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THE *AGÔN* AND THE ORIGIN OF THE TRAGIC CHORUS

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In his recently published book on the *Supplices* of Aeschylus,[1] A. F. Garvie discards previous opinions as to the date of this play which are based on the characteristics of the chorus. As is well known, the fact that the Danaides who make up the chorus of the *Supplices* are the real protagonist had been considered by many to indicate an early date. No less well known is it that since the publication in 1952 of the Oxyrh. Pap. 2256, frg. 3, a new phase in the problem of the dating of the *Supplices* has opened up. Numerous philologists claim to find support in the papyrus for a later date for this play, which previously had been reckoned as the earliest of all Aeschylean plays and thus of all extant Greek drama. Garvie's book, which deals thoroughly with the problem of the dating of the *Supplices* and discusses its archaic features, comes to the conclusion that its chorus, rather than being archaic, is of an unusual character within the Greek theatre. A chorus like that of the *Persae* where a messenger brings news to a chorus of anonymous citizens would come, according to Garvie, much closer to what is considered normal in the tragic chorus.

The opinion which one might hold on the primitive function of the chorus in Tragedy is intimately bound up with that which one might form on the origins of Tragedy. From this point of view we now make some remarks on the function of the chorus, at the same time presenting some of the results of a book we are preparing on the origins of the Athenian drama.

Garvie, like several authors among whom one must mention

[1] *Aeschylus'* Supplices: *Play and Trilogy* (Cambridge 1969). See now the review by M. McCall, *Am. J. Philol.* 91 (1970), 352–57.

Kranz in the first place, rightly sees that the true dramatic nucleus of Tragedy is made up of the scenes in which the chorus and an actor take part simultaneously. However, as with other authors, he tends to see in this confrontation of chorus and actor something secondary: the actor would merely have been brought in from outside and the coryphaeus would also have been introduced subordinately in order to isolate within the chorus one of its members, so that he could engage in dialogue with the actor. This theory is based fundamentally on the scarcity of dramatic and mimetic elements in the Greek Lyrics that we know, that is, the literary Lyrics, and on our scanty knowledge of the preliterary ritual Lyrics of dramatic or mimetic nature. We know, Garvie says, the masked *kômoi* which represent satyrs, animals, etc., but there are no corresponding ones in relation to the heroic myth. Therefore a chorus like that of the *Supplices*, which is the real protagonist of the dramatic action, is a more recent literary product, a creation of Aeschylus and not a remnant of the ancient dramatic choruses.

Garvie's ideas in this book follow a line of thought whose most qualified representative is probably Else. In his book, *The Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy*,[2] he makes Tragedy out to be an artificial synthesis of epic narration and nondramatic, choral Lyrics performed in Athens. I think, putting it briefly, that there is much to be said against this position. It breaks all the existing connections between Greek Tragedy and the more or less closely related genres which exist in various cultures and which spring from mimetic dances. It breaks the connections that exist within Greece between Tragedy, Comedy, Satyr Play, and various rituals. It leaves no room for explanations of such essential facts as, for example, the existence of the mask. In short, Tragedy springs from the medium to which it belongs, the mimetic rituals organized around the mimic dance of a chorus.

But one thing is certain and that is that evaluation of mixed scenes where chorus and actor speak to each other, in keeping with the origins of Tragedy, does pose difficulties. Kranz, who follows the ideas of Wilamowitz when the latter—at the same time basing his opinion on Aristotle—sees the origin of Tragedy in the dialogue between the chorus and the coryphaeus, certainly faces up to these

[2] Cambridge, Mass., 1966.

difficulties. In his *Stasimon*,[3] he firmly sets the origin of Tragedy in the *epirrhêma* between chorus and coryphaeus and then between chorus and actor; but he persists in considering this phase as derived from an ancient confrontation of two choruses,[4] and he finds himself contradicting the theory he had shared of the origin of Tragedy in the Dithyramb of satyrs; for neither the *epirrhêma* nor the remaining mixed scenes of chorus and actor contain anything satyr-like. On the other hand, Peretti,[5] who acknowledges this fact, separates these mixed scenes from the origin of Tragedy. They would be elements proceeding from the severer Lyrics, mainly those that are threnodic, which would have been incorporated secondarily into Tragedy.

We believe that the best method of approaching the origins of Tragedy is to analyze the tragedies that we possess, above all the earliest ones, with the object of picking out in them elementary unities of form and content, of discovering those nuclei of dramatic action which have been preserved in them, trying to establish the earliest form of the same. This task has been performed only in part and has been disturbed by the perpetual search for affinities between the results thus obtained and the ideas of Aristotle—interpreted in various ways—and those of Wilamowitz, which are in turn an attempt to reconcile elements from the *Poetica* which are in themselves irreconcilable: the two theories that Tragedy derives from the Dithyramb, a serious genre by definition, and that it derives from the *Satyrikon*, a festive genre.

We concede—and here we agree with Else—that Aristotle proceeds from philosophic propositions rather than from historical facts and that it is preferable to proceed independently by way of analyzing our material. And we find that one can push forward even further in this analysis, without of course contemning the achievements of Kranz, Peretti, Schadewaldt, Nestle, Duchemin and so many other scholars. In an article published recently we have set out the fundamental principles of the method which in our opinion must be followed.[6] Basically it deals with this isolating of elementary unities,

[3] Berlin 1933.

[4] Cf. also J. Lammers, *Die Doppel- und Halbchöre in der antiken Tragödie* (Paderborn 1931).

[5] *Epirrema e tragedia* (Firenze 1939).

[6] "Ideas metodologicas para el estudio de la evolución y estructura del teatro griego," *Revista de la Universidad de Madrid*, 18 (1969), 299–319.

restoring to them the earliest possible form and content. A subsequent study shows how these unities have influenced each other along with the widening and evolution of theatrical action. A new phase of the research consists in finding parallels to these elementary unities of Tragedy in various rituals—and yet another that of discovering outside Greece more or less parallel facts, where theatrical genres are created from mimetic rituals in which the dance and frequently the mask play a part.

Naturally we are not going to attempt this study here. We merely note down a few things about one of these elementary unities which is found in Tragedy and which is known to us in various rituals not always strictly theatrical: the *agôn* in which the chorus takes part. For as we have seen, the question arises whether the ancient chorus of Tragedy has a central role in the action of Tragedy or whether the action involves the actors only, the chorus being a simple witness. Of course the chorus has evolved greatly throughout the history of Tragedy and has tended to acquire a more or less subordinate role. But there do exist remains of an ancient type of action in which a chorus confronts an actor in what we call an *agôn*. Naturally, this does not mean that the chorus has the most important part in the action. The chorus can have at its side an actor who is usually its commander, such as Danaus is with respect to the Danaides in the *Supplices*. In fact it is perfectly normal that the chorus be made up of the subjects or servants or friends of the protagonist; and Garvie is right in pointing out that the centering of the *Supplices* on the Danaides rather than on Danaus is an innovation of Aeschylus. But the confrontation of the chorus and the Egyptian herald who threatens and pursues them, that is to say, the *agôn*: chorus/actor, has further parallels; it is not an isolated scene. On the other hand one must point out that the *agôn*: chorus/actor is nothing more than one of the elementary unities to which we have referred, although we believe that it could be the one around which the whole Tragedy is organized. Another very important elementary unity in which chorus and actor take part is the dirge or *thrênos*, several of which, for example, are to be found in the *Persae*. However, in the dirge the chorus can address its commander while in the *agôn* the existence of an adversary is essential; this is the most dramatic element of all. Perhaps one could say there is

no Greek Tragedy without an *agôn*—with the exception of the *Persae*.

Having come to this point we must stop a moment to take note of the fact that usually the typical *agôn* of Tragedy is considered to be that which takes place between two actors, the chorus playing a subordinate role. Really this is the more frequent; in this direction Tragedy has evolved. In the typical *agônes* of Euripides the two *rhêseis* of the two actors who confront each other are each followed by two lines of the coryphaeus who comments briefly on their words, sometimes however siding with one against the other as in the *Bacchae*. But if this is the more usual type of tragic *agôn*, it does not follow that it is the only one or the earliest. This, it seems to me, is the mistake of a book, otherwise excellent, *L'agon dans la Tragédie grecque* by J. Duchemin.[7] Here only those structures of the latter type are called *agôn*; when in Aeschylus or in Sophocles there are confrontations which are formally different, Mme Duchemin says that it is a question of situations of *agôn* without the form of *agôn*. And yet while the author tentatively proposes to attribute the origin of the *agôn* consisting of countervailing speeches to Euripides, she recognizes the archaism of some types of confrontation different from this one, above all the confrontation of chorus and actor.

If then we recognize the fact that various *agônes* of Tragedy in which actor and chorus confront each other (the latter sometimes accompanied by the actor) are archaic, we now find ourselves in a position to compare them, on the one hand, with *agônes* of Comedy in which the same occurs, and on the other with various archaic rituals to be found in Greece and outside Greece, rituals where an individual is pursued by a chorus or vice versa. To quote some Greek examples, we refer to the ritual of the Agrioniae of Orchomenus in which the priest pursues the Maenades with his sword, or to several involving the expulsion of the *pharmakos* to the sound of a mourning dirge accompanied by the flute. It is to those rituals, including those in which speech plays a subordinate role, that the drama is related, and also to others whose reflections we find in the analysis of Greek dramas. All this shows us that chorus and actor form a unit and that they belong to the same unit from the earliest times. Without doubt, the actor is one of the choral dancers who,

[7] Paris 1945.

when the action becomes mimetic (in the *agôn* it is always so, in the dirge it may or it may not be), represents or personifies a mythical character. But this, of course, must be proved by way of a thorough analysis of the relationship of actor and chorus in Tragedy. Sometimes it is all too clear that the actor performs some of the functions which are more appropriate for the coryphaeus; so in *Eumenides* 117 ff. the function of Clytaemestra is the same as that of the coryphaeus in 140 ff.—this confirms the theory that the actor originates in the coryphaeus; or to put it better, that both derive from the exarchon. The tragic *agôn*, founded on the confrontation of chorus and actor and of which we are going to offer some examples, is comparable, as will now be seen, to the comic *agôn*; and this deserves some explanation. We believe that this can only be understood in the context of the theory we have set out in detail in a recent article in the journal *Emerita*.[8] In it we have shown that the term *kômos* refers to any chorus which exists in order to perform a ritual action, including for example the intoning of a dirge before a hero's grave or the singing of the epinikion in honour of the victor in the athletic games. This is to say that not only Comedy but all drama originates in the *kômos*, the usage of the word being, in words like *κωμῳδία, κωμικός*, the result of a restriction in meaning so that it contrasts precisely with the word *τραγῳδία*. At the beginning of the didascaliae contained in *IG* II 971 the term *κῶμοι* still refers to the theatrical genres as a whole and at the same time to the Dithyramb. According to my theory, Tragedy would be no more than a specialization within the multiform genus of *kômoi*. The *kômoi* which gave birth to Tragedy would be those of a heroic nature, and the name would come from those performed by the *τράγοι*, that is to say, the antecedent of Satyr Play. From the remaining *kômoi* would have emerged Comedy whose nature became specialized in a definite way, in opposition to Tragedy. For if it is true that the *τραγῳδοί* performed within their mythical themes both the serious and festive genre (Tragedy and Satyr Play respectively), no less certain is it that with the passing of time, it was Tragedy which was considered as essential and against which the term that contrasted most was Comedy, rather than Satyr Play.

[8] "*Komos, Komoidia, Tragoidia.* Sobre los orígenes del teatro," *Emerita* 35 (1967), 249–94.

Thus we consider the theatrical genres as the result of specializations starting from a multiform genus, the *kômoi* taking part in quite diverse rituals. Even when both in Tragedy and Comedy common elementary unities are found such as the *agôn* of chorus and actor which we are now studying, these *agônes* may have and doubtless did have different intentions and evolved in opposite directions on being enclosed in different genres. However, we do not wish to go into the general problem about which I have already presented items in the above-mentioned article and which I must study in greater detail in the book of which the present article is a foretaste. Here I am referring rather to the *agôn*. And it is easy to reach the conclusion that this elementary unity, which is the *agôn* of chorus and actor in Tragedy, finds its parallel in Comedy, as I have already pointed out. It is easy to see that beneath the great differences between comic and tragic *agôn* there do exist, both in form and content, elements in common.

In the examination of the comic *agôn* something similar to what happens in the examination of tragic *agôn* occurs: its most common and typical features, which really proceed from a development which moved in the opposite direction to that experienced by the tragic *agôn*, have been continually pointed out. Gelzer's book on the *agôn*[9] is symptomatic in this respect. He attains a greater coherence than is apparent in the material, thanks to two methods: one, he distinguishes between the struggle (*Streit*) and the *agôn* or discussion, a much more formalised part; and the other, he denies the name *agôn* to passages which do not possess a regular structure. Inversely, Gelzer calls *agôn* those passages in which there is no true confrontation and in which, however, the structure is that of a typical *agôn*. This, as we know, is a double structure. The first semichorus sings the ode and its coryphaeus incites the actor to expose his reasons (*katakeleusmos*). There ensues the discussion between the two actors in the *epirrhêma*, ending in the *pnigos*: and everything is repeated in a symmetrical counterpart.

However, even within the canonical form there are variations. One of the characters can simply be the coryphaeus (as in the *Aves*) as a result of which there is confrontation of chorus and actor, not of two actors. But there also exist simple and not double *agônes*.

[9] *Der epirrhematische Agon bei Aristophanes* (München 1960).

And as for content it is of a most varied nature, ranging from a violent confrontation through all kinds of verbal threats to a peaceful discussion. The chorus pursues or is in turn pursued, persuades or allows itself to be persuaded. At other times there is a proposal which is either accepted or denied, or the problem remains unsolved and the play consists of a series of *agônes* until a solution is reached, at times by deceit or violence.

All this shows that the form of the *agôn* is highly variable, as is its content. In form there is a constant element which is the epirrhematic structure, which in Comedy tends to be double. In content the only constant feature is the confrontation either violent or dialectical. In this confrontation is included the persuasion, either successful or unsuccessful, of a chorus by an actor or vice versa. With successful persuasion the actor ends up by being converted from antagonist into the commander of the chorus as in the *Acharnenses* (chorus convinced by actor).

We would like to point out briefly that in Tragedy, as we have anticipated, there are scenes which as regards both form and content are comparable to the scenes from Comedy already referred to; that is to say there are *agônes* of chorus and actor which vary as regards form and content but which have essential features in common with the *agônes* of Comedy. Among them the *epirrhêma* predominates. (An *agôn* in the form of a *kommos* or lyrical dialogue, such as that of the *Supplices*, is an exception.) And there are examples in which this *epirrhêma* tends to adopt a double structure, as in Comedy. As for the content there is again a very varied range of motives—from hostile confrontation to friendly persuasion. In the latter case the actor who addresses the chorus can be considered as its superior from the very beginning: as with Clytaemestra, Eteocles, or Prometheus before their respective choruses. It is obvious that the actor originates in the chorus whether he figures as its commander or antagonist. And when the *agôn* takes place between two actors, with the role of the chorus thus fading into the background or even entirely disappearing, we must consider this as secondary, however frequent it later becomes. What happens in this respect in the *Agamemnon* is interesting. Here Agamemnon and Clytaemestra confront each other though not in a formal *agôn*, since she proceeds to dissemble and not to reveal her true thoughts until Agamemnon

is dead. Neither is there, properly speaking, an *agôn* between the chorus and Agamemnon although there is a concealed confrontation, criticism voiced by the former against the latter. But once Agamemnon dies, leaving on stage only the actors from one of the confronting parties, that is Clytaemestra and then Aegisthus, the chorus recovers the central role. And there is a true *agôn*: chorus/Clytaemestra; a complex *agôn* with epirrhematic elements and others from the *kommos*, since threnodic motives are blended in. There then ensues a second *agôn*, this in trimeters and tetrameters, between the coryphaeus (who represents the chorus) and Aegisthus.

Let us now look at some of the *agônes* of chorus and actor in Tragedy, without by any means intending to exhaust the subject. We attempt simply to note the fact of their existence and the importance that these *agônes* have for the investigation of the origins of Greek drama. One might say that the task of the tragic author consists essentially in organizing together the mythical material into a series of *agônes* (to which certainly other elements were added): *agônes* some of which were performed on stage and others off stage, being reported by the messenger. Mythical material did not always lend itself to expression in *agônes* of chorus and actor- –for this reason the type of *agôn* between actor and actor tended to predominate. But nevertheless there do exist examples of this type.

In the *Eumenides* Aeschylus discovered the possibility of dramatizing the happy ending of the *Oresteia* with the help of a *kômos* of deities who intervene in a series of *agônes*. The persecution of a character by these terrible deities and the persuasion achieved by them look back to possible archaic rituals: numerous parallels could be cited. Throughout the play there is a series of confrontations of the chorus (85 ff., 235 ff., 778 ff.) or the coryphaeus (397 ff., 566 ff.) and Orestes' party: either Orestes himself or his defenders Athena and Apollo. The themes are common to those of Comedy—persecution, abuse, threats, acceptance of judgment, judgment, persuasion.

Without doubt the *Eumenides* is the play in which the chorus most clearly takes part in agonistic action. However, it is by no means the only one. The *Philoctetes* by Sophocles is another good example. Although Neoptolemus and Odysseus are those who, in fact, attempt to carry off Philoctetes, either by deceit or violence, the chorus also has an agonistic role. Thus in 135–219 (*parodos*) we have a chorus

in the act of search; it is an *epirrhêma*: chorus/Neoptolemus (the latter recites anapaests) who are searching for Philoctetes and end up discovering him. In 826 ff. there is another *epirrhêma* in which Neoptolemus again acts as chief of the chorus. Even in 974 ff., during an *agôn* between Odysseus and Philoctetes, the chorus binds the latter upon the orders of the former and in a lyrical dialogue 1081–1217 the chorus attempts, in vain, to convince the hero that he must follow it to Troy.

The *parodos* of the *Oedipus Coloneus* (117–257) presents us with the chorus of inhabitants of Colonos in the act of expelling Oedipus, first from the sanctuary of the Eumenides and then from the entire territory. The chorus then takes part in two *agônes* of actors which follow—between Oedipus and Creon and between Theseus and Creon. The latter is a different action—not a continuation of the preceding.

We also find a chorus in action, prevailing throughout the play, in the *Rhesus* by Euripides, which as is known has an archaic structure. The tragedy begins immediately with the *parodos*—as in the *Persae* and the *Supplices*—in which a chorus of action is presented, the guards of the Trojan camp who follow up their chief Hector. But most significant is the choral *agôn* of 674–727 in which the chorus attacks Odysseus and Diomedes, the two Greek spies who have just killed Rhesus, and they escape.

In plays like these the chorus intervenes in the action throughout and at times this action bears the characteristics of an *agôn*. It is the type which comes nearest to that of Comedy and also to that of Satyr Play, such as the *Dictyoulkoi* or the *Theoroi* by Aeschylus or the *Cyclops* by Euripides. In other tragedies the agonistic performance of the chorus is less important but it is still noteworthy. Let us look at some examples.

The *Supplices* by Aeschylus, towards which we first turn our attention, presents a chorus which, apart from its role as protagonist, follows in line with the preceding, if one adds passages of persuasion to those of confrontation. We think that both fall within the meaning of *agôn*. Here we have a chorus which flees and which has sought refuge at an altar. The chorus then proceeds to persuade king Pelasgus in *rhêsis* and *stichomythia*: chorus/king, in *epirrhêma*: chorus/king, in a *stasimon* of the chorus, in a new dialogue in iambic

trimeters with *rhêsis* and *stichomythia*. Only from here on does the chorus take part in a confrontation, that is, with the Egyptian herald. In 825 ff., an *agôn* develops in which a lyrical dialogue and an epirrhematic dialogue follow an initial *astrophon* of the Danaides. Afterwards there is a new *agôn*, this time between two choruses, the Danaides and the serving women.

In the *Septem* there is an initial *agôn* of persuasion between the coryphaeus and Eteocles (181 ff.) but then there is another between the chorus and Eteocles (677 ff., *epirrhêma*). At the end there is an *agôn* of actors (Herald and Antigone). We have already commented on the *Agamemnon*: here the choral *agôn* combines with the dirge. On the other hand in the *Choephoroi* there is no choral *agôn* and yet there are signs of it in the repeated *agônes* in which the chorus takes part. In 84 ff. Electra persuades the chorus (although the dialogue is only with the coryphaeus) to implore Agamemnon to help Orestes kill Clytaemestra; in 164 ff. Electra convinces the coryphaeus of Orestes' presence, upon which the chorus implores Agamemnon to take vengeance. In 510 ff. the coryphaeus incites Orestes to action. In 770 ff., the same coryphaeus persuades the wet nurse to tell Aegisthus to come alone so that his death will be easier. In 1059 ff. the coryphaeus again tries to persuade Orestes, after the crime, not to be afraid and to cleanse himself. The *Prometheus* on the other hand presents true choral *agônes*– all of persuasion.

As can be seen, the differences are noteworthy: sometimes there is violent action, sometimes only persuasion; sometimes only the chorus intervenes, at other times only the coryphaeus. Sometimes the form of the *epirrhêma* is kept, sometimes it is not. And this occurs not only in Aeschylus. We saw that the *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus Coloneus*, and *Rhesus* have choruses which take part in *agônes* practically throughout the whole play. However, there are isolated, partial *agônes* in other plays with the participation of the chorus. Thus in the *Oedipus Rex* where the basic *agônes* are of actors, the chorus is present in some. In 634 ff. Jocasta appears, playing the part of a peacemaker, upon hearing the dispute between Oedipus and Creon. When these quarrel in front of her the chorus takes a hand in the persuading of Oedipus. In the *Heraclidae* by Euripides, on the other hand, we find an *agôn* of confrontation. The chorus comes on stage calling for Jocasta to prevent Euristheus' herald from pulling the suppliants

off the altar (73 ff.); then there is an epirrhematic *agôn*: chorus/herald, followed by a stichomythic one, coryphaeus/herald.

We could give more examples but we believe that the above are sufficient to enable us to see that *agônes* with chorus are not lacking in Tragedy and that sometimes they are in the very centre of its argument. The tragic choral *agônes* have the most varied tones and intentions, moving between the two extremes of violent attack and persuasion, and forming an alliance sometimes with other diverse forms or tending to be replaced by the *agônes* of the actors.

The formal study of the *agônes* is too complex to be undertaken here. One must proceed from the fact that the *agôn* is an open form subject to multiple variations. When the chorus takes part in it, it may end with the latter singing a *stasimon* just as the actor may recite a *rhêsis*. But there is a clear tendency toward the epirrhematic structure, which gave place to the *stichomythia* when the chorus was replaced by the coryphaeus. But one must not think that all the *epirrhêmata* are agonistic.

The agonistic *epirrhêmata* of Aeschylus tend to adopt a symmetric structure in which the chorus sings strophes and antistrophes and the actor recites iambic trimeters or anapaestic dimeters; in Sophocles there are comparable forms, as in *Philoctetes* 135 ff., *Ajax* 866 ff. But we must not fail to note the appearance of certain double structures, also present in Euripides, which remind us of the *agônes* of Comedy. The earliest types are those in which after the strophe and the antistrophe there are stichic dialogues of coryphaeus and actor. Already in Aeschylus there exist some signs of these double structures. Compare the *Agamemnon*, 1407 ff. (combination of dirge and *agôn*), where the chorus sings the strophe and the antistrophe, and each is followed by the trimeters of Clytaemestra; but in Sophocles and Euripides they appear even more clearly, without this meaning that we are dealing with later creations (although in details they do, undoubtedly, contain some later elements).

Let us look at some examples, without trying to systematize them. In the *Philoctetes* 391 ff., 827 ff.; *Oedipus Coloneus* 116 ff., 833 ff., 1447 ff.; *Oedipus Rex* 634 ff.; *Ion* 1229 ff., we find various types of choral *agônes* with double structure. The oldest are without doubt

those in which after the strophe and the antistrophe there occur stichic dialogues between coryphaeus and actor. It can happen that the stichic dialogue no longer represents a confrontation but takes place between two actors on the same side; and that the choral parts may be attributed to the actors. However in Comedy too there are diverse innovations.

What we really want to show, even though superficially, is that the participation of the chorus in the action, confronting an actor or persuading him, is not anomalous in Tragedy: it is a phenomenon that exists here as well as in Comedy. Even in the actor-*agônes* there are signs of some participation by the chorus in the conflict.

To sum up, we believe that it can no longer be maintained that the elements of the drama in which a chorus takes part are a secondary addition, nor can it be maintained that the drama itself (or Tragedy) is a creation from nondramatic lyrical elements and narrative elements. On the contrary, the drama springs from mimetic rituals in which there is a confrontation; also from other rituals, the dirge for example, which may or may not be mimetic. The *agôn* is in its very centre—as in that of so many predramatic rituals. Without doubt it was used in the celebration of heroic rituals and not only those in which satyrs, nymphs, and the like take part. In the history of rites we are familiar with the process of historization by which omnipresent archaic rituals are interpreted as referring to myths or changing historical facts. But even if this were not the case, it is clear that when the tragic poets wanted to represent the heroic myth with the help of a chorus, they were forced to have this chorus take part in the action in the same way as was usual in the *kômos* of so many religious celebrations, in keeping with the traditional patterns of the dirge, the *agôn*, the entreaty, the hymn, etc. The hero's army and his servants or subjects could easily be made into scenic reality by *kômoi* like these. And so too Eumenides or Bacchae. At other times the tragic poets got into difficulty and tended logically to make the role of actors more and more important while diminishing that of the chorus. Hence the differences with respect to Comedy. The latter, not being subject to the narration of fixed myths, continued to use the traditional *kômoi* which were adaptable to all kinds of actions—such as are usual in Comedy. Those *kômoi*, essentially the same, might incorporate all kinds of animals, fantastic beings,

dead people. They could be modified in any detail according to the poet's wish. In Tragedy the *kômoi* were open to much greater alterations; but it is easy to see that they were present at its origin just as they were in that of all Greek drama.*

Madrid, 10 September 1970

* [For further details, see now (1973) my book, *Fiesta, Comedia y Tragedia. Sobre los orígenes griegos del Teatro* (Barcelona, Planeta 1972). An English translation will be issued by Brill at Leiden.]