BATTLE LINES: GENDER AND VIOLENCE IN TERENCE'S *HECYRA*

by

JOSEPH SPELLMAN

(Under the Direction of Erika Hermanowicz)

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates *Hecyra* at the points where gender and violence intersect. These intersections are frequent and provide a heuristic device for interpreting the relationships between characters, and the relationship of the text to its audience. The term "violence," broadly construed, has been divided into three primary categories within this paper, each of these categories receiving its own chapter. The first chapter handles the verbal abuse between married couples in the play, the second looks carefully at the language used to describe the sexual assault at the play's center, and the third looks at military language used by a *meretrix* at the beginning of the play. In every instance, Terence uses these violent interactions to place himself at odds with the conventions of comedy, using the genre's familiar architecture to create something entirely new.

INDEX WORDS: Terence, Hecyra, Mother-in-law, Roman Comedy, Latin Literature, Gender, Violence, Classics

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**Dedication**

Daisy.

*Canis malefica et optima. Requiescas in pace.*

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## Introduction

Terence's *Hecyra* is a violent play. Husbands verbally abuse their wives, a young man rapes a stranger in the dark, and a *meretrix* declares war on the men who would take advantage of her companion. These violent actions and discussions are not simple manifestations of characters' interpersonal conflicts; rather, in every instance, these violent interactions are dependent on gender. This paper investigates these interactions between violence and gender, and through them uncovers ways in which Terence subverts the traditional forms of comedy. Terence asks his audience to reconsider the meaning of comic tropes, and, through the subversion of those tropes, the values of the society that they represent.

## Summary

Act 1:[1] The play opens with a pair of unconventional prologues, detailing the failure of the play's performance on two previous occasions.[2] With these to set the tone, the play itself can begin. The first characters on stage are Philotis and Syra, a pair of *meretrices* who will disappear once the exposition has been delivered, though not without leaving their mark. The pair discuss the recently ended relationship of their fellow *meretrix*, Bacchis, and the young man Pamphilus. Parmeno, a slave of Pamphilus, enters and discusses the marriage that ended Pamphilus' relationship with Bacchis.

[1] This summary employs the act structure which was added to the text by renaissance editors for the sake of clarity, cf. Goldberg (2013), pg. 44. References to this artificial act and scene structure are eschewed in the remainder of this paper, as the artificial divisions are at best, unhelpful, at worst, harmful to an understanding of this play as a continuous text meant to be read and performed as such.

[2] This summary is based on the summary of Norwood (1923), pg. 85-89.

According to Parmeno, Pamphilus married a girl, Philumena, whose family lives nearby, because his father urged him to do so. For the first several nights of their marriage, determined to return to Bacchis, Pamphilus claims to have not slept with his new wife, mistreating her in the hopes she would leave. When Bacchis refused to continue their relationship in light of his marriage, Pamphilus eventually began to show physical and emotional affection for Philumena. Following the death of a relative on Imbros, Pamphilus was away for seven months, and left Philumena with his mother, Sostrata, and his father, Laches. Laches spends most of his time in the country, thus leaving Philumena and Sostrata largely on their own. While the pair seemed to get along, Philumena recently returned to her parents' home and refuses to see Sostrata when she comes to visit. Parmeno attributes this absence to a quarrel between mother and daughter-in-law, and Laches has come from the country to speak with Phidippus, Philumena's father.

Act II: Laches enters, berating his wife for driving Philumena away, and although he is unsure of the specifics of their quarrel, he is certain that she is to blame. Sostrata maintains her innocence throughout the encounter. Phidippus enters, and Laches asks that he send Philumena back to his home before Pamphilus returns from his trip. Laches says that he would like to send Philumena back, but that she has refused to return while Pamphilus is away. Laches takes this as confirmation that Sostrata is to blame, and the pair of men leave. Sostrata gives a short monologue, asserting her innocence and kind treatment of Philumena, hoping that Pamphilus will return soon.

Act III: Pamphilus returns from his journey, coming onto the stage with Parmeno. He complains that he had recently exchanged his affection for Bacchis for that of his wife, and now he has learned that he may have to choose between affection for his wife and duty to his mother. Parmeno assures him that the quarrel will probably be simple to resolve when, suddenly, the pair

hear cries of pain coming from Phidippus' house. They fear that Philumena is sick, and Pamphilus rushes inside. Parmeno does not follow and meets Sostrata in the street, since she has just emerged from her home to voice concern for Philumena. Parmeno and Sostrata talk briefly, the former informs the latter of Pamphilus' return and convinces her not to visit Philumena personally, in case it deepens the conflict between the two women. Pamphilus exits the house, and has a short, terse, interaction with his mother. He sends her back inside and sends Parmeno towards the harbor to fetch his luggage.

Alone on the stage, Pamphilus informs the audience what has just happened. The household slaves met his unexpected arrival first with joy, then with dismay, and Pamphilus quickly learned the true nature of Philumena's illness: pregnancy. Pamphilus is outraged, as he says the baby certainly cannot be his, and Myrrina, Philumena's mother, intercedes. She tells Pamphilus that Philumena was raped by an unknown stranger before the two were married, and that the child Philumena is currently giving birth to is a result of this assault. She ran away from the home of Sostrata and Laches to hide the pregnancy, and it is only Pamphilus who knows that the baby is not his. Myrrina begs Pamphilus to keep the pregnancy and rape a secret, hoping that he will decide to take Philumena back, though she acknowledges that he may decide not to do so. She promises that the baby will be exposed right away, and Pamphilus agrees to keep the secret. At the end of his monologue, he sees Parmeno returning with the luggage and sends him on a new, useless errand, looking for a man who does not exist, in order to keep him from learning about the pregnancy.

Laches and Phidippus approach Pamphilus and ask him about his trip to Imbros. After these brief pleasantries, Laches tells Pamphilus that Phidippus has agreed to send Philumena back. Pamphilus argues that it would not be right to take Philumena back due to her quarrel with

Sostrata, citing his filial devotion to his mother's needs. When the older men seem unconvinced, Pamphilus flees, leaving the *senes* to return to their wives.

Myrrina arrives on stage for the first time, upset that Phidippus has learned of the baby's existence, and Phiddipus follows her out of the house, incensed that she would have hidden this pregnancy from him. Unaware of the rape, Phidippus thinks the baby must be Pamphilus', and he begins to suspect that Myrrina has been planning to ruin the marriage of Pamphilus and Philumena, due to Pamphilus' previous affair with Bacchis. Myrrina argues that this was not her intention, and Phidippus departs to see if, considering the birth of (what Phidippus believes to be) his legitimate son, Pamphilus will take Philumena back. Myrrina gives a monologue here, upset both that she has no way to identify Philumena's rapist, and that Pamphilus will likely reveal the rape in order to avoid taking Philumena back. In the course of this short speech, she also informs the audience that the rapist stole a ring from Philumena in the course of the attack.

Act IV: Sostrata speaks with Pamphilus and accepts the consequences of starting the quarrel, though she maintains her innocence. She has heard from Laches that Pamphilus would choose her over Philumena, so she plans to leave behind her city life and spend the rest of her days in the country with Laches. Her husband agrees with this plan and urges Pamphilus to take his wife back. Phidippus then arrives and Laches informs him of Sostrata's decision. Phidippus then proclaims Sostrata as innocent, passing the blame to his own wife, Myrrina. Revealing the existence of the baby to Laches, Phiddipus insists that Pamphilus take Philumena back. When Pamphilus continues to object, Laches grows angry and accuses his son of continuing his relationship with Bacchis, thus driving out Philumena with his infidelity. Pamphilus flees once more, and the *senes* decide to look for Bacchis and convince her to end the affair with Pamphilus. Laches calls for Bacchis, and Phidippus leaves to find a wetnurse for the baby.

Act V: Bacchis arrives and speaks to Laches, who accuses her of being his son's mistress, insisting that she end the relationship. Bacchis asserts that she has not been with Pamphilus since his marriage, and Laches asks her to say as much to Myrrina and Philumena. Bacchis voices her reluctance to speak to a married woman, given her position as a *meretrix*, but agrees to see them on account of her respect for Pamphilus. Phidippus returns and learns of what Bacchis has told Laches, and Laches voices his positive impression of the *meretrix*.

Parmeno returns from his fruitless errand and encounters Bacchis leaving the house of Phidippus. Bacchis tells Parmeno to fetch Pamphilus, saying that Myrrina has recognized the ring which Pamphilus gave her. As Parmeno runs off, Bacchis explains to the audience that Pamphilus gave her a ring some nine months prior, which he had stolen from a girl whom he had assaulted that same night. This proved that Pamphilus was Philumena's rapist, and thus the child his wife bore is his after all.

Pamphilus returns, joyful in his newfound discovery. He and Bacchis exchange pleasantries while Parmeno looks on, mystified. Pamphilus and Bacchis agree that they will not end this play like some sort of comedy, where everyone learns everything, and decide to keep the fact that Pamphilus raped Philumena a secret. Parmeno is congratulated for bringing the good news to Pamphilus, and despite his bewilderment, he accepts the praise and asks the audience to applaud.

**Chapters**

In order to facilitate this paper's investigations of violence and gender in *Hecyra*, the play's violence has been separated into three primary categories, each of which becomes the focus of one chapter in this work.

The first chapter concerns the verbal abuse in the relationships of the older couples in the play, Laches and Sostrata, and Phidippus and Myrrina. In these relationships, the husbands are intensely distrustful of their wives, frequently berating them, blaming them for the departure of Philumena. The wives, however, are innocent of what their husbands accuse them, and their responses inspire sympathy in the audience. The suffering of these wives reveals a paradox at the center of the play. It is the very attempts of the husbands to resolve the conflict of the play that perpetuates these conflicts. The desire to control situations and narratives, in the absence of concrete information, causes the men to extend and exacerbate the conflict that already exists. It is these runaway characters, with their misogynistic assumptions, who create the narrative of this comedy.

The second chapter deals with the rape at the heart of the play, analyzing the ways in which Terence's characters portray this event in *Hecyra*. The chapter begins with other examples of how rape is discussed in Roman Comedy in order to better understand and contextualize what Terence does in *Hecyra*. The first two plays are the *Aulularia* and *Cistellaria* by Plautus, which exhibit many "typical" features of sexual assault in New Comedy.[3] These plays are then contrasted with two Terentian examples, *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra*. In comparison to Plautus, Terence is far more interested in challenging the conventions of the comic rape plot, particularly through the removal of divine narration, and the addition of victims' perspectives. *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra* both subvert convention thereby allowing Terence to ask the audience how "happy" the happy endings of comedy really are.

[3] "Typical" as defined by Rosivach (1998), pg. 35-42.

The third and final chapter considers the introductory material of *Hecyra*. Beginning with the prologues, this chapter discerns instructions for understanding the play, that is, the importance of re-reading and reconsideration. With this recommendation in mind, the chapter turns to the military language employed by Syra, a *meretrix* who appears only in the opening. In looking closely at the words Syra uses, this section identifies another intentional subversion. In this opening monologue, Terence combines a stock scene, that of an older *meretrix* advising a younger counterpart, with a common metaphor, love as war, to create something entirely new. Through this introductory material, Terence teaches the audience how to understand *Hecyra*, and how to see the architecture of genre he is desperate to reveal.

## Chapter 1

### Hellish Headmistress:

### Conflicts of Husbands and Wives in *Hecyra*

*Hecyra,* like much of New Comedy, is a play about marriage. One of the many ways Terence sets this play apart from its peers is beginning it where most other comedies end.[4] Indeed, *Hecyra* is not a play leading *to* marriage, but a play proceeding *from* marriage. The goal is not the establishment of new marriage, it is a renewal of one that exists prior to the dramatic time, the goal is *re*-marriage.[5] The reconciliation that characters hope to achieve is between Pamphilus and Philumena, but their primary antagonists are Laches and Phidippus, the very fathers who set up the marriage in the first place. This essay will consider the ways that the *senes irati* undermine their own goals through performance of standard gender roles and demonstrate the ways Terence manipulates the literary frame of the *fabula* itself to create doubt about the happiness of the comedy's ending. It may indeed not be the case that this "woman's play" is feminist,[6] but the suffering of Terence's women is not without purpose. Their suffering is an indictment of the power center of the Roman family, the *pater* himself.[7]

Bursting from his house to the stage, Laches wastes no time in making his feelings about domestic strife known:

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[4] cf. Konstan (1983) pg. 133, Norwood (1923) pg. 92.
[5] Slater (1988).
[6] Norwood (1923) pg. 91.
[7] cf. James (1998a), James (2013), Packman (2013). *contra* Fantham (2004).

*Pro deum atque hominum fidem, quod hoc genus est, quae haec est coniuratio!*
*utin omnes mulieres eadem aeque studeant nolintque omnia*
*neque declinatam quicquam ab aliarum ingenio ullam reperias!*
*itaque adeo uno animo omnes socrus oderunt nurus.*
*viris esse advorsas aeque studiumst, simili' pertinaciast,*
*in eodemque omnes mihi videntur ludo doctae ad malitiam; et*
*ei ludo, si ullus est, magistram hanc esse sati' certo scio.* (Ter. *Hec.* 198-204)[8]

In the name of gods and men, what sort of tribe is this? What sort of conspiracy's going on? Look how all women want and don't want exactly the same things all the time! You won't find one of them deviating the slightest bit from the character of the others! In fact, all mothers-in-law are unanimous in hating their daughters-in-law! They're all equally determined to oppose their husbands, they're all equally obstinate, they've all be trained in wickedness in the same school, as far as I can see! And if there is such a school, I know perfectly well that this woman's the headmistress!

This opening speech typifies a behavior Laches will demonstrate throughout the play, a desire to construct and control narratives. Lacking information and enraged at his (innocent) wife, Laches finds in her the faults which he believes all women share. His outburst attributes a malicious unity to the actions of women, exemplified by his wife, and thus explains why she *must* be at fault in this instance. Two of his complaints are worth particular attention: the complaint about mothers and daughters-in-law, and the school of wicked intent.

[8] *Hecyra* text from Goldberg (2013); translations adapted from Brown (2006).

The first of these complaints is the only one to appear truly relevant to the plot of the play as we understand it so far. The opening speech from Laches consists of seven lines, with *socrus* and *nurus* appearing in the fourth, directly in the center of his tirade, thus linking the first and second halves of his opening salvo. The first three lines deal with characteristics shared among women. They are a *genus* that shares all the same preferences and tendencies, falling into perfect ideological order with one another, none deviating. After this general tendency is established, Laches gives a specific example of these common behaviors, and how they affect women's relationships with one another. Mothers-in-law universally hate their daughters-in-law, or is it the other way around? Both *socrus* and *nurus* have the same termination whether accusative or nominative. This being the case, the line can be read with either group as the subject, and either group as the object.[9] This lack of clarity in meaning follows naturally from the beginning of his speech and is underscored by the use of *uno animo omnes* in line 201 itself. In the world Laches sees, all women behave in the same ways in all circumstances, and it is the part of both mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law to hate one another.

After this intentionally vague pronouncement, Laches switches his focus from women's tendencies to women's relationships to men. Women are opposed (*advorsas*) to their husbands, and this behavior arises from only their stubbornness (*pertinacia*). In fact, Laches says that women are so uniform in their bad behavior that they seem to have been trained towards wickedness (*malitium*) in the same school. In this hypothetical school, Laches supposes that his wife could in fact be the headmistress, emphasizing *magistram* with a demonstrative *hanc*, pointing to his greatly distressed wife, Sostrata, who came onto the stage alongside him.[10]

[9] Goldberg (2013), makes note of this ambiguity, pointing to cultural traditions of domineering mothers-in-law, while noting that the line provides an "interesting interpretive challenge".
[10] Goldberg (2013), note on 204.

Laches uses these insults to attribute particular agency to his wife, as the female trouble that he has come back from the country to correct, in his mind, stems from a single source.

The audience members could be forgiven for agreeing with Laches' conclusion at this point (even if they lack his venom), as Terence has yet to reveal the true cause of the strife between Philumena and her mother-in-law, Sostrata. The information given prior to this scene hangs on the testimony of Parmeno, who told Philotis and Syra that Philumena "began to hate Sostrata in inexplicable ways" (179). Parmeno clarifies that there were no quarrels (*lites*) between the two; nevertheless, Philumena fled the house under the pretense of making a sacrifice, *simulat se ad matrem accersi ad rem divinam, abit* (184), and refused to see Sostrata afterwards. For this reason Laches has returned from the country, and has met with Phidippus to find a solution to this feminine conflict. The misreading of the situation by Parmeno is central to the conflict between Laches and Sostrata, and indeed the entire play.[11] His telling of this background information seems to place him firmly in the role of the *servus callidus*, as Terence does not give evidence to the contrary. While this proves to be the inverse of the truth, Parmeno being unreliable in the extreme and extraordinarily wrong, this central irony is not made clear to the audience until the closing scenes of the play. Using Parmeno in this way, Terence primes the audience to agree with the point argued by Laches upon his entrance.[12]

Potent as his initial tirade is, Laches is not content to end his abuse. This scene between Laches and Sostrata occupies forty-seven lines. Of these forty-seven, Sostrata speaks in nine.

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[11] cf. Goldberg (2013), note on line 179.

[12] Due to this ambiguity, Sewart (1974) argues that this *Hecyra* of Terence lacks the comedic power of the *Hekyra* of Apollodorus. He argues that this lost *Hekyra* would likely have contained a divine prologue immediately following Parmeno's explanation and preceding the entrance of Laches and Sostrata. It is his contention that an immediate revelation of Parmeno's ineptitude would result in a superior play, moving a single joke forward by a few hundred lines while dismantling every bit of tension Terence is so careful to construct.

Laches dominates the scene in volume and in force, uninterested in Sostrata's protestations. Following his insulting *magistram* (204), Sostrata claims ignorance of the situation that has earned such vituperation (*quam ob rem accuser nescio,* 205). Following the mocking *tu nescis?* (206) which Laches uses to interrupt her, she expresses a fervent hope that she and Laches might live out their lives together, saying:

> *ita me di bene ament, mi Lache,*
> *itaque una inter nos agere aetatem liceat* (206-207)
> should the gods love me well, my dear Laches, it will be possible for us to live out our lives as one.

Laches scorns her sentimentality with a "callous variant on the stock theme of comic misogyny,"[13] saying *di mala prohibeant*, "may the gods prevent such misfortune" (207). His contempt for his wife is undiminished by her wish and her protest, as he refuses to change his opinion on what has happened. His refusal to even entertain his wife's explanation seems to be in opposition to the power he attributes to his wife, particularly as regards his reputation.

The next portion of Laches' lines deal primarily with his social standing, and the influence his wife has on his position and that of their son. This emphasis on how others view him is a driving motivator for Laches throughout the play and is one facet of his obsession with controlling narratives. In response to his hateful *prohibeant* in line 207, Sostrata replies in one of her only uninterrupted lines,[14] politely saying that soon Laches will discover (*rescisces*) that he accuses her unjustly (*inmerito,* 208). To this, Laches replies with his typical hostility:

> *te inmerito? an quicquam pro istis factis dignum te dici potest?* (209)

[13] Goldberg (2013), note on 207.
[14] This statement relies on Goldberg's (2013) attribution of the *scio* at the end of line 208 to Sostrata.

> You? Unjustly? Is there anything that can be said that's worthy of you, considering what you've done?

Here Laches focuses on the shame that Sostrata brings to various groups through her actions, beginning with himself. He moves quickly to their son (210), and their in-laws (211), trying to prove to his wife that she is single-handedly responsible for the collapse of their social standing. Despite his concern for his son's standing, and the enmity of his in-laws, he will be all too happy to manipulate these parties himself when it becomes expedient later in the play.[15]

Following his comments about their in-laws, Laches briefly turns to his own emotional state. He says that Sostrata must imagine that he is a stone rather than a man due to how callously she has treated him (214), and that furthermore she must imagine he is unaware of affairs at home since he spends all of his time in the country (215-216). The irony of this comment is, of course, that Laches is completely wrong about the situation in his home. He is assuming Sostrata's culpability based only on his impressions of women's behavior, ignoring the comments Sostrata makes in her own defense. The audience, like Laches, is ignorant of his ignorance, and may even feel a bit of sympathy for him. His emotional appeal begins with an imperative *vide*, asking her to behold the undeserved upset (*inmerito aegritudo*) which he feels due to Sostrata's action (223). He follows this with a description of his life in the country, which he began by "serving you" (*concedens vobis*) and "attending to [our][16] property" (*rei serviens*) (224). He elaborates the precise nature of this service in the following line, saying:

> *Meo labori haud parcens praeter aequom atque aetatem meam.*
>
> *Non te pro his curasse rebus nequid aegre esset mihi!* (226-227)

[15] cf. especially the discussion with Pamphilus and Phidippus from 451-515.
[16] The same property is described as *nostra res* in the following line, 225.

I haven't been sparing of my labor: I've worked harder than was reasonable for a man of my age. In return for all that, you've taken no trouble to avoid causing me any upset!

Laches is careful to present himself as a devoted husband, living a life of financial service to his wife. He then scolds Sostrata for refusing to take better care of his emotions. His demands that his feelings be treated with care are entirely reasonable in the story that Laches is telling. The problem is that the story he tells ignores the Sostrata who is speaking to him and is based fully on the actions of the Sostrata whom he imagines, his inimical *magistra*.[17] It is this *magistra* who follows the behavior of all women, the *magistra* who believes that her husband is made of stone, and the *magistra* who forces him into back-breaking labor on the farm. Sostrata, in contrast, is the wife who wishes to live out a life with her husband (206-207), whose first line on stage is *me miseram* (205), and who calls her husband's accusations *inmerito* (208). Laches scorns the idea of living together with his wife (207), leading to suspicion that his only motive for moving to the country was devotion to his wife's whims. He also demands his emotions be handled with care (227), but completely ignores his own wife's statement of her distress. Finally, he scorns the idea that Sostrata is undeserving of his accusations (210), and then says that he himself is suffering *inmerito* from an *aegritudo* (223). Throughout his speech Laches has begged for the same sort of consideration that he routinely denies his wife.

Laches does briefly engage with Sostrata's arguments from lines 228-240, denying her claim that she is not responsible for Philumena's departure. He posits that because she was the only one present when Philumena left, she must be responsible for her leaving, a conclusion that logically follows from his assumption that all mothers and daughters-in-law hate one another

[17] cf. Ter. *Hec*. 204

(201). His closing statement in this scene describes a hypocrisy that Laches believes is common to all women:

> *Nam vostrarum nullast quin gnatum velit*
> *Ducere uxorem et quae vobis placitast condicio datur.*
> *Ubi duxere inpulsu vostro, vostro inpulsu easdem exigunt.* (240-242)
> Every one of you women wants her son to marry, and he gets given the match that you've decided on; when they've married at your insistence, it's at your insistence that they drive them out again!

The emphatic chiasmus in line 242 stresses how women tend to create and destroy their sons' marriages, but this stereotypical belief misses one key element of this particular case. Laches and the audience are often similarly ignorant of how events have transpired, relying on probabilistic reasoning to figure out what has happened. The gossip from Parmeno is the only evidence for what has happened in the absence of Laches, and the audience must choose whether to believe the arguments that Laches makes, or the counterclaims of Sostrata based solely on the testimony of the *servus (in)callidus*. From lines 114-133, Parmeno narrates the tale of Pamphilus' marriage with Philumena to his interlocutors, Philotis and Syra. He states clearly that the impetus for the marriage came from Laches alone. He pleaded with Pamphilus to take a wife, using arguments that are common to all fathers (117). Pamphilus refused this initial prodding, but Parmeno tells us that his father only made his appeals more forcefully (120-121). At last, his obnoxious behavior resulted in the betrothal of Pamphilus and Philumena (123-124). Philotis even interjects a curse for Laches and his meddling (134). At no point is Sostrata mentioned in this story. The first mention of Sostrata as *mater* occurs at line 174, with her name appearing first at 179, when

Parmeno introduces her "conflict" with Philumena. Laches is presented to the audience as the marriage's sole advocate.

Laches' reported insistence on the marriage is directly in conflict with his assertions about Sostrata's culpability. Laches argues that Sostrata and all other women (*vobis, vostro,* 241-242) love to drive out the wives they choose for their sons, but Sostrata did not choose Philumena as Pamphilus' wife. Through the play it is shown that Parmeno's testimony is a dubious source at best, but at this point, the audience has no reason to doubt his assessment of the situation. It is especially damning when Pamphilus and even Laches himself confirm that he was responsible for the marriage. At 295 Pamphilus says that "I never dared to refuse the woman whom my father thrust upon me" (*numquam ausus sum recusare eam quam mi obtrudit pater*). Then, speaking to Pamphilus near the end of the play, Laches says:

> *Egi atque oravi tecum uxorem ut duceres.*
>
> *Tempus dixi esse. inpulsu duxisti meo* (686-687)
>
> I begged and urged you to take a wife. I said that it was time. At my insistence, you married.

Laches' frank assessment of his own actions at the end of the play shows an overreach in his argument with Sostrata. He uses the same word *inpulsu* to censure Sostrata (and all women) at 242, then attributes the *inpulsu* to himself at 687. His belief in the tendencies of women is central to his argument, even in an instance where Sostrata's actions are incongruous with his understanding of female behavior. He may rightly believe that Sostrata drove Philumena out, but he is deliberately exaggerating his claims about Sostrata's culpability in favor of easy misogyny.

In the midst of Laches' chastisement of Sostrata, Phiddipus exits his house, speaking to his daughter within. In contrast to the rant Laches entered with, Phidippus is much more gentle. Addressing Philumena he says:

*Etsi scio ego, Philumena, meum ius esse ut te cogam*
*Quae ego imperem facere, ego tamen patrio animo victu' faciam*
*Ut tibi concedam neque tuae lubidini advorsabor.* (243-245)
I know I have the right to force you to do what I say, Philumena, but I'll give in to a father's love and fall in with what you want; I won't oppose your wishes.

Phidippus presents himself as a respectable family man, well aware of his own authority, but unwilling to exercise it contrary to the wishes of his daughter. Witnessing his neighbor's kindly speech, Laches shifts his persona. He is no longer a red-faced misogynist; he is a doting father and husband like Phidippus.

*Phiddipe, etsi ego meis me omnibus scio esse adprime obsequentem,*
*Sed non adeo ut mea facilitas corrumpat illorum animos;*
*Quod tu si idem faceres, magis in rem et vostram et nostram id esset.*
*Nunc video in illarum potestate esse te.* (247-250)
Phidippus, I know I am exceedingly obliging to all the members of my family, but I'm not so easy-going that I corrupt their characters. If you did the same as me, that would be better both for you and for us. As it is, I can see that you are under the thumb of your women.[18]

[18] Brown (2006) construes this line as "your women have you under their thumb". I think it is important that Phiddipus still be the actor of this line. Even under the *potestate* of his wife and daughter, Laches still makes this a choice on the part of Phiddipus, not making the women, but rather *te* (Phidippus) the subject of the line.

This characterization which Laches uses for himself is in contrast to everything that the audience has heard until this moment. Parmeno discussed his excessive meddling (*odio*) when it came to the marriage of Pamphilus, and he has demonstrated amply his unwillingness to even engage with Sostrata or entertain the idea that she is not to blame. According to Parmeno, Laches had gone to see Phidippus the day before, and Laches now tells the results of that meeting, saying that he had left as confused as when he had come (251). Goldberg's (2013) note on line 251 references Donatus, who believed that Laches' anger towards Sostrata is misplaced frustration with Phidippus. His catty insinuation that Phidippus is excessively indulgent to his family (248-249) is indicative of such frustration, but the suggestion that his mild rudeness to his neighbor is equivalent to his bombastic hatred of his wife is not supported in the text.

The two men depart the stage together, leaving the unfortunate Sostrata behind. Now that Sostrata is alone, she finally has a chance to proclaim her innocence. She tells the audience that it is unfortunate that all husbands hate their wives because of the actions of a few women (274-275). This is the inverse of what Laches states at 202, that all women are opposed to their husbands. Both use the adjective *aeque* to describe the hatred by and towards husbands, though Laches believes it is a fault of all women, while Sostrata feels that it is *propter paucas*. Sostrata simultaneously buys into the misogynistic belief of Laches that there are wicked women, while proclaiming her innocence in this case. While Sostrata is sure only of her own innocence, her account is supposed to be accepted by the audience.[19] To this point in the play, the audience does not know the truth of events, as Philumena and Myrrina are the only characters with the full story, and they have not yet spoken. The concrete knowledge that the audience does have,

[19] cf. James (2013), and Büchner (1974), pg. 129

however, is that Sostrata is emphatically innocent of wrongdoing, and the continued censure and abuse of her by Laches will provide a healthy amount of dramatic irony throughout the play.[20]

Following Sostrata's brief monologue, Pamphilus returns from his trip abroad. This is his first time on the stage, and he enters mid-conversation with Parmeno. He is distressed about the situation that has arisen in his absence and is about to enter the house where his young wife Philumena and her mother Myrrina are. Upon entering he will learn the truth of why Philumena has left his parents' house, but before doing so, he provides his own take on events. At line 295-296 he says he "never dared refuse the wife his father forced on him," but then asserts that even in his silence no one should have doubted his displeasure with the situation. In the context of this already unhappy marriage he says, without any evidence or first-hand knowledge of the situation, that he expects to learn that either his mother or his wife is to blame and this will only cause him more grief (299-300). In his willingness to find a woman at fault for his trouble, even in the absence of proof, Pamphilus shows himself to be strikingly similar to his father, though more moderate in the force of his view. Following his master's woeful musings, Parmeno offers his own reassuring analysis of the situation. He reminds Pamphilus that a small misunderstanding can be at the heart of even a large quarrel, depending on the temperament of individuals involved (306-309). As an example, he says that because of their unsteady (*infirmum*) spirits, children bear grudges against one another on account of "even the most minor offenses" (310). He says this to comfort Pamphilus with the fact that *itidem illae mulieres sunt ferme ut pueri levi sententia*, women are similarly puerile and fickle-minded (312). The irony of this statement is that Parmeno, Laches, and Pamphilus are in fact participating in this sort of

[20] A lack of dramatic irony is frequently cited as a central part of *Hecyra*'s "failure", yet it is still present in the play, even without an omniscient divine prologue. cf. Parker (1996), *contra* Sewart (1974).

fickle-minded censure that Parmeno describes as typical of women and children. All three men are more than happy to blame Sostrata based only on a rumor and unstable assumption; furthermore, they refuse to give hearing to Sostrata's take on events and continue to allow their ignorance and intractability to exacerbate the situation. Following this exchange, Pamphilus enters the house of Phidippus to inquire after his wife and hears her screams of childbirth.

While Pamphilus enters the house next door, Sostrata exits Laches' house and joins Parmeno on the stage. As she enters the scene, she is discussing the commotion she hears next door, and praying to Aesculapius for Philumena's wellbeing. Despite his servile position, Parmeno mocks Sostrata's concern. He says that if she tries to see the girl, she will simply be refused entry again, and that it would be a waste of time even to send someone to see Philumena in her stead (342). He further says that he considers it doubly stupid to love someone who hates you (343). He then informs her that her son has returned, and that he has gone to investigate matters for himself. Sostrata is thrilled that Pamphilus has returned and waits for his report. Exiting the house, Pamphilus speaks to the mother he has not seen in seven months with staccato, perfunctory statements. Now that he has learned of his wife's pregnancy, he has made the decision to keep the truth to himself. He sends his mother back inside and orders Parmeno to go and fetch his luggage. He then begins an astoundingly long monologue (fifty-four lines), relating what he has discovered from Myrrina, the mother of Philumena. His monologue ends when Parmeno returns with the luggage, and Pamphilus promptly sends him away on a useless errand. Pamphilus then concludes at line 448 that he will care for his wife and his mother-in-law as far as he can, but he will ultimately choose his own mother over his wife, a conclusion which

is a bit surprising considering his chilly response to the reunion with his mother in lines 353-358.[21]

Pamphilus then sees Laches and Phidippus coming back from the forum. He begins a conversation with them, unsure of how he can keep them in the dark about the truth he has learned, and how to explain to his father that he will not take his wife back (452-453). Pamphilus is working hard to ensure the ignorance of his father and his father-in-law, but the pair of *senes* seem equally eager to keep Pamphilus unapprised of what has happened in his absence. At line 466, Laches lies, saying that Phidippus had called Philumena back home, and he tells Phidippus to say as much. Based on the "*noli fodere*" from Phidippus in 466, Laches presumably delivered his instruction with an elbow to the ribs or a step on the foot. Despite his aside to Laches, Phidippus repeats the lie. In response to this brief farce between the *senes*, Pamphilus informs them that he is well aware of what has transpired in his absence. Laches responds with annoyance towards those hateful onlookers (*istos invidos*) who gleefully spread rumors (*lubenter nuntiant*). Laches' anger at this point is interesting, as it is a result of his inability to control the narrative. It is foolish to assume that Pamphilus would not have heard this bit of gossip about his mother and wife the moment he set foot off the ship; still, Laches is angry that he cannot keep his son ignorant of the "conflict." Furthermore, Laches and Phidippus do not discuss any sort of solution they reached during their time at the forum, so Pamphilus would have been bound to find out about Philumena's unexplained absence, yet Laches still fights to appear in control. This desire for control explains his determination to blame Sostrata, as a conflict stemming from his wife's actions would fall under his jurisdiction. In instructing Phidippus, his narrative

[21] For this cynical, opportunistic turn from Pamphilus, cf. Konstan (1983), pg. 135-8.

counterpart and social equal, to lie to Pamphilus, Laches is demonstrating just how far he is willing to go in order to be in control of narratives and to appear to have a hold on events.

Pamphilus, who actually has more information about this situation than either Laches or Phidippus, now presents his own argument, attempting to get out of his marriage by using his own informational advantage to manipulate the *senes*.[22] At line 480 he tells them that he must either give up his mother or Philumena, and he decides he must put his mother's interests first. This is the sentiment that expressed at 450, now used as a way to escape his marriage. Laches, no stranger to manipulation and half-truth, hints that he recognizes this ulterior motive in Pamphilus. He says: *verum vide ne inpulsus ira prave insistas, Pamphile.* (484), "just be sure that you aren't proceeding driven by some misplaced anger, Pamphilus."[23] Pamphilus exits, and the *senes* argue briefly. Laches says at 497-498 that he warned Phidippus that Pamphilus would take the news badly, and that Phidippus should have sent his daughter back. This is a rather ahistorical assertion, because if anything had gone according to plan, Philumena would have been back before Pamphilus returned, and he would have been none the wiser. Both fathers have demonstrated, and will continue to demonstrate throughout the play, that they are ineffectual, despite their confidence in their own familial authority. Phiddipus storms back into his own home, and Laches decides to take the quarrel back to his wife, upon whom he will spew his frustration (513-515). He says that it is by her *consilium* that all of this has happened, restating his hypothesis from the beginning of the play. While his assumption is the same, he explicitly

[22] It is through this manipulation that I disagree with Lape (2004). It is her contention that Terence uses marriage plots to highlight the tension young men feel between being good husbands and being good sons. I think Pamphilus exposes the weakness of this argument applied to every play in the Terentian corpus, where Pamphilus vacillates between familial and nuptial loyalty as suits his purpose rhetorically. He is not so much attempting to balance the two concerns, but rather escape from them entirely.

[23] Goldberg (2013) suggests that the *vide verum* is Laches' hint to Pamphilus that he suspects an ulterior motive.

decides he will berate his wife now because his son and neighbor do not care what he has to say (512-513), revealing that having an easy target is far more important to him than the truth.

Laches having gone back into his home, Myrrina rushes out of her door, and Terence gives the audience a look at the relationship between Myrrina and Phidippus, exploring how it parallels that of Sostrata and Laches. Myrrina is asking herself what she will do concerning her daughter's pregnancy, and how she will keep it secret from her husband. Phidippus bursts onto the scene, furious with Myrrina, assuming she is the one to blame for the misfortunes surrounding the marriage of Philomena and Pamphilus. He shouts *heus tibi dico*, and she coyly asks *mihine vir?* (523). Phiddipus responds venomously:

> *vir ego tuos sim? Tu virum me aut hominem deputas adeo esse?*
> *Nam si utrumvis horum, mulier, umquam tibi visus forem,*
> *Non sic ludibrio tuis factis habitus essem.* (524-526)
> Your husband, am I? Do you reckon me to be your husband, or even a man? If you'd ever thought of me as being either of those things, woman, you wouldn't have inflicted such insulting treatment on me!

This question is reminiscent of Laches earlier question to Sostrata in which he wondered if his wife considered that he was stone, rather than man (214). In these instances, both husbands are attacking their wives for a lack of care towards their feelings. The irony of course, is that they do so while ignoring their own wives' emotional vexation. At 535, Phidippus makes clear his quarrel with Myrrina, saying that although he had believed that the fault lay with the neighbors, he now sees that it is Myrrina who has caused such distress for both families. To this accusation, Myrrina replies with an exclamation of distress, like that seen earlier in Sostrata's speech,

proclaiming her despair (536). Phidippus makes a rather cutting comment here saying he wishes he knew it were true that she is miserable, *utinam sciam ita esse istuc!* (536).

Following his vicious barbs, Phidippus and Myrrina argue about the relationship between Pamphilus and Bacchis which he believes to be the cause of Myrrina's dislike of Pamphilus. Having said his piece, Phidippus ends the interaction and forbids Myrrina to take the newborn child anywhere, fearing that she will move forward with her plan to get rid of the child (563).[24] Interestingly, he follows this command with his own recognition that it is ineffectual. At 564 he says that he would be a bigger fool (*ego stultior*) to believe that his commands will be followed. He goes inside to badger the *servi* and tell them that Myrrina is forbidden to go anywhere with the child. Myrrina once again expresses her dissatisfaction with the situation mentioning that she has no idea how she will be able to change the mind of her husband. Myrrina's monologue, like Sostrata's before it, earns sympathy from the audience for telling the harsh truth about the reality that Myrrina is facing. Unlike Sostrata's speech, however, the audience does not have to guess whether Myrrina is telling the truth, as Pamphilus got the full story from her earlier, which she now tells the audience for herself. While Myrrina's speech is pathetic, the closing statement Phiddipus makes to himself is rather unusual. When he first entered the stage, he said that though he has the authority to force his daughter to act a certain way, he chooses not to exercise this fatherly power. Laches mocked him for this "decision." Now Phidippus is placed in a situation where his fatherly authority can and should be exercised, but he acknowledges that his command

[24] Packman (2013) thinks that this interaction is more vicious than the opening barrage Laches fires at Sostrata at 198, primarily because the argument here focuses on Myrrina's attempt to expose the child. I respectfully disagree, since Phidippus is ready to admit his own lack control, whereas quite a bit of weight is added to Laches' attack by how tight a grip he has on his family.

over his household is minimal. He demonstrates this lack of power by relying on the enslaved to keep an eye on his citizen wife.

At this point in the play, only three characters are fully aware of the nature of the events that are unfolding around them, that is to say, they are aware that there has been a birth and that the child was born of rape, though Pamphilus' identity as the rapist is still unknown to the characters and the audience. Of these three characters, only two of them actually speak during the play. Pamphilus and Myrrina both say their piece, but Philumena never appears on stage, and her only vocalizations are extra-metrical cries of childbirth.[25] Sostrata, Laches, and Phidippus are still ignorant of the truth of events. Phidippus knows about the birth of the child, though not about the rape that led to its conception. Laches and Sostrata are unaware even of the birth. In this context, Sostrata still takes it upon herself to offer a solution to the conflict. She enters the scene once more and tells Pamphilus her plan to free herself from suspicion. She acknowledges that Pamphilus probably believes that she is at fault for his wife's absence, and thus she states that she will move to the country with Laches. This will allow the young couple to live in peace without whatever conflict she may have unknowingly created (577-588). Sostrata is willing to live out the remainder of her life with a husband who has expressed nothing but disdain for her, all for the sake of her son.

Overhearing this discussion, and breaking into the conversation, Laches has his most humanizing scene. He acknowledges that Sostrata is making the right choice, showing good judgement by getting out ahead of events (607-609). He even makes some small mention of his own intractability, saying *abi rus ergo hinc: ibi ego te et tu me feres*, "head off to the country

[25] Knorr (2013) pg. 304.

then, where I'll put up with you, and you with me" (610). After a few more perfunctory lines, Sostrata returns inside to prepare for her trip, and she does not reappear on the stage. Continuing his discussion with Pamphilus, Laches says that is best that he and Sostrata leave town; the old, after all, are bothersome to the young (619). He says that he and Sostrata are now just the *senex atque anus* of a story (*fabulae*) (620-621).[26] The use of the word *fabula* at 620 shows how interested Terence is in attacking the literary frame he has been working in. His characters, particularly Laches, are storytellers, while also being characters in a story themselves. This is not the only instance of this sort of metatheatrical expression: consider Pamphilus admonition to Parmeno at 316, *noli fabularier*, "don't talk like you're in a play,"[27] and his comment to Bacchis at 866, *placet non fieri hoc itidem ut in comoediis/omnia omnes ubi resciscunt*, "it's for the best if this doesn't work out like in comedies where everyone figures everything out." Laches' country life with Sostrata is never explored further in the play; after all, they are just the old man and the old woman of a play, stock characters who can disappear, their purpose served. Further, as the play hastens towards its conclusion, Pamphilus never takes the time to free his mother from her confinement to the country, though he is fully capable of explaining the situation and removing the burden of fault from her. After all, there is no need for this to work out like some sort of comedy.

Following this metatheatrical discourse on age and life in the country, Phidippus comes back onto the stage stating his anger towards his daughter Philumena for keeping secrets from him, but he does place the blame for this squarely on her mother (623-626). Seeing Phidippus enter, Laches announces that Sostrata has decided to move to the country, and it is now safe for

[26] Goldberg (2013) suggests that there was a familiar and particular story that is being referenced here, also the conclusion of Ireland (1990), adding yet another layer of narrative framing.
[27] Knorr (2008).

Philumena to return (629-630). Phidippus upends the whole affair, proclaiming that Sostrata has done nothing wrong, and that Myrrina is entirely to blame (630-633). As a result of this pronouncement, Laches learns about the existence of the child, discovering and derailing Pamphilus' plan to use his superior knowledge to steer the course of events and escape from his marriage. At 644, Laches directs his anger towards Myrrina, questioning her motives in keeping the pregnancy a secret. Pamphilus continues trying to weasel his way out of the marriage, now blaming the secrecy of the pregnancy for his inability to take his wife back. Growing increasingly angry with Pamphilus for his vacillation, Laches recounts how he insisted that Pamphilus get married (686-688), and now says that he realizes that Pamphilus must have returned to his affair with Bacchis. Following this new most likely solution, he moves the blame for Philumena's actions once more, now from Myrrina to Pamphilus.

In the space of 67 lines, from 629 to 696, Laches has entirely altered his story twice. At 629, he still blamed his wife who was now on her way to the country. On hearing from Phidippus that Myrrina was to blame, Laches did not miss a beat in transferring his censure which had rested solely and inexorably on Sostrata to that point. Taking the lead from Phidippus, he placed the blame on Myrrina for guiding Philumena's actions. In Laches' mind, with this story, Philumena has no agency of her own, and Myrrina's actions are entirely inscrutable, but this is irrelevant since Myrrina is now the convenient and agreed upon villain of his story. Not long after this, however, Laches changes his mind once again and decides that it is more likely that his son is to blame for events; in fact, Pamphilus must have given his wife no choice BUT to leave him. Myrrina and Sostrata, who have both earned such derision from Laches, disappear entirely from the narrative. Laches now decides that he must call on Bacchis so that he can ascertain Pamphilus' guilt. While this attempt to investigate is much more of a consideration than Laches

ever gave to the women he blamed, it is just one more expression of Laches' desire for control. While he seemed entirely committed to the story that a woman was to blame, Laches shows that his only true commitment is to controlling the narrative.

Moving into the concluding scenes of the play, Bacchis emerges from her home to speak to Laches and settle matters once and for all. From 735-740, Laches remarks to Bacchis that he has reached an age where it would not be right for him to be forgiven if he makes a mistake, and thus he is being careful to avoid wronging her. This has never been a concern of his before, as he was all too happy to berate Sostrata, and then Myrrina, with not a single word of apology for his mistaken criticism. Bizarrely, the moment that Bacchis gives her assurance that she has not been with Pamphilus since his marriage, Laches instantly accepts the story and instructs Bacchis to go inside and tell Myrrina and Philumena the same. Laches here gives more courtesy and credence to the *meretrix* than he ever extended to his own wife, a decision made all the more ironic since Parmeno told Philotis that Pamphilus had still been visiting Bacchis every day after his marriage (157-159).[28] Having sent Bacchis into the house to smooth things over with Myrrina and Philumena, it is unclear where things stand with Laches and Sostrata. He is able to solve this one problem only, and when Phidippus returns, he says that they have been wrong to suspect their wives, but this is the last he says on the subject.

When the play ends, there is no resolution to the marital strife that has plagued the characters throughout. The last we heard of Sostrata was that she was preparing to leave for the country, and the last we hear of Myrrina is that she has told Phidippus that she believes Bacchis

[28] The reason for his deference to Bacchis here is unclear. The closest the text comes to solving this problem is Laches' assertion at 763-764 that Bacchis is quite different from how he imagined her. Perhaps he is simply won over by her good nature. A staging of the play could also imply flirtatious interaction that leads to Laches' easy acceptance of her position.

is telling the truth. The play ends with Bacchis, Pamphilus, and Parmeno, Pamphilus making the decision to keep his identity as Philumena's rapist hidden from everyone but himself, Bacchis, and Myrrina. The marriage of Pamphilus and Philumena may have been saved, but in saving his own marriage, Pamphilus has possibly ruined those of both his parents and his parents-in-law. Laches is still the rank misogynist he has been the entire play, and Sostrata is being forced to move to the country and abandon the life she enjoys. Myrrina is trapped with a man who believes she wanted to arbitrarily rid herself of a grandchild.

In *Hecyra*, Terrence provides two parallel portraits of citizen marriages: Laches and Sostrata, and Phidippus and Myrrina, using these marriages to explore the ways that husbands do harm to their wives, and pass the burden of this arrangement onto their progeny. Throughout the play, Laches demonstrates his compulsive need to control narratives and exercise absolute authority over everyone around him. This is seen in the way he verbally abuses Sostrata, refusing to give her fair hearing, then switching blame to Myrrina and Pamphilus the moment it becomes more convenient. He also compels Phidippus to lie to Pamphilus about a subject that Pamphilus is bound to learn about in the immediate future, if he does not know already, and becomes irate when he learns that his son already knows what is happening. Phidippus, who feels similarly angry, blames his own daughter and wife for events with little evidence to go on, but his ignorance is far less excusable than that of Laches. Where Laches has been away in the country for all of the events between Sostrata and Philumena, Phidippus is just completely unaware of what is happening in his own home. He presents himself as an authoritative *paterfamilias* who chooses not to exercise his power, while having no power at all. Laches, however, is his inverse, a bully and familial tyrant who touts his own obsequiousness and dedication to his family.

The play is a dissection of patriarchal power structures. If either father had been willing to talk to or engage with their wives or children, the play's action would have been impossible. It is their interference that creates conflict and prolongs the struggle between Philumena and Pamphilus, as well as their own conflict with their spouses. The need of Laches to control the narrative *creates* the narrative of the play. Terence is folding the frame of comedy in on itself so fiercely that it should be impossible for the play to proceed. Perhaps this comedy of errors is about the errors of comedy. After all, the characters in this play mirror life, and their problems are invented, but the dynamics of patriarchy that prevent them from being solved are all too real. What the hell is funny about that?

## Chapter 2

## Recalcitrant Rapist:

## The Discussion of Sexual Violence in *Hecyra*

Rape is a common occurrence in Roman Comedy, with a child produced by rape often being an integral plot element. Following Greek New Comedy, the plays the Romans wrote were full of young men and the women they victimized. This chapter explores the depiction of rape in four Roman comedies, arguing that Terence has a particular interest in subverting comedic conventions to challenge his audience's assumptions about rape in comedy. The chapter begins by analyzing two of Plautus's plays, *Aulularia* and *Cistellaria*, and treats these plays as a baseline for the handling of rape in Roman Comedy.[29] Working with this standard in mind, the chapter explores Terence's *Eunuchus*, a play with an explicitly transgressive portrayal of sexual morality.[30] Where the rapes in Plautus took place long before the action of the play, the rape in *Eunuchus* is perpetrated during the course of the show, and characters' responses to it shape the play's latter half. The audience of *Eunuchus* bears witness to the rape's planning, hears about its execution, and watches its consequences unfold. With *Eunuchus* in mind, this chapter at last turns to that play's chronological and ideological predecessor, *Hecyra*. Both plays have a strong tendency towards subversion; *Hecyra* is, however, more subtle in presenting its subversive traits. The identity of the rapist and the nature of his actions are never in doubt in *Eunuchus*, while the characters of *Hecyra* spend the play scrambling to learn who Philumena's attacker truly was. In

[29] These plays were chosen for the length and clarity of their descriptions of rape in addition to their close adherence to conventions of rape in New Comedy, as described by Rosivach (1998).
[30] cf. James (1998b); Christenson (2013).

addition to withholding knowledge of the rapist's identity from audience and characters alike, Terence further obfuscates details of the rape itself. His characters give only second and third-hand accounts of the rape; neither the rapist nor the victim describes their experience of the event to the audience. Where Plautus employs divine narrators to describe the rapes in his plays to the audience, Terence innovates by leaving this task to his human characters. In the absence of the divine, Terence finds space for his most important addition to the comic rape plot, the experience of the victim. Neither victim gives a first-hand account of their rape, but in presenting their perspectives, even indirectly, Terence is changing the angle from which his audience should view rape in comedy. The rapists in Terence, like those in Plautus, experience happy endings, marrying their citizen victims, adhering to the conventions of genre. By adding the perspective of the victims, however, Terence subverts these conventions in both *Hecyra* and *Eunuchus*, using the framework of comedy to create discomfort. It is with this discomfort that Terence dares the audience to consider just how happy comedy's "happy endings" really are.[31]

**Part I: Plautus**

The topic of rape in Plautus is prevalent, though often mentioned perfunctorily to move the plot forward. This chapter discusses two of Plautus' plays which describe rape most substantively, those being *Aulularia* and *Cistellaria*. Both plays feature a divine excursus on a

[31] This conclusion is an expansion of that by James (1998b) who argues that the rapes within *Hecyra* and *Eunuchus* are meant to unsettle and disturb. This chapter focuses more on the specific vocabulary of rape present in each play rather than rape's general thematic presence. This chapter also owes a debt to the work of Penwill (2004) and Packman (1993), whose work on Pamphilus and the vocabulary of rape, respectively, have greatly shaped the direction that this chapter takes.

rape that has occurred prior to the narrative, and in both instances, rape is a means to an end without too many complications.

In *Cistellaria*, the rape is significantly removed from the action of the play, having taken place long before the main portion of the story. The primary plot of the play concerns the marriage of the child produced by the rape, so the rape itself is relegated to background fascination and an explanation for how the child was lost in the first place. The god of help, Auxilium, discusses the rape in a delayed prologue:

> *mercator venit huc ad ludos Lemnius,*
>
> *isque hic compressit virginem, adulescentulus,*
>
> *<vi>, vinulentus multa nocte in via.* (Plaut. *Cist.* 157-159)[32]
>
> A businessman from Lemons came here for the festivities, and, drinking wine as only a young man can, he raped a virgin in the road in the dead of night!

By the time the play opens, the rapist, Demipho, has married his one-time victim, Phanostrata. In the narration of Auxilium, the preferred term for rape is the verb *comprimo*. Auxilium uses this verb four times (158, 162, 178, 179), and it is used one additional time by Lampadio, the slave who exposed the child, at line 616.[33] This choice of verb typifies Roman Comedy and appears frequently throughout the works of both Plautus and Terence.[34] Although this verb is also frequently used in other ways, its usage as a verb for rape was so common that Plautus uses the verb as a double entendre in *Truculentus* and *Casina*.[35] In the case of *Cistellaria*, forms of

[32] *Cistellaria* text from Lindsay (1904); translations adapted from Dillard (1995).
[33] All word usage statistics in this chapter are the result of searches on Carey, The Latin Library, unless otherwise noted.
[34] cf. Packman (1993), pg.43; Rosivach (1998), pg. 13.
[35] Packman (1993), pg. 43.

*comprimo* are used exclusively of rape, and the five uses of the verb are the only times rape is discussed in the play.

Plautus uses slightly more varied vocabulary to discuss rape in *Aulularia*. The play begins with a divine prologue from the Lar Familiaris of Euclio's household. Euclio's daughter, Phaedria, has been raped before the start of the play. The Lar says:

> *nam compressit eam de summo adulescens loco.*
> *is scit adulescens quae sit quam compresserit,*
> *illa illum nescit, neque compressam autem pater.*
> *eam ego hodie faciam ut hic senex de proxumo*
> *sibi uxorem poscat. id ea faciam gratia*
> *quo ille eam facilius ducat qui compresserat.*
> *et hic qui poscet eam sibi uxorem senex,*
> *is adulescentis illius est avonculus,*
> *qui illam stupravit noctu, Cereris vigiliis.* (Plaut. *Aul.* 28-36)[36]
>
> A young man from a high-class family raped her, and the young man knows who it is he has raped, but she doesn't know him, and her father doesn't even know she's been raped! So today I'll have the old man next door here ask for her hand in marriage, and I'll do that to make it easier for the man who raped her to marry her. This old man who would make her his wife is the uncle of the lad who raped her in the night during the festival of Ceres.

[36] *Aulularia* text from Lindsay (1904); translations adapted from Bovie (1995).

Forms of the verb *comprimo* are used four times in the lines above, with the alternate verb *stupro* appearing once. *Comprimo* occurs once more at line 689 when Eunomia discusses the rape with her son, Lyconides, the rapist. She says that his marrying the girl would be just (*iusta*), if he has indeed raped the girl (686-689). Near the end of the play, Lyconides approaches Euclio to confess his crime. A tense back and forth takes place, with Euclio believing that Lyconides is confessing to a different crime, namely stealing a hidden store of gold. Lyconides says that he committed the crime for the sake of love and wine, using the noun *vitium* and the verb *facio* to describe what he has done (745). This description adds a bit of variety to the vocabulary of rape in the play, though the ambiguity in terminology allows a continuation of the joke that the rape is being misunderstood as theft. Near the end of his interaction with Euclio, Lyconides offers an apology, saying:

> *ego me iniuriam fecisse filiae fateor tuae*
>
> *Cereris vigiliis per vinum atque impulsu adulescentiae*. (Plaut. *Aul.* 794-795)
>
> Alright I confess, I inflicted an injury on your daughter at the revels of Ceres, spurred on by wine and youthful passion.

In this final mention of the rape, Lyconides again uses the verb *facio,* though here the rape is described as an *iniuria* (794) rather than a *vitium* (745). Lyconides should be understood as using words to minimize his culpability in order that the father of his victim will accept his apology. This contrasts with the more straightforward usage of *comprimo* by the Lar who has no such persuasive goal. In response, Euclio calls what Lyconides is describing a "horror"[37] (*facinus,* 796) and goes inside his house to investigate what has happened. Though an unfortunate lacuna

[37] Translation offered by Segal (1996).

prevents analysis of any further mentions of the rape, it is understood that the play ends with the marriage of Lyconides and Euclio's daughter.[38] Euclio's daughter never appears on stage, and Lyconides receives a happy ending for admitting to his crime.[39]

In both Plautine plays, rape is described by a divinity in concrete terms, making frequent use of the verb *comprimo*. While both plays focus on marriages that result from the rapes, in *Aulularia,* Plautus hints at the victim's experience of the rape outside of these nuptial consequences. In the prologue, the Lar is careful to show that neither Euclio nor his daughter know the identity of her rapist (30), and he marks the end of his discussion of rape with the more forceful verb *stupro* (36).[40] In addition to this, Euclio calls the assault on his daughter an outrage (*facinus,* 796) when he finally learns about it. These examples suggest to the audience that Euclio's unnamed[41] daughter may have suffered as a result of the rape, an "outrage" which she chose not to disclose to her father. These explorations never move beyond suggestion, however, and Plautus leaves the audience to infer what she experienced during and after the rape.[42] In both plays, the end goal of the rape is marriage, and Plautus fits them neatly into the standard comic pattern of drunk young men raping girls and marrying them afterwards.[43] He only implies the experiences of these girls, experiences which Terence took care to explore in detail.

**Part II: Terence, *Eunuchus***

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[38] cf. Rosivach (1998), pg. 16.
[39] *Ibid*.
[40] *Stupro* appears only twice in Roman Comedy, in this passage of *Aulularia* and in *Truculentus* 821, cf. Packman (1993), pg. 43.
[41] The *Dramatis Personae* calls her Phaedria, but her name is never used in the extant play, and she never appears on stage.
[42] *Cistellaria* does describe the difficulty that Phanostrata encountered in making arrangements for the exposure of the child that resulted from the rape, though I exclude this as an experience of the rape itself, as an illegitimate child born from a consensual encounter would have caused a similar difficulty.
[43] For a detailed account of the features of rape in New Comedy, see Rosivach (1998), pg. 35-42.

Among all the plays of New Comedy, Terence's *Eunuchus* is an aberration for placing the rape during the action of the play (albeit offstage).[44] In addition to placing the rape during the action of the play, Terence also spends a significant amount of time considering the motivations of the rapist, as well as the effect the rape had on its victim. Despite having his actions challenged by other characters, the rapist is unrepentant throughout, and at least two characters discuss the consequences for the woman whom he raped.

The story of the rape in *Eunuchus* begins in typical comic fashion, with the young man Chaerea falling in lust with a young girl whom he sees on the street. He decides at once that he must have her in any way he can, whether by force, stealth, or begging (*vel vi vel clam vel precario,* 319). Ascertaining that the girl belongs to Thais, a *meretrix*, his slave Parmeno suggests that he could dress as the eunuch to sneak into the house and take advantage of the girl. Parmeno says:

> *tu illis fruare commodis quibus tu illum dicebas modo:*
> *cibum una capias, adsis, tangas, ludas, propter dormias,*
> *quandoquidem illarum neque te quisquam novit neque scit qui sies.*
> *praeterea forma et aetas ipsast facile ut pro eunucho probes.* (Ter. *Eun*. 372-375)[45]
> You could enjoy the benefits you said just now that he'd enjoy: you could have your meals with her, be with her, touch her, play games with her, sleep next to her…none of the women there know you or have any idea who you are. Besides, you've got the looks and age to pass as a eunuch with ease.

[44] cf. Rosivach (1998) pg. 46-50
[45] *Eunuchus* passages from Brothers (2000), translations adapted from the same. I have altered his text slightly in order to better match convention in other passages, eliding the "e" in *est* following a vowel. e.g. *ipsast* (375).

Chaerea takes this idea seriously, though Parmeno argues that he was only joking. After a bit of back and forth, Parmeno says that they are doing wrong (*flagitum facimus,* 382), and Chaerea responds:

> *an id flagitiumst si in domum meretriciam*
> *deducar et illis crucibus, quae nos nostramque adulescentiam*
> *habent despicatam et quae nos semper omnibus cruciant modis,*
> *nunc referam gratiam atque eas itidem fallam ut ab illis fallimur?*
> *an potius haec patri aequomst fieri ut a me ludatur dolis?*
> *quod qui rescierint, culpent; illud merito factum omnes putent.* (Ter. *Eun*. 382-387)
> Is it wrong if I'm taken into the house of a whore and pay back those sluts who so despise us and our tender years and who are always torturing us in every way they can think of? Is it wrong if I trick them in just the way that they trick us? Or is it fairer to bamboozle my father? People who got wise to *that* would find fault with me; but everybody would think that *this* was a job well done.

The pair hasten offstage to enact their plan.

This scene is shocking in a number of ways, convention is broken repeatedly, with the rape being planned in the midst of the show, during the day, by a sober rapist. Rapist *adulescentes* are often pardoned on account of darkness and wine, neither of which are factors in Chaerea's plan.[46] As Parmeno half-heartedly tries to talk his young master out of the plan, his master responds not with defiance, but with an assertion of his own goodness in acting this way, even going so far as to say that the public will say that he has done something good (387).

[46] cf. Rosivach (1998), pg. 46-50; James (2013), pg. 187.

Despite his confidence in gaining approval for his actions, Chaerea makes sure that no one is around before describing his elation. Thinking that he is alone, Chaerea says:

> *numquis hic est? nemost. numquis hinc me sequitur? nemo homost.*
> *iamne erumpere hoc licet mi gaudium? pro Iuppiter!*
> *nunc est profecto interfici quom perpeti me possum,*
> *ne hoc gaudium contaminet vita aegritudine aliqua.*
> *sed neminemne curiosum intervenire nunc mihi*
> *qui me sequatur quoquo eam, rogitando obtundat, enicet,*
> *quid gestiam aut quid laetus sim, quo pergam, unde emergam, ubi siem*
> *vestitum hunc nancts, quid mi quaeram, sanus sim anne insaniam!* (Ter. *Eun*. 549-556)
>
> Anyone around? Nobody. Anyone following me from in there? Nobody at all. Now can I let my joy come out? Good god, now's the time I could honestly put up with death, to stop life spoiling this happiness of mine with any pain. To think that there's no busybody here now interrupting, to follow me round everywhere I go, to batter my ears with questions, to plague me to death by asking why I'm so overjoyed, why I'm happy, where I'm going, where I've come from, where I got these clothes, what I'm after, whether I'm in my right mind or off my head!

Chaerea's friend, Antipho, has been watching Chaerea and reveals himself after Chaerea's short speech. He then inquires about Chaerea's mood and dress. Chaerea regales him with the tale of his exploits, telling how his eunuch disguise was accepted by Thais, the young girl's mistress, and how he was assigned to keep watch over the girl to make sure that no man could go near her (576-578). Chaerea, recounts how he saw a painting of Jupiter and Danae that made his soul rejoice (*animus gaudebat mihi*, 587). This joy was felt seeing how Jupiter had once played a

similar game (*consimilem…ludum*, 586-587), coming down to play a trick on a woman (*fucum factum mulieri,* 589). Emboldened by the painting, Chaerea shouts:

> *at quem deum! "qui caeli templa summa sonitu concutit."*
>
> *ego homuncio hoc non facerem? ego illud vero ita feci, ac lubens.* (Ter. *Eun.* 590-591).
>
> And what a god! "He who with his thunder shakes the highest realms of heaven."
>
> Couldn't I, mere mortal that I am, do that? So that was just what I did, and gladly.

Chaerea then goes on to describe how he was given a fan while the other attendants went to take their bath, and once they had gone, he locked the door (*pessulum ostio obdo,* 603). Antipho asks what happened then and Chaerea derides him before answering with his last comment on the rape he has committed, saying:

> *an ego occasionem*
>
> *mi ostentam, tantam, tam brevem, tam optatam, tam insperatam*
>
> *amitterem? tum pol ego is essem vero qui simulabar.* (Ter. *Eun.* 604-606)
>
> Was I going to let the opportunity slip when it was given to me on a platter? When it was so splendid, so short lived, so longed for and so unexpected? Then I really would have been what I was pretending to be!

After this, the pair of men shift unceremoniously to their dinner plans and Chaerea asks that as they go, Antipho should give him advice on how he "might be able to possess (*potiri*) [the girl] in the future" (613-614).

Although Chaerea enters the scene by checking to make sure that he is alone so that he can avoid any uncomfortable questions, he is all too happy to tell Antipho the details of his adventure, in fact begging him to listen (562). In his narration, he mentions the merits of his disguise (572-577), the movement of enslaved persons (580-583, 592-596, 599-601), and the

painting that inspired him to the act, from which he took on the role of Jupiter (583-591). For all his gleeful descriptions, particularly regarding the painting, when it comes time to discuss the goal of his "game" (*ludum*, 587) which he does "gladly" (*lubens*, 591), he is unusually circumspect. He acts as though the description of locking the door (603) should have been sufficient for Antipho. When pressed, however, he still talks about the event in vague terms. He refers to it as an opportunity (*occasionem*, 604) which he really could not bear to miss out on (*amitterem*, 606). The closest Chaerea comes to mentioning sex at all is his last line, joking that to let the opportunity pass he would have had to really be what he pretended to be, namely, a eunuch (606). His use of the word *occasio* is rare in the rest of the Terentian corpus, appearing as an opportunity for deceit in *Phormio* 885, and as one of many factors beguiling the spirit in *Heauton Timorumenos* 232-233. This word then carries no particular sexual or violent weight in the Terentian corpus, and perhaps the most explicit word used to describe the rape is that which Jupiter did to Danae, the *fucum factum* (589). The word *fucum* is fraught with difficulty, it does not appear elsewhere in the Terentian corpus, and appears once in the work of Plautus.[47] In the Plautine example (*Captivi* 561), the word is also used as a deception, though not one of a sexual nature. This further contributes to Chaerea's tendency to be non-specific about what exactly he has done.

Chaerea may have been reticent to share the specifics of what he did to Pamphila, but the girl's companion, Pythias, takes it upon herself to describe what has happened. She enters the stage in a rush, exclaiming:

[47] Usage indicated by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

*ubi ego illum scelerosum misera atque inpium inveniam? aut ubi quaeram?*
*hoccin tam audax facinus facere esse ausum! […]*
*quin etiam insuper scelus, postquam ludificatust virginem,*
*vestem omnem miserae discidit, tum ipsam capillo conscidit.*
*[…] qui nunc si detur mihi,*
*ut ego unguibus facile illi in oculos involem venefico!* (Ter. *Eun.* 643-48)[48]

Oh, I'm in a terrible state! Where can I find that wicked monster? Where can I look for him? To think that he had the effrontery to do such a shameless thing as this! […] What's more, on top of that, after he'd had his way with the girl, the villain tore the poor thing's clothes and pulled out her hair. […] If I could get my hands on him now, it would be so easy to scratch the poisonous creature's eyes out!

In her initial descriptions of the rape, Phaedria calls the rape a *facinus,* the same term used by Euclio in *Aulularia*, and mirrors Chaerea's usage of *ludus* in his description to Antipho, making the "game" that brought such pleasure to Chaerea the direct cause of Pamphila's pain. As she is describing the events of the rape, she comes upon Phaedria, the older brother of Chaerea, a regular lover of Thais, who had given her the "eunuch" as a gift (unaware that his brother had impersonated the genuine eunuch whom he had purchased). When he asks what she is in such an uproar about, she responds that the new eunuch has raped (*vitiavit*) the girl (654). Dorias, another slave of Thais who was nearby, asks what monstrous deed has happened (656), and Phaedria asks how a eunuch could have accomplished this (657). Pythias responds:

[48] Interjections from Phaedria have been removed from this quote.

*ego illum nescio*

*qui fuerit; hoc quod fecit res ipsa indicat.*

*virgo ipsa lacrumat neque, quom rogites, quid sit audet dicere;*

*ille autem bonus vir nusquam apparet. etiam hoc misera suspicor,*

*aliquid domo abeuntem abstulisse.* (Ter. *Eun.* 657-661)

I don't know who it was that did it, but the facts prove what he did. The girl's in tears; when you ask her, she doesn't dare say what's the matter; that fine fellow of yours is nowhere to be seen. Oh dear, I've got a suspicion, too, that he stole something from the house as he made off.

As Phaedria runs off to find the eunuch, Pythias blames herself for what has happened to her young charge, saying that she would never have given the girl to him if she had even considered this possibility (666-667). As the group questions the real eunuch, Dorus, he tells them that Chaerea stole his clothes, and Pythias asks if it is clear now that she is not drunk, and that the girl has in fact been raped (*virginem vitiatam*) (703-704).

Pythias makes it clear exactly what has happened to Pamphila. She calls the rape an audacious outrage (*audax facinus*) committed by a wicked criminal (*scelerosum…inpium*) (643-644). She also calls it a crime (*scelus*, 645), and employs forms of the verb *vitio* twice, using it at both line 654 and 704. The most interesting feature of her description, however, is her focus on the effect the rape has had on Pamphila. She begins by saying that the man who raped Pamphila also ripped her clothes and tore out her hair (645-645). As for the girl herself, she is now weeping and refuses to answer when she is asked about what has happened (658-659). Pythias' descriptions fill in the ugly details that Chaerea left out in his discussion with Antipho.

Her account is then echoed and supported by Thais who is trying to understand what has transpired. Thais says to her:

*pergin, scelesta, mecum perplexe loqui?*

*"scio; nescio; abiit; audivi; ego non adfui."*

*non tu istuc mihi dictura aperte es quidquid est?*

*virgo conscissa veste lacrumans opticet;*

*eunuchus abiit. quam ob rem? quid factumst? taces?* (Ter. *Eun.* 817-821)

You worthless creature, are you going to go on talking to me in riddles? "I know; I don't know; he ran off; so I heard; I wasn't there." Won't you tell it to me straight, whatever it is? The girl's in tears, her clothes are all torn, she won't open her mouth, and the eunuch's disappeared. Why? What's happened? *Now* you're quiet?

The pair locate Chaerea, still in his disguise as a eunuch, and interrogate him about the events with Pamphila, as they have learned that she is a citizen, the long-lost sister of Chremes. Thais asks why Chaerea ran, and he says that he was afraid that Pythias might accuse him of something (855). Thais asks what he did that might merit the accusations, and he responds that he did something small (*paullum quidem*, 856). Pythias explodes, asking him if it is "something small" to rape (*virginem / vitiare civem*) a citizen, and a virgin at that (857-858). After Chaerea says that he thought Pamphila was a fellow slave (*conservam*, 859), Thais decides to drop the charade and reveal that she knows who he is and what he has done. She says:

*missa haec faciamus. non te dignum, Chaerea,*

*fecisti; nam si ego digna hac contumelia*

*sum maxume, at tu indignus qui faceres tamen.*

*neque edepol quid nunc consili capiam scio*

*de virgine istac; ita conturbasti mihi*

*rationes omnis, ut eam non possim suis,*

*ita ut aequom fuerat atque ut studui, tradere,*

*ut solidum parerem hoc mi beneficium, Chaerea.* (Ter. *Eun.* 864-871).

Let's stop this. Chaerea, what you did was unworthy of you. Even if I fully deserve such insulting treatment, it's still unbecoming of you to have acted like this. The fact is, I don't know what advice I can take about this girl now. You've turned all my plans so upside down that I can't hand her back to her family, as was right, and as I was keen to do in order to produce some lasting benefit to myself that way.

Thais' criticism of Chaerea echoes Chaerea's earlier statement (382-387) where he suggested that it is good and correct for a young man like himself to take advantage of sexual laborers as they take advantage of young men. Thais does not disagree with Chaerea, and instead of calling attention to the injury done to herself or to the girl, she focuses on the inappropriateness of Chaerea's actions for a young man of his station. In saying this, Thais is simultaneously affirming Chaerea's position that it is appropriate to take advantage of *meretrices* and arguing against his point that everyone will think that he has done something good (387). The issue then is not the action itself, but the status of the person doing the action. From the position Thais is in, she has no recourse against a young man of Chaerea's position, and she makes the best choice that she still has available.

Immediately following this exchange, Chaerea makes an excuse for his actions on account of his love for the girl (876-878) and Thais agrees to forgive him (*ignosco,* 879). She claims that she understands his feelings, and that is why she is inclined to forgive him (878-881). The two then agree that Chaerea will be able to marry Pamphila, though Thais' feelings in

making this agreement must be tempered somewhat by what she has made clear from 868-871, namely that she does not have any other options. As Chremes, Pamphila's brother approaches the house to identify his long-lost sister as a citizen, Chaerea and Thais have a short exchange about embarrassment:

> *perii hercle! obsecro,*
>
> *abeamus intro, Thais; nolo me in via*
>
> *cum haec veste videat.* (Ter. *Eun.* 905-908)
>
> Damn it! Please, Thais, let's go inside. I don't want [my brother] to see me in the street dressed like this.

In this brief conversation, while the brother of the woman whom he victimized is coming down the road, it is his dress that Chaerea is worried about, and Thais nevertheless leads him inside to secure his engagement.

Pythias is the most vocal supporter of Pamphila throughout the play. When she first describes the rape to the audience, she voices her desire to claw out the attacker's eyes if she finds him (645-646). When she and Thais confront Chaerea after the rape, she tells him that she can hardly keep herself from ripping his hair out and calls him a monster (859-860). Even after Thais has agreed to forgive the young man, Pythias continues to tell Chaerea how little she trusts him (883, 884, 901-902, 903-904). Once Thais and Chaerea have gone indoors, Pythias begins to plan to take revenge, not on Chaerea himself, but on Parmeno who brought Chaerea to them (910-912). When she sees Parmeno coming towards the house she gloats that she will be able to take her revenge soon (920-922). The form of this revenge is convincing Parmeno that Chaerea is about to receive a horrific, unspecified, punishment that is typically given to adulterers (957-958). Her investment in revenge pays dividends when Parmeno then convinces his master and

Chaerea's father that Chaerea is about to be punished (992-993), and the old man rushes inside (995-996). Pythias then reveals her plan to Parmeno, having greatly enjoyed the old man's confusion (1002-1005). For all her torments of Parmeno, it is hard to feel that Pythias has accomplished her goals here. From line 643 onward, she has one stated goal, to take revenge on the man who raped Pamphila. Faced with the reality that the rapist is not indeed her fellow slave, she changes targets and seeks to play a trick on Parmeno rather than clawing at the eyes or the hair of Chaerea, as she wanted to do previously. Ultimately her revenge is the petty infliction of discomfort on the only person she is qualified to abuse, a fellow slave. Her anger has no consequence on the one man she really wants to lash out against. She laughs at the old man's confusion when Parmeno gives him bad information, but that is the closest she gets to harming Chaerea, or anyone of Chaerea's status.

Before taking any action, making his plan with Parmeno, Chaerea suggested that those who discover what he is about to do would consider that he has done something good in taking advantage of a *meretrix* (387). In his discussion with Thais, he is proven correct. Thais forgives him on Pamphila's behalf, and the two end up engaged. Thais makes the only choice she has available, just a few short lines after she described a girl who was weeping and unable to speak. Chaerea gets everything he wanted, and declares himself the happiest man alive, in whom the gods have shown their power (1031-1033). Despite his deception, despite his violent rape, the only time he mentions feeling ashamed in the play, it is because of his dress.

**Part III: Terence, *Hecyra***

Contrasted with the clarity with which he discusses rape in *Eunuchus*, Terence is far less forthcoming about the rape at the center of *Hecyra*. The most shocking feature of this play, at least for an ancient audience, is the centering of suspense rather than dramatic irony.[49] Terence accomplishes this in *Hecyra* by hiding the identity of the rapist from characters and audience alike, revealing that Pamphilus is responsible only at the end of the play. In the course of the play, the events of the rape Philumena has endured are narratively repeated three times: first by Pamphilus, then by Myrrina, and finally by Bacchis. Each of these characters discusses the rape from a different point of view and brings personal motivations and concerns to their discussion. The result is a play that, like *Eunuchus*, is concerned with the effect of the rape on its victim, though far more subtle in its execution.[50]

The first description of the rape in *Hecyra* is contained in Pamphilus' monologue after he has left the house of Phidippus and Myrrina. At line 326, Pamphilus enters the house. Returning to the stage at line 353, he speaks briefly to Sostrata and Parmeno about Philumena's "illness," and then sends both of them away. At line 361, he narrates to the audience what transpired inside the house. He describes discovering his wife's pregnancy, and his own horror at this discovery caused him to exclaim, "what an intolerable outrage!" (*facinus indignum*, 376). As he tries to leave the house, he is stopped by his mother-in-law, Myrrina, who explains to him the way in which her daughter became pregnant:

*o mi Pamphile, abs te quam ob rem haec abierit causam vides,*

[49] cf. Goldberg (1986), pg. 159.
[50] Here I disagree with Knorr (2013), pg. 308, that "Roman audience were no more bothered about Philumena's rape than Pamphilus himself." Knorr's argument, citing Rosivach (1998), centers on the happy ending rewarding Pamphilus and suggests that this ending constitutes an implicit endorsement of Pamphilus' behavior. It is my contention that Pamphilus receives a happy ending because that is what is expected of comedy, while discomfort arises from using this architecture to support an unrepentant *adulescens*. cf. James (1998b); Penwill (2004).

*nam vitiumst oblatum virgini olim a nescioquo inprobo.*

*nunc huc confugit te atque alios partum ut celaret suom.* (Ter. *Hec*. 382-384)

My dear Pamphilus, now you see the reason that this girl fled from you, for a single crime was inflicted on her, still a virgin, by some unknown reprobate. Now she has fled here that she might conceal her labor from you and the others.

After begging Pamphilus not to reveal what has happened to Philumena, Pamphilus quotes Myrrina as ending her speech by saying:

*continuo exponetur. hic tibi nil est quicquam incommodi,*

*et illi miserae indigne factam iniuriam contexeris.* (Ter. *Hec.* 400-401)

[The baby] will be exposed immediately, which will cause you no inconvenience at all, and you will have then concealed the injury inflicted so unjustly upon that miserable girl.

Terence here substantially problematizes the description of events to the audience. Pamphilus is telling the audience what he has heard from Myrrina, but Myrrina can only have told him what she has learned from Philumena. In this recounting, Pamphilus presents the story as direct speech from Myrrina (*habere orationem mecum principio institit*, 381; *inquit*, 386) but the story still, ultimately comes from the mouth of Pamphilus.[51] The portion of his monologue which is marked as direct speech fills eighteen lines, and description of the rape itself occupies two, described with imprecision in both cases. In the first description, the assault is a wrong (*vitium oblatum*) perpetrated against the yet unmarried Philumena (*virgini*) by an unknown reprobate (*nescioquo inprobo*, 383).

[51] James (1998b) notably discusses this speech as Myrrina's description. I differ from her in thinking that this monologue from Pamphilus is worth discussing as separate from Myrrina's monologue to the audience, and it is my contention that the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates meaningful differences in the accounts that are worthy of exploration.

Pamphilus is the only character to use the word *inprobus* in this play, making it difficult to judge the force of the word. Terence uses the word on one other occasion at *Andria* 192 to describe an inclination toward mistresses that might lead men away from their wives. While this descriptor may be ambiguous in its connotation, the word *vitium* is far less so. The same noun is used by Parmeno to describe his propensity for gossip, his largest failing (*maxumum vitium*), in line 112. At line 541, Phidippus describes Pamphilus' having a mistress as something that is not a fault (*vitium*) for a young man. In *Hecyra* then, a *vitium* can be a sort of personal peccadillo, a regrettable tendency, or, as Pamphilus uses it, a violent assault. Finally, the verb Pamphilus uses to describe the rape, *obfero*, is relatively common in *Hecyra*, though this usage has one important caveat, it is a word used almost exclusively by Pamphilus. The perfect passive participle form is used one other time, when Pamphilus muses at line 281 that he doubts so many misfortunes have ever been inflicted (*oblata*) on another man. The present form does not appear in the play, but the perfect active form, *obtuli*, appears thrice: once in line 816 when Bacchis announces that she has brought (*obtuli*) such joy to Pamphilus, and twice during the very monologue in which Pamphilus describes the rape. Describing his entrance to the house of Myrrina at line 370 he says that chance had borne (*obtulerat*) his arrival disastrously. This word is then used again at 386, this time as a quote from Myrrina, in which fate has brought (*obtulit*) Pamphilus to them today. It is strange that Pamphilus describes this rape in what is framed as a direct quote from Myrrina using language that is restricted almost entirely to himself. These features of his speech are not unique, however, and many of the same peculiarities appear in his second description of the rape.

The second mention of the rape comes as an injury (*inuriam*, 401) instead of a *vitium* (383) that has been done (*factam*, 401) instead of inflicted (*oblatum*, 383). The pairing of the adverb *indigne* and the dative *miserae* help to clarify the force of *inuriam*, and the word *indigne*

merits special attention. Pamphilus exclaims "what an intolerable outrage!" (*o facinus indignum*, 376) upon learning of Philumena's pregnancy. The word appears once more in the play, as Pamphilus argues with Laches at line 477, saying that perhaps Philumena thinks that she would be unworthy (*indignam*) if she were to give way to Sostrata's way of living. As with *inprobus* (383), Pamphilus is the only character to use forms of *indignum*. This quirk of his language is subtle, a few words across two lines of text, and if this were the only description of the event that occurs in *Hecyra*, there would be no cause for alarm. Terence, however, has characters describe the events of the rape twice more. While Pamphilus presents his story as one that he heard from Myrrina, the next account comes from Myrrina herself, and discrepancies in the two versions of the story begin to raise questions about what exactly has happened with Pamphilus.

Myrrina comes onto the stage as Phidippus learns that Myrrina and Philumena have been concealing the pregnancy, and he is furious that Myrrina is plotting to deprive him of a grandchild. Phidippus eventually leaves in a huff to make arrangements for the child's care, and Myrrina speaks directly to the audience to explain her mental state. In the midst of this monologue, she says:

> *nam quom compressast gnata, forma in tenebris nosci non quitast,*
> *neque detractum <ei> tum quicquamst qui posset post nosci qui siet;*
> *ipse eripuit vi, in digito quem habuit, virgini abiens anulum.*
> *simul vereor Pamphilum ne orata nostra nequeat diutius*
> *celare, quom sciet alienum puerum tolli pro suo.* (Ter. *Hec*. 572-576)
>
> When our daughter was raped, she couldn't see what he looked like in the dark, and she didn't take anything from him that could have helped us to figure out who he is afterwards. He himself forcibly pulled off a ring that the girl had on her finger as he left

her. At the same time, I'm afraid Pamphilus may not be able to keep hidden what we've asked him to any longer, when he knows a stranger's baby is being brought up as his.

It would be reasonable to expect that this description of the rape would be very similar to that given by Pamphilus. Both accounts come directly from Myrrina, or at least that is how Pamphilus framed his telling. For Myrrina, the girl was raped (*gnata compressast*, 572), and the ring which she wore on her finger was taken by force (*eripuit vi*, 573). Myrrina's use of *comprimo* typifies *Hecyra*, in which all uses of the verb describe rape. It is first used here by Myrrina, and again in Bacchis' account. In the second half of Myrrina's description, the ring was ripped away by force. The introduction of force (*vis*) further emphasizes the gravity of the event. Though the ablative form of *vis* is not being used directly with the form of *comprimo*, the proximity of the terms is evocative of the common idiom.[52] Contrasted with Pamphilus' description, Myrrina uses a stronger, more specialized verb, and makes the girl herself the subject. When Pamphilus described things, he made the *iniuria* and the *vitium* the subjects, and the girl was an indirect dative recipient.

The remainder of her description is about the circumstances of the event and the inability to identify the rapist. This significantly complicates the plot, as the typical comic device is unavailable to the characters.[53] Philumena has been raped, impregnated, and left with no method of finding the man who attacked her. In addition to the events of that night, however, is the fear that Pamphilus will no longer be willing to keep his promise if he is forced to raise a baby that is not his own. Myrrina's concern is rather prescient, as Pamphilus had long ago resolved not to

[52] Packman (1993), pg. 53, note 13 discusses in detail the significance and usage of the phrase *comprimo vi*.
[53] cf. James (2013), pg. 187; Brown (2006), pg. 315, note on 574; Doniger (2019) offers extensive discussion of the origin of the trope of identification by ring, and examines its use in this play and beyond. This theft also echoes Pythias' fear of a theft in *Eunuchus* 661.

take Philumena back, and now that he might be forced to, he is an unknown quantity. Interestingly, this is the last time that Myrrina appears on stage. She does not appear again, but a conversation with Bacchis allows her to discover the rapist's identity.

Bacchis is summoned by a furious Laches near the end of the play to answer for her (supposed) continued involvement with Pamphilus following his marriage. On her assertion that she has not been with him since he was married, Laches asks her to go into the house and convince Myrrina and Philumena of this fact, believing correctly that this will solve his female trouble, though the problem is solved for reasons entirely different than what he imagined. Leaving the house and sending Parmeno to fetch Pamphilus, Bacchis speaks directly to the audience about what she has learned:

*hic adeo his rebus anulus fuit initium inveniendis.*
*nam memini abhinc mensis decem fere ad me nocte prima*
*confugere anhelantem domum sine comite, vini plenum,*
*cum hoc anulo: extimui ilico. "mi Pamphile," inquam "amabo,*
*quid exanimatu's obsecro? aut unde anulum istum nactu's?*
*dic mi." ille alias res agere se simulare. postquam id video,*
*nescioquid suspicarier mage coepi, instare ut dicat.*
*homo se fatetur vi in via nescioquam compressisse,*
*dicitque sese illi anulum, dum luctat, detraxisse.*
*eum haec cognovit Myrrina in digito modo me habentem.*
*rogat unde sit. narro omnia haec, inde est cognitio facta*
*Philumenam compressam esse ab eo et filium inde hunc natum*. (Ter. *Hec*. 821-832)

> Actually, it was this ring that was the starting point for these discoveries. For I remember ten months ago he came to me early in the night, out of breath, he hid in my house, without a companion, full of wine, with this ring. I asked him "My sweet Pamphilus, please, why are you so flustered? Where is this ring from? Tell me." He then acted like he was absorbed in other tasks. After I saw this, I began to suspect all the more that something was amiss, and I insisted that he speak. The man said he had raped some unknown girl in the road, and he said that he had pulled the ring off her finger while she struggled. Myrrina recognized the ring just now that I am wearing on my finger here. She asked where it was from, so I told her all of this. Then she figured out that Philumena was raped by him and thus this child is his son!

Bacchis tells the story of the night of the rape from her own perspective, going so far as to quote herself directly while narrating the actions of Pamphilus. In this account from Pamphilus then, we hear that he happened upon an unknown woman in the road, and raped (*comprimo*) her with force (*vi*). Additionally, he tells her that he had taken (*detraxisse*) the ring from her while he struggled (*luctat,* 829).[54] The verb *luctat* is interesting in that it most likely has Pamphilus as its subject, but the subject could also be the unnamed Philumena who was struggling against her attacker. In either case, this was a violent encounter in the night, and the characteristics of rape are here, *comprimo* and *vi*, as well as the stealing of the ring. Aside from all of this, Pamphilus,

[54] Goldberg (2013, note on 829) here suggests: "The ring, by this account, came off accidentally in the struggle; Myrrina had made its removal sound deliberate (*ipse eripuit vi … virginem* [sic] *abiens anulum*, 574). Pamphilus would of course be in a better position to know the truth, though Myrrina might understandably think the attacker a thief as well as a rapist." Brown (2006), pg. 318, concurs with Goldberg's reading, saying that the phrase *dum luctat* implies that the rings removal was a byproduct of Philumena's struggle rather than an intentional choice by Pamphilus. I do not think *dum luctat* is sufficient evidence to contradict the testimony of Myrrina's *eripuit vi* (574). I prefer James' (1998b) reading that the struggle is included in this passage to clarify to the audience that Philumena is a "good girl" (pg. 38), and that the verb *detraho* implies significant violence (pg. 41).

who is now the known rapist, has attacked a *nescioquam* in the street, contrasted with the *nescioquo* whom he described as the perpetrator the first time we heard the story of the rape.

Only one character present at the rape speaks in the play, and though he describes the rape, he is retelling events filtered through Philumena's descriptions to Myrrina, and in turn what Myrrina said to him. In the second case, Myrrina describes the events of the rape for herself, though she was not present and is ultimately just relaying what she has heard from Philumena. In the final monologue, Bacchis gives us the first primary account of the events of that night, but she is still not able to describe the events in the alleyway without relying on what someone else has told her. Each of these monologues brings us closer to the events in question, but we never hear the events described in a first-person account by either the perpetrator or the victim. In Pamphilus' description, the crimes are the subject, and the girl is a dative recipient. In Myrrina's telling, the girl is the passive subject of a main verb and the dative victim of a ring being ripped away. In Bacchis' telling, the girl is the direct object of a violent assault perpetrated by Pamphilus, and the ring is put in the same grammatical case as just another object to be manipulated by the rapist subject.

With all of this obfuscation in the framing of the rape, the similarities of Bacchis' and Myrrina's telling stand opposed to the relative indifference of Pamphilus' monologue. With such a radically different description, two distinct possibilities for the difference emerge: the first, Myrrina described the rape differently in her conversation with Pamphilus than in her monologue, and the second, Pamphilus is not quoting Myrrina directly, as he claims to be.

Regarding the first option, let us analyze Myrrina's motivations. Myrrina's goal throughout the play is to have Pamphilus keep the pregnancy a secret, and failing that, to keep the rape a secret. Her secondary motivation is that Pamphilus should take Philumena back, but

she acknowledges that Pamphilus will know best on that particular issue (391). Perhaps the best point of comparison for this option is that the phrase *vitium oblatum* is also used in line 296 of Terence's *Adelphoe*. In this instance, the phrase is used to describe a rape that has been perpetrated against the daughter of a woman named Sostrata by her servant Canthara. Canthara uses the phrase to suggest that things are going well in the case of this rape, since the rapist is from a good family, and thus will provide security for Sostrata's daughter. Therefore, in the only other example of the phrase *vitium oblatum* in Terence, it refers to a rape, and is used by a person adjacent to the mother of the victim. However, a few key differences separate the usage in *Adelphoe* from that in *Hecyra*. In *Adelphoe*, the rapist is known to the parties, and a marriage with the rapist is likely to be advantageous for Sostrata's daughter. Canthara is trying to reassure a distressed Sostrata at this point in the play and uses a circumlocution for the rape rather than a more forceful description like a form of *comprimo*, thereby minimizing the assault to focus on the potential of an advantageous marriage. The usage in *Hecyra*, then, is distinctly different in that the rape is an event threatening to destroy the future of the young woman. The unknown rapist has the potential to ruin Philumena's marriage to Pamphilus, and it is essential to Myrrina that the rape be kept a secret. If Myrrina used the phrase *vitium oblatum* in her conversation with Pamphilus, it would need to be the phrase she felt is most likely to win Pamphilus to her side.

At the end of his monologue, during which he explicitly states Myrrina's motivations, Pamphilus says that he agreed to keep the rape a secret. Regarding taking Philumena back, however, he has already come to a decision:

> *nam de redducenda, id vero ne utiquam honestum esse arbitror*
> *nec faciam, etsi amor me graviter consuetudoque ei(u)s tenet.*
> *lacrumo quae posthac futurast vita quom in mentem venit*

> *solitudoque. o fortuna, ut numquam perpetuo's data!*
> *sed iam prior amor me ad hanc rem exercitatum reddidit,*
> *quem ego tum consilio missum feci. idem [nunc] huc operam dabo.* (Ter. *Hec*. 403-408)
> But about taking her back, I don't think that's at all decent, and I won't do it. Even if love of her and our relationship weighs on me heavily. I weep when my life hereafter and my future solitude come into my mind. O fortune, you're never given forever! But really, my prior love has prepared me for this hardship, and I have already banished that love far from my mind. Now I'll give this one the same treatment.

His profession of love following his decision is intentionally unsettling. Pamphilus has just learned what the wife he claims to love has been through, and furthermore he bemoans his coming life of solitude, despite the easy and obvious choice to take Philumena back. Pamphilus spends much of the remainder of the play working to ensure that he will not return to married life with Philumena, and the love which he claims to feel seems to have little impact on his priorities. To Pamphilus it is far more important that the secret is kept and that he not feel shame personally. Philumena's circumstance, though unfortunate, seems to be a background consideration, deserving only a few passing mentions. If it was Myrrina's decision, then, to deliberately downplay the rape in her telling of the story to Pamphilus, she failed tremendously, and perhaps a more harrowing description of the rape could have garnered more sympathy from Pamphilus.

The second possibility then is that Myrrina did not in fact use the phrase *vitium oblatum*, and Pamphilus is misquoting her in his monologue. The primary obstacle to this interpretation is related to form, namely that in a monologue Pamphilus should have no reason to lie to the audience. It is certainly true that Pamphilus has no reason to lie if he is alone on stage, but

Pamphilus is also the character most interested in metatheatrical expression.[55] A tendency towards breaking the fourth wall would hardly be sufficient evidence on its own, but coupled with the irregularities of his vocabulary, this conclusion becomes more plausible. His descriptions of the rape, in addition to being less forceful, use forms of the words *indignum*, *inprobus*, and *obfero*. The first and second are unique to Pamphilus in the play, while the last is used only by Pamphilus, with the exception of one usage by Bacchis, Pamphilus' closest confidant and ally. While Pamphilus uses a significant amount of vocabulary unique to himself in the play, the two nouns he uses for rape are not unique among the plays discussed in this chapter. The use and order of *vitium* and *iniuria* in *Hecyra* 383 and 401 are used in the same order by Lyconides in *Aulularia* when he offers an apology to Euclio, calling his rape a *vitium* in 745 and an *iniuria* in 794. Pamphilus uses the language of apology when describing the rape, language that minimizes the severity of the event, the very same language that Lyconides used to describe his own actions.

If it is indeed the case that Pamphilus is misquoting Myrrina, his reasoning requires a bit more exploration. Throughout the play, Pamphilus attempts to end his marriage with Philumena, making various arguments, including that of the unknown child, to support this goal.[56] One possible explanation, then, is that the misquotation is a subconscious reflex. Upon finding Philumena giving birth, when Myrrina told him the story of the rape, he unconsciously recognized the eerie similarities with the rape he committed himself nine months prior. In order to separate from Philumena, however, it is necessary that he not be the rapist, and the child not be his. Therefore, he unknowingly changes the story he hears from Myrrina, retelling it in his

[55] cf. Knorr (2008).
[56] The various arguments Pamphilus uses in pursuit of a divorce, and the uselessness of his claims to love Philumena, are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

own vocabulary, eliding details which might cause him to connect the rape done by the *nescioquis inprobus* to the rape he himself committed. The second explanation, however, more in line with Pamphilus' untrustworthy nature, is that he is being intentionally deceitful. In this model, he chooses to misquote Myrrina because it is expedient for achieving his divorce. If Myrrina told Pamphilus what she later tells the audience, that the attacker cannot be identified, Pamphilus has no reason for ever admitting his own culpability. Thus, he removes identifiable details from the story of the rape, and changes Myrrina's story into something far less disturbing, attempting to absolve himself of guilt in the audience's eyes.[57]

This reading runs directly contrary to the analysis of Rosivach (1998). In discussing Pamphilus description of the rape he says: "There is, of course, a good deal of irony here, particularly in the fact that Pamphilus felt honor-bound to divorce his young wife Philumena because she had been raped and bore a child even though she was herself the innocent victim of the attack, and even though Pamphilus himself had similarly attacked an unknown woman not that long before. The irony is, however, unconscious, and we should not suppose that Terence was aware of it, much less that he wished to call it to his audience's attention."[58] The suggestion that the author was unaware of an obvious irony in the center of his play is merely conjecture and seems to contradict the care which Terence demonstrates in writing dialogue for his characters. His retelling of the rape also entirely excludes Myrrina, who provides key evidence against his conclusions throughout the play. He suggests that "no one is the least bit concerned that his wife will spend the rest of her life with the man who first raped her and then was prepared to disown

[57] Penwill (2004) and James (1998b) offer the most substantial attacks on Pamphilus' behavior in this play. This chapter agrees with their conclusions that Pamphilus is portrayed as a disreputable figure.
[58] Rosivach (1998), pg. 28.

her for being raped."[59] He is not wrong in suggesting that Bacchis is unconcerned with this reality, considering that she begins her monologue by exclaiming "how much joy I have brought to Pamphilus today with my arrival!" (817). Aside from Pamphilus himself, Bacchis is the only character to directly respond to Pamphilus' identification as a rapist in the play. Myrrina does not appear on stage to discuss this revelation, and it is true that no one voices their concerns for Philumena's future with her rapist. However, summarily concluding that this represents a lack of care on the part of Terence ignores the crucial detail of Pamphilus' deception of other characters. He states clearly from 865-868 that no one who does not already know about his identity as the rapist needs to find out. Absent from the ending of this play are the apology Lyconides offers in *Aulularia,* and the forgiveness Thais offers in *Eunuchus*. While it is true that Pamphilus does not receive criticism on stage, this is the result of his deliberate deceptions, not a lack of concern on the part of the other characters and the author.

**Part IV: Conclusions**

All four of the plays in this chapter discuss rape substantially, but one tendency of these comedies repeatedly presents itself, the victims of the rape never offer their perspective on what has happened to them. *Cistellaria* bears the distinction of being the only play discussed in this chapter which has the victim of the rape, Phanostrata, appear on stage. This fact is of minimal use, however, as Phanostrata does not discuss her experience of the rape. Her appearance then is in keeping with what is seen in the other plays where the victim does not speak for herself about

[59] *Ibid*.

her experience of the assault, and although Plautus puts the character on stage, her perspective on the rape is less important in the play than that of Pamphila and Philumena in *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra* respectively. Terence is careful to describe what has happened to both Philumena and Pamphila, and *Eunuchus* especially stands apart from the other examples in that it focuses on the immediate consequences of the rape, since pregnancy is not the most relevant effect on the girl immediately following the rape. We instead hear about consequences in the moment. The descriptions of Pamphila in the aftermath of the assault are the only ones of their kind in Roman Comedy.[60]

Terence takes the additional step of removing himself from the narration of the play. Everything the audience learns comes from the mouths of characters. It is the job of the audience member to decide what to think about the rape. In Plautus, by contrast, the rape is described in both instances by a divinity. By using a divine narrator, Plautus avoids ambiguity and allows the plot to proceed with rape simply being one factor among many that drives the story forward. The ambiguity in Terence then seems to encourage a deeper consideration of events, and a more careful analysis of information that is presented. Each of these plays ends with the rapist married to his victim, but only in Terence is the audience asked to consider if this ending can really be considered "happy".

In *Hecyra*, Terence carefully rations his words to demonstrate that Pamphilus is untrustworthy. He also gives special attention to the plight of Philumena, describing her experience on the dark road, telling the audience twice about the insult added to her injury when the ring was stolen. Even more explicitly in *Eunuchus*, Pythias comes out vocally in support of

[60] Packman (1993), 47.

Pamphila, describing the torn clothes and tears, as well as the traumatized silence. Her description is mirrored by Thais, and her fury is vented on Parmeno, rather than the young man of high status, Chaerea. Both rapists, Pamphilus and Chaerea, are reserved in their descriptions of events. They prefer to use nouns and perfect passive verbs to describe what they have done to dative victims, while the women around them prefer to use the active voice.

In discussing *Hecyra*, Rosivach (1998) concludes: "By rewarding Pamphilus with its happy ending the play endorses his behavior. Whatever one may think of the rapes in the other plays we have examined, at least from the perspective of the plays themselves some good comes from them in that they serve to bring about otherwise impossible marriages between rich and poor. In the *Hecyra* the rape serves no similarly 'socially useful' function. It is an amoral plot device that temporarily jeopardizes and then restores a marriage that already existed. Pamphilus' insensitivity is also that of the play."[61] This conclusion is based on the idea that in the plays of Menander and Plautus, the rapists apologize, and whatever the response to that apology, it earns them a happy ending. *Hecyra* is troubling then because Pamphilus never apologizes, and in fact hides what he learns from his parents, leaving Myrrina with the knowledge that her daughter is trapped in a marriage with a rapist. Pamphilus' assertion that the play does not need to work out like a comedy (866) is not simply a metatheatrical joke, it is a thesis statement. There is no need for the play to work out like a comedy, because it is working out exactly like a comedy. The victim is married to her rapist, and the rapist faces no consequences for his actions. That is how comedy is supposed to work, but it is only in Terence that the audience is encouraged to ask if that comic ending is truly something that should be desired.

[61] Rosivach (1998), pg. 30.

This point is made even more explicitly in *Eunuchus*, with the rape taking place during the course of the show, with no wine or darkness to blame for the rapist's actions. Chaerea plans the rape out in the open, he accomplishes it without consequence, and in the end, he is able to marry the girl whom he attacked. Pythias, who rails against him, finds herself powerless against the limitations of social status and the laws of comedy. Comedy dictates that Chaerea gets to marry the girl, and so that is what he shall do. Like in *Hecyra*, however, the audience is not encouraged to support him, despite his explicit instruction. Chaerea outright says that if his actions are discovered, everyone would approve of what he has done (Ter. *Eun.* 387). There is nothing in this quote itself to suggest breaking the fourth wall, but Terence is not a stranger to metatheatre,[62] and a metatheatrical reading significantly deepens this quotation. Consider how things end for Chaerea, and how the public, the *audience* is "supposed" to understand the events of the play. What Chaerea does is hardly more shocking than anything that happens in Terence's comic predecessors, it is only the change in perspective that makes the events of the rape so unsettling. Terence is practically daring the audience to reconsider their ideas of what makes a comedy, and in both *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra*, what is typically meant to inspire mirth is instead used to unsettle and challenge.

In order for rape in *Hecyra* to truly be an "amoral plot device,"[63] it would need an uncomplicated presentation. Although Terence follows convention in constructing his stories, he changes the perspectives from which events are told, and thereby radically alters their meaning. Victims in Terence do not speak about their experience because that is what the laws of comedy dictate, but still their point of view is heard from the mouths of others. Terence perfectly imitates

[62] cf. Knorr (2008).
[63] Rosivach (1998), pg. 30.

the form of a comedy, using its conventions to create something altogether more sinister.[64] If the audience was truly not supposed to care about the rape in *Hecyra*, Terence could follow Plautus' lead by having a divine figure indicate what we are supposed to think. When the "happy" ending is reached, Terence leaves the audience with as many questions as answers, and an audience looking for a divine explanation must make do with one of the most cynical lines in all of literature. There is one character in *Hecyra* who is all too happy to tell the audience what to think, to fill the role of divine narrator. At the play's end, when Pamphilus has learned that he is the rapist, his response echoes the divine aspirations of Chaerea in *Eunuchus* 591 and 1033, he expresses his joy, and declares his role in shaping the story, exclaiming: *deus sum*! (Ter. *Hec*. 843).

[64] Goldberg (1986), pg. 157-169, discusses several intentional changes to comic tradition employed by Terence. Penwill (2004) characterizes Pamphilus as "the comic love-hero stripped bare", and James (1998b) argues that these changes demonstrate that *Hecyra* is meant to disturb.

## Chapter 3

## Warring and Whoring:

## Military Language and *Meritrices* in *Hecyra*

The beginning of *Hecyra* is perhaps the most fraught portion of the play. The play begins with not one, but two, prologues, and this pair of prologues is followed by a pair of protatic conversations, first between Syra and Philotis, then between Philotis and Parmeno. Taken together, this introductory material occupies nearly a quarter of the play's 880 lines,[65] and much of that text is spent away from the specifics of the narrative. The prologues speak about the performance history of *Hecyra*, and the conversation between Syra and Philotis introduces only briefly the relationship of Pamphilus and Bacchis. It is not until Parmeno enters and Syra fades to the background that the conflict of the play is introduced. This chapter investigates the expository material in *Hecyra*, looking first at the prologues, and then at the conversation between Syra and Philotis. From these investigations, this section argues for two central goals of the introduction: first, that the prologues offer an instruction about how the play should be read, and second, that Syra tells the audience how the play should be understood. Through their discussion of repeated failed performance, and their existence as a pair, both of which call attention to the construction of the play, the prologues suggest that *Hecyra* is a play that cannot be seen and read only once. It must be re-read and re-seen to truly be understood.[66] My

[65] Goldberg (1986), pg. 165 calls this a "[problem] of pace and perspective" that is "noticeable at once."
[66] Sharrock (2009) provides a concise overview of the Republican Roman practice of *insatauratio* on pg. 232-233, reviewing both ancient and modern sources for occasions on which Roman Comedies would be performed repeatedly, either as a revival, or on the very occasion of the premiere.

suggestion is tested by looking at the conversation between Syra and Philotis. In this brief exchange, Syra uses violent, militaristic language to advise her younger companion about the gendered categories of *amatores* and *meretrices*. She emphasizes the dangers of trusting *amatores* like Pamphilus, but Philotis is not the only one who should heed her warnings. Throughout the play, the truth of Syra's statements is proved repeatedly by Pamphilus. It is by following the suggestions of the prologues, returning to the start of the play and re-reading her speech, that the truth of her statements becomes evident. Her advice is not just about sexual labor, it is an instruction for how to interpret the play, if only the audience will listen. It is this reconsideration of Pamphilus with a critical eye, having been informed by Syra's violent speech, that finally explains his character and the nature of the play: a deconstruction of the comic love hero in a play that is determined to show the inner workings of comedy.

The prologues of *Hecyra* are a genuinely strange artifact in comedy. Their discussion of the failures to perform *Hecyra* on not one, but two occasions, has garnered its fair share of scholarly attention.[67] While the stories of gladiators, tightrope walkers, and interfering rivals are certainly interesting, their narrative function is far more important. Gowers (2004) agreed with the assertion that the Terentian prologues are "arcane literary polemics,"[68] but beyond this function, they manage to introduce core thematic elements of the plays. Reading across the Terentian corpus, she suggests that Terence uses his prologues to introduce key features of his plays' title characters. In the case of *Hecyra*, she connects the prologues with the character of Sostrata, arguing that Terence has chosen to inform his audience about a wrongly maligned character by inventing a story about a poorly received play. Sostrata endures the ire of her

[67] cf. Parker (1996); Gilula (1981); Sandbach (1982).
[68] Here she is quoting Goldberg (1986), pg. 31.

husband, Laches, throughout the play, and is not the hateful mother-in-law that everyone expects her to be. What this explanation fails to account for, however, is the pairing of the prologues. To account for the inclusion of both prologues, Sharrock (2009) argues that "Terence is using the story of re-performance as a way into the understanding of his play."[69] The first prologue is incredibly short, a mere eight lines from an author whose shortest prologues occupy at least twenty-five. Despite this, it is complete, it begins with the name of the play (1) and ends by asking the audience to give it a fair hearing (8). The second prologue is written without any mention of this first prologue. The speaker introduces himself at its start (9) and ends the speech by asking the audience for a fair hearing (55-58). The two prologues also describe the same event, the failure of *Hecyra*'s first performance. In this description, however, one detail stands out. The first prologue describes a tightrope-walker (*funambulo*, 4) who distracted the audience, in the second prologue, the distractor was talk of a boxing match (*pugilum gloria*, 33) in addition to the expectation of the tightrope walker (*funambuli … exspectatio*, 34) which drew the audience away from this performance. From line 4 to line 34, the story changes with the addition of boxers. In this pair of prologues, the action has already stopped and started twice, and in this recapitulation, there is already noticeable change. The prologues are a jarring pair, each complete in its own right, telling the same story, about the same story, and doing it differently. These prologues which circle back upon themselves, starting again from the beginning to tell the story of a play that was repeatedly started over. It is repetition of repetition, and the first prologue becomes ironic in light of the second. The first prologue purports to start a play which has failed once before, hoping for its success on a second showing, and the second prologue tells us how

[69] pg. 247.

that second showing failed, hoping to find success in the third. In the second prologue, the re-starting of the exposition has given the audience information that radically alters their perception of the prologue that was just spoken. The second prologue forces the audience to reconsider the first, and though the content of that prologue does not change, its importance absolutely does. This insistence of the play on the necessity of restarting and reconsidering is compounded by the play's third prologue, the prologue which was not passed down with the *Hecyra*.

The implication of a third prologue hangs heavy over the two present in *Hecyra*. All of Terence's plays begin with a prologue, but the first prologue to *Hecyra* is a prologue that talks about a failed first performance and is unusually short. The second prologue handles a first and second failed performance, while being a similar length to Terence's other prologues. Donatus supposed that this first failed performance was performed without a prologue, but this would not be in keeping with Terentian conventions.[70] This prologue may be absent, but that absence is felt. The pair of prologues which accompany the play are in conversation with one another, the second asking the audience to reconsider the text of the first, and the pair asking the audience to think of the missing original. The prologues then are not only concerned with simply the text that is present, but also the text which is absent, the text that is left unsaid. Whatever meaning this "prologue 0" may have imparted, it is gone, supplanted by a pair of prologues that exist in a world that this original prologue is incapable of presenting, a world in which *Hecyra* has not already been tried. As the prologues are presented, the reader of *Hecyra* is perpetually at a third showing, a showing that opens by presenting itself as a second, and then immediately says that the second has already failed and it must be attempted again. *Hecyra* is never a new play, it

[70] Sharrock (2009), pg. 245.

repeats itself endlessly in the hopes that we might hear it out, and that in doing so, we might understand it.

Immediately following the prologues, the play's protatic characters, Philotis and Syra, emerge, giving the audience the first taste of the play's conflict:

**PH.** *Per pol quam paucos reperias meretricibus*
*fidelis evenire amatores, Syra.*
*vel hic Pamphilus iurabat quotiens Bacchidi,*
*quam sancte, uti quivis facile posset credere,*
*numquam illa viva ducturum uxorem domum:*
*em duxit!* **SY.** *ergo propterea te sedulo*
*et moneo et hortor ne quoiusquam misereat,*
*quin spolies mutiles laceres quemque nacta sis.*
**PH.** *utine eximium neminem habeam?* **SY.** *neminem:*
*nam nemo illorum quisquam, scito, ad te venit*
*quin ita paret sese abs te ut blanditiis suis*
*quam minimo pretio suam voluptatem expleat.*
*hiscin tu amabo non contra insidiabere?*
**PH.** *tamen pol eandem iniuriumst esse omnibus.*
**SY.** *iniurium autem est ulcisci advorsarios,*
*aut qua via te captent eadem ipsos capi?*
*eheu me miseram, quor non aut istaec mihi*
*aetas et formast aut tibi haec sententia?* (Ter. *Hec*. 58-75)

**Philotis:** For god's sake Syra, how few lovers can you find that are faithful to us whores. I mean, look at Pamphilus here, how often he swore to Bacchis, and how solemnly, anyone might have believed him! He swore he'd never marry while she was alive, but, well, he's married!

**Syra:** That's why I'm always warning and advising you not to pity a single one of 'em! When you get ahold of one, strip 'im, maim 'im, rip 'im to shreds!

**Ph:** Can't I have an exception for anyone?

**Sy:** Not even one! After all, I'm sure there's not a single one of 'em who comes to you and isn't fully prepared to charm you into satisfying his desires as cheaply as possible. Sweetheart, are you not gonna plot against them in return?

**Ph:** Chrissakes! Surely it's wrong to treat them all the same?

**Sy:** Is it wrong to punish your enemies? Is it wrong to catch them the same way they are trying to catch you? Oh hell, what a pain. Why don't I have your age and your looks, or why don't you at least have my brains…

Although this conversation introduces the play's essential conflict, with Philotis mentioning what has happened with Pamphilus, Syra immediately subordinates the specifics to a general discussion. When Parmeno enters at line 76, Syra speaks only a half-line line of greeting (83), before going silent for the rest of the scene and then disappearing for the rest of the play. Syra leaves the stage without ever saying another character's name, offering only her general advice about how to treat lovers. She is relegated to a protatic role and does not even participate in the expository discussion with Parmeno and her counterpart. Why then, should she be included at all? The simplest answer to this question is precedent, either set by the Greek original or by Terence's Roman predecessors. On the first point, what evidence can be found in Donatus for the

*Hekyra* of Apollodorus indicates that Syra is in the original play, but that Philotis is a Terentian invention, conversing with Parmeno as Syra did in Apollodorus' play.[71] While the conversation between Philotis and Syra is necessarily a Terentian invention, it draws from Plautine models. The stock scene of an older woman offering advice to a younger *meretrix* is seen at least thrice in the works of Plautus, if not elsewhere in Terence.[72] Aside from the general framework, however, this conversation has very little in common with its Plautine analogues. In *Asinaria*, *Cistellaria*, and *Mostellaria*, the *meretrices* discuss marriage, and in all cases the younger of the pair fills the role Bacchis fills in *Hecyra*, namely being the lover of the play's *adulescens*. In these Plautine examples, then, the scene is used to expand on the character and background of the young woman who will become a bride. If Philotis were Bacchis, or even Philumena, the conversation could be rightly construed as a simple adaptation of a Plautine model, but as it exists, convention alone is an insufficient justification.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this conversation between Philotis and Syra is the force and frequency with which Syra employs verbs, the most crucial of which form the tricolon *spolies, mutiles, laceres* (65). This portion of her speech has often been identified as military language, which is not considered unusual in discussion of love.[73] While "military language," broadly defined, is typical of love, the language used by Syra is still highly unusual. In her analysis of this metaphor in Terence, Fantham (1972) divides these metaphorical usages into three primary categories: general references to warfare, references suggestive of single combat,

[71] cf. Sewart (1974).
[72] cf. Goldberg (2013), pg. 96; Gilula 1980, pg. 154: both cite *Asinaria* 504-544, *Cistellaria* 78-81, and *Mostellaria* 184-247. Norwood (1923), pg. 92 calls this the "familiar 'bird-of-prey' theory which all sensible *meretrices* must follow."
[73] cf. Goldberg (2013), pg. 98; Fantham (1972), pg. 26-33. Fraenkel (2007), pg. 159-172, identifies military language in comedy with the schemes of clever slaves, and as an invention of Plautus.

and metaphors specifically dealing with the conflicts of love.[74] Fantham places these verbs, as used by Syra, in the third category, along with an introductory scene in *Eunuchus*. The paired scene in *Eunuchus* finds Parmeno and Phaedria discussing the same conflict as Syra from "the other side." Phaedria fears that a woman will mock a man when she discovers that he has been conquered (*eludet ubi te victum senserit,* 55), and Parmeno suggests that he should ransom himself for the lowest price he can (*quid agas, nisi ut te redimas captum quam quesas / minimo*, 74-75). Parmeno in *Eunuchus* and Syra in *Hecyra* both use the construction *quam minimo*, albeit for Syra it is a method by which men exploit *meretrices,* and for Parmeno, it is the act of ransoming oneself from the captivity of love of those same *meretrices*. While these scenes do bear similarities, Syra's language is still unique, even in the metaphors of militaristic love.

Among the three verbs Syra uses in line 65, *spolio*, *mutilo*, and *lacero*, two have comic counterparts.[75] Plautus uses *lacerentur* in *Bacchides* line 779 to describe physical punishment merited by an enslaved person, and Terence himself uses the verb of physical violence in *Adelphoe* 315. In the usage most similar to Syra's, Plautus uses the form *lacerari* in *Mercator* line 48 to describe the destruction of a household's finances by a *meretrix*. *Spolio* has a similar comic lineage to *lacero,* used in *Pseudolus* line 583 in which Pseudolus himself brags about how easily he can overcome his enemies. Standing apart from these words, then, is *mutilo*, which appears nowhere else in comedy. The verb is uncommon, and distinctly uncomedic.[76] The sole other use of this verb in poetry is in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* line 559, the participle form,

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[74] pg. 26-33.
[75] Information in this section complied from the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.
[76] Information concerning this verb was obtained from *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Fantham (1972) pg. 32, and Fraenkel (2007), pg. 160 identify military language in comedy, of love and clever slaves respectively, as a distinctly Roman innovation. It is worth noting that both verbs provided in *TLL* as Greek analogues for *mutilo*, ἀκρωτηριάζω, and κολοβόω are similarly applied only to military descriptions and have no example usages in comic texts (cf. *Cambridge Greek Lexicon*).

*mutilatae*, being employed to compare the severed tongue of Philomela, which is flopping about on the ground, to the tail of a mutilated snake. This verb then is shockingly violent and serves to characterize the verbs on either side of it as also strongly violent. Although *mutilo* is the most explicitly violent verb that Syra employs, every verb she uses has a possible military connotation.[77] This scene then is unlike anything found in Plautus, or indeed elsewhere in Terence.

Having demonstrated that this discussion between Philotis and Syra is, first of all, an addition to the Greek original, and second, not a simple copy of a Plautine model, the task of this paper now becomes understanding why exactly this scene was included. Syra's advice has been called the "familiar 'bird of prey' theory,"[78] but I take issue with the adjective "familiar." It is true that the scene resembles scenes in Plautine comedies, and the metaphor of love as war may be recognizable, but this particular iteration of speech is set apart from its peers. Terence has taken a scene that seems familiar but asks the audience to reconsider that familiarity. By coarsening the vocabulary Syra uses and placing her speech at the start of the play, immediately following the prologues that turn the spotlight to the play's artificiality, Terence is creating a scene that looks like comedy, but accomplishes something entirely different. The subversions of convention here follow from the prologues in asking the audience to look deeper, to move past the comedic shell and to reconsider what they see in the play. A process in which the audience will be helped by following Syra's advice.

The first significant allusion to Syra's speech comes immediately following the exposition. Laches, in berating his wife Sostrata, says that all women are determined to be

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[77] cf. *OLD*: *hortor*; *misero*; *moneo*; *spolio*; *mutilo*; *lacero*; *nanciscor*; *pareo*; *expleo*; *insidior*; *ulciscor*; *capto*; *capio*.
[78] *Pace* Norwood (1923), pg. 92, citing no other examples of this type of speech.

opposed (*advorsas*, 202) to their husbands, linking this tendency to a school of wickedness in which all women are trained (203-204). This line recalls the statement by Syra in line 72 when she asked Philotis if it was wrong to take revenge on enemies (*advorsarios*), providing her with the exact sort of training which Laches is describing in his rant against Sostrata. The irony that becomes apparent in Sostrata's monologue, however, is that she is not accustomed to being adversarial to her husband. She has nothing bad to say about her husband, and she even agrees with his conceit, blaming a small contingent of women who make the rest look bad (274-275). At the end of the play, what does her credulity earn her? A life in the country, apart from her friends and comforts (593-600) with a husband who is verbally abusive. What is more, Sostrata chose this fate for herself. In her willingness to trust in the goodness of her husband and her son, she ends the play by going into a self-imposed exile. Similarly, Myrrina's struggles go unresolved at the end of the play. Phiddipus was willing to place the blame on her for hiding the pregnancy, attributing her actions to some hatred she must feel towards Pamphilus. After describing what has happened to Philumena, Myrrina never again returns to the stage, her last contribution given through Bacchis when she identifies Pamphilus as the rapist. Throughout the play, she has trusted Pamphilus to keep the secret of the rape, and when he decides not to disclose his culpability at the end of the play, her husband still blames her for causing all of the trouble in the first place. The end of the play leaves these characters in the lurch, largely because the one character who can free them from the suspicions of their husbands is the one man whom the play is most determined to make untrustworthy.

Syra's speech is generalizing, a generalization enabled by its responding to the character of Pamphilus. The young man who is introduced as swearing that he would love Bacchis as long as she lived (60-62), takes a wife in the very next line (63). It is in response to this introduction

that Syra tells Philotis that no man is worth her pity (*misereat*, 64), a pity that Pamphilus asks for repeatedly. Parmeno relates that he calls himself *miser* at line 133, then Pamphilus calls himself the same at 285, 293, 296, 300, 373, 379, 385, 701, 702. The stem *miser* appears twenty-nine times in *Hecyra*, nine of which find Pamphilus referring to himself as such.[79] There are three characters in the play who refer to themselves in this way, Pamphilus, nine times, Sostrata, four times, Myrrina, four times, and Syra, once. Throughout the play, it is Pamphilus who begs for our pity, the very Pamphilus whom Syra has suggested we should pity least of all.

Pamphilus is a vexing character, receiving both harsh criticism and concern for his suffering in modern scholarship.[80] The vicissitudes of Pamphilus are numerous throughout the play. Although the *adulescens* himself does not arrive on stage until line 281, his character has already been discussed at length, albeit with plenty of conflicting information. The first the audience hears of Pamphilus is that he is someone who betrayed Bacchis (60-63), though the audience then learns from Parmeno that Pamphilus only married at the insistence of Laches, though he loved Bacchis as much as before (114-123). The audience then hears from Parmeno that Pamphilus did not touch his wife on the first two nights of their marriage (135-137), a fact that Philotis finds hard to believe, saying it's unlikely a drunk young man could keep his hands off the girl sharing his bed (138-140). Parmeno elaborates that it was part of Pamphilus' plan to give the girl back to her father, and that it wouldn't be *honestum* (151) for Philumena to stay with him. At this Philotis says that Parmeno is presenting a Pamphilus who is good and decent (*pium ac pudicum ingenium*, 152). Parmeno then says that Pamphilus was still going to Bacchis daily, but she rejected him on account of his marriage, becoming more spiteful and intractable

[79] Search conducted through Carey, The Latin Library.
[80] For criticism of Pamphilus, cf. James (1998) and Penwill (2004); For audience concern cf. Knorr (2013) and his endorsement of Schadewalt's (1931) "die Nöte des Pamphilus" (the sufferings of Pamphilus) theory.

towards him (*maligna multo et procax magis*, 159). Parmeno claims that it was Bacchis then who truly betrayed Pamphilus, and that he came to love Philumena as a result of his former lover's rejection (160-170). Parmeno's story then turns to the "quarrel" between Philumena and Sostrata, but in the course of his interaction with Philotis, Pamphilus seems to have been vindicated. He did get married, but only against his wishes (141-142), and he tried to end his marriage honorably (150-151). The Pamphilus whom Parmeno presents would seem to be entirely worthy of the audience's pity, tossed about as he is by his circumstances, provided, of course, the audience can overlook the injuries (*iniurias*) and abuse (*contumelias*) Pamphilus inflicted on his wife (165-166).

If the audience follows along with the logic of the play, Pamphilus seems to be a character who is, indeed, pitiable. When Pamphilus arrives on stage himself, this characterization seems to suffer a small blow, as Pamphilus says that he never dared to refuse the woman his father chose for him (295), contradicting Parmeno's statements about Pamphilus' attempts to end the marriage (148-156). Regarding the supposed quarrel of Philumena and Sostrata, Pamphilus also states that if his mother is at fault, *pietas* demands that he side with her, even if he is indebted (*obnoxius*) to his wife for the way she bore his mistreatment (301-303). At this point Parmeno and Pamphilus hear Philumena screaming in pain, and Pamphilus goes to investigate her "illness." Pamphilus reveals what he discovered inside the house in his lengthy monologue, explaining to the audience both the pregnancy and the rape that caused it. His response to this information is to say that it would not be *honestum* for him to take Philumena back (402), the same word Parmeno quoted him as using in line 151. In both instances, Pamphilus used the *honestum* to describe the inappropriateness of continued marriage to Philumena, because of his love of Bacchis at 151 and because Philumena was raped at 402. This echoing of *honestum* is

similar to an echoing of *pietas* in 447. The *pietas* that demanded taking his mother's side in the supposed quarrel at 301 is now what he must practice (*pietatem colam*), even though he knows there is no quarrel and even if it means breaking the promise he just made to Myrrina (444-449). Immediately after this, Pamphilus speaks with Laches and Phidippus, saying again that *pietas* causes him to take the side of his mother over that of Philumena (481), and when that does not convince the *senes*, he claims it is *necessitas* that is dragging him away from his wife (492). When Phidippus and Laches are still unconvinced, telling Pamphilus that he can still take his wife back (493-495), Pamphilus runs away (496). The picture of Pamphilus that has emerged, then, is of a young man who recycles his arguments regardless of the circumstances, always pursuing the same end. It was originally not *honestum* for him to stay married to Philumena since he was in love with Bacchis, but now that the love of Bacchis has ended (297), it is still not *honestum* because of the rape Philumena has endured. Before he learned why Philumena fled, *pietas* demanded that he take his mother's side in the quarrel, but after learning about the pregnancy, he still claims he must leave Philumena because of *pietas*.

As the play proceeds and Sostrata decides to exile herself to the country so that Pamphilus can be with Philumena, Pamphilus says she should not go since he still has not decided if he ought to take Philumena back (614-617). This is quickly proven to be a lie when Phidippus enters and informs Laches that it is Myrrina, not Sostrata, who is to blame for the conflicts (630-632). In response to this, Pamphilus says that the fathers can cause what problems they like so long as he does not have to take Philumena back (634). Pamphilus said he was uncertain (*incertus*, 614) about taking Philumena back to Laches, but his position has not changed throughout the entirety of the play. He is quoted by Parmeno as wanting out of his marriage as early as line 133, and at line 634, despite the pregnancy, despite the rape, despite the

actions of his parents, despite the pleas of Myrrina, Pamphilus has never altered his position, dropping even his familiar justifications of *pietas* and *honestum* to simply say: *dum ne redducam*, "as long as I don't have to take her back." When Phidippus reveals the existence of the baby to Laches and Pamphilus still refuses to take Philumena back (670-671), Laches accuses him of continuing his affair with Bacchis, and Pamphilus again flees from the *senes*, unable to argue his way out (701-705).

When the end of the play arrives and Pamphilus is able to remain married to Philumena, it is in spite of his continued best effort. Although he gives the appearance of changing his mind and reacting to new information, his arguments and motivations are consistent throughout. It is only at the play's end, when he has learned that he is the rapist who fathered Philumena's child, that he stops fighting to separate from her. He makes a few mentions of the love he feels for her throughout the play (e.g. 297-298, 404, 448), but this love has never convinced him to stay with her, no matter the change in circumstances. Pamphilus has the appearance of a character tossed about by circumstance, forced into a marriage, forced to choose between wife and mother, forced to deal with an unwanted pregnancy, but none of these circumstances changes his behavior, only his arguments. His desire from the beginning of the play was to get out of the marriage, and he spent the play pursuing that desire in whatever way he could. Syra's advice at the very beginning of the play, then, is proven correct: Pamphilus was never worthy of the audience's pity, his only goal was to fulfil his desire.

Throughout this paper, many of the arguments rely on knowledge of what is to come. In the first chapter, without knowing that all his misogynistic assumptions will be proven wrong, it is impossible to see the ways that Laches creates problems for himself and for those around him; in the second, unless one knows that Pamphilus is the rapist and hears the accounts of Myrrina

and Bacchis, it is impossible to recognize peculiarities in the account Pamphilus gives; in the third, without knowing how little pity Pamphilus deserves, it is impossible to see the importance of the speech Syra gives at the beginning of the play. It is through repetition, through seeing these individual parts of the play in the context of the whole that they can be understood. From the first line, mirroring a pair of prologues with a pair of introductory conversations (Syra and Philotis, and Philotis and Parmeno) Terence starts and restarts the drama. In doing so, he demonstrates the doubling-up and doubling-back that is integral to the message of the play, a message that can be seen through repetition, through reading and re-reading. *Hecyra* is a play that looks like a comedy, but as it is considered and reconsidered, the familiar exterior is pulled away. Terence has not just created a play, he has created an anatomical model of a comedy. The outside of his play looks like a comedy should, but the prologues and Syra ask us to look deeper, to consider what is underneath. Re-reading, re-performance is not a textual labor, it is vivisection of genre. As the play repeats itself endlessly, trapped in the third performance, reconsideration of the text pulls back the layers of convention. Upon re-reading, the small cuts of subverted tropes become massive incisions, revealing the viscera under the familiar jokes. By opening the play in this way, stripping away distractions and nicety, Terence reveals the beating heart of comedy. At the center of this play, the core of the genre, there is Pamphilus, the comic *adulescens*, the malicious organ that sustains the whole rotten edifice. *Plaudite*!

## Conclusion

*Hecyra* is a play that asks to be re-read. In the past two years, I have done so extensively, and nearly exclusively. There is certainly more to learn from *Hecyra*, but I feel that moving forward, more extensive research into, and across, the Terentian corpus will benefit my reading of the *Hecyra*. There is a theory that the Pamphilus and Philumena of *Hecyra* are the literary descendants of the Pamphilus and Philumena in *Andria*.[81] Working from this premise, I think there much work to be done in "generational" readings of Terence's plays. Terence is rife with common names, Chaerea of *Eunuchus* is served by a Parmeno like the Pamphilus of *Hecyra*. In both the *Heauton Timorumenos* and *Hecyra* there is a noble *meretix* by the name of Bacchis. There are, however, also the twin Bacchides in Plautus' play of the same name. How would a reading of the Plautine *Bacchides* inform the understanding of the Terentian Bacchides? There is also the notable gender inversion between the rapist of *Hecyra*, Pamphilus, and the rape victim of *Eunuchus*, Pamphila. The catalogue of Terentian names is far from expansive, and reading how these names interact across the works of Terence and the other comedians could certainly be a fruitful area of inquiry.

An area of work related to the above, though not limited by naming conventions, is the comparison of Terence to Plautus and the fragments of other Roman comedic authors. A notable example that I did not have the opportunity to investigate here is the relationship of the *meretrices* in *Truculentus* to Syra and Philotis in *Hecyra*. The characters in *Truculentus* spend

[81] This is a major focus in Penwill (2004).

the play successfully beguiling their lovers, thereby separating them from their wealth. In other words, these characters exhibit behavior very similar to that which Syra recommends to Philotis in *Hecyra*'s opening scene. Investigating the specific connections between the behaviors of these sets of characters, especially through the justifications which they use for their actions, will be profitable to Terentian studies.

One final area of investigation, which I fear may become my white whale, is the idea of *Hecyra* in performance. While there is fine scholarship on ancient performance, it is rather clinical, looking at issues of staging, music, and costuming, and does not delve into what is impossible to see on any page, an audience reaction. In order to truly understand *Hecyra*, it would be invaluable to see *Hecyra*. By working with contemporary theater experts, actors, directors, playwrights, as well as the wealth of expertise in the field of Classics, I think it would be possible, if arduous, to create a stageable, and watchable *Hecyra* (a *Thoroughly Modern Mother-in-Law*, if you will). The process of adapting, translating, staging, and viewing this play will provide incomparable insight into its value, not only as entertainment, but also as literature.

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