also spits into the bosom of her dress, a gesture used to avert the evil eye.³⁷ This is perhaps a metaphorical use of the apotropaic gesture, but the view that an affectionate look from someone in an envious/malign condition can be unintentionally harmful is put forward as a serious one in Plutarch (*QC* 682A-D).

The argument in both Plutarch and Heliodorus requires the materiality of the gaze in the case of love to be assimilated as closely as possible to that of the evil eye; and at a certain level of generality there is indeed a parallel — in both cases we can be affected (*via* our own eyes) by others' looks. But there is also a distinct lack of fit between *erōs* and *baskania* as manifestations of the materiality of the gaze: the latter illustrates the eyes' supposed ability actively to infect others with the malicious emotional state of their possessor, whereas in the paradigm scenarios of *erōs* the active eye of the beloved typically does not express the emotion itself, and the eye of the lover, which does express the emotion, is generally ineffective. The preferred optical theory of both Plutarch and Heliodorus is the passive one, but in both there is a tension between an active model (which suits *phthonos*) and a passive one (which suits *erōs*): the Plutarch passage begins with the harmful glance of a particular Pontic tribe to illustrate the general truth that people can be harmed by being the target of others' looks (680D-F; cf. the 'poisoned arrows', *πεφαρμαγμένα βέλη*, from the eyes of the envious at 681E). But the passage goes on to explain the harm caused by others' gaze in terms of a more or less passive optical theory in which the eyes are said to be an especially powerful source of the

³⁷ Theocritus 20. 11-15:

τοιάδε μυθίζοισα τρίς εἰς ἔδν ἔπτυσσε κόλπον,
καί μ' ἀπό τᾶς κεφαλᾶς ποτὶ τῷ πόδε συνεχῆς εἶδεν
χεῖλεσι μυχθίζοισα καὶ ὄμμασι λοξὰ βλέποισα,
καὶ πολὺ τᾶ μορφᾶ θηλύνετο, καὶ τι σεσαρός
καὶ σοβαρόν μ' ἐγέλαξεν.

With such words she spat three times into her bosom and looked me up and down from head to foot, snorting with her mouth and looking askance; she assumed a ladylike posture and mocked me, grinning haughtily.

For the association with the evil eye, cf. (e.g.) Theocritus 6. 39; cf. W. Deonna, *Le Symbolisme de l'oeil* (Berne, 1965), 180; W. Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge MA, 1996), 89, Rakoczy, *Böser Blick*, 134, 147-8.

aporrhoi that the whole body produces (680F-681A).³⁸ The analogy of *erōs* is then introduced in a way that initially suggests that it too, like *phthonos*, involves the active emission of emotion-particles (681A-B):

καὶ τῶν ἐρωτικῶν, ἃ δὴ μέγιστα καὶ σφοδρότατα παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστίν, ἀρχὴν ἢ ὄψις ἐνδίδωσιν, ὥστε ρεῖν καὶ λείβεσθαι τὸν ἐρωτικόν, ὅταν ἐμβλέπῃ τοῖς καλοῖς, οἷον ἐκχεόμενον εἰς αὐτούς.

Of love, too, which is the greatest and most violent passion of the soul, vision provides the beginning; so that the lover, when he looks upon the beautiful, flows and melts, as if pouring himself out towards them.

It immediately becomes clear, however, that it is the *vulnerability* of the eye of the lover to the melting looks of the beloved that is being used as an argument for the *active* ability of the eye to cause harm in *baskania* (681B-C):

διὸ καὶ θαυμάσειεν ἂν τις οἶμαι μάλιστα τῶν πάσχειν μὲν καὶ κακοῦσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον διὰ τῆς ὄψεως οἰομένων, οὐκέτι δὲ δρᾶν καὶ βλάπτειν. αἱ γὰρ ἀντιβλέψεις τῶν ἐν ὥρᾳ καὶ τὸ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐκπίπτον, εἴτ' ἄρα φῶς εἴτε ρεῦμα, τοὺς ἐρῶντας ἐκτῆκει καὶ ἀπόλλυσι μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀλγηδόνη μεμιγμένης, ἣν αὐτοὶ γλυκύπικρον ὀνομάζουσιν· οὔτε γὰρ ἀπτομένοις οὔτ' ἀκούουσιν οὔτω τιτρώσκεσθαι συμβαίνει καὶ πάσχειν, ὡς προσβλεπομένοις καὶ προσβλέπουσι. τοιαύτη γὰρ γίνεται διάδοσις καὶ ἀνάφλεξις ἀπὸ τῆς ὄψεως, ὥστε παντελῶς ἀπειράτους ἔρωτος ἡγεῖσθαι τοὺς τὸν Μηδικὸν νάφθαν θαυμάζοντας ἐκ διαστήματος ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀναφλεγόμενον· αἱ γὰρ τῶν καλῶν ὄψεις, κἂν πάνυ πόρρωθεν ἀντιβλέπωσι, πῦρ ἐν ταῖς τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ψυχαῖς ἀνάπτουσιν.

This is why we should be surprised, I think, that people believe that a person can be affected and harmed through sight, but not that they can act and cause harm. For the reciprocated gaze of the beautiful and that which is emitted by the eye, be it light or a current, melt and dissolve the lovers to the accompaniment of a pleasure that is mixed with pain, which they themselves call bittersweet. For neither by touching or hearing are they so wounded and affected, as by looking and being looked upon. Such is the a communication and the inflammation that results from sight that one must consider altogether unacquainted with love those who wonder at Median naphtha when it catches fire at a distance from the flame.

³⁸ NB esp. τὸ σῶμα . . . ἐκπέμπει τινὰς ἀπορροίας. μάλιστα δὲ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν εἰκός ἐστι (' . . . the body emits *aporrhoi*, especially *via* the eyes . . .').

For the glances of the beautiful, even if they look back from a great distance,
kindle fire in the souls of their lovers.

The disanalogy between *phthonos* and *erōs* is highlighted by the fact that in *phthonos* it is the agent of the gaze who is in the grip of a *pathos* of the soul (681D-E) while in *erōs* it is the recipient (681A-C).

Heliodorus' 'malarial' account of *phthonos* is more consistently passive, but the same tension between the active character of *phthonos* and the passivity of *erōs* is still apparent: when someone looks with *phthonos* at what is beautiful, he fills the surrounding air with his malign quality, 3. 7. 3; but in *erōs* the affection enters the soul *via* the eyes as a result of what the lover has seen, a sign of the eyes' receptivity to *aporrhōiai*, 3. 7. 5. The passive model is credited with quasi-active powers in the case of *phthonos*, but not in that of *erōs*.

In broad terms, then, it is true to say that the Greeks had a belief that others' eyes could be harmful, and that a person's own eyes could be receptive to various harmful or disturbing influxes, both from the eyes of others and from other sources. But we cannot generalize to any universal applicability of these notions: the look of a lover, it seems, can infect a person with the evil eye, but is unlikely to transmit the lover's *erōs*; and there is an asymmetry between the evil eye (in which others' eyes can straightforwardly transmit what those individuals are feeling and achieve the desired effect on their target) and *erōs* (in which neither party straightforwardly uses the eyes to transmit emotion). Though in very general terms similar beliefs in the physical consequences of seeing and being seen can be used in the explanation of both phenomena, the preferred optical theory conditions but does not determine the presentation of the two emotions; the independent folk theories of the two emotions, even when they come into contact with optical theory, remain (in different ways) resistant to absorption into a single, over-arching theory.

In the case of these emotions a concept of vision as a process of physical contact is clearly activated, and there genuinely is a sense that the eye has the potential to send or

receive emotions which have powerful physical effects on their target. But in the case of other emotions, this potential is very often ignored. Though the angry can occasionally be credited with the power to harm that is more often attributed to the envious, one should not generalize from these occurrences.³⁹ There are numerous passages from Homer on in which a character's eyes express anger;⁴⁰ it is part of the definition of anger as the Greeks understood it that the patient of the emotion desires to inflict retaliatory harm on its target; but though the Homeric poems (e.g.) are full of angry looks, there is not a single case in which the scowls, frowns, blazing eyes, or evil looks of the angry individual have any harmful effect on the target of his or her anger. On occasion, in fact, a belief in the power of the eye to harm would be incompatible with typical scenarios of social and ocular interaction — if there were a consistent and universal belief that looks could kill, no angry individual would use visual cut-off (i.e. deliberately look away) as a way of punishing an offender's lack of respect.⁴¹

The widespread belief that vision is a process involving physical contact between perceived and perceiver certainly means that there are particular reasons to pay special attention to the role of the eyes in Greek models of emotion; but we have no warrant to generalize from physical efficacy or vulnerability of the eye in some scenarios to an all-encompassing universal belief in the physical effects of seeing and being seen; these models of vision are enlisted in support of cultural models of emotion where they fit, modified where they fit less well, and ignored when they do not fit at all.

³⁹ See (e.g.) Apollonius of Rhodes, 4. 1661-73 (n. [36] above). That the notion of the material power of the gaze to harm is implicitly present in descriptions of angry looks etc. is the view of Rakoczy, *Böser Blick, passim* (esp. 33, 42-52 on Homer); cf. S. H. Lonsdale, 'If Looks Could Kill: *paptainō* and the Interpenetration of Imagery and Narrative in Homer', *CJ* 84. 4 (1989), 325-33.

⁴⁰ See *Iliad* 12. 466, 15. 607-8; of anger: *Iliad* 1. 101-5 [1. 103-4 = *Odyssey* 4. 661-2], 19. 16-18; cf. the expression **ὑπόδρα ἰδών** ('looking from under [the brows]'): *Iliad* 1. 148, 4. 349, 4. 411, 5. 251, 5. 888, 10. 446, 12. 230, 14. 82, 15. 13, 17. 141, 17. 169, 18. 284, 20. 428-9, 22. 260, 22. 344, 24. 559.

⁴¹ For visual cut-off as a strategy of taking offence see (averted gaze) *Iliad* 3. 216-20, 426-7, 21. 415; Euripides, *Phoenissae* 457-8; (veiling) *Hymn to Demeter* 40-2; Herodotus 6. 67; Euripides, *Medea* 1144-55; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 911-13 (cf. *LIMC* i, Achilleus 440-2, 444-5, 453, 448, 464; Aias I 81, 84; iii, Briseis I, 14). Withdrawal is in fact typical of anger (*Iliad* 6. 325-31) and is central to Achilles' strategy of retaliation in the *Iliad*: 1. 306-7, 327-30, 348-50, 488-92; 9. 356-63, 428-9, 650-5, 682-92; 16. 61-3. See D. L. Cairns, 'Anger and the Veil in Ancient Greece', *G&R* 41 (2001), 18-32. Cf. the aversion of the gaze as an expression of divine disapproval/rejection: Hesiod, *Works and Days* 197-200; Tyrtæus 11. 1-2 W; Aeschylus, *Supplikes* 172, 811, *Septem* 664-7, *Agamemnon* 776-9; Pindar, *Pythian* 4. 145-6; Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* 1163-7.

