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Attendance and Divine Manifestation In Dramatic and Non-dramatic Contexts

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In recent years the concept of performance has aroused considerable scholarly interest in studies of analysis of ancient Greek culture. The present work¹ shares the same broad concern but approaches the subject drawing attention also to the related aspect of attendance, i.e. to an activity which is pragmatically situated in a context of social interaction and which presupposes a preliminary stimulus, an act attracting the senses. The awareness of this fact of interplay seems particularly strong in ancient Greek culture and more specifically in the context of spectacular events and ritual practices, in which (as I would like to stress below) performance and attendance seem to be inseparable and interdependent parts of a broader dynamic process. Performance may sometimes seem to be of primary importance; nonetheless, spectatorship is not made redundant but seems to be inscribed in the organisation and logic of the event, so that the two facets (spectacular stimulus and response), though distinct, can be mutually enforcing and signifying, co-active and complementary.

The wider perspective and potential of this process seems to be evoked in tragic drama and particularly in Euripides' *Bakchai*², in which the force of this interaction proves to be both apocalyptic and destructive, and at the same time points to possible ways in which tragedy (and *Bakchai* in particular) may fulfil its own *telos* as a form of *theoria* in the context of the Dionysiac festival.

1. The present work originates in an oral presentation at the "Viewing and Listening" Conference organised in May 2004 by the Department of Philology of the University of Crete in Rethymnon. I would like to thank the audience at Rethymnon (colleagues from Greece and abroad, as well as students) and especially Dr. I. Rutherford, for the welcoming reception of my arguments and useful comments.

2. I have adopted Hellenized transliteration for Greek names and titles, but in some well-known and established cases (e.g. Socrates) I have retained the conventional Latinized form.

I. *Theasis* in the wider sense: roles, action and reciprocity

Attendance, i.e. the presence and role of spectators and listeners, does not appear to have been an accidental and secondary activity in the course of Greek rites³. Even in the case of rituals with a truly inclusive character and the apparent potential to engage all as active members, as “performers” in a sense, the role of viewers seems to have been anticipated and inscribed in the organisation of the event and to have formed a well defined and complementary part of the procedure. The Dionysiac procession that Dikaiopolis organises in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*⁴ would seem to provide a unique opportunity for everybody in the house to take part and feast. The proper conduct of the procession, however, necessitates the appointment of roles and Dikaiopolis, who is in charge of this duty, proceeds to make the relevant announcements (253-262): his daughter will be the kanephoros, Xanthias his slave will be the phallos-bearer and he himself will follow singing the *phallikon* (in place of the choral group which normally performed that duty). His wife, however, who had a ritual role earlier in the scene when she brought the first offerings with her daughter (244ff.), is entrusted with a role outside the processional formation: she is going to be the *theates*, the spectator of the *pompe*, and will attend the event from her appointed position away from and in distinction to the group — σὺ δ’ ὦ γύναι θεῶ μ’ ἀπὸ τοῦ τέγους (263). The viewing place will be the house, since she is a *gyne*; nonetheless, the *theasis* will be complete: it will include not only the visual spectacle (which is self-evident) but also the aural dimension, the acoustic result, as explicitly said: ἐγὼ ἄσομαι ...! σὺ δ’ ὦ γύναι θεῶ μ’⁵.

In the *Acharnians* and in other literary examples⁶, viewing stands out as an important activity with a composite character which involves not only sight but a larger variety of senses and perceptions and which is the appropriate reaction to composite spectacles such as processional rituals (which combine various stimuli)⁷. The description of the wedding procession in *Iliad* 18. 491-96 filled with hymenaeal music

3. A significant indication in this direction is the existence of numerous “cultic theatres” (specific spaces for cultic activities presupposing attendance by an audience) within the borders of various temenoi in the Greek world; see recently Nielsen 2002.

4. An important passage for the historical reconstruction of the celebration of the Dionysia in the Attic demes (see e.g. Deubner 1932, 135-7, Parke 1977, 100-2), even though the Aristophanic description cannot be an exact, realistic reflection of the “real-life” ritual (on this see also Kavoulaki 2000, 158). For the place of this scene in the wider ritual nexus of the play see Bowie 1993, 35-44.

5. The object *με* (θεῶ μ’) leaves no doubt that the object of the *theasis* is the singing (*ἄσομαι*) — among other things. Parke’s free translation (Parke 1977, 101 “look at the spectacle of the procession”) may create wrong impressions.

6. Some of them also in Aristophanes, e.g. the closing scene of Aristophanes’ *Birds* (1706ff.) or the scene of the entry of the *mystai* in Ar. *Frogs* (316ff.); in the latter case the aural stimuli of the coming procession are combined with olfactory experiences (*Frogs* 337-39).

7. I have explored the issue of the composite character of pompic rituals more fully in Kavoulaki 2000.

and dance and attended by the women at their thresholds, or the wedding ceremony in Sappho 44 [Voigt] abounding in olfactory stimuli are famous and telling examples in this respect.

An activity with such a potential, which could contribute to an overall sense of participation and significant involvement, would have played an important role in historical socio-religious events⁸. Extant historical sources, in particular, point to the fact that attendance through viewing and listening was strategically included and necessary for the *telos* of the ritual process. In the *Hipparchikos* (3.1) Xenophon informs us that one of the duties of the cavalry commander was to make the processions “worth viewing” (*ὅπως τὰς πομπὰς ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς ἀξιοθεάτους ποιήσει* 3.1). To help in this direction, Xenophon proposes the route of the choruses in the agora at the Dionysia as a model for the improvement of the performance of cavalry processions:

τὰς μὲν οὖν πομπὰς οἶμαι ἂν καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς κεχαρισμενωτάτας καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς εἶναι εἰ, ὅσων ἱερὰ καὶ ἀγάλματα ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἔστι, ταῦτα ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν Ἑρμῶν κύκλω [περὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ] περιελαύνοιν τιμῶντες τοὺς θεούς. Καὶ ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις δὲ οἱ χοροὶ προσεπιχαρίζονται ἄλλοις τε θεοῖς καὶ τοῖς δώδεκα χορεύοντες (3.2)⁹.

The Dionysiac choruses, by processing and dancing around all the altars in the agora, “gratify the gods” (*προσεπιχαρίζονται θεοῖς*)¹⁰. Accordingly, the performance of the cavalry regiments would be most worth viewing to humans and to gods alike, if the riders followed a similar arrangement and route. In this instance, reciprocity of the parts involved in the attendance of the ritual touches on the wider reciprocity between human and divine spheres. Going round all the altars in the agora at the Dionysia, the choruses gratify the gods, renewing the *charis*-based relations during the privileged time of the Dionysia. By following the same pattern of movements in the course of festive processions, the cavalry regiments could reactivate the same process which associates the *performing group* with *two other* parts explicitly and distinctly mentioned, i.e. the gods and the human *theatai*. The gratification of the gods is here complemented by the gratification of the human on-lookers who witness the contact and participate in a

8. For a general but vivid sketch of the cultural experience of being “viewer and listener” in the Greek world see Segal 1984.

9. On this passage and its focus on Dionysiac *pompai* see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 62; Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, 70) has noticed the importance of the passage for the reconstruction of the Dionysiac festival and especially of the procession.

10. *Προσεπιχαρίζονται* is a xenophonic hapax (Petrocelli 2001, 72) which picks on the notion of *charis* in *κεχαρισμενωτάτας* of the previous period; the latter word is significant in Xenophon and comes up in the first paragraph of the *Hipparchikos*, referring clearly to the favour of the gods (on the exordium see also Petrocelli 2001, 47-8). For a discussion of a much wider *charis*-related perspective in Xenophon’s works see Azoulay 2004.

triadically-structured network of relationships based on *charis* (κεχαρισμενωτάτας, προσεπιχαρίζονται)¹¹.

If in Xenophon we are allowed a glimpse into the effort of the organisers, of the ritually responsible officers, for the correct arrangement of the ritual, so that it succeeds in honouring the gods and in engaging human attendants in an interactive process, in Plato's *Republic* we can trace the stance of the human witnesses in this process. At the beginning of the dialogue (327a-b) Socrates talks of his visit to Piraeus, a religious visit on the occasion of a religious feast which Socrates attended explicitly as a *theates*:

κατέβην χθές εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος προσευξόμενος τε τῇ θεῷ¹² καὶ ἅμα τὴν ἑορτὴν βουλόμενος θεάσασθαι τίνα τρόπον ποιήσουσιν ἅτε νῦν πρῶτον ἄγοντες· καλὴ μὲν οὖν μοι καὶ ἡ τῶν ἐπιχώριων πομπὴ ἔδοξε εἶναι, οὐ μέντοι ἦττον ἐφαίνετο πρέπειν ἢν οἱ Θοῤᾰκες ἔπεμπον. Προσευξάμενοι δὲ καὶ θεωρήσαντες ἀπῆμεν πρὸς τὸ ἄστυ.

Socrates' *theasis* is the immediate response¹³ to the event of the newly organised feast (νῦν πρῶτον ἄγοντες) and is characterised by neither passivity nor detachment but rather conscious involvement: spatial transition (the journey to Piraeus), attentiveness and alertness to ritual stimuli (the *pompai* of the ἐπιχώριοι and the Thracians), ritual and aesthetic appreciation (καλὴ ἡ πομπή, οὐ μέντοι ἦττον πρέπειν) and religious response (προσευξάμενοι) are concrete reactions explicitly reported by Socrates and well blended together. Such an involvement underlines the alerting or communicative quality of the ritual and seems to complete and validate the procedure: the frame of communication that the ceremony seems to create (by arousing the interest of the members of the community) can be tested and verified by the human witnesses who, absorbed in a composite religious-aesthetic spectacle, are directed towards and attempt communication with the divine (προσευξάμενοι)¹⁴. Delight (καλὴ) and religious communication are inextricably blended together, and the whole event which started with a desire for prayer and *theasis* (προσευξόμενος ... καὶ βουλόμενος θεάσασθαι) is completed and concluded with prayer and *theoria* (προσευξάμενοι καὶ θεωρήσαντες).

11. Note that the triadic schema of relationships is also conspicuous in the Aristophanic passage mentioned above: the *theates* is drawn into the ritual through the composite *theasis* (θεῶ μ', *Ach.* 263), while Dikaiopolis, the central performer and organiser, has already called upon the god (ὦ Διόνυσε δέσποτα, *Ach.* 247) and goes on to address directly Phales, and god's *εταῖρος*, as the symbol of the god is emphatically paraded and manifested. *Κεχαρισμένως* (*Ach.* 248) is a key-word in this context too.

12. Adam 1975, 1: 62 notes that ἡ θεός in Plato and in other Attic texts refers usually to Athena but he concludes (along with the majority of scholars) that in this case Bendis must be implied, since the *heorte* mentioned is clearly and explicitly the Bendideia (ἐν τοῖς Βενδιδαίοις 354a). On Bendis and the Bendideia see also Pache 2001.

13. Characteristic reaction of Socrates: see also *Xen. Mem.* 1.3.1, 4.3.16.

14. For the inseparability of the religious from the aesthetic appreciation in relation to religious works of art (statues, images) see Elsner 1996.

II. *Theoria*: viewing, spectacle and participation

Theoria is the term which seems to sum up on the level of language this interaction and complementarity brought out on the level of ritual practice. Loaded with both an active and a passive sense and covering a wide semasiological range, *theoria* combines both view (spectacle) and viewing (attending) in its meaning¹⁵ and apparently also in composition. The roots of the words *θέα* and *δράω* seem to lie at the basis of its formation according to standard scholarly opinion¹⁶, although ancient writers insist on detecting the word *θεός* in it, a possibility which is not wholly excluded by modern scholars¹⁷. The association with either (or both) of the roots (*θέα* and *θεός*) would have been facilitated by the standard use of the word to denote participation in a *religious* festival either as a member of an official delegation (with a specific ritual role, e.g. to make a procession, to sacrifice, to sing and to dance, or to inquire with the god), or as a simple (unofficial) *spectator* (viewer and listener at the same time). As a technical term it is customarily used for participation at long-distanced festivals, i.e. for pilgrimage in more contemporary terms¹⁸. Since, however, participation in every celebration involved to some extent the practice of going out and visiting a (religious) sight for religious purposes, then the practice and term of *θεωρεῖν* could be applied to all cases: to celebrations at Piraeus, at Brauron or even closer.

Theatre-going seems to have been also characterised as a *theoria*¹⁹ and the Greek word for the state fund for theatre tickets —*theorikon*²⁰— is an unmistakable testimony. *Theorika* are those which pertain to the *theoria* and their users are the *theoroi* at the Dionysiac festival²¹. If this means anything more than mere “spectators”, i.e. anything more than the ordinary term *θεαταί*, may be difficult to confirm. The chorus, however, who mediates between the audience and the tragic heroes and has been characterised as an “ideal spectator”, often enacts the role of *theoroi* in the dramatic setting, to such an extent that I. Rutherford has proposed the existence of a distinct sub-genre of theoric (or pilgrimage) dramas (“a principal characteristic of which is that the khoros represent pilgrims”²² visiting a religious sight).

15. See basically *LSJ* s.v. (especially *θεωρία* III.1 & III.3).

16. For the standard etymology of the word see e.g. Ziehen 1934, 2243, Chantraine 1968, 1: 433-4.

17. Modern views on the issue of etymology (taking also into account the root *θεός*) are synoptically presented in Rutherford 2000, 136-7; Rutherford includes a systematic presentation of the meanings of the word and comments on its semantic development. For some ancient views on the etymology and meaning of the word see e.g. [Plu.], *De Mus.* 27, Philodem., *De Mus.* 23.8ff., Caecilius 168 [Ofenloch]. For *theoria* from a cultural and philosophical perspective see recently Nightingale 2004.

18. “Special vocabulary for pilgrimage”: Rutherford 2000, 133.

19. Personified in Ar., *Peace* 520-23 (see Rutherford 1998, 141-5).

20. Arist., *Ath.* 43.1, D. 18. 113 etc. *Θεωρικά* (sc. *χρήματα*): D. 3.11 etc.

21. *Ἡ τοῦ Διονύσου θεωρία*: Pl., *Lg.* 650a.

22. Rutherford 1998, 153; see also 135-8.

On the other hand, it is worth emphasizing that the tragic performances were themselves defined and perceived as choruses: to stage a tragic performance, the poet ἤπει χορόν and the archon ἐδίδου χορόν; moreover, τραγωδοί (“members of the tragic chorus”) was the standard term to denote tragedy in the official (and other) texts²³. In the dramatic, mythical setting of the extant plays the choruses may well embody the role of spectators-pilgrims (*theoroi*), but in the context of the festival the plays as choruses constitute the primary *spectacle*—visual and aural at the same time—which attracts attention. Choruses at the Dionysia (as we saw in Xenophon) had the responsibility of inviting *charis*, of inciting that interaction that the cavalry commander should also aim at according to Xenophon. Perceived and organised as tragic Dionysiac choruses, or choral events, the tragic performances could, thus, magnetise the human *theatai* and engage them in an enlarged frame of relations and dialogue involving also the gods (according to the schema that the Platonic and Xenophonic texts above seem to suggest). A possible re-evocation of this process within the dramatic setting would certainly enhance the attentive collaboration of the audience which would be invited to react and follow reactions to alerting stimuli also within the drama. This situation seems indeed to be brought about in the extant plays; besides the responsive stance of the chorus, there is also emphasis on the *alerting* side of the theoric procedure which is often evoked by the tragic χορός in its dramatic persona²⁴ and which complements the aspect of the theoric response, while the dynamic pattern developed in this way acquires a wider significance with a stimulating or even challenging potential.

The exploration of such a full-scale dynamic process seems to acquire prominence in Euripides’ *Bakchai*, a play which has been subjected to all sorts of analysis²⁵ but also one which invites further reflection as regards the interaction between ritual movement and viewing (viewing in the broader sense of the word indicated above and including also the acoustic dimension). In the *Bakchai* showing and viewing, or rather performing and attending in a ritual context become the channel for the fulfilment of Dionysos’ (and the play’s) programmatic scope, explicitly stated in the prologue of the play (22): ἵν’ εἶην ἐμφανῆς δαίμων βροτοῖς – “so that I [sc. Dionysos] become a god manifest to the people”. Set on the mythological plane, the play draws on

23. See Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 84, 101-7.

24. In this case the dramatic persona would duplicate to some extent the ritual persona of the chorus which is never totally neutralised during the plays, as Sourvinou-Inwood has most recently emphasized (Sourvinou-Inwood, *forthcoming*).

25. Segal’s “Afterword” (Segal ²1997, 349-93) and his “Introduction” to the Oxford translation of the play (Segal and Gibbons 2001) offer helpful orientation as concerns modern views and approaches; the latter especially is a succinct and well-balanced presentation of the major, currently interesting issues regarding the play. The methodologies applied to the *Ba.* are numerous and the results are often diametrically opposed. The basic commentaries (starting with Dodd’s seminal work, and adding further Roux 1970-72, Seaford 1997, di Benedetto 2004) are also helpful in summarising, criticising or advancing earlier opinions (besides promoting a new approach). Nikolaidou-Arabatze 1996 gives an overview of earlier, largely nineteenth century views on the play. For recent criticism of some modern interpretative trends see also Radke 2003.

and acts out the inherent tensions and qualities of the process which proves to be located in the structural and dramatic logic of the action. The larger picture that emerges may allow “viewers” a better vision of Dionysos and his theatrical *θεωρία*.

III. *Theoria* and tragic *theon horan*

In the introductory part of the play Dionysos – xenos announces that he has come to Thebes leading his thiasos of Asiatic maenads (56-57). At the end of his rhesis he invites the women of the chorus to come in and start their choral performance beating their drums (59-61): *αἴρεσθε τὰπιχώρι' ἐν Φρυγῶν πόλει / τύπανα, ... / βασιλεία τ' ἀμφὶ δόματ' ἔλθοῦσαι τάδε / κτυπεῖτε Πενθέως, ὡς ὄρᾳ Κάδμου πόλις* (61 “so that the city of Kadmos sees”)²⁶. In other words, the entry and performance of the chorus, a composite aural and visual spectacle, functions as an alerting stimulus, as an open invitation to the Thebans (and the wider public) to come and see. It is noteworthy that at this early stage of the play the “viewing” or “seeing” (*ὄρᾳ*) of the city of Kadmos (*ὡς ὄρᾳ Κάδμου πόλις*) is presented as a result of a sonic stimulus, namely the orgiastic sound of the *τυμπαῖον* (*κτυπεῖτε*), beating the rhythm for and accompanying the choral performance of the women²⁷.

That the content of this type of cultural stimulus, i.e. the object of seeing, is the presentation and celebration of Dionysos is neither silenced nor left simply implied: the women of the chorus explicitly describe their entry as *katagein ton Dionyson* (*Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι*, 85), a ritual introduction of Dionysos, celebrated (as often in analogous historical cases) in rhythmical, processional movement and music²⁸. The women of the chorus make their entry into the orchestra in ionic pace, and before taking their positions they explicitly air and proclaim their invitation for viewing, recognition and participation (69-71): *τίς ὁδῶι, τίς ὁδῶι; τίς / μελάθροισι; ἔκτοπος*

26. I have used Diggle’s text of the *Ba.* (Oxford Classical Texts) throughout my analysis.

27. The acoustic stimuli multiply in the course of the play and culminate in the loud voice of Dionysos (*βοή, ἤχη, κελευμός*) in the climactic scene (1079-89) which stirred the maenads to attack and made Pentheus at last “see” and “learn”; see the discussion below.

28. As Seaford 1997, 38 notes, “the ritual escorting Dionysos into the city was known in Ionia as *Καταγωγή*”. Major examples of *katagōgia* celebrations: in Ephesos, *Acta S. Tim.*; for the antiquity of the feast cf. also Herakl. fr. 15 D-K; Priene, *Inscr. Priene* 174. Cf. *IG II²* 1368. 111f. for Athens. In Athens the introduction of Dionysos was also celebrated on various occasions, e.g. during the *eisagoge apo tes escharas*, the City Dionysia or the Anthesteria; see Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 60, Burkert 1988, Seaford 1997, 38, Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 72. The common denominator in all the above cases was the procession, a celebratory mode which seems to be picked up by the entry of the chorus in the *Ba.* (in ionic pace, through the streets of the city, with the symbols of the god and a clear religious goal). In this respect Dodds (1960, 71 and *ad* 68-70) is right in detecting echoes of religious processions in the scene, despite di Benedetto’s (2004, 77) objections which sound paradoxical, especially for a scholar who has effectively analysed “Dioniso per strada” (di Benedetto 2004, 73-6), and which seem not to stress the fact that in tragedy cults are normally presented *in statu nascendi*.

ἔστω, / στόμα τ' εὐφημον ἅπας ἐξοσιούσθω: (“who is in the road? Who is in the palace? Let him come out. And let everybody by keeping sacred silence make himself pure”). The exhortation and invitations to the people of Thebes multiply in the course of the hymnal performance (105 ff.):

ὦ Σεμέλας τροφοὶ Θῆβαι, στεφανοῦσθε κισσῶ
βρούετε μίλακι ... καὶ καταβακχιοῦσθε δρυὸς
ἢ ἐλάτας κλάδοισι,
στικτῶν τ' ἐνδυντὰ νεβρίδων
στέφετε ...
μαλλοῖς ἀμφὶ δὲ νάρθηκας ὑβριστὰς
όσιοῦσθ'.

The last appeals of the women (referring to symbols and external appearance) seem to receive some response, since Kadmos and Teiresias enter the scenic space *κισσώσαντες κρᾶτα* (“wreathed with ivy” 205), holding *thyrsoi* and wearing *nebroi* (176-77, 249-51). The entry of the two old men (physically contrasted to the age and vigour of the young king soon to enter the stage) seems to mirror the alien appearance and conduct of the women (cf. *χορρεύειν* 184, *κρᾶτα σεῖσαι* 185, *κροτῶν* 188, *βακχεύοντ'* 251 etc.) and thus to extend further the challenge to sight and hearing, as well as the invitation for viewing and interaction that the chorus' processional entry initiated²⁹.

The incentive given by the chorus' movement and spectacle, orchestrated and announced by the *xenos*, is carried on in the following scenes by a series of sights, sounds and visions which occupy central positions and strengthen the impression that something calls to be viewed and perceived, or better to be made manifest: Kadmos' and Teiresias' transformation and rejuvenation (170ff., 190), the presentation and appearance of the *xenos* (434-60), the miraculous phenomena at the earthquake scene (575-641), and finally the raving Theban women who are seen by and through the messenger's eyes (677-768) and are explicitly called *δεινὸν θέαμα* (760 cf. 667).

The wondrous festive events seem to attract Pentheus' attention: he is puzzled by the sights (248f., 453, 624), angered by the movements of the *xenos* and the women (226-28, 239-41, 246f.), stirred and disturbed by the music of the chorus (511-14). Unlike the situation at the Athenian Bendideia (described by Plato)³⁰, the attraction of attention fails to develop into a condition of communication. Pentheus refuses to accept the terms of communication and tries to suppress and cover completely the spectacle, the visual and acoustic spectacle of the *thiasos* as well as the ensuing provocative spectacles (346-58, 509-14, 616-21, 630-35, 778-86) – although he

29. Cf. 248-249 *τόδ' ἄλλο θαῦμα ... / ὄρω* uttered by Pentheus when he notices the two old men.

30. The comparison with the historical situation at the end of the fifth century and the introduction of foreign cults in Athens may be already implicit in the play; see Versnel 1990, 131-205.

eventually comes to admit to be (like the Platonic Socrates) “eager to view” (“βουλόμενος θεάσασθαι”):

βούλημι σφ' ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένους ἰδεῖν;
Πε. Μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δούς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν (810-11).

The god’s challenge at l. 810 (βούλημι ἰδεῖν) reiterates his original invitation to the people of Thebes to come and see (ὡς ὄρα 61). Pentheus is eager to view but seeks a position outside the ritual frame (σιγῇ καθήμενος 815, λάθρα 816, εἰς κατασκοπήν 838). The delight of viewing is detached from the frame of ritual communication and signification and the unity of προσευξόμενος and θεασόμενος (attested in Plato above) is split; the process of communication is under jeopardy.

The undermining of the ritual process is implicitly and perhaps more provokatively pronounced later on, when Pentheus’ attendant coming back from the mountain narrates the events and calls their journey a *theoria*: ξένος θ’ ὃς πομπὸς ἦν ἡμῖν θεωρίας (1047). The word *theoria* rings of its religious meanings (religious mission, official religious delegation), and yet it is used for an expedition that has been explicitly described as spying (κατασκοπή). The appropriation of the term *theoria*, in conjunction with Pentheus’ idiosyncratic response and monosemic attachment to viewing, casts a negative light onto Pentheus’ attempt: in his effort to come close to the Dionysiac spectacle, Pentheus seems to threaten to appropriate and subvert the Dionysiac *theoria*. At that moment, Dionysos-xenos, master of views and sounds so far in the play, decides to intervene, and by allowing the young king to fulfil his wish, by letting him appropriate the *theoria*, he turns Pentheus’ undue *theoria* (viewing, attendance) into a true Dionysiac *theoria* (view, object of attendance), a Dionysiac spectacle with cries, *mania* and *sparagmos*; he, thus, prevents the disjunction of *horan* (ὄραῖν) from *the-orein* (θεωρεῖν, understood as *theon horan*) in a ritual Dionysiac frame.

From that moment onwards Pentheus is gradually transformed into what he wants to see, he is turned into the spectacle that he wishes to enjoy (847-57)³¹. He is dressed like a maenad in his effort to see the maenads (913-16). He wants to come out of the city unnoticed (840) and he is led along the Theban roads, so that he can be seen by all Thebans (854-55, 961). The leader of the journey is the xenos (820, 841, 961, 964, 1047, 1159) who has so far proved to be the mediator of that which is to be viewed and perceived, the leader and conveyor of the thiasos and the Dionysiac spectacle. As he leads Pentheus away from the palace (965-75), after he has dressed him and adorned him and orchestrated his movements and conduct (913-75), he appears to be once again in

31. It must be stressed that Pentheus’ unsolicited assent to viewing (811) and eagerness to be led to the mountain (819 ἄγ’ ὡς τάχιστα) precedes Dionysos’ influence on Pentheus’ mind (850 ἔκστησον φρενῶν). The god’s justification of his entry into the palace —οὐ μὴ θελήσῃ ἐνδύναι— proves that Pentheus’ will (θέλησις) functioned up to that point. Cf. also the arguments of Radke 2003, 31ff. on this issue.

control of movements and appearances, the leader of the *θέα*, the mediator of yet another processional spectacle³², a true *πομπὸς θεωρίας* (1047)³³.

In the Greek text *πομπὸς θεωρίας* may signify the leader of the viewing mission, the conveyor of the “viewing delegation” from the point of view of Pentheus and his attendants, as we noticed above. The term *theoria*, however, seems to contain multiple levels of meaning (viewing delegation, spectacle, even perhaps the vision of the god)³⁴, and each time it is the context of the action which directs the “play” of signification. On the way to the mountain, Pentheus forms the spectacular focus of the *pompe*, attracting upon him the sight and negative energy of the attending women of the chorus (977-1023), as well as the mockery of the Thebans (855-56, 961). The culmination of Pentheus’ transformation, however, comes at the point of arrival, when he assumes the full dimensions of a true object of vision: seated on top of a tree (1070) and eager to fulfil his desire to see, “he was seen by the maenads rather than seeing them” (*ᾠφθη μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας* 1075).

At that moment at which Pentheus is most ostensibly and magnificently transformed into a kind of *θέα*, Dionysos- xenos is lost out of sight (1077), and the air is suddenly filled with the *βοή*, the loud cry of the god (1079ff.). Dionysos’ role as the mediator of the spectacle has been completed; the spectacle is now fully played out, so he can regain his Olympian hypostasis and return to his superior position, superior in a literal sense: Dionysos stands above the plane of human affairs and becomes a *theoros*, a viewer of human suffering in a truly Homeric manner. Paradoxically, it is at the moment when the god becomes bodily *ἀφανής*, that Pentheus himself at last fulfils his mission as a *theoros*: he can now see deep down and fully (*κατεῖδε* 1075)³⁵, he can understand the coming divine punishment (*ἐμάνθανεν* 1114) and can realise and admit that he was mistaken (*ἐμαῖς ἁμαρτίαισι* 1120-21).

32. Apart from the thiasos of the Lydian women and their entry into Thebes. The choice of the processional pattern for the depiction of Dionysos’ control over Pentheus is suggestive in various ways (see also following note); in art (as Hedreen 2004 argues) Dionysos’ triumph and advent find a symbolic expression in epiphanic processions which provide the model for further analogous visual representations.

33. The various indications in the text make it clear that the leading of the spectacle (which is also the Dionysiac victim) takes place in the context of a *pompe*, a ritual which is closely related to *theasis* (as we saw in Aristophanes, Xenophon and Plato above for example) but which is also tightly connected with *thysia*; in this respect, the interpretation of the scene proposed here complements to some extent other analyses of the scene which stress the sacrificial model (e.g. Foley 1985, 206-38, Seidensticker 1979, Segal ²1997, 36-50; cf. also Seaford’s (1997) note *ad* 1047 —a thorough and perceptive comment— where he includes the sacrificial indications in the mystic pattern which is also associated with processional transitions; on the wider issue of the mysteries in the *Ba.* see mainly Seaford 1981, 1994, 280-301, 1997, 39-44 and *passim*; cf. also Segal 1986, 294-312, Leinieks 1996, 123-52). Others (e.g. Leinieks 1996, 172-5 taking the lead from Winnington-Ingram 1948) prefer to stress the athletic and agonistic connotations in *θεωρία* and *πομπὸς θεωρίας*.

34. Cf. Rutherford 2000, 136: “The various meanings of *θεωρία* are not always easy to distinguish; more than one of the senses ... sometimes seem to be present in the same text”. The examples he adduces are Ar., *Peace* 520ff. and Xen., *Hieron* 1.11ff.

35. In a literal and in a metaphorical or symbolical sense.

Pentheus' *theoria* ("viewing", "attending" as a *theoros*, "seeing the god") may seem paradoxical, since it takes place when Dionysos is no longer visible. This may not be so surprising, however³⁶, if we consider that the term *theoros* can also be used to describe the consultant of an oracle³⁷. The *theoria* of the oracular *theoros* is presumably not the direct appearance of the divinity but basically³⁸ the prophetic reply, i.e. divine guidance afforded through words, sounds or even smells³⁹. Likewise, in the tragic context, and particularly in the culminating scene in the *Bakchai*, divine *theoria* (afforded not only to Pentheus but also to internal and external audiences) does not necessitate direct "visions" but is experienced through sounds, words and symbols and, more importantly, through a powerful and distinct tragic means (conveyed through tragic diction), i.e. the sharp contrast between divine invisibility, superiority and control on the one hand and the striking spectacle of human suffering, impotence and late learning (cf. ἐκμαθεῖν 39, ἐμάνθανε 1113) on the other.

It is this contrast between the two poles that reveals and illuminates each one of them, and it is by this contrast that tragic θεωρία hypostasizes its (par)etymological θεός-connection, that Dionysos' divinity is made manifest and that the god's programmatic statement —θεὸς γεγώς ἐν-δείξομαι (47)— acquires a literal force: Dionysos' divinity is shown and proven *in* the very punishment, death and fragmented body of Pentheus. The internal audience is an indisputable witness to this development: the women of the chorus (who have turned from performers into viewers of the Dionysiac action but are still crucially involved) respond actively and hail the announcement of Pentheus' death with an acknowledgement of Dionysos' revelation: ὦναξ Βρόμιε, θεὸς φαίνῃ μέγας (1031)⁴⁰. At the same time, the re-introduction of the Dionysiac spectacle —the komastic entry of Agave with Pentheus' head (1166-72) which manifests the power of the god— is saluted as κῶμος εὐίου θεοῦ and is accepted by the women (1173). Standing by (or even pointing at) the collected members of his grandson, Kadmos later on admits: ἐς τοῦδ' ἀθρήσας θάνατον ἠγεί-

36. Dionysos' invisibility has indeed seemed paradoxical in a context of epiphany and *theoria* (Rutherford 1998, 150 "less than a true epiphany ... he just hears his voice" and 153 "the pilgrimage culminates not in a vision of the deity"). However, Seaford (1997, *ad* 1082-83 and 1084-85 perceptively) shows that a divine *epiphany* does take place in the scene, and —as I am arguing— the process of *theoria* (*theoria* with a marked *theos* compound element) is to be discerned even in such events and "spectacles" (as the βοή, κελευσιμός etc.). If Burkert (1997) is right, the root of the word θεός points to paradoxical and extraordinary experiences, largely associated with noises, voices and smells.

37. See *LSJ* s.v. Examples: Theogn. 805, Soph. *OT* 114, *OK* 413, Thuk. 5.16. In Soph., *OT* 77-86, Kreon, who was sent to Delphi as a *theoros*, returns to Thebes adorned with a laurel wreath, the symbol of the god.

38. But perhaps not solely, as we can infer from E. *Ion* for example (especially *Ion* 183-246).

39. The word ὄμφαί, a word used for prophecy (e.g. Soph., *OK* 101-103: ἀλλά μοι, θεαί, / βίου κατ' ὄμφας τὰς Ἀπόλλωνος δόττε / πέρρασιν) denotes not only sound (as the other words θέσφατα, φθέγματα etc do) but also smell; see *LSJ* s.v. ὄμφή.

40. The line is corrupted but there is no doubt about its basic formulaic pattern; for parallels see Roux 1970-72, *ad loc.*

σθω θεούς (1326)⁴¹.

Yet, the ritual and theatrical focus in all these scenes and events is not Dionysos. As noticed above, at the moment when the god is made manifest, he paradoxically becomes ἄδηλος, and the “gaze” of the internal and external *theatai* is fixed on the human *theoria*, the spectacle of human suffering (conveyed largely as an *akroama* in the messenger’s speech). Pentheus is viewed and ridiculed by the Thebans (855-56, 961), viewed, listened to and killed by the maenads (1075, 1114, 1117-35), viewed and almost pitied by the chorus (1173, 1184, 1327-28), viewed and mourned by Kadmos and Agave (1216-1326). Even Pentheus’ own “viewing” (*θεωρία*) has himself as a centre: in hearing the god and realising the coming punishment, Pentheus acknowledges his own folly (*ἐμαῖς ἁμαρτίαι* 1120-21). Attending groups and individuals witness and admit divine power as made manifest via human suffering, so that the ritual frame regains its triadic dimension. Nonetheless, the focus rests on the human condition and, thus, tragic *theoria*, without at the least waiving its *theos* – connection, sustains a fundamental human centre.

In this light, tragic drama (as exemplified by the *Bakchai*) proves to be a human, not a divine drama. In the play this seems to have been so manipulated by Dionysos himself, the god of the theatre, whose statue remained present at the theatre during the performances⁴². The celebrants of the god, who came to the theatre to honour the primary *Theoros*, would have witnessed the god’s powerful deeds, but at the same time they would have been invited to acquire —through pity and fear, intensely aroused in the last part of the play— a better and deeper insight into their own human nature.

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41. I would like to note that I am interested in bringing out the logic and consequences of the action and not in evaluating possible moral attitudes towards the gods. There is very little hope that we may ever reach consensus over the presentation of the gods in the *Ba*. (or in Euripides in general). It is only worth remembering that we are here dealing with a religiosity radically different from modern equivalents and defined by the element of fear: *σέβω* and *σέβομαι* (“to rever”, whence *εὐσέβεια* “piety”) denotes fear and awe in front of somebody and the original Indo-european root seems to signify “to retreat in front of somebody”; see Frisk 1973, 2: 686-7 and Chantraine 1968, 992-3; also Burkert 1985, 272-5 and Burkert 1996, 30-33. In this frame it is not surprising that the paradigmatic killing of Aktaion by “raw-eating dogs” is adduced early in the play (*Ba*. 337-41) as a precept for reverence towards the gods.

42. See Pickard-Cambridge 1988, 60.

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Θέαση και θείκη αποκάλυψη σε δραματικά και μη δραματικά συμφραζόμενα

ΑΘΗΝΑ ΚΑΒΟΥΛΑΚΗ

Στην παρούσα εργασία εξετάζεται η διαδικασία και δυναμική της θέασης (με την ευρεία έννοια της παρουσίας, παρακολούθησης και συμμετοχής) όχι ως αυτόνομο φαινόμενο, αλλά ως μέρος μίας διαδραστικής λειτουργίας, μέσα σε συγκεκριμένα τελετουργικά πλαίσια στην Αθήνα των κλασικών χρόνων. Επισημαίνεται η σημασία της θέασης ως σύνθετης εμπειρίας, που απευθύνεται στο σύνολο των αισθήσεων, αλλά και ο ρόλος της ως καθοριστικού μέρους της τελετουργικής πράξεως και της επικοινωνιακής διαδικασίας (μέσα στο τρίπολο «θεοί – άνθρωποι λειτουργοί – άνθρωποι θεατές») ταυτόχρονα, τονίζεται η αλληλεξάρτηση μεταξύ θεάματος (– ακροάματος) και θεωμένων (ακροωμένων, παρισταμένων), μία σχέση που αναδεικνύεται και λεξιλογικά με τη χρήση του όρου *θεωρία*, ενός όρου με αμφισβητούμενη ετυμολογική προέλευση και πολλαπλά σημασιολογικά επίπεδα. Ο όρος αυτός, αλλά και το αλληλένδετο θέασης και θεάματος φαίνεται να έχουν ιδιαίτερη σημασία για το φαινόμενο του θεάτρου και να προβάλλουν επιτακτικά στις *Βάκχες* του Ευριπίδη. Όπως φαίνεται από την προλογική ρήση των *Βακχών*, βασικό διακύβευμα δεν αποτελεί η έλευση ή γενικώς η υποδοχή του θεού στη Θήβα, αλλά το *έμφανῆ γενέσθαι τὸν Διόνυσον*, το *ἐνδείξεσθαι*, και γι' αυτό η δυναμική που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ τελετουργικού θεάματος και θεάσεως αποτελεί το βασικό άξονα της δράσεως στις *Βάκχες*. Όπως υποστηρίζεται, η δυναμική αυτή απεργάζεται την αποκαλυπτική και καταστροφική τροχιά των εξελίξεων, που επιτρέπει την υποστασιοποίηση της τραγικής *θεωρίας* – με τρόπο, βέβαια, παράδοξο, αφού το *ἐμφαίνειν τὸν θεόν* επιτελείται με εστιακό κέντρο τον Πενθέα – πάσχοντα άνθρωπο.