

BACCHAE 47-52: DIONYSUS' PLAN

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Toward the end of his prologue speech, Dionysus tells what he will do about Pentheus, who *θεομαχεῖ τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ καὶ σπονδῶν ἄπο / ὠθεῖ μ', ἐν εὐχαῖς τ' οὐδαμοῦ μνείαν ἔχει* 45-46).¹ His plan is:

αὐτῷ θεὸς γεγῶς ἐνδείξομαι
πασὶν τε Θηβαίοισιν. ἐς δ' ἄλλην χθόνα,
τὰνθένδε θέμενος εὖ, μεταστήσω πόδα
δεικνὺς ἐμαυτόν· ἦν δὲ Θηβαίων πόλις
ὀργῇ σὺν ὄπλοις ἐξ ὄρους βάκχας ἄγειν
ζητῇ, ξυνάψω μαινάσι στρατηλατῶν. (47-52)

Coming as it does from a god, this prediction should come true: we should see Pentheus "fighting the god" followed by an epiphany of Dionysus and, if this has no effect, a battle between the two. Yet scholars have been unwilling or unable to localize the epiphany:²

¹ I wish to thank Professors G. W. Dickerson and M. L. Lang and the Association's referee for their thoughtful and detailed criticism.

² The following will be cited by author only: the editions of the *Bacchae* by E. Bruhn (Berlin 1891³); G. Dalmeyda (Paris 1908); E. R. Dodds (Oxford 1960²); H. Grégoire (Paris 1961); G. Murray (Oxford 1913²); and J. E. Sandys (Cambridge 1892³); as well as W. S. Barrett, *Euripides Hippolytos* (Oxford 1966); A. P. Burnett, "Pentheus and Dionysus: Host and Guest," *CP* 65 (1970) 15-29; A. P. Burnett, *Ion* (Englewood Cliffs 1970); D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1967); K. Deichgräber, "Die Kadmos-Teiresiaszene in Euripides' Bakchen," *Hermes* 70 (1935) 322-49; H. Diller, "Die Bakchen und ihre Stellung im Spätwerk des Euripides," in *Wege der Forschung Euripides* (Darmstadt 1968) 469-92; J. Ferguson, *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Austin 1972); A. J. Festugière, "Euripide dans les 'Bacchantes,'" *Eranos* 55 (1957) 127-44; G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941); M. Imhof, *Bemerkungen zu den Prologen der sophokleischen und euripideischen Tragödie* (Winterthur 1957); G. Kirk, *The Bacchae* (Englewood Cliffs 1970); H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* (London 1961³); A. Lesky, *Die griechische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen 1972³); G. Murray, *The Bacchae of Euripides* (London 1904); G. Norwood, *Essays in Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1954); M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* (Göttingen 1954²); A. Rivier, *Essai sur le Tragique d'Euripide* (Lausanne 1944); T. G. Rosenmeyer, *The Masks of Tragedy* (Austin 1963); W. Schmid,

Si nous considérons maintenant les scènes suivantes, nous constatons que s'accomplit progressivement ce qu'il faut bien appeler l'épiphanie de Dionysos. (Rivier 89)

the divine manifestation . . . [was] promised in the Prologue and has been taking place in some sense and degree at every stage in the action . . . the glorified appearance of Dionysus is not yet. (Winnington-Ingram 135)³

Nor have they found a battle:

Pentheus does not in fact attempt to recover the women by force, though he is on the point of doing so (784, 809, 845); so that the god's threat is never carried out. (Dodds *ad v.* 52)⁴

Two solutions have been proposed short of condemning the poet as inept: Euripides is purposely misleading us; Dionysus changed his plan.

The usual resolution of the dilemma has been to assume that here, as elsewhere, Euripides is engaging in a bit of judicious *suggestio falsi*: the god was not a false prophet but Euripides, wanting to keep the audience in suspense, dragged this red herring across the path of the plot. The clearest parallel, the *Ion*, was pointed out by Dalmeyda in answer to Bruhn, who first raised the problem. Since then the *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, and *Suppliants* have also been adduced.⁵

Geschichte der griechischen Literatur, part one, vol. three (Munich 1940); W. Steidle, *Studien zum antiken Drama* (Munich 1968); H. Strohm, *Euripides* (Munich 1957); F. Wassermann, "Die Bakchantinnen des Euripides," *NJhB* 5 (1929) 272-86; C. W. Wilink, "Some Problems of Text and Interpretation in the *Bacchae*, I," *CQ* 16 (1966) 27-50; R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Euripides and Dionysus* (Cambridge 1948).

³ See also Schmid 661. Diller (474) seems to recognize the plan's sequence: "die Tragödie . . . Epiphanie Kampf und Sieg des Gottes darstelle" and Pohlenz speaks repeatedly of *the* epiphany (452, 458) but neither recognizes the conditionality of the plan or that a plan exists at all. To them Dionysus is simply playing "ein Spiel der Katze mit der Maus" (Diller 484, cf. Pohlenz 455). Similarly, Wasserman: "Das ganz Stück eine grosse Epiphanie des Dionysos [ist]" (273) for *the* epiphany is "eine wahre Epiphanie mehr der Kraft als der Person . . . der Gott zugleich hier und überall ist" (277). Burnett, alone, sees a connection: "If the god really means to persuade him, the obvious next step is some form of direct revelation" (21) but she minimizes the plan here ("obvious next step") and later denies it altogether (see below).

⁴ See also Bruhn 25, Burnett 22, Grube 71 f., Kirk *ad* 50 f., Kitto 372, Strohm 127. Murray comments: "The suggestion of a possibility which is never realized or approached is perhaps a mark of the unrevised condition of the play" and is followed by Imhof 101.

⁵ See Dodds *ad* 52, Pohlenz 451, Wilink 30. Stoessel (*RE* s.v. Prologos, 23.2.2343) comments: "anders als in den angeführten Parallelen bleibt hier die Ankündigung der Zukunft so unbestimmt dass nichts von der Handlung vorweggenommen scheint." See now Lesky 486.

Yet none of these but the *Ion* is at all a close parallel. The prologues of the *Medea* and the *Suppliants* are spoken by humans and so have not the finality of a speech by a god. In the *Hippolytus* the alleged *suggestio falsi* is, as Barrett notes (*ad v. 42*), more mystifying than misleading.⁶ The prologue may gloss over the details but the predicted end actually occurs and so the audience is accurately apprised of the ultimate outcome.

The *Ion* parallel is not really valid either, for in the exodos the point is made explicitly that the god changed his plans (1563 ff.):

This was his conspiracy, but when informers went to work and disclosed the plan, he was afraid you would contrive a mutual death between you, and so he saved you both ingeniously!

He meant to keep the truth well hid. . . . (trans. Burnett)

There can be no doubt that the plan was changed and that the poet meant something by it. The *Bacchae* has no such explanation nor is it likely that the missing portion contained one (see Dodds *ad v. 1329*) and we should be wary of ascribing the difficulty in line 52 to *suggestio falsi*.

A partial mitigation of Euripides' subterfuge has been suggested by Willink (30 note 3), following Barrett:⁷

the commoner technique is to mislead (but not to tell a lie) by putting the false prediction in a subordinate clause.

Yet this misconstrues the structure of the whole plan by isolating the condition. There is a logical progression that should not be obscured: "Pentheus fights me; I will set things right (hopefully); (but) if he (still) fights, I will retaliate with force."⁸ Whether there will be violence or not depends on Pentheus; the god reacts more than he acts.⁹

Such a subterfuge would be awkward artistically in any case. We

⁶ Elsewhere (*ad 41-50, ad 42*) he calls the statement misleading. Contrast Kitto (204): "Aphrodite goes on to destroy all possibility of dramatic surprise in the play by telling us exactly what is to happen" (see also Ferguson 280, Grube 187, and, more subtly, Pohlenz 266).

⁷ See Barrett *ad 42*: "Since all this is expressed in a final clause, giving Apollo's intention, Eur. is guilty of no misstatement."

⁸ For a similar reading see Conacher 59, Grube 401, and Burnett 18 f., who works out the implications of such conditionality brilliantly.

⁹ Pentheus thinks to decapitate Dionysus (240 f.) but is himself decapitated; his palace is treated precisely as he treats Teiresias' oracular seat. The maenads, similarly, are peaceful until attacked.

are faced with either a god who is not in control although he appears to be or one who does not know what he is saying.

A. P. Burnett has recently argued for the second possibility, that Dionysus changed his plan. According to her (28), the god

can dissolve his own dispensation, and can in the space of a syllable create an alternate fate for the city, one that takes cognizance of its tardy decision to make him welcome.

Demonstration of this, for her, lies in the exodos (29):

The results of Pentheus' death are the results that he himself, when not maddened by impiety, had always wished to obtain. Thebes is in the end the Dionysus-worshipping city the god had meant it to be, but it is also the healthy and united city that Pentheus was ready to defend. The Theban women will return to health and sanity, their piety now all their own. . . . Agave and her sisters of course must go into exile, for they are touched with kin-blood, but so would they have been, if Pentheus had had his way and the women had massacred all the Theban men instead of only one. Cadmus and Harmonia . . . will finally become immortals living in the Blessed Isles. The Asiatic women depart and Thebes enters a new phase in her history.

Most will agree that this is not the play Euripides has chosen to write: the ending is not one of reunification and joy but of separation and sorrow. If anything, it shows that divine punishment is *not* limited to those responsible but like fire spreads to include everybody.¹⁰

In view of the deficiency of either solution, one should, perhaps, return to the text and look more closely for signs of epiphany and battle.

I. BATTLE

la scène où Agavé croit tenir la tête d'un lion ne s'accorde guère avec l'hypothèse de la lutte armée: la tragique méprise s'explique si Penthée était seul; elle est peu vraisemblable s'il y a eu bataille rangée.

(Grégoire 223 f.)

¹⁰ There is no talk of a "healthy and united city." Agave has no intention of worshipping Dionysus (1383 ff.). Kin-blood is not discussed. Cadmus is not impressed by the idea of immortality (1360 ff.). There is no mention of the Asian departure or the Theban "new phase."

It must be granted that a "bataille rangée" does not take place but those who demand one are reading too much into line 52. The precise terms of the plan are: "if Thebes (i.e., Pentheus) seeks to (i.e., desires to) lead the bacchants out of the mountains, I will take the field with my maenads and get hold of him." Dionysus does not say that Pentheus must actually, physically, attempt to bring back the maenads (so Dodds) nor does he mention the word "battle."¹¹ Furthermore, in the one other reference to such a battle, *Eumenides* 25 f., the battle is obviously metaphoric:

ἐξ οὔτε βάκχαις ἐστρατήγησεν θεός
λαγὼν δίκην Πενθεὶ καταρράψας μόρον.

Dionysus plays the general but his adversary is a rabbit.¹²

Yet *στρατηλατῶν* has military connotations and Euripides does provide a battle of sorts.¹³ A paradigm has already been provided for Pentheus in the messenger's speech (751 ff.): the maenads, like *πολέμιοι* (752), swoop down and turn everything topsy-turvy; in anger at being plundered, the villagers rush to arms (758 f.). The phrasing recalls the prologue: οἱ δ' ὀργῆς ὕπο / ἐς ὄπλ' (758)—ὀργῇ σὺν ὄπλοις (51) and gives point to the debate about weapons that follows the speech.¹⁴ Pentheus fits the pattern: like the herdsmen he hides in the bushes, spying on the maenads. He, too, wants to bring the maenads out of the

¹¹ *αὐτήν* is easier to supply mentally than *μάχην*. There are numerous parallels for *συνάπτω* with only a direct object in Euripides and a few for it used absolutely (*Pho.* 106, 1381, but the latter is plural: "they joined together"). Even if *μάχην* is to be supplied, we need not assume this refers to a "bataille rangée" in view of v. 636.

¹² For the usual interpretation see Bruhn 25, Pohlenz 451, Schmid 669 note 4. Dodds remarks (xxxv) that Aeschylus' testimony is not explicit.

¹³ It must be granted that military imagery is eventually overshadowed by hunting and athletics. The hunting imagery is well-known ("the *Bacchae* is dominated by a key metaphor—the image of the hunt" Winnington-Ingram 12). Athletic imagery is also pronounced, especially in the last scene: Dionysus leads Pentheus into a contest from which the god will emerge victor (975 f., cf. 1163). Dionysus is later called *καλλίνικον* ᾧ δάκρυα νικηφορεῖ as well as *ξυγκύναγον* (1146 f.). Agave brings home a prize (*νικηφόρον ἄγραν* 1200 f.). There is talk of a victory hymn (1161), a revel-band (1167) and a banquet (1184). Although hunting and athletics overshadow the military imagery, this does not mean that the military imagery is not effective. It is only in the last scene that it drops completely from sight, that is, only after the "battle" has taken place. Moreover, the two sets of imagery are not incompatible (*pace* Grégoire). The passage in the *Eumenides* cited above speaks of the event in terms both of hunt and war.

¹⁴ Five of the six occurrences of the word *ὄπλον* outside of the prologue are within these one hundred lines (303, 759, 789, 804, 809, 845).

mountains, to stop their revelry (compare 791, 804 ff. with 719). The herdsmen escape and the maenads dismember some cattle instead. Pentheus does not escape and is himself dismembered.¹⁵

Not only does Pentheus by his actions fit the battle pattern of the messenger speech but the language of the whole scene is military also: Pentheus is a spy on a campaign and when their commander gives them the order, the maenads mount a tower and attack Pentheus with spears and the epic missiles, *χερμάδας κραταιβόλους*.¹⁶ The battle cry is raised; victory belongs to Dionysus.¹⁷

There is some reason, then, to argue that at least part of Dionysus' plan has not been altered. Still, the problem of the epiphany remains.

II. EPIPHANY

The prediction of an epiphany before Pentheus and the Thebans is preceded by two other mentions of self-revelation by the god: in lines 21 f. we are told that Dionysus established his rites in Asia so that he might be revealed to mortals as a god; in lines 39 ff. he says that he drove the women out of Thebes so that they might learn that they were uninitiated and so that he might defend his mother by being revealed a god, born by her to Zeus.¹⁸ The three are verbally parallel:

¹⁵ The term "bacchant" is used throughout the play but the term "maenad" is used almost exclusively in the second half, after the miracle. The few early occurrences look to the miracle: after the birth epiphany Dionysus will lead the maenads (52); Dionysus' birth is an aetiological explanation for the maenad costume (103); the chorus' wish for Dionysus' presence (570) is soon realized and the chorus is for the first time called maenads (601).

¹⁶ Spy (*κατάσκοπος* 916, 956, 981, cf. *κατασκοπή* 838) is used only in the *Bacchae*, the *Rhesus* (nine times!), and once in the *Hecuba*. It is always clearly military. For *ἐπιχειρέω* ὁδῶ (819) as a military campaign see Hdt. 7.43. For *προηγῆτήρ* (1159) as commander compare Xen. *Cyr.* 2.1.1, 4.2.27. Pentheus' wig (?) is called a helmet (*κόρυθ'* 1186, about which Dodds, translating it "crest," says "*κόρυς* does not occur elsewhere in this sense"). The epic *χερμάδιον* is metrically unsuitable for tragic dialogue; *χερμάς* replaces it (the epic overtone is obvious in *Septem* 300 *χερμάδ' ὀκρίοεσαν*, cf. *Il.* 4.518). Euripides' phrase seems to be a coinage based on the epic-sounding *τηλεβόλος χερμάς* of Pindar (*P.* 3.49).

¹⁷ Dike as *ξίφηφόρος* (992) recalls Pentheus (628 and 635 are the only mentions of sword). The battle cry (1133, cf. *El.* 843, 855, *HF.* 981) is also a ritual cry (cf. 593 and Aeschylus fr. 71a Mette) while the victory is athletic as well as military.

¹⁸ In the past Thebes to Dionysus meant its women: 23 f. is explained by 35 f. In the future (i.e., the course of the play) Thebes will mean its men, specifically Pentheus since every other male, by the time he appears on stage, has "learned" about Dionysus

ἴν' εἶην ἐμφανῆς δαίμων βροτοῖς (22)
 φανέντα θνητοῖς δαίμον' ὃν τίκτει Διὶ (42)
 αὐτῷ θεὸς γεγώς ἐνδείξομαι / πᾶσιν τε Θηβαίοισιν (47-48)

and one may assume that the epiphany before Pentheus, like that before the women, will be a defense of his mother, a proof of his birth, and will involve some sort of ritual conversion.

The repeated emphasis on Dionysus' disguise (4, 53, 54)¹⁹ suggests that we will see Dionysus disguised (as he now is) before he is revealed; Dionysus' arrival on stage in front of Pentheus will not by itself constitute the "birth" epiphany predicted in 47 f.²⁰ First Pentheus appears, against the background of male conversion and wisdom, in its more and less pure forms. Dionysus is led in and the confrontation between the two young leaders demonstrates Dionysus' contention in the prologue that Pentheus "fights the god." Accordingly, the plan should now begin—the stage is set for the birth epiphany. After the chorus once again recalls the story of Dionysus' birth and brings the god, verbally, closer and closer to Thebes,²¹ a voice is heard off-stage and we are presented with the notorious "palace miracle."

A great deal has been written on the palace miracle but it has never been identified as the birth epiphany of Dionysus, the epiphany

(even the messengers). The identification of Pentheus and Thebes is stressed by repeated parallelism (361 f., 503, 666!, 1194) and is implicit in 530 f. Pentheus' isolation in fighting the god is stressed by the triple repetition of *μόνος* in 962 f. (cf. 1255, in contrast to the opening where Cadmus and Teiresias are the only men to dance, 195). I do not think anything is meant by the shift from *δαίμων* (22, 42) to *θεός* (47) in describing the god's epiphanies although *δαίμων* is confined to the early part of the play (except for 1325 where the parallelism recurs).

¹⁹ Willink's recent criticism of 53 f. is hyperlogical (for defense see Sandys and Dodds *ad loc.*, Grube 401 note 1, and Winnington-Ingram 47 note 3). The more important matter is *why* Dionysus bothers to disguise himself and this Burnett answers ingeniously: Dionysus is playing the role of the unexpected (divine) guest.

²⁰ Yet it foreshadows the crucial arrival: confinement is followed by miraculous release and the appearance of the god (442 ff.).

²¹ This assumes that Nysa is in Asia and the Corycean peaks are not those of Delphi but of Cilicia (*contra* Dodds, whose parallels are admittedly impressive). Only two of the ten locations listed by Stephanus for Nysa would argue against the above. A. Herrmann (*RE* s.v. Nysa #12, 17.2.1654) notes that these can be eliminated as "spätere Gründungen." Ferguson observes that the chorus "finally, with consummate irony, picture him in a place of fine horses" (474). In any case "nimmt das Lied die typische Form des ὕμνος ἐπικλητικός auf, wie er vor die Epiphanie des Gottes gesungen wird" (Deichgräber 342, see Dodds 142).

predicted in the prologue.²² Critics of the miracle have been concerned only with the question of its existence, not of its essence or implications. Statements about the nature and meaning of the miracle are, at best, guarded:

it is essential to hold fast to the symbolical interpretation . . . we expect a wonder and a wonder occurs . . . the tone is light as the detail is vague . . . if the miracles at this stage were too overwhelming, they would make what follows an anti-climax . . . it is the function of the palace-miracle to foreshadow [the ultimate disaster] in symbol. And the details of the symbolism—earthquake, lightning, and fire—are extraordinarily apt.
(Winnington-Ingram 82–85)

its whole meaning is that Dionysus is a god with divine power. It is one of a series of miracles which is already begun in the prologue and continues up to the destruction of Pentheus; all serve the same purpose, though with increasing force. Euripides does not want this one to be given a significance different from that of the others. (Kitto 376)²³

The “details of the symbolism” are suggestive of something more than imminent disaster. The lightning, fire, and thunder are precisely the elements associated with the birth of Dionysus.²⁴ Dionysus has been confined, hidden away in darkness (510) and then he bursts forth, in flames. The palace is personified as a maenad (*διατινάξεται* 587,

²² W. Steidle (37) speaks here of “einer Epiphanie des Gottes,” having earlier (32 note 2) quoted Wassermann’s dictum that the whole play is one great epiphany of the god (see above note 3).

²³ Likewise Conacher 65, Festugière 134, Rosenmeyer 140, and Strohm 129. Norwood’s recantation, although still concerned with the reality of the miracle, quite rightly points out its centrality and drama: “so far from playing the scene down, he plays it up. He could easily have omitted the most exciting passages. No to mention the words, so often adduced already, about complete downfall of the palace, why if he means to dilute the scene, does he go out of his way to make Dionysus bid the thunderbolt’s blazing torch consume the house of Pentheus utterly with fire?” (59). See also Ferguson 482 for the centrality of the miracle, and Pohlenz 452 for its undeniable drama. Norwood’s solution to the “riddle” has yet to be refuted: “the miracle, in short, is effected, but it is not the downfall [of the palace]; it is the divinely induced belief in the downfall” (62).

²⁴ Lightning, fire, and thunder are not confined to this play (one thinks of the *Pro-metheus*) but, to judge from the closely parallel scene in the *Heracles*, these elements suggested the Dionysiac: Heracles, shaking his head like a maenad (867) is a bull (869), dancing up and down the house (1085) without drums or thyrsos of Bromios or Dionysiac libation (892 ff.). There, as here, the destruction of the palace goes unremarked.

πεσήμασιν 587, διάδρομα 592) and, like Semele, is destroyed.²⁵ The flaring up of Semele's tomb (596 ff.) secures the identification.

The birth of Dionysus has been kept constantly before us up to this point; the play before the miracle is concerned almost exclusively with Dionysus' birth; it is stated and debated, rationalized and lyricized. After the miracle there is virtually no mention of it at all. Instead it is the epiphany of the bull, that is, the *result* of Dionysus' birth, that commands our attention. Thus the verb *τίκτω* referring to Dionysus occurs only before the miracle (2, 42, 92, 99, 229, 335, 467, 524).²⁶ Semele is not mentioned after the miracle (3, 28, 41, 105, 278, 335, 376, 468, 581, 597).²⁷ The cult title Bromios, explained by the ancients with reference to the fire and thunder of Dionysus' birth, is found almost entirely in the first part.²⁸ Conversely, what Semele and Zeus produced, a bull (as predicted in v. 100), occurs only after the miracle (618, 743, 920, 1017, 1159, cf. 922).²⁹

²⁵ For the maenadlike character of *διάδρομα* compare 135, 148, 727, 731, 748, 1067, 1091; for *διατινάσσεται* (587, 606 and *ἀντινάξ'* 623) compare 80, 553, *HF.* 867, *IT.* 282, *Or.* 342; *πέσσημα* is used of an inanimate object only in *IT.* 1384 (statue of Artemis). Like Orpheus (see 562), Dionysus has a way with inanimate objects: Thebes (23 ff.) and the tree (1064 f.) as well as the house bend to his will. This ability seems to be traditional (cf. Aeschylus fr. 76a Mette: *ἐνθουσιᾷ δὴ δῶμα βακχεύει στέγη*).

²⁶ Thereafter only of Pentheus (966, 987, 1119) and his prototype Acteon (1228).

²⁷ It is perhaps significant that the first and last references alone concern Semele's tomb, the scene not only of birth but also of death. The father, Zeus, is likewise mentioned primarily in the first part (1, 8, 27, 31, 42, 90, 95, 122, 243, 245, 286, 289, 291, 366, 417, 466, 467, 522, 524, 581, 599, 603, 725, 859, 1333, 1341, 1343, 1349). The clustering at the very end is emphatic: when the action is viewed in its totality, the meaning of Dionysus' parentage is spelled out.

²⁸ The ancient explanations are found in Diodorus 4.5.1, schol. *Il.* 1.354b, and *Ety. Gud.* s.v. *Βρόμιος* (for a different but not incompatible explanation of the title see Dodds *ad* 65-67). The epithet is used sixteen times before and during this scene and only three times after it (66, 84, 87, 115, 141, 329, 375, 412, 446, 536, 546, 584, 593, 629, 726, 790, 976, 1031, 1250, and 1085 if we accept the papyrus against the manuscript). This distribution is even more striking when compared with the uniform diffusion of the other two common appellations, *Dionysus* and *Bacchus*.

²⁹ Only after the crucial "birth" can other epiphanies occur. This has not been recognized by those who speak of a continuum of epiphanies throughout the play. Thus there are very few "appear" words before the birth epiphany, other than in the prologue, which of course looks to the future (22, 42, 47, 50): 182 is bracketed by Murray; 501 is negative and so supports my contention; 527 and 538 both prepare for the birth epiphany. Similarly "seeing" is much more noticeable in the second part of the play: I found only six references to present, positive acts of seeing in the first part (6, 198?, 249, 252, 500, 550).

Likewise, many words common to birth and miracle occur only before and during but never after the miracle. Thunder is mentioned only in the description of Dionysus' birth, by the chorus in the parodos (90) and here (599). The adjective *κεραύνιος* is found frequently before and during the miracle, and never after (6, 93, 244, 288 of birth, 594 of palace!).³⁰ The word *φλόξ* is found only before and during the miracle (8, 146, 598) while *πῦρ* is used first of Semele (3, 8, 288, 523), then the palace (624), and is thereafter magical (758, 1083) or metaphorical (778) but never burning.

Dionysus comes on stage and explains what we have just heard presented lyrically (616 ff.).³¹ The events he describes are, likewise, reflections of the birth myth. Dionysus' epiphany, like the mythic birth, is double. This is made clear by verbal parallelism, metrically reinforced:

.....ὁ Βάκχος.....	623ὁ Βρόμιος.....	629
ῆσ'.....	625	ῆσσε.....	631
διαμεθεῖς.....	627	διαμεθεῖς.....	635

The god's two forms in the epiphany are also found in myth: he appears first as a bull, which recalls the traditional animal guise of Dionysus (100) and then as a phantom, which recalls Teiresias' elaborate rationalization of the second birth (292 ff.).³² As in the myth, Dionysus is here bound and then released.

So we have seen how Pentheus fights the god and we have seen the first part of Dionysus' plan in action, the birth epiphany. This epiphany will, hopefully, set things right (*θέμενος εὔ* 49) so that Dionysus can move on. There is the possibility, though, that Thebes (i.e., Pentheus) will still fight the god, will still want to rehabilitate the maenads and then Dionysus will have to resort to force.

³⁰ Yet the maenads are described as "shattering by thunderbolt" (1103) the tree. One should note further similarities between the two scenes: fire and thunder (accepting the papyrus reading at 1085) are both mentioned; the tree acts like a maenad (1072 ff.); Dionysus' voice again directs his followers.

³¹ Dodds' comment on the "lightness of tone" in the trochaics relies, I think, too heavily on Aristotle. See A. W. Pickard-Cambridge *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford 1968²) 158–60.

³² It is Pentheus who equates god and bull and he is deluded; the phantom is also delusory, although clearly god-created. Most scholars simply follow Pentheus' equation (e.g., Burnett 21, Dodds 151, Winnington-Ingram 9) but illusion and reality are, in Dionysus, inextricably blended.

The question then remains: will the epiphany work? Dionysus’ narrative of the epiphany suggests it will not: Pentheus is as rabid a fighter of the gods as ever: *πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὦν ἀνὴρ / ἐς μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησε* (635 f.). His resistance continues in the next scene: he is prepared to make his attack; he calls out his troops and ignores Dionysus’ warning not to fight the gods or try to lead the maenads back. Dionysus even offers to bring back the women himself and set everything right, to no avail. The whole interchange recalls, in fact, the plan of the prologue: Dionysus planned to go to another country once he had set things right (*τὰνθένδε θέμενος εὔ* 49) while his present promise to set things right (*εὔ καταστήσαι τάδε* 802) is ignored.³³ Dionysus’ warning not to lead the maenads home (*κινουῦντα βάκχας <σ> εὐίων ὀρώων ἄπο* 791) and his promise to do that without violence (*ἐγὼ γυναικας δεῦρ’ ὅπλων ἄξω δίχα* 804) recall the conditions under which Dionysus himself would attack (*σὺν ὅπλοις ἐξ ὄρους βάκχας ἄγειν* 51). The result is, as predicted, the “battle” discussed earlier.

The god’s statements in the prologue, then, are not misleading. From line 52 we would not expect a “bataille rangée” in the literal sense and any expectation of a military confrontation of some sort is amply fulfilled by the warlike nature of Pentheus’ misadventure in the mountains. The usually disregarded announcement of the god’s imminent epiphany in line 47 can be identified with one of the most dramatic spectacles of the whole play, the “palace miracle.” The god’s plan is, in fact, an accurate outline of the play’s action: Pentheus fights the god; Dionysus is unable to set things right by miraculous proof of his divine birth and, when Pentheus still desires to lead the women back, he is forced to dispose of him.

³³ In only these two places in the play does εὔ involve something more physical than speaking (267, 475, 479, 721, 824) or thinking (196, 480, 484, 851). See Burnett 23 for the same connection.