Curiosity and Exposure in Nonnus

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Introduction

This paper addresses the following questions: how does Nonnus portray the quest for (possibly taboo) knowledge, and the play of curiosity and its associated risks in the *Dionysiaca*? How does the sense of mastery and personal growth that accompanies an expansion of knowledge and experience become eroticised and fuse with a drive to shame and dominate others? How does exposure, whether it involves emergence from a refuge or a display of more of the body, create a sense of nervous vulnerability both in the subject and in others, a vulnerability which can, for the viewer, also offer gratifications?

The theme of scopophilia, love of looking, in Nonnus is illustrated by 26 voyeur or quasi-voyeuristic episodes. Their content provides an aperçu into the questions raised above. The most detailed voyeur episode, partly because it is described twice, is the Actaeon and Artemis episode (5.299–315, 473–492). It serves as a signal example of one who, seeking to learn more, discovered that his new knowledge (of the goddess' body) brought him no profit. On the contrary, Actaeon's satiated but unholy curiosity, his venture into the unknown, proved fatal. As a successful hunter, he knew how to hide his own presence as he waited to ambush and shoot a dangerous animal, such as a leopard. Ominously, however, whenever he broke cover and outran a swift stag, Nonnus tells us he was being secretly observed. Peeping over a thicket, Pan "would watch him with astonished gaze" (5.297–298). Accustomed to lurk and scan, it was an easy step for Actaeon to take the opportunity to gaze insatiately (ἀκόρητος) and with furtive eye (ὄμματι λοξῷ) at another kind of prey, the unclothed goddess that none may see (ἀθηήτοιο θεαίνης). He may have happened upon the scene accidentally but he could not cease surveying Artemis as she

Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 48 (2008) 71–94

bathed. Imperfectly concealed, "from close range he measured out the sacred body of the unwed virgin."[1] Then in response to a warning shout from one of her nymphs, "Artemis, half-visible (ἡμιφανής), snatched up her circling girdle along with her dress and covered her modest breasts with her maiden belt. She sank with wet limbs into the stream and, shamefast, the maiden slowly hid from view her whole body" (5.311–315), as if in a titillating reverse strip show.

At first, Nonnus suggests that Actaeon saw everything, but it may be that he only ever saw the upper half of Artemis' body and imagined the rest (unless we are to understand that at the particular moment of the shout she was half-hidden, having been earlier more fully exposed). In essence, the peeping and vulnerable hunter Actaeon, half-hidden in a tree and dazzled by the brilliance (αἴγλη) of the divine form, is espied by a Naiad who, not noticed and therefore, in a sense, hidden from Actaeon, spots him with her furtive eye. She gives away her own half-exposed state when she shouts to the goddess who, in a half-, or more than half-exposed state, hides herself in the water. This Naiad had a feature in common with numerous nymphs and Bacchantes in the poem. She was unveiled (ἀκρήδεμνος), that is, she emerged and exposed herself, mirroring in a way what Actaeon did.[2] Before being transformed into a fawn, Actaeon suffers the double shame voyeurs fear most: being seen by both the object of scrutiny and by a third party.[3]

In this account, elements of violating a taboo and researching forbidden knowledge co-exist with the erotic delights of contemplating an unsuspecting nude. Actaeon-as-fawn compares

[1] 5.305–307. The erotic element in this episode of "knowing" becomes explicit later, in the lament of the ghost of Actaeon: "I should never have yearned for the archeress of the wilderness … I yearned for an immortal" (5.433–437). Cf. 5.310–311, the nymph's warning to Artemis that she was being watched by a love-crazed man (ἐρωμανέος).

[2] As 5.308 makes clear: ὄμματι λαθριδίῳ δεδοκημένον (sc. Ἀκταίωνα) ὄμματι λοξῷ.

[3] Hence some apprehended voyeurs prefer to be charged as burglars: D. Gaensbauer, "Trespassing and Voyeurism in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Dury," *Comparative Literature Studies* 24 (1987) 192–201, at 192.

his lot with that of Teiresias who, having unintentionally seen Athene bathing and in a sense "knowing" her, was blinded but lived to gain a prophetic gift (5.337–343). Later, the ghost of Actaeon recounts in sensuous detail to his father what happened. He forsook the cover of foliage to peep from a tree-branch at "Artemis, sweating in the hot steam of the burning heat … washing in the pure waters. As she bathed, her radiance shot snow-white beams off the water into my eye. You would have said the full moon of evening was shining from the water" (5.482–486). Yet he also acknowledges his mad (ἀασάμην) violation of a prohibition in "gazing upon the naked flesh of Artemis the unseeable (Ἀρτέμιδος ἀθηήτοιο) … to see her body with daring eyes" (τολμηροῖς βλεφάροισιν, 5.477–480).

Curiosity in humans and animals is vital for survival and for growth. As children grow they become less neophobic, more inquisitive and comfortable with the unfamiliar. Curiosity serves multiple purposes, providing sensory stimulation and developing the brain and nervous system. That it can be so pleasurable helps ensure its constant exercise.[4] Curiosity leads to learning some very necessary lessons but, because it is an exploration, a venture into the unknown and mysterious, it is often fraught with danger and fear until familiarity brings comfort and, possibly, satiation and boredom.[5] Humans and animals need to feel a certain degree of security before they can explore with any confidence, so that the availability of a refuge to which to withdraw remains paramount. In humans, curiosity is both an intellectual faculty, and a spur to imagination and to play, where one potentiates the other in an endless dialogue that functions as a major source of creativity.[6] What the curious searcher does not see often has to be left to the

[4] M. Heifetz, *Sexuality, Curiosity, Fear, and the Arts* (New York 2005) 16.

[5] A. Maslow, "The Need to Know and the Fear of Knowing," in D. Lester (ed.), *Explorations in Exploration* (New York 1969) 199–217.

[6] J. Chodorow, *Dance Therapy and Depth Psychology* (London 1991) 87, distinguishes the roles in curiosity of logos/the directed conscious and eros/the free-fantasising unconscious. For play as a form of searching, see M. Hughes, "Exploration and Play in Young Children," in J. Archer and L. Birke (eds.), *Exploration in Humans and Animals* (Wokingham 1983) 230–244.

imagination, so that the hidden gains in allure and attraction. Clothing hides, displays, and calls attention to what it hides. Long hair hiding the nape of the neck makes it an erogenous zone and increases curiosity about it.[7]

Curiosity has helped drive the exploration that has done so much to open up new landscapes of every kind and has led to astonishing achievements. "Curiosity is the ambition to go beyond," to be more than you are.[8] Insights gained from pursuing curiosity often lead to a pleasurable sense of mastery and the chance to apply an insight to life in general, possibly with immense consequences.[9] Divinities, if conceived of as evolving, creative players, could plausibly be credited with curiosity too. Like humans but on a grander scale, God/gods as players and experimenters could be curious about what eventuates when certain things are tried.[10] Novelty, interest, curiosity, and exploration form an easily comprehended nexus. A new interest and realm of mastery marks further autonomy and ego-growth, provided there is no fatal violation of a taboo or an inrush of new stimuli that overwhelms and burns out the seeker.

This is precisely the fate of two of the most egregious taboo-violators in the *Dionysiaca*, Semele and Pentheus, both encouraged by deities to be improperly curious. Hera, disguised as an old woman, persuaded Semele to demand proof of her divine lover's identity, the presence of Zeus' thunderbolts. Zeus having failed to convince Semele of the impropriety of her demand (8.366), his thunderbolts' awesome power consumed her: "the bridal blast of thunder with its child-birthing rays reduced the maiden completely to ashes" (8.394–395). Teiresias warned Pentheus at length not to demand a full divine epiphany of Dionysus to settle his doubts about his cousin's paternity (45.96–215). Rejecting this and a warning from Dionysus, Pentheus was trapped by an offer to pry into the Dionysian mysteries (ὄργια, 46.81–127). Having dressed and cavorted as

[7] J. Laver, *Modesty in Dress* (London 1969) 2, 12, 14, 19.

[8] B. Benedict, *Curiosity. A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago 2001) 254.

[9] Heifetz, *Sexuality* 32.

[10] I.e., the concept known in Hinduism as *lila*, cosmic play.

an initiate, he was able to observe the dancing Maenads from a high tree. Poorly concealed and dislodged, too late he regretted his curiosity and exposure, and wished for the cover of foliage: "Hide me, Hamadryad Nymphs" (46.192). Like his cousin, Actaeon, Pentheus was dismembered for having seen what he should not and for being seen.[11]

Voyeurism

The voyeur episodes in the *Dionsyaca* present, albeit in a skewed and diverse way, many of the issues of ego development that are contained in the poem. They are emblematic expressions of a tension that constantly surfaces, the tension between half or full exposure/emergence, and half or full seclusion/submergence, as characters are pulled between two conflicting drives, to reveal and conceal, to look and not look. The frequent association of violence with sex in these episodes suggests a somewhat primitive, archaic approach to relationships. Forces released on these occasions can bring loss of innocence/virginity and/or death to the watcher (Actaeon, Aura, Hymnus) as well as to the watched, albeit sometimes rather indirectly (Persephone, Semele, Ampelus, Carpus, Nicaea, Clymene, Aura).

The episode involving Aura, the rather masculine daughter of the Titan Lelantos and the Oceanid Periboea, and companion of Artemis, also features the bathing goddess, but the perspective of the viewer is different (48.335–369, 422–423). While Actaeon views from a distance, Aura does so while swimming beside Artemis, furtively (λοξὰ παπταίνουσα, 341) but boldly and shamelessly too (τολμηροῖς βλεφάροισιν ἀναιδήτοιο προσώπου, 342). Both these episodes refer to the holy body of the maiden who may not be seen, to Artemis as modest (σαόφρονος, 344) and ashamed (αἰδέομαι, 422) to the daring of the viewer, the inch by inch scanning (διαμέτρεε, 343) to the (at some point) half-visibility of Artemis, and to her breasts. The proximity of Aura's viewing and the insatiable nature of Ac-

[11] Whatever sexual repression is present in Nonnus' Pentheus, his illicit prying, insofar as one can remove all titillation from it, is less erotically charged than Actaeon's. Cf. J. Gregory, "Some Aspects of Seeing in Euripides' *Bacchae*," *G&R* 32 (1985) 23–31.

taeon's, and the gender of the viewers, are the main points of difference. Aura was not destroyed immediately and not for viewing *per se* but for expressing the hostile urge present in much voyeurism, to render the object shameful. She proceeded to violate a taboo, grasping and mocking Artemis' breasts. Raped and impregnated by Dionysus she paid dearly for her transgression, later committing suicide in shame and grief.

Voyeurism as a sexual pathology is typically a substitute for rather than prelude to sex. Remote viewing, however, is what Dionysus and Poseidon have to be content with as they watch the unsuspecting and fully clothed daughter of Aphrodite, Beroe (42.60–88, 346–355, 447–455). These two accounts have several elements of an unambiguous voyeuristic episode: wandering, scanning eyes; love-mad, insatiate, inflamed viewers; furtive looking; rosy, white, and gleaming object; references to hair, neck, and breasts. At one point, as if aware of Dionysus' staring, Beroe covers up even more. Poseidon imagines her naked beneath her clothes: "With keen gaze and unwavering eyes, he registered the form of the young girl through her flimsy garment as if in a mirror. Gazing from side to side (παρακλιδόν) at her gleaming breasts as if they were naked, he reproached the begrudging bodice that hid her bosom as it wrapped around and around. He moved his love-mad eye in circles (ἑλικηδόν) over her face and stared insatiate at her whole body" (42.449–455). His eyes saw only so much, his imagination provided the rest. There is a clear interplay here between the fevered, infatuated observer, directing his scrutiny, eyes now steady, now scanning, and that observer's subjective construction. Curiosity here is unsatisfied and driven largely by lust. While an invasion of Beroe's privacy, there is no immediate link with violence although the rival suitors, Dionysus and Poseidon, are later forced by Aphrodite to settle their claims in a massive sea battle (42.497–43.374). In three clear examples of divine voyeurism, watching is a prelude to forceful impregnation. The nakedness of bathing Persephone, Semele, and the nymph Nicaea is emphasised as they are gazed upon insatiately by panting, fevered Zeus, Zeus again, and Dio-

nysus.[12]

Gods who peep are powerful enough to escape dire consequences, although Zeus has to be wary of Hera finding out. Less fortunate was the shepherd Hymnus, who does not see the huntress, Nicaea, bathing naked (though he fantasises about it, and does see her bathing clothed) but does see her naked white, and rosy thighs and neck as the wind blows her robe and hair as she chases prey and he follows. He scans her as a divine voyeur would: insatiately, unseen (λαθών), love-mad, passionately, furtively (15.220–254). Exasperated by his tiresome attentions and masochistic call to be slain by her, Nicaea kills him. Eros and violence are less strongly linked by voyeurism here, but the gratifying nature of the spectacle presented by girls who expose themselves as they run has a more obvious sadistic tinge in the two accounts of the Indian warrior, Morrheus, pursuing the Bacchante Chalcomede. In the first pursuit, Morrheus deliberately slows down, and with the typical scanning, enamoured voyeur's eye, he enjoys the sight of her bare, gleaming neck, tossing hair, rosy ankles, bare feet, and white, naked, unveiled (ἀνάμπυξ) beauty. As he chases her, a hunter after vulnerable prey, the wind lifts her robe.[13] Before being pursued, Chalcomede had stood unveiled and loosely girt before love-mad Morrheus, rolling her eyes as if love-mad herself. Morrheus delighted in the sight of her breast distending her diaphanous robe. Taking a considerable risk, she presented an alluring sight to the male gaze and successfully acted as an exhibitionist and decoy when Dionysus was afflicted by madness and unable to lead his army in battle.[14] Even more ex-

[12] 5.586–621, 7.177–279, 16.11–18. The Naiad Clymene is watched by another divine voyeur, Helios, as she swims naked in the ocean, half-seen, unshod. The brilliant beauty of her body in general and breasts in particular illumines and flashes from the water. She was given in marriage to Helios by her father Oceanus and then impregnated (38.113–129).

[13] 34.307–314. Cf. B. Simon, *Nonnos de Panopolis. Les Dionysiaques* XIV (Paris 1999) 6–8.

[14] 34.273–280. The same details appear in the second pursuit, except that Morrheus really tries to catch her (35.103–108). On the theme of the fleeing maiden, see G. D'Ippolito, *Studi Nonniani* (Palermo 1964) 86–114. A less threatening and less detailed example is Dionysus glimpsing Aura's thigh as

posed than Chalcomede was King Sithon's daughter Pallene, as she stood opposite Dionysus, about to wrestle. Facing her, Dionysus furtively scanned her semi-naked, unshod (ἀσάμβολος), unveiled body, focusing on her glorious hair, her hitherto secret female form more than ever a delight to behold. His subsequent wrestle with her has a clear erotic charge (48.111–123, 147–149). Accounts of the witnessing of the great taboo, the primal scene, also combine sex with violence. A love-mad satyr spies insatiately upon the forbidden sight of the Dionysus-Nicaea "wedding" (ἀθηήτων ὑμεναίων, 16.309–311). Artemis enjoys watching the Dionysus-Aura "wedding."[15]

To conduct such unsuspected surveillance provides a delicious sense of advantage and, in this case, revenge. The hostile urge to make the espied objects of shame is exemplified by Hephaestus spying on (ὀπιπεύων) Ares and Aphrodite making love, trapping their naked bodies in a net and inviting the other Olympians to look.[16] Finally, there are two clear if unusual

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the wind blows her tunic (48.485–486). The sadistic, intrusive elements of voyeurism, a form of visual rape, are also conveyed by Nonnus' use of ὀχετηγός, "pipe, channel, conduit," to describe the eye of the fevered watcher, such as Zeus seeing the bathing Semele (7.203), Hymnus the hunting Nicaea (15.240); cf. 42.216, 43.1. See R. Smith, "Voyeurism: A Review of the Literature," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 5 (1976) 585–608; I. Rosen, "Exhibitionism, Scopophilia, and Voyeurism," in I. Rosen (ed.), *Sexual Deviation*[3] (Oxford 1996) ch. 8. For discussion of voyeurism in Nonnus, see R. Schmiel, "The Story of Aura," *Hermes* 121 (1993) 470–483, emphasising the innate violence of such activity; J. Winkler, *In Pursuit of the Nymphs. Comedy and Sex in Nonnos' Tales of Dionysus* (diss. U.Texas 1974) 1–17, 52–69.

[15] 48.752–772: not the first time, apparently, that Artemis had witnessed a defloration. In later gloating to Aura about what she witnessed, she adds the details, common in a voyeuristic scene, of proximate water (a fountain), breasts, and furtiveness.

[16] 5.581–585, Although a lover sitting beside his lass is not a voyeur, the presence of certain features in the image at 1.525–534 makes it at least scopophiliac or quasi-voyeuristic. He gazes insatiately at her blushing breast and bare neck, scanning her body. Voyeuristic/scopophiliac elements are present too in scenes involving Calamus and Carpus (11.406–421), Aphrodite and Cadmus (4.128–146), Dionysus and Ampelus (10.175–194), Ares and Aphrodite (6.242), a Naiad and bathing Semele (7.224–225). Cf. the image of a girl bathing and revealing her neck, breasts, and white body at 40.319–323.

instances that are voyeuristic in that the object is unaware of the shameless staring at the forbidden: a snake stares up the legs of a sleeping Bacchante (14.363–366), and an Indian feasts his eyes upon a dying and then dead Bacchante, whose dress pulls up as she falls, exposing her naked thighs and arousing a necrophiliac desire in the Indian, who, wounded by her brilliant beauty, looks lustfully at her naked ankles, "at the valley of the uncovered (ἀσκεπέων) thighs," breasts, rosy arms.[17] It is precisely her dead state that renders her nakedness safe and especially delicious to contemplate and ponder congress with.

The voyeur episodes in Nonnus vary in the motivation and vulnerability of the viewer and in the consequences for both subject and object who, nevertheless, are to some extent interchangeable. That is, the voyeur can become an object of scrutiny too and insofar as he identifies with the espied, he becomes an exhibitionistic figure himself, consciously and deliberately so when Morrheus bathes naked before Chalcomede (35.185–203). As phrases such as "insatiate staring," "greedy gazing," "feast eyes upon," "devour with the eyes" suggest, aggressive infantile oral pleasures as well as clandestine infantile researches into sexual knowledge may be present in the love of looking.[18] The linking in these scenes of some form of violence

[17] 35.21–78. Although these scenes of scopophilia are quite diverse, the appearance therein of words such as ὀπιπεύω, in general meaning to see but clearly with the distinct sub-meaning of peep or spy when used in the most blatant voyeur scenes, tends to suggest that feasting the eyes in other scenes has a voyeuristic element. It is used to describe the voyeuristic activity of Zeus and Dionysus in spying upon Semele and Beroe, and a Naiad upon Semele, and therefore carries that connotation when Ares regards Aphrodite, and Dionysus Ampelus (twice) and his rape victims Nicaea and Aura. However, the sense of spying and unsuspected surveillance is also evident when an Indian watches the secret rites of Bacchantes, and Hera the shapeshifts of Dionysus (5.582, 6.242, 7.224, 10.242, 11.64, 16.15). The noun ὀπιπευτήρ applies to Zeus vis-à-vis Semele and to the serpent gazing at a Bacchante's genitals (7.193, 14.366), but also to Argus spying on Zeus and Io (3.270, 20.85, 31.225), and to men who are especially aroused by the sight of veiled and modest women (42.353–354).

[18] Winkler, *In Pursuit* 167. Insatiate appetite for food and drink: 13.270, 17.61, 19.305, 41.142, 47.184, 47.59; hungry desire: 42.60; gazing at the primal scene: 16.310; Actaeon gazing at Artemis, 5.305, Hymnus at Nicaea,

with sexual arousal and satisfaction implicate hostility, humiliation, sadism, and the desire to dominate. Curiosity and the transgression of taboos are sexualised.

The conflict: stay in or come out? The opportunities and benefits of exposure

Nothing ventured, nothing gained, and the likely consequences of staying hidden are boredom, stagnation, and fossilization. To never venture from a refuge is to miss the liberation, thrill, and affirmation that comes with being noticed and applauded, or the exhilaration and non-conformity that might come from frenzied revelling, drumming, dancing, chanting, drinking, fighting, roaming with hair unbound, clothes loose, feet unshod, arms and legs free. Thus does Aion foresee Bacchante revellers, "as they shake their unbraided (ἄπλοκον), madly raging hair into the air over their shoulders" (7.92–93), like the pregnant Semele rushing out, unshod (ἀπέδιλος), to revel in the hills when she hears the sound of the double pipe in the mountains (8.17–18). The typical Bacchante is unshod, loose-haired, and mountain-seeking.[19] At the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne, a Naiad needs to be unveiled and unshod if she is to join the celebratory song, dance, and music (47.461). Being unveiled, the Oceanids enjoy greater freedom of movement as they accompany the swift chariot of Artemis (48.313). While frenzied, unveiled women incur some

15.227, Apollo at Hyacinthus, 3.156, Zeus at Persephone, 5.589, Poseidon at Beroe, 42.455. Satisfying a hunger for knowledge is akin to satisfying a hunger for food in that incorporation dissolves a subject/object divide. For the threats posed by women's bodies in the poem and how they signify a fragile, immature sense of identity which resorts to voyeurism and fetishism to cope with the danger, see R. F. Newbold, "Fear of Sex in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*," *Electronic Antiquity* 4.2 (1998).

[19] 19.329–331. Cf. the dancing girl at King Staphylus' funeral games: face unveiled, hair unbound and shaken into the wind (20.10). Nonnus is fully aware of the sexual potency of the naked foot. Cf. D. Levine, "The Erotics of Feet in Ancient Greece," in D. Cairns (ed.), *Body Language in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Swansea 2005) 55–72. Incidence of some key *Dionysiaca* words: ἀκρήδεμνος 25 times; ἀνάμπυξ 9; ἄπλοκος 9; ἀπλεκής 7; ἀσάμβολος 12; ἀπέδιλος 11; ἀσκεπής 17; ἀκόρητος 28; ἡμιφανής 22; παπταίνω 39; ὑπερκύπτω 14; ὀπιπεύω 48; ὀπιπευτήρ 10.

dangers (see below), they also pose dangers to others, as if something dangerous is released from them. Examples are the revelling, frenzied, unveiled, loose-haired, militarily effective Bacchantes fighting for Dionysus against the Indians and Poseidon; Bacchantes hunting in the forests and mountains, where being unshod aids speed and stealth, and poses a greater threat to animals; the unveiled, drunken Agave and her companions in the Theban mountains.[20] Pallene, daughter of King Sithon, may have exposed herself to an audience of insatiate gazers as she stripped for wrestling, but many suitors had failed to outwrestle her and paid with their lives for the muscular power and skill she was able to unveil (48.90–123).

There are risks, however, in learning, in growing, in following the curiosity which emerges from wonder, in widening one's experience, even if all one does is watch. Being less covered or bound is liberating in that it can facilitate certain experiences but is associated with anxiety when it is accompanied by furtive fear of detection while stalking or by fear that unwanted erotic attention might be ignited. The less clothing women wear, the more free movement is possible but also more chance that the wind might blow to reveal flesh to an eager viewer. As female dancers spin and turn, the secrets of their thighs are revealed (11.506). Voyeurism is part of a larger motif, a fascination with the half-hidden and the half-revealed, of perilous and tremulous curiosity and exposure, "when the viewer is poised on the verge of an epiphany," like the neonate Dionysus peeping from Zeus' thigh-womb.[21] The relationship between the voyeur and exhibitionist, the scopic drive to both see and be seen, has long been noted and exemplifies conflicted exposure. Pentheus offers a neat illustration of the polarity. Before going to spy on forbidden sights, Nonnus has him exhibitionistically dancing around the walls of Thebes, loosening his long hair and shaking a veil. Like voyeurs, the populace watch him from the walls with furtive eyes, as if ashamed (46.116–138). The voyeur unconsciously and imaginatively identifies with the observed one and thus, in a sense, becomes

[20] 14.346, 17.29, 35.261, 43.316, 45.5, 46.147.

[21] Winkler, *In Pursuit* 9. The image in Nonnus is at 9.11.

the object of observation.[22] Literary descriptions of voyeuristic scenes capture that psychological truth when they indicate, however obliquely and fleetingly, the two-sided nature of the process, such as when the espied seems aware that she is being watched as, in the *Dionysiaca,* occurs with Nicaea, Clymene, and Beroe, or when the spy is exposed to the scrutiny of a third party, as Actaeon is by one of Artemis' nymphs.[23]

Any kind of action in the world involves some form of exposure and, if necessary, some emergence from a hiding place or sanctuary. While watching from seclusion and a position of advantage can satisfy many forms of curiosity, fuller testing, exploration, and engagement with others require stepping out into the light of day and into the sight of potentially dangerous others. The risks include shame, ridicule, or embarrassment, and it is fear of this that an urge to expose oneself, to grow, to learn, has to overcome. It is this dilemma over whether or how far to emerge in order to learn and grow that constitutes a major motif in Nonnus. It is the dilemma of the shy person who shrinks from the spotlight but who secretly wishes to be in it.[24] If shyness is a holding back, not exposing or advancing oneself when opportunity to learn and experience more beckons, resisting therefore an urgent curiosity, then the shamelessness of exhibitionism is a (over)reaction to that shyness. Shy nymphs or nature spirits, embedded and secluded in their environment, yet peeping or venturing forth to see, say, or do something, are a traditional image yet one peculiarly attractive to Nonnus. Nymphs, partly because of this very seclusion, are also traditionally conceived of as highly sexual, alluring, promiscuous, even predatory.[25] A word that well captures the ambivalence is ἡμιφανής, half-visible. Another is ὑπερκύπτω, peep over. Both words are present in an early example of the image

[22] See, for example, H. Krips, *Fetish. An Erotics of Culture* (Ithaca 1999) 25–27.

[23] Cf. n.28 below. Hence the rosiness of Nonnus' espied: blushing is an unconscious exhibitionism, drawing attention to an aroused self.

[24] An issue some shy people resolve by becoming actors, licensed exhibitionists.

[25] J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs* (Oxford 2001) 10, 32, 65.

when a Nereid, riding a "half-seen" dolphin, "peeps out" of the sea in a double image of nervous observation.[26] The image is a simile for Europa sailing over the sea on the back of bovine Zeus. If the figure seems a little forced at first its aptness soon becomes clear. For Athene also spied (ὀπιπεύουσα) Europa and the bull, and knew what it foreshadowed: "her maidenly cheeks blushed in shame" (1.84–86). Shame is a notably empathetic emotion in that observers easily feel the embarrassment or shame of others, squirming and feeling uncomfortable at the sight of others in this state, with which they identify. The sight of Europa and the bull is so shameful that it is best not fully seen by observers. The first instinct of the shamed is to hide and avoid or reduce exposure, an urge that is transferred to Europa via the image of the water spirit on the dolphin. Who, like Athene, could resist staring at the curious sight of a bull carrying a maiden through the sea? Yet that sight is an unwelcome revelation to Athene. Its, as it were, half-seen incompleteness reduces the shock, and its object is suitably ashamed.

The peeping/half-visible image can occur in other non-erotic but still violent contexts. The movement of the warriors who emerge from the earth after Cadmus has slain the great serpent could have been described in various ways but Nonnus has one man peeping over a plume before him, half-visible by association with his explicitly half-visible fellows (4.433, 439). The half-visibility of Nereus, peeping from the sea but aggressively roaring and shaking his trident, belongs with these examples rather than with shy peeping nymphs (36.95). Indians stand "half-visible" and vulnerable in Hydaspes' water in the battle against Dionysus' army.[27] Nonnus' description of Nereids as both unshod and half-visible as they rush into a sea-battle (43.260) may be formulaic and even logical, but it is a motif in-

[26] 1.72–78. This Nereid-dolphin image is reproduced almost exactly at 43.281–285; here, however, being in the midst of a sea-battle is cause for nervousness. Cf. 39.257–266.

[27] 23.22, 31. They are killed by Dionysus, despite some resistance. The same image of an Indian standing in a river during a battle with Dionysus' forces occurs earlier (15.250). Cf. the unshod Naiad in a river bed with mud up to her knees, rendered exposed and vulnerable by the fearsome Typhon (2.56).

dicative of a nagging concern with exposure and how the normally hidden becomes both more vulnerable and more erotic. To be able to submerge easily into the safety of womb-like earth or water when faced with threats to one's body or reputation has obvious appeal for hypersensitive, unconfident, fearful beings. The loss of her safe matrix because of Typhon's rampage, losing it for a state of "exile," brings great anxiety to an unveiled Hamadryad: if not literally so, she is unveiled through the loss of her refuge (2.95). The impudent Naiad who sees and mocks Dionysus, lovelorn watcher of Beroe, is unshod, unveiled, and after speaking she quickly retreats to the perfect camouflage provided by her spring.[28] ἠμιφανής may occur on its own or with one or more of unveiled, unshod, unbound hair, wind-blown hair. These four states in turn can occur without half-seen, singly or in combination with one or more of the others, to denote a state of partial or complete exposure, or vulnerability, and often an enticing sexiness.

Apparently otiose or formulaic references to someone being unveiled, unshod, unbound, unbraided, whether or not fully or half-visible, are therefore Nonnus' way of indicating the riskiness inherent in a particular state or activity, where freedom, the removal of that which conceals, and vulnerability are combined in an erotic package. Sexual availability is implied. Vulnerability is evident in images such as that of the unveiled Naiad who flees from the burning Hydaspes by diving into the Ganges. Another wandered over mountains both unshod and unveiled to as far as Persia and India (23.275, 278–279). The vulnerability of the Bacchantes put to flight by Lycurgus is underlined by their unveiled state (20.342). Ino, rushing unshod over the mountains looking for Dionysus, is vulnerable as well as unimpeded (9.248). Unveiled, unshod, battle-frenzied Bacchantes who leap about on high, jagged rocks are recklessly impervious to the dangers of falling, falling in two senses (14.382). A satyr, unshod, flees from Deriades (32.256). One does not expect satyrs to be shod at all and shoes might slow one down or betray, but the epithet here may serve as a marker

[28] 42.98–109. Cf. the tree nymph who sees and mocks Dionysus' infatuated ogling of Nicaea (16.228–245).

of vulnerability and concomitant fear. When unshod is used with stealthy seeking, it conveys the seeker's fear of detection and may suggest violence about to be inflicted on a vulnerable prey.[29]

The risks and costs of learning more: forbidden sights and becoming disembedded/disembodied

Certain sights are forbidden to the uninitiated or unprivileged, or are invasions of the privacy of others that invite retribution if detected. Such prohibitions are not trivial, and the curious need to find out how much investigation into the unknown is permitted. The secret and forbidden are tied closely to exclusion and inclusion, to what is permitted and what is not, to who has power and who does not, to what is private and what is public.[30] The payoffs and pitfalls of voyeurism present the problem that repeatedly and in a variety of ways, as we have seen, surfaces in the *Dionysiaca*: those who expose themselves, whether to satisfy curiosity or explore states and situations, incur a risk of impairment or death. Blindness is symbolic of the fitting emasculation which Teiresias suffered by becoming a woman, and emasculation is suggested when Dionysus caught a glimpse of Aura's wind-blown thigh and "became womanish."[31]

Often there is an assertiveness involved which is driven by dominance and power needs, that is, exercising a prerogative to make someone an object, subject to the mastery of a (tyrannical) gaze.[32] One of the rewards of gaining power is that it is more likely to make one the object of respectful gazes, but the cost is that one is also more vulnerable to envy and hatred. Gaining through the eye control of knowledge that is in some

[29] 48.623: Dionysus, intent on rape, approaching the sleeping Aura.

[30] F. Lloyd and C. O'Brien (eds.), *Secret Spaces, Forbidden Places* (New York 2000) xviii; P. Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago 2003) 8.

[31] 48.486. See Larson, *Greek Nymphs* 81. On the darkness/blindness that afflicts Actaeon as he falls from the tree, see 5.492.

[32] J. Seppanen, *The Power of the Gaze* (New York 2006) 73, 138; F. Greene, "Travesties of Love: Violence and Voyeurism in Ovid's *Amores* 1.7," *CW* 92 (1999) 409–418. Cf. Plutarch *De Curiositate* 515D.

way forbidden, private, or secret is a facet of fantasies of power and status which can be very dangerous, as not only Actaeon but also Semele and Pentheus discovered.[33] Being a voyeur is akin to being an invisible divine watcher, and the forbidden nature of it all adds to the sadistic sexual excitement, the erotic thrill of domination, of catching someone when they are vulnerable. However, fixed, entranced staring, even when looking sideways, is like standing on tip-toe, precariously balanced. Mortals or nymphs who stare become oblivious to the dangers of being seen as they peep from a vantage that is no longer secure, like the unveiled Naiad who, spying on the bathing Semele, exposed herself to Zeus' gaze. Curious, they become over-extended from their base and absorbed in the sight as their eyes stretch forth at a curiosity as if on stalks.[34] If one emerged from cover in the *Dionysiaca*, there was reason to be nervous. There are several references to the all-seeing eye of powerful beings like Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Justice.[35] Argus, with his many unwavering eyes (ἀπλανέεσσι ὀπωπαῖς), was well equipped to spy on Zeus' "wedding" with Io, and then to guard the dehumanised girl/cow/object.[36] Protection via concealment from the power of Zeus and from Hera, whose eye can penetrate disguises, is almost impossible. Since there is no guarantee that hiding will bring complete invisibility, only a hope of reduced or semi-visibility remains. Although it was elaborately screened by vegetation, the Dionysus-Nicaea union was evident to the ghost of Hymnus, and Pan knew what occurred (16.270–285, 304–308, 321–324). With insatiate gazers in hiding or on the prowl, staying in a refuge is a sensible precaution against what are ambush predators in another guise.[37] Clearly, Zeus

[33] Fantasies: 5.512–519; 8.286–347, 375–391; 9.206–243; 46.81–115.

[34] τιταίνω, *stretch* or *strain*, is used 30 times with ὄμμα.

[35] 5.609; 7.190; 9.133, 276; 14.169–170; 24.73; 40.1.

[36] 3.270, 20.85. Cf. Aphrodite's reference to Argus' extraordinary capacity to spy on Zeus and thereby exercise a kind of control (31.225).

[37] The hunting, predatory nature of peeping was made explicit by the voyeur who spoke of his espied as prey and regarded his nocturnal expeditions as "going on safari": I. Yalom, "Aggression and Forbiddenness in Voyeurism," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 3 (1960) 305–319, at 316. Cf. A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur* (Cambridge 1993) 37–39.

does not have to fear suffering the fates of Actaeon or Hymnus as he explores the bodies of bathing Persephone and Semele. Breathlessly spying on them, he can stare, rapt and entranced, with *some* impunity. Nevertheless, even he is liable to possible embarrassment if detected by another (almost) all-seeing being.

Revelry, like battle, has the power to draw women and nature spirits out of their refuges. A neat illustration is the Dionysian revelry that has a Hamadryad "shooting forth" from a leafy cluster but, as if feeling unsafe and nervous about the exposure, withdrawing to remain half-visible as she praised Dionysus. Nearby a less nervous unshod Naiad sang with her (44.12–14). The juxtaposition of the Bacchante Gorge being unveiled and receiving a battle wound conveys the risk (29.266–267). Half-hidden because she was unveiled or only partly embedded, a tree-nymph attracts the attention of a lustful satyr who has to be checked by Dionysus (12.372). If to unveil is a metaphor for to rape, to unveil oneself may seem to invite that assault.[38] A Nereid who emerges sufficiently from the sea during a battle to see that the sea is on fire is "unveiled" and has to plunge back into the deep (39.400), as is a Hamadryad who peeps forth from her matrix of foliage to speak to gods (Dionysus and Aphrodite, 48.520.) A Hamadryad peeps from her arboreal matrix, leafy from the hips down, to spy on the Indians preparing to ambush Dionysus and then, as she informs him, she remains half-visible (22.84), as was the Indian spying through foliage on Dionysian revelry (22.57).

μύστις and compounds, occurring 35 times, are not particularly germane to our study, but ὄργια (30) is. The word may refer to secret rites such as those of Dionysus (mainly), including his viticultural secrets, Hera, and Aphrodite, or refer to arcane knowledge such as the astronomical lore of the muse Urania, the healing art of Apollo, and Osiris' once occult gift of script, brought to Greece by Cadmus. The following entities and places are associated with mysteries in some way in the *Dionysiaca*: Dionysus, Mystis, satyrs, Cabiri, Hermes, Athene, Corybants, Hecate, Orpheus; Eleusis, Egypt, Olympus. One of

[38] D. Kardulias, "Odysseus in Ino's Veil. Feminine Headdress in *Odyssey* 5," *TAPA* 131 (2001) 23–51.

(cosmic nurse) Harmonia's tablets of time, revealed to Aphrodite, contains the secrets of law (41.344). There is, therefore, reference in the poem to a sizeable realm of occult information not accessible to all and sundry. But, tellingly, ὄργια is also used with erotic overtones when applied to women's thighs and genitals: as the Bacchante Helice fell, mortally wounded, she gathered her clothing to safeguard the secrets of her snowy-white thigh (17.224; cf. 11.506). Only the secrets of Semele's lap were not penetrated by Zeus' scanning gaze (7.266). They were, however, when he became a serpent and impregnated her, accessing the secrets of her womb as he does Persephone's.[39]

Exposure, hair, and grief

Beroe's flowing, unbound locks, we are told, enhanced her attractiveness (42.87). The loose hair of women has a particular role in the titillation of covering and uncovering, in the eroticisation of exposure. Many cultures associate loose hair, like loose clothing, with sexual allure and wildness, and control of the hair with control of the emotions and with culture taming nature.[40] Loose hair is an expression of freedom and frenzy as unveiled and foaming Bacchantes revel joyously, or of threat as they wander in the mountains or battle ferociously in the wind.[41] Aware of how Maenads' loose hair challenges male authority, Pentheus stipulates that his frenzied and unveiled mother be arrested and dragged in by the hair (45.227, cf. 46.7.) It is by her unbound (ἀπλεκής) hair that a lustful satyr seizes and tries to rape a Bacchante (15.76). As Semele bathed

[39] 5.586–621. A less complete access and knowledge is achieved by the serpent who, fascinated, sleeplessly (ἄγρυπτον) gazes at the Bacchante's maidenhood (κορείης) (14.363–366).

[40] A process of displacement upwards from the genitals may be implicated: covered hair denotes guarded genitals. See A. Hiltebeitel and B. Miller, *Hair. Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures* (New York 1998) xii–xiii, 32; L. Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise. The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Swansea 2003) 263–265, an exhaustive treatment of the terminology, psychology, eroticism, and ideology of covering and uncovering the female body.

[41] 9.330–331, so that unbound, shaken hair intermittently covers their shoulders; cf. 17.29, 20.10.

in Zeus' sight, extra pleasure for Zeus was provided by the way wind and water blew Semele's hair and laid bare her neck.[42] Ampelus' long, curly hair, blown by the wind and exposing a gleaming neck, excited his admirers (10.183). A similar revelation excited Dionysus as he gazed upon Nicaea (16.15). The infatuated Morrheus declares that the sight of Chalcomede's hair imperfectly covering her shoulders dissolves his battle ardour (34.336). Instead, it ignites his lust.

As a mark of grief, unbound hair signals both release and vulnerability, and is typically accompanied by unveiling. The unveiling of both body and soul in profound grief is a form of exposure and undignified behaviour that has the potential to embarrass others.[43] Realising that Actaeon was dead (but not as yet how), his mother, Autonoe, displayed the traditional marks of feminine grief and loss, including being bare-bosomed, loose-robed, unveiled, and unshod, declaring vulnerability and a symbolic downfall, being cut off in some way from everyday society. She declared her freedom from customary restraints as she roamed like a Bacchante over the ridges.[44] On realising what she had done to Pentheus, Agave fouled her hair in grief and removed her breast covering (46.275–279).

Water as cover, matrix, and refuge

Peeping forth from foliage or water, even being close to water, conveys in Nonnus a sense of timorous uncovering, of uncertainty over how much exposure is safe, and when. Water in the poem (over 1000 references to water in some form) commonly serves as a matrix, a metaphorical womb. It is the natural home and refuge of shy nymphs.[45] Water, as we have

[42] 7.259, 262. The isotopy of wavy water and wavy hair reveals the links between that which protects when controlled and brings danger when not. See G. Durand, *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary* (Brisbane 1999) 98–99.

[43] Spearing, *Medieval Poet* 130.

[44] 5.375–379, 405–406. Cf. the bereaved and unshod daughter of Deriades, Protone (40.109), the unveiled and loose-haired Indian widow (24.195), the unshod nymph who mourned Hymnus (15.373).

[45] Cf. Larson, *Greek Nymphs* 8–10, pointing out the etymological connections of Naiads and ναίω, *flow*.

seen, is also a form of clothing that both protects modesty and excites the imagination. For example, the alluring sight of Galatea half-hidden in the water is enough to entrance Polyphemus so that he stays behind and does not join Dionysus' army (14.65). With water itself serving as a veil, to peep unveiled from the sea, as Thetis does at Dionysus, is a doubled exposure.[46] The risky assertiveness of the Naiad who in a double or even triple exposure peeps forth unshod and unveiled from the bloody waters of Hydaspes to denounce Indian-killing Aeacus, calling on him to stop, is mitigated by her water-embedded position (22.391). When nymphs lose their watery home, their lack of cover is expressed in terms of undress. Having bathed herself in a very circumspect way, Artemis, standing near the river bank and wringing out her hair, is only "half-visible" in the covering water, as Aura stands beside her looking at her breasts (48.347–350). Similarly, Nicaea is half-visible as she washes in a stream but is still careful, as if aware she is being watched (and she is, by Hymnus), lest a wind raise her robe up to her breasts and reveal her genitals, exactly what Hymnus prays for.[47] The Oceanid Clymene, standing in waist-deep water, is half-visible as she watches her son Phaethon ascend Helios' chariot (38.305). Erotically associated with Aphrodite, with fertility, and with shy yet shameless and shoeless nymphs, water is alluring, threatening, mysterious. Nonnus articulates the erotic associations when bathing Semele's rosy, blushing limbs "reddened the dark water: the flowing stream became a brilliant, desire-exciting meadow" (7.222–223). Meadow (λειμών) is also a term for female genitals.

The role of water as a protection and refuge, concealing from danger and exposure in the way clothes do, but also serving as

[46] 39.254. Cf. the Hamadryad who peeps half-visible from her leafy cluster and sings as other, less cautious nymphs join in a great Dionysian revel (22.7–15). For the shy nymph who remains half-visible while celebrating a "wedding," see 48.641. In fact, it is Dionysus' rape of the sleeping Aura that is being celebrated, which only the much stronger being, Artemis, is able to behold.

[47] 15.250. Fantasy overrides the logic that suggests a wet robe would not easily be flicked by a breeze. However, a wet, clinging garment reveals more.

sanctuary and a body that should not be pried into and violated, is particularly clear in the Lycurgus-Dionysus episode. Attacked by Hera and Lycurgus together, Dionysus fled and plunged into the Red Sea. There he was embraced, comforted, and hospitably received by Thetis and Nereus. Lycurgus shouted from the shore his desire to penetrate the water and drag Dionysus and his former nurse Ino from "the bosom of the deep." This and his wish to flog the sea brought a rebuke and a warning from Zeus that such invasive impiety would cost him his eyesight, as it did Teiresias when he saw the unseeable (20.354–404).

Confronting or avoiding the discomforting: fear of looking

The riskiness of prying and peeping in the *Dionysiaca* is taken to absurd lengths and shows how unconfident some viewers are when a goddess like Thetis peeps out of the water and feels so inferior at the sight of Beroe's beauty that she sinks back in shame, as if someone *might* have spotted her peeping and compared her unfavourably with Beroe. Her fear was twofold: of being seen peeping and of being considered less beautiful (41.233). "One need not be watched to experience shame. It is enough to be forced to recognise one's vulnerability to being watched and to be an object in the eyes of some other subject."[48] Ironically at that moment, Thetis' very fear and embarrassment, if observed, would have rendered her more attractive to the sadistic instincts of some.[49] A striking example of shrinking-back-in-shame vulnerability occurs when a laurel tree, hit by a cloud of arrows, hides under its leaves "lest Apollo see it shot with arrows."[50] Shrinking in embarrassment, battle-hardened Chalcomede withdraws her gaze and turned away at the sight of Morrheus bathing in the sea. More confronting are such highly charged, bated-breath visions of the primal scene,

[48] Spearing, *Medieval Poet* 10.

[49] See Greene, *CW* 92 (1999) 413.

[50] 17.341. Cf. the Indian Habathroos who had been humiliated by Deriades by having his head shaved and hid his "hairless temples" under a helmet (26.159). When Ares shrinks back in shame (to be less visible, presumably) at the depiction of Aphrodite with a shield (25.158), is this embarrassment for her or at the implied devaluation of his own prowess?

when the potential embarrassment of detection is so great for viewer and viewed. The peril and the stimulation are reduced by making the scene and/or the viewer "half-visible." Because the scene is so fraught and confronting, Echo in shame hides herself beneath a rock *lest* she behold the violent "wedding" of Dionysus and Aura (48.642–644). Similarly, Nonnus makes a point of telling us that no immortal, no nymph, no all-seeing Phaethon, no soft-eyed Selene watched the love-making of Zeus and Hera (32.76–97). The wish, however, is father to the thought. The unconscious knows no negative, that is, the unsolicited denial of something betrays its lurking presence. Seeing the horrors and terrors of a sea-battle makes the Nereid Galatea cope with the horrors and terrors of a sea-battle by remaining half-visible in her matrix, the bosom of the sea.[51]

A minor motif of the *Dionysiaca* is the sidelong gaze. ὄμμα occurs 5 times with δόχμιον, 7 times with λοξόν. Insatiate or not, gazes need not be direct and frontal but furtive and sidelong in hope that the gazers will be undetected and enjoy the sight for longer: a form of veiling, therefore, a watching from cover. Thus, Ares ogled Aphrodite, Cadmus Harmonia, Hymnus Nicaea, Aura Artemis.[52] Sometimes it may be a way of showing disrespect or displeasure to someone, looking askance, as Pentheus does to Cadmus and Teiresias.[53] When, trembling, Maron watches with "sideways" (λοξῷ) eye his mime rival Selinus perform, it might be a mark of disrespect but it might also be that, unable to fully bear the sight in his nervousness about the outcome, he wanted to but feared to do so (19.222) This is probably why Dionysus looks sideways at his wounded favourite, Hymenaeus, unwilling to behold an unwelcome sight.[54]

[51] 39.257–262. Further indications of the fascination of the shy peeping motif for Nonnus: a nautilus peeps out of the sea long enough to be a model for the first ship; a ship's stern, which is always partly submerged, peeps out of water (40.506, 45.145).

[52] 6.242, 4.248, 15.238, 48.341, and cf. 43.142.

[53] 45.64. At other times, it seems to be a case of catching someone or something out of the corner of the eye, like the audience who espied runners in a race as they came into view (10.414).

[54] 29.152. Similarly, a girl depicted on a shield averts her gaze in grief at the death of her father (3.219). On averted gaze and low self-esteem, see D.

Conclusion

To hide and not look, or disclose and look? If the latter, for how long should one forsake privacy and remain exposed? Stay out too far and too long, and one could be physically, and emotionally, destroyed, not least by a toxic sense of shame, the brake that tries to curb the urge to see and be seen/exposed.[55] Withdraw too soon and too readily, and one becomes isolated and fails to achieve all one could, or even worse, is completely ignored. Sexual and invasive overtones typically characterise the terminology of inquiry: probing, penetrating, prying, digging, diving, immersion in a sea or body of knowledge, the possession of which confers status and power. There is an ambiguity about curiosity that corresponds to the voyeur-exhibitionist ambivalence. In the eighteenth century, the meaning of to *peep* or *peek* slid between the sense of an exposure to, like something being caught by an observer's eye (objective sense), and curious looking at (subjective application). Similarly, curiosity can mean either a subjective state of mind or the object scrutinised, a vulnerable, even shameful curiosity that exposes itself to possible domination and exploitation, to being known in the biblical sense.[56] That one mode easily becomes the other presents a dilemma for Nonnus' characters who crave security and secrecy as well as novelty, freedom, and the self-exposure that marks a degree of self-esteem. While to some extent it is formulaic to describe nymphs and nature spirits as erotically half-visible, unshod, unveiled, loose-haired, this image informs much behaviour in the poem and captures a sense of furtive, nervous exploration, invasive, sadistic scrutiny, and vulnerable, immodest assertion. In Nonnus, some scenes, activities, presences are so fraught and confronting that usually

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Cairns, "Bullish Looks and Sidelong Glances: Social Interaction and the Eyes in Ancient Greek Culture," in Cairns, *Body Language* 123–156, esp. 134–135.

[55] H. Lowenfeld, "Notes on Shamelessness," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 35 (1976) 62–72.

[56] R. Evans and A. Marr (eds.), *Curiosity and Wonder from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Aldershot 2006) xv.

only gods can safely behold and withstand them.[57] The underlying tension resolves, broadly and stereotypically, into tremulous, vulnerable female peepers (Hera and Artemis apart), and insatiate, predatory male starers, but the perils of exploration and the risks, while exercising curiosity, of becoming a curiosity and being mocked, reproached, or punished persist for all.[58]

December, 2007

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[57] The satyr watching the rape of Nicaea is an exception (16.309–311).

[58] My thanks to the *GRBS* referee for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.