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DIONYSIAC DRAMA AND THE DIONYSIAC MYSTERIES

In Euripides' *Bacchae* Dionysos visits Thebes in disguise to establish his mysteries there.[1] And so, given normal Euripidean practice,[2] it is almost certain that in the lost part of his final speech Dionysos actually prescribed the establishment of his mysteries in Thebes.[3] In the same way the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* tells how the goddess came in disguise to Eleusis and finally (vv. 476–82) established her mysteries there. After coming to Eleusis she performs certain actions in the house of king Celeus, for example the drinking of the κυκεών, which have long been recognized as corresponding to ritual undergone by the initiands in the Eleusinian mysteries.[4] It is the main thesis of this paper that just as elements of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* seem to derive from a ἱερὸς λόγος of the Eleusinian mysteries, so certain elements of the *Bacchae* derive from a ἱερὸς λόγος of the mysteries of Dionysos,[5] and that furthermore Euripides consciously alludes to the Dionysiac mysteries for a dramatic effect dependent on the religiosity of his audience, rather as Aeschylus alludes in the *Oresteia*, on the principle μαθοῦσιν αὐδῶ, to the mysteries of Eleusis.[6]

This case will suffer from two drawbacks. Firstly there is the general scepticism about ritual patterns in drama arising as a reaction to the excesses of, for example, Murray and Cornford.[7] This means that a far greater degree of probability seems to be required from suggestions of this kind than from the more traditional mode of speculation of, say, textual criticism. And secondly, it must be immediately and frankly admitted both that we do not know much about the mysteries of Dionysos and that most of what we do know is from the Hellenistic and Roman period. In the argument that follows recourse will sometimes be had to two assumptions. The first is to suppose a degree of continuity between the Dionysiac mysteries of the classical and later periods. This assumption is based firstly on the observable continuity of the mysteries: for example the antiquity of the Eleusinian ritual described by Plutarch, which will form an important part of my argument, is attested by Aristophanes and Plato.[8] And it is based secondly on general considerations: conservatism is of the essence of those rituals in which a community such as a *thiasos* perpetuates itself by the transmission

[1] *Ba.* 20 ff., 40, 49, 465, 470, 1387.

[2] W. S. Barrett on E. *Hipp.* 1423: 'at the end of all his tragedies save *Tr.* – I exclude the satyric *Cy.* and the prosatyric *Al.*; the end of *I.A.* is spurious, of *Ba.* lacunose – Eur. gives a similar prophecy of 5th-century cult or nomenclature or the like; on the lips of the *deus ex machina* if there is one'.

[3] cf. τὰ μὲν πᾶσι παρήγγειλεν... in the hypothesis.

[4] esp. vv. 192–211: Richardson, pp. 24 ff., 209–17, 231–6, etc. Here and elsewhere references may be to the bibliography at the end.

[5] The ἱερὸς λόγος was associated especially with the mysteries, and so were λεγόμενα (contrasted with δρώμενα), as the myth enacted in, or at least corresponding to, the ritual: v. Burkert (1972), p. 43 n. 14, also n. 18 below.

[6] Convincingly demonstrated by Thomson (1935), pp. 20–34, 228–30, and idem (1966), index s.v. Eleusinian Mysteries; v. also Tierney.

[7] Pickard-Cambridge (1927), pp. 185–207, 329–52.

[8] Thomson (1935), p. 25; v. also n. 37 below. Another example: at Eleusis the drinking of the κυκεών is reflected in the archaic *h. hom. Dem.* and reported a thousand years later by the Christian fathers (Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2. 21; Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* 5. 26). On the persistence of the κέρνος from the Minoan period through Eleusis to the present day v. Nilsson (1967), I. pp. 304 f. Dionysiac: Nilsson (1967), I. p. 144.

of a ritual treasured as originally taught by their god.[9] The second assumption is to suppose, on the basis of numerous observable similarities,[10] an essential similarity between the Dionysiac mysteries and the Eleusinian, about which we are well informed even for the classical period. These assumptions, even if used with caution, may appear questionable. But there is no circularity involved in suggesting that they may acquire support from the argument as a whole. It should also be said that there may be in the play allusions lost on those as relatively ignorant as we are of the mysteries.

Of the fifth-century evidence for the Dionysiac mysteries the most important is the *Bacchae* itself.[11] The chorus of maenads enter, and after a prelude (64–72) sing

> ὦ
> μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαίμων
> τελετὰς θεῶν εἰδὼς
> βιοτὰν ἁγιστεύει καὶ
> θιασεύεται ψυχὰν κτλ.

Dodds remarks correctly in his commentary that the word τελετή does not always mean 'initiation'.[12] But that it does refer to initiation here is fortunately settled by a number of parallels, some of them quoted by Dodds himself, in which μακαρισμός of this kind refers to initiation into the Eleusinian and other mysteries.[13] The initiate attains to εὐδαιμονία (73) by becoming part of the *thiasos*: θιασεύεται ψυχάν (75).

τελετὰς θεῶν εἰδώς. The imparting to the initiands of *knowledge* was a general feature of mystic initiation. For example, it provides the basis for the elaborate parody in Aristophanes' *Clouds* of mystic initiation (probably the Eleusinian),[14] and for the adoption by the philosophers of mystic terminology.[15] At Eleusis we hear both of λεγόμενα[16] and of a παράδοσις τῶν μυστηρίων, which Burkert takes to have been in mythical form.[17] λεγόμενα (contrasted with δρώμενα) and the ἱερὸς λόγος are associated especially with the mysteries, including the Dionysiac.[18] Such knowledge

[9] cf. Burkert (1972), pp. 34 f., 67; Burkert (1979), p. 49.

[10] e.g. terminology (μυστήρια, ὄργια, etc.), function (εὐδαιμονία of initiate), secrecy, ἱεροὶ λόγοι, *cista mystica*, revelation of sacred objects: v. Burkert (1977), pp. 413 ff. For an actual connection between the Dionysiac and the Eleusinian v. Nilsson (1967), I. p. 599. Indeed the *Ba.* may have been influenced by the Eleusinian mysteries themselves.

[11] v. also Hdt. 4. 79, Ar. *Ran.* 357, the funerary inscr. from Cumae (Schwyzer 792; cf. West in *ZPE* 18, 3 (1975), 234 ff.), Nock, p. 795 (*Mnemos.* 5 (1952), 183).

[12] But even the examples he gives (Theophrastus' Δεισιδαίμων going every month τελεσθησόμενος to the Ὀρφεοτελεστής, and Pi. *Ol.* 10. 51 of the Olympic games) do not convince, for a ritual may change its function while retaining its name. Ὀρφεοτελεσταί did initiate people (Plut. *Mor.* 224e) and to be regularly initiated is no doubt ludicrously superstitious. The Olympics originated (Pi. says ἐν πρωτογένει τελετᾷ: cf. Plut. *Vit. Thes.* 25. 4) in initiatory ritual: Brelich, pp. 451 ff., Thomson (1946), pp. 113–19: on τελετή v. now Graf, p. 32.

[13] Richardson, pp. 313 f.

[14] A. Dieterich in *RhM* 48 (1893), 275–83; cf. Burkert (1972), p. 296.

[15] Herakleitos: Thomson in *JHS* 73 (1953), 77 ff.; Empedocles: E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 100 n. 1; Plato and his successors: bibliography in Burkert (1972), p. 227 n. 11 (add Thomson, 1935, pp. 20 ff. and Richardson, pp. 313 f.): cf. Brelich, pp. 75–8.

[16] Mylonas, pp. 272 ff.

[17] Theon Smyrn. *Math.* p. 14 Hiller, 19, 26; p. 15. 7. Burkert (1977), p. 428 (allowing nevertheless that πάθος was more important than μάθος: Aristot. fr. 15; cf. P. Foucart, *Les Mystères d'Eleusis* (Paris, 1914), pp. 415 ff.); cf. Pausan. 8. 15. 1–2 (γράμματα are read to the μύσται of Demeter at Pheneus in a ritual claimed to be like the Eleusinian); Isoc. *Panegyr.* 28; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5. 71. 1.

[18] Burkert (1972), p. 43 n. 14; (1977), p. 415; Dionysiac: e.g. on the decree of Ptolemy Philopator, F. Jesi in *Aegyptus* 41 (1961), 141 ff., G. Zuntz in *CQ* 44 (1950), 70 ff.: also Kern, pp. 1302 ff., Dem. 18. 259, 19. 199 (cf. Burkert, 1977, p. 278), Livy 39. 18. 3, Bieber in *JDAI* 43 (1928), 312.

was in general kept from the uninitiated. Although Teiresias instructs Pentheus in the benefits conferred by Dionysos on mankind, Dionysos cannot tell Pentheus much about his *ὄργια*, for they are *ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν* (472). When Pentheus asks how they benefit the participants, Dionysos both disappoints and excites his interest: *οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ'· ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναι* (474). He simultaneously draws Pentheus towards knowledge of his *ὄργια* and keeps him outside. It is in the same spirit that he reveals more than Pentheus learns, for he reveals it in a riddling manner, which may intrigue and yet baffle the uninitiated and make full sense only to the initiated. An example occurs at verses 477–80:[19]

ΠΕ. τὸν θεὸν ὁρᾶν γὰρ φῄς σαφῶς, ποῖός τις ἦν;
ΔΙ. ὁποῖος ἤθελ'· οὐκ ἐγὼ 'τασσον τόδε.
ΠΕ. τοῦτ' αὖ παρωχέτευσας εὖ κοὐδὲν λέγων.
ΔΙ. δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν.

Here *ἀμαθής*, which in general means ignorant or boorish, probably also carries the particular sense 'uninitiated'.[20] Pentheus fails to take the hint that the god is before his very eyes (cf. 502). It is only after dressing as a maenad that he (dimly) perceives his power of self-transformation (920 ff.); for he sees Dionysos as a bull, whereupon Dionysos remarks (924) *νῦν δ' ὁρᾷς ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν*.

Were riddling utterances employed in the ritual of mystic initiation in order to confuse and stimulate the initiand? That the riddling language of satyric drama and dithyramb (and, in a vestigial form, of tragedy) originates in the ritual of Dionysiac initiation I have argued elsewhere.[21] But of the language used in mystic initiation we know very little.[22] All the more tantalizing therefore is the suggestion that the verses of the Thurian gold leaves[23] of the fourth century B.C. derive from a ceremony of mystic initiation.[24] For example, the verses in which they appear to culminate[25]

χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα τὸ δ' οὔπω πρόσθε ἐπεπόνθεις.
θεὸς ἐγένου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου· ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες.

must be allowed even by the cautious Zuntz to be worded as a ritual formula; and according to Burkert 'wird offenbar Bezug genommen auf ein Initiationsritual'.[26] If so, then the central event of the ritual was presented to the initiand, in the ritual itself, in riddling language.[27] The point of *ἔριφος ἐς γάλα ἔπετες* is unknown. One view refers it to the assimilation of the initiand to Dionysos.[28]

Demetrius in his essay *On Style*[29] points out that any hinting expressing (*ὑπονοούμενον*) is *φοβερώτερον*, and will be variously interpreted, whereas what is stated clearly and obviously is likely to be despised. He continues *Διὸ καὶ τὰ μυστήρια ἐν ἀλληγορίαις λέγεται πρὸς ἔκπληξιν καὶ φρίκην, ὥσπερ ἐν σκότῳ καὶ νυκτί. ἔοικε δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀλληγορία τῷ σκότῳ καὶ τῇ νυκτί*. He then proceeds to warn against doing

[19] v. also 498–502, 518, 649–51, 656, 923 f., 955, 963–70 (v. below pp. 267–8).

[20] *Suda* s.v. *ἀμαθής· ἀμύητος*. cf. Ar. *Nub.* 135 (cf. 140, 492; n. 14 above); Aristid. Quint. *De Mus.* 3. 25 (p. 129 W–I); *Ba.* 490; cf. *ὑπό τινος τῶν ἔκτος* in hypoth. *Ba.*; with *ἀνόσιος* cf. nn. 183, 132 below.

[21] Seaford (1976 and 1977–8); cf. Brelich, pp. 74, 76.

[22] For Eleusis v. Richardson, pp. 22 f., 26 f.; for *μακαρισμοί* v. n. 70 below.

[23] Fundamental is Zuntz, pp. 277 ff.

[24] Wieten, *passim*; Burkert (1977), p. 439; J. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (3rd ed. Cambridge, 1922), pp. 572 ff.

[25] Zuntz, p. 343.

[26] Zuntz, p. 343; Burkert (1977), p. 439 (also 436 f.); cf. Athenag. 32. 1.

[27] v. also esp. A1. 5–9 (Zuntz, p. 301).

[28] e.g. v. Macchioro, *Zagreus* (Florence, 1929), p. 74; cf. Zuntz, pp. 323 f.

[29] Chs. 100 f.; written at some time between 275 B.C. and the first century A.D.: Russell and Winterbottom, *Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford, 1972), p. 172.

this continually, ὡς μὴ αἴνιγμα ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν γένηται. It is in the light of this neglected passage, and others like it[30] that we should interpret the passage of Plato's *Phaedo* (69c) in which it occurs to Socrates that the doctrine of the founders of τελεταί to the effect that a good fate in the next world awaits only the initiated is in fact a riddle, referring to those who have lived the philosophic life correctly.[31] This seems to me to have more point if based on the known riddling quality of mystic τελεταί, although we are certainly not compelled to the hypothesis. And much the same can be said of a passage in which Plutarch,[32] who was initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos,[33] refers to the doctrine of οἱ σοφώτεροι, which they conceal from the masses, concerning Dionysos (as one identity of the Delphian god): in telling of his suffering, dismemberment and rebirth they are telling riddles referring to his transformation[34] into the elements, animals and plants. Perhaps this conception of the passion and rebirth of Dionysos as a riddle derives from its narration[35] in the mysteries.[36]

A riddle stimulates and perplexes by a partial and apparently senseless description, and thereby creates admiration for its eventual solution. Now the purpose of ἀλληγορίαι in the mysteries, according to Demetrius, was ἔκπληξις and φρίκη. But what was the point of ἔκπληξις and φρίκη? Demetrius compares it to the effect produced by darkness and night. Now there are several passages that reveal that the transition of the initiand in the ritual of initiation, from miserable confusion to happy enlightenment, was accompanied by the appearance in the darkness of a marvellous light. For example, Plutarch in a famous passage describes the experiences undergone at Eleusis: πλάναι τὰ πρῶτα καὶ περιδρομαὶ κοπώδεις καὶ διὰ σκότους τινὲς ὑποπτοι πορεῖαι καὶ ἀτέλεστοι, εἶτα πρὸ τοῦ τέλους αὐτοῦ τὰ δεινὰ πάντα, φρίκη καὶ τρόμος καὶ ἱδρὼς καὶ θάμβος. Then there is the perception of a marvellous light, knowledge and joy (ἐκ δὲ τούτου φῶς τι θαυμάσιον κτλ.).[37] And on the Eleusinian ceremony of θρόνωσις Burkert has written:

> Unmittelbar verständlich ist auch die psychische Wirkung – nicht umsonst kommt das Verbinden oder Verhüllen der Augen bei Initiationen immer wieder vor –: blind, hilflos, preisgegeben muss der Initiand das Unbekannte über sich ergehen lassen, der Unterlegene, Nicht-Wissende umgeben von den Aktiven, 'Wissenden'; auf sich selbst zurückgeworfen, verunsichert, geängstigt, muss er die folgende Enthüllung, das neue Sehen als beseligende Befreiung erleben; im neuen kontakt zur Wirklichkeit ist er bereit, Göttliches zu schauen.[38]

As for the mysteries of Dionysos, it is surely the initiand's transition from fear and ignorance to idyllic certainty that is expressed in both of the scenes on either side of the sacred marriage in the great fresco in the Pompeian Villa Item.[39]

[30] Casel, pp. 36, 60, 63, 79, 92 f., 120 f., 122; esp. Iamb. *Vit. Pyth.* 103–4, 227, Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 15, *Vit. Pyth.* 41, Plotin. *Enn.* 5. 1. 7 (cf. 3. 6. 19, 1. 6. 6); R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* (Munich, 1962), pp. 161, 168, 334.

[31] καὶ κινδυνεύουσι καὶ οἱ τὰς τελετὰς ἡμῖν οὗτοι καταστήσαντες οὐ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι πάλαι αἰνίττεσθαι ὅτι ὃς ἂν ἀμύητος . . .

[32] *De E Ap. Delph.* 389a. [33] *Consol. ad Ux.* 611d.

[34] So too *Ba.* 478 refers enigmatically to the god's transformation; cf. *Cyc.* 519 ff. (below, p. 273), *Ba.* 276 ff., 286 ff.; n. 28.

[35] Burkert (1972), p. 249; (1977), p. 415; n. 125 below.

[36] cf. also Theodoret. *Graec. Aff. Cur.* 3. 84 (cf. Burkert, 1977, p. 428 n. 10), schol. Philostr. *Vit. Ap.* 1. 17 (cf. Seaford, 1977–8, pp. 88–92).

[37] Fr. 178; Plato (*Phaedo* 69c, 107d–108c, *Phdr.* 247a–254c, *Symp.* 210e) and Plutarch (*Mor.* 36e, 47a, 81e, 943c) allude to the same phenomenon, whether at Eleusis or in the mysteries generally: v. Thomson (1935), pp. 24 f., Boyancé in *REG* 75 (1962), 460 ff., Des Places in *Ann. Fac. Lettr. Sci. hum. Aix* 38 (1964), 9–23; n. 45 below.

[38] (1972), 295 f. (cf. 296 on the fears of Strepsiades); on the Eleusinian Ὄκνος v. Burkert (1977), p. 415; Graf, p. 193.

[39] Esp. if the winged flagellator is *Agnoia* (Lehmann in *JRS* 52 (1962), 62–8; R. Seaford, *Pompeii* (London, 1979), ch. 4).

It seems to me that this digression has produced a key to the understanding of the behaviour of Pentheus. Both Murray and Dodds remark correctly that Pentheus' behaviour in the first scene is that of a typical tragedy-tyrant. But events later in the play will reveal a Pentheus more unaccountably disturbed than any Kreon or Oedipus. And this is presaged in the first scene by Teiresias' blunt *μαίνῃ γὰρ ὡς ἄλγιστα* (326) and by the almost equally strong expression[40] used by Kadmos as Pentheus appears for the first time (214): *ὡς ἐπτόηται*. That in the allusions by Plato and Plutarch *πτόησις* is part of the experience of the mystic initiand[41] would be of dubious relevance, were it not for the subsequent behaviour of Pentheus. Let us take the episode of the imprisonment of Dionysos.[42]

Pentheus attempts to imprison Dionysos within the palace, but Dionysos escapes while fire appears around Semele's tomb and the palace is shaken. At 616–37 Dionysos describes to the joyful chorus the extraordinary behaviour of Pentheus within the palace. This behaviour resembles in detail the experiences of the initiands in the Eleusinian mysteries as described by Plutarch.[43] First of all, the stables are in darkness (510, 611: cf. *διὰ σκότους* in Plut.). In tying up a bull, which he thinks is Dionysos, Pentheus is *θυμὸν ἐκπνέων, ἱδρῶτα σώματος στάζων ἄπο, | χείλεσιν διδοὺς ὀδόντας* (620–1: cf. in Plut. *τὰ δεινὰ πάντα, φρίκη καὶ τρόμος καὶ ἱδρὼς καὶ θάμβος*). Then follows the shaking of the house and the fire at Semele's tomb. Pentheus, thinking that the house is on fire, rushes here and there (cf. in Plut. *πλάναι τὰ πρῶτα καὶ περιδρομαὶ κοπώδεις*). Abandoning this fruitless *μόχθος*[44] (627: cf. in Plut. *περιδρομαὶ κοπώδεις καὶ διὰ σκότους τίνες ὕποπτοι πορεῖαι καὶ ἀτέλεστοι*), and thinking that his prisoner has escaped, he rushes into the house with a sword: *ἴεται ξίφος κελαινὸν ἁρπάσας δόμων ἔσω* (628). The description continues (629 f.)

> *κἀθ' ὁ Βρόμιος, ὡς ἔμοιγε φαίνεται, δόξαν λέγω,*
> *φάσμ' ἐποίησεν κατ' αὐλήν· ὃ δ' ἐπὶ τοῦθ' ὡρμημένος*
> *ἦσσε κἀκέντει φαεννὸν ⟨αἰθέρ'⟩, ὡς σφάζων ἐμέ.*

Finally the palace falls to the ground, and Pentheus drops his sword exhausted (634 *κόπου δ' ὕπο*; cf. in Plut. *περιδρομαὶ κοπώσωις*), *φάσμα* (Jacobs) for the manuscripts' *φῶς* in 630 is accepted by Murray and by Dodds: 'Why should the king mistake "a light" for his prisoner?' asks Dodds. In Plutarch the ordeals of the initiand in the darkness are followed by the perception of a marvellous light (*φῶς τι θαυμάσιον*). And this contrast between suddent light and the preceding darkness is an emphasized feature of mystic initiation.[45] Now this mystic light seems, at least at Eleusis, to have been identified with the deity;[46] and this phenomenon, as we shall see, seems to underlie the description of Dionysos as *ὦ φάος κτλ.* at 608. In 628 the manuscripts' *ξίφος κελαινόν* is suspect in a passage otherwise free (as suits the pace) of merely

[40] e.g. the word's other occurrence in *Ba.* is of Agaue's excited delusion (1268).

[41] e.g. Plato, *Phaedo* 108b 1 *πολὺν χρόνον ἐπτοημένη*; Plut. *Mor.* 943c; n. 37 above; cf. Ar. *Nub.* 319 (and n. 14 above).

[42] 509–641 (v. also Dodds, 506 n., 647, 775–86, 794 f., 812 ff., 821 ff., 918–70). I owe much in the interpretation of this passage to George Thomson.

[43] The antiquity of the ritual described by Plut. is attested by Aristophanes and Plato: Thomson (1935), p. 25; nn. 8 and 37 above.

[44] *μόχθοι* in mystic initiation: cf. *Ba.* 904 and p. 260 and n. 69 below.

[45] e.g. Dio Chrys. 12. 387: more refs. in Burkert (1972), p. 304 n. 7, Richardson, p. 26, Thomson (1935), pp. 26 ff.

[46] With the divine child whose birth was announced by the hierophant *ὑπὸ πολλῷ πυρί*. One identification of this child was as Ploutos, whom Pindar, speaking of the mystic doctrine of life after death, calls *ἀστὴρ ἀρίζηλος, ἐτυμώτατον ἀνδρὶ φέγγος* (*Ol.* 2. 53; cf. Ar. *Ran.* 342 ff., S. *Ant.* 1146 ff. (with schol.); E. *Ion* 1074 ff.); Richardson, pp. 28 f., 316–20.

decorative epithets. And so Verrall was right to read κελαινῶν, barely an emendation,[47] to go with δόμων. In this way the epithet ceases to be merely decorative, as it prepares the contrast created by φῶς two lines later. Pentheus in the darkness of the house sees the light created by the god in the αὐλή and mistakes it for the god: this is no more surprising than the king mistaking a bull for the god. Both errors, so strange in a mere narrative, are derived from the cultic associations or identities of Dionysos. And so the emendation φάσμα is unnecessary.[48] Finally, the contrasting ἡσυχία of the seated onlooker Dionysos may also derive from ritual.[49]

The argument requires now some clarification. The *Bacchae*, like the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, shows us the reflection in myth of initiation ritual. But in the mode of this reflection there are differences. Most obviously, the figure corresponding to the initiand is in the hymn Demeter; in the drama, however, it is not the god but Pentheus. This distinction cannot be explained away simply by pointing to the resemblance between Pentheus and Dionysos.[50] It is rather a symptom of a distinction between the two myths in their relationship with the ritual. They must both of course avoid revealing the secret centre of the ritual (and here the dramatist must be particularly careful, in that the drama, as an *enactment* of myth, resembles ritual). But whereas Demeter's fasting, drinking of the κυκεών, and so on, gave probably an explanation, a model, and a significance to the same actions performed by the initiand as a preliminary to actual initiation, the experiences of Pentheus seem to express the *subjective* aspect of initiation, the ignorance, fear and confusion of the initiand. Of this there are two consequences for the myth. Firstly, the negative emotions of the initiand cannot coexist with the knowledge of an impending transition to certainty and joy. And so the transition is a secret, not to be revealed directly in the myth.[51] The myth is concerned primarily with the triumph over the hostility of the king, a conflict which may derive from historical reality.[52] Therefore – and this is the second consequence – the ambiguous emotion of the initiand, that combination of desire and disturbance which cannot exist in the god, is expressed rather in the god's enemy: within the hostility of Pentheus there is also both disturbance and desire. If there is anything at all comparable in the *Homeric Hymn*, it is the centre-piece of Demeter's visit to Eleusis – the episode, which probably had its counterpart in the ritual, in which Queen Metaneira sees Demeter, whom she has not recognized to be the goddess, putting her son Demophon in the fire and cries out in fear, thereby depriving him of immortality.[53]

Neither the hymn nor the play represents an initiation ceremony in the systematic way that Mozart's *Magic Flute* represents Masonic initiation rites.[54] The sufferings of Pentheus, expressing the ordeals of the initiand before the τέλος of the ritual, cannot,

[47] κελαινῶν easily corrupted to agree with adjacent ξίφος, and anyway ο and ω are constantly confused.

[48] If it were to prove correct, we would have to consider the φάσματα occurring in the Eleusinian and Dionysiac mysteries: v. n. 68 below.

[49] With ἥσυχος θάσσων ἔλευσσον cf. the seated women holding the flagellated initiand in the Villa Item fresco (n. 39 above), the Campana relief in the Louvre (*AJA* 37 (1933), p. xxxii, 2), p. 267 below (D. as μυσταγωγός), and (Eleusinian) Plut. fr. 178.

[50] Both transvestite (Gallini, pp. 216 ff.), dismembered as animals, their limbs collected again by their mothers: v. below p. 267; G. Murray in J. Harrison, *Themis* (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1927), p. 346.

[51] Though cf. below on 604 ff. and on 963 ff.

[52] Dodds, p. xxvi (add the detailed parallels with the suppression of the cult in Italy in 186 B.C. reported in Livy bk. 39).

[53] Richardson, pp. 232 f.; Burkert (1972), p. 309.

[54] J. Chailley, *The Magic Flute, Masonic Opera* (transl. 1927).

as I have explained, be allowed to pass into the joyful knowledge with which in fact the ritual ended. But this does not mean that the transition finds no expression in the myth. It occurs indeed in the same event, the liberation of Dionysos, as the experience of his followers the chorus. In a nocturnal mystic ritual described by Firmicus Maternus[55] the grief of the initiands at the death of their god is ended by the importation of light (*lumen infertur*) and the exhortation of the priest:

> θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου.
> ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐκ πόνων σωτηρία.

In the *Bacchae* the ἀθυμία (610) of the *thiasos* at the imprisonment of their god passes into fear (604) and trembling (607) at the shaking of the palace and at the sudden appearance of fire around the tomb of Dionysos' mother Semele, and then suddenly into joy at the appearance of Dionysos, who exhorts them to be of good courage (θαρσεῖτε).[56] They reply (608–9)

> ὦ φάος μέγιστον ἡμῖν εὐίου βακχεύματος,
> ὡς ἐσεῖδον ἀσμένη σε, μονάδ' ἔχουσ' ἐρημίαν.

Given that, at least at Eleusis, the fear and trembling of the initiands were dispelled by the appearance of a light apparently identified with the god, the power of this passage would for the original audience (especially for the initiated) derive from its expression of the emotions of mystic initiation. It might be objected against all this that the emotions of the *thiasos* need be no more than a natural reaction to events, and ὦ φάος κτλ. no more than a figure of speech. But this would be to ignore what has happened simultaneously to Pentheus. It can hardly be a mere coincidence that his experiences too seem to express those of the initiand, and that moreover they form an unmistakable antithesis to those of the god's followers. He embodies not only the ordeals of the initiand, but also, as the god's enemy, the negation of the desired ritual process. He rejects and attacks even the light in the darkness, and persists in his hostile and confused ignorance.

Pentheus' disturbed state is of course no less apparent in the later scenes. Why does he allow himself to be dressed as a maenad? The disguise serves no purpose in the story, for the king is willing to go ἐμφανῶς (818), and Dionysos' insistence on the disguise is only fleetingly motivated.[57] Dodds notes the occurrence of transvestism in Dionysiac ritual, and adds 'The specific reason for the disguising of Pentheus is perhaps that the victim of the womanish god (453–9 n.) must wear the god's livery...the sacred vestiment is "a mental link between his person and the supernatural".' This may contain some truth, but is basically misleading, for it inverts the true relationship between god and man. In fact of course the effeminacy and transvestism of the god[58] derives from the transvestism of his adherents. Why else should the god be transvestite?

Pentheus emerges from the palace with the βύσσινοι πέπλοι, μίτρα, θύρσος and νεβρίς put on him by Dionysos.[59] νεβρίζειν τοὺς τελουμένους was to put the νεβρίς on the novice in the process of initiation.[60] In the prologue Dionysos describes his

[55] *Err. Prof. Rel.* 22; the Eleusinian according to Thomson (1935, p. 26 n. 34); 'es kann nur Dionysos sein' Wilamowitz (*Glaube der Hellenen* II, p. 381).

[56] The use of this verb in the Mysteries appears not only from Firm. Mat. but also from certain allusions in Plato and elsewhere: R. Joly in *REG* 68 (1955), 164–70.

[57] *Ba.* 854 f. (and this contradicts 841: Dodds, 854 n.).

[58] Dodds, 453–9 n.; Picard, *passim.*

[59] *Ba.* 833, 835, 859: these are of course attributes of the god and of his worshippers: Boyancé, pp. 45 ff.; Picard, *passim.*

[60] Dem. 18. 259; Harpokration s.v. νεβρίζων; cf. Brelich, p. 72.

first action in Greece (23 ff.): *Θήβας . . . | ἀνωλόλυξα, νεβρίδ' ἐξάψας χροὸς | θύρσον τε δοὺς ἐς χεῖρα*. And ten lines later he repeats the point: 'I made (the daughters of Kadmos) wear the livery of my mystic rites (*σκευήν . . . ὀργίων ἐμῶν*)'. The god adjusts Pentheus' *μίτρα*,[61] and the belt and pleats of his *πέπλοι* (935–6):

> *ζωναί τέ σοι χαλῶσι κοὐχ ἑξῆς πέπλων*
> *στολίδες ὑπὸ σφυροῖσι τείνουσιν σέθεν.*

This elaborate attention is, no less than the disguise itself, undemanded by the story. With the adjustment to the belt we should compare the importance of the belt in contemporary depictions of the god and his worshippers.[62] And we should also compare one of those rare inscriptions which tell us something about the internal arrangements of a Dionysiac community. At Torre Nova in the second century A.D. there were various categories of initiate, including the following: *ἀπὸ καταζώσεως, βάκχοι ἀπὸ καταζώσεως, βάκχαι ἀπὸ καταζώσεως*.[63] Cumont, with no thought of the *Bacchae*, argued that this *κατάζωσις* may have been transvestite.[64] As for the adjustment to the *στολίδες*, it is remarked even by Dodds, who in general shows no tendency to this kind of analysis, that 'it was a ritual requirement that the linen *χιτών* of the *μύστης* should be girt in such a manner as to hang in pleats'.[65]

Transvestism is of course a well-known feature of initiatory ritual in Greece and elsewhere, its central function being in general to deprive the initiand of his previous identity so that he may assume a new one.[66] When Pentheus emerges from the palace dressed as a maenad, he has lost all his previous hostility.[67] He exhibits an uncanny enthusiasm for his new role (925–6, 930–1) and a childlike compliance to Dionysos' demeaning attentions (934, 937–8, etc.). According to Dionysos his previous mind has been replaced by the one he should have (944, 947–8). On emerging from the palace dressed as a maenad Pentheus thinks he sees two suns, two cities of Thebes and Dionysos as a bull leading him (918–24). On Dionysos' consequent remark, *νῦν δ' ὁρᾷς ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν* (924), Dodds comments 'Now at last – *νῦν δέ* in allusion to 502 – P.'s eyes are unsealed to "see what he should see", because now the bull-nature, the Dionysiac nature, has broken loose in his own breast'. But if so, never was a liberated bull-nature so abjectly tame. This kind of vague psychologizing does not get us very far. In fact there is firm evidence that both Eleusinian and Dionysiac initiands were subjected to *φάσματα* (apparitions or visions),[68] but what exactly they were has

[61] *Ba.* 928–34; *μίτρα* in the *thiasos*: Dodds, 831–3 n.; Pauly-Wissowa, *RE* xv 2218; Picard, p. 719: 'Il devient le signe apparent des inities bachiques, des *κάτοχοι* du dieu'.

[62] Especially in those vases depicting the ritual of a Dionysiac *thiasos*, probably at the Lenaia: e.g. Beazley, *ARV*², p. 1152 n. 2 (Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, fig. 22*a*); v. further n. 59 above.

[63] Cumont, p. 257; cf. the detailed concern for the dress of the initiates at Andania: Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris, 1969), I, pp. 122, 15 ff.

[64] Cumont, p. 257 (only the category *ἀπὸ καταζώσεως* contains both sexes); cf. Boyancé, pp. 45 ff., Turcan, p. 117.

[65] From Pollux 7. 54: *στολίδες δέ εἰσιν αἱ ἐξεπίτηδες ὑπὸ δεσμοῦ γινόμεναι κατὰ τὰ τέλη τοῖς χιτῶσιν ἐπιπτυχαί.*

[66] Brelich, p. 72; Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (transl. London, 1960), p. 172; V. Propp, *Le radici storiche dei racconti di fate* (transl. Turin, 1949), pp. 174 ff.; Jeanmaire, pp. 352 ff.; Gallini, pp. 215 ff. (bibl. p. 215 n. 6); Halliday in *ABSA* 16 (1909–10), 212 ff.; Burkert (1979), p. 29; etc.

[67] In fact the change may be said to start a little earlier, at 810: this is dramatically necessary given that P. has to be willing to dress as a maenad.

[68] Graf, p. 134 n. 34; Burkert (1972), p. 317; De Jong, *Das Antike Mysterienwesen* (Leiden, 1909), pp. 323 ff.; Pl. *Symp.* 211 a (cf. 210 a 1, e 6); Plut. fr. 178. 5 ff.; Aristid. 22. 3, p. 28 Keil (cf. 41. 10, p. 333); Celsus, *ap. Origen* 4. 10; *Suda* s.v. *Μέλαν*; cf. Philo. *Vit. Cont.* 2 ii, p. 473 m; v. esp. *εὐδαίμονα φάσματα μυούμενοί κτλ.* at Pl. *Phdr.* 250 b.

remained a mystery. Pentheus, like the initiand, sees the strange sights which he should see and accept; and he does so because he is, in a sense, assuming a new identity, being initiated into the *thiasos*. This view of the scene is confirmed by the choral passage which introduces it (902–11). On 902–5 (*εὐδαίμων μὲν ὃς ἐκ θαλάσσας | ἔφυγε χεῖμα, λιμένα δ' ἔκιχεν· | εὐδαίμων δ' ὃς ὑπερθε μόχθων | ἐγένετο*). Dodds remarks 'the language has a liturgical ring, vaguely recalling such religious formulas as *ἔφυγον κακόν, εὗρον ἄμεινον* (Sabazius mysteries, Dem. *de cor.* 259)'.[69] We may add that apparently *μακαρισμοί* were actually uttered in the ritual of mystic initiation.[70] And of course the first choral *μακαρισμός* (76 ff.) clearly refers, as we have seen, to initiation.

After coming to this view of Pentheus' vision I discovered the same view held by Clement of Alexandria. This is particularly gratifying, because Clement had of course profound knowledge of the pagan mysteries, and it is difficult to believe that he had not been initiated into the mysteries of Dionysos. Then, being converted to Christianity, he felt free to reveal his knowledge.[71] In the last chapter (12) of his *Protrepticus* he speaks of the true mysteries of Christianity in terms of the pagan mysteries: *Ὦ τῶν ἁγίων ὡς ἀληθῶς μυστηρίων, ὦ φωτὸς ἀκηράτου. δαδουχοῦμαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐποπτεῦσαι, ἅγιος γίγνομαι μυούμενος, ἱεροφαντεῖ δὲ ὁ κύριος . . . ταῦτα τῶν ἐμῶν μυστηρίων τὰ βακχεύματα.* The passage is introduced by a comparison of the true mysteries of Christianity with the *Bacchae*, which begins as follows.

'The holy spirit shall bring you to anchor in the harbours of heaven.[72] Then you shall see my god (*μου κατοπτεύσεις τὸν θεόν*) and be initiated into those holy mysteries and enjoy the things hidden away in heaven, preserved for me, "which neither ear hath heard nor have they entered into the heart" of any man. "And indeed, I seem to see two suns and a double Thebes" said one frenzied with idols (*βακχεύων . . . εἰδώλοις*), drunk with unmixed ignorance.'

In comparing the true vision in the true mysteries of Christianity with the sensual vision of Pentheus Clement here clearly regards Pentheus' vision as belonging to the Dionysiac mysteries. He then proceeds to urge Pentheus to abandon this madness for salvation, and extends the analogy to other details of the play: *δείξω σοι τὸν λόγον καὶ τοῦ λόγου τὰ μυστήρια, κατὰ τὴν σὴν διηγούμενος εἰκόνα.*

Pentheus' new *πέπλοι* are called *βύσσινοι* (821), which Dodds translates 'eastern linen': 'that *βύσσος* meant in the fifth century a kind of linen seems fairly certain from Herodotus' statement (2. 86. 6) that it was the material of Egyptian mummy-wrappings'. Now a little earlier (2. 81) Herodotus has said that the Egyptians bury their dead not in wool but in linen, and that *ὁμολογέουσι δὲ ταῦτα τοῖσι Ὀρφικοῖσι καλεομένοισι καὶ βακχικοῖσι, ἐοῦσι δὲ Αἰγυπτίοισι καί Πυθαγορείοισι.* And so it is of interest that Dionysos goes on to call Pentheus' new dress *κόσμον ὄνπερ εἰς Ἅιδου λαβὼν | ἄπεισι* (857–8). In order to be initiated into the

[69] He refers to Thomson (1935), pp. 21 ff., and Tierney, p. 19. Tierney identifies the *μόχθοι* with the *πόνοι, πορεῖαι, πλάναι* of the *Phaedo* (cf. n. 37 above); given my interpretation of 616 ff., and that P. is now going to his death, Dodd's objection, that the *Phaedo* passage refers to post-mortem experiences of the soul, fails.

[70] Burkert (1977), pp. 431, 439; Richardson, p. 313; E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, p. 100 n. 1; G. E. Dirichlet, *De Veterum Macarismis* (Griessen, 1914), pp. 62–4; Zuntz, pp. 342 f.

[71] v. e.g. *Protr.* 2. 22. 4: *Οἷαι δὲ καὶ αἱ κίσται μυστικαί· δεῖ γὰρ ἀπογυμνῶσαι τὰ ἅγια αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἄρρητα ἐξειπεῖν. Οὐ σησαμαῖ ταῦτα . . .;*

[72] cf. *Ba.* 902–3, and what the priest tells Lucius shortly before his initiation into the mysteries of Isis (Ap. *Met.* 11. 15): 'Maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti'; Philodam. *Paean in Dion.* (pp. 165 ff. Powell), 35 f. *βροτοῖς πόνων ὦξ[ας δ' ὅρ]μον.*

mysteries of Isis, in which he visits the underworld, Apuleius puts on linen, because, it has been suggested, it is funerary dress. Inasmuch as the initiand dies, his dress is funerary.[73] And this is the point, I imagine, of the description of maenadic dress in a fragment of Naevius' *Lycurgus*, which derives probably from Aeschylus' *Lykourgeia*,[74] as 'pallis patagiis crocotis malacis mortualibus'. After calling Pentheus' new dress funerary Dionysos continues (859–61)

γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς
Διόνυσον, ὃς πέφυκεν ἐν τέλει θεὸς
δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος.

This sentence is often regarded as central to the meaning of the play. But the phrase ἐν τέλει θεός has been much discussed and emended. Dodds regards the interpretation 'a god with god's authority' as 'perhaps likeliest', with Murray's comma after θεός. Either ἀνθρώποισι must be taken with both superlatives, or there must be an antithesis between ἐν τέλει and ἀνθρώποισι. The latter is clearly what the word order suggests; but what would be the sense? Dodds says that there is no clear contrast, and chooses the former. But to the initiated at least the antithesis is clear enough. In fact the modern treatment of the passage illustrates Dionysos' principle that δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν. Dionysos is for mankind in general ἠπιώτατος (cf. 272–85), but for his initiands, in the ritual of initiation (ἐν τέλει),[75] δεινότατος, because they will undergo the terrors of a ritual death. But this death, being at the centre of the mystic ritual, cannot be directly revealed to the uninitiated any more than can the sacred objects.

The idea that the initiand has to die to be reborn is widespread in initiation ritual in general. And its occurrence in the Hellenistic and later mysteries of oriental origin is well known.[76] But did it also occur in the Greek mysteries of the classical period? The view that the rebirth of the Eleusinian initiates was indicated by contact with a representation of a *pudendum* of Demeter in a *cista* rests on slender evidence.[77] More likely is it that they were subjected to some kind of κατάβασις, or at least that, as Burkert puts it,[78] 'möchte man die Finsternis in dem geschlossenem Raum wohl als Hadesnähe erleben', and that it was through this experience and the following transition to joy that the initiate conquered the fear of death and came to know of the joy after death.[79] Furthermore, the pig sacrificed by each μύστης in a preliminary ceremony was regarded as a substitute for himself.[80]

[73] Ap. *Met.* 11. 23; S. Eitrem in *Symb. Osl.* 4 (1926), 39; Thomson (1946), p. 107; Vidal-Naquet in *PCPS* 14 (1968), 49–64; cf. Brelich, p. 79; on the dressing of the corpse v. D. C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London, 1971), pp. 66 f., 144, 165, 207.

[74] Fr. 39 Warmington; cf. Kratin. *Dionysalex.* fr. 38 Kock; and perhaps the problem of *Ba.* 1158?

[75] τέλος of the mysteries: to the examples listed by Richardson, p. 314 add Pollux 1. 36 and perhaps E. *Med.* 1382 (cf. Brelich, pp. 366–7); there may be a deliberate ambiguity with 'authoritative'; but ἐν τελετῇ (the more common word) would not fit in an iambic trimeter.

[76] e.g. Brelich, pp. 78–80; M. Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth* (New York, 1958), *passim*; for Greece v. e.g. Brelich, pp. 355–76. Greek mysteries: e.g. Kern, pp. 1331 ff.; R. Merkelbach, *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike*, *passim*; Nock, p. 101 (= *Essays on the Trinity and Incarnation* (1928; ed. A. E. J. Rawlinson), p. 117).

[77] A. Koerte in *ARW* 18 (1915), 1116 ff.; Kern, p. 1230; Nock (as n. 76 above); cf. Burkert (1977), p. 428 n. 10.

[78] Burkert (1927), p. 309; Graf, pp. 126–39.

[79] Burkert (1972), pp. 325 f. 'Hernach mag der reale Tod als blosse Wiederholung dessen, was längst vorausgenommen ist, erscheinen'; idem (1977), pp. 415, 431. Plutarch (fr. 178, quoted above) compares the experience of death to the experience of the Eleusinian initiand. Tierney, p. 21; Ar. *Nub.* 257 (cf. Burkert, 1972, pp. 57 n. 45, 296 n. 16).

[80] Burkert (1972), p. 285; Thomson (1946), p. 122; schol. Ar. *Ach.* 747; v. also on θρόνωσις Burkert (1972), pp. 57 n. 45, 296; on the 'killing' of the παὶς ἀφ' ἑστίας μυηθείς Burkert (1972), pp. 309 ff.

As for the Dionysiac mysteries, we know that in the later period at least they, like the Eleusinian, ensured for the initiates a happy fate after death.[81] Hence presumably the Dionysiac content of funerary monuments, which is best known from the imperial period but is also found in the classical.[82] And from the early evidence, notably the gold leaves, Burkert concludes that at least since the fifth century there were 'Bacchic' mysteries that promised happiness in the next world.[83] As for the question of whether the initiand 'died' in the ritual, it has been argued from the later evidence, literary and pictorial, that the initiand was subjected to an experience of the underworld.[84] To this case I will add here various slight and scattered indications of a ritual death.

(*a*) In the formula χαῖρε παθὼν τὸ πάθημα κτλ., quoted earlier, which was probably addressed to the initiand, the πάθημα (never previously experienced, of becoming a god) has been taken to mean death.[85]

(*b*) To his description of the killing of Pentheus Theocritus (26. 27 ff.) adds the curious remark that one should not care for an enemy of Dionysos, even if he were to suffer a yet worse fate and be in his ninth year or entering his tenth. Edmonds' suggestion, that this is a reference to a mock death in the ritual of initiation, is given some support by the apparent importance in the education of Dionysos of his ninth year,[86] and by a Latin epitaph of a woman revealing that she was initiated into the mysteries of Dionyses in her tenth year.[87] And if so, then here is the death of Pentheus associated with death in initiation.

(*c*) In Livy's account of the Dionysiac mysteries suppressed in 186 B.C., distorted though it is, the reference to the sacrifice of initiates may reflect a mock death, just as the reference to those carried off by the gods to hidden caves may reflect a ritual κατάβασις.[88]

(*d*) The flagellation of the initiand in the Villa Item was perhaps conceived as a form of death, as was the initiatory flagellation of the boys at the altar of Artemis Ortheia. And in some depictions of his death Pentheus is being struck by the maenads with their thyrsi.[89]

In conclusion, I do not want to claim that mystic initiation provides us with the key to understanding the play in the way that Masonic initiation does provide us with the key to understanding the *Magic Flute*. The argument is rather as follows. (1) Some at least of the traditional material worked by Euripides has its origin in the mysteries. In this respect the *Bacchae* is comparable to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. (2) Euripides alludes to the mysteries for dramatic effect, and some at least of these allusions are recognizable as such even to the unitiated like ourselves. In this respect the *Bacchae* is comparable to the *Oresteia*. But in this Euripides has the advantage over Aeschylus of mythical material derived from the mysteries as the basis for his

[81] Plut. *Consol. ad Ux.* 611 d; Henrichs (1969), p. 238 n. 54; Nilsson (1957), ch. 8. Of this *Ba.* (like *h. hom.*) can only hint (Burkert, 1977, p. 435 – on *Ba.* – 'Selbst der "Vorteil" der den Geweihten winkt, bleibt geheim'; Richardson, p. 25). Next world imagined as ὀρειβασία: Burkert (1977), p. 437.

[82] Later period: F. Matz, *Die Dionysischen Sarkophage* (Berlin, 1968); classical period: Matz, op. cit. I, pp. 86 f.; H. Metzger in *BCH* 68–9 (1944–5), 296 ff.; K. Schauenburg in *JdI* 68 (1953), 38 ff.

[83] Burkert (1977), p. 438.

[85] Wieten, pp. 105 ff.; cf. p. 254 above.

[86] Nonnus, *Dionys.* 9. 169.

[87] R. Egger, *Der Grabstein von Cekancevo* (Vienna, 1950); Nilsson (1957), p. 132; for the initiation of children v. Nilsson (1957), pp. 106 ff.

[88] Livy 39. 10. 7, 13. 11 (their bodies were never found! 8. 8), 13. 3; Festugière, p. 104 (*Mél. Ec. de Rome* 1954, 94).

[89] Brelich, pp. 136 ff.; Villa Item: nn. 39 and 49 above; Pentheus beaten: H. Philippart in *Rev. Belg. Phil. Hist.* 9 (1930), pl. IX *a* (in Pompeian House of Vettii), n. 133, n. 144, and fig. 10; cf. Brelich, p. 80, Athenag. 28.

allusions. (3) This provides the key to understanding certain lines which have been unnecessarily suspected as corrupt (630, 860) and certain passages which cannot be explained satisfactorily by reference either to the demands of the plot, or to the typical tyrant of tragedy, or to some vague power exercised by Dionysos over Pentheus.

The argument so far is of course speculative, but in no way dependent on the truth of the even more speculative extension of it that follows.

Mystic initiation is not the only ritual referred to in the *Bacchae*. The ὀρειβασία of the maenads, culminating in the tearing to pieces and eating raw of an animal, the σπαραγμός and ὠμοφαγία, was a contemporary ritual.[90] Furthermore, the division of the maenads into three *thiasoi* (680 ff.) is based on the historical reality at Thebes and elsewhere.[91] And both ritual and tripartite arrangement are reflected generally in myth. The three daughters of Proetus, king of Argos, were driven mad by Dionysos, along with the women of the city, who devoured their children and took to the wild.[92] At Orchomenos the three daughters of Minyas were driven mad by Dionysos, and in their craving for human flesh tore to pieces the child of one of them 'like a fawn';[93] their reputed descendants were in Plutarch's day subjected to a ritual of pursuit at the festival of the Agrionia.[94] Elsewhere Plutarch reveals more details of the Agrionia: the women search for Dionysos,[95] they tear apart (σπαράττουσι) and eat ivy, and ask each other riddles.[96] In the *Bacchae* Agaue dismembers her son, and offers his remains, which she mistakes both for ivy and for a bull, to be eaten.[97] In this σπαραγμός she leads (as ἱερέα φόνου: 1114) the maenads, just as in a Milesian inscription of 276–275 B.C. the ὠμοφαγία is directed by the priestess of the public *thiasos*.[98]

There is moreover a third pattern of ritual in the play, discovered as long ago as 1894 by Bather. This derives, it seems, from a ritual of the same type as the widespread customs of Carrying out Death and Bringing in the Summer documented by Frazer and Mannhardt:[99] the dressing up of the figure as a woman (821 ff.), the leading of it through the town for all to see (854 ff.; 961), the setting of it on a tree (106 ff.), the pelting with sticks and stones (1096 ff.), the tearing to pieces and scramble for the parts (1125 ff.), the carrying home of the head on the thyrsus at racing pace (1141, 1165), the fixing of the head on the triglyphs of the house (1212 ff.). However unfashionable nowadays is the work of Frazer,[100] these points of resemblance with the type are too numerous and coherent to be a set of mere coincidences. Furthermore, since Bather wrote, this type of festival has been analysed as originating in *Pubertätsweihen*, the ritual of initiation of the young as adult members of the community. This is to say that the rebirth of the youth as adults, which is inherent in initiation, is originally

[90] Dodds, pp. xvi ff., and in *The Greeks and the Irrational*, pp. 270–82. *Ba.* 138, 735–47, 1122–36 (cf. 338 f., 1184 ff.).

[91] Dodds, 680 n.

[92] Apollod. 2. 2. 2 (from Hesiod); 3. 5. 3.

[93] Aelian, *VH* 3. 42; vase-paintings show maenads carrying children, in one case it seems with the intention of eating them: Dodds, 745 n.; cf. nn. 107, 135 below.

[94] Plut. *Qu. Graec.* 299 f.

[95] Plut. *Qu. Symp.* 717 a.

[96] Plut. *Qu. Rom.* 291 a; the ivy is presumably in some sense the god: Bather, p. 261; similarly Lykourgos, after persecuting Dionysos and the *thiasos*, kills his own son, mistaking him for a vine (Apollod. 3. 5. 1).

[97] *Ba.* 1125 ff., 1169 f., 1184, 1242. Elsewhere P. is torn apart in the form of a bull: Oppian, *Kyn.* 4. 233 f., Val. Flacc. *Arg.* 3. 264.

[98] Sokolowski, *Lois Sacrées de l'Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1955), n. 48 (pp. 123 ff.); Henrichs (1969), pp. 234 ff.

[99] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*[3], IV, pp. 233 ff, 246 ff, IX, pp. 227 ff.; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald und Feldkulte* (Berlin, 1877); for Greece v. Thomson (1946), ch. 8 (esp. pp. 138 ff.; add Artem. *Oneir.* 2. 37, Strabo 10. 3. 10 = 468).

[100] v. e.g. B. Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy* (1973), p. 38.

conceived as assisted by the rebirth of nature in the spring, which it may in turn assist; but as the ritual degenerates into a custom the significance of the death and rebirth of the young people is forgotten: the mock death of an individual or of a puppet is conceived entirely in terms of the death and rebirth of nature.[101] Now if this analysis is correct, it is of interest to observe that the behaviour of the maenads on the mountain in the *Bacchae* contains, as well as the elements noted by Bather, another set of features characteristic of *Pubertätsweihen* as they are known both outside Greece and, usually in a vestigial form, in Greece itself.[102] They sleep on leaves,[103] are invulnerable,[104] eat honey and milk,[105] plunder the community,[106] kidnap children,[107] hunt without weapons,[108] perform σπαραγμός and ὠμοφαγία,[109] and finally return festively from the wild.[110].

But of course the maenads on the mountainside are not performing *Pubertätsweihen*. I am not suggesting that this strand of ritual in the play reflects contemporary ritual. It has been generally recognized that the Greeks were not so thoroughly exceptional as to have never had *Pubertätsweihen*.[111] However, there is a well-known tendency for *Pubertätsweihen* to become, with the development of society, socially marginal, and thereby to change their function: the group into which they effect initiation is no longer the whole adult community but the secret society or the shadowy community of the next world.[112] Among the products of this process, in Greece, seem to be the Eleusinian and the Dionysiac mysteries. This point has been sufficiently argued elsewhere.[113] My purpose here is to suggest it as a tentative hypothesis to explain the diversity of the apparent ritual origins of the mythical detail in the *Bacchae*. Certain *Pubertätsweihen*

[101] Thomson (1946), pp. 1313 ff.; H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 115 ff.

[102] Brelich; Thomson (1946); Jeanmaire.

[103] *Ba.* 684 ff.; Thomson (1946), p. 115; cf. e.g. Piddington in *Oceania* 3 (1932), 65.

[104] Material collected by C. Berthold, *Die Unverwundbarkeit in Sage und Aberglauben der Griechen* (Leipzig, 1911), and interpreted as derived from initiatory ritual by J. Bremmer in a paper not yet published.

[105] *Ba.* 780 ff.; H. Usener in *RhM* 57 (1902), 178 ff.; R. Perdelewitz in *RVV* 11, 3 (1911), 57 ff.

[106] *Ba.* 748–64; Dodds' comment is purely psychologizing, but both the ethnological parallels he adduces are in fact initiatory. *Stehlrecht* in *Pubertätsweihen* (and in the secret society rituals deriving from them): Brelich, p. 85; Schurtz, op. cit. (n. 101), p. 107; F. Schlesier, *Die Melanesische Geheimkulte* (Göttingen, 1956), p. 600; O. Höfler, *Die Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt, 1934), pp. 257 ff.; etc.

[107] Brelich, pp. 29, 65 f.; Schurtz, op. cit. (n. 101), p. 103; E. M. Loeb, *Tribal Initiations and Secret Societies* (*Univ. Calif. Publ. Amer. Arch. Ethn.* 25 (1929)), 264, 274; F. Speiser, *Über Initiationen in Australien und Neuguinea* (*Verhandlungen der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Basel*, 1929); R. Jaulin, *La Mort Sara* (Paris, 1967), pp. 51 ff.; Seaford (1976), p. 214 n. 44, 220 n. 92; Henrichs (1969), p. 232; the initiators may meet mock-resistance from the parents.

[108] *Ba.* 736, 1173, 1205–10, 1237; the insistence on this point requires explanation: cf. Vidal-Naquet in *PCPS* 14 (1968), 60 f.; Brelich, index s.v. caccia rituale; Pi. *Nem.* 3. 51 f.; Anton. Lib. *Metam.* 12; cf. Jeanmaire, pp. 298, 353; A. *Dikt.* 815 ff. (with Seaford, 1976, pp. 213 ff.).

[109] n. 90 above; Brelich, pp. 70 f., 96; p. 266 below.

[110] *Ba.* 1167, 1172; Brelich, pp. 94 f.

[111] v. esp. Brelich, *passim*; Thomson (1946), ch. 7.

[112] e.g. H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (1908), pp. 2, 20, 74 f., 83 f., 93, 95, 135; Loeb, op. cit. (n. 107), pp. 254, 262; Schurtz, op. cit. (n. 101), p. 101, 113–18; Schlesier, op. cit. (n. 106), p. 309; Speiser, op. cit. (n. 107), pp. 252–4; E. Briem, *Les Sociétiés de Mystères* (Paris, 1941), pp. 35 ff.

[113] W. Koppers, 'Zum Ursprung des Mysterienwesens', *Eranos Jahrbuch* 11 (1944), 214 ff.; K. Prumm, 'Neue Wege einer Ursprungsdeutung antiker Mysterien', *Zeitschr. Kath. Theol.* 57 (1933), 89–102, 254–72; R. Pettazzoni, *I Misteri* (Bologna, 1924); Brelich, ch. 1 and pp. 457 ff.; Thomson (1946), chs. 7 and 8; K. H. E. De Yong, *Das Antike Mysterienwesen* (Leiden, 1909); Burkert (1977), pp. 414 f; Seaford, *Pompeii* (1978), pp. 62–74. This does not mean that the mysteries were uninfluenced by any other kind of ritual.

are socially marginalized, their function becomes merely religious, and as a result they tend to be preserved by the women.[114] They become the rituals of the Dionysiac *thiasoi*. But as the ritual develops, so does the myth in which it is expressed. And so the development of the ritual leaves its mark in the myth which, preserved by tradition within the *thiasos*, itself preserves and combines elements derived from distinct chronological layers of ritual. Another example of this same process is provided by the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. Some elements of the hymn reflect the Eleusinian mysteries. The Eleusinian mysteries seem to be derived from *Pubertätsweihen*.[115] And it has also been argued, independently of interest in the mysteries, that other elements of the hymn derive from *Pubertätsweihen*.[116] The result of this concomitant development of ritual and myth is a series of elements derived from different but related rituals, from contemporary rituals and from the ancient *Pubertätsweihen* from which they descend.

Of contemporary ritual the *Bacchae* reflects two seemingly different kinds: on the one hand the ὀρειβασία and σπαραγμός performed by the female *thiasos*, and on the other hand the mystic initiation of the male Pentheus. Does this combination in the myth[117] reflect the same combination in ritual? Or has the myth been shaped by two entirely distinct rituals, perhaps from distinct *thiasoi*? The question may be unanswerable. But the little that we know of these *thiasoi* will throw some light on the matter.

Firstly, there is the question of sex. The Milesian inscription already mentioned distinguishes the civic or public (δημόσιος) *thiasos*, led by the official priestess, from the other *thiasoi*, which are nevertheless closely associated with it: they are founded, it appears, by women initiating to Dionysos (τελεῖν τῷ Διονύσῳ) and paying a fee to the official priestess.[118] And it mentions as participating in the processional καταγώγια of Dionysos, along with the priest and priestess, the 'priests and priestesses' – probably leaders of the various private *thiasoi*.[119] It seems that the marginalization of the *Pubertätsweihen* had left the ancient public *thiasoi*, for example the three Theban *thiasoi* reflected in the *Bacchae*, in the service of a male god but largely in the hands of the women. However, there is evidence in the historical period for a growing demand for the Dionysiac mysteries among men, which found expression partly in the initiation of men into the female *thiasoi* (e.g. of the three *thiasoi* publicly founded in Magnesia in the early third century B.C. by three maenads from Thebes at least one, the καταιβάται, must have included men)[120] and partly in the growth of the private mysteries (for example we know that the Dionysiac mysteries introduced from Greece into Italy and suppressed in 186 B.C. were at first confined to women but later opened to men as well).[121]

Secondly, what relation does the σπαραγμός (and ὠμοφαγία)[122] bear to mystic

[114] v. e.g. I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (Penguin, 1971), pp. 96 ff.

[115] v. n. 113 above.

[116] G. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean* (3rd ed. 1961), pp. 231–7. On the chronological layers in ritual and myth v. now Burkert (1979).

[117] cf. Burkert (1977), p. 435, on *Ba.*: 'Hier überlagert sich also der Mythos vom Frauenaufstand mit der Praxis geheimer, geschlechtsindifferenter, auf Initiation beruhender Feiern.'

[118] Henrichs (1969), p. 237; the other *thiasoi* are not necessarily exclusively female: v. n. 121 below.

[119] Henrichs (1969), p. 238.

[120] Henrichs (1978), p. 133. Also Cadmos and Teiresias in *Ba.* make for the mountainside; and Xouthos at E. *Ion* 551 f. claims that he was made part of the maenadic *thiasos* at Delphi, even if only for a drunken orgy. The Milesian inscription mentions priests.

[121] Livy 39. 13. 8–10; cf. Lewis, op. cit. (n. 114), ch. 4.

[122] According to a recent study 'nothing in the available evidence suggests that historical maenads indulged in *sparagmos* and *omophagia*' (Henrichs, 1978, p. 148). Even if true this would not affect our argument, which is largely concerned with what was *imagined* as done.

initiation? In *Pubertätsweihen*, as in mystic initiation, the initiands often partake of a special meal.[123] The only fifth-century reference to ὠμοφαγία (apart from the fleeting one at *Ba.* 138) is in Euripides' *Cretans*, as the central act apparently in the initiation of a βάκχος.[124] In *thiasoi* practising ὠμοφαγία, or any kind of collective meal, initiation may well have included a first communion. But the ritual also appears in another aspect. According to later writers the σπαραγμός and ὠμοφαγία commemorated the dismemberment and eating of Dionysos.[125] Certainly it seems to be, in the words of Dodds (p. xviii) 'a rite in which the god was in some sense present in his beast-vehicle and was in that shape torn and eaten by his people'. But the body of Dionysos was recomposed and restored to life.[126] The imagined eating of the initiand, followed by his restoration to life, is a widespread feature of the comparative data.[127] Furthermore, other elements of the Dionysos myth – the sowing of Dionysos in Zeus' thigh, the Kouretes and the Titans, the κώνος and the ῥόμβος – are each independently associated with initiation ritual; and the theme of dismemberment, eating and restoration to life is found in other myths (e.g. Pelops) which there is independent evidence to connect with initiation ritual.[128] If it is asked why the killing of the initiand should be imagined in terms of the dismemberment of an eaten animal, one explanation is that advanced by Burkert. He argues that when the old hunting bands became, with the development of agriculture, mere 'maskenbünde', secret societies, their aggression was no longer satisfied by their ritual of secret sacrifice. And as a result, being deprived of an external *Jagdobjekt*, they made the initiand himself a victim, and subjected him to a mock death. Finally a sacrificial animal was substituted, but the threat of death remained to terrorize the initiand.[129] In this there may be some truth, except that we must reject the implication that this is the origin of the practice (rather than merely of a particular form) of 'killing' the initiand. For the practice is found also in pre-agricultural societies.[130]

Did the *thiasoi* ever celebrate not just the σπαραγμός of Dionysos but also his rebirth? From the secrecy surrounding these rituals two hints survive to this effect. With the remains of Dionysos kept at Delphi Plutarch associates two complementary[131] rituals: a secret sacrifice (corresponding probably to the dismemberment of the god)[132] by the Ὅσιοι and the awakening (ἐγείρειν) of the god in his λίκνον-cradle by the Thyiades.[133] In one version of the myth of Dionysos' dismemberment the rebirth is

[123] *Pubertätsweihen*: Brelich, pp. 70 f., 96. Dionysiac Mysteries: Livy 39. 9. 4 (cf. Seaford, *Pompeii*, pp. 70 f.). Eleusinian: the κυκεών (Richardson, pp. 344–8).

[124] E. fr. 472N; Burkert (1972), pp. 50 f.; cf. Ar. *Ran.* 357: μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ' ἐτελέσθη; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 12. (119. 1) αἱ μαινάδες αἱ δύσαγνον κρεανομίαν μυούμεναι.

[125] Firm. Mat. *Err. Prof. Rel.* 6; Schol. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 12. 119 (92P); Photius, s.v. νεβρίζων. The myth is not an invention of the Hellenistic age (Burkert, 1972, p. 249 n. 43). It survives however in Orphic form, in which the killing of D. is a crime and he is cooked. These are hostile inversions, and do not mean that there was no myth associated with the ὠμοφαγία: Nilsson in *HTR* 28 (1935), 203 f.; cf. M. Detienne, *Dionysos Slain* (transl. 1979), pp. 68–94; the words used for the dismemberment are still διασπᾶν and διασπαράσσειν; v. further Henrichs (1978), pp. 144 f.

[126] Burkert (1972), p. 257; Fauth, p. 2274.

[127] Brelich, pp. 89 f.; dismemberment and recomposition: G. Thomas in *Oceania* 2 (1931–2), 230.

[128] Thomson (1946), pp. 108 ff.; Fauth, p. 2248; J. Harrison, *Themis* (2nd ed. Cambridge, 1927), ch. 1.

[129] Burkert (1972), p. 57. On the identity of animal and god v. e.g. G. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean* (3rd ed. London, 1961), pp. 49 ff. The initiand actually killed: Thomson (1946), p. 108, Webster, op. cit. (n. 112), p. 35.

[130] Brelich, pp. 78–80.

[131] Burkert (1972), pp. 141 f.

[132] Burkert (1972), pp. 142.

[133] Plut. *De Is. et. Os.* 365a. On Dionysos Liknites as the dying and rising Dionysos v. Nilsson (1957), ch. 4.

presented as an awakening (ἐγείρειν).[134] On one of the Attic 'Lenäenvasen', which depict the ritual of a *thiasos* of women, there is a λίκνον-cradle containing the mask of the adult Dionysos.[135] This ritual may well have occurred at the Lenaia,[136] which we know contained mystical elements, including the celebration in song of the σπαραγμός of Dionysos.[137]

In *Pubertätsweihen* the newly initiated, inasmuch as they are newly reborn, often act like children.[138] Sometimes in the return from the place of initiation they are carried back like babies. Bambara girls, for example, return on the backs of their mothers.[139] Now in the myth of the death and rebirth of the child Dionysos the collection of his limbs is made in one version by his mother Demeter and in another by his mother Rhea.[140] At the culmination of the *Bacchae* the scattered remains of Pentheus, collected from the mountainside with great difficulty by Kadmos, were individually bewailed and recomposed[141] on stage by his mother Agaue. In this case of course there is no new life. The death of the god's human enemy, like the death of the initiand,[142] is imagined as real. And yet there is a pathetic hint of joyful rebirth, not only in the mother's recomposition of the body, but in the passage in which Dionysos predicts Pentheus' triumphal return (963–70).

Pentheus is to be led out of Thebes by Dionysos as πομπός (920, 965), to where he will undergo an ἀγών (964, 975; cf. 1163), and then return in a triumphal κῶμος (966 ff., 1167, 1172). This sequence of πομπή – ἀγών – κῶμος is undoubtedly derived from ritual.[143] True, in the little that we know about Dionysiac *thiasoi* it is not attested. But in the outward πομπή from Athens to Eleusis each initiand was led by a μυσταγωγός,[144] and we hear of an outward procession to the mountain led by the priestess of the public *thiasos* at Miletus.[145] The κῶμος-return[146] of Pentheus is predicted in ambiguous terms (964 ff.). 'The ἀγῶνες[147] you deserve await you. Follow. I am your πομπὸς σωτήριος,' says Dionysos, 'but another will bring you back.' 'Yes,'

[134] *Orph.* fr. 214 Kern.

[135] Beazley, *ARV*², p. 1249 n. 13 (Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, fig. 24): other vases in the series show the mask attached to a body, and the mask in the λίκνον certainly seems like a dismembered head. On another (*ARV*², p. 1019 n. 82; Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, fig. 20*b*) a maenad holds an infant satyr.

[136] The alternative is the Anthesteria: Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, pp. 30–4. The name Lenaia derives from Ληναι = Βάκχαι: Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, p. 30; Burkert (1972), p. 260 n. 21.

[137] Deubner, *Attische Feste* (2nd ed. 1966), p. 126; cf. Pickard-Cambridge (1968), p. 35.

[138] Brelich, pp. 95 f. (to his refs. add R. Thurnwald, 'Primitive Initiations – und Wiedergeburtsriten' in *Eranos Jahrb.* 7 (1940), 321–98). For Eleusis v. Richardson, p. 29. The slaughtered and resurrected Dionysos is a child.

[139] L. Tauxier, *La Religion Bambara* (Paris, 1927), p. 400.

[140] *Orph.* fr. 36 and 301 Kern (Philod. *De Piet.* 44 p. 16. 1; Diod. Sic. 3. 62. 6).

[141] In the part of the play now lost: Dodds 1329 n.; Christ. Pat. 1466 ff. (Dodds, p. 58), κρᾶτα τοῦ (τρισολβίου) ὀρθῶς προσαρμόσωμεν κτλ.

[142] Brelich, p. 33; Thomson (1946), pp. 97 f., 436; v. p. 257 above.

[143] Thomson (1946), pp. 166–8, 241; Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Enkykl.* XXI. 2. 1887 f. (s.v. pompa).

[144] Burkert (1977), p. 429 (add Plut. *Alc.* 34. 5); H. W. Parke, *The Festivals of the Athenians* (London, 1977), p. 62 and n. 64. The mysteries (an ἀγών? n. 147 below) were followed by something like a κῶμος (Burkert, 1972, pp. 321 f.; 1977, p. 431; Graf. pp. 137 f.) which need not however have taken the form of a return to Athens.

[145] ὑμᾶς κεἰς ὄρος ἦγε καὶ ὄργια πάντα καὶ ἱρὰ | ἤνεικεμ πάσης ἐρχομένη πρὸ πολέως. Late third or second century B.C.: Henrichs (1969), pp. 225 ff. It probably refers to two different ceremonies: Henrichs (1969), p. 233; (1978), p. 149.

[146] *Ba.* 1167, 1172; to the examples of δέχεσθαι as a ritual term given by Roux on 1167 add E. *Su.* 390, *Ba.* 1172; Ar. *Thesm.* 101, 104; Pi. *Ol.* 4. 9, 6. 98, 8. 10, *Pyth.* 5. 22.

[147] ἀγών in the mysteries: Thomson, II (1966), pp. 154 f.; Quandt, p. 111.

replies Pentheus, 'my mother.' Dionysos: 'You will be conspicuous to all.' Pentheus: 'That is why I go.' Dionysos' next words – *φερόμενος ἥξεις* – suggest to Pentheus a chariot. The truth – *ἐν χερσὶ μητρός* – suggests to Pentheus an embrace, like that given to a petted child.[148] We are reminded of his child-like compliance to Dionysos' attentions earlier in the scene, but also, knowing what *ἐν χερσὶ μητρός* will really mean, of a child in its mother's arms. In fact Agaue will return carrying her son's head – rather as the Attic *thiasos* of maenads attended the adult head of Dionysos in its *λίκνον*-cradle.[149]

Just as in his *Hippolytus*, for example, Euripides dramatized the *aition* of the cult of Hippolytus in Trozen (vv. 1423–30), so in his *Bacchae* he dramatized the *aition* of the Dionysiac mysteries at Thebes. Now of certain festivals analysed by Brelich as originating in *Pubertätsweihen* the *aitia* conform to a general pattern which contains the killing of a human being. In each case the rite is closely associated by resemblance or substitution with the preceding death. For example, human sacrifice, the response to an oracular demand to bloody the altar of Artemis Ortheia is replaced by bloody flagellation at the altar.[150] Or at Brauron the girls become bears (*ἀρκτεύειν*) in expiatory imitation of a murdered bear; and in an alternative version the expiation takes the form of a father sacrificing his daughter, for whom in the event there is substituted a goat dressed as the girl.[151] Cases such as these suggest, as Brelich is aware (p. 376), that the mythical death is a transformed collective memory of the original conception of initiation as death. At Brauron the actual death of a goat probably inherited the initiatory death of the girls. And so it is, I think, with the *σπαραγμός* of Dionysos and Pentheus as goat or bull.[152] So too with the traditions of the substitution of an animal for a youthful human victim in Dionysiac cult at Potniai, and at Tenedos, where the calf to be sacrificed wore buskins. In fact all the evidence of this kind collected by Dodds (p. xix) to indicate a previous stage of human sacrifice is better explained in this way. And because it will be argued in the next section that tragedy originates in a ritual of this kind, it should be added that here, it seems to me, is the explanation of why tragedy, which tends to centre around the death (generally expressed as sacrifice) or catastrophe of a human being, takes its name from the song sung at the sacrifice of a goat.[153]

I do not of course mean to suggest that Euripides was conscious of all this. I mean rather to extend the conclusions of the first section in the following way. (1) The rituals of the Dionysiac *thiasoi* derive ultimately from *Pubertätsweihen*. The *σπαραγμός* and *ὠμοφαγία* was a collective meal, but also commemorated a mythical death based on the death of the initiand, and at least in some *thiasoi* this mythical dismemberment remained as a model to terrify the initiand. (2) The myth from which Euripides made the *Bacchae* corresponds at too many points with these rituals for coincidence. And Euripides seems conscious of at least some of the correspondences with contemporary ritual.

[148] v. Dodds and Roux, ad loc. For a further irony in D.'s *τρυφάς γε τοιάσδε* (*θρύπτεσθαι* can mean to be broken small) v. *HSCP* 83 (1979), 10 ff.

[149] Dionysos goes on to say *οὐρανῷ στηρίζον εὑρήσεις κλέος* just as Socrates predicts *κλέος οὐρανόμηκες* for the initiand Strepsiades (Ar. *Nub.* 461; n. 14 above); cf. Zuntz A 1. 3, A 2. 3, B 1. 617, B 2. 6 (pp. 301–5, 359–61)?

[150] Brelich, p. 136; Pausan, 3. 16. 9 ff.

[151] Brelich, pp. 248 ff.

[152] Not only Dionysos is *youthful*, but also Pentheus (*Ba.* 274, 330, 974, 1174, 1185; Accius fr. 8; Philostr. *Im.* 1. 18; Nonnus 46. 201; depictions: Roux, p. 22), untypically of the tyrant of tragedy.

[153] W. Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', *GRBS* 7 (1966), 87–121. The *σπαραγμός* may be of bull or goat: e.g. *Ba.* 139, 734 ff.

Attic tragedy was performed within the cult of Dionysos. According to Aristotle it originated in the dithyramb.[154] The dithyramb was, at least at the time of tragedy's origin, a Dionysiac cult hymn. We would be justified therefore in inferring that the earliest themes of tragedy concerned Dionysos, but in fact the inference is unnecessary, for we are told precisely this in a tradition independent of Aristotle.[155]

On the basis of these facts combined with certain features of extant tragedy, attempts have been made to detect in surviving tragedy a pattern derived from the Dionysiac ritual in which tragedy supposedly originated.[156] These attempts, constructed as they were on the basis of no certain knowledge of the ritual in question, are easily attacked.[157] Nevertheless, it seems to me that this line of argument should not be abandoned entirely.

The first themes of tragedy were about Dionysos. But the number of myths about Dionysos is (at least at this period) not great. The central ones are those of his birth, death and rebirth[158] and of his victory over his enemies Lykourgos and Pentheus. And so the very earliest themes of tragedy probably included the dismemberment of Dionysos and of his enemy. Of the four titles attributed to Thespis the only certainly Dionysiac one is *Πενθεύς*. It is true that Herakleides Ponticus was accused by Aristoxenos of forging plays by Thespis. But Herakleides was also a historian of literature, and in the words of Pickard-Cambridge[159] 'even if Herakleides did forge plays in the name of Thespis, he is likely to have followed tradition as regards their titles'.

The upshot of all this is the near certainty that the *Bacchae* deals with one of the very earliest themes of youthful tragedy, even if we do not know enough to call it the 'original' theme. This conclusion is based merely on the content of the play. What then of its form? According to Dodds, who had no interest in the origins of drama, the *Bacchae* is the most archaic of Euripides' plays in form, diction and style.[160] He cites as an example the use of 'the original metre of tragic dialogue, the trochaic tetrameter', used in that dialogue between Dionysos and the chorus (604–15) which we have seen to be closely associated with the mysteries. It is clear moreover from what we know of the earlier plays on the same theme[161] that Euripides' treatment is not only archaic but thoroughly traditional.

There is one important indication of the play's archaism missed by Dodds, and this merits a digression. The dithyramb, in which according to Aristotle tragedy originated, was probably at first processional.[162] We know of several processions at the City Dionysia, notably the great *πομπή* in which, at least in the second century B.C., the

[154] *Poet.* ch. 4; modern doubts as to his veracity can only be explained as over-reaction against previous over-estimation of what can be known about origins. The main points are (1) A. knew more than we do about the subject (v. Lucas, *Commentary*, p. 79); (2) there is no inconsistency in the chapter: Seaford (1976), 209 ff. and n. 175 below; (3) A. is not a fool; (4) that tragedy originated in the dithyramb and in the satyr-play-like is not an obvious guess, and is supported by considerations of which A. was almost certainly unaware: Seaford (1976 and 1977–8).

[155] Zenobius 5. 40; Apostolius, Photius, *Suda* s.v. *οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον*; Plut. *Mor.* 615a. Pickard-Cambridge calls the tradition 'doubtless sound' (1927, p. 167); Seaford (1976), pp. 209 ff.

[156] e.g. G. Murray in J. Harrison, op. cit. (n. 128), pp. 341–63; Thomson (1946), part 3.

[157] v. e.g. Pickard-Cambridge (1927), pp. 185–207. A recent dismissal is by B. Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy*, ch. 1.

[158] The dithyramb was associated with the birth of Dionysos: Pl. *Leg.* 700b *Διονύσου γένεσις, οἶμαι, διθύραμβος λεγόμενος* ; cf. *Ba.* 526.

[159] (1927), p. 117.

[160] Dodds, pp. xxxvi ff.

[161] Dodds, pp. xxviii ff.

[162] Pi. *Ol.* 13. 9 (Pickard-Cambridge, 1927, p. 7; Thomson, 1946, p. 170); Aesch. fr. 355 Nauck; Thomson (1973), p. 161 (Tarditi, *Archilochus* (1968), Testim. 4. 23 ff.); on identity of *διθύραμβος* and *θρίαμβος* (Latin *triumphus*): Pickard-Cambridge (1927), pp. 14 f. (cf. D.S. 3. 65. 8; Pratinas fr. 3 Snell v. 16).

ephebes drove a bull 'worthy of god' to sacrifice in his precinct.[163] And there are reasons for believing that in its original form the nucleus of the festival was an outward πομπή to the ἐσχάρα near the Academy, a sacrifice, and a κῶμος-return.[164] An important first stage in the evolution of tragedy was for the dithyramb to become a stationary song (στασιμόν).[165]

The *parodos* of the *Bacchae*, and especially the first part of it (73–134) is, if not exactly a dithyramb, certainly dithyrambic. The Dionysiac *thiasos* sings a traditional hymn (71) to their god containing ornamental and elaborately compound epithets (100, 102, 108, 112, 117, 122, 123, 124), verbal repetition (107, 116), an unrestrained metre, a mythical narrative, and the theme of the double birth of Dionysos. All these are recognized features of the dithyramb.[166] To the recognized features of the dithyramb we may add a further two, both of them found in this song. Firstly, it contains in fact two narratives, the birth of Dionysos and the invention of the τύμπανον. But the τύμπανον is not mentioned directly: it is described in two periphases: βυρσοτόνον κύκλωμα τόδε (124) and κτύπον εὐάσμασι Βακχᾶν (129). Turning to the surviving fragments of dithyramb we find the agents of dithyrambic abandon – wine, music and musical instruments – described in riddling periphrases, sometimes as inventions.[167] That this features derives, like the theme of the double birth of Dionysos, from the ritual of initiation I have argued elsewhere.[168] Secondly, the *thiasos* describes itself as Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι from Phrygia to Greece (85). As Dodds remarks in his commentary, 'the expression is perhaps connected with the Καταγώγια, a Dionysiac festival celebrated in Ionia and, in later times at least, at Athens'.[169] The Καταγώγια was a processional 'bringing back' or 'bringing home' of Dionysos which, originating in a widespread type of Dionysiac ritual, may have come to be conceived as commemorating, like the chorus at verse 85 of the *Bacchae*, the god's original arrival.[170] In this respect it resembles the εἰσαγωγή at the Athenian Dionysia, in which the god was brought back to the city from the ἐσχάρα near the Academy.[171] The dithyramb was in origin probably a hymn sung in precisely this kind of procession.[172]

[163] *IG* ii² 1006. 13; cf. Pi. *Ol.* 13. 9 βοηλάτᾳ . . . διθυράμβῳ.

[164] cf. n. 143 above. The four known processions form two corresponding pairs: journey out to ἐσχάρα (where ephebes sacrifice, crowned singers hymn Dionysos) and (probably torchlight) εἰσαγωγή back to the theatre; πομπή to precinct (ephebes sacrifice and were crowned, hymns to Dionysos at the altar) and (probably in the evening) κῶμος. This looks like reduplication: perhaps the emergent drama had to be transferred from the distant ἐσχάρα to the destination of the εἰσαγωγή under the Acropolis, which then attracted its own sacrificial πομπή and κῶμος. This hypothesis might explain the anomaly noted by Nilsson in *Jhb. Arch.* 31 (1916), 337 f. (*Op. Sel.* i, pp. 211 f.). Material in Pickard-Cambridge (1968), pp. 60–3, 102 f.: Deubner, pp. 139 ff.

[165] This change was probably first made in Corinth by Arion (Pickard-Cambridge, 1927, p. 20), who is therefore associated with the creation of tragedy: *Suda* s.v. Arion; Solon fr. 30 a West. Perhaps this is the change referred to in Pi. fr. 70 Snell 1–5 (despite Philostr. *Her.* 19. 17; etc.).

[166] Pickard-Cambridge (1927), ch. 1; cf. also the general cultic features of the song pointed out by Deichgräber (*Hermes* 70 (1935), 323 ff.) and Festugière, pp. 66–80 (*Eranos* 54 (1956), 72–86).

[167] Page, *PMG* nn. 744, 760, 780, 791 (220 ff.), 805 c, 806, 808, 810, 831, 832; Antiphanes' parodic fr. 12 Kock; Athenaeus' interests may be responsible for the high proportion of such material in extant dithyramb, but not for its nature.

[168] Seaford (1977–8), 88–94.

[169] Deubner, pp. 103 f.; Burkert (1972), p. 223 n. 24; Roux, ad loc.

[170] Deubner, p. 111.

[171] Pickard-Cambridge (1968), p. 60; Deubner, p. 139; cf. n. 164 above.

[172] cf. n. 162 above; dithyramb associated with κῶμος (A. fr. 355 N), with the θρίαμβος (*triumphus*), and with satyrs, who are found in this kind of procession: e.g. we see them blowing αὐλοί as they accompany their god in his ship-cart, probably in his κῶμος-entry at the

Dodds, noting that the song has certain of the features of an actual cult hymn, continues 'This is a return to the oldest dramatic practice: cf. the statement attributed to Aristotle (Them. *Or.* 16. 316D) that τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ὁ χορὸς εἰσιὼν ᾖδεν εἰς τοὺς θεούς, ... The chorus themselves emphasize the point: they use a formula which must be designed to give the illusion of a religious procession (68–70)...'. Having identified the song as dithyrambic we may add that the illusion is not so much designed as derived from a reality: the *thiasos* in the dithyrambic procession once brought their god into the theatre.[173] Of course tragedy often reproduces lyric genres such as the *threnos* or *paean*. But given that the *Bacchae* treats of what may be the earliest theme of tragedy in a manner both archaic and traditional, I find it difficult to believe that the dithyrambic arrival of the *thiasos* was invented by Euripides. The opening verses of the *parodos*, it seems to me, still reflect the ancient transition from the processional to the static dithyramb.

To return to the main argument. One theory concerning the ritual origins of tragedy stressed the importance of the ritual of initiation. For example, it was suggested that the riddling language of tragic stichomythia derives from the riddling catechism of initiation, and the ἀναγνώρισις of γνωρίσματα from the revelation in initiation of the sacred objects.[174] This theory was built on slender foundations, but it acquires support from an unexpected quarter. Aristotle said that tragedy developed ἐκ σατυρικοῦ, 'from the satyr-play-like'.[175] And it seems very likely that satyric drama was instituted at the end of the tetralogy to appease those who objected to the developing tragedy turning its back on Dionysiac themes.[176] And so satyric drama, being essentially conservative, may be closer than is extant tragedy to tragedy's supposed origins in ritual. It should therefore be called as a witness in the investigation of those origins. And in fact both the supposed vestiges of initiatory ritual in tragedy reappear in the exiguous remains of satyric drama in a form markedly less attenuated and closer to ritual. This argument I have set out in detail elsewhere, and extended to the dithyramb.[177] I am now in a position to advance it a little further.

The importance of Dionysiac initiation in the origins of tragedy was suggested without awareness of the support provided by satyric drama, and without awareness of the mystic elements in the *Bacchae*. The myth of Pentheus and its treatment in the *Bacchae* on the one hand take us close to the origins of tragedy, and on the other hand, as argued earlier, derive from the mysteries of Dionysos. These two considerations, if taken together, may be thought to provide independent reasons for regarding mystic initiation as an important factor in the origins of tragedy. For the original theme of tragedy as it emerged from ritual could hardly be other than the ἱερὸς λόγος which expressed the ritual. But to test this hypothesis we must recall our key witness, satyric drama.

In Aeschylus' *Lykourgeia* there occurred the imprisonment and miraculous escape of Dionysos,[178] and probably also of the maenads.[179] The scene of the god's escape in the *Bacchae* we have seen to be based on ritual; as for the imprisonment and escape

Anthesteria (Deubner, pp. 102ff.). On a red-figure Attic vase a satyr leading a Dionysiac κῶμος is called 'Dithyramphos' (*ARV*,[2] p. 1055 n. 78; Pickard-Cambridge, 1927, p. 11).

[173] The *Ionics a minore* reappear in the choral procession of the μύσται in Ar. *Frogs* (324–53; cf. 354ff. with *Ba.* 68ff.), in which the ξυνέμπορος is Iacchos.

[174] Thomson (1946), pp. 188–91.

[175] Poet. ch. 4: this is inconsistent with his view, in the same chapter, that tragedy originates in the dithyramb only if σατυρικόν is taken to mean 'satyric drama', which it does not: v. further nn. 154, 172 above; Seaford (1976), pp. 209ff.

[176] Seaford (1976).

[177] Seaford (1976 and 1977–8).

[178] Dodds, pp. xxxiff.

[179] Dodds, p. xxxii; Apollod. 3. 5. 1.; Naevius, fr. 6.

of the maenads, this is briefly described in the *Bacchae* (226 f., 443–8), but without serving any function in the plot, and so probably largely out of loyalty to the tradition. In 'Apollodorus'' summary of the Lykourgos story the satyrs too are imprisoned, and this probably derives from the fourth play of Aeschylus' *Lykourgeia*, the satyric *Lykourgos*.[180] Now this theme, the captivity and eventual liberation of the satyrs, was certainly an extremely common feature of satyric drama.[181] Although satyric drama was instituted to preserve what was being lost from tragedy, the tragedian would run out of Dionysiac themes for satyric drama in the same way that he had run out of Dionysiac themes for tragedy. Nevertheless, the chorus of satyric drama remains, as in the *Bacchae*, the Dionysiac *thiasos*. And the plots, so far as we can judge from the surviving titles and fragments, are more stereotyped than those of tragedy, and in particular because of the frequency of the theme of the captivity and liberation of the satyrs – in this respect the satyric chorus remained, unlike the tragic, at the centre of the action. We may infer therefore that in the original story or stories the *thiasos* was captured by their god's enemy, then liberated, and perhaps (v. *Ba.* 604 ff.) reunited with their liberated god. With the inevitable introduction of non-Dionysiac themes into satyric drama, the theme of captivity and liberation nevertheless remained. The new themes were on the whole chosen consciously or unconsciously, as consistent with the traditional pattern. Pentheus would be replaced, for example by Kirke (as in Aeschylus' satyric *Kirke*), the satyrs would be her captives, to be freed by Odysseus so as to be reunited eventually with Dionysos. At each City Dionysia the audience would find the satyrs in thrall to some new uncongenial master. This is why so many satyr-plays are called after the adversaries of heroes. In the prologue of Euripides' *Cyclops* Silenos explains that the satyrs, taking to the sea to find the kidnapped Dionysos, were shipwrecked on Sicily and became the slaves of Polyphemos. This explains their continued presence in such unlikely circumstances. They are in the course of the play rescued by Odysseus, with whom they finally depart, eager to be reunited with Dionysos (*Βακχίῳ δουλεύσομεν*).

This feature of satyric drama tends to support one of our conclusions, that the myth of the captivity and liberation of the *thiasos* was associated with the origins of tragedy. But what of the other, that the myth was also associated with the mysteries of the *thiasos*? Has this association left any trace in satyric drama?

Euripides' *Cyclops* is the only satyr-play that survives complete. Nevertheless, comparison even of this play alone with the *Bacchae* is fruitful. In both plays the chorus (the *thiasos*) are in the power of a master[182] who appears to them as *ἀνόσιος*[183] and a *θήρ*.[184] He is also *ἀμαθής*,[185] and scorns[186] and restrains[187] *βακχεύματα*. They express nostalgia for circumstances more favourable to their revels,[188] and speculate on the whereabouts of Dionysos,[189] on their liberation from tyranny,[190] and on the destruction of their master,[191] which they invoke Justice, wine or Dionysos to

[180] Apollod, 3. 5. 1; cf. A. fr. 125N.

[181] v. e.g. P. Guggisberg, *Das Satyrspiel* (diss. Zürich, 1947), pp. 60–3; e.g. A. *Theoroi* 41–50; S. *Herakles at Taenarum* (Radt, p. 186), *Ichn.* 63, 164, 457 Radt; E. *Bousiris* fr. 313N, *Eurystheus* fr. 375N, *Cyclops*, *Skiron* (*P. Oxy.* 2455 fr. 6). In fact we may suspect the occurrence of the theme in any play named after a persecutor of mankind (e.g. A. *Kerkyon*) or in which the satyrs do uncongenial work (e.g. Sositheos, *Daphnis*, fr. 1). As in *Cyclops*, captivity would explain their occupation or presence.

[182] *Ba.* 803; *Cyc.* 24, 90.

[183] *Ba.* 614, 374; *Cyc.* 26, 378, 438.

[184] *Ba.* 1183, etc.; *Cyc.* 658.

[185] *Ba.* 480, 490; *Cyc.* 173; cf. n. 20 above.

[186] *Ba.* 240 f., 511 ff.; *Cyc.* 204 ff.

[187] *Ba.* 226 ff., 443 ff., 511 ff., etc.; *Cyc.* 203.

[188] *Ba.* 402 ff.; *Cyc.* 63 ff.

[189] *Ba.* 556 ff.; *Cyc.* 74 ff.

[190] *Ba.* 862 ff.; *Cyc.* 619 ff.

[191] *Ba.* 976 ff.; *Cyc.* 514 ff.; with *ἀμμένει* at *Cyc.* 514, cf. *Ba.* 964; S. *El.* 1397 (cf. 1441, 1492; Thomson, II, 1966, p. 169); Aristid, XXII, 10, p. 31 Keil; Greg. Nyss. I. 80 Jaeger.

perform.[192] The freedom of the *thiasos* is established by the revenge[193] taken on the master by an unsuccessfully imprisoned ξένος,[194] upon which the *thiasos* indulges in ἐπιχαιρεκακία.[195]

There are of course inevitable differences. For example, Odysseus giving wine to Polyphemos has no counterpart in the Pentheus story.[196] Nevertheless, this central element of the Homeric story appears in the *Cyclops* in a form that has little to do with Homer, but corresponds to the initiatory pattern of the *Bacchae*.

In the *Bacchae* Pentheus emerges from within the palace to the accompaniment of a choral μακαρισμός, has his vision, accepts with an almost childlike compliance the demeaning attentions paid to his new appearance as a member of the *thiasos*, and finally goes off, intent on a triumphant return, to his death. Polyphemos too emerges from within to the accompaniment of a choral μακαρισμός (*Cyc.* 495 ff.), accepts with an almost childlike compliance[197] the demeaning attentions paid to the manners and appearance required for his new occupation of wine-drinking (542 ff.), and after further drinking has a vision which, like Pentheus', passes from his surroundings to his instructor (576 ff.): he sees the heavens mixed up with the earth, the throne of Zeus, all the glory of the δαίμονες, and Silenos as Ganymede. The bathos of the final element prepares an appropriate end for the κῶμος in sex. Polyphemos returns, intent on raping Silenos, to the cave, where he will be blinded by the Greeks. With the preceding elements it is perhaps worth comparing the glimpse of initiation into the mysteries of Isis allowed us by Apuleius;[198] 'nocte media vidi solem candido coruscantem lumine; deos inferos et deos superos accessi coram et adoravi de proxumo'.

This scene of the *Cyclops* has no counterpart in the Homeric model, and like its counterpart in the *Bacchae* it serves no function in the story. The precondition for it is that, unlike in Homer, Polyphemos is introduced to wine for the first time.[199] This means also that, like Pentheus, he can be told that Dionysos is a great benefactor of mankind,[200] and, like Pentheus, he is perplexed by, and scornful of, a partial revelation of Dionysos' power of self-transformation.[201] The ξένος in the *Cyclops* is of course not Dionysos but Odysseus, but even in the *Cyclops*, as in the *Bacchae*, Dionysos is both absent[202] and present[203] – his presence revealed to[204] but unnoticed[205] or ridiculed[206] by his victim, whom he eventually defeats.[207]

Again, whereas Pentheus must be killed, the killing of Polyphemos would be incompatible with the story. And yet the blinding is described as a φόνος (469–71):

> *XO:* ἔστ' οὖν ὅπως ἂν ὡσπερεὶ σπονδῆς θεοῦ
> κἀγὼ λαβοίμην τοῦ τυφλοῦντος ὄμματα
> δαλοῦ; φόνου γὰρ τοῦδε κοινωνεῖν θέλω.

[192] *Ba.* 991 ff., 1017 ff.; *Cyc.* 616 f.
[193] *Ba.* 1081; *Cyc.* 441.
[194] *Ba.* 353, etc.; *Cyc.* 676.
[195] *Ba.* 1032 ff.; *Cyc.* 663 f.
[196] Unless we choose to believe that there may be hints to the initiated that D. secretly administered to P. (drugged?) wine: *Ba.* 326 f., 851, 924.
[197] *Cyc.* 542–45, 559, 561–2; cf. ἰδού at *Ba.* 934, *Cyc.* 544, 562 (also at Ar. *Nub.* 254; cf. n. 14 above).
[198] *Met.* 11. 23; cf. A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithras-Liturgie* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 10, 20.
[199] cf. Seaford (1977–8), p. 91; the same may have been true of Dionysos' enemy Lykourgos in Aeschylus' satyr-play *Lykourgos*: v. e.g. V. Steffen, *De Graecorum Fabulis Satyricis* (1979), p. 20.
[200] *Cyc.* 520 f.; cf. *Ba.* 272 ff. (and cf. *Cyc.* 574 with *Ba.* 282).
[201] *Cyc.* 526 f.; cf. *Ba.* 477–80.
[202] *Ba.* 582 ff., etc.; *Cyc.* 74 ff.
[203] *Ba.* 500, etc.; *Cyc.* 156, 454, 520 ff., 575.
[204] *Ba.* 500 ff.; *Cyc.* 519 f., 575.
[205] *Ba.* 501, 479.
[206] *Ba.* 499; *Cyc.* 525 ff.
[207] νικᾶν; *Ba.* 975, 1147, 1001; *Cyc.* 454, 678 (cf. 519 ff.).

φόνου κοινωνεῖν is to be accessory to murder.[208] Most commentators accept that the simile refers to that part of the preparation for a sacrifice in which a torch was dipped into a χέρνιψ, which was then sprinkled over altar, onlookers and victim.[209] This is to say that Euripides has substituted for the Homeric simile of the smith dipping hot metal into cold water (*Od.* 9. 391 ff.) his own, similar but closer to the reality (δαλός) and drawn from sacrificial ritual. And so there may be a secondary reference in φόνος to gore. My point is that the blinding of Polyphemos has been expressed as a sacrificial φόνος in which the *thiasos* is to play a secondary role, as it does in the sacrificial φόνος of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*.[210] So too the actual φόνος in the *Cyclops*, of Odysseus' companions, is a cannibalistic sacrifice,[211] in which the *thiasos* of satyrs rejects all participation with a vehemence which is surprising inasmuch as, despite the description of Polyphemos as κρεάνομος,[212] there is no chance of their being invited to participate.[213] Why then do they do so? Turning to the *Bacchae* (1184) we find that there too the *thiasos* rejects participation in cannibalism.[214] But of course in this case they reject it because they have been offered it. The τόπος is more at home in the *Bacchae*.[215]

How do we explain this similarity of form in the two plays? The *Cyclops* was almost certainly written before the *Bacchae*, and so there is no question of Euripides parodying himself. In fact the similarity may not even proceed from the conscious intention of the dramatist. Alone of extant drama, *Bacchae* and *Cyclops* represent the ancient type, in which the chorus is a Dionysiac *thiasos* and the theme is redolent of initiation into the *thiasos*. But the *Bacchae* represents it more closely than does the *Cyclops*. For the theme of the *Bacchae* is the traditional myth of the *thiasos*, the ἱερὸς λόγος of their mysteries, and so form and content cohere inasmuch as the form is merely an expression of the story. In the *Cyclops* on the other hand we can see the persistence of this traditional 'initiatory' form fused (often with humorous results) with a novel and somewhat discrepant[216] (Homeric) content.[217]

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[208] cf. e.g. in Euripides *Andr.* 915, *Or.* 1591, *El.* 1048.

[209] Ar. *Pax* 959 (with schol.); E. *HF* 928 f.; Athen. 409 b; Hsch. s.v. δαλίον; P. Stengel, *Opferbraüche der Griechen* (Leipzig, 1910), pp. 17, 36; idem, *Die Griechischen Kultusaltertümer*[3] (Munich, 1920), p. 109. With the (curious) σπονδῆς: cf. D. Chr. 34 (17), 34, Aeschin. 2. 84, which justify Reiske's ὡσπερεί in 469 (ὥσπερ ἐκ L).

[210] *Ba.* 1182 f., 1114, 1129 ff.

[211] *Cyc.* 243 ff., 345; Seaford, *CQ* n.s. 25 (1975), 200 ff., and in *CQ* n.s. 26 (1976), 315 f.

[212] *Cyc.* 245; at *Theocr.* Id. 26, 24 the maenads κρεανομέοντο Pentheus, to which Gow compares Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* 1. 84. 10 f. Stählin: αἱ μαινάδες αἱ δύσαγνον κρεανομίαν μυούμεναι, and comments 'the word may come from a Dionysiac mystic ritual', cf. Seaford, *CQ* 25 (1975), 200 ff.

[213] cf. *Cyc.* 323 ff., 31; Seaford, *CQ* n.s. 25 (1975), 202 on the irony of P's remark.

[214] There is even a remarkable verbal parallel: cf. τλᾶμον with unusual sense and without the usual ὦ at *Ba.* 1184 and *Cyc.* 369 (ὦ at *Cyc.* 369 to be deleted *metri causa*).

[215] A further example: both for Pentheus and for Polyphemos the κῶμος turns into its (ambiguously predicted: *Ba.* 963–70, *Cyc.* 511–18) disastrous opposite, and this powerful contrast pervades the endings of both plays. But the blinding of Pol. must occur not (despite the expectation of the *thiasos*: *Cyc.* 447 f.) on the mountainside but in the cave, and so he has to be persuaded to have his κῶμος at home.

[216] For similar fusion of traditional form and novel content in satyr-play v. Seaford (1976), pp. 216–19.

[217] I am grateful for their comments on a previous draft of this paper to Jan Bremmer, Fritz Graf, Nicholas Richardson and especially to George Thomson, who in an article devoted largely to the question of whether Pentheus is drugged has reached independently conclusions similar to mine about mystical allusions in the *Bacchae* (*Journal Philos. School Univ. Thessalon*, 1979, 424–46).

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