CHORAL MEDIATIONS
IN GREEK TRAGEDY

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Contents

List of figures vii
List of contributors viii

1 Introduction: the chorus in the middle
Renaud Gagne and Marianne Govers Hopman 1
2 Choral polyphony and the ritual functions of tragic songs Claude Calame 35
3 Chorus, conflict, and closure in Aeschylus’ Persians
Marianne Govers Hopman 58
4 Choral intertemporality in the Oresteia
Jonas Grethlein 78
5 Choreography: the lyric voice of Sophoclean tragedy
Simon Goldhill 100
6 Conflicting identities in the Euripidean chorus
Laura Swift 130
7 The choral plot of Euripides’ Helen
Sheila Murrayhan 155
8 Transcultural chorality: Iphigenia in Tauris and Athenian imperial economics in a polytheistic world
Barbara Kowalzig 178
9 Maenadism as self-referential chorality in Euripides’ Bacchae
Anton Bier 211
10 The Delian Maidens and their relevance to choral mimesis in classical drama
Gregory Nagy 227
Contents

11 Choral persuasions in Plato’s Laws
Lucia Prauscello

12 The comic chorus and the demagogue
Jeffrey Henderson

13 Dancing letters: the Alphabetic Tragedy of Kallias
Renaud Gagné

14 Choral dialectics: Hölderlin and Hegel
Joshua Billings

15 Enter and exit the chorus: dance in Britain 1880–1914
Fiona Macintosh

16 “The thorniest problem and the greatest opportunity”: directors on directing the Greek chorus
Peter Meineck

Bibliography

Index

Figures

1 The Aegean and the Black Sea page 184

2a and b Chersonesos on the Crimea. Remains of the Roman and Byzantine City. The Greek city was on the other side of the peninsula. Photographs by Angelos Chaniotis (2010) 193

3 The ancient theatre at Chersonesos. Photograph by Angelos Chaniotis (2010) 193

4 The temple of Artemis Tauropolos at Nas, on the island of Ikaria. Photograph by Karin Kowalzig (2004) 195

5 Regional maritime network of cults of Artemis linked to the legend of Iphigenia (Ikaria, Paros, Leros, Samos) 196

6 Cults of Artemis in Attica, the Euboian and the Saronic Gulf, in the majority linked to the legend of Iphigenia 206

7 View of the tip of Euboia, where Karyotas was located, from the shrine of Artemis Tauropolos at Halai Araphenides. Montage by Barbara Kowalzig 207
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Artemis, who notoriously integrates the other and the self; its meandering between slave and civic, between barbarian and Greek, and not least the traditionally integrating role of the travelling, theoric chorus, bringing different religious worlds together in their dance. All these amount to the tragedy as one big *choros*, a large-scale actiology, mediating the transcultural economic encounter. The chorus can do what it does because of its connotations with Hellenicity (the civic, the freeborn etc.); but the Hellenicity it produces is a cultural hybrid comprising the religious imaginary of the entire Mediterranean, including the Black Sea.

**CHAPTER 9**

Maenadism as self-referential chorality in Euripides’ *Bacchae*

**Anton Bierl**

**Introduction**

Drama — the action of ancient Greek tragedies, satyr plays, and comedies that are embedded in the institutional frame of the Dionysia — is staged in alternating choral and speech passages as a flux of scenes arising from a mythical model. Beyond its ability to communicate an array of meanings on the political, social, and cultural level, ancient tragedy aims at displaying given patterns with the purpose of communalizing quintessentially suffering. Since, compared to modern, naturalistic drama, it focuses to a lesser degree on the representation of dramatic events full of suspense, Athenian tragedy can to some extent be characterized as predramatic, especially its chorus, something that has been picked up by many recent trends in theater productions. For the last two decades, the study of the Greek chorus and of other ritual forms of expression has been revolutionized by the application of modern literary and cultural approaches. Decisive contributions to an adequate understanding of *chorëia* were made by focusing on ritual and performative aspects of the phenomena. These recent developments were triggered by a number of observations. One is Walter Burkert’s view that choral dance is a quintessentially ritual activity. He defines dance as following: “Rhythmically repeated movement, directed to no end and performed together as a group, is, as it were, ritual crystallized in its purest form.” In addition, according to Stanley Tambiah, ritual — and thus choral dance — is performative in three

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2. Cf. the predramatic theater (cf. Lehmann 2006) that has common features with the predramatic tragedy, see Lehmann 1991 esp. 1 and Bierl 2010.
The choral songs of the Bacchae are part of a performative and multi-media presentation where melodic, visual, olfactory, and kinetic stimuli converge. One of the decisive features of the Bacchae is the fact that it is arguably the only transmitted tragedy where the dramatic and performative roles of the chorus are intertwined, and, as far as dancing is concerned, are practically indiscriminate and identical. Through the fusion of different levels of form and content, the performance gains authority. Moreover, mythical and ritual elements are blended in the performance, and in reenactment both forms are blurred. In the orchestra of the theater of Dionysos, the ritual and mythical identity of the maenads expresses itself mostly in the form of choral performance, since Dionysos and his entourage are intrinsically linked to choral dance. Therefore, the Bacchae in particular can be analyzed by looking solely at the references to energeia.

Furthermore, the chorus supplied by the polis collectively represents the actual citizens who, in the here and now, worship Dionysos in the Athenian theater of Dionysos. It is well known that the chorus oscillates between the distant past and mythic location in its dramatic role, and the here and now, in its cultic and performative role. Like a shifter, the chorus can move freely and alternate between multiple levels. It encompasses the communal,

the performative, and the dramatic voice, and according to situation and perspective, one comes particularly to the fore.

In choral performance, events that belong to the mythical background can meet with anticipated facts that can be projected into the future like thoughts. At the same time, in such choruses the here and now, the internal perspective of Athens, and the "there and then," the external perspective of the mythical and dramatic plot, can blur. In such songs, choral self-references abound that pertain to the performance, the actual singing and dancing, as well as references to imagined choral engagements or to other choruses of gods, nymphs or maenads, the so-called choral projections. The sophisticated and technically refined poet designs the boundaries between these categories as particularly fluid. Moreover, Euripides knows all about adopting the tensions that work in the context of Dionysos and adapts them to his dramaturgical purposes.

By means of self-references, the choral performance as speech-act is confirmed in an illocutionary manner, i.e., in saying something the chorus does something. Hence there is neither "suspension of disbelief" nor a breach of fiction, but instead, rituality is strengthened by performance. Through projections on other choruses, the differences between internal and external, myth and ritual, past and future are blurred again. Furthermore, choral self-references and projections are connected with other metatheatrical considerations. Everything takes place in the realm of Dionysos, the god of the theater. Such choral self-references serve to merge both instances, namely, the communal and the dramatic chorus, in an aesthetic way and strengthen the all-encompassing ritual and performative stage event.

A choral reading of the Bacchae

In my book Dionysos and die griechische Tragödie, where I address the idea of metatheater, I contend "that the Bacchae reveals the process of how..."
somebody [i.e. Pentheus] resists theater and how eventually he will be so completely captivated by it that he will perish under its influence, or more accurately from a perverted form of theater. In this play particularly, the maenads' self-references focus on their own performativity and rituality. Because of the chorus' dramatic role as Dionysian maenads, metatheater is completely absorbed in specific mytho-ritual and performative references. In the theater Dionysos becomes manifest in the choral dance. I propose here to look at the Bacchae from the perspective of performative chorality. I will focus my interest for the self-referential dimensions of this play on aspects of the chorus, in particular of the parodos, which I had left out in my former treatment.

As is well known, the Bacchae restages the arrival and the triumphant success of Dionysos. This marginal god, the incarnation of quintessential "otherness," returns now to Greece via oriental, barbarian countries where he introduced his cult (13-22). Most of all, he comes in order to show himself to mankind as the "coming" and "present" god. The play deals with his feature of epiphany15 with the revelation of his divine power (6V ελπίς τοις γενομένοις θείαν προσεύχοντος "so that my divinity may be made manifest to mortals") 22; see also φανέρως θητητος διηγείται... 42). However, as usual, he meets resistance. Even the sisters of his mother Semele deny the fact that Dionysos is the son of Zeus. That is the reason why the god punishes them with maenads.

Dionysos' vengeance is thus exacted according to the logic of the god's own ritual: all the women go mad and leave their houses, where they are normally under the guard of their husbands, in the direction of the mountains (32-8). In their movement to the outdoors, Semele's three aristocratic sisters become their leaders. The groups form ecstatic rhai'mi and choroi which, in their wild dancing, show reverence to Bacchos. In doing so, they intonate the shrill scream of the oikephale, Moreover, they put on the thyrsos and they carry the thyrsus enwined with ivy. In short, the women who opposed Dionysos become by his intervention de facto worshippers of the god — that is, wild maenads. This "second" Theban chorus is only imagined offstage and never shown in the orchestra to the audience. In this case, myth motivates what ritual reenacts.

Their state of frenzy is the mad ecstasy that is a constitutive part of the Dionysiac cult.

Against the mythical background of Pentheus' resistance, maenia is now seen as a form of punishment which, beside rites of mystery initiation,17 will be used to promote the worship of the god by all Thebans. Pentheus, however, denies the divine nature of Dionysos. In vengeful opposition to his intervention he tries to lock him out and to suppress the cult in his polis. Therefore, Bakchos wishes to prove his divinity to the tyrannos, the absolute ruler in the city, and thus to all male Thebans. He wants to substantiate his divine identity and to make himself manifest as a god so that his city will receive him in hospitality. Finally, he asks his Lydian-Asiatic escorts to let their bass drums roar (55-61) so that Thebes might see his arrival (65 ὡς εἰς θεῖον, 66), because such a multimodal procession would captivate the onlookers. Dionysos announces that he will go meanwhile to the mountains in order to participate in the choruses of the new Theban maenads (ἐγὼ ἐν ἴδιοις, ἐς Κιθαρίδεας παρακεῖσθαι / θησαυροὺς ὑπέρ Ἑλλάδος, οὐσίαν ἐντολής χρήματον ["for my part I will go to the glens of Kithairon, where the bacchants are, and take part with them in their dances"] 62-3).

The parodos

How is the god's divine power made manifest in the theater? On the stage this manifestation is necessarily achieved by theatrical and performative means, that is, by ritual equipment, paraphernalia, and props, which distinguish the group on the visual level, and moreover by music, noise, and rhythm as well as by ecstatic movement.16 Since Dionysos is the choral god par excellence, the ongoing reference to his choral dancing serves this purpose, too. His ritual takes place in the collective choros and is thus choroeia. To introduce someone into the Dionysian cult is conceived as an initiation into Bacchic mysteries (21-2, 40) that coincide with dramatic choral dance in the realm of theater (τὸν καθ᾿ ἐμανθανόμενον καὶ καταταγμένοις τάξιν / τοῖς ἔτοιμοι ["having set everything in Asia a-dancing and having established my rites"] 31-2). The procession of the parodos (64-69) has to be understood as a bipolar movement: it leads the Theban women outside to

the mountains, and the Lydian bacchants inside into the city. To oppose this double movement, where the god is present in each case, inevitably means to resist Dionysos. To oppose this double movement, where the god is present in each case, inevitably.

In the proödöle (64–73), the chorus describes their ecstatic movement from outside, from Asia and Mount Tmolos toward Thebes. Their language is full of performative markers. According to John Austin's speech-act theory, the group performs this action by uttering their choral voice in the first person singular. The chorus is swift to perform "sweet toil and weariness happily unwearing" (πανθον ἐρωτόν νυκτότοι ϊνώνυκτόν, 66–7) in honor of Bionios, the roaring god; the dancers' toil is the action itself, namely, the procession and the wild dance. In a state of ecstasy, such movements are highly exhausting and in the same time they create happiness.

After the illocutionary exclamation "Out of the way!" (δεῖτος ἡτοίμας, 69), by which they perlocutionarily clear the way, two strophes and antistrophes follow twice which mark again the up and down in space. The first strophe (73–87) represents the content of the announced hymn, first in form of a blessing (μακαρίατοι) (73–82). Whoever is initiated in the Bacchic mysteries is blessed, that is, he who has dedicated himself totally to the god and in his ecstatic religious experience has figuratively opened his "inner doors" through dancing in honor of Kybele and Dionysos on the mountains. Despite the focus on the actual performance in the city of Thebes, the view turns outside toward the second imaginary chorus of Theban maenads who worship Dionysos with ecstatic choreia in the mountains. Through projection, the chorus entering the city is associated with other dancing.

40 This fact is also recognized by Di Benedetto 2004: 302.
45 On this subject, cf. Diggle 1994: 3–4. He rejects the previously standard interpretation that initiated spectators should remove themselves, or at least that one in general should give way. On the contrary, he sees the words as an "invitation to approach" (8). In our analysis, I integrate both sides of the debate: it is about making room for the procession, which at the same time should direct the spectators into the spell.

Collectives whose leaders are the three sisters of Semele. These "choruses," which only later become violent and whose actions are incorporated by two reports, become reality in the imagination of the spectators, and despite the women's punishment, their actual actions partially overlap with proper cult practices. Jens Holzhauers is the only one, to my knowledge, who has seen this and he thus rightly speaks of a "superimposition effect." Regarding lines 65–7, he expresses the idea of the blending of the two choruses in the mountains: they bring onto the stage that which is happening simultaneously on Kithairon.

By mentioning Kybele (79), the great mountain-mother, another ecstatic cult of the wilderness is blended with Dionysos. The goddess gives the dramatic chorus its Asiatic, local color. Moreover, she is part of the musical aetiology which will be discussed later. From the projection into their own past and into the affairs of the Theban maenads, they turn their focus upon the actual choral procession. This first solemn entrance-song is the model of the cult to be annually repeated, and its content is, so to speak, the aetiology of ritual or "socio-praxis."

In the first antistrope (88–104), the chorus turns from ritual, from cultic dancing, to the myth which "gives a reason and a basis" to its holiness. The perspective is shifted to the very beginning, to the scene of birth, which Dionysos already recounted in the prologue. The aetiological myth justifies the special divine authority and the ritual power of the god who manifests himself in the song and celebrates his entrance. Then the chorus speaks about Zeus's thigh-pregnancy (94–8) and Dionysos' second birth (99–104). At the same time, in reciting the birth myth, the bacchants underline the ritual of entrance in a metaphorical and iconic manner. Violence erupts twice through a bodily enclosure (from the womb and from the thigh). The city gate and the body represent the resisting boundaries that the baby as well as the Dionysian group will rupture.

By admonishing the Thebans to put on the Dionysian paraphernalia in order to adopt his cult (105–39), the chorus refers to its own visual props that indelibly stand for Dionysos, the paradox between nature and...
Maidens as self-referential chorals in Euripides' Bacchae

From the perspective of the cult on the mountains, the chorus now glides into the myth which is located in the world of the mountains as well. In the second antistrophe (120–34), by reciting the myth of the origin of the visible and audible symposion, which is deictically addressed as ἐπιστήμου κόλπων τῶν θεῶν, "this drum of tightened hide" (124), the choruses aesthetically speak again about the musical and rhythmical dimension of their choral performance immediately after narrating the events of the god's birth. The Korybantes, who invented the symposion and mingled it with Phrygian pipe sound, handed the percussion instruments over to Rheia-Kythe and from her as intermediary the Dionysian symtms obtained them as a musical accomplishment. They connected the sound with the Bacchic choruses (χορεύοντας, 151) of the biennial festivals on Mount Kithairon (130–4). Through this mythical narration the prehistory of the choral performance is explained, and it gains authority from Zeus and Rheia.31

In the difficult episode (135–69) the chorus members return to Dionysos who, as ἀγαυής and δύνατος (141), represents a projected leader of his chorus in the mountains. The god simultaneously fulfills the same function for the groups in Thebes (thus also for the dramatic chorus of bacchantes) as well as for the Athenian chorus in the orchestra. Again the dimensions of myth and ritual are blurred in a paradoxical manner. Ritual highlights myth while, on the other hand, myth highlights ritual. The chorus imagines how the divine chorus-leader falls to the ground after the exhausting performance in the landscape of Lydia and Phrygia, from where they, the chorus of bacchantes, originate and where they celebrated the rites before (135–7).32 The wild procession represents a hunt through the barbarian mountains where the horrible pleasures of the Dionysian rites, the ἄνθρωπος and άνθρωπος, are performed (138–40). Most of all, they describe how the god thrums for the blood of a goat (ἵππων προλύτην, 139), which was probably killed by being torn apart, and how he takes pleasures in eating the meat raw (ἄγαυον χοροῦ, 139).33 What appears to be cruel

30 The theology of the symposion as the invention of Rheia and Dionysos was already discussed in Bacch. 131 (131): Τί παρασκευής γίνεται ποιητές τῆς θεότητος.

31 On the mythical notion of a "male celebrant" (Dodds 1960, 81–2, cf. also 83–4) cf. Huxley 1984. Dodds’ opinion has now been adopted once more by D. Bode 2004: 146 (cf. ibid. 147–9). He then, in fact, views the god as a leader (Di Balbino 2004: 104–5). The debate is ongoing and exaggerated, since the god is, in the minds of the Bacchic and in the stories, a human priest, in whose role the god has cloaked himself. The commingling of god and man here is constitutive; ἔσσεσί (151) seems to refer to ἄγαυον πλάτους κατεφύγει (150–7). Cf. also ἄγαυον (151).


33 On the term "pathetic fallacy," cf. Copley 1937. In bucolic poetry, this stylistic device of poetic, pathetic, symbolic, and realistic is usually employed poetically. Cf. Harvard 1982. See also Bacch. 126–7, where "the whole mountain with its frosty participants in the Bacchic dance, and everything was set in rapid motion."
and horrifying in myth is the reflection of a much more harmless cult celebrated throughout the Greek world. Why should the god hunt a goat in the mountains (ὑπὸ θεῶν, 138)? I believe that this passage refers to the blood of the famous sacrifice of a billy-goat in Athens where tragedy or a form of proto-tragedy was performed. With these words the perspective is simultaneously shifted to the here and now of Athens and to the actual cultic performance. At the same time, since the chorus deals already with aetiological focus, it embeds and refers to the origins of the genre in a metatheatrical manner. The myth is again the circular aetiology of the chorus' actual tragic performance. Furthermore, by alluding to the ἀναργύρως und ἑπίμπαγα, the chorus anticipates the tragic events in store for Pentheus in the gorges of Mount Kithairon. Myth acts out the story of resistance and punishment in horrible ways, while ritual symbolically restores certain exceptional practices by reenacting these events. The envisioned performance happens in the medium of choreia and a chorale dance.

In the dancing whirl Dionysos Bacchus (145) tosses his hair into the air (ὑπὸ θεῦ, 140), a typically idiosyncratic image of chorale performance. Together with ritual cries of εὐθυμία, Dionysos shoves again (ὑπὸ θεῦ, ὑπὸ πάθεως ὑπὸ βίου, 151): ὁ γάτα βόσκει, ἡ γάτα βόσκει (522–3). Previously, the chorus members had admonished themselves to depart to the mountains with the same words (83). The cry is now projected as an appeal from Dionysos, the chorus-leader. The call merges into another self-exhortation to keep up the actual performance, which is thus confirmed. At the same time, the Asiatic chorus is again notionally in the Phrygian-Lydian mountains (cf. θύατρον ὑπὸ ὥρας Φρυγίας τὴν Λυδίαν, 140) and even on the Lydian Mount Iolnos (Τοῦ Ιωλνοῦ θυσιαστήρου μυθίδος, 114). The call to sing in honor of Dionysos is directed to the men of Thebes as well. Kadmos and Teiresias will obediently follow Dionysus, who has been projected in the mountains as chorus-leader. Finally, the dancing performance of an exemplary bacchant is brought into focus. She moves like a colt (τὸ λάκτος ἄτροα, 165), and with her wild leaps she leads or moves (ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄτροα, 166) her swift-footed limb, which is due to press ahead with the procession. As we have seen, the parodos is characterized by chorale self-references and projections that almost merge. The performance confirms itself through speech-act and celebrates its holy ritual. At the same time, in this self-referential image of the foal, the differences between animal and man blur in the sign of the dancing god.

Choral self-referentiality in the rest of the play

The mixture of chorale self-references, which confirm the performance, and chorale projections, which foreshadow the outside and envision the imagined world of the mountains, is a feature of the entire Bacchae. Immediately after the parodos, Kadmos and Teiresias take up Dionysian symbols. They begin their first dance steps and wish to go outside into the realm of nature in order to perform there an almost grotesque choreia. Pentheus, on the contrary, tries to stop it all. He would prefer to jail the old men, but then he lets them do as they please. However, he has Dionysos and his female retinue put in prison. Yet the god as Lykios and Eleutherus knows how to

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220 Anton Bierl

antistrophe before. According to the bacchants, the well-sounding pipes "boom" (βραχον) their "sacred dances" (ἱερά παραβάτες, 161–2), and the drums are "deep-roaring" (ὑπὸ τοπάτων, 156). With this sound they merge with Dionysus, the "rider." Moreover, the flow of ritual language and music is "suiting to" or "in concert with" (μετὰ τοῦ, 162) the wild wanderers who are moving "to the mountains, to the mountains!" (ἱερὰ ὑπὸ ὑπὸ ὑπὸ, 163). Almost removed from the syntactical connection, we are confronted with these ritual cries in the same way as we were in line 116, where Dionysos has been projected in the mountains as chorus-leader. The cry is now projected as an appeal from Dionysos, the chorus-leader. The call merges into another self-exhortation to keep up the actual performance, which is thus confirmed. At the same time, the Asiatic chorus is again notionally in the Phrygian-Lydian mountains (cf. θύατρον ὑπὸ ὥρας Φρυγίας τὴν Λυδίαν, 140) and even on the Lydian Mount Iolnos (Τοῦ Ιωλνοῦ θυσιαστήρου μυθίδος, 114). The call to sing in honor of Dionysos is directed to the men of Thebes as well. Kadmos and Teiresias will obediently follow Dionysus, who has been projected in the mountains as chorus-leader. Finally, the dancing performance of an exemplary bacchant is brought into focus. She moves like a colt (τὸ λάκτος ἄτροα, 165), and with her wild leaps she leads or moves (ὑπὸ τοῦ ἄτροα, 166) her swift-footed limb, which is due to press ahead with the procession. As we have seen, the parodos is characterized by chorale self-references and projections that almost merge. The performance confirms itself through speech-act and celebrates its holy ritual. At the same time, in this self-referential image of the foal, the differences between animal and man blur in the sign of the dancing god.

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to burst his bonds.42 The chorus underlines the aggression against their leader in the stasima with images taken from their Dionysiac performance. According to them, to take steps against Dionysos means to stop the chorus, and this is hybris, or transgression (177). The gods task is choreia and festivity: ὑδός ἔχει, / διαμόρφω το χορόν / ἑπιτι τ' αὐλου χελάσα / ὅπωτε τοιαύτα τε μίμησας ["these are his powers, to blend us, by dance, with the worshipful band, to laugh to the sound of piping, and to vanquish care"] (177–8).

Suddenly and miraculously the imprisoned girls are set free (443–8). After the altercation with Dionysos, who allowed it to happen so that he would be arrested, Pentheus is determined to incarcerate the strange priest (436–38). The bacchants are desperate and try to call him. They assume that the absent god is in other cult sites, including at last Pieria (456–65). They are convinced that he would come to set the land in Bacchic frenzy and choral dance, and that as chorus-leader he would lead the whirling maenads over the river Axios (μάξων δ' Περά, / σηπερωθ' Σεθης, ἥγε / τ' χαράσσων ἱμάμ βοσκοθ- / χατό, τ' ν' διαγόμμο/ βοσκός Αξίων ἄλεο / σαμώνος κούνδος δέξα ["happy Pieria, Euhios honors you, and he will come to dance with his bacchants: he will lead his whirling bacchants, crossing the swift-running current of the river Axios"] 565–70). In such projections, the choruses dreams about freedom in remote locations. Dionysos loosens the bonds for a second time, now on his own body, and in the so-called scene of the palace miracle, the process of release is now acted out in a theatrical formative fantasy concerning violence that is acted out by their Theban enemies (778–86). He has no interest in listening to all the warnings. The play thus reaches its decisive turn (810): Dionysos convinces Pentheus to put on the indices of Bacchic cult in the famous scene of costume change and will be led out in a procession by Dionysos (912–76).44 In the call of the Theban maenads, who are to take revenge on him, the ritual cry ὑδός ὃδος / ὃδος ["to the mountains, to the mountains!"] (986) is taken up from the parodos (116, 164). In their imagination, they themselves are the dogs of Lyssa, or personified Fury, and should incite the Theban women to the insane deed (977–1023). In his desired epiphany, the punishing god is stylized at Deí (921, 1014). Furthermore, in the messenger's report of the mythic and ritual paragenesis performed by the wild Theban bacchants, we again encounter "choruses."45 Before the Theban women are turned to outrageous maenads, they behave like peaceful and idyllic choruses, "like foals, having left the decorated yokes, they were singing antiphonally..."

"...as selfreferential chorality in Euripides' Bacchae 223 the performative future tense, the chorus speaks about its actual choral performance. They place their white feet in all-night dances and toss their neck into the dewy air, like a fawn which has escaped a violent chase, now when the former hunter has gotten caught in a trap (ἵππος ἔκ τοις λευκοῖς χελάσι, / θῆρα πατή λυκοᾶν / τ' ήματι / ἀείθη κ' ἐπισάθον ἄξιτον / ὅ χυρός χαλαράς ἕμματι - / Σακα ζωο- λούσος ξενός..."

"...shall I ever in the nightlong dances move my white feet in centuries? Shall I toss my head to the dewy heaven like a fawn that plays amid green meadow delights..."

The cultic performance serves as a means of punishment: the god's opponent will put on the indices of Bacchic cult in the famous scene of costume change and will be led out in a procession by Dionysos (912–76).44 In the call of the Theban maenads, who are to take revenge on him, the ritual cry ὑδός ὃδος / ὃδος ["to the mountains, to the mountains!"] (986) is taken up from the parodos (116, 164). In their imagination, they themselves are the dogs of Lyssa, or personified Fury, and should incite the Theban women to the insane deed (977–1023). In his desired epiphany, the punishing god is stylized at Deí (921, 1014). Furthermore, in the messenger's report of the mythic and ritual paragenesis performed by the wild Theban bacchants, we again encounter "choruses."45 Before the Theban women are turned to outrageous maenads, they behave like peaceful and idyllic choruses, "like foals, having left the decorated yokes, they were singing antiphonally a Bacchic song" (ὁ δ’ ἀκολουθεῖ πασσία άκα πόλεων ζέγγον / ἂξιονός ἀντίδοθαν ἄλλαθαν [μέλος, 1056–7]).46 Moreover, even the triumphant cry of joy about the ritual slaughter that takes place behind the stage turns out to be an exhortation to dance (ἀναχώρησον Βοσκόν, 115). In a very macabre way, this is a joyful dance celebrating a "supernatural victory" (τ’ θάλλελον κλείσιν, 1161), which might be compared to and allude to the victory of choral performance in the "beautiful agón" (κλαδής ἄγον, 1165) of the actual Athenian Dionysia. All in all, the chorus of the Bacchae provides a total mental and performative fantasy concerning violence that is acted out by their Theban counterparts and can only happen offstage according to the dramatic conventions. The play ends with another choral procession, again moving from outside to inside, that is, the choros kimos by Agave (cf. 1165–1204). In her..."
The Bacchae as a whole is characterized by an opposition between inner and outer space, between the actual stage and what is left offstage. Only the chorus as a mediator and shifter can cross these boundaries. The ritual power of the Dionysian cult can be experienced in the performance of the devotees, and in the theater of Dionysos, all of this cultic activity is identical with choral dancing. The entrance song which makes the god manifest by means of choreia breaks the former resistance to the god. The retained energy is released in an all the more violent manner as a consequence. Dramatically, the initial parados functions as an interface for the further course of the play where the arrival in the city of Thebes simultaneously represents the transition to the brutal events on Mount Kithairon. Thus, the chorus of the Asian bacchants as a theatrically and aesthetically confusing ensemble becomes the message in the rhetorical and ritual performance. By means of this chorus, particularly through the initial procession, the arrival of the "coming god" can be experienced in various media. Most of all, through choral projection, the movement toward the inside simultaneously becomes one toward the outside. The dimensions of time and space, as well as other oppositions, blur in a ritual flux in the songs. Past, present, future, and the actual time of performance are fused, and the time of myth is reenacted in the ritual of drama. Multiple loops create a sensation of unity and communio in a scenario of "anti-structure." In a paradoxical way the oppositions between barbarians and Greeks, Thbes and Athens, nature and culture, animal, man, and god, outside and inside, country and city, myth and ritual, chaos and idyll, ecstasy and happiness, brutal rites of sacrifice and blessed mysteries collapse in the acting out of choreia. As I have argued, in the Bacchae, chorality functions as a dynamic field of force between myth and ritual. On the basis of the tension between these forms of expression, the arfful and sophisticated dramatist Euripides develops his self-referential and Dionysiac theater of coinciding oppositions that Dionysos encompasses.

The choral songs of this play – particularly the parados, which executes the necessary entrance on the matrix of an implicit resistance – fulfill the criteria of rituality and performativity defined by Stanley Tambiah – i.e. by means of the speech-act, in the multimedia presentation, and in the indexical enumeration of metonymic and synecdochic relations between parts and the whole. Form and content interact closely. They possess a rhetorical and formulaic design combined and varied by the principles of condensation and redundancy. Most of all, ritual and myth, function and fictive role, and the various instances between which the chorus can shift and form the flux of performance.

As I noted above, Euripides, the consummate dramatic artist, is well aware of all of the tensions that are constitutive of the god Dionysos, and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{48}}\] Segal 1982: 78-114 ("The Hierarchical Axis: Heaven, City, Mountain"), esp. 77 and 124 recognizes that the centripetal force of the inside will be inversely by the centrifugal dynamics of the outside. However, he does not localize the fusion of both forces in the parados which anticipates, thus, the course of the action.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{49}}\] On communio, see Turner 1957: 274 (definition) and 276 (commensal); on anti-structure (in relation to communio), ibid, esp. 24, 46, 50, 272-278 and passim.
The Delian Maidens and their relevance to choral mimesis in classical drama

Gregory Nagy

CHAPTER 10

Introduction

My focus is on the Delian Maidens, as represented in the Homeric Hymn (5) to Apollo. These maidens, in verse 165 of the Hymn, are said to be engaging in an act of *mimeis* "reenactment" (hereafter written simply as *mimeis*), as expressed in this verse by the verb *mimeisthai* "reenact, imitate," derived from the noun *mimeis* "mime." I will argue that the act of mimeis as represented in this archaic hymn is related to the act of mimeis as performed by choruses in classical drama—specifically, in the composite dramatic genres of tragedy, comedy, and the satyri play. In terms of my argument, the mimeis performed by the Delian Maidens in the Hymn is a model for understanding how the classical genres of drama assimilated various archaic genres of chorale songmaking. As we will see, this model comes to life in the interaction of solo and choral performance as represented in the Hymn. Such an interaction, as we will also see, is an act of mediation that proves to be the essence of mimeis in classical drama.

My overall argumentation stems primarily from the book *Pindar's Homer* (1990). In that work, I confronted two relevant questions: who are the Delian Maidens and what do they have to do with mimeis? My findings focused on the identity of the Maidens as a chorus, and on the essence of mimeis as a *mental activity* performed by a chorus. A summary of these findings was later published as the article "Transformations of choral lyric" by the journal *Arion* (1994/5), in an issue dedicated to the topic of choral performance. I then expanded on these findings in the book *Poetry as..."