



The Subjectivity of Fear as Reflected in Ancient Greek Wording

Citation

Nagy, Gregory. 2010. "The Subjectivity of Fear as Reflected in Ancient Greek Wording (updated, online version)." *Dialogues* 5: 29-45

Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37366708>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

The Subjectivity of Fear as Reflected in Ancient Greek Wording

Gregory Nagy

This essay was originally published in *Dialogues* 5 (2010) 29–45. In this on-line version, the original page-numbers of Nagy 2010 will be indicated within braces (“{” and “}”). For example, “{29|30}” indicates where p. 29 of the original printed version of the essay ends and p. 30 begins.¹

Introduction

In the first part of this essay, I will speak about ancient Greek wording relevant to what we translate as ‘fear’. In the second part, I will speak about the subjectivity of such fear, defining subjectivity in four different ways.

Part 1. Fear

I start, then, by considering the emotion that we call *fear*. There is no single word in ancient Greek that matches the modern English word *fear* in all its comprehensiveness. In the ancient Greek language as it comes down to us in surviving texts, there are several different

¹ The essay is based on two informal talks I gave at two separate events. The first event took place on November 14, 2009, at the University of Florida in Gainesville, and the second, on April 15, 2010, at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington. At the first event, organized by Professors Andrew Wolpert and Victoria Pagán, I was part of a small group of professors who were challenged to confront this question: why is fear such a misunderstood emotion in today’s world, and what can we learn about it from the ancient world? At the second event, organized by the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage, I was asked to say something about the human need for the divine. I am grateful to Anna Lea, President of the SPGH, who inspired me to see a connection between such a need and what I call in this essay the subjectivity of fear. She also invited me to publish my essay in *Dialogues*, which is the journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage. I am also grateful to Adele Uphaus-Conner for helping me prepare my text for publication in *Dialogues*.

ways of talking about *fear* as we understand that word. In this essay, I will concentrate on three of these different Greek words translated as ‘fear’:

- 1) noun δέος (*deos*), verb δείδια
- 2) noun φόβος (*phobos*), verb φοβέομαι
- 3) noun ἔκπληξις (*ekplēxis*), verb ἐκπλήσσομαι

Let us take a closer look at each of these three words:

(1) The noun δέος (*deos*) and the corresponding verb δείδια derive from the root *dw- / *du-, meaning ‘two’, which is also attested in the Latin noun *dubium*, meaning ‘doubt’. For a parallel relationship in meaning, we may compare the German noun *Zweifel*, meaning ‘doubt’, {29|30} which is derived from *zwei*, meaning ‘two’. For the relationship between the meanings ‘fear’ and ‘doubt’ we may compare the French words *douter* ‘doubt’ and *redouter* ‘fear’ (and we may note the English derivative *redoubtable*). So why are ‘fear’ and ‘doubt’ derived from the meaning ‘two’? It is because you feel two ways about something when you are in doubt, when you are afraid. In the language of Homeric Greek, for example, to be ‘afraid’ (δείδιμεν) is to feel ‘in a double way’ (ἐν δοιῇ) ...

δείδιμεν· ἐν δοιῇ δὲ σαωσέμεν ἢ ἀπολέσθαι

νῆας εὐσσέλμους,

We are afraid. It can go either way, whether we can save or lose
the ships with their fair benches.

Iliad 9.230–231

It is a primal feeling, such fear, as when a deer is caught in the headlights of a speeding car. You can just see the deer’s two fearful eyes reflecting the two “suns” radiating from the two headlights. What will happen? It can go either way for the deer, *fight or flight*.

(2) φόβος (*phobos*), φοβέομαι, from the root *bhegh- ‘run’, as in the Russian verb *begù* ‘I run’. I note that φέβεται (*phebetai*) means ‘runs away’ while φοβέω (*phobeō*) means literally ‘I cause to run away’. The relationship of φέβεται (*phebetai*) / φοβέω (*phobeō*) is parallel to the relationship of σέβεται (*sebetai*) / σοβέω (*sobeō*). Now the Greek verb σέβεται (*sebetai*) means ‘worships [a god]’, and it is cognate with the Sanskrit verb *tyájate*, which refers to such sacred moments as when birds flutter away at the approach of a god. What, then, does the Greek verb σοβέω (*sobeō*) mean? On the basis of the available comparative evidence, we would expect that the subject of σοβέω (*sobeō*) is an {30|31} overpowering divine force that is rushing toward you. Such a subject can be reconstructed from the three alternative meanings of σοβέω (*sobeō*) as given in the dictionary of Liddell, Scott, and Jones. I paraphrase here those three meanings:

- 4) A. ‘I scare away birds’ (as in Aristophanes Birds 34, οὐδενὸς σοβοῦντος).
- 5) B. ‘I move rapidly or violently’.
- 6) C. ‘I walk in a superior way’.

Put these three meanings together for σοβέω (*sobeō*), and you can see clearly the close parallel with φοβέω (*phobeō*), which means literally ‘I cause to run away’. This parallel matches the parallel between σέβεται (*sebetai*) ‘worships [a god]’ and φέβεται (*phebetai*) ‘runs away’. And the meaning of σέβεται (*sebetai*) ‘worships [a god]’ matches the meaning of the cognate Sanskrit *tyájate* ‘flutters away at the approach of a god’.

(3) ἔκπληξις (*ekplēxis*), ἐκπλήσσομαι, means literally ‘shock’ or ‘astonishment’. Here are some examples, all taken from the prose of Thucydides:

- (a) Thucydides 3.11.2 τὸ δὲ ἀντίπαλον δέος μόνον πιστὸν ἐς ξυμμαχίαν
‘commensurate mutual fear [deos] is the only sure thing as a basis for an

alliance.’ (From the speech of the people of Mytilene at Olympia, addressed to the people of Sparta.)

(b) Thucydides 6.78.2 εἴ τέ τις φθονεῖ μὲν ἢ καὶ φοβεῖται ‘And if someone is envious or is even afraid [*phobeîsthai*] (for it is inevitable that great powers have these things happen to them [= to be envied and feared]...’ (From the speech of Hermocrates addressed to the people of Camarina, warning them that Athens {31|32} will attack them too if they conquer Syracuse.)

(c) Thucydides 4.125.1 νυκτός τε ἐπιγενομένης, οἱ μὲν Μακεδόνες καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν βαρβάρων εὐθὺς φοβηθέντες, ὅπερ φιλεῖ μεγάλα στρατόπεδα ἀσαφῶς ἐκπλήγνυσθαι, καὶ νομίσαντες πολλαπλασίους μὲν ἢ ἦλθον ἐπιέναι, ὅσον δὲ οὕτω παρεῖναι, καταστάντες ἐς αἰφνίδιον φυγὴν ἐχώρουν ἐπ’ οἴκου ‘When night came on, the Macedonians and the mass of barbarians suddenly became frightened [*phobeîsthai*], which often happens to great armies, that they become panic-stricken [*ekplēgnusthai*]. And, thinking that an army many times more numerous than the number that had really arrived was advancing and was about to attack them, they suddenly broke and fled in the direction of home.’
(The defection of the Illyrian allies panics the Macedonians allied with Brasidas.)

So here we see the mentality of *ekplēxis* as ‘panic’. Here are two further examples...

(d) Thucydides 2.96.1 καὶ ἔκπληξις ἐγένετο οὐδεμιᾶς τῶν κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἐλάσσων ‘and a panic [*ekplēxis*] ensued as great as any that occurred during the war’. (The Athenians panic about the safety of Piraeus when they see fire-signals lit on the island of Salamis.)

(e) Thucydides 7.71.7 ἦν τε ἐν τῷ παραυτικά οὐδεμιᾶς δὴ τῶν ξυμπασῶν ἐλάσσων ἔκπληξις ‘And the panic [*ekplēxis*] of the present moment was as great as any of all the other cases [of panic in the war]’. (The Athenians panic when they are trapped in the battle of Syracuse).

In the narrative of Thucydides, we can see here a crescendo of panic. Each instance of great panic that defies {32|33} the imagination leads to another instance of even greater panic that defies the imagination all the more. But the ultimate panic is yet to come...

(f) Thucydides 8.96.1-2 τοῖς δὲ Ἀθηναίοις ὡς ἦλθε τὰ περὶ τὴν Εὐβοίαν γεγενημένα, ἔκπληξις μεγίστη δὴ τῶν πρὶν παρέστη. οὔτε γὰρ ἡ ἐν τῇ Σικελίᾳ ξυμφορά, καίπερ μεγάλη τότε δόξασα εἶναι, οὔτε ἄλλο οὐδέν πω οὕτως ἐφόβησεν ‘When the news of what had happened in Euboea reached the Athenians, there was the greatest panic [*ekplēxis*] of them all, greater than any of the previous cases [of panic in the war]. Neither the disaster in Sicily, however great it had seemed at the time, nor any other thing ever had so frightened [*phobeîn*] them.’

This same word *ekplēxis*, which can be translated as ‘panic’ in moments when a whole community experiences fear, is used also in situations where the community is understood to be the audience in a theatrical performance. The audience of Athenian State Theater, as a notional community, can experience such *ekplēxis* vicariously by way of collectively reacting to a primal fear experienced by one single person who is larger than life, the hero. That is what Aristotle has in mind in the *Poetics* (1455a17) when he speaks of the *ekplēxis* experienced by the audience in reacting to the primal fear experienced by Oedipus as acted by an actor in the tragedy of Sophocles that bears the hero’s name, *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

In using the word *ekplēxis* in this context, Aristotle has in mind the moment when Oedipus recognizes who he really is, which is a moment of primal fear for the hero. In this context, Aristotle does not have to mention fear as the defining emotion of Oedipus at the moment of recognition. He mentions instead the *ekplēxis* experienced by {33|34} the audience in collectively reacting to the primal fear experienced by Oedipus, which is for the hero his own *ekplēxis*. The emotion of fear as experienced by Oedipus, which is his primal *ekplēxis*, transcends any single emotion for the audience experiencing their collective *ekplēxis*. For the audience, their *ekplēxis* comes from the shock and awe of experiencing the full impact of primal emotions experienced by the hero—emotions that are larger than life because the hero is larger than life. When that full impact becomes weakened, however, then the original shock and awe can become merely awe. That is what happens to an English word like “terrific,” which has lost its power to express the sense of shock that still resides in a word like “terrible.”

A sense of awe, even without the primal fear, makes for powerful theater. A case in point is a passage in Plato’s *Ion* (535b) where the word *ekplēxis* captures the awe experienced by an audience of 20,000 when Ion the rhapsode re-enacts scenes of fear and pity in his performances of Homeric poetry.

By now we have seen that the primal emotion of collective fear, as conveyed by the word *ekplēxis*, transcends other emotions in the realm of theatrical performance. And now we will see that the divine force behind this collective fear is the god of theater himself, Dionysus.²

Part 2. The subjectivity of fear

I proceed to consider the word *subjectivity*, and I have four things to say about it:

7) In the usage of everyday people, *subjectivity* is simply the opposite of *objectivity*.

² On Dionysus as god of theater and as god of all forms of *mimēsis*: Nagy 2007 / 2009.

8) In the usage of philosophers, *subjectivity* is a key word {34|35} for debating questions about the nature of the human *self* and about the ways in which that self operates in the context of historical contingencies. Even in this kind of usage, the word *subjectivity* is normally treated as the opposite of *objectivity*.

9) In the usage of linguists, *subjectivity* can be analyzed *grammatically* in terms of *person*. When I say *person* here, I mean the first, second, and third persons of personal pronouns and verbs. The classic study of grammatical persons is by Émile Benveniste.³

1) As Benveniste shows, the grammatical first person singular or the 'I' is the basis of subjectivity in its distinctness from the second person or the 'you' with whom the 'I' engages in what can best be described as a *dialogue*. Further, the 'I and you' dialogue of the first and the second persons is subjective in its distinctness from the third person, which can be a 'he' or a 'she' or an 'it' or a 'they' as well as a zero person who is neither a first nor a second person, as when we use the pronoun 'it' in making a statement like 'it is raining'.

2) To what extent, though, is the third person objective? In terms of linguistics, we can say that even the objectivity of the third person depends on the subjectivity of the first and the second persons. When I speak with you and I say 'he' or 'she' or 'it' or 'they', the identity that is marked by these pronouns in the third person depends on whom or what we mean when we use these third-person pronouns 'he' or 'she' or 'it' or 'they'. In our dialogue, we may also use nouns for identifying the various persons that mark what we are speaking about. For example, 'he' may be the king of Thebes and 'she' may be his mother, while 'it' may be the sun that shines and 'they' may be the mother

³ Benveniste 1958. See the Bibliography.

{35|36} and the aunts of the king. But the objectivity of these identifications of personal pronouns in the third person with corresponding nouns still depends on the subjectivity of the dialogue between the first and the second persons.

3) In the use of personal pronouns, we can say that all three persons are subjective, in that the making of references by way of all three persons can *shift*, depending on the subjectivity of the speaker who owns the personal pronoun 'I' at the moment of speaking. When I say 'I' or 'you' to you, the 'I' is I and the 'you' is you, but when you say 'I' or 'you' to me, then the 'I' is you and the 'you' is I, and these usages of 'I' and 'you' will shift depending on who is speaking to whom. Likewise in the third person, 'he' and 'she' and 'it' and 'they' will shift identities depending on who is speaking about whom or what.⁴ There can even be shifts in inclusiveness and exclusiveness in what we say in an 'I and you' dialogue. For example, when I say 'we' in English I can *include* you if I mean 'I and you' or *exclude* you if I mean 'I and he' or 'I and she' or 'I and they'.

4) What makes it possible to study the subjective uses of shifting personal pronouns objectively is the fact that every occasion of speech where a speaker uses the pronoun 'I' is a historical contingency that is located in the context of the time and the place when the speaker spoke. When I or you study such a historical contingency, our own speaking about it may be ultimately subjective, but we can be objective about the contingency to the extent that we can keep ourselves aware of our own historical contingencies.

⁴ On the linguistic concept of the *shifter*, I refer to the work of Jakobson 1957. See again the Bibliography.

5) So far, I have said three of the four things I wanted to say about *subjectivity* with reference to the emotion of *fear* as reflected in ancient Greek wording and syntax. Now I come to the fourth. {36|37}

10) Just as *subjectivity* can be analyzed in terms of the *person* in *grammar*, it can also be analyzed in terms of the *persona* in *theater*. When I say *persona*, I mean not only a dramatic *character* like, say, the young man Pentheus who is king of Thebes in the tragedy *The Bacchic Women* (or *Bacchae*) composed by Euripides. I mean also the *mask* worn by the actor who represented Pentheus at the premiere of the drama in the late fifth century—as also the corresponding masks worn by countless later actors who represented Pentheus in countless ‘re-runs’ of the drama in later times. In Latin the noun *persona* actually means ‘theatrical mask’. And in Greek, the noun πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*) likewise means ‘theatrical mask’. More than that, Greek πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*) refers not only to the *persona* in *theater* but also to the *person* in *grammar*, whether it be the first or the second or the third person. *And the Greek theatrical mask, as indicated by the word πρόσωπον (prosōpon), is a subjective agent, an ‘I’ who is looking for a dialogue with a ‘you’.*

The subjectivity of the πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*) as a mask used in theater is evident in the components of the word, which derive from the syntax of expressing the mutuality of looking straight at another person who is looking straight back at you. But the mutuality of this act of looking at each other is uneven in the ritualized setting of ancient Greek theater. That is because the ultimate model for this mutuality of looking at each other in theater is the god of ancient Greek theater himself, Dionysus, who is seen as the ultimate subjective agent. As the god of *theatron*, which means literally ‘the instrument for looking’ (this noun combines the root of the verb *theâsthai*, which means ‘look’, with the suffix of instrumentality, *-tron*),

Dionysus is the god of the instrumentality of looking, and the actual instrument for looking is the mask or πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*). {37|38}

In the interaction of ancient Greek myth and ritual, the god in the myth is the model for the ritual in which his human worshippers engage—and that is how Dionysus becomes the rôle model for the ritualized use of masks in Greek theater. The god shows the way. As the rôle model, he is the absolute model for all the rôles, all the personae, all the persons of ancient Greek theater. And he is also the absolute model for every *pathos* or ‘emotion’ experienced by every person, as enacted through the *mimēsis* or ‘re-enactment’ achieved by way of theater. Yes, the god shows the way, and he can do so *by wearing a mask himself*.

By wearing a mask, Dionysus becomes the ultimate agent of subjectivity, the ultimate model for all other agents of subjectivity. That is why Dionysus can be represented in the ancient Greek visual arts as wearing a mask that must be recognized as the ultimate mask, the mask that ends all masks, which is the face of the god himself.

I give here an example. It is a line drawing of a terracotta representation of the god Dionysus wearing a mask. The terracotta representation is housed in the Louvre; its provenience is Myrina, and it is dated to the second century BCE. {38|39}



[[Caption for the illustration: Mask of Dionysus, found in Myrina (now in Turkey).
Terracotta. 2nd-1st centuries BCE. Paris. Musée du Louvre. Department of Greek,
Etruscan and Roman Antiquities (Myr. 347). Line drawing by Valerie Woelfel.]]

What we see is the god Dionysus wearing a mask, or, better, wearing a face that is his mask, and this mask is the ultimate mask because it shows the looks of his own face. That is the point of such a representation of the god of masks, who is the god of theater.

I see here a fusion of emotions: there is fear, and there is also sorrow and anger and hate and love and happiness. But the dominant emotion that I see here is fear, in the sense of the shock and awe induced by the feeling of *ekplēxis*. Dionysus fuses all emotions into one single primal emotion.

What happens, then, when ‘you’ look at such a mask? In other words, what happens when the ‘I’ who is looking for a dialogue with you is the ultimate agent of subjectivity, even the god of subjectivity? My answer, and this is the first of two conclusions, is that ‘you’ *experience the emotion of primal fear, because ‘you’ are looking at the god of absolute subjectivity*, looking him in the face, looking back at him as he is looking at ‘you’. This kind of primal fear is an emotion that transcends all other human emotions.

Which brings me to the second of the two conclusions, and it is this: *this transcendent emotion of primal fear is the primary emotion of ancient Greek theater, and the emotions of sorrow and anger and hate and love and even of happiness are all secondary to it*. It is the *ekplēxis* experienced in theater. {39|40}

To make this point come alive, I close with the confrontation of Pentheus the king of Thebes with Dionysus the god of theater:

Euripides *Bacchae* 912–944, 971–976

{Δι.} σὲ τὸν πρόθυμον ὄνθ' ἅ μὴ χρεῶν ὄρᾶν

σπεύδοντά τ' ἀσπούδαστα, Πενθέα λέγω,

ἔξιθι πάροιθε δωμάτων, ὄφθητί μοι,

915 σκευὴν γυναικὸς μαινάδος βιάκκης ἔχων,

μητρός τε τῆς σῆς καὶ λόχου κατάσκοπος·

πρέπεις δὲ Κάδμου θυγατέρων μορφὴν μιᾷ.

{Πε.} καὶ μὴν ὄρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίου δοκῶ,

δισσὰς δὲ Θήβας καὶ πόλισμ' ἐπτάστομον·

920 καὶ ταῦρος ἡμῖν πρόσθεν ἠγεῖσθαι δοκεῖς

καὶ σῶι κέρατα κρατὶ προσπεφυκέναι.

ἀλλ' ἦ ποτ' ἦσθα θήρ; τεταύρωσαι γὰρ οὔν.

{Δι.} ὁ θεὸς ὀμαρτεῖ, πρόσθεν ὧν οὐκ εὐμενής,

ἔνσπονδος ἡμῖν· νῦν δ' ὄραϊς ἅ χρή σ' ὄρᾶν.

925 {Πε.} τί φαίνομαι δῆτ'; οὐχὶ τὴν Ἴνους στάσιν

ἢ τὴν Ἀγαυῆς ἐστάναι, μητρός γ' ἐμῆς;

{Δι.} αὐτὰς ἐκείνας εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ σ' ὄρῶν.

ἀλλ' ἐξ ἔδρας σοι πλόκαμος ἐξέστηχ' ὄδε,

οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ νιν ὑπὸ μίτραι καθήρμισα.

930 {Πε.} ἔνδον προσείων αὐτὸν ἀνασειῶν τ' ἐγὼ

καὶ βακχιάζων ἐξ ἔδρας μεθώρμισα.

{Δι.} ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἡμεῖς, οἷς σε θεραπεύειν μέλει,

πάλιν καταστελοῦμεν· ἀλλ' ὄρθου κάρα.

{Πε.} ἰδοῦ, σὺ κόσμει· σοὶ γὰρ ἀνακείμεσθα δῆ.

935 {Δι.} ζῶναί τέ σοι χαλῶσι κούχ ἐξῆς πέπλων

στολίδες ὑπὸ σφυροῖσι τείνουσιν σέθεν.

{Πε.} κάμοι δοκοῦσι παρά γε δεξιὸν πόδα·

τάνθενδε δ' ὀρθῶς παρὰ τένοντ' ἔχει πέπλος.

{Δι.} ἦ πού με τῶν σῶν πρῶτον ἠγήσηι φίλων,

940 ὅταν παρὰ λόγον σώφρονας βάκχας ἴδης.

{Πε.} πότερα δὲ θύρσον δεξιᾷ λαβὼν χερὶ

ἢ τῆιδε βάκχηι μᾶλλον εἰκασθήσομαι;

{Δι.} ἐν δεξιᾷ χρῆ χᾶμα δεξιῶι ποδὶ

αἶρειν νιν· αἰνῶ δ' ὅτι μεθέστηκας φρενῶν. {40|41}

...

971 {Δι.} δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κάπὶ δείν' ἔρχηι πάθη,

ὥστ' οὐρανῶι στηρίζον εὐρήσεις κλέος.

ἔκτειν', Ἀγαυή, χεῖρας αἴθ' ὁμόσποροι

Κάδμου θυγατέρες· τὸν νεανίαν ἄγω

975 τόνδ' εἰς ἀγῶνα μέγαν, ὁ νικήσων δ' ἐγὼ

καὶ Βρόμιος ἔσται. τᾶλλα δ' αὐτὸ σημανεῖ.

{Dionysus:}

You there! Yes, I'm talking to you, to the one who is so eager to see the things
that should not be seen

and who hurries to accomplish things that cannot be hurried. I'm talking to you,
Pentheus.

Come out from inside the palace. Let me have a good look at you

915 wearing the costume of a woman who is a Maenad Bacchant,

spying on your mother and her company.

The way you are shaped, you look just like one of the daughters of Kadmos.

{Pentheus:}

What is this? I think I see two suns,⁵

and two images of Thebes, the seven-gated *polis*.

920 And you seem to lead us like a bull, and horns seem to have sprouted on your head.

Were you ever before a beast? You have certainly now become a bull.

{Dionysus:}

The god accompanies us, now at truce with us,
though formerly not propitious.

Now you see what it is right for you to see. {41|42}

{Pentheus:}

925 So what do I look like? Don't I strike the dancing pose [*stasis*] of Ino
or the pose struck by my mother Agaue?

{Dionysus:}

Looking at you I think I see them right now.

Oh, but look: this strand of hair [*plokamos*] here is out of place. It stands out,
not the way I had secured it underneath the headband [*mitra*].

{Pentheus:}

930 While I was inside, I was shaking it [= the strand of hair] forward and backward,

⁵ The two suns *are* Bromios and I. That delusional diplopia is humored, as it were, by Dionysus.

and, in the Bacchic spirit, I displaced it [= the strand of hair], moving it out of
place.

{Dionysus:}

Then I, whose concern it is to attend to you, will
arrange it [= the strand of hair] all over again. Come on, hold your head straight.

{Pentheus:}

You see it [= the strand of hair]? There it is! You arrange [*kosmeîn*] it for me. I
can see I'm really depending on you.

{Dionysus:}

935 And your waistband has come loose. And those things are not in the right order.

I mean, the pleats of your peplos, the way they
extend down around your ankles.

{Pentheus:}

That's the way I see it from my angle as well. At least, that's the way it is down
around my right foot,

but, on this other side, the peplos does extend in a straight line down around
the calf. {42|43}

{Dionysus:}

I really do think you will consider me the foremost among those dear to you
940 when, contrary to your expectations, you see the Bacchants in full control of
themselves [= *sōphrones*].

{Pentheus:}

So which will it be? I mean, shall I hold the thyrsus with my right hand
or with this other one? Which is the way I will look more like a Bacchant?

{Dionysus:}

You must hold it in your right hand and, at the same time, with your right foot
you must make an upward motion. I approve of the way you have shifted in
your thinking.

...⁶

{Dionysus:}

971 You are terrifying [*deinos*], terrifying [*deinos*], and you go to terrifying [*deina*]
sufferings [*pathos* plural],⁷

with the result that you will attain a glory [*kleos*] that reaches the heavens.

Extend your hands, Agave, and you too, her sisters,

daughters of Kadmos. I lead the youth

975 to this great ordeal [*aqōn*] and the victors will be I

and Bromios.⁸ The rest the affair itself will signal [*sēmainein*]. {43|44}

Bibliography

Benveniste, Émile. 1958. "De la subjectivité dans le langage." *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique* 1958:257–265. Reprinted in Benveniste 1966:258–266.

———. 1966. *Problèmes de linguistique générale*. Paris. = *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary

Elizabeth Meek. 1971. Coral Gables, FL. (I recommend especially the formulation about *intersubjectivity* on the last page, p. 266.)

⁶ Just before the wording that follows this point, Pentheus speaks of luxuriance.

⁷ To be *deinos* is to be stunning.

⁸ The diplopia of Pentheus is reflected in the way Dionysos speaks, as if his role as a *bakkhos* or ritual participant were distinct from his role as the *Bakkhos* or god.

Jakobson, Roman. 1957. *Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb*. Cambridge, MA.

Reprinted in Jakobson 1971:130–147.

———. 1971. *Selected Writings II*. The Hague.

Nagy, Gregory. 1994/5. “Transformations of Choral Lyric Traditions in the Context of Athenian State Theater.” *Arion* 3:41–55. The text of the article is also available online at <http://chs.harvard.edu>.

———. 2007. “Did Sappho and Alcaeus ever meet?” *Literatur und Religion*. Vol. 1, *Wege zu einer mythisch-rituellen Poetik bei den Griechen* (ed. Anton Bierl, Rebecca Lämmle, Katharina Wesselmann). *Basiliensia – MythosEikonPoiesis*, 1.1:211–269. Berlin. A second edition (Nagy 2009) has been published online at <http://chs.harvard.edu>.