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BOUNDLESS NATURE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE SPEECH IN PLAUTUS

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PREFACE

This study began as an investigation of Plautus' language as a reflection of social concepts, the underlying assumption being that Plautus would have preserved various characteristics of spoken Latin that might be suitable for sociolinguistic analysis. Initially I was no more interested in gender relations than in any other part of the broad spectrum of social interactions in Plautus. As the body of data grew, however, it became more and more evident that the linguistic features isolated as 'feminine' and the recurrently negative reflections on female words in the comedies form a pattern that corresponds all too well to ancient (and modern) stereotypes of female speech. As a result, I was compelled to shift my assumptions about a "specifically female" idiom to an inquiry into the motifs underlying the construction of female speech in theatrical text: not only into *how* women speak, but *why* they are represented as speaking, in a certain manner. Since the meta-textual asides on female speech found in Plautine drama are not explicit in this regard, I used the relevant evidence in Donatus' *scholia* to Terence, and in Greek and Roman philosophical texts, to provide their theorizations of gender differences as a means of contextualizing and elucidating the Plautine 'female idiom'. This study is thus a portrayal in reverse mode of female mannerisms in Plautus, beginning with the abstract concepts, and ending with the linguistic behaviour labelled as predominantly feminine in Roman comedy. It is my hope that my data will prove useful to students of Roman comedy who are interested in social applications.

ABSTRACT

The existence of specific lexical features marking the speech of female characters in Roman Comedy is signalled in scholiastic literature, and has been confirmed by modern quantitative research. This thesis, focusing on the comedies of Plautus, investigates the question of why the playwrights made specific linguistic choices for female *personae*.

Greek and Roman literary theory stipulated that the speech of women in drama had to be constructed so as to reveal the speakers' feminine nature. Philosophical doctrines that construed gender as a polar opposition evince a fundamental distinction, defining male as 'bond' and female as 'boundless'. The association of female with boundlessness, it is argued, also determines woman's position with respect to speech. A study of Greek New Comedy reveals that the reflections on female nature and expression found there depict woman as adverse to limits, a concept which Plautus seems to have subsequently adapted from his sources.

Donatus's scholia to Terence characterize female speech as disorderly and disrespectful of the norms of verbal interaction. Concrete linguistic patterns are rationalized as symptoms of 'softness' and querulousness, both representing the female propensity to violate interpersonal limits. The text of Plautus, examined for meta-textual asides on female speech, confirms the scholiast's observations. An inquiry into the Plautine perception of *blanditia* reveals that female mannerisms are interpreted as tokens of a contagious moral disorder, and that they earmark the feebleness of female (and effeminate) *personae*. The otherness of female complaints, emphasized during the performance of *palliata* by both verbal and para-verbal means, is intimately associated in the text of the comedies with the chaos within women's minds. Female speech patterns in Plautus thus illustrate the concept of *infirmitas sexus*.

RÉSUMÉ

La recherche linguistique moderne a confirmé l'existence de traits lexiques propres au discours des personnages féminins de la comédie romaine, déjà soulignée dans les scolies. En se concentrant sur les comédies de Plaute, le présent ouvrage se penche sur les raisons qui ont poussé les auteurs des *palliata* à associer certains traits spécifiques de langage à la nature féminine.

D'après la théorie littéraire grecque et romaine, le discours des personnages féminins dans le théâtre doit démontrer la différence entre la nature féminine et celle du citoyen mâle adulte, représentant la norme liguistique. Les doctrines philosophiques qui interprètent le genre comme un contraste bipolaire révèlent une distinction fondamentale entre le principe masculin de "liens" et celui, féminin, d'"absence de liens". Nous avançons ici que la perception de tout ce qui est féminin comme étant sans liens (ou sans limites), définit également la position de la femme par rapport au langage. Une étude de la nouvelle comédie grecque révèle que les réflexions qui y abondent sur la nature et l'expression féminine montrent la femme comme étant réfractaire aux limites, un concept que Plaute semble avoir adopté de ses modèles grecs.

Les *scholia* de Donat décrivent le discours féminin comme étant désordonné et irrespectueux des règles de l'interaction verbale. Les traits du langage féminin sont ici théorisés comme étant des symptômes de 'mollesse' et d'un caractère querelleur, symptômes d'une propension toute féminine à transgresser les limites interpersonnelles. Une étude des remarques auto-thématiques sur le langage féminin chez Plaute confirme les observations du scholiaste. Les personnages de Plaute interprètent *blanditia* comme étant signe d'un désordre moral contagieux, et ce registre de langage sert à marquer autant la faiblesse des personnages féminins que celle des personnages efféminés. Le caractère unique des plaintes des femmes, sur lequel on met l'emphase par des moyens verbaux et non-verbaux durant la représentation des pièces de Plaute, est étroitement associé dans le texte au chaos de l'esprit féminin. Les traits du parler des femmes chez Plaute illustrent donc le concept de l' *infirmitas sexus*.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

'Female Latin'

1. Roman Comedy and 'Female Latin'

In the history of classical scholarship, one finds two approaches to linguistic differentiation in Roman Comedy, each proudly self-sufficient and ignorant of the other. On the one hand, many scholars claimed that Roman playwrights had made no effort to differentiate among their *personae* by giving them distinctive speech characteristics. For example, Wilamowitz-Moellendorf viewed Plautus and Terence as indolent imitators of Menander, and claimed in all authority: "*Reden alle Menschen des Plautus und des Terenz dieselbe Sprache*" (1925:160). His opinion was supported by Coulter who, in an article on the speech of foreigners in Greek and Roman Comedy, asserts that "there is no real attempt at characterization by language" (1934: 133). Eduard Fraenkel, the advocate of *Plautinisches in Plautus*, also believed that the Plautine language should be admired for its uniformity (1960: 389). In the last thirty years this view has been challenged, but only to disclose the playwrights' efforts to create individual styles for certain *personae*, not to create styles typical of entire classes of characters.[1]

On the other hand, linguistic differentiation of social status and gender 'in old writings' was known to ancient grammarians.[2] Although some of the remarks on linguistic variables, most evidently those scattered throughout Aelius Donatus' commentary to Terence, refer to literary style, not to colloquial language,[3] scholars have typically viewed 'female speech' in Roman Comedy as an effort to imitate actual Roman women.

1.1. The 'Ethnographic' Approach

At the turn of the last century, ethnographers discovered separate male and female expressions in the languages of traditional societies, and made efforts to link them to features of 'female nature'.[4] Classicists interpreted the male-female differences in the Latin

of Comedy in a similar spirit. Gagnér attempted to explain the use of *(me)hercle, (e)castor* and *(ede)pol* in Plautus and Terence, arguing that it is not surprising that men invoked the name of a hero who represented both leadership and relations with the outside (1920: 80-88: *hercle, mehercle*), and that women's dread of innovation lies behind the female characters' predilection for the antiquated *ecastor* (1920: 88-101).[5] Gender roles in the evolution of language (new expressions being allegedly created by men and then reluctantly adapted by women) are also evoked to explain why the less archaic *pol, edepol* could be employed by both sexes (101-109).[6]

Gagnér owes his notion of female conservatism to Otto Jespersen's belief that the woman "has none of that desire to avoid those all too common, flat, everyday expressions that prompt boys and men constantly to seek renewal of the language through the use of stronger and stronger words."[7] Even in languages that do not dispose of a gender-differentiated vocabulary, Jespersen argues, women have a poor vocabulary, use too many euphemisms and too many adverbs (1922: 240). The 'weaker sex' speaks a weaker language, deprived of the masculine "output of spasmodic energy" (*ibid.* 254). In Jespersen's view, the peculiarities of female speech are the result of a division of labour that for thousands of years has allotted to women domestic occupations that require "little energy" and "no deep thought" (1922: 254).[8]

The assumption that Roman women spoke a different version of Latin that defined them as a separate social class has also influenced Hofmann (1926, 1978) who quotes the differences in men's and women's use of language as an obvious example of the distinctions between various *Gesellschaftsschichten* (1926, 1978: 11). He lists women's idiosyncratic use of interjections,[9] their predilection for *amabo* and for the possessive pronoun in address among the features of colloquial, i.e. sub-standard, language.[10]

1.2. The Quantitative Model

Recent research on female speech-patterns in Comedy draws upon an interest in social variables that was reborn in modern linguistics in the 1970s,[11] and that is mainly concerned with presenting statistical evidence proving the existence of a 'woman's Latin'.

An imposing body of data concerning the speech of female *personae* in the Comedy has been collected by Michael Gilleland in his Ph.D thesis.[12] Gilleland chose four linguistic features (Greek words, interjections, diminutives, and certain forms of address), and used methods of statistical linguistics to determine their incidence in the speech of all character types. All lines of investigation brought a positive result, though the numbers were far from striking. Female characters were shown to use slightly fewer words of Greek origin (60% of the average in Plautus, 80% in Terence), and slightly more diminutives (130% of the average in Plautus and 140% in Terence).[13] The distribution of *au*, *ei* , *malum* and *vah*, as well as that of *(me)hercle* and *(m)ecastor* was shown to depend on character type and sex (*ibid.*: 202). Finally, Gilleland observed that women in Terence used the possessive pronoun *mi/ mea* and employed titles in address more often than men did (*ibid.*: 280).[14]

The statistical method, influenced by Labov's (1966) quantitative model, yields valuable (though not always conclusive) evidence. The decision to select Greek words and diminutives as representative of gender differences is not necessarily the most fortunate. In fact, there is evidence (Juv. 6.184-199, Mart. 10.68) that Hellenisms, at least in imperial Rome, were believed to be provocative, rather than unfeminine, and unsuited to matrons and elderly women only. As for diminutives, they often have, as Priscian already observed, a purely semantic function: denoting small objects.[15] Their use can, therefore, be considered stylistically significant only if a neutral variant exists (e.g. *sororcula*: *soror*), which is not always the case for the diminutives in Gilleland's list (e.g. *tabella*).[16]

Most importantly, no effort was made to look at the linguistic phenomena in their dramatic context, and to find connotations of female mannerisms. In the 'Epilogue' of his thesis (1979: 281), Gilleland affirmed that "Plautus and Terence do seem to have distinguished different character types by their use of words of Greek origin, certain interjections, and diminutives," but he makes no attempt to explain why they did so. He offers only a parallel: characterization by language is even more obvious in Sanskrit drama, where the gods and the leading male characters speak Sanskrit, while women, and other characters use varieties of Prakrit that are appropriate to their rank.[17] Like ancient Indian drama, Gilleland seems to imply, Roman Comedy sets out to convey the inevitable difference in male and female speech.

The last word in the discussion of 'female Latin' belongs to J. N. Adams, who, in an article entitled "Female Speech in Roman Comedy" (1984), examines certain lexical differences in the speech of men and women in Plautus and Terence. Adams looks upon linguistic differentiation as a reflection of everyday speech, and offers his reader some parallels from modern English and other languages, thus implying a universal nature of 'female speech', and perpetuating the ethnographic approach to 'female Latin' of Hofmann and Gagnér. Trudgill's controversial article about British English from Norwich is cited as evidence for women's supposed conservatism and predilection for prestigious expressions and (Trudgill 1972, 1975)[18] while Lakoff's intuitions are invoked as a testimony of a female penchant for politeness (Lakoff 1975).[19] The research of Crosby and Nyquist (1977), one of the few works confirming Lakoff's hypotheses, is cited as evidence of gender differences supposedly discernible in the use of 'imperatival modifiers'.[20]

Adams' choice of the expressions used to measure male-female differences appears, upon close examination, to be dictated by a desire to combine modern assumptions about female speech with bits of information derived from Latin texts. He provides statistical

evidence that, as long has been known, the use of oaths and exclamations depends on the speaker's sex.[21] Following, as one can assume, Lakoff's idea that 'women's language' is less assertive, Adams compares male and female usage of the 'modifiers' *amabo*, *quaeso*, *obsecro*, *sis* and *sodes*, and concludes that (as Hofmann already believed) only the first (*amabo*) is typical of women. He also determines (confirming another of Hofmann's claims) that women in Comedy have a predilection for proper names modified by *meus* in address. Finally, Adams produces some evidence to confirm the view expressed in the commentary of Aelius Donatus, that women in Terence (but not in Plautus) use *miser* to refer to themselves more often than men do.

According to Adams, these linguistic variables reveal that women in Roman Comedy " a) . . . tend to be more polite or more deferential . . . and b) that they are more prone to idioms expressing affection or emotion . . . " The playwrights simply "exaggerated the frequency of certain feminine expressions," in order to create this stage-language for women. Adams thus insists on the authenticity of the 'female idiom' in spoken Latin, which he views as the inspiration for the stage-language.[22]

Adams' article, in spite of its admirable scholarship, leaves the reader disappointed by the author's assumption that Comedy simply imitated the speech of Roman women. There are reasons to question Adams' belief that a 'female idiom' would have been the ultimate motivation underlying the linguistic choices made for female *personae*. Plautus and Terence (who are highly unlikely to have conducted studies in linguistic differentiation) reflect not how women talked, but beliefs about how they did, and the stage-language of the *palliata* should, therefore, be studied as a source of knowledge about literary stereotypes of female speech, not about facts.[23] These stereotypes are likely to depend upon conceptions of female nature and sexuality that were rooted in Greek thought, and that were shared by the playwrights and the audience of the Roman *palliata*.[24]

Most notably, Adams' interpretation of his data shows a disturbing correspondence to popular notions of the present day. The categories of indirectness ('polite or deferential') and spontaneity ('expressing affection or emotion') correspond quite well to the labels attached to female expression by folk-linguistics, such as those listed in Kramer's study of *The New Yorker*'s cartoons (1974), which tend to represent women's speech as "emotional, vague, and euphemistic." Modern beliefs that presuppose emotionalism and primness in women do not provide an adequate explanation of the evidence presented by Hofmann, Gilleland, and Adams himself. One is left wondering why *amabo* is the only polite formula that female characters use more often than male characters do, and why self-pity is the emotion that women, apparently, are particularly prone to express. It is the purpose of the present study to search for ancient concepts underlying the speech of women characters in Plautus, and to ask why certain lexical and semantic features of speech are employed in construing images of women.[25]

2. *Eine Fremde Natur*

In 1788 Goethe published anonymously in *Der Teutsche Merkur* reflections on ancient theatre inspired by his Italian experience.[26] He confesses to having watched with great interest women disguised as men, and men disguised as women, during the carnival (1990: 172-173), and focuses on the art of female impersonators who, as in Rome's past, were still playing women in comedy (1990: 171).[27] Being an outsider, Goethe wrote, allowed a young man to understand the essence of female behaviour and nature, and to achieve a knowledge of femininity that a real woman, distracted by her own individual and accidental features, would have been unable to achieve:

> *Der Jüngling hat die Eigenheiten des weiblichen Geschlechts in ihrem Wesen und Betragen studiert; er kennt sie und bringt sie als Künstler wieder hervor; er spielt nicht sich selbst sondern eine dritte und eigentlich fremde Natur. Wir lernen diese dadurch nur desto besser kennen, weil sie jemand beobachtet, jemand überdacht hat.*[28]

From the perspective of this thrilled spectator, the habit of entrusting female roles to male actors appears to be much more than a social convention or an accident of the history of theatre. It seems instead to have been a meaningful decision: to filter woman's nature (*Wesen*) through a man's mind, and to have a male body imitate the female countenance (*Betragen*), implied that femininity required special translation. The presence of the impersonator signals that the woman is to be considered as the 'other'. [29]

The plays of Plautus are populated by strangers, the 'Greeks', the exact opposite of what the Romans were supposed to have been according to their own moral principles. Adapted from the Νέα, the characters become so drastically oversimplified that Carlo Goldoni saw in them the prototypes of the *tipi fissi* of *Commedia dell'arte*.[30] Plautus explored the ambiguous identity of his *personae*. Just as the Roman behind his 'Greek' mask was allowed to condemn the moral baseness of the Greeks, and thus reveal his allegiance to Rome, so did the theatrical 'woman' at times reject her illusory gender, and recite lines hostile towards her own kind.[31] One could accumulate examples of female self-criticism, such as these misogynist jokes attributed to female speakers: Which woman is best? None, because one woman can only be worse than another, says Eunomia.[32] What creature has never existed and (regrettably) will never exist? A silent woman, according to the same witty matron (Aul. 123ff). Do you say that women are wicked? No. There is no point in repeating what everybody knows (Pasicompsa in Merc. 513-514)."[33]

Allusions to the paradox of female misogyny are particularly transparent in the Poenulus. First a would-be courtesan criticizes women's passion for baths and cosmetics with self-destructive zeal (Poen. 210-232), and defines the inconvenience of such devotion from the point of view of a man, as she jokes that whoever longs for endless nuisance should get himself a woman and a ship (Poen. 210-211).[34] The male and female are then defined as opposite parties with conflicting interests, when the same character interrupts her

sister's anti-feminine tirade to declare that men (*alios*) already criticize women, and that there is no need for them, the women (*nosmet*), to name their own vices:

> *(. . .) soror, parce, amabo: sat est istuc alios*
> *dicere nobis, ne nosmet in nostra etiam vitia loquamur* (Poen. 250-251).

It is notable that, when describing their own speech, Plautine 'women' often side with *alii*, rather than with themselves, warning the audience against female talkativeness (Aul. 124ff, Cist. 120ff), deceitful sweetness (Asin. 222-223, Truc. 225), and fraudulence (Epid.546). Some of these remarks seem to inform the audience's interpretation of the lines about to be uttered, and appear to imply that female speech and stage-language, not unlike the misogynist jokes, contribute to the construction of the woman's *fremde Natur*.[35]

3. *Tacitae Spectent*

Lines addressed to women among the spectators in the prologue of the Poenulus (28-35) corroborate the assumption that in the *palliata* genuine female voice was styled as undesirable:

> *nutrices pueros infantis minutulos*
> *domi ut procurent neu quae spectatum adferat,*
> *ne et ipsae sitiant et pueri pereant fame*
> *neve esurientes hic quasi haedi obvagiant.*
> *matronae tacitae spectent, tacitae rideant,*
> *canora hic voce sua tinnire temperent,*
> *domum sermones fabulandi conferant,*
> *ne et hic viris sint et domi molestiae.*

This excerpt concerns noise control, a topic most legitimate in a prologue, and already discussed at the beginning of this one (5-8, 17-24). It is nevertheless remarkable how the high-pitched sounds associated with women—the squealing of infants (*obvagire*) and the shrill voice of the matrons themselves (*canora vox*)—are considered inappropriate for the public space of theatre.[36] Both nurses and matrons are reminded that their cacophony belongs in the enclosure of the household (28: *domi*, 34: *domum* 35: *domi*), and that their presence is tolerated on condition their voice is heard only where it belongs: at home (31-32). Only in a silence unpolluted by their own voices were women allowed to watch on

stage their own images, 'purified' of accidental features, and representing, as Goethe might have put it, 'the essence of femininity, observed and thought over by someone else.'[37]

Conclusion

In order to comprehend how 'women's Latin' is used to construe images of women in the *palliatae* of Plautus, we will turn to ancient literary theory, philosophy and moral thought to explore those ideas of linguistic differentiation and gender that may have found their way into the Νέα (Part 1). Donatus' commentary to Terence will offer us insight into the assumptions that allowed the grammarian to rationalize particular Latin expressions as being representative of 'women's nature'. Finally, Plautine characters' expressed opinions about female speech, and the words of the theatrical women themselves will be studied in an attempt to reconstruct both the Plautine idiom of feminine stage-language and its implications (Part 2).

ENDNOTES

1. It has been argued that contrasting vocabularies served to set apart the Epidamnian Menaechmus from his pious brother (Windsor Leach 1964), and that Euclio's short, asyndetic sentences and earthy metaphors are contrasted both with the periphrastic expressions of the old servant Staphyla, and with the sophisticated diction of Megadorus (Stockert 1982). Hofmann (1977: 356) observed that greetings formulae are used to characterize speakers in the Aulularia. Arnott analyzed the techniques of characterization in Terence's Phormio (1970) and Plautus' Stichus (1972), and observed a method of characterization consisting in accumulation of pertinent vocabulary. Concentration of metaphors and 'vivid language' are shown to be characteristic of Phormio (1970: 52), and obsessive repetition of moral terminology of Soror (1972: 59-60). However, Arnott demonstrates that Plautus and Terence, like their models, 'individualized and vivified' their *personae* by means of style, not that some features of style are typical of a whole class of *personae*.

2. Gellius in Noct. Att. 11. 6.1. asserts that "in old writings" women do not swear by Hercules, and men do not swear by Castor., Charisius in Inst. gramm. 2.13 notes that *mediusfidius* is used exclusively by men.

3. Aelius Donatus' commentary to Terence promotes the view that Terence surpassed his Greek originals in his efforts to differentiate the speech of various types of *personae* (cf. Ad And. 89.1, Ad Ad. 81.2, Ad Phorm. 647 and Ad Hec. 440.3). Many of Donatus' remarks on linguistic characterization have been collected by Reich (1934).

4. Ploss and Bartels' Das Weib in der Natur- und Völkerkunde (1897, 6th ed.) is a classical example of the early 'anthropological' approach to female speech.

5. For brief references to the peculiarities of female use of interjections, see Richter (1873: 389-642), Meinhardt (1892: 47), Nicolson (1893: 99), Meister (1916: 119ff), and Ullman (1943-4: 87ff); for terms of address see Griffin's note on the use of *mulier* and *vir* between husband and wife in Plautus (1943: 78).

6. Gagnér (1920: 93) argues that *ecastor* was originally used by men and women, but men stopped using this expression when it wore out, while women, because of their natural lack of imagination, continued to use it: " *Mulieres in veteribus haerent and nova non fingunt.*"

7. This is a translation of Gagnér's quote (1920: 93n5) from an article in Danish published in Gads Danske Magasin (1906-1907: 583). Jespersen expresses the same view in The Language (1922: 242-243).

8. The very presence of a chapter entitled 'The Woman', while no analogous one is devoted to 'The Man', reveals that Jespersen viewed female speech as deviant, and male as standard (cf. Cameron 1985, 1992: 43).

9. For Hofmann's specific references to men's and women's use of interjections, see 1926: 13 (*ei* and *vae*), 14 (*au*), 16 (*heus* and *eho*) and 30 (*ecastor, mecastor* and *mediusfidius*).

10. The fact that the feminine character of *amabo* is restricted to Comedy, and that this restriction does not apply to Cicero's letters, is explained as a result of evolution (1926,

1978: 127-128). For the comments on *mi/ mea* preceding or following the pronoun, see *ibid.* 138.

11. See Thorne and Henley's annotated bibliography of books and articles concerning sex differences in language, speech and nonverbal communication (1975: 205-305).

12. Linguistic Differentiation of Character Type and Sex in the Comedies of Plautus and Terence. (University of Virginia, 1979).

13. Gilleland (1979: 171) quotes the following numbers: in Plautus, Greek words are used on the average once in 86 lines; male characters use them once in 81 lines, female characters once in 145 lines. For Terence the numbers are 213.5 (average), 207 (male characters), and 269 (female characters). Diminutives are used on the average once in every 215 lines in Plautus, once every 161 lines by female characters, and once every 227 lines by male characters. In Terence the average is 312 lines, 1: 215 for female characters, and 1: 335 for male characters.

14. Here the disproportion is very clear: women use nominal terms of address with *meus* 5.25 times more often than without it; men use the pronoun 0.6 times less often than address without *meus*. However, according to Gilleland, no comparable distinction is made by Plautus.

15. Prisc. G.L. 2. 101: "*solent autem diminutiva vel necessariae significationis causa proferri ...vel urbanitatis . . . vel adulationis.*"

16. As the author himself points out (1979: 201), his lists of Greek words and diminutives, based exclusively on morphology, are open to criticism, because they include words not necessarily felt as loan-words or diminutives by the speakers of Latin in Plautus' time.

17. Gilleland names as his source C.D. Buck's, Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin (Chicago 1933). Incidently, the same piece of information is used by Jespersen in The Language (1922: 237-254), where the distinction between Sanskrit and Prakrit is ascribed to the fact that women's speech is frequently considered less prestigious.

18. Trudgill (1972, 1975) examined the speech of men and women in the urban British of Norwich and found that women of all classes were using more standard English forms than men. He suggested that men were underreporting their use of standard expressions, while women were overreporting them, and concluded that women were more status-conscious than men because status was the only source of self-esteem and identity for housewives. His interpretation was criticized by feminist researchers mainly for the assumption that all women's status was determined exclusively by their husband's occupation. A summary of the critical arguments can be found in Cameron (1992: 63); a more outspoken critique was delivered by Christine Delphy (1982).

19. Rather than referring to Lakoff's scholarly publications (1973, 1977), Adams refers to Language and Women's Place (1975), a booklet addressed to the general public, where she puts forward three basic premises: that women are less assertive and more polite than men, and that their speech is expected to be more correct. However, true to her training in generative grammar (cf. Lakoff 1968), Lakoff provides no evidence in support of her hypothesis, except her own intuitions about her native language. See a later scholarly publication (1977) for a more precise definition of the style of women's speech.

20. For research disproving Lakoff's claims, see e.g. Dubois and Crouch, in whose sample men actually use more tag questions than women (1976) and Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary (1989) who conclude that there is no gender difference in the use of this approval-seeking construction.

21. Surprisingly, Adams makes no reference to Gagnér's exhaustive work, which includs a list of all loci in Comedy where the six interjections occur, and a careful comparison of their incidence in the speech of all character types.

22. *Ibid.* 71. An identical hypothesis concerning *amabo* has been formulated by Hofmann (1926: 127-128).

23. Lakoff observed (1975: 5-6) that suppositions about gender differences may be perpetuated through language acquisition. Girls are socialized to 'speak like ladies'; boys, to speak 'like men'. It is not improbable, therefore, that the features of female speech that we find in the Comedy correspond to some degree to the linguistic behaviour expected of Roman women, which may well have been shaped by similar stereotypes.

24. Cf. Rabinowitz's on Euripides' identification of Phaedra's speech with her sexuality (1989: 129-134) and Richlin on *apologiae* as a testimony to the Roman assumption that words and *mores* are virtually identical (1992 2-13).

25. The existing studies on *mulieres comicae* overlook or side-step the question of female speech patterns. Benoist's De personis muliebris (1862) is an inventory inspired by the author's enthusiasm for Plautus' refinement in presenting "*varium et mutable mulieris ingenium*" (*ibid.* 69). Mack's well-documented dissertation (1966) is helpful in tracing the Greek antecedents of Roman motives; Della Corte (1969) offers little more than a list; Schuhmann (1977, 1978a and b) focuses on the "socio-economical conditions of women's life in Plautus," and refuses to acknowledge the literary nature of her sources. Finally, there are two recent dissertations on Plautine women. Gerdes (1995) argues convincingly that female roles in Plautus are more important than most discussions of theatrical techniques usually admit. Rei (also 1995) concentrates on the figure of the female trickster and on the comic inversion of status, which allows women to play central roles in the intrigue of four plays (Cas., Pers., Poen., Stich.). Both Rei and Gerdes, focusing as they do on the performance and the comic *ludus*, are interested neither in female speech patterns, nor in the underlying concept of 'the feminine'.

26. Cf. esp. the reference to La locandiera in the entry of October 11, 1783 (Goethe 1998: 283).

27. Such customs parallel the Athenian festivals, where men and women exchanged their costumes (cf. Zeitlin 1985: 89n8).

28. Goethe's essay (1990:171-175) should be read in the light of his theory of *mimesis*, developed at the same time (cf. Michéa 1945: *passim*), and implying that simple imitation (*Einfache Nachahmung*) is always inferior to the imitation of the subject's inner nature. Comparing two performances of Goldoni's Locandiera, Goethe argues that actresses are not less efficient than the impersonators, but that their performance is too life-like, because it involves a "simple" mimesis (*ibid.* 174). Though Goethe's observations imply that he conceived of male and female as strangers to one another, it seems far-fetched to claim that

the idea that men can do everything better than women is central to Goethe's argument (cf. Ferris: 1990 and her chapter on 'Goethe, Goldoni and woman-hating').

29. Zeitlin formulated this principle forcefully in her essay on Athenian drama: "From the outset, it is essential to understand that in Greek theatre . . . the self that is really at stake is to be identified with the male, while the woman is assigned the role of the radical other (1985: 66)." See also Zeitlin's discussion of the implications of the travestism in *Thesmophoriazousai* as an allusion to impersonation in Old Comedy (1981: 177-181).

30. For the Greeks as anti-Romans, see Segal's perceptive argument (1969: 36-39). The oversimplification of the Greek characters in the course of their adaptation by Plautus is best revealed by Questa's study of the Plautine prologues in comparison with those of Menander. Questa demonstrated that Plautus emphasized masks and fixed role types rather than relations between characters (1982: 9-64). The view that Plautine characterization relies on exaggeration of the features already implicit in the New Comedy mask system is also represented by Dupont (1985: 255-256), by Slater (1985:148-149), by Gratwick (1985: 109-110), and by Wiles (1991: 140-144). Wright offers a comparison with other genres of Italian popular theatre (1974: 104). See also Cébe on caricature in character portrayal (1966: 41-42), and Anderson (1993: 118) on the caricatural features of their speech.

31. Segal has discussed the motif of mistrust of the stranger in Plautus (1969: 37-39). See Moore (1989: 153-162) on the pervasiveness of misogynistic themes in Plautus, and Rosivach (1998: 6-8) on the social reality behind the situation of women in New Comedy. Female misogyny does not seem to be a Plautine peculiarity: Mack (1966: 27-29) discusses the motif of female self-criticism in Greek comedy.

32. We can reconstruct this joke from the indignation of one matron, who, addressed as *optima femina* (Aul. 135), protests: *alia alia peior est* (Aul. 140, cf. also Stich. 109).

33. See also Mil. 887-888 and Truc. 465-470, where courtesans boast of the feminine genius for wrongdoing (*male facere*).

34. In fact, she repeats not just any man's view, but that of Cato himself, alluding to the limitations imposed on female expenses by the Oppian law. See Petrone's analysis of the juxtaposition woman/ship (1974: 21-22); Cf. Hallett (1973: 104) and Johnston (1980:149-152).

35. Aul. 124 ff, Cist. 120ff, Epid. 546.

36. It is believed that Rome did have, as Arcellaschi has argued (1982: 130), a space reserved for theater, the *theatrum ad aedem Apollinis*, situated where Marcellus' theatre was built later.

37. Hunter (1985: 83) insists that, when thinking of female characters in New Comedy, one must keep in mind the premise that ancient poets were male and that the audiences for whom they wrote, in both Athens and Rome, were predominantly male.

PART I

CHAPTER 1

Ethical Diction and the Construction of the Other in Rhetorical and Literary Theory

1. 'Propriety' of Style

The idea that female *personae* in drama have a specific way of expressing themselves is a consequence of the concept of stylistic 'propriety'. Aristotle affirms that diction must be suitable to the topic, to the literary genre, and to the speaker (Rhet. 1404b 1-15; 1408a 10). 'Proper' style, he affirms, must harmonize with the speaker's emotions and character (Rhet. 1408a 10). The style befitting character, λέξις ἠθικὴ (Rhet. 1408a 25-30), is construed as a configuration of the speaker's disposition (ἕξις), and of his or her place within a classification of human beings (γένος).[1] Because of the codependence of style and *ethos*, a young man or a slave ought not to use ornate style (Rhet. 1408a 30); an orderly man must be 'deliberate' in his gestures and speech (Arist. Physiogn. 807b 34-36), a peasant cannot address the same topic and utter his opinion in the same way as an educated man (Arist. Rhet. 1408a31). Aristotle is not entirely original. As North (1979: 157-158) notes, he appears to build upon an aesthetic principle expressed earlier by Plato (Laches 188c-d), where the eponymous character declares that he appreciates listening to speeches, as long as the speaker and his words agree with each other and remain in harmony.[2]

The concept of πρέπον is a commonplace in Greek literary theory. Hermogenes insists that a farmer seeing a ship for the first time can offer but a rather naive description of it (Prog. 9.21,10ff). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for whom propriety is coextensive with 'imitation of nature and truth', affirms that πρέπον is the most important of all virtues of speech (De Lys. 9.1; Pomp.Gem. 3.20; Isocr. 11.70.15),[3] and praises in particular Lysias' ability to differentiate "between the young, the old, the high-born and the humble" (De Lys. 9).[4] 'Ethical diction' is also essential to Roman rhetorical theory. Cicero (Orat. 21.70)

lists suitability, *decorum*, among the principal virtues of style.[5] Quintilian (Inst. 11.1.1) insists that 'appropriateness' of diction (*ut dicamus apte*) is indispensable (*maxime necessaria*) to a good speaker, and declares (Inst. 8.3.43), quoting Cicero (Part. 6.19), that speech need not be particularly elaborate and polished, as long as it is probable (*probabile*), that is, fits 'the opinions and characters of the people involved'.

2. Mimesis

A figure of thought exploiting the creative potential of linguistic stereotypes, called ἠθοποιία or μίμησις in Greek, *figuratio* or *sermocinatio* in Latin, belongs to the fixed repertory of the orator's stratagems.[6] A trained speaker could not only manipulate language so as to present himself as a trustworthy character;[7] but by imitating someone else's manner of speaking, he was also able to conjure up a contemporary, historical or mythological figure, and even create a fictitious *persona*, to make them speak in favour of his cause.

The latter skill is of particular interest for us: Quintilian insists on its difficulty, pointing out (Inst. 11.1.38-40) that lawyers, who often speak through someone else's lips (*ore alieno*), should be particularly vigilant in rendering the character of the person whose voice they use, remembering that Appius Claudius' manner of speaking must differ from that of Clodius Pulcher. If imitating another man was already a hard task, there were circumstances that posed an even greater challenge to the speaker. Quintilian warns his students that impersonating the other becomes especially delicate in the *prosopopoeia*, the imitation of "the feelings of children, women, nations, and even inanimate objects" (Inst. 11.1.41). This means that, since the orator's own style would be fit for a male and a citizen, it would be particularly difficult for him to alter his words so as to imitate one who is not an adult, not a man, not a Roman or even not a person. *Mimesis* involves different degrees of otherness, and becomes increasingly challenging as otherness increases.

Quintilian's division of objects of stylistic mimesis into male citizens (11.1.40) and all others (11.1.41) may have a prototype in Greek literary theory. Aristotle's typology of characters in his discussion of 'ethical diction' (Rhet. 1408a 25) appears to reveal a similar care to mark *personae* as different from the speaker, that is, those who happen not to be an ἀνὴρ or not to be Athenian:

> Καὶ ἠθικὴ δὲ αὕτη ἡ ἐκ τῶν σημείων δεῖξις,. . . ὅτι ἀκολουθεῖ ἡ ἁρμόττουσα ἑκάστῳ γένει καὶ ἕξει. λέγω δὲ γένος μὲν καθ' ἡλικίαν, οἷον παῖς ἢ ἀνὴρ ἢ γέρων, καὶ γυνὴ ἢ ἀνήρ, καὶ Λάκων ἢ Θετταλός, ἕξεις δὲ καθ' ἃς ποιός τις τῷ βίῳ.

All three categories according to which this catalogue is organized (age, gender, ethnicity) seem to indicate various ways in which one may deviate from the standard framework for the central figure of the middle-aged Athenian citizen. The mature man holds the central place in the threefold division of human age. Contrasted with woman, ἀνήρ is considered a part of a binary concept of gender. Tellingly, the presentation of regional differences appears to concern male speakers only (Λάκων ἢ Θετταλός).[8] The Aristotelian concept of linguistic diversity implies that the different variants of spoken Greek were taken to be deviations from a golden mean, rather than a series of parallel registers. ' Ανήρ' thus remains the yardstick against which others and their ways of speaking are measured.

3. 'Ethical Diction' in Drama

This aesthetic postulate of congruent character and style was also used to judge the language of drama. Aristotle uses a quotation from the playwright Kleophon (Rhet.1408. 10) to illustrate suitability of style. Quintilian, explaining that one can use both action and words to mimic other people's behaviour (Inst. 9.2.58), offers a quotation from Terence (Eu.155-157). In fact, one may regard the 'ethical diction' of the stage as a model for the rhetorical concept. When Dionysius of Halicarnassus (De imit. 2. 207) encourages the orator to imitate the stylistic qualities (λεκτικὰς ἀρετάς of comic writers, he mentions the

virtue of being 'ethical'. Terence, while praising Menander's plays as *dissimili oratione . . . factae ac stilo* (An. 11-12), refers to the differentiation of both the content of utterances and their linguistic form, and thus recognizes that *mimesis* is desirable in comic dialogue.

The notion of πρέπον is also one of the criteria of literary excellence in Plutarch's famous essay comparing the style of Aristophanes and Menander. Plutarch finds fault with Aristophanes' writing for the lack of linguistic differentiation of characters in his plays, and then immediately proceeds to praise Menander for having created a language that fits different characters and emotions, yet remains homogeneous. No one among the famous artisans (τεχνιτῶν), says Plutarch, has been able to manufacture a shoe, a mask or a robe that would be "suitable for a woman and a youth, an old man and a slave."[9] Yet Menander, he continues, mingled speech in such a way that it keeps measure with any nature, disposition or age. In identifying unity of style, rather than its differentiation, as Menander's greatest poetic achievement, Plutarch implies that such uniform diction is an artistic creation. We may suppose that otherwise—i.e. in the achievements of average craftsmen—each category of characters would naturally have been expected to speak in its own distinct manner.

Plutarch's catalogue of the *personae* who must be distinguished by their costume and language is probably meant to emphasize the difficulty of the poet's task of levelling out the usual irregularities of speech. It is therefore likely that the characters listed (a woman, a youth, an old man, and a slave) are those prone to some linguistic extravagance. Ανήρ does not figure in the repertory of non-standard speakers, because his presence as a model is understood: the maturity of ἀνήρ would provide a golden mean between boyhood and old age, his gender and social prestige constitute a symmetrical response to the nature of a woman and to that of a slave. If our reading is correct, Plutarch classifies women's speech as a less decorous version of Greek, along with the speech of the immature, of the

elderly and of non-citizens.

This summary of the approach to linguistic differentiation in ancient literary theory allows us to make two essential observations. On the one hand, the postulate that one must try to render another's nature when imitating another's speech is a commonplace in both Greek and Roman doctrines of various periods. On the other hand, the linguistic standard appears to be the speech of a middle-aged male citizen, and women's words are consequently regarded as a deviation from this standard. One is therefore entitled to suspect that the renditions of female speech in the ancient texts in fact represent efforts to illustrate the difference between male and female nature. Speech patterns ascribed to women, in Roman Comedy, are thus likely to stem from generalized concepts of the essential contrast between 'male' and 'female'.

ENDNOTES

1. I assume here that λέξις ἠθική means simply 'diction fitting the speaker's character'. Such an interpretation is encouraged by Grimaldi's discussion of 'ἦθος' (1988: 183-189). Grimaldi (*op. cit.* 184), criticizing Cope's traditional concept of three meanings of the ἦθος (1867: 108-113), assumes that 'ἦθος' carries the basic meaning of 'the character of a person' throughout the text of the Rhetoric. Aristotle's concept of character in the Rhetoric, he argues (1988: 187), includes both a disposition formed under the direction of reason, and certain naturally-present qualities of character. We can therefore assume that λέξις ἠθική would imply imitating the speaker's moral and intellectual abilities. A very useful distinction between 'ἦθος', character in general, and 'ethos', the speaker's character used as a means of persuasion, has been proposed by Wisse (1989: 5-6, 333). Wisse (1989: 30) also argues that, unlike in the E.N., where 'ἦθος' denotes a person's moral qualities as opposed to their thinking faculty (διάνοια), in the Rhetoric, Aristotle uses 'ἦθος' as a term comprising both moral and intellectual qualities. This interpretation allows him to define 'ethical' diction as portraying character (1989: 48), a meaning that seems to be implied in Rhet. 1408a. See also Rorty (1992: 50-53) for a discussion of the role of the speaker's ἦθος in Aristotle's psychology of rhetorical persuasion.

2. This concept appears to find a parallel in Plato's theory of the linguistic sign as representation of the essence of the *nominandum*, formulated in the Cratylus (cf. esp. Crat. 423c11-e9). Baxter argues (1992: 166) that Socrates' theory of mimeticism should be understood as imitating the essence of the thing named, rather than its outward aspects. Kretzman (1971: 131) also comes to the conclusion that Plato's correct names should include essential features of the form it represents; Fine (1977: 297) points out that the name according to Plato is correct only if it reveals the essence of the thing. See also Leky (1919: 84-85) and Rijaarsdam (1978: 85, 87, 165). 'Ethical diction' transfers this postulated correlation between the object's essence and its verbal representation to the level of literary creation. Like the Platonic law-giver, the speaker or writer should choose words that reveal the nature of the person whose presence he signifies in speech.

3. Dionysius defines the concept of imitation of characters in literature as a part of the ideal of imitation of nature and truth. Cf. Hidber (1996: 63).

4. See *contra* Kennedy (1963: 135) who claims that Lysias did not attempt to vary the diction to suit the speaker, and that all his speakers use the same "blameless Attic prose."

5. Among Cicero's four requisites of style for oratory we also find congruence between the speaker's style and purpose: "*ut latine, ut plane, ut ornate, ut ad id quodcumque agetur apte congruenterque dicamus*" (De orat. 3.10.37).

6. The term is used for example in Ad Herenn. 4.52.65; Hermog. Prog. 9.20.7 and 9.21.6; Quint. Inst. 9.2.31 and 58. A complete repertory of all Greek and Roman terms is offered by Martin (1974: 291-292. esp. 291nn. 203-208). See also Leeman (1963: 40, 305).

7. Kennedy (1972: 41, 57, 65, 78, 143) notes that Roman orators had a special predilection for this type of argumentation 'based on character'.

8. Such an approach remains in contradiction to the fact that female characters in Aristophanes' Lysistrata are certainly liable to ethnic stereotypes. For a note on Lampito's

use of Lakonian dialect, the most obvious linguistic example of ethnic characterization of women in Greek comedy, see Henderson (1987: 77).

9. Iudicium 853e 1-f 1: "'Η δὲ Μενάνδρου φράσις οὕτω συνέξεται καὶ συμπέπνευκε κεκραμμένη πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ὥστε διὰ πολλῶν ἀγομένη παθῶν καὶ ἠθῶν καὶ προσώποις ἐφαρμόττουσα παντοδαποῖς μία τε φαίνεσθαι... πολλῶν δὲ γεγονότων εὐδοκίμων τεχνιτῶν, οὔθ' ὑπόδημα δημιουργὸς οὔτε προσωπεῖον σκευοποιὸς οὔτε τις ἱμάτιον ἅμα ταὐτὸν ἀνδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ μειρακίῳ καὶ γέροντι καὶ οἰκότριβι πρέπον ἐποίησεν ἀλλὰ Μένανδρος οὕτως ἔμιξε τὴν λέξιν, ὥστε πάσῃ καὶ φύσει καὶ διαθέσει καὶ ἡλικίᾳ σύμμετρον εἶναι." Plutarch's emphasis, as Wiles points out (1991: 217), is very different from that of Menander's modern critics (e.g. Sandbach 1975: 197), who tend to highlight his ability to differentiate characters through distinct oaths and characteristic patterns of syntax.

CHAPTER II

The Female Principle in Greek Philosophical Thought

Maccus vortit barbare, the *sphragis* specifying that Plautus has adapted Greek plays for the Roman stage, contains a formal acknowledgement of the close link between Greek New Comedy and *palliata*.[1] No matter how imaginative and subversive the Plautine *versio* may be, this declaration obliges us to begin our own investigation of Roman Comedy in Greece.

A search for the essential contrast between 'male' and 'female' in Greek thought must focus on those philosophical systems that viewed gender as a polar opposition. Therefore, the discussion below gravitates around two schools of thought, that of Pythagoras and that of Aristotle. The Pythagoreans attempted to construct a metaphysic that included a primary contrast between 'male' and 'female', specifying the implications of this essential opposition for the macrocosm of the universe, and for the microcosm of the human psyche.[2] Aristotle deserves attention both because he offers a comprehensive rationale for the binary concept of gender,[3] and because his teachings would have been informed by, and would in turn have informed, the social discourse from which issued the plays of New Comedy.[4]

1. The Boundless

1.1. Πέρας and Ἄπειρον:

The writings of Aristotle testify to 'male-female' as one of the contrasting pairs of principles found in the universe (Met. 986a 23-27).[5] In the so-called 'Pythagorean Table of Opposites', 'masculinity' and 'femininity' appear in the following catalogue of antitheses:

πέρας–ἄπειρον, περιττὸν–ἄρτιον, ἓν–πλῆθος, δεξιὸν–ἀριστερόν, ἄρρεν–θῆλυ, ἠρεμοῦν –κινούμενον, εὐθὺ–καμπύλον, φῶς–σκότος, ἀγαθὸν– κακόν, τετράγωνον–ἑτερόμηκες.

The Table's value as a source of associations of 'male' and 'female' lies in its internal structure which, though not always taken for granted by modern scholars,[6] is repeatedly supported in ancient *testimonia*. Aristotle himself refers to certain elements of the Table in a way that suggests that he considered the catalogue to be a coherent system. Claiming that the Pythagoreans associated the 'even' (Phys. 203a 10) and 'evil' (E.N. 1106b 29) with ἄπειρον, and that they believed the first unit to have developed from a seed (Metaphysics 1080b 16), he reveals the Table's design as two columns assembling correlated features.[7] This arrangement is not morally neutral; the position of 'evil' implicitly rates 'the female', and every other principle that is cited as the second element of its pair, as 'worse' than its opposite. Aristotle's assumption that the 'even' (Phys. 203a 10) and evil (E.N. 1106b 29) are related to ἄπειρον further suggests that the first pair, πέρας and ἄπειρον, underlies the ones that follow.[8] This predominant character of 'limit/ unlimited' is, it seems, also evoked by Plato in the Philebus (16c), where Socrates mentions an 'ancient tale' according to which all things consist of 'one' and 'many', and contain in their nature the principles of 'limit' and 'unlimitedness'.[9] We can therefore represent the Table as two columns of concepts subordinate to ἄπειρον and πέρας:

ἄπειρον	πέρας
ἄρτιον	περιττὸν
πλῆθος	ἓν
ἀριστερόν	δεξιὸν
θῆλυ	ἄρρεν
κινούμενον	ἠρεμοῦν
καμπύλον	εὐθὺ
σκότος	φῶς
ἀγαθὸν	κακόν
ἑτερόμηκες·	τετράγωνον

The Table's arrangement thus links 'male' to the noun τὸ πέρας, meaning the 'end', 'bond' or 'passage', and female to 'that which has no πέρας', that which is 'endless', 'boundless' or 'lacking in connections'. Our understanding of the Pythagorean contrast

'male-female' depends therefore on the interpretation of the first two opposites.[10] An investigation into the meaning of ἄπειρον in the Presocratic doctrines mentioned in Aristotle's writings should reveal those connotations of ἄπειρον that are most likely to fit the context of the Pythagorean Table of Opposites.[11]

1.2. Primeval Chaos

1.2.1. Between the Elements

"What is ἄπειρον?" would have been a question asked by all Milesian philosophers trying to identify the primeval element that they believed to have existed since the beginning of the Universe.[12] Though they differed in their attempts to identify the ἄπειρον principle, various substances, proposed by the philosophers as the primordial element of nature, had to meet the requirement of being ἄπειρος. Both Thales' water (Simpl. In Phys. 451ff) and Anaximenes' air (*ibid.*) are described as 'boundless'.[13] Some thinkers argued that neither water, fire, air, nor earth could be the primordial element from which all things have come (Arist. De gen. et corr. 332a 19, Phys. 187a 12). They postulated that a substance 'between the elements', 'neither air, nor water, nor fire', called simply ἄπειρον, was the original matter (Phys. 203b 12, 204 b22).[14]

Aristotle's practice of characterizing the 'boundless' through lists of elements with which it is not identical finds an explanation in some accounts of Anaximander's cosmogony. Anaximander believed, we read in Pseudo-Plutarch (Strom.2), that the heavens and all the innumerable worlds came into being through separation (ἀποκεκρίσθαι) from the first principle.[15] Boundless matter, from which the universe could have been created by separation, must have contained all the elements fused into one.[16] Anaximander would thus have chosen the adjective ἄπειρος to denote not only lack of spatial limits, but also lack of internal distinctions. A mythological analogy suggests itself immediately: the world's pre-creation state, chaos (Hes. Theog. 115ff, 700ff).

1.2.2. The Unbounded

A similar definition of ἄπειρον emerges from Aristotle's accounts of Pythagorean cosmogony.[17] All reports describe a fairly similar scenario. Elements are 'drawn' from the boundless, τοῦ ἀπείρου, to the primeval unity, called heaven (Phys. 213b 22 and Stob. Anth.1.18.1c) or τὸ ἕν (Aristot. Metaph.1091a12-17). Two passages affirm that specific elements, such as time (Anth.1.18.1c), breath, and void (Phys. 213b 22) came out of 'the unbounded', and suggest therefore that the Pythagoreans conceived τὸ ἄπειρον as a fusion of elements where everything is potentially present yet nothing is definite.[18] Putting 'a bond on the boundless' (Metaph.1091a12-17) is thus coextensive with creating a cosmic order.[19] In Presocratic cosmogonies, the adjective ἄπειρος is used to denote the primeval element that lacks external boundaries and internal divisions. The correlation of 'female' and ἄπειρον in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites links then the feminine principle with *chaos*, and the male with *cosmos*.

Another source going back to the sixth century, and believed to reveal strong Pythagorean influences,[20] suggests that the order created by imposing limits on the unlimited had an intellectual dimension. Detienne and Vernant (1974: 261-304) draw attention to the meaning of πόρος in Alcman's cosmogony, according to which the sea-goddess Thetis, helped by two personifications, Poros, 'passage, path', and Tekmar, 'fixed sign, mark', played an important role in the creation of the world.[21] The two personified terms of marine vocabulary, Poros and Tekmar, connote the powers of intellect (*ibid.* 147), and represent the action of an intelligence trying to overcome the original state of confusion (1974: 271). If, following West's interpretation (1967: 1-15), we assume that Alcman views the world as having been fashioned out of a rude mass which was ἄπορον and ἀτέκμαρτον (trackless and featureless), we should conclude that Alcman conceived his original element as not only endless, but also unstructured. Alcman's primeval stuff could

thus be defined as a mass that is only provided with features and internal connections through the divine intelligence of Tekmar and Poros.[22] The primary chaos associated with the female principle might thus be symbolically opposed to the efforts of intelligence to rationalize and organize the universe.

1.2.3. An Oriental Paradigm

Alcman's cosmogony suggests that the concept of primeval chaos associated with 'female' in the Pythagorean Table of Opposites may well be rooted in earlier mythological accounts of creation.[23] Two texts from ancient Mesopotamia, including a description of the chaotic state that preceded the creation of the world, seem to reveal interesting similarities with the concept of ἄπειρον. One of the myths of Enki ("Enki and Ninhursag") transmitted in a Sumerian text includes a striking image of the world before creation as an absence of the ordinary: predators do not hunt their prey, birds do not fly, men and women do not live, either young or old (lines 11-30).[24] No laws of nature or society apply to this primordial state where the differences between hunter and prey, young and old, men and women do not exist. A later text, one of the 'minor cosmogonies' called 'Chaldean', paints a similar picture of the non-existence of the world "when all the lands were sea"(10).[25] In describing the pre-creation state as the sea, the Chaldean cosmology echoes Ennuma elish, an older Akkadian text composed in the late second millennium.[26] Ennuma elish is an account of Marduk's victory over Tiamat, the female principle of primeval ocean represented now as water (I.5), now as a woman (I 42-44, II 11), now as *ku-bu*, a fetus or a monster (IV 128-140).[27] Before killing Tiamat, Marduk accuses her of having usurped the authority of Anu, embodiment of the fundamental order of the universe (Tablet IV, lines 76-84).[28] The female principle of water is thus linked to the primordial state of lawlessness and non-existence that we have seen described in other texts.[29]

2. Weakness of Body, Weakness of Mind

2.1. Ὕλη

The Aristotelian theory of generation ascribes to the male and female functions that seem to correspond to the roles assigned to ἄπειρον and πέρας in Pythagorean cosmogonies.[30] As ἄπειρον, the female is identified with matter (ὕλη), while the male, as πέρας in the Pythagorean cosmogony, is said to set the procreative process in motion (G.A. 732a 7ff: ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως), or to provide the *logos* and form for the new being (εἶδος e.g.: Met. 988a2ff).[31]

Both the medical writers and Aristotle define the female body in terms that parallel the Presocratics' association of the female principle with primitive matter. They consider a woman's flesh to be softer, moister and more porous than a man's (Corp. Hip. 8.12.6ff, 8.23.6ff).[32] In Aristotle's opinion, women have softer bones, their flesh is wet, cold and 'uncooked' (G.A. 766b 17f), and hence affected by an inherent lack of strength, ἀδυναμία (Met.1046a 29ff). In contrast, the male body is firm, smooth, and efficient (Physio. 806b 33-35). A man's voice is an emblem of his sound body and mind, and any change to its deep tone is the most obvious symptom of female, or effeminate nature; all those whose voices are sharp, soft and broken like a woman's are indisputably κίναιδοι (Physio. 813a 35-813b 1).[33]

Aristotle's rationalization of the gender differences in human flesh seems to depend on his view of heat as the 'informing' power (Met. 1040b 8-10) that must master the wetness when a form is created (Meteor. 379a 1). A body that has not received enough heat will not be completely 'cooked' or formed. This might well be the reasoning underlying his definition of female as a sort of incomplete male, disabled (G.A. 737a 29: ὥσπερ ἄρρεν πεπηρωμένον), or infertile (*ibid.* 728a 17: ὥσπερ ἄρρεν ἄγονον), and the motivation for his opinion that this unfinished creature is a sort of monstrosity, τέρας (*ibid.* 767b 9, cf. 775a

15).

2.2. The Chaos Within

In Aristotle's cosmological theory vital heat is not only the condition of material coherence, but also the cause of intelligence and divinity.[34] A creature with a colder, more raw physique must also have an 'uncooked' psyche. Lack of firmness is said to affect the temper as well as the bodies of all female creatures, rendering their souls as soft as their flesh (Physio. 809a 32, 810b36, 810a13-14: μαλακώτερα τὰς ψυχὰς).[35]

In the Politics (1260a 12f 197-199), Aristotle specifies the nature of this spiritual deficiency: though women are not deprived of the part of the soul responsible for deliberation, τὸ βουλευτικόν, its capacity is ἄκυρον, without authority.[36] The usual interpretation of this statement, that it refers to women's 'irrational character', lacks precision.[37] A more Aristotelian explanation could be proposed.

Aristotle describes the 'bouleutic capacity' of the human soul as that which enables people to reflect upon the means of achieving a predetermined end (cf. Guthrie1981: 351), rather than the end itself. This distinction is emphasized in the Nicomachean Ethics (1113b 3-4, 1112b 11-12): one deliberates, writes Aristotle, not about the goals (οὐ περὶ τῶν τελῶν), but about the means to achieve the goals (ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη). Since Aristotle grants to women that part of the soul which is devoted to finding ways to accomplish what the person wants, the supreme power, τὸ κῦρος, in which the female deliberative mind is deficient, is likely to be linked with the part of the soul that should guide τὸ βουλευτικόν, i.e. that provides the capacity to set goals.

Given that the ultimate ethical goal of a human being is identified as εὐδαιμονία, acting according to virtue,[38] the expression βουλευτικόν ἄκυρον means that a woman can be resourceful enough to achieve her goals, but is unable to set for herself the right goal, that is, a virtuous (and happy) life. In other words, she may be wise enough to achieve what she

chaotic intellectual power needs to be curbed by means of directives coming from outside.[39]

2.3. Female Σωφροσύνη

Equipped only with a sort of random practical intelligence (τὸ βουλευτικὸν ἄκυρον), the woman is morally impaired. Incapable of pursuing the long-term ethical goal of εὐδαιμονία, she will use her intellectual potential solely to satisfy her immediate desires. This link between femininity and incontinence is a 'topos' common in classical literature of various periods, and has been discussed elsewhere.[40]

I would like to call attention to one aspect of the classical belief that women are particularly prone to self-indulgence, especially sexual self-indulgence: the obsessive concern for female σωφροσύνη. North (1979: 47) has observed that both moral treatises and casual references from the archaic age to late antiquity repeatedly name 'modesty' as the only, or the most important virtue expected of a woman. And female self-control always means chastity.[41] Self-control is in fact not an adequate translation for female σωφροσύνη, which seems to be understood as 'proficiency in accepting control from outside', docility rather than self-control. Such a definition appears to be implied by Aristotle's well-known view (Polit.1260a 22-24), that the 'ἀρετὴ' of the ruled, i.e. women, slaves and children, is coextensive with excellence in obeying outside guidelines: their courage, justice and σωφροσύνη must be the courage, justice and σωφροσύνη of subordination. The idea that meekness is a *sine qua non* condition for a deserving woman is also reflected in Epicurus' testament transmitted by Diogenes Laertius (10.19), according to which Epicurus would have made provisions for a certain daughter of Metrodorus, on condition that she remain orderly (εὔτακτος) and obedient to the authority of her tutor (πειθαρχούση).

A treatise 'on female virtue' seems to have been a standard position in the literary output of female philosophers from the Pythagorean circle.[42] Stobaeus quotes, for example, a fairly long excerpt from an essay entitled Περὶ γυναικὸς σωφροσύνης, with

which he credits Phyntis, the daughter of Kallikrates (Anth. 3.31.8. ff = T. 151. 20 -154. 11).[43] Phyntis begins her argument with a 'functionalist' definition of virtue. There exist, she says, different kinds of virtue, adapted to different functions: sight must be good for seeing, the sense of hearing, good for hearing, a horse needs the virtue of a horse, a man, that of a man, a woman, that of a woman. And the primary virtue of a woman is temperance (σωφροσύνα), that which enables her to love and respect her husband (61d). Bravery and prudence, Phyntis explains further, "befit a man because of the strength of his soul (διὰ τὰν δύναμιν τᾶς ψυχᾶς)," while temperance—for reasons she apparently feels no need to specify—befits a woman.[44]

Phyntis is by no means the only Pythagorean to place emphasis on the female virtue of submission and self-effacement. Perictone (T. 144, 7-10) emphasizes a woman's moral obligation to live lawfully and truly "by her husband," (πρὸς δὲ τόν ἄνδρα), and to have not one thought on her own. Melissa (T. 116, 13) affirms that a spouse's will should be an unwritten law (νόμος ἄγραφος) for a woman.

Such views echo the opinion that Iamblichus ascribes to Pythagoras himself, who in one 'speech' apparently assured his female followers that "it befits women either not to oppose their husbands at all, or to think that they indeed achieve victory when they lose, defeated by their husbands (V.P. 4. 54)."[45] What Iamblichus' Pythagoras probably means by "victory" is the moral and intellectual achievement of a woman who knows enough to see that her husband knows better.

For Pythagorean philosophers, a woman's moral excellence thus depended largely on her efforts to respect the limits imposed on her by her husband. Considering that the Pythagorean ideal of the human soul finds its expression in the notion of harmony or 'cosmos within' (κόσμος ἐντί), one is tempted to look for an analogy between the belief in woman's need to follow guidelines and the early cosmogonies.[46] Just as a boundary had to

be placed on the boundless in order to create cosmos, so limits had to be imposed on a woman's nature in order to establish harmony within her soul. Damippos' discussion of reason and happiness (T. 68-69) appears in fact to encourage such a comparison: Damippos argues here that one achieves spiritual harmony when those elements of the human soul that are endowed with logic and deliberation place limits on the unlimited in human nature (ἄπειρα φύσιν); the first, he says, is fit for ruling, the second, fit to be ruled (68, 8). In the Pythagoreans' view, a woman would need some assistance in the process of setting limits to her boundless nature (ἄπειρος φύσις), which would have been considered congenitally prone to chaos. We know from Perictone that mastering desires was a requirement a woman had to meet, if she were to achieve spiritual harmony (T. 143, 1), and that, at least as far as common opinion was concerned, intemperance was as much a particularly female vice as temperance was a female virtue.[47]

The reasoning behind this intimate connection between being a woman and the need for 'modesty' or 'temperance' becomes more evident in the light of North's discussion of early Greek connotations of σώφρων (1979: 26-27). North points out that in tragedy the notion of σωφροσύνη was related to other ideas denoting order, such as κόσμος, and τάξις. She gives two convincing examples: Sophocles' Ajax concludes his speech by admitting that we must learn σωφρονεῖν, 'to accept limits' (670-677), while Euripides' Jocasta (Phoen. 451-454) tries to constrain Eteocles' ambitions, reminding him that the righteous are satisfied with what is sufficient and do not try to obtain more than is their share. If being σώφρων meant knowing one's place in the 'cosmos' and accepting the existing limits, it is not surprising that the ideal of σωφροσύνη was considered so vital for women who, because of their spiritual 'softness', were believed to be prone to transgression. The association of female nature with the 'unlimited' and of male nature with the 'limit,' which we have derived from the Table, would thus have had a spiritual as well as a 'cosmic'

dimension.

3. Εὐφημία or Timycha's Tongue

According to Iamblichus, the Pythagoreans practiced silence in order to learn to control their tongues (V.P. 31). "Among all things hard to control," he says, "the tongue is the hardest" (*ibid.* 31.194). The story of Timycha, which Iamblichus uses to illustrate this statement, suggests moreover that female tongues were considered particularly difficult to control. Timycha, as the story goes, was put to the torture by the tyrant Dionysius, who hoped to learn from her why the Pythagoreans would not tread on beans. He had reasons to expect that she would easily 'blabber out' (ἐκλαλήσειν) the mystery that he longed to unravel. The heroine represented the zenith of female weakness: she was not only "ten months pregnant," but also deprived of her husband's support.[48] However, before any Pythagorean secret could be exposed, the brave Timycha bit off her tongue and spat it out in the tyrant's face. Iamblichus explains the heroine's drastic gesture to his readers as a desire to forestall any act of weakness that the female element in her nature (τὸ θῆλυ αὐτῆς) could commit under torture. Aware of her imperfection, the brave woman cuts off the body part likely to serve in an act of treachery before her self-control is really put to trial.[49] Suspecting that her tongue is likely to obey the low instincts of τὸ θῆλυ αὐτῆς, the Pythagorean heroine follows the ethical precepts of her sect, and her self-mutilation is a strangely fitting metaphor for the acknowledgment of female weakness we find in the writings of women from the Pythagorean circle.

Mistrust of female words reveals itself once again in Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, in one of the speeches (V.P. 54) where Pythagoras is quoted as saying that a woman should speak little and with restraint about others (εὐφημεῖν τοὺς ἄλλους), and should see to it that others speak of her with the same restraint (ὁρᾶν ὁπόσα ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εὐφημήσουσι).[50] The primary meaning of εὐφημία, 'uttering words of good omen,

avoiding words of bad omen', implies the necessity of selecting words; εὐφημεῖν means to control one's words, to distinguish between good and bad, proper and improper. The idea of 'controlled speech' would correspond to other notions associated with harnessing 'boundless nature'; σωφροσύνη, the discipline of spirit, and cosmos, the order of the universe. Juxtaposing women's words and actions as objects of εὐφημία, Iamblichus' Pythagoras suggests, moreover, that anxiety about female words and anxiety about female virtue can be but two facets of one problem: woman's congenital propensity for anarchy.[51]

Conclusion

Aristotelian and Pythagorean views on the feminine converge, and moreover can be paralleled by the beliefs underlying the medical writings of the Corpus Hippocraticum and the Presocratic cosmogonies. One could explain the persistence of the idea that woman's body is soft, amorphous and weak, and that her psyche is equally weak and confused, by the possibility of mutual influences between philosophical schools, but there is an alternative, more tempting, explanation.[52] The association of 'female' with chaos and disorder may well have been neither Aristotle's nor Pythagoras' intellectual property, but rather one of those deep-rooted, pervasive beliefs that exist beyond and beside their philosophical transcriptions. Such beliefs would have been recognized and comprehended by theatre audiences with no training in philosophy.

However, Timycha's potential loquacity, so brutally restrained before it can be witnessed, is the only specific testimony of how female incontinence might manifest itself in speech. The next chapter will pursue the traces of ἄπειρος φύσις in opinions about female speech in New Comedy and its Roman adaptations.

ENDNOTES

1. *"Demophilus scripsit, Maccus vortit barbare"* (Asin.11) and *"Philemo scripsit, Plautus vortit barbare"* (Trin.19).

2. The importance of this ancient theory of gender is stressed by Derksen (1996: 2). See Allen's (1985:1-82) complete (but somewhat uncritical) catalogue of all passages in Presocratic philosophers that may have anything to do with the concept of gender.

3. Aristotle rejected both Plato's views (Rep. 2) of male and female as complementary and Empedocles' theory of double seed to formulate his concept of male-female as opposite, which parallels the views of the Pythagoreans (cf. Allen 1985: 84-88 and Derkson 1996: 31-36). Lovibond argues that even in Plato's theory of gender, one may find some reminiscences of the binary concept of the Pythagorean Table (1994: 92-100).

4. Cf. *infra*: 40.

5. Though, as Cornford has noticed (1936: 6), Aristotle probably considered the Table to be ancient (he ascribes it to Alcmaeon, a younger contemporary of Pythagoras), its antiquity has been contested. Sinnige argues that Aristotle himself appears to imply that the number of principles has not always been ten, and indeed Simplicius has a list of seven pairs, Porphyry, a list of six (1968: 68). Kirk claims that the Table as a whole does not recall any ideas of the early Pythagoreans (1983: 339), and rejects Guthrie's attempt to reconcile the Pythagorean belief in the essential unity of nature with the dualist view implied by the Table (1960: 246-247). The debate whether the Table reflects original or later Pythagorean ideas does not, however, affect its credibility as testimony for general associations linked in the Greek mind with 'the feminine'.

6. Cornford (1939: 7), Guthrie (1960: 246; 1987: 22-23), DeVogel (1966: 4, 158, 196), and more recently Carson (1995: 124) assume that the Table is structured. Kirk appears somewhat sceptical, claiming that the Table has little internal structure, but nevertheless confesses to be tempted "to infer that limit and unlimited are intended to be the basic opposites which in some sense underlie all the others, odd and even included." (1983: 339).

7. Cornford notes that the association one/seed fits the position of male in the Table of Opposites (1939: 19). Baldry argues that Presocratic cosmogonies depended on medical imagery and drew upon contemporary knowledge about the development of an embryo in the mother's womb. In the light of his argumentation, the fact that the concept of 'limit' in Pythagorean cosmogonies is identified with sperm also reflects the analogy between the origins of the world and the development of an embryo (1932: 31).

8. Most scholars agree that some of the pairs are probably of an earlier date than others. According to De Vogel (1966:4), and Sinnige (1968: 43), this is the case of the limit/ unlimited and the one/ many pairs. Kirk (1983: 33) believes limit/ unlimited and even/ odd to be the earliest pairs. The contrast male/ female also appeared quite early in the philosophical descriptions of origins of the world. It seems, for example, to be an essential cosmic opposition for Parmenides, who, in his description of the rings of the universe, says that from the middle of the rings made of opposing elements (sunlight/ night, density/ thickness), the supreme goddess sends female to mix with male, male with female (Apud Aetium 2.7.1). Parmenides' emphasis on the opposition male-female leads Kahn to believe that together with hot/ cold, dry/ wet and bright/ dark, male/ female might have been one of

the rudimentary pairs of opposites in the oldest Milesian cosmologies (1960: 161).

9. It is generally assumed that the 'ancient theory' should be identified with Pythagoras or Pythagoreanism. Cornford sees the passage in the Philebus as evidence confirming that the first pair of opposites is also the dominant one (1939: 7). Cf. Gosling (1975: 164) Waterfield (1982: 60n1) and Frede (1993: 8n2). See *contra* Benitez who points out that the identification of Plato's 'ancient theory' with Pythagoreanism is far from evident given that ἄπειρον was commonly used in Presocratic philosophy, and that by Philolaus' time the terms πέρας and ἄπειρον were already well established (1983: 51-53).

10. Onians (1951: 310-334), Seligman (1962:118) and Chantrain (1957: 871) affirm that 'bound' is likely to be the original meaning of πέρας, while Kahn (1960: 230-239) prefers 'passage'. Opinion is divided when it comes to defining the type of boundaries denoted by πέρας. Onians (1951: 310-334) argues that the original meaning would have been that of a 'circumscribing band or bond'; Seligman (1962:118) assumes that 'limit' would be the basic sense. Gottschalk insists on 'indefinite in extent or number' as the original meaning of ἄπειρον. Chantrain (1957: 871) renders ἀπείρων as *sans fin, sans terme* and ascribes the meaning of *infini, sans limite* to the Attic form ἄπειρος.

11. It should be stressed that the following is not an investigation of the ideas of Presocratic philosophers, but merely an attempt to establish the meaning Aristotle ascribed to the term 'boundless' used by Milesian and Pythagorean philosophers. See Capizzi (1990: 51-53) for arguments suggesting that Aristotle's understanding of Anaximander's doctrine may in fact be quite different from the original concept.

12. Aristotle (Phys. 203a16) writes that "all philosophers of nature (οἱ δὲ περὶ φύσεως πάντες) propose some other kind of element for the 'boundless' (τῷ ἀπείρῳ)." Simplicius (In Phys. 24.13), reproducing Theophrastus' account of Anaximander's first principle, refers to "those who say that this (i.e. the beginning of all things) is one, moving and boundless." Cf. Benitez (1989: 51) and his reference to Huffman's claim (1981: 12-13) that Philolaus's understanding of ἄπειρον does not differ from that ascribed to Presocratic philosophers.

13. Other instances could be quoted that imply that the adjective is often used in descriptions of elements, for example, the 'limitless darkness' in Pindar fr. 130.8, the 'boundless air' of the Orphics (fr. 941), the Homeric 'boundless sea' and 'boundless earth' (24.342, 24.545). Looking at these two collocations of ἄπειρος, water and air, one is tempted to assume that this adjective denotes not only 'a thing that lacks limits' in a purely spatial sense, but also matter without any visible texture. Ἄπειρος could thus mean 'limitless' as well as 'easily moulded' or 'unstructured'. This physical property of the air ('mollitia') is, in Cicero's mind, automatically associated with effeminacy (De nat. 2.66): the Stoics, Cicero tells us, deify the air under the name Iuno, and they choose to feminize it because "there is nothing softer than the air."

14. Kirk (1983: 111) remarks that according to Aristotle, this putative stuff would have been either half-fire, half-air or half-air, half-water. See Kirk (*op. cit.* 113n1) for references to other examples of substances 'between elements'.

15. Simplicius (In Phys. 24, 17) differs only slightly in his wording when he writes about

an *apeiron* essence (φύσιν ἄπειρον), from which all the heavens and the worlds in them came into being.

16. It is probably this excerpt that Cornford had in mind when he argued (1965: 178) that in Anaximander's cosmogony, the world was formed by separating out the opposite powers, and that the 'unlimited' must thus mean 'indistinct', 'without internal divisions'. Rivaud (1960: 42-43), Kahn (1974: 110) and Gurtie (1960: 78-79, 83-85) agree with Cornford's interpretation. Kirk (1983: 110) points out that it may not be sufficient to define Anaximander's ἄπειρον as 'indefinitely huge in extent' since one would naturally have assumed the original stuff to be without boundaries, and such a description would not have been "sufficiently remarkable" as the sole characteristic of Anaximaner's first principle. He admits that the general point made by Cornford seems quite probable, but expresses a certain reserve based on the absence of early examples of the adjective being used clearly in a non-spatial sense.

17. Burnet (1930: 108-109) argues that Pythagorean cosmogony depends in fact on Ionian concepts. He points out that the theory of 'boundless breath' ascribed to the Pythagoreans by Aristotle (Phys. 213b 22) is reminiscent of Anaximenes, and that Petron, one of the early Pythagoreans quoted by Plutarch (De def. orac. 422b), seems to echo the Milesian doctrine of the plurality of worlds.

18. Cf. also Van Raalte's comments on Theophrastus' Metaphysics 5b15-16 and 6a25-6b1.

19. Unlike the very positive infinity of the Milesian philosophers, the Pythagorean term clearly has a negative meaning: of the cosmic void and indeterminate principle (cf. Sinnige 1968: 62).

20. For a detailed analysis, see West (1967: 7-11).

21. The reconstruction of Alcman's cosmology is based on a papyrus commentary on Alcman edited by Lobel in Oxyrhynchus Papyri 24. 2390 fr 2 (=Page 1962: fr 5). For a detailed description see Barret (1961 *passim*), West (1963: 154-156, 1967: 1-7).

22. Detienne and Vernant also refer to a mythological space which, as the sea, is described as ἀπέραντος or ἄπειρον, the Tartarus (o.c.276). This mythical abyss, they point out, is characterized as a space without marks or directions where even gods, be they as clever as Hermes, cannot find their way (ἀμέχανος Ad Herm.157). If we can assume that the lack of boundaries of Tartarus is identical with that of primeval elements, the accounts of a lack of any mark or direction in Tartarus would suggest that the primitive matter would also be devoid of any internal structure. Such a negative image would in fact coincide with the meaning of "cosmic void and indeterminate principle" that Sinnige ascribes to the Pythagorean ἄπειρον (1968: 62).

23. The possible Oriental origins of the concept of 'boundless' are referred to by Rivaud (1960: 44), Sinnige (1968: 52-53) and West (1983: 101-104). Kirk (1983: 12n.1) suggests that certain Homeric references could contain allusions to Babylonian and Egyptian mythological ideas and points out (*op. cit.* 92) the links between Thales' concepts and the Babylonian myth of Tiamat and Apsu. Babylonian and Egyptian influences in Thales' thought are also mentioned by Revel (1968: 21, 41). Vernant (1969: 286-297) compares

Zeus' struggle with Typhon with Marduk's victory over Tiamat in Ennuma elish. Guthrie discusses both the importance of the Orient for early Greek philosophers in general and points out the parallels between the teachings of Pythagoras and those of Zoroaster (1960: 29-30). Oriental motifs may also have been introduced to Greek thought via the Orphic cosmogonies, which are likely to represent an adaptation of an ancient Near Eastern myth of creation. For the Orphic origins of the Pythagorean cosmogony see Cornford (1912: 198), Sinnige (1968: 55). Kirk (1983: 220-222) analyzes of the affinities between the Orphic and the Pythagorean teachings.

24. See Clifford (1994: 35 n. 52 , 36) for a list of all translations of the entire text (278 lines) and his own rendering of the passage describing pre-creation.

25. A term introduced by Bottéro (1985) and adopted by Clifford 1994 to describe a corpus of short texts written mainly in the first millennium B.C (cf. esp. 54-55). I consulted Clifford's (1994: 62-64) and Heidel's (1967: 62-63) translations of the Chaldean Cosmogony.

26. Cf. Clifford (1994: 64-65).

27. For a translation of all extant tablets, see Heidel (1963: 18-60). Brandon (1993: 96-109) and Clifford (1994: 88-92) quote excerpts concerning creation. Speiser in his A.N.E.T. translation (quoted by Clifford) renders *ku-bu* as 'monster' while Garelli and Leibovici (1959) insist that the word means 'fetus'. Heidel (op.cit. 42n.93), quoting Thureau-Dangin (1922: 81), makes a curious decision to translate *ku-bu* as 'abortion', and offers an explanation that seems to be based on his own religious views rather than on his knowledge of ancient Near East: "The monstrous corpse of Tiamat is here compared to a thing as repulsive as abortion." Brandon (op.cit. 69, 77) and Clifford (op. cit. 90n. 63) suggest that Tiamat may well be an Akkadian version of an even more ancient sea-goddess, the primordial creatrix, Nammu.

28. See Brandon (1963: 99).

29. Vernant (1969: 288) in the margin of his discussion of parallels between Zeus' struggle with Typhon and Marduk's victory over Tiamat, describes her as "a female monster, an incarnation of the powers of disorder and of return to formlessness and chaos." For Iranian parallels to the concept of ἄπειρον, not concerning however an association of boundless with female, see West (1971: 87-99).

30. A link between the Pythagorean Table of Opposites and Aristotle's concept of male and female has been noted by Clark (1975: 207), who writes that Aristotle "shows signs of agreeing" with the Pythagoreans "and adds various *yin* concepts—cold, passivity (De Gen. An. 765b1f), matter (Phys. 193a 22ff), back and bottom (De inc. 706a 24f). More recently, Freudenthal (1995) has argued that the theory of vital heat in Aristotle's biological treatises gravitates around the same doctrine as theories transmitted by Diogenes' of Apollonia On Fleshes and the "Pythagorean Notebooks" (Diog. Laert. 8.25-33), and is in fact a de-theologized version of the Presocratic ideas.

31. Carson (1990: 154) calls attention to the Pythagorean Table while discussing Aristotle's association of matter with female, and of form with male. See also Föllinger (1996: 139-159) for a detailed discussion of the role of the contrast εἶδος–ὕλη in the Aristotelian theory of procreation.

32. The ancient medical beliefs about women and the female body transmitted by the Corpus Hippocraticum and their underlying social and moral concepts have recently received much scholarly attention. Cf. for example Manuli (1980, 1983), Rousselle (1980), Hanson (1990, 1992), Dean Jones (1989, 1991, 1992, 1993). See Föllinger (1996: 23-55) for a comprehensive commentary on the excerpts of the Corpus dealing specifically with gender distinction. On the association of woman with matter in Aristotle's writings see, for example, Cantarella (1989: 59-60) and Sissa (1992: 67-73). The defects of the female are analyzed in Sissa (1983 *passim*).

33. See Carson 1995 (*passim*) for a perceptive discussion of ancient and modern prejudices combining the qualities of sound and gender.

34. For a discussion of vital heat, see Freudenthal (1995: 56-59).

35. It is generally assumed that Aristotle's ethical ideas reflect his biological concepts. The view that psychological differentiae of the two sexes can be related to their physiological constitution has been expressed by Lloyd, who points out that "one of the key factors is the quality of blood, though here too many of Aristotle's formulations are imprecise and very difficult to assess." (1983: 100). Aristotle's zeal in transposing prejudices surrounding the concepts of the female role in procreation into ethics has been stressed by Horowitz (1965), Campese (1986), and Sissa (1990).

36. 'Deliberative faculty' is the standard English translation proposed first by Jowett 1905 (cf: Ellis 1912: 'power of determination', Fortenbaugh 1977: 'deliberative faculty'; Föllinger 1996: 197, 'plannende Vermögen'). The statement concerning women is part of a longer exposé demonstrating how different classes of the ruled partake in the 'planning capacity' of the soul (slaves are said to be totally deprived of it, children to have it in an undeveloped form).

37. This influential (see Föllinger 1996: 198n81) interpretation of Aristotle's statement has been proposed by Fortenbaugh (1977: 139) who, quoting Medea's confession (1079) that anger (θυμός) is stronger than her deliberations (βουλεύματα), argues that Aristotle intends to say that a woman's reflections are easily overruled by her emotions. More recently, the view that Aristotle contrasts male rationality with female irrationality has been advanced by Allen (1985: 109), Campese (1986: 24) and Sherman (1989: 154n). Föllinger criticises this point of view, arguing that the passage in question implies in fact that the 'analytic faculty' of a woman is identical with that of a man, but that it lacks the capacity to transpose the deliberation into action (*op.cit.* 198-199).

38. Cf. Guthrie (1981: 340-341, and 351), Clark (1975: 145-163) and Roberts (1989: 187-190).

39. Their minds being deprived of an organizing principle, women would be unable to distinguish right from wrong and true from false. Cicero implies that *mulierculae* indeed tend to make the same choices as the other two groups of people who, in Aristotle's view, suffer from some deficiency of the deliberative faculty, that is, children and slaves: women share the slaves' and children's taste for cheap entertainment (Cic. Off. 1. 57), and, like children, are prone to believe any nonsense (Disp. 1.36-37).

40. See Carson (1990: 138-142) for some striking examples implying a link between female wantonness and wetness. Just's indifferent enumeration of 'the attributes of

gender' (1989: 153-159) and Thornton's chapter on the 'Charybdis of appetite' (1997: 70-74) offer a collection of Greek *loci* usually quoted to illustrate the ancient belief in female incontinence. Cf. also Henry (1992: 259) on women's immoderation in eating and drinking, and Rabinowitz (1991: 51) on the association female/sexual in Greek tragedy.

41. North 1966 (21, 32, 59) and Carson (1995: 126).

42. For the dating of the women Pythagoreans, see Thesleff (1965: 99) and Waithe (1987b: 11-75).

43. All references to the Pythagorean writings of the Hellenistic period marked by "T." give the page and paragraph numbers in Thesleff 1965.

44. Waithe (1987: 29) argues that Phyntis was perhaps implying that women's cultivation of virtue is limited by the social structure, not by their nature. The Pythagorean philosophers' view on female virtues has been discussed in some detail by Lambropoulou (1995: 122-134). Lambropoulou's presentation of the Pythagorean thought seems, however, somewhat biased, since the author takes into consideration only those statements that admit that women can be virtuous (e.g. Perictone T 142, 17, Phyntis T 152, 11), ignoring any ideas that show the place of female excellence in the context of other human virtues. Such a global vision is offered e.g. by Phyntis, who divides human virtues into three distinct categories, saying that some of them are proper (ἴδια) to men, such as being a good general, citizen, or leader, while others are proper to women, such as excellence at staying inside and serving her husband. Only a few, ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, φρόνησις, can be achieved by both men and women (Phyntis T 152, 9-11).

45. De Vogel (1966: 133) expresses her admiration for Pythagoras' "remarkable psychological insight," which she sees reflected in the fact that, instead of reproaching women, he praises them as 'just' for their ability to share, which is foreign to male nature.

46. For the notion of 'cosmos' in the Pythagorean doctrine, see Archytas (T. 42-43), Ekphantos (T. 79, 84), Kallikratidas (T.105), Metopos (T. 118), Okkelos (T. 124).

47. Stobaeus' Coniugalia Paecepta (Anth. 4. 23) furnish many further *florilegia* glorifying female submission. Two examples: another Pythagorean philosopher, Theano (4. 23. 54), when asked what is appropriate for a woman, is quoted as answering, "to please her husband;" Socrates reportedly said that while a man must obey the laws of the *polis*, a woman must obey the disposition, ἤθη, of the men of her house (4. 23. 58).

48. Gourevitch (1984: 169-170) asserts that both the Greeks and the Romans believed that ten months to be the most likely period of human gestation, and quotes Aulus Gellius' convenient summary of various ancient views on this subject (II, XVI, 1-5, 9-10, 12, 21). Cf. also Ulp. Dig. 38.6.3.11, where 10 months is considered as the *terminus post quem* a child could not inherit from his deceased father.

49. "ἐμφαίνουσα ὅτι, εἰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν βασάνων τὸ θῆλυ αὐτῆς νικηθὲν συναναγκασθείη τῶν ἐχεμυθομένων τι ἀνακαλύψαι, τὸ μὴν ὑπηρετῆσον ἐκποδὼν ὑπ' αὐτῆς περικέκοπται."

50. This precept is reminiscent of the well-known passage of the Periclean speech (Thuc.

2.45.2) and reinforces the interpretation that Pericles' advice—not to talk and not to become a topic of others' talk—is addressed to all women, not just to the 'privileged' class of War Widows, as Thornton (1997: 254n. 70) implies on the authority of Nomodeiktes (1993).

51. Restrictions also had to be imposed, in Pythagoras' view, on female sexuality: sexual continence is a pervasive motif in the Pythagorean discussions of female σωφροσύνη (e.g Phyntis: T. 152, 20; Perictone: T. 144, 10).

52. Platonizing Pythagorean theory occurred within the Academy and was accepted by Peripatus. Burkert (1962: 55) argues that Plato's followers have passed off (*ausgegeben*) his theory of numbers as Pythagorean, cf. Philip (1966:10-12).

CHAPTER III

Stranger Within, Stranger Without: Female Register in New Comedy

1. The Philosophizing of Thalia

Among Mitylene mosaics representing scenes from Menander's plays the portraits of Socrates, Cebes and Simmias have been discovered, alongside the playwright's portrait. The presence of images of three Athenian philosophers in Mitylene bears witness to Menander's reputation as a 'philosophizing' author,[1] a reputation he also enjoys in the literary tradition that makes him a student of Theophrastus (Diog. Laert. 5. 36), a friend of Theophrastus, Epicurus (Alkiphron 4.19.14), and Demetrios of Phaleron (Diog. Laert. 5. 79). Though the historical accuracy of these reports is doubtful, they nevertheless offer us insight into Menander's reception by erudite Greek readers, who found the plays they knew to be so strongly influenced by philosophical ideas that they felt prompted to explain them through Menander's personal sympathies.

Parallels between reflections on human nature transmitted in the Greek fragments and Roman adaptations of New Comedy and the ethical doctrines of fourth-century B.C.E. philosophical schools have received much scholarly attention.[2] Stoic, Epicurean, and Pythagorean influences have been pointed out, but the most convincing argument has been made for a Peripatetic background.[3] The ideas expressed in Menander, Plautus, and Terence have been demonstrated to parallel the ethical and social doctrine of Aristotle.[4] It has been pointed out that Menander's art, especially his treatment of characters, reflects the Peripatetic theory of aesthetics.[5] Philemon's Thesauros, adapted into the Plautine Trinummus, reveals an influence from Peripatetic ethics in the presentation of characters, their actions, and their motivations (Fantham 1977).

The reflections on woman's nature and speech, and the representation of female

characters, are naturally contingent upon New Comedy's intellectual background, which is rooted, as has been established, in Greek ethical doctrines. Below I discuss the evidence drawn from the fragments of New Comedy and from Peripatetic writings that, because of their emphasis on gender issues, prove to be the most fruitful source of reflections on female mind and speech. It is not, however, my intention to evince the playwrights' Peripatetic proselytism. Comic references to philosophical arguments cannot always be taken at face value: often exploited by the playwrights for various dramatic purposes, they have often been presented with a certain irony.[6] Moreover, labelling ideas about female nature as the intellectual property of one school or another would be difficult, since some of the similarities noted may in fact result from the shared 'cultural background' of the philosophical texts.[7] I merely hope to point out some correlations between the beliefs about women's behaviour and speech expressed in New Comedy and the notion of 'boundless nature', and to demonstrate that this basic definition of the feminine should prove an efficient and informing model for the interpretation of female speech patterns.

1.1. Limiting the Unlimited

1.1. 1. The Outside and the Inside

References to the etiquette of everyday life, which required a woman to be enclosed within the physical boundaries of her *oikos*, are the most rudimentary form of the idea that limits must be imposed on female behaviour.[8] The walls of the *oikos* divided the Greek space into two worlds, the inside and the outside, and the social roles of the male and the female were defined through their position in respect to these boundaries.[9] Aristotle (Oec. 1344 1-5) explains that it is the man's duty to defend the inside and provide it with goods from the outside; the woman must tend to the *oikos* and watch over the goods brought there by the male. Consequently, the man must cross the boundaries; the woman, however, must never do so. Her actions should always be directed inward, never outward. Aristotle (*ibid.*) warns

that contact with the outside can in fact jeopardize a woman's health. Theophrastus appears to reinforce the concept of the ideal female figure as being turned towards the interior of the house, literally facing the inside, since he writes that even eye-contact with the outside world may prove destructive for a woman (Theophr. fragm. 157).[10]

Fragments of New Comedy evoke this division of space. The street door, the passage between the two worlds, is described as the boundary (πέρας), established by law, outside of which a married woman should not trespass (Men. 815 K-A).[11] Neither should an unmarried woman: Kore fears πληγὰς if she is discovered outside (Dysk. 205). Tellingly, it is the man's responsibility to control the traffic between the inside and ouside. Davus, discovering that Kore has left her house, is scandalised, but he does not blame the girl for her behaviour: it is her father's duty to safeguard her (Dysk. 223-225).[12] In contrast, the ideal young man, Gorgias, is given a line where he declares that under no circumstances would he leave his mother alone at home (Dysk. 617-619). A fragment of Philemon (120) formulates a precept which transposes to a moral dimension the physical confinement of the woman inside her husband's house: a woman should obey the man of the house, and should never best him. A woman who overcomes her husband is an immense atrocity (cf. Men. 794, Jambl. V.P. 4. 54):

> ἀγαθῆς γυναικός ἐστιν, ὦ Νικοστράτη,
> μὴ κρείττον' εἶναι τἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ὑπήκοον·
> γυνὴ δὲ νικῶσ' ἄνδρα κακόν ἐστιν μέγα.

In suggesting that a woman's virtue is a man's responsibility, the fragments express ideas that coincide with Aristotle's concept of the female virtue of subordination and with the Pythagorean emphasis on female submission: a woman's duty is to follow instructions; the rest is beyond her control.

1.1.2. Marriage: the Sea of Trouble

Complaints about marriage in general, and about marrying wealthy women in particular, are

commonplace in Middle and New Comedy.[13] The criticism of wealthy wives, as Arnott pointed out (1996: 442), can be paralleled with Aristotle's observation (E.N. 1161a1) that "women with dowries sometimes rule." But there exists another, allegedly Peripatetic, source that reveals precise correlations with the portrayal of marriage by the comic fragments: Saint Jerome in Adversus Iovianinum (1.47-8) quotes a passage from a *liber aureus de nuptiis*, written, as he asserts, by Theophrastus.[14] The narrator of Jerome's essay and one speaker in Menander's fragments are like-minded enough to formulate the same ostensibly witty concept about choosing a wife: marrying is a type of shopping, and men should be allowed to choose their wives the way they browse among other goods (Adv. Jov. 47. 24-27 and Men. 804). This matrimonial market would, moreover, be expected to have a liberal policy on returns, and both sources produce lists of features that should entitle the husband to 'return' a wife.[15] It is worth noting that most 'defects' ennumerated reflect the topos of female incontinence: a woman who is prone to anger (ὀργίλη, *iracunda*), arrogant (χαλεπή, *superba*), or empty-minded (ἀγνώμος, *fatua*) would not pass the test; a blabbermouth, λάλος, would also face rejection (cf. Men. 65).

A good woman, as one can read in Diphilos' Syrinx (114) is hard to find. If, however, against all odds, a man finds the *rara avis*, and marries her, he still has to pay with his peace of mind.[16] Neither the fragments nor Jerome specify the reason underlying the wives' disquieting properties, but a metaphorical rationale may be derived from one fragment of Menander, featuring a married man advising another man not to take a wife. The speaker chooses a parable suggesting that assumptions about woman's unpredictable nature may lie behind the Greek man's matrimonial anxiety: whoever marries embarks upon a sea of trouble (Men. 64. 6: πέλαγος πραγμάτων) from which there is no escape. This association is turned into a joke in Anaxilas (34), where someone explains that the woman is like the sea, because she is nauseating.[17]

Female antagonism towards remaining within prescribed limits translates into the dowered wife's insatiable passion for power: once allowed to rule within the *oikos*, she is ready to defend her domain by means of insults and poison. On top of that, she cannot control her sexual appetite and must find an outlet for it either inside or outside the *oikos*. Jerome quotes Theophrastus' register of a wealthy matron's retainers, whose names "serve as a disguise for paramours:" a handsome slave, an administrator with ringletted head, and a eunuch, "castrated for (her) long and safe pleasure;"(Adv.Jov. 47.31-34). Likewise, a comedy character fearing the evil passions of a wife (ἐπιθυμίαι κακαί) imagines a lover (μοιχὸς) 'wanton' in the marriage-bed (Men. 508 7-8).

Though one must treat conclusions based on fragmentary evidence with some reserve, the fact that most fragments discussing marriage sound strikingly similar may well be significant. Unless, by some strange coincidence, the bulk of New Comedy lines celebrating conjugal life and female nature have been lost, it would appear that most characters were given lines bitterly denouncing wives on the grounds of their arrogance, ambition, irascibility, lust, mindlessness, and loquacity, features also consistently ascribed to them (if one can trust St. Jerome) by Theophrastus.[18]

1.2. 'Ethical Diction' and Female Speech

1.2.1. Λαλία

Among Theophrastus' definitions of personalities, many begin with a description of the character's verbal behaviour.[19] Such definitions are offered not only for the features of character intrinsically connected with speech, such as ἀδολεσχία (3.1) or κακολογία (28.1), but also for other types of personality that are not associated automatically with verbal behaviour, such as περιεργία (13.1) or ἀναισθησία (14.1). This practice, implying that people's speech spontaneously discloses their personality, shows the reverse side of the rhetorical manuals' assumption that one must give fictitious speakers words that are

congruent with their personalities. The remarks on 'ethical diction' found in Menander's fragments are formulated, like Theophrastus' vignettes, by observers of human speech and nature, who stress that words are the key to the speaker's mind. If in general a man's character can be read from his words (Men. 66: ἀνδρὸς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται), those who speak a lot run the greatest risk of disclosing their personality (Men. 693).

We can thus assume that references to women's garrulity point to presuppositions about female nature. Myrtile (Men. 65) incarnates the talkativeness that Timycha was so anxious to keep in check. Once accosted, Myrtile sets the record for chattering: πέρας ποιεῖ λαλιᾶς: she can out-talk even the famous mechanical cymbal of Dodona, for unlike that engine, she rings at night. The power driving this human *perpetuum mobile* is so strong that it would be easier to restrain (καταπαύσαι) the wind-driven mechanism than Myrtile's babbling.[20] Significantly, this astounding loquacity is not merely recorded: the speaker feels that it is necessary to limit it (καταπαύσαι ταύτην λαλοῦσαν).[21] The assumption that the chatter will not end by itself, and that one must put a stop to it, reproduces the basic, almost 'cosmic' dimension of the association of 'female' with ἄπειρον, implying lack of outward limits.

Another fragment touches upon a different facet of the task of circumscribing female nature and speech: it stipulates that the woman should speak second, because the man must lead in everything, implying that words must be limited so as to fit within the system of social boundaries. Suggesting that in verbal exchange, as in everything, the man must lead and the woman must follow, Menander's character formulates a synthesis of two Aristotelian concepts: the postulate of congruence between the speaker and his words (Rhet. 1408a 25) and the distinction between male and female nature as that of ruler and ruled (Pol. 1254 b 15).[22]

Because of the woman's interior chaos, male speakers must beware of information

that 'passes through' her mind and mouth. Antiphanes (245) jokes that women are such notorious liars, that the only statement the veracity of which cannot be doubted, even if it comes out of a female mouth, is that the speaker will not be alive after her death:

> ἐγὼ γυναικὶ δ' ἔν τι πιστεύω μόνον,
> ἐπὰν ἀποθάνῃ μὴ βιώσεσθαι πάλιν,
> τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἀπιστῶ πάνθ' ἕως ἂν ἀποθάνῃ.

Anonymous speakers in Menander affirm that telling the truth is not a female custom (808), and that woman's nature is simply bereft of truth (814). A fragment of Philemon (177 Kock) implies that female ears, as well as female lips, cannot be trusted. It is necessary to be very careful in committing one's own thoughts to the light-weight race (ἐλαφρὸν γένος), especially when it comes to morally doubtful secrets, which can fall on too fertile a ground if they are entrusted to a woman.

This evidence from the fragments, tantalizingly incomplete as it is, nevertheless does allow us to observe that female speech as it is portrayed appears to be adverse to limits and moral discipline. If termination of Myrtile's logorrhea requires input from outside, and if vigilance must be applied to anything women say and hear, it is because, like the female mind, female words must have male supervision.[23]

1.2.2. The Enigma of Kind Words

A fragment of Anaxilas (22) sheds more light on the intimate link between the mistrust inspired by female words and the assumption that woman's nature is boundless and subversive. The speaker of the fragment (15-24) compares three courtesans to three mythological monsters, Skylla, Charybdis and Siren, who through their stories and iconography symbolize the fragility of the boundaries between woman and beast.[24] The first two, mocked for their appetite, are compared to Charybdis, the daughter of Earth transformed into a monster for having devoured Geryon's oxen, and to Skylla, whose lower body was agape with six voracious maws; the third is ridiculed for the discrepancy between

her human voice and her bird-like body.[25] All *hetaerae*, we are told, speak like another incongruous mythological creature, the Theban Sphinx, concealing their ogreish habits behind words of love and friendship:

Σφίγγα Θηβαίαν δὲ πάσας ἔστι τὰς πόρνας καλεῖν,
αἳ λαλοῦσ' ἁπλῶς μὲν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἐν αἰνιγμοῖς τισιν,
ὡς ἐρῶσι καὶ φιλοῦσι καὶ σύνεισιν ἡδέως. (22. 22-24)

Women must thus, paradoxically, be feared (Men. 809: δεδιέναι) when they fashion utterances with kind words (Men. 809: χρηστοῖς λόγοις); a woman who speaks kindly is a terror beyond measure (Men. 806: φόβος ὑπερβάλλων). Sostratos, in his troubled soliloquy (Dis Exapaton, 18-30), goes even further: he fears that his girlfriend can enslave Moschos (19) and even persuade Sostratos himself with her oaths (24), suggesting that a woman's words can put even a well-informed listener in jeopardy. No comment is offered, however, to elucidate the question of whence the woman's words derive their power to influence the listener despite the mistrust they inspire. We will later attempt to disentangle this enigma in Roman adaptations of New Comedy.

2. *Maccus vortit barbare*

The ideas discovered in the few crumbs of Greek plays left to us will now be compared with the reflections on female speech and nature inherent in the comedies of Plautus. The shape in which the texts of Plautus have survived (incontestably superior to the shattered condition of Greek New Comedy should enable us to establish how the speculations about female nature relate to the dramatic action of the plays, and should shed some light on the question of whether the association of female to boundless is indeed likely to have informed the linguistic characterization of women in New Comedy.[26]

2.1. *Modice et Modeste Vivere*

The characters in the Latin plays and the speakers of the New Comedy fragments prove like-minded in their respect for 'proper limits'. *Modus* 'due measure', *modestus*, and

modestia seem to offer a Roman parallel to the Greek notion of moral boundaries.[27] *Modus* derives its connotations from the idea of measure of surface.[28] It is a model to be reproduced: a unit of measurement (Varr. R.R. 1.10.1.), the desirable size of a human body (Cels. 7. 18. 10), the customary length of a spear (Nep. Iph. 1.4.), the prescribed amount of medication (Cat. De Agri, 156.6.7). From this basic notion of a paradigm for the right physical size, the metaphorical meaning of the limit to be imposed on human actions was developed.[29]

Modus, the testimonies suggest, needs most urgently to be applied to the enjoyment of life. In what seems to be its primary 'ethical' significance, *modus* refers to the due portion of food and drink; one not too generous, as attested to in the rebuke against a character who *convivat sine modo* in Ennius Satire 1, but not too scarce either, as Pliny's allusion to excessive fasting suggests (Plin. Nat. 26.10). Plutarch testifies that alimentary abstinence was considered an important manifestation of virtue by Cato, who apparently ate simple and often uncooked meals (Plut. Cat. Maior 4.2, 4.4), and criticised obesity and the taste for luxury in others as a symptom of moral disorder (*ibid.* 9.6). This aspect of modesty is not unknown to Plautine *personae*: a *servus modestus*, one who requires little food and drink, represents no doubt a thrifty farmer's ideal of a domestic (Men. 971, Stich. 693).

Roman morality also knows the measure of passion proper for a man. The famous anecdote about Cato praising a young man who has visited a brothel once, but, as Pseudo-Acron adds, reproaching the youth after his second visit, is a perfect illustration of this concept of proportion (cf. Hor. Sat. I.2.31, ff).[30] If, as we read in the Bacchides, a moderate intake of love is a young man's legitimate need,[31] he is nevertheless expected to observe due limits, *temperare*, and to beware of transgressing social conventions (Epid. 111). These conventions, mockingly summarized by Palinurus (Curc. 37f), required that the

object of legitimate passion be either a slave or a *meretrix*: *Dum ted abstineas nupta, vidua, virgine, iuventute et pueris liberis, ama quidlibet*. The narrow space accorded for love in an ideal citizen's industrious life shrinks further with age (Asin. 934, Cas. 239, Merc. 305): the *senex* is expected to demonstrate exemplary restraint in 'this business', *temperare istis artibus* (Merc. 982).

Men who refuse to limit their pleasures foresake their dignity.[32] Gluttons (Stich. 193-195) and misers alike (Aul. 720-726) despise themselves. The virulently contagious incontinence of womanizers disarranges all aspects of their existence, affecting their moral and intellectual capacities. Charinus confesses that his passion has rendered him unrestrained, irrepressible and unjust (*intemperans, non modestus, iniurius*, Merc. 54). Pistoclerus, with his mental abilities impaired by his love for Bacchis, realizes too late that he is incapable of reflection (Bacch. 614: *sine modo et modestia sum*). Such are the inner symptoms of immoderation. A lustful man can, however, be recognized even before one has time to observe his actions. He smells of perfume and saunters slowly down the street (Cas. 240).[33] His pace would probably be too slow by the civic standards of the *advocati*, who insist that citizens must take moderate steps, so as to avoid emulating the haste of a bustling slave: "*Liberos homines per urbem modico magi' par est gradu ire, servoli esse duco festinantem currere.*"(Poen. 522-523).[34] More interestingly, there is also something wrong with the immodest man's speech. A protagonist of a love-story includes *multiloquium* and *parumloquium* (Merc. 31) in his flamboyant description of the symptoms of a lover's decadence (24-36).[35] Among the numerous *matrices* for righteously Roman behaviour, we can therefore also count particular limits to speech.

2.2. *Modus Muliebris Nullus Est*

While certain male *personae* may have a hard time measuring up to the moral standards of modesty, female characters are described as being congenitally incapable of observing

limits. Cleareta's desire for money is unquenchable (Asin. 167). Leaena's amorous passion for wine (Curc. 110) has no limits.[36] Women's incapacity to keep track of time is so hopeless, jokes the pale lover in the Miles (624: *umbra*), that the time spent waiting for a woman is longer than the same amount of time wasted for a different reason (*ibid.*1293-1295). One would-be *hetaera*, commenting on the time and effort women spend on grooming, formulates the underlying reason very clearly: "*Postremo modus muliebris nullus est* (Poen. 230)." After all, woman knows no limit.

Plautus, however, would not be himself if he were not to ridicule this principle by giving to some female *personae* lines revealing, ironically, the speakers' great sense of *modus*. To enhance the burlesque of such a concept, female advocates of moderation are always contrasted with male personae who are *sine modo*. Virgo (in vain) lectures her gluttonous father on the charms of a well-measured life (Persa 346); Cleustrata, married to the lecherous Lysidamus, makes the manly decision to forgive him in order not to prolong play (Cas.1006); the patient wives of the Stichus, teased by their ostensibly perjurious father, give him a lecture on the importance of *fides* between a man and his son-in-law (Stich. 129-131).[37] When men behave like women, women behave like men.

2.3. The Immodest Tongue

Just as a man's immoderation is allegedly betrayed by his speech and demeanour, so is woman's boundless nature manifest in certain unmistakable symptoms.

2. 3. 1. *Clamor Clarus sine Modo*

In theatre, the 'otherness' of female words would have been emphasized most evidently by the actor's voice. One can conjecture that female impersonators of the Roman theatre would have been trained to imitate the female voice, and that the allusions to *clamor* or *vox muliebris* (Poen. 1146; Rud. 233, 234) imply that some imitation was attempted on stage. This supposition is supported by external evidence. A fragment of a speech by Cato (115.2) including a description of a 'Greek style' comedian refers to the trained per-

former's ability to imitate various voices: *Cantat, Graecos versus agit, iocos dicit, voces demutat.* Quintilian's comment on a New Comedy delivery mannerism further specifies that a female register may have been part of the professional's repertory. Quintilian complains that some actors change their voices when their lines require them to repeat another character's words: when imitating a woman, they deliver their lines in a *vox effeminata* (Inst. 11. 3. 91).[38]

One character in Plautus apparently hears a *vox effeminata* on stage, and feels obliged to cut it short: Hanno (Poen.1146) orders the old nurse Giddenis to refrain from expressing joy at the sight of her son. "Shut up and use your female equipment sparingly!" (*tace atque parce muliebri supellectili*), he orders. Asked what kind of equipment he is talking about, Hanno names: *clamor clarus sine modo*, the boundless scream.[39] *Supellex* evokes the costume worn by the actor playing the old woman, which, in all likelihood, included a padding to imitate a female bosom.[40] Hanno's answer, identifying this item in the woman's costume with shrill scream, parallels the incontinence of the female voice with the overabundance of female flesh. The expression *sine modo* is used to denote excess of flesh: Celsus' description of a pregnant woman's belly as *sine modo fusa* (De Med. 2.7.16) provides a matching context for Giddenis' bosom. With an evocative gesture on the part of Hanno, the line, *clamor clarus sine modo,* could yield material for a *double entendre* based on the supposed correlation between the actor's (generously?) padded breast, and the screams beyond measure coming out of Giddenis' chest.[41]

The shrill and loud *clamor clarus* is not only physically immoderate, it is also symbolically linked to disorder and chaos. In Roman Comedy, female clamour is associated with extreme situations involving inarticulate, and therefore primitive and uncivilized, sound. *Clamor* represents the screams of a woman giving birth (Hec. 410), the cacophony produced by Casina apparently gone insane (Cas. 620), and the furious stridor

of an *uxor dotata* having a tantrum (Aul. 168). Terence, describing the tumult of the audience in the prologue of the Hecyra, also refers to *clamor mulierum* (35) as a symptom of disorder.[42] Women's propensity to *clamor* links female voice, and its theatrical imitation, with uncivilized and unrestrained expression of emotion.[43]

2.3. 2. *Largiloquium*

A woman's mouth is best . . . shut, jokes Trachalio as he defends the silence of the two *mulierculae* in the Rudens.[44] But it is rarely so, according to the good matron Eunomia of the Aulularia: a mute woman is as much of an oxymoron as a good woman, and men are justified in hating women for their loquacity (Aul. 123-126). Eunomia speaks *de domo*. Her canticum is framed as a lengthy introduction to a talk with her brother. The object of her intervention is remarkable: she comes to see Megadorus to convince him to get married, and thus to impose her judgement on a very intimate aspect of his life (Aul. 147-150). The matron is very assertive (149: *volo te uxorem ducere*), and does not take 'no' for an answer (153: *heia, hoc face quod te iubet soror*). After a brief discussion of the potential wife's age (Aul. 155-169), she guesses that her brother has already decided to marry someone (170 -171), and so leaves without having succeeded in imposing her candidate, but having gained knowledge of her brother's latest secret: the identity of his future bride. Eunomia has used the torrent of her speech to acquire a piece of intimate information.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that another confession of a chatterer serves as an opening for a monologue in which a secret is blabbed (Asin. 145).[45] In the Cistellaria, the task of informing the audience about the origins of Selenium falls to the old bawd, Lena (Cist.120-149). Unlike any male *persona* reciting an exposition monologue,[46] Lena begins her speech with words of self-criticism drawing the spectators' attention to her indiscretion:[47]

> *Idem mihist quod magnae parti vitium mulierum*
> *quae hunc quaestum facimus: quae ubi saburratae sumus,*

largiloquae extemplo sumu', plus loquimur quam sat est. (Cist. 120-122).

Admitting that members of her "corporation" become *largiloquae*, as soon as they are full of wine, Lena offers moreover a rationale for the practice: talkativeness, she implies, is just another outcome of female incontinence. *Largiloquium* seems thus to mean more than verbosity. Self-proclaimed chatter-boxes are portrayed as particularly prone to absorbing and exudeing information. Their claims are substantiated by the fact that women on the Plautine stage do tend to reveal intimate detail about others. Cleustrata announces to everybody that her husband smells of perfume (Cas. 235f), and makes fun of his baldness (Cas. 239); Erotium betrays Menaechmus' penchant for wearing female clothes (Men. 690f); Artemona informs the audience about her husband's poor performance in bed (Asin. 873f).[48]

Plutarch's anecdote about Cato, which has this paragon of Roman virtue confess that among the few things he regretted in his life was the moment of weakness in which he entrusted his wife with a secret (9.9: λόγον ἀπόρρητον), confirms that the theme of female 'leakiness' catches Roman as well as Greek resonances.

2.5. Monsters of Loquacity

2.5.1. *Canis Femina Rabiosa*

As several complaints about dowered wives in the fragments of comic Poets attest, the outspoken κυρία οἰκίας (Men. 296) was a stock motif in New Comedy, but one of the most detailed descriptions of the speech patterns of this domestic monster (cf. Men. 297.1: Λαμία) is to be found in Jerome's translation of Theoprastus' *On Marriage*:[49]

> *dein per totas noctes garulae conquestiones: 'illa ornatior procedit in publicum'; 'haec honoratur ab omnibus, ego in conventu feminarum misella despicior'; 'cur aspiciebas vicinam?' 'quid cum ancillula loquebaris?' 'de foro veniens quid attulisti?'* (Adv. Jov. 1. 47. 15-18)

This short sample of a wife's speech appears to be staged to convey her incapacity to hold her tongue. Like Myrtile (Men. 65), she will not shut up even at night; her questions betray

an 'indecent' inclination toward self-pity and jealousy, an 'unhealthy' curiosity about her husband's dealings with other women, and on top of that, an outrageous desire to know what he might have brought home from the market.

The Plautine Menaechmi features an overbearing wife who seems to be an embodiment of Theophrastus' worst fears. "Wicked, stupid, unbridled, with no control over her soul" (*mala, stulta, indomita, imposque animi*), this woman heedlessly displeases her husband (Men. 110-111). She launches a fierce assault on Menaechmus' liberty, trying to hold him back at the door and questioning him each time he goes out:

> *... me retines, revocas, rogitas,*
> *quo ego eam, quam rem agam, quid negoti geram,*
> *quid petam, quid feram, quid foris egerim.*
> *portitorem domum duxi.* (Men.114-116)

It is not only her habit of staying in proximity of the gate, at the boundary of her world (Men. 815), that earns Matrona the epithet *portitor*, 'customs inspector'. Like a *portitor* Matrona guards the limits of 'the inside' and usurps control over her husband's actions outside the *domus*. While her very presence in the doorway may well be disgraceful,[50] the emphasis here is placed on the fact that her voice travels outside the house, to ask after her husband's whereabouts all over town. But Matrona's most objectionable offense has to do with invading Menaechmus' private space. Striving to know her husband's secrets, she attempts to transgress his personal boundaries, like a policeman frisking someone for contraband goods hidden on his body.

This report of a wife's aggressive curiosity is strongly reminiscent of Semonides' description of the dog-woman's desire to hear and know everything, and of her constant chatter (λαλεῖν), which her husband cannot stop (παύσειε) even by knocking out her teeth with a stone (12-20). It might be more than a coincidence that Matrona's fierce attack on her husband's twin brother makes him compare her to Hecuba, the dog:

> *MEN. Non tu scis, mulier, Hecubam quapropter canem*
> *Graii esse praedicabant? MA: non equidem scio.*

MEN. quia idem faciebat Hecuba quod tu nunc facis:
omnia mala ingerebat quemquem aspexerat. (Men. 715-718).[51]

As Aristotle (Oec. 1344.1-5) and Xenophon (Oec. 7.30) assert, the wife's duty is to guard the house. So is the dog's. Both have to stay within the *oikos*, and be mistrustful of strangers who try to enter. A Latin proverb serving as a metaphor for the most unexpected hostility (Poen. 1234: "*Etiam me meae latrant canes*?") stipulates that a dog's duty is to bark at strangers and fawn over its master. Matrona's performance is a violation of these canine standards of excellence: she mistrusts and assaults her husband (114-116), and leaves the house that she is expected to protect (707). These transgressions earn her the epithet of *rabiosa femina canis* (Men. 838).[52]

Plautus predilection for the motif of *canis rabiosa* is striking.[53] In the Casina, Lysidamus' pet-slave paints a grotesque portrait of Cleustrata: "you are like a hunter," he commiserates with his master, "you spend your days and nights with a dog" (Cas. 319-320).[54] Other husbands of the *uxores dotatae* confess in their monologues that they are terrorized by their spouse's verbal aggression. Demipho complains that his wife is a murder: "*uxor me ... iam iurgio enicabit*" and fears for his manhood (Merc. 274-275): "*quasi hircum metuo ne uxor me castret mea.*" Daemones, more lucky, is merely annoyed at the prospect of listening to his wife's *vaniloquentia* (Rud. 904-905).[55] These are no empty declarations, but telling remarks that may inform the audience's perception of the scenes where the *uxor* is given the opportunity to play a raging fury who uses her sharp tongue to cross-examine and criticise her husband. Plays featuring the dowered wife almost inevitably include such a scene. In the Casina, there is Cleustrata, who, in a truly dog-like gesture, examines her husband's bodily odours, and than scolds the bald little tick (239: *cana culex*) for spending too much money on perfume (Cas. 235-250); in the Asinaria, there is Artemona, who spies and eavesdrops on Demaenetus, and then takes home her *cuculus* (Asin. 896ff, 934), to punish him with her dreadful kisses (893, 903, 918); Dorippa

in the Mercator, the worst of all, uses sarcasm (Merc. 732ff).[56] Significantly, the wives' wicked curiosity coincides with a desire to leave the house. All 'bad' wives in Plautus are very mobile: the shameless 'matron' of the Miles, played by Acroteleutium, leaves her husband's house to meet her lover (1137ff). Artemona (Asin. 851ff) and Matrona (Men. 704-708) go out to look for their husbands. Dorippa travels from country to city house to spy on her husband (Merc. 667-669). The least offensive of them, Cleustrata, abandons her household duties to chat with her neighbour (Cas. 144-146).

In contrast, the 'good' ones, Alcumena and the sisters in the Stichus, are always portrayed in the interior of their houses. The matrons in the Stichus offer an example of the recommended wifely attitude: lack of interest in the husband's affairs combined with intransigent devotion. When one of the sisters, Panegyris, in a moment of weakness, expresses a discreet interest in what their absent husbands might have been doing for the last three years (31-33),[57] the morally superior Pamphile silences her (36-37: *tace sis, cave sis audiam ego istuc / posthac ex te*). The wife's *officium*, she preaches, is not contingent upon the husband's moral integrity (Stich. 43-46):

> *etsi improbi sint atque aliter*
> *nos faciant quam aequomst, tam pol,*
> *ne quid mag' sit, omnibus obnixe opibus*
> *nostrum officium memnisse decet.*

Officium confines the wife to the *penetralia* of her husband's house, which, in the absence of the man, remains the token of her union. In the opening dialogue of the Stichus, reiterated references to the non-presence of the husbands in the house contribute to the construction of the link between marriage and house. The husbands left three years ago (29: *domo abierunt*), and are now absent from the house (4: *hinc apsunt*), yet the house is the place where the wives remain to worry about them (5), and the place whence they can be taken away (15-17), as could Penelope, whose sufferings are evoked in Panegyris' opening lines.

Woman is associated with the Interior, and both her virtue and her transgressions are defined in respect to this function. The barking dog, a stranger within, represents the wife's dangerous ambition to 'infiltrate' her husband's soul as well as his house.

2. 5. 2. The Enchantress

We may now turn to Menander's enigmatic comments on the frightening kindness of female words, and compare Sostratos' soliloquy with the Plautine Bacchides.[58] Sostratos, who suspects that his girlfriend has betrayed him with his best friend, declares that there is only one way he can face her without giving in: transfer the money, which he was originally going to offer her, to his father and then let her unleash her art full-force against him (D.E.18-46):

> ἰτάμη γάρ—ἐις μέσον τε πάντες οἱ θεοὶ
> ἥξουσι. ...
> κακὴ κακῶς τοίνυν ἐπάναγε, Σώστρατε ἴσως σε πείσει... (21-24)
> ... πιθανευομένη γὰρ παύσεται
> ὅταν ποτ' αἴσθηται, τὸ τῆς παρομίας
> νεκρῷ λέγουσα μῦθον. (27-29)

Plautus borrows the motif of the courtesan's powerful persuasion, and offers a rather close translation of the image of the young man tantalized by female words:[59]

> *igitur mi inani atque inopi subblandibitur*
> *tum quom mihi nihilo pluris [blandiri] referet,*
> *quam si ad sepulchrum mortuo narret logos.* (Bacch. 517-519)

Both the νεανισκός and the *adulescens* picture themselves safely watching their girlfriends use all their charms to convince them, as Ulysses, chained to the mast, listened to the Sirens' song, an image which should appear all the more compelling, if one keeps in mind the important role of music in the *palliata*.[60]

However, while Menander's youth pictures his girlfriend calling upon all the gods to persuade him of her innocence (21-24), Plautus has his character imagine Bacchis trying to fawn on him, *subblandiri* (517), and uses a verb insinuating the behaviour of a friendly

dog.[61] Sostratos' emphasis on 'all the gods' defines πείθω as persuasion relying on endless oaths; Mnesilochus' 'fawning' suggests a less articulate reaction focused on pleasing.[62] In other words, the Greek girl will feign honesty, the Roman, kindness. *Blanda verba*, whose power inspires in the young man enough awe to make him distrust himself, are likely to be an equivalent of the Menandrean χρηστοὶ λόγοι (Men. 806, 809).

The etymology of the stem *bland-* is doubtful. Walde (1938: 108) presents, not without reservations, the view that its root can be reconstructed as **mel-d*, and that the stem belongs to the familly of *mollis*, 'soft'. Ernout (1932 *ad loc.*) has suggested that *blandus* may have been a borrowed word that primarily described the tone of voice:

> *On peut se demander si le premier sens n'est pas 'à la voix caressante' et s'il n'est pas emprunté..... Il s'agirait d'un mot familier et expressif désignant une parole caressante, peu articulée.*

The soft voice, as some early references attest, was the tone associated with the most intimate human interactions. It could be heard in the nursery in the voices of children (Lucr. 5.1018; Amm.18.4.4), their mothers and nurses (Afran. Com. 60; Lucr. 5, 230); at the deathbed in the last cries for help (Lucr. 6,1244), and in the bedroom, in lovers' oaths (Ovid, Am. 3.1.46; 3.7.58, Ars 1.455, 1.468). *Vox blanda* seems to derive its force from being used in situations of vulnerability, where one human being has to depend on another, and permits the other to learn intimate facts that others do not know. This connotation bestows upon *vox blanda* the subversive power of disarming listeners and compelling them to trust the words it carries. Let out of the *penetralia*, the innermost part of the house, *blanda verba* may therefore be used as a formidable weapon of deception.

In Plautus, *blanditia* is the domain of the courtesan and the procuress. Female characters who have first-hand knowledge of the courtesan's *modus operandi* are the perfect mouthpiece for cynical comments on the nature of feminine 'softness'.[63] The *lena* Cleareta, rejecting her daughter's lover, nostalgic for the good old days (Asin. 206: *cum*

illiciebas me blande ac benedice), teaches the youth the rudiments of her profession (221-223): the pleasant hellos, the flattering how do-you-do, the kisses, and the inebriating, charming talk are only used to put the prey off its guard.[64] A courtesan's maid (Truc. 224-226) maintains that a proper procuress talks softly (*blande*) to her client while she silently plans how to bring him to ruin.[65] Male *personae* have no illusions about the sincerity of 'soft speech'. A disenchanted parasite declares that a courtesan speaks gently (*blanditur*) only so long as she can see something to snatch away (Men. 193); a well-educated youth knows that *blanditia* is nothing but a snare (Bacch. 50). A slave (Men. 262) warns his master against the sycophants, flatterers and courtesans who reside in *Epidamnum*, explaining that the latter are especially threatening, for they are more enticing (*blandiores*) there than anywhere else in the world. Yet, in spite of that knowledge, almost no man in Plautus is able to resist a courtesan's *blanda verba*.

Plautus' predilection for lively representations of triumphant *hetaerae* was already being commented on by his ancient readers (Gel. Noct. Att. 3.3.6).[66] The victory of the *meretrix* and her mesmerizing talk is celebrated most extravagantly in irreverent epilogues demonstrating the power of female persuasion, which have long offended scholars.[67] In the Bacchides, severe fathers join their sons in feasting and flirting;[68] in the Truculentus, rival lovers are persuaded to share Phronesium's favours (960ff).[69] Dramatic situations illustrating the irresistible charm of the *meretrix*' speech abound in the Plautine drama. Philaenium charms old Demaenetus with her fresh breath and words of sympathy (Asin. 894, 899, 905); Gymnasium wins over Senex not only with her beauty, but also with her words (Cist. 315); Pasicompsa's *oratio* makes a smashing impression on Lysimachus (Merc. 514); the words of Acroteleutium disguised as a matron seduce Pyrgopolinices (Mil. 1222); Ampelisca bewitches the clumsy Scepharnio (Rud. 436ff), the ruffian of the Truculentus learns to eat from Astaphium's hand (669ff). There is, however, one persona

who defies a courtesan's magnetism: Menaechmus II, the pious wanderer. Mistaken by Erotium for his lecherous brother, he follows her only to take advantage of the free dinner (Men. 419), then spoils the spoiler, stealing her mantle and jewellery (530ff).

Greek folklore knew a mythological paradigm for irresistible feminine beguilement: the Sirens' words were a synonym for bewitchment and deception (Hesych. Lex. 714). Their connection with Aphrodite and Peitho may be emphasized by the etymological explanation of their name connecting Σιρήν with Ζειρήνη, apparently the Thracian epithet of Aphrodite.[70] The two Sirens of the Odyssey use their clear-sounding, piercing song (λιγυρά ἀιοδή) to enchant (θέλγειν) Odysseus as he sails by (44, 183). The Homeric enchantresses use Odysseus' name, prove that they know his story, and flatter him, all to inspire in him an irresistible desire to get close to them. While the strong, piercing voice may have the property of penetrating into the human soul, the spell of the Sirens, as sympathetic magic often does, relies on the victim's essence, οὐσία, to take control over his actions.[71] Instead of nails, hair or bodily secretions, the bird-women use Odysseus' metaphysical οὐσία, his name and story, to construct his image in their song. The ogresses create an illusion of intimacy that incapacitates their victim and compels him to seek their closeness. A man at his most vulnerable, Odysseus could not have resisted the attraction of the penetrating voices of the sea-demons professing to know his future, as well as his past and present, if he had not been bound to the mast of his ship.

The parallel between a courtesan and a Siren drawn by Anaxilas (22. 20ff), and the image of a lover exposing himself to temptations implicit in Dis Exapaton and in the Bacchides, show that the fascination inspired by the song of the Sirens is an archetype not foreign to the comedy's representation of the *meretrix*. The Menaechmi offers another nonchalant comic travesty of the Homeric figure of the other-worldly seductress. Messenio accuses the *meretrices* of *Epidamnum* of a curious practice, that of sending their servants

into the harbour in order to learn the travellers' names (Men. 337-348). This illicit piece of knowledge apparently gives them the power to "stick and cling" to the newcomers (*ibid.* 337-348).[72] Aware of this, Messenio and his master feel awe, but not disbelief, when a strange woman later identifies Menaechmus' name, including the patronymic, and claims to know his past and his present (*ibid.* 408-412). Yet the Syracusan Menaechmus proves immune to the charm, not only because the name (*ibid.* 43, 1123, 1125) and the childhood memories belong to his debauched twin brother, but also because, not being a great lover of women (267ff), he knows how to enjoy the pleasures of life with moderation. The only remedy against *blanditia* are the bonds of self-restraint.

Blanda verba draw their strength from male weakness. They rely on displaced pieces of knowledge to create an illusory intimacy. By means of a soothing voice and familiar words a treacherous woman can render her victim vulnerable, and then gain control over his inner self. Fear of such an *inward* transgression may underlie the mistrust of women's kind words in New Comedy.

2.5. 3. *Sermo Lepidus*

While the courtesan's discourse is criticized for being dangerously attractive, one wife is rebuffed for not being attractive enough. Lysidamus, the heavily perfumed old man of the Casina, tells his much-despised wife (Cas. 228, 234), Cleustrata, that her greatest sin is the lack of 'softness' in her manners (Cas. 584): "*vitium tibi istuc maximum est, blanda es parum.*" Lysidamus' criticism is prompted by his wife's presumed inability to ask a favour from a neighbour, and Cleustrata can retort that ingratiating herself with other women's husbands (*viris alienis subblandirier*) does not belong to a matron's duties (Cas. 585-586).

This squabble reflects two aspects of what might have been the concept of the ideal matron's behaviour in the second-century B.C.E. While the *senex* implies that being *blanda* belongs to his wife's duties, Cleustrata insists that she is not required to charm

other women's husbands. A 'respectable' woman would then be required to be a 'soft' speaker, but to reserve her *blanda verba* for the men of her household. Such constraints would correspond to the restrictions implied in the speech against women lobbying for the abolition of the Oppian law, which Livy (34.2.9-10) puts in the mouth of Cato.[73] Interestingly, not only the ideas but the very wording of Cleustrata's reply and Livy's speech are similar: both censure any form of *blanditia* with other women's husbands (*viri alieni*):

> *Qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi? Istud ipsum suos quaeque domi rogare non potuistis? An blandiores in publico quam in privato et alienis quam vestris estis?*

Livy's Cato, shocked by women's intervention in the matters of the Republic, chooses to expose the monstrosity of this situation by painting a picture of a world 'inside out': instead of staying in their houses where they can be heard only by their family, the matrons are present in the public space, and practice their 'soft speech' on strangers. The emphasis appears to be placed not so much on the sight of the matrons, but on the sound of female voices in the forum, which Cato seems to consider inherently indecent, almost adulterous.[74]

While Cleustrata's argument is corroborated by Livy, Lysidamus' claim finds support in one funeral inscription also dated to the second-century B.C.E.

> *suom mareitum deilexit suo...*
> *sermone lepido, tum autem incessu commodo;*
> *domum servavit: lanam fecit: dixi: abi.'* (CIL 1. 1211)

As its presence in this laconic catalogue attests, verbal compliance must have been considered one of the essential attributes of the perfect wife. And the context in which sweet chatter and pretty gait are mentioned—enclosed as they are between affection for the spouse and housekeeping—appears to indicate that this ideal matron would have been expected to demonstrate the charms of her appearance and speech within the boundaries of her house. Plautus' practice conforms to this ideal: he makes the perfect wives of the Stichus demonstrate their quality of *morigerae* at home, while talking to their father (88ff).

Objectionable outside and recommended within the *domus*, *blanditia* is gauged

according to the woman's position within a system of social and moral boundaries; most evidently, by her situation in respect to the enclosure of a man's house, which divides women into tame and wild, good and bad. The physical limits of the *domus* are thus an emblem for the precinct of moral patronage with which the men of the house surround 'their' womenfolk. Only within these limits can a woman live a civilized life; only within them does her soft voices not represent a threat to the social order.[75]

The courtesan, whose savagery is underscored by the Latin *lupa* (cf. Truc. 657), remains uncivilized, even though she introduces herself into a man's intimacy, because she does not surrender her free will, and never forgets to serve her own interest (a task for which, in Aristotelian terms, no woman is qualified).[76] She represents a threat, because she can use her lover's vulnerability to gain control over him, and impose on him her own moral disorder. Such *inward* transgression is symbolized by the figure of the enchantress who uses displaced pieces of information to cast a binding spell on a traveller.

Conclusion

This survey of the *topoi* related to the verbal behaviour of women characters in New Comedy in Greek and Latin has shown that speech may be expected to reveal female nature, with its 'innate' antagonism towards boundaries and measurements. The consequences of the association of the feminine with lack of boundaries now seem far more complex than the general idea of loquacity, a speech without end or purpose. At the basis of the correlations surrounding female verbal subversion lies the division of space into inside and outside, at the most rudimentary level, inside and outside the house. In order to remain civilized the woman also has to accept the moral standards established by the men of the house. Staying indoors behind the threshold of the house is the semiotic equivalent of a woman's acceptance of the male limit restraining her nature, and a measure of her 'goodness'.

Submission is then the remedy for the female propensity for savagery of which we get a glimpse in the connotations of *clamor clarus* (madness, lack of control). When a

woman steps outside the threshold, even if it is only her talk that travels all over the city, she challenges her husband's authority, and ultimately the social order itself, by transgressing *outside* the sacred precinct.[77] The microcosm of human relations reveals a mirror image of this struggle to restrain the female desire to transgress boundaries. Congenitally opposed as she is to any kind of limitations, the woman seeks to step inside the man's personal boundaries. There are two paradigms for *inward* transgression: the dog and the witch, both trying to discover a man's personal secrets in order to gain control over his interior space.

We have now acquired a more precise idea of the ways in which speech in New Comedy may reflect the notion of woman's boundless nature. Women are said to be unable to measure their speech or to withhold information; they use words to invade a man's life outside the house and to besiege his inner self. Female speech is thus considered prone to trespass against the norms of interaction. It remains now to translate these abstract assumptions about the transgressive nature of female words into concrete features of language and speech. The time has come to consult Aelius Donatus.

ENDNOTES

1. Charitonidis and Kahil 1970. Cf. Kahil's opinion voiced in the discussion following Wehrli's presentation in Entretiens Hardt (1969 16: 154). The moralising tendency might have been even more evident in the plays written by other New Comedy playwrights. See Fantham's convincing demonstration of the influence of Peripatetic ethics on the characterization of Lesbonicus and Lysiteles in the Trinummus, adapted from Philemon's Thesauros.

2. Petersen (1854: 116-118) had already called attention to the correlations between New Comedy and Peripatos. Wilamowitz's point of view evolved from the straightforward *"Menander is ein Peripatetiker"* (1881: 179) to the far more cautious opinion that any educated Athenian would to some extent be under the influence of Peripatos (1908: 54). See also Leo (1912: 126-31) and Fraenkel (1922: 377; 1960: 440). For more recent studies see, for example, Barigazzi 1955 (267-326), Webster (1950: 195-219), Steinmetz (1960: 73ff), Gaiser (1967: 8-38), Wehrli (1969: 147-152) and Fortenbaugh 1984 (207-212). Gaiser (1967: 39-40) presents a bibliography of 55 books and articles tracing the philosophical motives in Menander, published between 1859 and 1965.

3. For Stoic influences, see Pohlenz (1943: 270), for Epicurean, de Witt (1952: 116-126) and for Pythagorean influences, Arcellaschi (1982). The similarities between Menander and Peripatos have been described both as evident (Webster 1950: 217-219) and as merely probable (Gaiser 1967: 36). It has also been argued that cross-references do not necessarily bear witness to a direct Peripatetic influence. For example, Webster (1950: 216) points out that certain complaints about women found in the fragments of Menander seem to go back to Middle Comedy (*ibid.* 216n3), and argues that Menander's '*ethopoiia*' merely adds a more realistic and individual dimension to the traditional stock-types.

4. For Menander, see Webster (1950, 1969) and Gaiser (1967), for Plautus, Ludwig (1961), and for Terence, Waltzer (1935) and Rieth (1964).

5. Cf. e.g. Webster (1950: 217, 1969: 149), Wehrli (1969: 149), Walton and Arnott (1996: 97-99).

6. See for example Della Corte's demonstration of Plautus' comic treatment of Stoic and Epicurean motifs in the Mostellaria and Captivi (1974: 86-94).

7. See *supra*: 32; cf. Wehrli (1969: 149, 152).

8. See Woodbury (1990: 272, 278-285), Carson (1990:136, 160-164).

9. See Vernant (1969: 98-104) for an analysis of the symbolic connotations of space associated with Hestia and Hermes.

10. Xenophon's Isomachus (Oec. 7.30) fully approves of this traditional division of space: "it is better for a woman to stay inside (ἔνδον μένειν) than to live outdoors, and it would be harder on a man to stay indoors instead of taking care of things outside (τῶν ἔξω)."

11. Unless specified otherwise, the numbers of fragments of New Comedy correspond to those in Kassel and Austin (1983-1995). The tradition of presenting the male/ female opposition in terms of the contrast between 'limited' and 'unlimited' suggests that the use

of the term πέρας in this fragment implies a series of connotations more general than the idea that a woman should not discuss private business outside her house, as suggested by Gomme (1937: 99) and Gomme and Sandbach (1973: 715). Only adulterous women are said to stay close to the door (Arist. Pax 979, Thesm. 792).

12. Knemon's shocking negligence has a parallel in the conduct of Theophrastus' stingy man, among whose most outrageous sins figures the unwillingness to buy his wife a trustworthy attendant, who would accompany her whenever she goes outside (Char. 22.10).

13. Arnott's comment on Alexis 150 (1996: 441) includes an exhaustive list of references to the topos of the overbearing wife in Greek and Roman comedy.

14. A reference made by St. Jerome a few paragraphs later (1.49) suggests that his testimony may be based on Seneca's lost treatise on marriage. See Fortenbaugh (1984: 208-211) for a detailed discussion of Jerome's possible sources for this passage. Scholars seeking evidence for correlations between New Comedy and Peripatos have already pointed out some similarities between Saint Jerome's summary and Menander: Petersen (1854: 116-18), Wehrli (1950: 214-217), Fortenbaugh (1984: 212).

15. Menander's character would reject a senseless woman, ἀγνώμον', one who does not control her anger, ὀργίλην, is harsh, χαλεπήν, and a chatterbox, λάλον. Theophrastus (1. 47.23-4) stipulates that one should send back a wife who would prove " *iracunda, fatua, deformis, superba, et foetida.*" *Fatua* would mean senseless, extravagant, insane, as in Cic. Dei. 21, de Orat. 2.90, Juv. 9.8, Sen. Ep. 52.2.

16. Adv. Jov. 47. 57-59, cf. Men. 64, Philem. 165, 167.

17. The simile that woman is like the sea has a long history in Greek literature. It occurs in Semonides' Catalogue (7.27ff), and is possibly the assumption behind the title of Pherecrates' play Thalatta, which, as Henry (1985: 16) has suggested, might well have been named after a greedy courtesan.

18. There are, to my knowledge, only a few optimistic references to marriage and women. A brief statement that a man and a woman are a cosy (οἰκεῖον) combination (759) and a description of the ideal wife who responds with kindness to insults (Epitrep. 917-923). When it comes to marriage, the greatest good is the least evil (Men. 798, 801).

19. Among the definitions that appear in the first line of all of Theophrastus' essays, nine out of thirty (1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 28) explain how a given disposition manifests itself through a man's words (3, 7, 15, 28) or his words and actions (1, 6, 8, 13, 14).

20. I believe one can take πέρας ποιεῖ as meaning 'she sets the record', because πέρας can signify 'goal in a race course' (cf. LSJ). Such a translation would render Bentley's emendation, πέρας οὐ ποιεῖ unnecessary, and, unlike Allison's (1930: 321) colourless "she talks to the limit," it introduces an athletic imagery which gives justice to the witticism of Menander's comparison 'Myrtile versus the famous cymbal of Dodona'.

21. It is worth noting that by Peripatetic standards, Myrtile's logorrhea would reflect lack of self-control. Theophrastus (7.1) defined λαλιά as the inability to control one's speech (ἀκρασία τοῦ λόγου), an opinion that concurs with the Aristotelian concept of the female's

unruly intelligence (βουλευτικόν ἄκυρον), which needs directives from outside (cf. *supra* 8).

22. See: 820 1f : τὰ δεύτερ' ἀεὶ τὴν γυναῖκα δεῖ λέγειν, / τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄνδρα ἔχειν. Admittedly, it is quite easy to imagine the playwright using this statement in a context that would render it laughable, e.g. pronounced by the husband of a particularly opinionated wife.

23. Cf. Arist. Polit.1260a 22-24, Perictone (T. 144, 7-10), Melissa (T. 116, 13), Iambl. V.P. 4. 54.

24. On the representation of female boundaries in Greek mythology as easily mutable, see Carson (1990: 154, esp. n. 39).

25. Δὲ Νάννιον τί νυνὶ διαφέρειν Σκύλλης δοκεῖ; / οὐ δύ' ἀποπνίξασ' ἑταίρους τὸν τρίτον θηρεύεται / ἔτι λαβεῖν; ἀλλ' ἐξέπεσε πορθμὶς ἐλατίνῳ πλάτῃ. / ἡ δὲ Φρύνη τὴν Χάριβδιν οὐχὶ πόρρω που ποιεῖ, / τόν τε ναύκληρον λαβοῦσα καταπέπωκ' αὐτῷ σκάφει;/ ἡ Θεανὼ δ' οὐχὶ Σειρήν ἐστιν ἀποτετιλμένη; / βλέμμα καὶ φωνὴ γυναικός, τὰ σκέλη δὲ κοψίχου. Anaxilas (22.15-21). For references to Charybdis' story, see (Grimal 1951 *ad loc*).

26. Appendix 1 summarizes the scholarly discussion of 'amatory motives' in Plautus, which offers a parallel to Plautus' attitude towards the concept of female found in his sources.

27. Plautus does not use the abstract *temperantia*, but the verb *temperare*, 'observe proper limits or measure,' occurs fairly often (cf. Lodge *ad loc.*). Porphyry (Ad Hor. Carm. 1. 20.1.2) testifies that the direct Greek equivalent of *modus* would be *metrion*: "*Modicis. Videtur modicum pro paruo positum; quod quid<a>m negant, existimantes modicum a modo dici, et significationem habere eius, quod Graece metr<i>on dicitur.*" *Modus* seems to be the quality required in everyday life, a humble excellence which may be contrasted with the Plautine *virtus*, denoting excellence, bravery, dignity. See Eisenhut (1972: 24-29) for a comprehensive discussion of the meaning of *virtus* in Plautine drama.

28. Ernout (1932) considers the meaning 'measure of surface' as the primary sense of *modus*, from which the moral and abstract meaning 'measure that one should not exceed' and the sense of 'limit' would have developed. Curiously enough, the TLL (*ad loc.* II.B.2.b.α) in its list of *loci* illustrating the metaphorical use of *modus* for *moderatio* does not register any of the Plautine uses of *modus* discussed here, though in each example quoted, the context implies that the *modus* being used there denotes a 'limit' to be imposed on human behaviour.

29. For the definition of *modus* as limit cf. OLD 6. This meaning is already present in Plautus (e.g. Merc. 652) and Terence (e.g. Heaut. 755). The sacramental *hoc modo*, introducing practical instructions in De Agri Cultura, may be representative of the Roman farmer's tremendous respect for the one and only 'right way' of doing things. Cf. e.g. De Agr. *ad modum*: 18.7.5, 46.1.1, 133.2.6, 151.1.3; *hoc modo*: 84.1.1, 22.1.1, 24.1.1., 32.1.3, 33.1.5, 39.1.7, 40.1.6, 52.2.5.

30. Pseudo Acron commenting on Sat. 1.2. 32 paraphrases Cato's second opinion: *"Adolescens, ego te laudavi tamquam interdum huc venires, non tamquam hic habitares."* It might be interesting to note the similarity between this anecdote and the story crediting Solon with the institution of legal brothels (Plut. Sol. 15, Phil. Adelph. 2.479K, / Adelph. 4K?). For Horace's *Macta virtute esto* as an imitatation of Cato's style, see Fedeli's commentary (1994, vol.2: *ad loc.*).

31. Segal (1968: 74) notes that pleasure in moderation is defended by Pistoclerus' father (Bacch. 416-418).

32. Prescriptive reflections on how people should behave are even more likely to be ironic in *palliata* than the philosophical recommendations were in New Comedy. As Moore has convincingly argued, moralizing belongs to Plautus' play-within-the-play and is represented as a tool for deception, an element of the performance rather than a source of edification, and that Plautine criticism of comic moralizing as a source of edification is programmatic (1998: 89). We may add to the passages discussed by Moore one scene representing a confrontation between moralizing and seduction. In the first well-preserved scene of the Bacchides, Pistoclerus recites one line after another praising uprightness and disclosing the deceitful nature of the *meretrix* (Bacch. 40, 41, 50-52, 55-56, 65-73, 85, 97-98), but his *sententiae* prove to be of no avail, and the young man's principles quickly melt under the warm breath of Bacchis' *blanditia* (92).

33. Cf. also Cist. 379-380, where Gymnasium suggests a link between her professional training and her extremely slow gait.

34. See Taladoire (1951: 17-44) for a discussion of gesture in the texts of Plautus and Terence. As Arnott points out in his commentary on Alexis 265, the ideal of the *advocati* might be Athenian, see *idem* (1996: 741) for references. Yet, gait as well as elaborate, hairdo, stylishly folded cloak and woman-like gestures, belongs to the repertory signs traditionally associated with the 'soft' man in Rome (Barton: 1994: 85).

35. Consequently, when an exemplary young man (Trin. 313-317) recites his own *aristeia*, boasting to have refrained from nightly visits to brothels and from theft, his language—he refers to the *lupanar* as *damni conciliabulum*, and to theft as *suum alteri adimere*—becomes a token of his modesty. Plautus' use of an idiom expressing verbal discipline *linguae temperare* (e.g. Pseud. 1035, Rud. 1254), further suggests that according to Roman social conventions, speech was considered something that could and should be controlled.

36. See Angello on Plautus' use of erotic expressions in Leaena's canticum (1983: 247-253).

37. See Petrone on the contrast between gnomic misogyny and the triumph of female intelligence in the Casina (1988 101-102), Hallett on the mannish behaviour of Cleustrata (1989: 69). The tradition of presenting women, παρὰ προσδοκίαν, as not so wicked as the misogynous sentences would have them, goes back to Menander (cf. Henry 1988: 109-110); female goodness is however severely restricted: Harbotronon (Epi.) has selfish motivations; Chrysis's (Sa.) and Glycera's (Per.) actions are "good" because they are dictated by devotion to one man. See Appendix 2 on the (allegedly) good courtesan in Roman comedy.

38. Rhetorical manuals dealing with *actio* show that refined techniques for training voices in different registers were known. For example, Quintilian (11. 3. 20) refers to voice exercises for an orator, pointing out that the program should differ from a singer's training because the latter would have been expected to tune his voice *ab imis sonis ad summos*. Professor Benjamin Victor has called my attention to the fact that additional evidence may exist in the *sigla personarum* of three manuscripts of Terence: Vat. lat. 3226 (cod. Bembinus), "A"; Florence Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana 38.24, "D"; Paris, B.N.F.lat. 10304, "p," which show women's roles assigned to specialists (E, Z, Θ, Φ), cf. Jory (1963: 65-78).

39. The Ambrosian and the Palatine *codices* differ in the attribution of *sine modo*. The first has it as Agorastocles' reaction, the second as the continuation of Hanno's words. One can consequently interpret *sine modo* either as the imperative of *sino* followed by the adverb *modo*, or as the preposition *sine* followed by the noun *modus, -i*. Lindsey (1910) and Maurach (1975) prefer the first option, while Ernout (1961) chooses the second. Lindsey's decision implies that Argyrippus intervenes here to calm Hanno, who is irritated by Giddenis' outburst of joy, and that Plautus makes him use *sine modo* as words of appeasement, a meaning which, as Maurach argues (op. cit. *ad locum*), these words also have in Curc. 655 (Amph. 806 would seem a more obvious example). *Sine modo*, meaning 'let it be' or 'stop that!' (Amph. 806; Cas. 473; Curc. 655; Most. 11, 12) is a more frequent expression in Plautus than *sine modo* 'without limit' used only here and in Bacch. 613 (*sine modo et modestia sum*). Nevertheless, the collocation is grammatically correct, and is attested to in other archaic and later texts, e.g. Ennius Sat. 1.1., also Plin. Nat. 19. 97 and 26. 10, Quint. Dec. Maior. 12. 16 and Decl. Minor. 316. 12, Gell. N.A. 115. 11. The congruence between *clamor sine modo* and other statements about female lack of limit quoted above speaks in favour of Ernout's decision.

40. Cf. OLD on *supellex* b. The suggestion that the Roman actors playing female roles might have been wearing padded bosoms has been made by Beare (1963: 189), and is based on Cas.769, 814ff. Bain (1977: 215f) makes the same claim about the Greek histriones. Cf. also Lucian *Salt.* 27 and Arnott on Alexis 103 alluding to the actor's false bosom (προστερνίδια).

41. Hanno's joke derives an additional twist from the contrast between the supposedly physiological assumption that women scream immoderately because they have breasts, and the mimetic context wherein both the actor's bust and his high-pitched voice are an imitation. Reading *sine modo* as part of Hanno's utterance could thus be defended on the sole ground of it allowing us to credit Plautus with a Plautine joke. The comic potential of *supellex muliebris* and *clamor clarus* has not escaped the attention of some translators. Nixon (1932) renders *clamor clarus* as 'mighty lungs', Burroway 1995 opts for an alliteration: 'lusty lungs'. This is not Plautus' only joke about female body; see Phillips (1985: 122-124) on Alcumena's padded belly.

42. The effect of *clamor* in Poen. 1146 is augmented by its cognate adjective *clarus*, used to describe a particularly sharp, piercing noise, such as a rooster's cry (Lucr. 4.711). Chantraine (1968: 125) affirms that *clarus* is a cognate of *clamo* and *calo*, an equivalent of the Greek λιγύφθογγος.

43. Men are said to utter *clamores* only in the turmoil of strife (Amph. 228, 245; Asin. 423, Aul. 403, Bacch. 974, Rud. 613, etc.), when they forsake their civilized manners. Cf. Cic. Tusc. 2.23.56 on the honourable screams uttered by athletes and warriors.

44. Cf. Rud.1114: *eo tacent quod tacita bonast semper mulier quam loquens.* He, interestingly enough, avoids the use of the comparative of *bona*, a mistake that earned Megadorus a reprimand (Aul. 135-140).

45. Duckworth suggests that Lena's speech might have the character of a quasi-prologue, doubling the deferred prologue spoken by Auxilium 149ff (1952: 212n10).

46. Monologues serving exposition are described, along with several other categories of monologue, by Duckworth (1952: 105).

47. Most monologues in Roman comedy are assigned to male characters. I have found, apart from Lena's speech only four monologues spoken by women (Cas. 759-779; Merc. 917-829; Stich.676-683; Truc. 465-481). More precise data (including the *cantica*) is offered by Duckworth, who observed (1952: 106) that in Plautus monologues are delivered most frequently by slaves (44%), old men (25%) and young men (11%), whereas Terence reverses the order: young men (33%), old men (27%) and slaves (23%). That means that 80% of the monologues in Plautus and 83% in Terence are uttered by male characters. This fact may reflect the concept of female unreliability.

48. Tellingly, a debauched old man who commits a similar indiscretion, discussing his wife's bad breath (Asin. 894f), is characterized as *incontinens* (859).

49. Anaxandr. 53, Antiph. 270, Diod. 3; cf. n.12. Plautine scholars tend to overlook the Greek origins of the motif of the overbearing wife. While Schuhmann (1977:63-65) simply omits the evidence of Greek Comedy, Stärk (1990: 70) goes further in asserting that "*Menanders verheiratete Frauen sind ehrwürdige Gestalten*,"quoting the notorious passage about the silence of women in Thucydides (2. 45.2) as evidence of Menander's treatment of female *personae*. The existence of Greek precedents does not however exclude that, as Schuhmann (*op.cit.*) and Stärk (*op.cit.*) have argued convincingly, the Plautine *dotata* may bear features of the wife of the Atellana, and that the importance of this *persona* might have been dictated by contemporary social realia. See Pomeroy (1975:169-170) on the differences in status between Greek and Roman women and Dixon (1991: 71-74) on the legal aspects of marriage in the early Republic .

50. Cf. 127: *uxorem abegi ab ianua.* Only adulterous women are said to stay close to the door in Arist. Pax 979, Thesm. 792.

51. The symbolic connotations underlying Hecuba's transformation, as Pippin-Burnet (1994: 157-162) has demonstrated, are complex, but the usual Greek answer would probably point to her proverbial misfortunes or to her fierce maternal instinct (see *eadem*: 157, esp. n.40). Menaechmus' response is therefore ironic, and directs the audience's attention towards more coarse, everyday associations.

52. Pippin-Burnett (1994: 153-157) quotes ancient testimonies referring to several connotations whose ambivalence goes back to the Homeric poems (representing, on the one hand, the savagery of dogs feeding on abandoned corpses, and on the other, the proverbial fidelity of Argos), and proposes a convincing explanation for this ambiguity: "Greek dog represented the wild made tame." As the outsider within the house, the dog was therefore, Pippin-Burnett argues, an obvious symbol of Woman.

53. Only one fragment of Menander (810), warning that it is far more dangerous to anger an old woman than a dog, suggests that the overly inquisitive dog-woman may well belong to the stock repertory of New Comedy.

54. Cleustrata's habit of talking day and night is reminiscent of Myrtile's capacity for talking at night (65 K) and of Theophrastus' complaints about the wife's nightly attacks of logorrhea (Adv. Jov. 47.15). The permanence of the wife-husband war is implied, for instance, in this short exchange between Lysidamus and his slave Olympio (Cas. 317-318): " *LYS.: quicum litigas,"OL. eadem qua tu semper. LYS. cum uxori mea?"*

55. (...) *uxor me vocat. redeo domum./ iam meas opplebit aures† sua vaniloquentia.* Jachmann (1966: 74-75) draws attention to the gratuity of the motif of the jealous wife in the Rudens (904-905), whose only purpose is to explain why girls can take refuge only at the altar, and he believes that it must have been a Plautine innovation. Cf. also: Aul. 168, Cas. 227, 409; Men. 114-118, 569, 765-768, Merc. 556-557.

56. Even the blameless Alcumena asks for a few words of explanation (Amph. 502-503). On Terence's treatment of the motif of wife-fearing husband, see Esteves (1966: 74-76).

57. Arnott (1972: 54-57) demonstrates how the less-impressive member of the pair steals the limelight.

58. The importance of female characters in DE. and Bacch. is discussed in "Appendix 1."

59. Bacch. 50, 55, 62-64, 517, 1166, 1174, cf. DE: 20-23.

60. Hom. Od.12.179-194. A courtesan is compared to a Siren in a fragment of Antiphanes' Anaxilas 20. This analogy, not explicit in the text of the Bacchides, may gain some legitimacy from Bacchis' two comparisons: that of Pistoclerus pacing outside her house with Ulysses (Bacch. 21-25), and that of her sister with a nightingale (38). A very interesting interpretation of the latter line is offered by Zehnacker (1994), who believes that some of the exchanges in the Plautine *diverbia* would depend for their effect on one speaker answering another's utterance in very similar wording and intonation, as happens in *operetta* or *opera buffa*. His musical insight would increase the probability of the Bacchis/ Siren association.

61. *Blandiri* is behaviour typical of dogs: A.G. N.A. 5.14.12.2; Hyg. Fab. 126.1.4; Pomp. Comment. 2.19. 30. 1; Serenus Lib. Med. 52.950, Servius In Verg. Aen. 1.44.3, 3.496.1.

62. Given that Peitho is a companion of Aphrodite (Grimal 1996: 351), one can expect that πείθω would be associated with attraction, but Menander stresses here its persuasiveness rather than its erotic connotations. Wherli (1974: 102) notes that the *hetaerae* in Menander seem to swear very often and to use a very specifc range of oaths.

63. For *bona meretrix*, see Appendix 2.

64. Cf. also: Bacch. 50, 1173; Men. 193; Truc. 163, 318. Plautus' choice of the word *vinnulus* reminds one of Seneca's criticism of Maecenas' effeminate style (Ep. 11.4-8), describing it as typical of a drunken man - *ebrius*.

65. *Bonis esse oportet dentibus lenam probam, ad-/ ridere ut quisquis veniat blandeque adloqui/ male corde consultare, bene lingua loqui.* The same maid believes that the '*Truculentus*', uncouth as he is, can certainly be softened by means of *blandimenta*, *hortamenta*, and other tricks. (Truc. 318)

66. On Plautus' tendency to accord to the characters of *hetaerae* a greater importance than they enjoyed in his models, see Gaiser (1972: 1083, esp. n. 261).

67. Fraenkel, for instance, refers to the *cruda fine* of the Bacchides (1960: 234); Slater argues that the play's puzzling epilogue is left open for the audience's interpretation (1985: 116-117); Barsby suspects that Plautus added a moralizing couplet at the end of the play to disclaim responsibility for offending his audience's ethical susceptibilities (1986: 189). Zwierlein (1992: 313) with a truly scholarly impartiality interprets the last scene as the triumph of the *hetaerae*. See also Lacey's interpretation of the decision to eliminate the scenes of confrontation as en effort to emphasize that the two fathers as debauched as their sons (1978: *passim*). For a survey of the indignant opinion on Truculentus, see Enk (1979: 22-27).

68. In the Bacch. the spectators could admire the courtesans adapting their techniques of seduction to a very young man (35-98) and his father (1120-1206). The not-yet-emancipated Pistoclerus is offered a new role, that of a self-contained man (54), champion of absent friends (60), brave protector of helpless women (42-46, 61-62) and a patron of courtesans (47-49), that is to say, the role of an adult man. His father is 'mollified' by declarations of total submission and respect for the authority of *paterfamilias*. Requests are formulated with utter respect, the old man is addressed as though he were a powerful divinity capable of granting wishes (1170: *sine hoc exorare*, 1176: *sine, mea Pietas, te exorem*, 1199: *sine te exorem*). Bacchis argues that he should enjoy life as long as he can (1193-1994).

69. Phronesium in the Truc. manages to get her ex-lover, an urbanite (322-351, 854, 892), her present lover, a soldier (515-630, 893ff), and her new lover, a not-so-well groomed (933) country gentleman (645ff,) to contribute to the support of her household all at once. The epilogue of the Bacchides was viewed by Fraenkel (1960: 68-69) as very 'Plautine'.

70. This etymology is proposed by Pisani (1957: 391). See *contra* Nilsson's note on the undoubtedly oriental origin of the representations of half-women, half-birds (1967: 228), which however, are not necessarily identical with the Homeric Sirens (cf. Buschor 1944: 13). Various interpretations of the Siren motif have been proposed, presenting them as vampires (Weicker, 1902), female demons seducing sailors with their song (Gresseth 1970: 212-213), or else emphasizing their connections with the Muses (Pollard 1952: 60-63). The Homeric Sirens are also said to have a meta-literary mission to fulfil: Pucci quotes a series of idioms and formulas pointing to an Iliadic stylization in the Siren song and argues that the episode should be read as a polemic between the poet of the Odyssey and the different style of epic poetry represented by the Iliad (1979: 121-132). See Rabinowitz on the role of softening words and Peitho in Euripides' Hippolytos (1989: 133).

71. Names are an important element of binding spells (cf. Faraone 1991: 12-14). One tablet (*ibid.* 14) cursing "Zois the Eretrian (...), her food, her drink, her sleep, her laughter, her company, her cithara playing, her entrance (πάροδον), her pleasure, her rear end, her thought, and her eyes," seems to suggest that the more personal detail was included in a spell the more efficient it was expected to be. While it was a universal practice of ancient

magicians to bind the person represented by a magical figurine through the use of substances taken from the victims body, such as nails, hair, or bodily secretions, the name scribbled on some surface or other was also believed to be an efficient means of identification (cf. Tupet 1976: 49).

72. Cf. also Bacch. 23 = fr. XV, where Bacchis compares a young man she is planning to seduce to Ulysses. As she rehearses the *oratio* she intends to use to trap her prey (cf. Bacch.103: *piscatus*) she is compared to a nightingale, an allusion that might evoke remote associations with the ensnaring song of the (probably winged) enchantresses. On the magical symbolism of the bonds of Venus, see Tupet (1976: 46). Cf also Hor. Sat. 1.8.49-50; Verg. Buc. 8.73-75 and 8. 77-78; Tib. 1.8.5-6.

73. Paschkowsky (1966: 107ff, 248, ff.) has argued that we might have here Livy's rendering of a speech by Cato, indicating certain stylistic similarities between Ab urbe 34.1-8.3 and the extant writings of Cato. This view has more recently been rejected by Briscoe (1981: 39-43), who refutes Paschkowsky's linguistic arguments one by one, and points out (1981: 40) that Livy composed speeches only when the original was not available. We cannot be sure, therefore, that the text Livy ascribes to Cato has anything to do with what Cato actually said in the Senate in 195 B.C.E. This speech, however, even as Livy's free composition, would bear witness to the fact that first-century B.C.E. readers would have found plausible the idea that a conservatist of Cato's stamp could have formulated similar views. And as such, the speech constitutes valuable testimony.

74. Hallett (1984: 229) notes that Cato in fact uses the same expression *vir alienus*, when referring to a wife's adultery in De Dote.

75. Alcumena, when insulted by Amphitruo, is assigned a line translating her feelings towards her husband into her position within the walls of her husband's house (Amph. 882): *Durare nequeo in aedibus*. Tellingly, as she considers leaving her husband's house, the virtuous Alcumena immediately counts on the protection of a male relative named Naucrates (860, 918)

76. See Tatum's note on the joke (1983: 209n9). Cf. also Truc. 854-855: *blitea et luteast meretrix nisi quae sapit in vino ad rem suam; / si alia membra vino madeant, cor sit saltem sobrium*, and also Asin. 221-223; Men. 193; Truc. 224-226.

77. One is tempted to see a link between this outward transgression and the woman's return to her uncivilized state. Both Matrona and Cleustrata, who inquire about their husband's whereabouts,π are compared to dogs.

CHAPTER 4

Women's Words and the Bonds of the Father Tongue: Cicero and Donatus.

1. *Ut pater eius, ut maiores*

On the rare occasions when the ancient men of letters mention female speech without reproach, they usually refer to women's conservatism. Plato (Crat. 418c), in a discussion of archaic features of pronunciation, remarks that women "are most devoted to preserving old forms of speech," (μάλιστα τὴν ἀρχαίαν φωνὴν σώσουσι). A virtually identical statement is made by Cicero's Crassus (De Orat. 3.12. 45): *mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conservant.* Crassus affirms further that when he hears his mother-in-law speak, her very pronunciation reminds him of Plautus or Naevius. And there is also the testimony of Pliny, who praises the archaic style of the epistles that Pompeius Saturninus claimed were written by his wife (1.16.6).[1]

The wording of Plato's comment, φωνὴν σώσουσι, as well as the Ciceronian *conservant* and *tenent*, suggests that women were viewed as guardians of the ancestral speech.[2] This interpretation is encouraged by Cicero's claim that conservatism is a privilege of women because they live in seclusion (*multorum sermonum expertes*), which allows them to preserve the 'father tongue' unspoiled.[3] The lack of artifice and ostentation in the speech of Crassus' mother in-law gives him the certitude that her father and his ancestors spoke in the same succinct, considerate and moderate manner (*presse et aequabiliter et leniter*). Old-fashioned diction would therefore be thought of as a token of a woman's attachment to her *domus*, proof that she had rarely crossed its threshold. She would instead have stayed inside, tending to her father's and then her husband's property, children and language.

The concept of *sermo patrius* sheds an interesting light on a woman's position with

respect to linguistic norms. Good Latin, in Cicero's view, is something a woman can inherit and transmit, but not own, a sort of precious family treasure that she has the right to use, but not to modify in any way. Respectable women would thus be expected to speak more 'correctly' than men, and to exercise no freedom in experimenting with new expressions. Cicero's remarks on conservatism fail to reveal any positive aspect of female speech. On the contrary, they imply that a woman's diction may have some merit only if she has preserved the diction of her father and grandfather without making any contribution of her own. A woman seems to be perceived as a sort of transparent vessel, in which language, like a child, can be stored, and through which it passes without being altered.[4] Such an ideal of female speech is not, essentially, different from the concept of a norm implied in Aristotle's Rhetoric (1408a 25-30): in a perfect world, women would speak like men.

Several laconic remarks in Greek and Roman texts of various periods imply, however, that women were believed to use a 'dialect' of their own. The scholia to Plato (Ad Ap. 25c, Ad Th. 178e), for example, note that certain terms of address (ὦ οὗτος, ὦ τάλαν and ὦ μέλε) were typical of young women 'trying to please'. Herodotus (1.146) notes peculiarities in female use of terms of address; Aristophanes' Ecclesiazusae (155-9) stipulates that the oath μὰ τὼ θεώ was considered a marker of femininity.[5]

2. The Norm

2.1. *Non enim dixit*

Though cursory remarks on female speech may be found in Greek and Latin literature and scholia, only one source, Donatus' commentary to Terence, offers us the advantage of a systematic treatment of female speech and of linguistic characterization in general.[6] Terence's art of character portrayal and the refinement of his language were traditionally extolled by Latin scholiasts. Varro's concise note on the virtues of the three best-known Roman Comedy writers praises Terence precisely for his skill in representing characters

(ap. Non. s.v. *poscere*. Lindsay: 596).[7] Quintilian uses a quote from Terence to demonstrate what he means by verbal *mimesis* of the speaker's character (9.2.55, 11.1.40). Caesar and Cicero (cf. Suet. De poetis 5) are reported to have admired his *sermo*, i.e. the dialogue in his plays. Five centuries later, when Euanthius (De Fab.3.4.) and Donatus (e.g. Ad Eun. 454) applaud Terence's respect for the traditional method of character portrayal, they perceive characterization as a phenomenon concrete and consistent enough to serve as a means for distinguishing among *personae*. Euanthius argues that Terence's characters are so distinct that it is easy to discern their roles, even if as many as four characters are speaking in one scene:

> *illud quoque mirabile in eo... quod non ita miscet quattuor personas ut obscura sit earum distinctio.* (De Fab.3.8.)

Donatus insists on *sermo* as an instrumental means of characterization in Terence:

> *Hic inducitur concursus dissimilium personarum et tamen virtute et consilio poetae discretarum, ut confusio nulla sit facta sermonis.* (Ad Eu. 454.1).[8]

Numerous glosses (usually introduced by ἐν ἤθει or *moraliter*) draw the reader's attention to the instances where Terence's choice of a particular word or expression is dictated by the need to construct characters. This allows us to assume that *sermo* refers here to speech patterns.[9] Throughout his commentary, Donatus makes succinct references to mannerisms of speech appropriate for different stock-types. Phormio speaks παρασιτικῶς (Ad Ph. 327); *libuit*, when used by Thais, is described as *verbum meretricium* (Ad Eu. 796). A somewhat redundant declaration of Micio in the Adelphoe is dismissed as *senilis* μακρολογία (Ad Ad.68.3).[10] Donatus' knowledge that Phormio's buffoonery befits a parasite, that Thais' allusion to pleasure befits a courtesan, and that loquacity suits the character of an old man, is backed by a conviction that there is a right and proper way of speaking, that such 'proper manners' would impose an economy of expression on the speaker.

2.2. *Proprietas*

By late antiquity linguistic norms had become the subject of systematic investigation, and propriety of language use was, not surprisingly, one of the essential criteria of Donatus' textual analysis.[11] Donatus' notes on propriety usually compare the expression chosen by the playwright with an option proposed by the commentator, and this form links them to the tradition of *differentiae*.[12] In addition to 'classical *differentiae*', usually introduced by the formula '*non x sed y*', there are numerous other scholia, which, without reproducing the traditional formula, also emphasize the difference between the words Terence gives to his characters and a 'neutral' option offered by Donatus.[13] Most such glosses deal with topics typical of *differentiae*: the mechanisms underlying the playwright's choice of vocabulary (e.g. Ad An. 2.3:'*fecisset*' versus'*scripsisset*', Ad An. 31.4:'*facere*' versus '*efficere*'), and the reasons behind the use of grammatical categories (in Ad An. 38.3 we read, for example, that Terence preferred the imperfect form '*serviebas*' to that of the perfect tense, because he wanted to stress that the action had not been definitively finished). Others, however, suggest that in Donatus' view, the linguistic norm would extend beyond precision of vocabulary and correctness of grammar, and would impose a certain discipline on the use of language in interaction. For example, an intervention may be necessary, or may not, from the point of view of the dialogue (Ad An. 33. 2 and 54. 3); a formula of politeness is said to be needed to tone down an imperative (Ad An. 85.1).

2.3. Meaningful Slips

Acute awareness of proper language use is vital to the scholiast's concept of character portrayal: many glosses suggest that constructing a *persona* often compels the playwright to transgress the principles of correctness, both at various levels: grammar, vocabulary and discourse structure. Terentian slaves make logical mistakes (Ad Ph. 186, Ad Hec. 323. 2) and confuse noun cases (Ad Ph. 249.2); the soldier Thraso drops important words (Ad Eu.

1056) or repeats himself (Ad Eu. 405.2, 412. 3), being, as we are told, too foolish to understand his own words if he hears them only once (Ad Eu. 405.2).

The remarks on female speech have special status among Donatus' comments on ethical diction. When the speech of the male characters (old men, young men in love, parasites, and slaves) is said to be peculiar, the anomaly is ascribed to the oddness of their *persona* (Ad Ph. 327), or to their age (Ad Ad. 68.3 and 646.2), not to their gender.[14] Never are we told that someone speaks in a 'manly' way or that some expression is distinctly 'mannish'. In contrast, remarks on feminine mannerisms tend to ascribe certain features of speech to female characters, or perhaps to women in general, rather than to one theatrical stock-type. The judgement passed on Sostrata's complaint "*miseram me, neminem habeo*" (Ad.291) is characteristic of this approach: *muliebriter queritur* (Ad Ad. 291. 2), rules Donatus, and adds (Ad Ad. 291. 4) that one can easily predict what women are likely to say: "*proprium est mulierum cum loquuntur aut aliis blandiri . . . aut se commiserari.*" Various female *personae* are consequently said to express themselves in a way proper to all women, rather than to their stock-type. In Ad Hec. (87. 2) the courtesan Philotis, who refers to herself as *misera*, is said to use a typically feminine expression: "*Muliebris interpositio τὸ misera*" likewise, the speech of the maid Mysis (Ad An. 685.1) is described as "soft, feminine, and wrapped in many blandishments."

Donatus' comments on mannerisms of speech rely on the assumption that the playwright chooses expressions tailored to his *personae*, and that he is sometimes compelled to sacrifice linguistic propriety for the sake of characterization. These purposeful deformations of language are usually ascribed to a feature that makes the *persona* marginal. Old men are distinguished by their age (and not, say, by their social status); soldiers and slaves speak poor Latin, not because their age or gender, but because of their lack of education, and, perhaps, because of their foreign origins (cf. Plaut. Truc. 955). The

impropriety of female speakers is explained by their femininity.[15]

3. The Catalogue of Peculiarities

Donatus has in mind a very precise concept of feminine mannerisms: Terence's choice of particular words for female characters is interpreted as an effort to give the speech of theatrical *personae* a certain softness (*blanditia*), to emphasize their inclination for self-pity (*commiseratio*) or, sporadically, their talkativeness (*tardiloquium*).

3.1.1. *Blanditia Muliebris*

Among the mannerisms that Donatus ascribes to women, the vocative of the first person possessive pronoun, *mi, mea*, is mentioned more frequently than any other linguistic tic. This pronoun, when used in address, is said to express affection, and may perhaps best be rendered by the adjective 'dear'.[16] No matter which term of address it modifies, *mi/ mea* is always said to reflect the speaker's 'feminine softness'.[17] If, however, the necessity of winning somebody's favour is particularly urgent, the female characters in Terence are said to use the emphatic *mi, mea* along with the addressee's name, behaving precisely in the same manner as the enchanteress discussed in Chapter 3 (56ff). When Sostrata accosts her son with the words *mi Pamphile* (Hec. 585), Donatus (Ad Hec. 585.2) points out that she speaks in a manner typical of a woman asking for something. "She begins with a blandishment," he explains, "in order to encourage her son to listen to her words."[18]

Address by name can be a token of 'softness' even without the possessive pronoun. The readers' attention is drawn twice to Thais using this 'stratagem': when the courtesan, who is about to leave for a party with the soldier Thraso, is surprised by another lover's servant, and calls him by his name, we are told that she resorts to a *blandimentum* (Ad Eu. 462.2).[19]

One formula of pleading, *amabo*, 'please', is also labelled as 'soft' (Ad Eu. 654. 2). In Ad Eu. 565.1, Donatus includes this polite modifier of requests in a brief review of terms

of endearment:

> *'Mea' et (Ad. III 1.2.)'mea tu' et (Eun. I.2.50; 70al) 'amabo' et alia huiscemodi mulieribus apta sunt blandimenta.*[20]

Likewise, in the comment on Hec. 824, where Bacchis quotes her own words addressed to Pamphilus *"Mi Pamphile..., amabo, quid exanimatu's, obsecro?"* both *mi Pamphile* and *amabo* are identified as 'soft'.[21]

In other instances where Donatus uses the term *blanditia*, 'feminine softness' may apparently be expressed in ways more subtle than the choice of modifiers and terms of address, a concept that corresponds to the view of norm as encompassing vocabulary, grammar and the rules of conversation, discussed above (*supra* 77). A look at the second scene of the third act of the Eunuchus (462, ff) will serve as our first example. Thais, somewhat embarrassed, has to tell Phaedria's slave Parmeno that she has accepted the soldier's invitation to dinner:

> *PA. ituran, Thais quopiam es? TH. ehem Parmeno:*
> *bene fecisti; hodie itura...*

Donatus (Ad Eu. 463.1) draws our attention to *bene fecisti*:

> *Quid bene fecit Parmeno? an quasi perturbata haec loquitur et iam de nihilo blandiens, utpote meretrix et faceta?*

He implies that, since one usually has to earn the 'thank you' by rendering a service, an undeserved *bene fecisti* is a *blandimentum* especially fit for a courtesan. What appears in Donatus' view to qualify this formula of gratitude as a manifestation of female softness is not its wording but the fact that, contrary to the rules of interaction, it is used gratuitously.

Another comment on the Eunuchus (Ad.Eu. 151) offers us a further insight. Here Thais asks her lover to give priority to his rival, saying: *"sine illum priores partis ... habere."* For the scholiast *sine illum* is another manifestation of 'softness':

> *Blande 'sine illum', tamquam in manu eius sit iniuriam non pati sed excludi militem; non enim dixit 'fer' aut 'patere' sed 'sine'.* (Ad Eu.151.1)

Since Phaedria has no power to dismiss his rival, Donatus must think of the verbs he proposes as semantically more appropriate than the one used by Terence: *fer* or *patere* would have been a better thing to say from the point of view of strict linguistic propriety, while the playwright has opted for a verb that is inadequate to the context, but which conveys a message less threatening to Phaedria's 'face'. For Donatus, this choice represents an effort to render the courtesan's softness.

Aside from a tendency to use the standard signs of intimacy provided by the language (terms of address and modifiers), Donatus' concept of *blanditia* would thus include certain irrational patterns of speech, such as understatements (*sine illum*) and white lies (*bene fecisti*). 'Soft' speakers thus seem to sacrifice the rules of interaction or linguistic precision for the sake of creating an altered image of reality that may please their partner in conversation.

3.1.2. *Senex Blandus*

Though Donatus presents the notion of 'bland diction' as typically feminine (Ad Ad. 291.4), he does use the term *blande* twice to describe the speech of an old man named Laches. The readers are instructed to pay attention to Laches' words, when this personable old gentleman calls his wife *anus*, and to belabour his point, describes his daughter in-law affably (*blande*) as *puella* (Ad Hec. 231). On another occasion (Ad Hec. 744), the scholiast calls our attention to Laches' delicacy in describing the relationship between his son and Bacchis as 'their love affair', rather than 'his love and her trade', an expression Donatus would consider more adequate.[22]

The figure of *senex blandus*, though marginal in Donatus' discourse, deserves a moment of reflection. If one considers these remarks in the light of the ancient concept of linguistic differentiation, centred as it was around the figure of a middle-aged man (Arist, Rhet. 1408a 25, Quint. Inst. 11.1.41), it becomes clear that *senex blandus* does not have to

cast any doubt on the force of Donatus' conviction about the unmanly character of *blanditia*. The underlying assumption would be that not all men are equally virile. *Muliebris* would therefore imply a concept broader than simply 'pertaining to the physiological feminine gender'. Our analysis of several Plautine references to immodesty of speech and demeanor has already shown that 'feminine' features are not necessarily restricted to women, but may be shared by morally incompetent men (cf. *supra* 48-49).

3.2. *Nullius Momenti Querellae*

While, as we have seen, Donatus proves quite generous in illustrating the first part of his statement that female characters are likely either to 'speak softly' or to whine, he is far less prolific in producing the evidence to support the second part. Apart from one brief (and not very revealing) observation that *misera* is a typically feminine interjection, he has nothing to say about the lexical patterns associated with female querulousness.[23] More instructive is the gloss on the Adelphoe (291), where, without focusing on vocabulary or grammar, Donatus calls his reader's attention to the words of Sostrata, who laments that there is no one she can send to fetch a midwife (*miseram me, neminem habeo*):

> *Nam haec omnia muliebria sunt, quibus pro malis ingentibus quasi in acervum rediguntur et enumerantur nullius momenti querellae.* (Ad Ad. 291. 4)

Sostrata's complaint is qualified as *muliebre*, because instead of expressing concern for what Donatus believes to be the real problem (the birth of an illegitimate child), she complains about a temporary absence of domestics. It is typical of female whining, we learn, that instead of naming the real concern, the speaker enumerates petty worries, piling them up in a heap of irrelevant complaints.

3.3. *Senile and Femineum Tardiloquium*

Twice Donatus ascribes to women a feature of the discourse of old men, which he calls *tardiloquium*.[24] The two allusions to female loquacity offer an interesting parallel to the glosses on 'softness' and 'self-pity'. In Eunuchus (110 ff), when Thais is asked if her

step-sister might have been an Athenian citizen, she meticulously enumerates all the clues indicating that the girl may in fact be a citizen, and describes in detail how her mother acted upon learning about the girl's hypothetical origins. This monologue prompts Donatus to remark that slowness (*mora*) is appropriate for a female character, and to insist that such a way of speaking is quite feminine: *"Et vide quam satis muliebriter."* The striking disproportion between the simplicity of the yes-or-no question (*civemne?*) and Thais' answer suggests that (not unlike *nullius momenti querellae*) overabundance of detail may have been considered a feature characteristic of women's diction (Ad Eu. 116. 2 and 4). Likewise, Bacchis' elaborate 'thank you': *"est magna ecastor gratia de istac re quam tibi habeam"* prompts the commentator to remark that Terence imitates the typical senile and female rambling (Ad Hec. 741: *imitatur hic senile et femineum tardiloquium*). A simple *ago gratias*, Donatus explains, would have been sufficient. To the superfluousness of *blanditia* and the irrelevance of *querellae*, we may thus add the overabundance of *tardiloquium*, a feature woman shares with the old man.

3.4. *Muliebriter Dixit*

Glosses concerning female speakers are rich in remarks contrasting what is said with what ought to be said. In Ad Eu.151.1 (*"non enim dixit 'fer' aut 'patere' sed 'sine'"*) Donatus emphasizes that Terence chose for Thais a verb unfitting for the context. *Sufficerat enim 'ago gratias'* in Ad Hec. (741), offers the reader a properly concise form, to reveal Bacchis' *tardiloquium*. The comment on *nullius momenti querellae* (Ad Ad. 291.4), criticizing female whining for being out of focus and repetitive, indicates that there is a 'proper' way to complain: one must be concise and give a valid reason for one's dissatisfaction.

The 'feminine' diction of Terence's characters would thus be manifest, in Donatus' view, in their tendency to transgress the rules of verbal interaction, either by resorting particularly frequently to the linguistic signs of affection and self-pity, or by transgressing the norms of communication in order to indulge their partners (*blanditia*) or themselves

(*querellae, tardiloquium*). In other words, women go too far in their pretence of affection and concern for the other, and require too much attention for themselves. Female diction would then differ from 'proper speech' in the way the *personae* use language to mark the limits and distances separating them from others. The 'feminine' in speech would manifest itself in a tendency to transgress personal boundaries to advocate an emotional promiscuity.

4. Reading the Female Mind

Donatus not only points out the patterns of speech typical of female *personae*, but also explains how the reader may decipher the true motives behind female words. His interpretations are ambivalent when it comes to the volitional aspect of female speech. Blandishments and complaints can be described both as involuntary symptoms of female nature and as behaviour consciously chosen by a willful speaker.

For example, the commentary on the fourth scene of the second act of the Adelphoi describes' *mea tu'* as a *blandimentum "sine quo non progreditur colloquium feminarum et maxime trepidantium'*(Ad.Ad. 289.2)," which suggests that 'soft speech' is an uncontrolled reflex that comes naturally to women, even when it is not in their best interest (*et maxime trepidantium*). In the comments to the same scene we read that, like *blandimenta*, querulousness may be involuntary: typically female complaints are interpreted here as a symptom of cowardice: *muliebriter queritur et ex perturbatione sua aestimans metu multa facit ea quae pauca sunt* (Ad Ad. 291.4). To judge by his spontaneous response, Donatus finds the aimlessness of Sostrata's*'nullius momentis querellae'* (Ad Ad. 291.5) particularly objectionable: he loses his usual scholarly composure and proceeds to rebuke the character directly: "What's the use of this, and why are you whining?"

On the other hand, sweet words and complaints are described as a means of 'mollifying' and manipulating the other.[25] When Sostrata calls her son 'dear Pamphilus' and declares that she is going to propose a solution that is in everybody's best interest, Donatus (Ad Hec. 585.2) explains that, intending to say something difficult, she prepares

the ground with blandishments (*praeblanditur*), and 'smooths over' the matter (*remque praemollit*). All these efforts are intended to turn Pamphilus into a willing listener (*ut libenter audiat*).[26] Thais, caught in a delicate situation (*deprehensa*), resorts to *blandimenta* in an attempt to pacify (*satisfacere*) Phaedria's slave (Ad Eu.462.2).[27]

A comment on another excerpt of the Eunuchus offers an insight into what the scholiast believed to be the psychological mechanisms behind feminine kindness. In the second scene of the third act, Thais comes on stage and informs the audience that she has probably just heard the soldier (Eu.454): "*Audire vocem visa sum militis.*" But as soon as the *miles* himself joins her on stage, she salutes him warmly: *salve mi Thraso.* At this point, Donatus feels obliged to emphasize that, when speaking to the soldier, Thais chooses a different term of address than when talking about him to herself: *quia secum, 'militis', quia apud illum 'Thraso'*, suggesting that Thais' *blanditia* is merely an appearance of affection. No matter whether used by a mother or by a courtesan, sweet words, when addressed to a man, in Donatus' view, serve to beguile him. Women are said to use markers of intimacy as a sort of magical signal that disorients their partners and renders them easy to manipulate.

The scholia to Andria suggest that the general appeal of female helplessness may be quite similar. Mysis acts here as a *porte-parole* on behalf of her mistress Glycerium: her emphasis on Glycerium's suffering (An. 268: *laborat ex dolore*) attracts the commentator's attention as a clever trick on the part of the maid (*callide aggreditur iuvenem*). Analyzing Mysis' presentation of Glycerium, Donatus defines her tactic as aimed at winning affection (Ad An. 684. 1) and explains how Mysis constructs an image of a suffering, helpless, yet devoted and trusting young woman, and shows how that irresistible icon of femininity entices the young man to oppose his father.[28]

Donatus leaves the question of why women do not talk like men without a definite

answer. He implies that female speakers transgress the rules of interaction because their nature compels them to do so, and that matrons and courtesans alike emphasize their 'femininity' in order to mollify their interlocutors, that is, to render them more like themselves.

5. Cicero on Portion and Proportion

The idea that language is a tool whose use in everyday encounters reflects the relationship between speakers, and is therefore regulated by the very norms that determine human interaction, is not an invention of late grammarians. References to a 'proportion of words' are not rare in the Latin literature, and more than one source implies that the ability to observe these 'conversational limits' is intimately linked with the speaker's moral integrity.

Cicero in De officiis (1. 142) defines modesty as the ability to place everything one does or says in the right place and order. Pliny (Ep. 5.7) is more concerned with the means of moderating a conversation than with the underlying moral principles, when he writes about the challenge of preserving in a letter the right measure of speech (*modum sermonis custodire*). This task becomes particularly difficult, he explains, when the speaker is deprived of the aid of facial expression, gesture and voice, which help to temper a conversation (*sermonem moderari*).[29] In Cicero's writings, one finds descriptions of expressive disorders that represent transgressions against these rules.

5.1. Disregard for the Other: *Ineptia*

Cicero's discussion (De orat. 2.16-18) about lack of tact in ordinary conversational manners (*in sermonis consuetudine*) offers a glimpse of Roman rules of social interaction, focusing on the behaviour that might be offensive for the other:

> *Quem enim nos ineptum vocamus is mihi videtur ab hoc nomen habere ductum, quod non sit aptus; idque in sermonis nostri consuetudine perlate patet; nam qui aut tempus quid postulet, non videt, aut plura loquitur, aut se ostentat, aut eorum, quibuscum est, vel dignitatis, vel commodi rationem non habet, aut denique in aliquo genere aut inconcinnus aut multus est, is ineptus dicitur* (De orat. 2. 17)

The vocabulary Crassus uses here to define the vices of conversation suggests that proper

speech would be intimately linked with the notion of *modus*. A speaker who is *aptus* would observe the proportions determined by convenience and rank (*ratio commodi et dignitatis*), avoid saying too many things (*plura*), avoid becoming 'too much of a presence' (*multus*), and would also mind the structure of his utterance, striving to be well arranged, *concinnus*.[30]

The 'proportions of words' in a dialogue seem to be determined by the relationship between the participants. A skilled conversationalist would avoid advertising himself (*se ostentare*) and would take into account the prestige and the convenience of those who are present (*eorum quibuscum est*): for example, the topic and the length of an exchange must suit everyone, not only the speaker. As a particularly shocking example of *ineptia*, Crassus indicates the Greek habit of plunging into passionate discussions about things most complicated and unnecessary, without taking into consideration either the place or the company involved. This ability to perceive and respect the limits between the conversational space designated for self and others is thus portrayed as the exquisite privilege of a Roman citizen. "Search everywhere," remarks Cicero's Crassus (De Orat. 2.18), "but you will not find the Greek word for 'tactless' (*ineptus*)." [31]

This brief lesson on proper speech suggests that *sermo cotidianus*, in Cicero's view, should be disciplined by the same virtue of moderation that was to rule other aspects of life. A temperate speaker had to know the limits of how much and what he could say without imposing on the other. Crassus' exposé thus implies that conversational exchange was perceived as a sort of tournament, whose rules assigned to each speaker a position according to his or her importance, and required that the participants not intrude upon one another's territory.

5.1.2. Misrepresentation of Self: *Graeci Palliati*

Crassus' discussion of the ineptitude of Greek speakers has a precedent in the Plautine passage expressing irritation at the idle talk of the *Graeci palliati* clogging the streets of Rome (Curc. 288ff):

constant, conferunt sermones inter sese drapetae,
opstant opsistunt, incedunt cum suis sententiis... (Curc. 290-292)

The behaviour censored here is the very opposite of the tactful discretion of the *aptus*. Standing in the middle of the way the Greeks are as much of an obstacle as a *homo opulentus, tyrannus, strategus or 'agoranomus'* (Curc. 284-285). Yet they are but run-away slaves, and slaves are supposed to walk fast, since a leisurely, well-measured pace was a privilege reserved for citizens (Poen. 522-523). Not only their gait, but also their unctuous talk, usurps the dignity of citizens: *conferre sermones* is an idiom used to denote private conversations concerning matters of state;[32] *sententia*, which can refer to a judicial pronouncement, or a vote given in an assembly, also has strong civic connotations, ridiculously inappropriate for a *drapeta*. A crude remark attributed to Phaedromus reminds the audience that these self-important Greek intellectuals are but unruly servants in Rome *"ita nunc servitiumst: profecto modus haberi non potest* (300)." The otherness of the foreigners is thus revealed in their insubordination to the Roman boundaries of social interaction (Rhet. 1408a 25, Quint. Inst. 11.1.40).

5.2. Inward Transgression

Another dialogue by Cicero, Laelius, suggests that these territorial limits were contingent upon the degree of intimacy between the speakers. Close relationships and informal exchanges allowed the participants to cross interpersonal boundaries: true friendship, we read, often requires criticism and reproach (Lael. 88, 91). Such exchanges were even more demanding than the more formal dialogues discussed in De oratore. Only a virtuous man is honest enough to offer criticism (Lael. 89) and patient enough to accept it with gratitude (Lael. 91). Moral integrity seems to be a feature essential to intimate relationships and conversations. True friendship and the truly friendly exchange of ideas, being based on virtue, are therefore possible only between perfect and wise men (Lael. 100: *perfectorum hominum id est sapientium*). Paragraphs 91-99 present the dangers of being intimate with

someone who is less than a *homo sapiens et perfectus*. Imposters who are not morally qualified to be true friends can only feign intimacy, and aim at pleasing others instead of contributing to their moral improvement. Their attitude is described as *blanditia* or *adulatio*:

> *... habendum est nullam in amicitiis pestem esse maiorem quam adulationem blanditiam adsentationem; quamvis enim multis nominibus est hoc vitium notandum levium hominum atque fallacium ad voluntatem loquentium omnia, nihil ad veritatem.*" (Lael. 91).[33]

In Roman literature (as in Donatus' commentary), this verbal indulgence that mollifies the other's spirit and mind was often associated with women, or with men behaving 'like women'. According to Livy, a man besieged day and night by female blandishments (*circumsessus muliebribus blanditiis*) has to make a considerable effort to free his mind and turn it to matters of state (AUC. 24.4.4); Seneca (Con.1.pr.8.5) clearly thinks of *blanditia* as a feminine quality when he writes that a man has to weaken his voice (*extenuare vocem*) if he wants to imitate the 'feminine softness'. Tacitus implies that some features of style are associated with female softness, when he affirms that the letters Otho wrote to Vitelius were contaminated with womanly blandishments (Hist. 1.74: *muliebribus blandimentis infectae*).[34]

5.3. Expressive Mismanagement

While the excerpts from Laelius seem to shed light on the effect the speaker's moral imperfection may have on his attitude towards the other, in the Tusculanae Disputationes we find some hints about the rules of expressive self-control that the speaker should observe in voicing his or her emotions. Though Cicero is concerned here with inarticulate expression of grief, his general reflections, interestingly enough, resemble some of Donatus' remarks on *muliebres querellae* (esp. Ad Ad.291.4). In order not to act like slaves and women (2.21.55), men must first reject the scream of pain.[35] This ability (like that of being *aptus*) is thought to be attached to the status of the Roman citizen: since even Greeks and

barbarians can at times stand pain, a Roman male should be all the more able to suffer in silence (2.20.46) instead of letting out a womanish scream. It is not the noise itself that is objectionable: screams can in fact be sound and honorable if they are uttered by men engaged in battle or athletic competition (2.23.56 - 2.24.57). The howl of lamentation offends the ear because it reveals the feebleness of an effeminate mind (4. 28. 60-61 *imbecillitas animi effeminati*).

Conclusion

Cicero's reflections on blandishments and lamentations, the two features that Donatus ascribes most frequently to female speakers, suggest that these two attitudes were thought to have moral overtones, and that both were associated with the speaker's inability to perceive and observe 'proper measure'. The feminine mannerisms described by Donatus seem to depend upon the notion of *modus* in several ways. Quite literally 'a wrong portion of words' is suggested in the comments on women resorting too often to blandishments (Ad Ad. 289.2), complaining too much, and dwelling on insignificant matters (Ad Ad. 291.4), or using too many words (Ad Hec. 714). Moreover, all general and specific observations about female speech that concern the relationship between the speaker and her interlocutor refer to the manner in which she presents herself or the other (*aut aliis blandiri aut se commiserari*), and can be defined as forms of disregard for the distance prescribed for participants of a conversation. On the one hand, women tend to expose their personal concerns too generously (*muliebres querellae*), imposing a panorama of their confused interior on others, on the other hand, in using false signals of intimacy (*blanditia*), they tend to intrude upon the other's territory.

Some of the motives Donatus identifies as the reasons underlying female speech patterns can be understood as a form of moral incontinence. The statement that women cannot refrain from using *blandimenta* even when there is little time (Ad Ad. 298.2) implies that they are unable to discipline their urge to please the other. Likewise, the desire to

express grief is described as a force beyond the control of the *ingenium muliebre*, incapable as it is of a rational attitude towards fear (Ad Ad. 291.4).

Cicero's praise of conservatism appears, then, to be intimately linked with the Roman perception of female speech that we have retrieved from Donatus' comments. Because of her tendency to cross the social and linguistic boundaries, the best a woman can do is to remain within the walls of her house, and to hold her speech strictly within the norms of her 'father tongue'.

Donatus' insights have made it possible for us to associate the concept of boundless female nature with certain concrete lexical and semantic features of Terence's dialogue. Enlightened by the expertise of the Roman grammarian, we will now turn to Plautus.

ENDNOTES

1. For other Ciceronian *loci* where 'Plautus and Naevius' definitely stands for 'Classics', see Cic. Brut. 71, De Rep. 4.11 (fr) 11, Tusc. 1.3.10. The phrase seems to have already acquired the connotation 'authorities, classics' by Terence's time (An. 18). Rolfe (1901: 452) argues that the fact that Cicero (De orat. 3. 12.45) and Pliny (1.16.6) name different playwrights to indicate the archaic character of the matron's words suggests that two independent testimonies are involved.

2. Such a function would in fact correspond to the traditional division of male and female roles (cf. Arist. Oec. 1344 1-5, Xenoph. Oec. 7.30).

3. The standard Latin phrase for 'mother tongue', *sermo patrius* (Cic. De fin. 1.4; Q. Curt. Hist. 6.9.34, 6.9.36, 6.10.23; Hor. Ars. 57; Lucr. De rerum 1.832, 3.260; Plin. Epist. 4.3.5, 4.18.2; Plin. Nat. Hist. 8.1.; Serv. In Verg. Aen. 12. 836.6; Sil. Ital. Pun. 2. 440; Tac. Ann. 2.60; Ver. Aen. 12. 384) appears to confirm that the Romans believed in a'patri-linear' transmission of language. In the entire Latin corpus, *mater* appears only once in combination with *sermo* in Cicero's praise of Cornelia, the mother of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (Cic. Brut. 211.3). However, even this passage makes clear that the source of the elegance of a woman's speech is her father: the speech of Laelia, the daughter of Cornelius, was coloured (*tincta*) by the refinement of her father's language.

4. I owe this analogy to Professor Anne Carson. For Woman represented as jar in medical writings see e.g. Hanson (1992: 38-39); for literary representations of woman as vessel, see duBois (1988: 46-48).

5. These and several other passages from Greek and Latin literature and scholia are listed in Gilleland (1980: 181-3). Bain (1984: 28-30) offers a few more Greek examples, while Reich (1933: 91-92) has collected several excerpts from Donatus. Many of those claims revealing ancient stereotypes proved justified in the light of Bain's analysis of female speech patterns in Menander. Bain's statistical research indicates that female speakers are repeatedly assigned certain expressions rarely used by the male personae. Such appears to be, in all likelihood, the function of the vocatives of τάλας, when expressing compassion, of γλυκύς, and of the diminutive πάππας. The exclamatory αἴ, as well as μὰ τὼ θεώ also seem to be attributed typically to women.

6. Donatus' philological analysis is particularly remarkable because it often includes, as Thomadaki (1989: 365-372) has demonstrated, remarks on performance. This approach is reflected in his attention to language use in interaction.

7. The other two authors are Caecilius, praised for the plots of his plays, and Plautus, said to excel in his dialogues.

8. This is not the only praise Donatus awards to Terence for his ability to adapt the style of utterances to the speaker and the situation. Further examples can be found e.g. in Ad Phor. 212 (2), and Ad Hec. 596 (20).

9. Though Kroll (1919: 68-76) seems to go too far in his suggestion that ἐν ἤθει and *moraliter* sometimes have nothing to do with the notion of character and should be translated e.g. as 'expressing emotion', 'emphatic', or 'ironic'(cf. Jakobi 1996: 166), his meticulous classification of different uses of both terms is nevertheless instructive. It

reveals in fact that Donatus in his judgement of Terence's character portrayal took into consideration various criteria: consistency, expression of emotion, and realism. The latter, classified by Kroll as *"Nachdruck, Betonung"* (*op. cit.* 71) or as the character proper (*op. cit.* 74) is the object of numerous comments; see for example Ad Hec. 131, 611, 748; Ad Ph. 70, 303; Ad Eu. 837, 901 and Ad Ad. 284, 313, 396, 492, 798, 958. Hellenistic critics (Tract. Coisl. 8) considered realism, λέξις κοινὴ, to be fitting for comedy. See Jakobi (1996: 124-127) on Donatus' use of *consuetudo* to denote colloquial speech, and of ἰδιωτισμός to describe expressions fitting a particular situation.

10. *"Mea sic est ratio et sic animum induco meum"* (Phorm. 68). Elsewhere, a lengthy introduction by the same character is again ascribed to his age: *Seniliter* (Ad Ad. 646.2). Donatus must perceive the style of *senex* as quite distinct, for he suggests that another character can imitate it: a young man, Chareas, repeating a conversation he has had with a *senex*, repeats his speech, imitating, in Donatus' opinion, the annoying slowness of old men: *"Hic ostenditur odiosa tarditas senis apud festinantem Charean"* (Ad Eu.338.1).

11. See Jakobi (1996: 109-112) for a thorough discussion of the history of *proprietas* as the main criterion of linguistic analysis).

12. The tradition of *differentiae* reflects the ancient grammarian's attention for *proprietas*. This 'genre' of grammatical literature flourished in late antiquity but its roots may, as Uhlfelder argues (1954: 12), go back to the controversy about analogy and anomaly. An interest in synonyms and homonyms seems to have been a recurrent motif in Roman literature: Jakobi (1996: 102-104) traces the Roman glosses on *differentiae* back to Varro (De lingua 5.2) and Cicero. See also Goetz 1923: 90 ff). Jakobi's comparison of Donatus' *differentiae* to those found in other *scholia* has demonstrated (1996: 102-105) that Donatus not only offers synonyms of various expressions chosen by Terence, but also explains how the playwright's choice of words renders the speaker's intention, or how it serves the *ethopoia* (ibid. 105). For example, in Ad Eu. 746.1 the scholiast draws his reader's attention to two verbs denoting desire, *volo* and *cupio*, and points out that Terence chooses *volo* instead of *cupio* to signal the speaker's timidity.

13 Jakobi, 1996: 102, has calculated ca. two hundred *differentiae*. The commentary on the first 100 lines of the Andria, for example, includes 33 less formal glosses.

14. For the old men, see e.g. Ad Phorm. 68.3; Ad Ad.88.2, 646.2; Ad Eu.338.1; Ad An. 28.1; for young men in love: Ad An. 267.5; Ad Eu. 223.1; Ad Hec. 325.1; 201.4; for parasites Ad Ph. 318.2, 339, 432.3; and for slaves: Ad Ph. 41.4, 60.1, 61.2, 186.6, 249.2; Ad Hec. 323.2). The quotations gathered by Reich (1933), far more numerous than the passages indicated above, include not only the comments on Terence's effort to create a consistent register for different theatrical types, but also the glosses on linguistic individualization of characters within certain types, and the comments insisting on the playwright's efforts to render his characters' emotions in speech.

15. Such a view of linguistic differentiation seems to be linked to the ancient concept of the norm, which can be traced back to Aristotle's Rhetoric (1408a 25-30), Plutarch's *iudicium* (Iudicium, 853eff), and Quintilian's discussion of *prosopopoia* (Inst. 11.1.41). Donatus explains the peculiarity of certain speakers by the very features that distinguish them from the ideal of the middle-aged male citizen.

16. In the comment on Ad. 353, where a matron calls upon an old servant named Canthara, we read (Ad Ad.353. 2): *"TU MEA CANTHARA tristis ac seriae feminae blandimentum est 'mea' magis quam pronomen possessivum. deest enim 'cara' vel quid tale, quod additum pronomen faceret 'mea'."*

17. *Mea nutrix* is labelled as a *blandimentum* in Ad Ad. 289. 1; *era mea* in Ad Eu. 834.1; Mysis' use of the term of endearment *mi anime* prompts the commentator to describe her speech as *"mollis oratio et feminea multis implicata blandimentis."*

18. Ad Hec 585. 1: *"MI PAMPHILE, HOC VOBIS ET MEAE COMMODUM rem duram dictura vide quantis praeblanditur verbis remque praemollit. 2.MI PAMPHILE HIC EST VOBIS ET MEAE principium hoc aliquid praecantis est feminae. A blandimento incipit, ut libenter audiat."* Donatus may well be right when he asserts that the addressee's name modified by *mi* should pass for a formula that women in Terence use to solicit a favour. We find the same expression attributed to the courtesan Chrisis, who, on her death-bed, asks a young man to take care of her sister (An. 286). Commenting on her words as they are quoted by the young man, Donatus (Ad An. 286.2) explains that he imitates here Chrisis' blandishment: *"MI PAMPHILE imitatus est etiam blandimentum Chrisidis."* In his comment (Ad Eu. 95. 2) on Thais addressing Phaedria (*"anime mi, <mi> Phaedria"*), Donatus argues that Terence strives to make *mi Phaedria* the courtesan's typical expression, *verbum peculiare*, and quotes four other instances where she resorts to this *blandimentum* (Eu. 86, 95, 144, 190): *"vide quam familiariter hoc idem repetat blandimentum."*

19. *"HEM PARMENO vide deprehensam meretricem velle blandimentis satisfacere Parmenoni."* On another occasion, when she uses her interlocutor's name in the middle of their conversation (Eu.871), Donatus remarks that she 'endearingly' repeats his name: *"blande nomen repetitum est 'Charea'."* However, names seem to be flattering mainly when the addressee is the speaker's inferior. Cf. Ael. Don. Ad Ad. 891.2 , 894, 2; Serv. Ad Aen. 1.38. Other sources affirm moreover that they may be disrespectful if used to address a social superior (Serv. Ad Aen. 1. 76., 12. 652; Tib. Cl. Don. 1. 581-582).Ad Phorm. 1048.2: *"an potentiorum blandimentum circa inferiores fuit hoc, ut nomina eorum quaererent et cum audissent, ipsis nominibus eos compellarent statim? tale est in Adelphis (891-892): 'qui vocare - Geta. - Geta, hominem maximi pretii.'"* Tiberius Donatus (Ad Aen.1. 65) offers a similar explanation of the nature of Juno's benevolence in calling a lesser god by name: *"pulchrum est enim, si inferiore in loco positus sit cognitus potiori."* The scholia on the use of names concern specific situations where an influential figure uses a stranger's name, as does the old Lysimachus: Merc. 516 -517: *"quid nomen tibi deicam esse? - Pasicompsae. Lys. ... sed quid ais, Pasicompsa?"*

20. See also Ad Ad. 289.2:*"MODO DOLORES MEA TU OCCIPIUNT PRIMULUM . . . et rursum 'mea tu' blandimentum est sine quo non progreditur colloquium feminarum et maxime trepidantium."*

21. Hofmann (1926, 1978: 127) derives this formula from *'(sic) hoc (quod te rogo) fac (ut) te amabo'* or *'ita te amabo ut hoc facies'*, and notes that its use in old drama conforms to its derivation: because of the erotic connotations of *'amo'*, the formula had to be used almost exclusively by women. It may be equally important to note that *amabo* is the only modifier stressing the speaker's emotional obligation towards the interlocutor. The other polite modifiers translated as 'please'(*obsecro* and *quaeso*) frame the speech act as that of supplication and assign the speaker the role of the petitioner.

22. *"Non enim illius amorem et tuum quaestum, sed 'amorem vestrum'* (Ad Hec. 744.7).

23. Cf. Ad Hec. 87. 2: *"Muliebris interpositio τὸ 'misera'."*

24. Unlike the predominantly feminine *blanditia*, 'slow speech' is mentioned slightly more often in the comments on the speech of the *senes* (cf. Ad Ad. 68.3; Ad Ad. 646.2; Ad Eu.338.1) than in the glosses on female speech.

25. Female blandishments are not identical with the rhetorical *captatio benevolentiae*. Unlike the rhetorical device, which is based on kindness, goodwill and reputation (Cf Cic. Off. 2. 32, Part. Orat. 28), they are based on an irrational charm.

26. Ad Hec 585. 1: *"MI PAMPHILE, HOC VOBIS ET MEAE COMMODUM rem duram dictura vide quantis praeblanditur verbis remque praemollit. 2. MI PAMPHILE HIC EST VOBIS ET MEAE principium hoc aliquid praecantis est feminae. A blandimento incipit, ut libenter audiat."*

27. Without using the term *blandiri*, Donatus draws his reader's attention to similar utterances of female speakers misrepresenting their true feelings and perceptions in order to accommodate the addressee. He notes for instance that Thais, telling Phaedria the story of her relationship with the soldier, claims that she had known the soldier before she met him. We are told that she is thus reversing the roles in the triangle for Phaedria's benefit: the betrayed lover becomes in her account the new one, the new one appears to have been betrayed (Ad Eu. 126: " *nam posterius dicit hunc cognitum per absentiam militis.*") Other examples of feminine strategems are pointed out by Donatus in his comments on An. 268. 3; 684.1; 718 and Eu. 126.1; 142; 455).

28. Ad An. 268. 3; 684. 1; 718.

29. Cf. also Quint. Inst. 1.9.2.3, Decl. Mai. 19.12.9; Fronto Ad M. Caesarem 4.3.1. The importance of voice for the right pace and tone of a verbal exchange seems also to be stressed by Cicero, who names, in a passage devoted to linguistic correctness, (De Orat. 3. 40-41) the speaker's voice, in addition to cases, tenses, rules of agreement and word order. He remarks that this aspect of delivery is linked to the language of exchange (*quasi cum sermone coniunctum*), and suggests that certain common faults: " *mollis vox aut muliebris aut quasi extra modum absona atque absurda*" are shunned by everyone. Though the latter catalogue of faults is traditionally taken to refer to an unmusical voice (Cf. e.g. Rackham, 1942), the context (a discussion of correctness) and the emphasis placed on the common nature of the vice (*nondum ea dico quae sunt actionis*) suggest that Cicero may in fact be referring to a tone of voice that goes beyond the proper register, and which therefore must be avoided by male speakers in private and in public.

30. Cf. OLD 7: "too much in evidence, tedious, wearisome; wearisomely verbose, long-winded."

31. Cf. also 1.221.6: *ineptum ac Graecum*. Crassus' description of the allegedly Roman *aptus* corresponds quite closely to the characteristics that Aristotle attributes to his 'moderate man' (cf. esp. EN. 1126b 29-1127a 6); even the statement that there is no Greek word denoting this concept seems to echo Aristotle: ὁ μὲν οὖν μέσος τοιοῦτός ἐστιν οὐκ ὠνόμασται δέ (*ibid.*1127a-7-8). In spite of this disclaimer, Aristotle uses, in his discussion of the sense of humor, expressions that seem to denote 'tact', ἐπιδεξιότης (e.g.

EN. 1128a 17, 18), and 'tactful' χαρίεις (e.g. EN. 1128a 15, 30, 1128b 1).

32. See De Off. 1.136.8 , ibid. 2.39.3. and Livy AUC. 3.34.4, where the term *sermones conferre* describes public consultations.

33. Cicero classifies such an attitude as a form of *ineptia* in De Orat. 1.112: "*me velle ineptum petere blandius, quod nisi inepte fiere non posset fieri.*"

34. *Blanditia* is also referred to as a phenomenon typical of female expression in Curt, Alex. 8.3.1, and as a manner in which to approach an *ingenium muliebre* in Liv. AUC. 1.9.16, as well as in Plautus Amph. 507, and Cas. 883.

35. Cicero insists again that expressing pain is base and unmanly, and that it is nourished by an effeminate way of thinking that melts a manly spirit down both in pain and in joy, in 2.21.52. In fact, even women should avoid prolonged screams (*eiulatus*), and this is why, according to Cicero, wailing during funerals was forbidden by the Twelve Tables (2. 23.55).

PART II

CHAPTER 5

Spoiling the Soul: *Blanditia* in Plautus

"Plautine drama, as Slater has argued, is full of references to the play as play and to the performers as players and playwrights" (1985: 14). It is also full of comments on the text recited by various characters, often describing their utterances as typical of a particular stock type or situation.[1] These remarks include comments on *blanditia*, which reveal a repertory of expressions that Plautus and his audience would have associated with the 'soft' register, and explain their connotations. This chapter will confront such meta-textual references to *blanditia* with the Plautine practice, in order to uncover the rationale underlying the distribution of 'soft words' in Plautus. First, however, it is essential to reflect on the ancient concept of politeness, the ideal social behaviour against which one must set the notion of *blanditia*.

1. Civic Affections

Precepts for proper manners depend inevitably upon the idea of society that one wishes to promote. The ideal of social interaction that determines the verbal behaviour of Plautine *personae* would have been a hybrid one: rooted in fourth-century Greek thought,[2] yet intelligible to Roman audiences. In order to gain insight into the ideal of civility underlying the Plautine dialogue, I propose to look at some of the assumptions that inform another hybrid theory of society inspired by a combination of Greek doctrine and Roman principles: the one outlined in Cicero's work.

1.1. The Moral Prerequisites for *Comitas*

Cicero' social thought is founded upon the belief that people are born for friendly association, a theme with both Peripatetic and Stoic resonances.[3] Following the Greek concept of οἰκείωσις, Cicero seems to place the human being in the middle of concentric

circles, the innermost of which is occupied by the self: self-awareness (De Fin. 3.16.17 *sensus sui*) and self-love (*ibid. se diligere*) are the very conditions for associating with others, and the very reason for loving others (De Fin. 3. 63, cf. also De Off. 1.50).[4] The next circle is reserved for the immediate family: love for one's children (De Fin. 3.62), who are defined as the continuation of self, is the prefiguration of the less personal affections, outlining further removed precincts of association: for one's clan, community, and country (De Fin. 3.63).

Cicero's definition of *populus* as a commonwealth of people bound together by their acceptance of laws and by community of interest makes it clear that his rendition of the Greek concept of social identity goes beyond mere adaptation:[5]

> .... *populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus.*(Rep. 1.39)

The acceptance of the bonds of law and association of people transform a natural community of men into a *res publica* (Rep. 3.43). This social concordance is founded upon the distinctly Roman institution, and the distinctly Roman virtue, of *fides*.[6] *Fides*, denoting both trust and reliability, seems to have been the essential value of Roman aristocratic ethics. Perceived as the fundament of justice (De Off. 1.23) and the condition necessary for the coherence and survival of the community (De Off. 2.84), *fides* guaranteed the very structure of Roman society as a network of relationships of service and gratitude, kinship, and protection.[7]

For Cicero, a person's *fides* also warranted *comitas*, politeness.[8] Human politeness and generosity are but a manifestation of 'social' virtues.[9] *Comitas* is a sign of the speaker's *fides*, much as a blush is a token of his modesty (De Orat. 182.10).[10] In Cicero's understanding, *comitas* would thus depend upon a man's moral qualifications as a political being, and would reflect his *civile ingenium ac populare* (De Fin. 5.65.15). A token of a high spirit, capable of respecting what belongs to the other (De Off. 3.24.3),

comitas is coextensive with the capacity of limiting one's activities in order to accommodate fellow human beings. Cicero compares it to *pudor* (De Orat. 2.182.10), *continentia, modestia* and *temperantia* (De Inv. 2.164.8), and contrasts it with *vanitas* (Part. 22.10). For Cicero, then, politeness is a sign of reliability and a derivative of self-control. As such it entails moral skills reserved only for a few. *Fides*, the guarantee of the coherence of the Roman community, is an elite virtue, inaccessible to people who cannot act as agents within the civic network of service and gratitude. The Plautine idiom exploits the collocations *fides Graeca* and *fides muliebris* as oxymoronic: 'Greek credit' means payment in cash (Asin.199) and perjury is dubbed 'female loyalty' (Mil. 456).[11] The conviction that women are incapable of *fides*, and that therefore their words are hollow, is reflected in Amphitruo's refusal to listen to his wife's testimony. Alcumena's most solemn oaths are thwarted by her gender:

> *AL. vera dico, sed nequiquam, quoniam non vis credere.*
> *AM. mulier es, audacter iuras* (Amph. 834- 835).[12]

Since the bonds of *fides* are antithetical to the nature of women, and since genuine politeness and generosity are contingent upon the individual's *fides*, women cannot be truly civil. The Plautine usage appears to confirm this principle: the term *comitas* is employed exclusively to praise the kindness of men.[13] Women are condemned to *blanditia*.[14]

1.2. The Exigencies of Φιλία

While sincerity and kindness are conditions for the peaceful coexistence of a society, they are even more indispensable for what Cicero describes as the highest form of the human bond of association—friendship (cf. Lael. 19-20). *Fides* is the very foundation of friendship (*ibid.* 65), and *comitas*, a sign of a friendly interaction, passes for the external token of mutual goodwill (*ibid.* 66).[15]

In order to define the meaning of *comitas* in the microcosm of personal relations, we need to withdraw into the very centre of the individual's social world, the self. Affection

towards another person is only an echo of the affection one has for oneself (Lael. 23),[16] and the devotion a friend inspires is analogous to what one feels for oneself:

> *Ipse enim se quisque diligit, non ut aliquam a se ipse mercedem exigat caritatis suae, sed quod per se sibi quisque carus est. Quod nisi idem in amicitiam transferetur, verus amicus numquam reperietur; est enim is, qui est tamquam alter idem.* (Lael. 80.5-81.1.)

Friendly feelings towards another person, being a mirror image of self-love, prompt one to set for the other the same goals as for oneself. Since self-awareness should be an incentive towards virtue (Cf. De Leg. 1.59), benevolence towards a friend should prompt the virtuous man to champion the friend's quest for moral excellence.

The idea that self-love is the first step toward loving others goes back to Aristotle (EN. 1166a 1, 1166a 30), who perceives friendship, self-love and gender as interdependent. Friendship, argued Aristotle, is contingent upon moral goodness (*ibid.*1166b1-29); people who are morally inferior lack self-love, and therefore cannot be truly benevolent towards others.[17] It is remarkable that these morally inferior people are said to suffer from a disharmony between their desires and their capacity to make decisions,[18] a disability of *proairesis* strongly reminiscent of that ascribed to women, whose random (ἄκυρον) *bouleutic* capacity (cf. Polit. 1260a 12f 197-199) lacks the guidance of the 'right' desires.

Aristotle's discussion of bestiality, a mental disorder that makes people desire things that are not naturally pleasant (E.N.1148b15ff), further elucidates this analogy between the woman and the unrestrained man. Aristotle's examples of the bestial disposition include several anomalies of appetite represented by the female creature (τὴν ἄνθρωπον) that rips up pregnant women to devour their foetuses, and by people eating raw meat or human flesh, or feasting on their own children. He makes a point of noting that banal perversions (among them irregular sexual behaviour and nail-biting) are sometimes due to habit, sometimes due to nature. The former type of perversion is classified as

unrestraint, the latter, as a sign of bestiality. Illustrating a concept of behaviour that cannot be considered lack of restraint because it is due to nature, Aristotle points to the passive role women play in intercourse. Consequently, female behaviour, being 'unnatural by nature', can be qualified as 'bestial' in Aristotle's terms. The woman's moral expertise is thus comparable to that of the unrestrained man. Like 'morally inferior' people (men), with whom the latter is identified, women will not be able to tend to their own, or to someone else's, moral excellence. Incapable of self-awareness and self-love, they will also be unfit for friendship.

It is probably not a coincidence that Aristotle foresees important limitations when it comes to women as agents of φιλία. Though he conjures up motherly feelings as the very paradigm of empathy and disinterested love (E.N.1166a 5-10), Aristotle claims that the affection between man and woman is most likely to be imperfect, because it joins unequal partners (*ibid.*1158b 13, 17). Men and women are held together, Aristotle explains, by a combination of utility and pleasure (*ibid.* 1162a 25), which, according to his classification (*ibid.*1156a 6ff), can only serve as an incentive for second-rate feelings.[19] The claim that perfect friendship is a union between good men, based on equal virtue (*ibid.*1156b 7ff) confirms that, according to the Peripatetic theory, women did not have the moral expertise necessary for friendship.

According to Aristotle, a certain virtue, being a variation of φιλία, deprived only of its emotional aspect, enabled men to behave honourably in the presence of people who were not their friends (E.N. 1126b 20ff). This nameless virtue involved a sort of disengagement that allowed the well-behaved man to show equal regard (and disregard) for the feelings of friends and strangers (*ibid.*1126b 20-30). Guided by his own and other's honour and best interest (τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ συμφέρον), such a man would not hesitate to hurt the other, if he considered that by accommodating him he might threaten someone's dignity or interest

(*ibid.* 1126b 30-1127a7).[20] We can conjecture that women, who were believed to be deprived of the capacity to set virtuous goals for themselves, would lack the moral knowledge necessary to attend to others' advantage and honour. Civility, like friendship, would thus be a male prerogative.

2. Κολακεία: Words Soft as Women's Cushions

2.1. Spoiling the Soul

Aristotle's discussion of the nameless ideal of the pleasant, yet morally irreproachable man serves as a background for a reference to a far more colourful character, one with an impressive comic pedigree (*ibid.*1127a 9-10).[21] Unlike the perfect man, the κόλαξ is concerned exclusively with procuring pleasure (*ibid.*1173b 30), and has, like the woman, no regard for either his own or the other's moral goodness. While Aristotle does not feel it necessary to theorize on this well-known theme, Theophrastus is said to have devoted an entire treatise, or at least one of the three books of his treatise on *philia*, to this topic (Athen. 6.254d, Diog. Laert. 5.47). Traces of a Peripatetic theory of flattery survive in a brief passage of Cicero's Laelius (88-100) and in Plutarch's essay Πῶς ἄν τις διακρίνειε τὸν κόλακα τοῦ φίλου (Mor. 48e-74e), and suggest that it was built on the Aristotelian distinction between the advocate of virtue and the advocate of pleasure.[22]

Cicero defines both attitudes in terms of the influence they exert on the other's moral condition. Diametrically opposed to friendship, *virtutum adiutrix* (Lael. 83), *blanditia* is called the handmaiden of vices (Lael 89: *vitiorum adiutrix*). Plutarch's opinion (Steph. 61d 8) is identical. He explains that a true soul-mate and an imposter differ in their attitude towards the other's soul. The friend fosters the soul's respectable part: truthful, honourable, and capable of rational thinking (ἀληθινὸν καὶ φιλόκαλον καὶ λογικὸν). The flatterer pampers the other side: irrational, false and liable to emotions (ἄλογον καὶ φιλοψευδὲς καὶ παθητικόν).[23] While the friend nurtures order within the other's soul,

the flatterer promotes chaos. The former helps his friend become a stronger man, the latter encourages unmanly weakness. The flatterer's company, Plutarch explains (*ibid.*61e), has the same softening effect on the soul as unhealthy food has on the body. He promotes decay of his victim's spirit, rendering it rotten (σαθρὰν) and rancid within (ὕπουλον).

2.2. Like Water

The dissolution of the soul brought about by the flatterer's speech corresponds to the boundless fluidity of his own persona. *Varius, commutabilis and multipex* (*ibid.*92), in Cicero's account, the flatterer transforms himself in response to the other's will, and follows every change in his victim's facial expression (*ibid.* 91, 93-94). Flexibility, manifest in the many names of that vice, *adulatio blanditia assentatio*, is the token of the flatterer's depravity (93).

The imagery present in Plutarch's metaphors frames the κόλαξ as a clearly effeminate figure.[24] Like the woman, he lacks moderation: incapable of setting limits to his praise (50b), the flatterer imitates his victim's virtues and vices indiscriminately (53c).[25] Like the inquisitive wife, he hunts for secrets (50d, 54a), and seeks other people's closeness (51e). The flatterer's words are soft, like the cushions used by women (59c 9): they appear to offer support, but in fact cave in. Like the woman, he is associated with the wetness and boundlessness of water: the κόλαξ has the consistency of water, which takes the form of its receptacle (52b), and which glides towards soft valleys, omitting steep hills (66b 2). Like water he catches and reflects images of alien feelings (53a). His very humanity is called into question: compared to a monkey, a dog, a chameleon, a gad-fly, ticks, and vermin, the κόλαξ, as Sirinelli (1989: 70) has put it "has no human existence; he represents boundless malleability."[26]

The flatterer's passive status is further emphasized by sexual imagery featuring him as a source of the other's pleasure (61e): the flatterer tends to the other's base enjoyments

(πονηράς ἡδυπαθείας); through his conversation, he stimulates the other's sexual organs (αἰδοῖα παρακινεῖ), and nurses his erotic pleasure (ἡδονήν τινα τιθασεύον ἔρωτος). Incapable of self love (cf. Arist. E.N. 1166b 1-29), the flatterer is disloyal towards himself. This yielding attitude is identified as an obvious symptom of the flatterer's harmful intentions. Unlike a moderate person, the flatterer does not hold his ground, but, gladly declaring his inferiority in every aspect (54d), goes to great lengths in self-criticism (57e 1: ψέγειν ἑαυτοὺς). In order to please others and encourage their self-indulgence, he gives up his place at table, his seat in the theatre, and his turn to speak in the assembly, (59f-60b).

Most importantly for us, the flatterer's fluid personality is said to find reflection in his venomous speech. This special jargon, "self-sick and in need of contrived poisons" (62c; cf. Eur. Phoen. 469, 472), is the very opposite of the words of truth: simple, plain and unaffected.[27] In the language of flattery, names of virtues are substituted for the names of vices, and names of vices for names of virtues (56c); greetings are always sumptuous (62c-d). There is no place for frankness: ground is always given in discussion (58b-c, 63a); 'yes' is the only answer to all requests (62e). Insults are taken gracefully (64e).

Aristotle, Cicero and Plutarch testify thus to the contemporary belief that the moral qualifications of people were transparent in their style of conversation. The ideal man, an advocate of his own and others' virtue, was expected to have the moral expertise necessary to choose excellence over pleasure under any circumstances. Such a personality was believed to manifest itself in an unyielding yet kind attitude of firmness and frankness. But the philosophers' ideal friend and citizen had an evil twin. Soft, flexible, permeable, trying to worm his way into the other's intimacy, concerned exclusively with pleasure, ready to trade his own dignity in a mindless pursuit of applause, the corruptor of souls was a figure well established in Greek tradition. This figure was implicitly portrayed as feminine. We can now define flattery as a soft, woman-like imitation of friendship and civility, which were

qualities accessible only to morally competent males. The Latin term *blanditia*, as Cicero's usage attests (cf. esp. Lael. 95.1), was felt to denote the dangerous and destructive skill of the corruptor of souls.

3. *Blandimenta*

Among the Plautine references to *blanditia*, many are direct comments on the text spoken on stage.[28] Some seem to highlight the formal repertory of linguistic means specialized in the framing of interpersonal relations, such as greetings, terms of address, or polite formulae. Others label utterances as 'soft' that do not reveal any consistent lexical or grammatical patterns, but instead show certain semantic similarities in the way they represent the relationship between the speaker and his or her interlocutor. Consequently, the discussion below falls into two parts. A list of the lexical patterns repeatedly labelled as *blandimenta* will be followed by an attempt to rationalize other references to 'soft discourse'.

3.1. The Ritual of Exchange

The Romans, it appears, took the ritual of everyday encounters with a particular seriousness, and Plautine drama reproduces the formulaic flavour of Latin conversation.[29] Verbal exchanges are carefully framed within idiomatic phrases designed to convey a variety of detail, such as the lapse of time between the previous conversation and the current one, the nature of the exchange (official or private), or the social distance and degree of intimacy between speakers.[30] These idioms appear to have a genuine power of sanctioning relationships. In recognition scenes, the newly-found family members scrupulously exchange proper greetings to signal that they have recognized one another *bona fide* (e.g. Curc. 658; Epid. 649; Men. 1125, 1132; Poen. 1158). Slaves who achieve a temporary position of superiority immediately demand to be addressed by some prestigious title (e.g. Asin. 651-3, Cas. 444-445, Men. 1031).[31] A 'wrong' formula may provoke a very strong

reaction: a man whose name has been forgotten feels rejected and deeply insulted (Men. 495 ff).[32]

3.1.1. Greetings

The greetings Plautine characters label as 'soft' do not present definite lexical patterns, but instead involve a dissonance between the speaker's true feelings and words. For example, the *leno* in the Poenulus (685-686), who tells the audience that he is going to accost a prosperous-looking stranger 'softly', welcomes him with the words: "*Hospes hospitem salutat. Salvom te advenire gaudeo.*" To the Roman ear, this line would have, in all likelihood, sounded ridiculously confidential: the honorable title of *hospes* and the third person greetings remain in contrast with the generic, and rather contemptuous *homo*, which the pimp used when talking to himself.[33] His choice of "*salvom te advenire gaudeo,*" used otherwise only to welcome someone whose arrival has been expected, is equally suspect, and reinforces the tone of fake congeniality that the *leno* endeavours to create.[34] An equally insincere welcome is glossed as 'soft' in the Casina (228). The *senex amator* first curses his wife (Cas. 228, cf. 233-234), than accosts her endearingly: "*uxor mea, meaque amoenitas, quid tu agis?*" (Cas. 229), feigning affection for the one whose death would please him. The old Simo, who tries to deceive his slave with soft words (Pseud.451: "*adire blandis verbis*") dissimulates his anger behind a casual 'Hi. What's up?' (*ibid.* 457: "*salve, quid agitur?*").[35] 'Soft' speakers thus misuse greeting formulae, creating a pretence of kindness or friendship.

3.1.2. Terms of Address

While the very presence of nominal address appears in general to upgrade greeting formulae, only one feature of nominal address, the emphatic use of the possessive pronoun *mi/ mea*, is repeatedly associated in Plautus, as it is in Donatus, with the 'soft register'.[36] *Mi/ mea* passes for a *blandimentum* when attached to a term indicating family: husbands

trying to ingratiate themselves with their wives address their spouses with *mea uxor* or *mea uxorcula* (Cas. 229, 917-18; Men. 626); a lover trying to appease his girlfriend and her mother calls them *mea sororcula* and *mea matercula*, using kinship terms in hopes of stirring up some positive emotions (Cist. 451-2).[37] *Mi/mea* is an indispensable element of terms of endearment (cf. Cas. 229; Rud. 436).[38] Any noun denoting something essential (*anime mi, vita mea, ocule mi, ocelle*) or something pleasant (*mea rosa, mel meum, mea columba, meus pullus passer, mea colustra, mea pietas, mea voluptas, mea amoenitas*) can lend its name to a blandishment, as soon as it is identified as the speaker's own and dear.[39] Plautus explores this feature of Latin phraseology in his serenades of sweet talk, creating a menagerie of endearment: *dic me igitur tuom passerculum, gallinam, coturnicem, agnellum, haedillum me tuom dic esse vel vitellum* (Asin. 666-667), or juxtaposing some lovable victuals: *meum mel, . . . , mea colustra, meu' molliculus caseus* (Poen. 366).

Women predominate in this usage. They employ, for example, *mi* modifying *pater* 3.5 times more often than men.[40] The incidence of *mi* with the interlocutor's name is, as Adams has demonstrated (1984: 68), seven times higher in the female than in male speech.[41] *Animus, mel, vita, oculus, amoenitas, voluptas*, and *rosa* modified by *mi/ mea* are given to female *personae* five times more often than to men.[42] Used alone, the first person possessive seems to have a strictly feminine character; it occurs only twice, each time when one *meretrix* is addressing another (Mil. 1386, Most. 346).

It also appears that Plautus would sometimes associate diminutives used in address with *blanditia*: self-proclaimed 'soft speakers' (Cist. 451-2 and Cas. 917-918) use diminutives to placate their offended female partners. It is probably to mock this conjecturably infantile feature of the *Liebesprache* that Plautus coins the term '*blandiloquentulus*' and gives it to a brave young supporter of arranged marriages, who expresses a deep mistrust of *Amor* that 'little sweet-talker' (Trin. 239). However, the

distribution of diminutives suggests that this tic is not connoted as typically feminine or effeminate.[43]

3.1.4. Polite Formulae

References to soft speech appear to draw the audience's attention to two urbane formulae used in requests, *amabo* and *obsecro*. Olympio, describing his efforts to ingratiate himself with 'Casina' on their wedding night, (Cas. 883) tells Pardalisca how, assaulted and humiliated by his 'wife', he, the miserable groom, had no defence but to beg: *"Casina, inquam/ amabo, mea uxorcula, qur virum/ suum hic me spernis"* (917-918). Notorious for being used by women more frequently than by men, *amabo* occurs in Plautus as many as 62 times more often in the speech of female *personae* than in the speech of male *personae*.[44] The connotation of *amabo* as a feminine modifier seems to depend on its direct association with intimacy. Such an explanation has been offered by Hofmann (1926, 1978:127), who argues that the original meaning of *amabo*—a promise of love—may still have been felt in Plautus' time.

Another modifier, *obsecro*, appears twice in the scene in the Cistellaria (450, ff) featuring Alcesimarchus begging his girlfriend's forgiveness *blande et per precem* (cf. Cist. 302). This formula, originally used in prayers (cf. Adams 1984: 59), and stressing, as it seems, the speaker's respect, rather than affection, would probably be felt as less 'feminine' than the other modifier. It is, however, used by female *personae* 4.7 times more often than by male.[45] From the repertory of polite formulae, 'soft' speakers choose most often the one whose primary meaning carries a vow of affection.

3.2. Yielding Words

Like Donatus' comments, the remarks about soft speech made by Plautine *personae* suggest that *blanditia* is not limited to the manipulation of terms of address and modifiers. Several remarks refer to what the characters *do* with their words. Speech acts aiming at the

improvement of the other's self-esteem are qualified as 'soft'.[46]

Plautine characters systematically draw the audience's attention to those utterances that convey the impression that the speaker is giving up his or her own prerogatives and is tending instead to the other's needs. For example, Milphio's flamboyant speech against the blatant hypocrisy of his master's *blanditia* (Poen. 135-139) is provoked by Agorastocles' attempt to enlist Milphio's help in his quest for the money he needs to set his girlfriend free:

> *Saepe ego res multas tibi mandavi, Milphio,*
> *dubias, egenas, inopiosas consili,*
> *quas tu sapienter, docte et cordate et cate*
> *mihi reddidisti opiparas opera tua*
> *quibu' pro benefactis fateor deberi tibi*
> *et libertatem et multas gratas gratias.* (Poen.129-134)

Agorastocles' appeal fairly bristles with artful traps set to ensnare the slave's ego. First, there is the emphasis on *alter*: the young man suddenly forgets about his love affair and focuses on Milphio, his achievements, and his prospects for freedom. A second ambush is dissimulated behind an extended compliment, which at the same time is a lavish expression of gratitude: the young man makes it clear that the slave deserves to be set free because of his own merits and talents (*opera tua*). A generous accumulation of adjectives describing the difficulty of the problems entrusted to Milphio and the brilliance of his solutions renders the *aristeia* very forceful. In fact, Agorastocles' choice of words suggests that he already thinks of Milphio as more than a mere slave, for he refers to his actions as *benefacta* —favours—rather than as simple duties. A third trick: since Agorastocles has the legal power to set Milphio free, his words about freedom 'being owed' to Milphio can be understood as a disguised promise.

The strategies found in Agorastocles' speech (expressions of affection and gratitude, compliments and promises) are also termed *blandimenta* elsewhere in Plautine texts. In the Amphitruo, the audience is reminded of Jupiter's talent for sweet talk (507,

526) when he fashions an account of recent events tailored to give Alcumena the impression that every single action he has undertaken has been dictated by his love and respect for her (522-524).[47] Promises unlikely to be fulfilled are 'soft'. Stratipocles, commenting on Epidicus' offer to find once again, against all odds, some money to buy the young man's most recent flame (Epid. 158-159) refers to "*Epidici blanda dicta*" (Epid. 321). Tranio's pledge to manage the crisis that has arisen upon the sudden return of the *senex* (Most. 395) is said to be nothing but *blanda dicta*, as is Megadorus' unexpected offer of help (Aul. 195).[48] Likewise, Erotium's exuberant expression of gratitude for Menaechmus' gift of his wife's *palla* (Men. 192), the compliments of Amphitruo (Amph. 509) and Bacchis (Bacch. 50) are all dismissed as mere 'soft talk'.

Plautus uses the term *blanditia* to describe deceit dissimulated behind ritualized expressions of intimacy, and behind conversational strategies aimed at pleasing the interlocutor. Both the lexical patterns and the speech acts associated with the ingratiating tone seem to serve the task of drawing the addressee closer to the speaker. 'Soft' salutations imitate intimacy; the endearing pronoun *mi/ mea* indirectly conveys a claim on the other's freedom. The central theme of 'soft speech' is the vision of the intimate and asymmetrical relationship that the speaker is trying to impose on the other. This relationship's past is emphasized through words of gratitude, its present through compliments, and its future through promises and vows of affection (*amabo*).

While the statistics demonstrate that women are more prone to use *blandimenta* than are men, roughly half of the references to *blanditia* found in the Plautine texts are meant to draw the audience's attention to the 'softness' of men.[49] One could diminish the importance of this statistic by pointing out that Plautus may well have wished to call attention to these scenes where conventions are broken, rather than observed. Furthermore, if the numbers are adjusted by counting the lines spoken by male and female characters, it

becomes obvious that the audience was in fact reminded of female 'softness' proportionally five times more often than of male 'softness'.[50] But no matter how we look at the data, it is clear that, while Plautus would have thought of *blandimenta* as feminine, he would not have restricted the notion to women.

4. Connotations

4.1. *Mala Bestia*

Of all Plautine speakers, the harlot and the madame are the softest.[51] They are also the ones crippled with the gravest disorders of appetite, a fact reminiscent of Aristotle's account of bestiality (E.N.1148b15ff). The demi-mondaine is recurrently described as a beast (Bacch. 55: *bestia*) ready to consume everything in her path.[52] No lover can satisfy her greed, because her appetite knows no limits (Truc. 237-245). Her boundless nature is more menacing than the sea itself (Asin. 134). Every offering is swallowed up immediately, and disappears as though swept away by the waves of the sea:

> *meretricem ego item esse reor, mare ut est:*
> *quod des devorat <nec dat>is umquam abundat.* (Truc. 568-569)

The courtesan and her household "gape at" a new lover (*inhiant illum*), like vultures poised in waiting for the moment to feast (Truc. 337-339). A joke made by Phronesium makes even the door of her house partake in the process of consuming the client (Truc. 352).[53] The mouth, both alluring and threatening, becomes a fitting symbol of woman's double nature.[54] In the Truculentus, the essence of *sermo meretricius* is said to lie in the contrast between the comforting taste of woman's speech, and the grim reality of her inner nature: the courtesan's tongue, dipped in honey, is said to pour forth sweetness, while her heart, steeped in bile and vinegar, can yield only bitterness (Truc. 179-180). A real *lena*, sings Astaphium, needs a good set of teeth to do her work properly. Her words and her smile are used to lull her victim while she is preparing to destroy him:

bonis oportet dentibus esse lenam probam, ad-
ridere ut quisquis veniat blandeque adloqui,
male corde consultare, bene lingua loqui. (Truc. 224-226)

'Soft words' are the beast's hunting strategy, used in the service of satisfying her gargantuan appetite (e.g. Truc. 572-574). Those who have experienced the effects of sweet talk describe it as a sort of paralysing mucilage. Pistoclerus (Bacch. 50) affirms that *blanditia* is nothing but bird-lime, *viscus*.[55] His father, severely impaired by this sticky secretion (Bacch. 1158: *tactus vehementer visco*), feels that his heart has been pierced by a goad.[56] In the Menaechmi, Messenio warns his master against the local harlots who "get close to their clients and stick to them like glue" (Men. 342: *se adplicant, adglutinant*).

Other, anthropomorphic, images compare the sweet-talking courtesan to a cunning hunter. Cleareta explains that she uses gentle words to make her clients feel at ease (Asin. 222: *bene salutando consuescunt, compellando blanditer*") just as a fowler uses food to entice birds to come close and trust him (Asin. 217: *assuescunt*). Once approached by the hunter, the lover cannot get away; he is bound in the chains of love (Bacch. 179-180, Trin. 568, 724), caught in a thornbush (Truc. 224), 'stuck (*haerere*) in love' (Epid. 191), trapped like a fish (Bacch. 102, Truc. 37) or a bird (Asin. 225) in one of those nets that the *meretrices* hide under their robes (Epid. 215).[57] The association of sweet talk with the lover's imprisonment seems to suggest that the *meretrix* uses language to destroy the proper distance between her victim and herself: once the interpersonal boundaries have been obliterated, he is held dangerously close to her, transfixed under her spell.

4.2. *Venus* and *Fides*

The perception of a woman's seductive power as an act of magic has a parallel in religious ritual. It has been argued by Schilling that the Roman religion knew two types of prayer (1954:13-64).[58] The enunciation of *carmen*, the prayer animated by the principle *do ut des*, being a sort of contract based on the bond of *fides* between the man and the divinity, was

called *precari*. It involved a description of the offering and the favour expected, and had a strictly legal character manifest in a great care for procedure. In contrast, the other type of prayer was felt as an attempt to bend the divinity's will, to captivate it, *venerari*, and to gain its favour (*venia*) without giving anything in exchange. This magical power enabling people to induce the gods' obedience was called *venus*. Confined to anthropomorphic dimensions, *venus* became a personification of feminine persuasion.

The distinction between the prayer founded on *fides* and that based on *venus* seems to inform those concepts of manly and feminine persuasion which one finds in Plautine drama. Not only was *fides* represented as a male prerogative (cf. Mil. 456), but charm, *venus*, was associated in Plautus with women.[59] So are its derivatives, *venustus*, and *venustas*; *venustas* is the divinity that inhabits the house of Bacchis, along with Amor, Voluptas and Venus (Bacch. 115), the skill Phronesium needs to use to captivate her lover (Truc. 714), and the mood that reaches its height during the festival of Venus (Poen. 1177).[60] The only man confessing to *venustas* (Mil. 651, 657) is Periplectomenus, whose character, as he explains himself, being woven out of many others, corresponds to the Peripatetic description of the Flatterer. This *semisenex lepidus* is capable of endless transformations: as an old man, he can act like a youth (661), as a severe witness, he can become lenient, all to please his audience (663-664). He proudly refers to himself as a fluid little fellow (*liquidusculus*), and boasts of being an exquisite parasite and an avid shopper, and most tellingly, of dancing better than any *cinaedus malacus* (665-668). The charm of *venus* is thus associated with women almost exclusively, for the only male *persona* exceptionally endowed with *venustas* is a man who shares woman's boundless nature.

The illicit power of *venus*, intimately linked with *blandimenta*, is often described in terms suggesting sorcery: the courtesan's soft persuasion (*compellare blanditer*) and her intoxicating speech (*oratio vinnula, venustula*) act as a venomous potion that tames men (Asin. 222-223). Women cast binding words (Aul. 187); their persuasion is spiced with

venomous herbs (Mil. 189-194). *Venustas* produces in a person under its spell a state of intoxicating joy (Stich. 278) and oblivion (Pseud. 1257). Expert in the exercise of *venus*, the woman was thus a *venefica*.[61] Just as it was the witch's business to manipulate human identity, to substitute children (Truc. 763), rejuvenate the old (Pseud. 868-872), create doubles (Amph. 1043) and deprive men of willpower (Epid. 221), and human form,[62] the words of a *meretrix* have the power to magically transform the listener: *immutari blandimentis* (Truc. 317-318). *Im-mutari* is used in Plautus to signal troubling and deep transformations of self-identity. It conveys, for example, the change Sosia suspects upon seeing his own body borrowed by Mercury (Amph. 456).[63] *Blandimenta* inflict drastic changes upon the man in love. Once captured, he is not himself any more: overwhelmed by the vices that accompany his passion (Merc. 25-30, Most. 135ff), he loses his mind (Truc. 77, 79), his soul (Truc. 47, 49) and his sense of proportion (Curc. 201). In a way, he becomes a woman himself.

The courtesan's bestial nature is thus contagious, and can 'rub off' on men who approach her. This concept corresponds to the Peripatetic theory of flattery, which assumes that 'morally base' people pass their weaknesses onto those with whom they associate, and echoes the Roman tradition linking female charm, *venus*, with magic. The *venefica* gains control over her victim's inner self by means of magic, and deprives him of his manly sense of *modus*.

4. 2. *Genus Mulierosum*

Significantly, men resort to the 'soft register' most frequently in order to communicate with women: more than half of all references found (13/23) to *vir blandus* are meant to draw the audience's attention to the strategies used by a male *persona* in talking to a woman, usually the woman he desires. All of these exchanges can be reduced to one simple archetype: in order to satisfy his fancy, a man needs to enlist a woman's support.[64] Plautus practices

several variations on this archetype. There is the unfaithful husband who in vain attempts to secure his wife's cooperation (Men. 626, Cas. 228-229), the *novos amator* trying to insinuate himself into a woman's favour (Asin. 185, Cas. 833, Cist. 93), and the lover forced to seek forgiveness (Amph. 507, Cist. 302, Poen. 357).[65]

The *amator*'s taste for *verba blanda* has in fact a deeper motivation than the need to communicate with women in 'their' language. An exchange in the Asinaria suggests that a man in love resembles a woman in one particular aspect of his nature. When Alcesimarchus reproaches the *lena* Cleareta for her lack of *modus*, she echoes his reproach:

> AL. *qui modus dandi? nam tu numquam expleri potes?*
> *modo quom accepisti, hau multo post aliquid quod poscas paras.*
> CL. *quid modist ductando amando? numquamne expleri potes?* (167-169)

This squabble brings up a very important issue: by Roman standards, the *amator*, in his immoderate pursuit of one woman, is guilty of self-indulgence.[66] While, as we have argued above, spending time with women can enhance a man's 'softness', Lysiteles' diatribe against Amor (Trin. 236-278) suggests that the courtesan's victims are predisposed to their fate. Lysiteles explicitly identifies the lover's intrinsic weakness as the very reason for his condition: the victim of Love is the victim of his own appetite, since Amor represents a danger only for a *homo cupidus* (cf. Bacch. 1207-1208).

> *Numquam Amor quemquam nisi cupidum hominem postulat se in plagas conicere:*
> *eos petit, eos sectatur; subdole blanditur, a re consulit.* (236-237)

A man who allows himself to live in a relationship with a *meretrix* partakes in the woman's lustful nature, and, consequently, shares her manner of speaking. The link between passion and 'sweet talk' is one of the leitmotifs of Lysiteles' monody: Amor himself is accused of being *blandiloquentulus* (239, cf also 238a and 240),[67] and a verbal exchange between a lover and a courtesan is quoted as an example:

> *'da mihi hoc, mel meum, si me amas, si audes'*
> *ibi ille cuculus: 'ocelle mi, fiat: et istuc et si amplius vis dari, dabitur'*(243-246).

This mock conversation, assigning *verba blanda*, (endearing terms of address and polite modifiers), to both the girl and her *amator*, implies that a man in love with a woman ends up partaking in her immodesty, and imitating her womanly chatter. Since uncontrolled sexuality is associated with feminine nature (*supra*: 28), a *homo cupidus*, who, debilitated by his own passion, opens himself to 'sweet talk' and adopts this feminine tone, should be thought of as effeminate.[68]

Plautus paints a grotesque image of a lover's decadence in the Bacchides, where Pistoclerus has to choose between remaining a virtuous youth or becoming an *adulescens amans*. Pistoclerus pictures his future as Bacchis' client in a long parallel comparing a lover and a soldier: holding a dove (*turtur*) [69] instead of a sword, his head covered with a chamber-pot, chest decorated with garlands, with a harlot instead of a shield at his side (*scortum pro scuto*), wearing a soft cloak (*malacum pallium*) instead of a cuirass, the youth turned *adulescens amator* appears to be the antithesis of virility (Bacch. 68-72).[70] The Heraclean choice between virtue and pleasure (cf. Xen. Mem. 2.2.21) is thus also a choice between the masculine and the feminine in the young man's nature. As the dialogue continues (79-84), it becomes clear that, if the feminine should prevail, Pistoclerus will have to learn a new fashion of speaking. Bacchis' instructions about the way to ask for a place to recline ("'*mea rosa*', *mihi dicito*, / '*dato qui bene sit*'"), which constitute his first lesson, leave no doubt that Pistoclerus' new role would transform the young man into a *vir blandus*.

Self-indulgence and effeminacy converge symbolically in the scene featuring another 'soft' speaker, the Epidamnian Menaechmus. Wearing the mantle stolen from his wife as a gift for his lover, Menaechmus proudly poses as Ganimedes and Adonis (Men. 141-147), mythological paradigms for the *eromenos*, rather than the *erastes*.[71] When his theft is discovered (Men. 626), the unfortunate Adonis will be mocked for 'talking softly'

to his wife. Finally, Lysidamus, the most promiscuous of Plautine characters, a lover of girls and bearded men alike (Cas. 466, 470) is repeatedly characterized as *blandus* (Cas. 228, 274).[72]

In general, the Plautine womanizers are also womanish. The soldier in the Poenulus (1296 -1303), seeing a man wearing long robes and embracing two girls in public, concludes that the stranger must belong to the species of *homme à femmes* (*genus mulierosum*), the very opposite of *mares homines* among whose number the soldier counts himself. This contrast between *mulierosus* and *mas homo* seems to rely on proportion. While 'a manly man' can love women, the soldier admits (1311), *mulierosus* loves them too much. And this excess in his inclination makes the womanizer womanish.[73]

The feminization of the *amator* takes its most spectacular form in the Casina, which, as MacCary and Willcock have argued (1976: 37-38), is likely to have been influenced by the traditional comic representations of the marriage of Heracles and Omphale, featuring the god Pan taking Hercules disguised as Omphale for a woman and assaulting him.[74] Like Hercules in the mythological parodies, Olympio finds himself raped on his wedding night (Cas. 907-914). As soon as the audience, helped along by allusions to a cucumber-like, sturdy object which the bride used to assault Olympio (911-914), has understood the nature of his sexual misadventure, Plautus has the slave repeat the words he used to plead with his aggressor.[75] Endearing address (*Casina, . . . mea uxorcula*) signals that the words of the groom-turned-bride are to come across as *blandimenta* (cf. 883): [76]

> *Ibi appello, 'Casina', inquam,*
> *'mea uxorcula' qur virum tuom sic me spernis?* (915-6 - 918).

'Soft speech' should therefore be associated not only with the self-indulgence and excessive appetite of an *amator*, but also with the effeminacy of a man playing a passive sexual role.[77]

4.3. Crippling Appetite

Male characters can also dissolve into 'soft words' when driven by another form of *cupiditas*, the lust for money. Like excessive sexual appetite, greed, associated with both women and effeminate males in Aristophanes and in Hellenistic epigrams, is a form of inability to set and observe limits to one's desires, and its correlation with effeminacy is not surprising.[78] In the Plautine drama, the greedy *agelast* (cf. Segal 1969: 79-97), the *leno* or the braggart soldier, is often also a *vir blandus*. Lycos (Poen. 683-685) leaves no doubt as to the reason behind his gentle tone: *it ad me lucrum*. Charmides, the "wicked old man from Sicily" (Rud. 49-50), is accused by his fellow villain, the *leno* Labrax, of having ruined him with his sweet talk (Rud. 507).[79] One scene of the Bacchides is centered around the uncovering of a 'soft man' posing as *mas homo*. Cleomachus enters the stage thundering that whoever thinks him incapable of defending himself must think he is a woman, rather than a soldier (Bacch. 845), and declares that there is absolutely no amount of money which could dissuade him from killing his girlfriend and her new lover (860). However, as soon he is offered two hundred pieces of gold (874), greatly satisfied with such compensation, the soldier very politely agrees to be beaten up, and so is humiliated in his male dignity (875-876).[80] It is left to the spectator to draw the obvious conclusion: since Cleomachus' greed prevents him from defending his honour, he is, according to his own words (845), a *mulier* rather than a *miles*. The audience may hear a revelation of the soldier's true nature in his accommodating response to Chrysalus' threat:[81]

> *CL. nihil est quod malim. CH. atque ut tibi mala multa ingeram?*
> *CL. tuo arbitratu. NI. ut subblanditur carnufex.* (875-876)

The soldier's transformation into a woman can be paralleled by an interesting tale. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Ex.14. 8.12) decribes the symptoms of the Gauls' decadence after their second expedition against Rome. Too much food and wine, too much sleep and too much rest is said to have made the warriors' bodies "so flabby, soft and so effeminate"

that, when they tried to drill in arms, their respiration was broken by continual panting, and their limbs were drenched in sweat. What is more, the soldiers stopped exercising before ordered by their commanders to do so. Dionysius ennumerates effeminacy in one breath with flabbiness and softness, symptoms which concide with the physical features commonly ascribed to women by fourth-century writers, who identify trouble in breathing (Arist. P.A. 653a 27 - 653b 3), excessive wetness (Corp. Hip. 8.12.6ff, 8.23.6ff) and lack of resistance (Arist. Met.1046a 29ff), with feminity. Lack of self-control can thus tip the balance in favour of a man's 'inner woman' to the point of affecting what the Greek writers considered to be the physiological evidence of gender in the human body.

Conclusion

The Plautine passages referring to 'soft speech' seem to reveal a concept of gender according to which virility and femininity are something quite different from a permanent condition determined exclusively by physiological sex.[82] This flexible notion of gender has a precedent in the Aristotelian perception of the female as an underdeveloped male (G.A. 737a 29: ὥσπερ ἄρρεν πεπηρωμένον), which implies, as Sissa has pointed out (1994: 61-81), that the male and female are variants of a single form. According to our evidence, the difference between the two variants involves the presence or absence of firmly defined boundaries. In Plautus, the status of a *mas homo* is so intimately linked with self-control that absence of *modus* implies lack of virility, and is reflected in a man's, as well as in a woman's, 'soft' way of speaking. Yielding to the persuasions of those deprived of *modus* represents a danger, because it may bring assimilation: someone who lends an ear to the speech of one of the monsters of appetite risks losing his own self-control. A man succumbing to 'soft speech'becomes himself similar to a woman. And this prospect of loss of identity as a *mas homo* seems to be the ultimate reason for the fear and distrust of *verba blanda* expressed by Plautine male characters.

The Peripatetic theory of flattery, explaining that morally incompetent individuals

communicate depravity to those with whom they associate, concurs in its perception of the mechanisms of contagion with primitive reasoning derived from magic. Incapable of *fides*, women are believed to dispose of an illicit power of persuasion: *venus*, which relies on a primary parallel between action and reaction. By displaying *obsequium*, they compel others to respond with *obsequium*,[83] infiltrate their minds and souls, and contaminate them with their softness. Though women are by nature predisposed to corruption, men who suffer from womanish disorders of appetite can also render others depraved. The figure of *vir blandus* points to a concept of virility that associates manhood with the presence of due measure and self-control, and femininity with its absence. *Blanditia* is, then, a sign of femininity understood as a contagious weakness of spirit.

ENDNOTES

1. See Knapp (1919: 35- 55) for an exhaustive catalogue of the Plautine allusions to plays, players and playwrights.

2. See Fantham (1977) on the Aristotelian concept of friendship dramatised in Philemon's Thesaurus and subsequently apparent in Plautus' Trinummus.

3. For the history of the scholarly discussion of the origins of the theory of οἰκείωσις, see Görgemanns (1983: 166-168). Most scholars attribute the idea to the Stoics and trace back its appropriation by the Academy to Antiochus of Ascalon, student of Carneades who claimed that the only difference between Stoa and Peripatus lay in terminology (Pohlenz 1940:1-81; Brink 1955: 123-145; Pembroke1971: 124, 135; Görgemanns 1983: 165; Atkins 1990: 269).

4. Cicero's development of the theme of self love through love of family and loyalty towards one's country into love of human kind has been analyzed by Wright (1995). Wright (*ibid.* 174) points out possible Peripatetic (Stob. 2.118) and Stoic (Diog. Laert. 7.85-6) sources for this concept. For other references to self-awareness in ancient philosophy, and to modern comments on the Graeco-Roman concept of self, see *ibid.* 172n2. Schofield (1995: 71) points out that Cicero takes a stand against the Epicurean theory presented by Glaucon in Plato's Rep. 2 (cf. 358e-359b), which submits that people associate because of weakness, cf. Cic. Rep. 1.39.

5. Cf. Schofield (1995: 69-70, esp. 69n.3) for references to previous discussions of *res publica* as *res populi*.

6. Schofield (1995: 81) argues that the *consensus* of the people is one of Cicero's criteria in the assessment of various forms of government, and demonstrates that this care for legitimacy may well be a "distinctly Roman and Ciceronian input" (*ibid.* 64) into the theory of *res publica*.

7. Cf. Atkins (1990: 266-268) on the role of *fides* as the element binding Roman society. A detailed and perceptive analysis of *fides*, and an account of the scholarly discussion, are offered by Hellegouarc'h (1966: 23-39).

8. I focus on *comitas* for two reasons. First, more frequently than *humanitas*, *comitas* refers to concrete actions or ways of speaking (Cic. Philip. 13.4.11, De Orat. 2. 182. 10, Ovid Ars 1. 710, Plin. Nat. Hist. 35. 85. 7, Sen. De Benef. 1. 14. 3). *Humanitas* denotes a friendly or polite disposition rather than behaviour (e.g. Cic. Epist. 3.2.2.7, 11. 27. 6, 13.6.4.2, 13. 33. 1.2). Second, though *urbanitas*, elegance (cf. OLD 2.), or *humanitas*, kindness (OLD: 3), have a meaning close to 'politeness', *comitas* is the only term used by Plautus to denote generosity (Asin. 556; Capt. 410; Mil. 79, 636; Rud. 38; Trin. 333). The use of *urbanus* in Plautus is restricted to 'concerning the city' and does not imply refinement of human relations (Cas. 101; Merc. 714, 717, 718; Rud. 1025; Trin. 202, Truc. 658; Vid. 35); *humanus* denotes 'human', esp. as opposed to divine (Amph. 28, 258; Asin. 854; Bacch. 1141; Capt. 304; Cas. 334; Cist. 194; Merc. 6, 319, 320; Mil. 730, 1043, 1044; Most. 814; Poen. 466; Rud. 767; Trin. 479; Truc. 218). For Cicero's *humanitas* see Boyancé's discussion of the three aspects of *humanitas*: the quality of being a man, as opposed to animal; culture; benevolence and politeness (1970: 6-8). Hellegouarc'h (1972: 268) views *humanitas* as combining the notions of culture and civilisation. Novara

emphasises the ideas of progress and civilisation (198-1983: 165-197). Convenient summaries of literature analyzing the ideal of *humanitas* are offered by Hellegouarc'h (1972: 267\n7) and Novara (*op. cit.* 166n2).

9. De Orat. 2.334: *sunt enim aliae virtutes, quae videntur in moribus hominum et quadam comitate ac beneficentia positae; nam clementia, iustitia, benignitas, fides, fortitudo in periculis communibus iucunda est auditu in laudationibus; omnes enim hae virtutes non tam ipsis, qui eas habent, quam generi hominum fructuosae putantur.*

10. Cf. also Brut. 132. 4 and De Off. 1.9.16, where *comitas* is associated with the manner of speaking.

11. For Asin. 199 see OLD on *fides*, 5. On *foedus* and related vocabulary as describing relations between men, see Hallett 1973: 109-110. *Fides Graeca* means no *fides*, also in Pro Flacc. 9.4., where Cicero tries to undermine the authority of witnesses on the grounds of their Greek nationality; Gaius Inst. 2. 281 quotes a law according to which a testament written in Greek was invalid. Cf. also Curt. Ruf. Hist. Alex. 4. 10. 16. The Romans had no better opinion of *fides Punica* than they had of *fides Graeca*: Livy in AUC. 22.6.12, 30.30.27 uses the phrase *Punica fides* as a synonym for treason. The Roman stereotypes of foreigners in general, betray certain 'feminine' qualities: the Greek is, for example, wanton, soft, prone to telling lies, and a chatterbox (cf. Baldson 1979: 30-33).

12. Adams (1984: 46) interprets this remark as a metatextual comment meaning 'female *personae* in theatre use oaths more frequently than the male personae', but the preceding line, concerned as it is with truth and trust, implies that the female *audacia* in taking oaths has moral, in addition to statistical, implications.

13. In other sources, *comitas* was at times ascribed to women: Olympias (Aul. Gel. 13.4.3.2) and Tertia Aemilia, the mother of Cornelia Gracchorum (Val. Max. 6.7.1.), two respectable motherly figures, were said to display *comitas*.

14. Cf. the *locus classicus* asserting the lightness of female words, Cat. Carm. 70 2-3: *sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti, / in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.* A short story by Phaedrus (App. Fab. 29), featuring a perfidious courtesan (*meretrix perfida*) and a young man who knows how to enjoy her voice without having any illusion as to the worth of her words, reproduces the stereotype of female unreliability.

15. The intimate link between gentleness (*comitas*) and good faith (*fides*), makes *comitas* into an opposite of opportunistic complaisance (*ibid.* 89: *in obsequio autem . . . comitas adsit.* Steinmetz (1967: 151-152), who sees in this passage proof of Cicero's clumsy addition to his Greek original, seems to fail to notice that *comitas*, true gentleness based on good faith, may refer here to the speaker's motivations, while *obsequium*, a pleasant manner of speaking, to his words. Cicero may be saying that complaisance is acceptable if one speaks in good faith, i.e. if one believes one is encouraging the friend's virtues, but agreement (*assentatio*) to a friend's vices is a crime.

16. *Verum enim amicum qui intuetur, tamquam exemplar aliquod intuetur sui.* Cf. Aristotle E.N. 1170b7.

17. See *contra* Fraisse (1984: 234-235) on the restrictions of φιλαυτία.

18. E.N.1166b 8-10 διαφέρονται γὰρ ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ ἑτέρων μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄλλα δὲ βούλονται, οἷον οἱ ἀκρατεῖς.

19. If the affection between a man and a woman were to be based on virtue, virtue would have to be gender-differentiated (*ibid.*1162a 25-27), which, as Aristotle specifies elsewhere (Polit.1260a 22-24), means that the man would have to be an exquisite ruler, and the woman a perfectly obedient subject (cf. E.N.1160b 32 ff).

20. This ideal foreshadows Crassus' discussion of the allegedly Roman aptitude for conversation (De Orat. 2.17), which allows a respectable citizen to tend to the prestige (*dignitas)* and convenience *(commodum)* of his interlocutor.

21. The allusions to the figure of κόλαξ appear in Aristophanes Pax (756), Equites (46-49) and Vespae (45, 592, 1033). Eupolis wrote a comedy entitled Flatterers (Eup. frag. 156-191 KA tit., 159.1, 13; 190.1); Plutarch himself quotes Menander's Κόλαξ (57a, 547c). Terence And. 68, and its relation to Perinthia is discussed by Steinmetz (1967: 149-150). One may also note that Cicero (Lael. 98) and Plutarch (52c 1, 53c 9, 54b) tend to illustrate their discussion of flattery with examples drawn from theatre.

22. Two chapters of Characters (Two: "The Flatterer" and Five: "The Pleasant Man") deal with flattering behaviour but avoid any of the theoretical issues that were probably treated in the book On Flattery. On the history of scholarly discussion of Theophrastus' lost book, see Steinmetz: (1967: 153n347). Steinmetz (1967: 4-6, 149), Fraisse (1974: 388-389), and Fortenbaugh (1984: 11-113) point to Panaetius as Cicero's most likely source, and claim that one can ascribe to him an amalgam of Stoic and Peripatetic views. Powell (1990:19) stresses the parallels between Laelius and Aristotle's discussion of friendship in the Nicomachean Ethics. The correspondence between Plutarch's title and Cicero's sentence introducing the section on flattery (Lael. 95: *secerni autem blandus amicus a vero et internosci*) may point to a common source. Theophrastus and other Peripatetic sources are often indicated as Plutarch's possible sources. Mutschmann (1915: 563-565) argues for the Peripatetic philosopher Ariston of Keos as Plutarch's authority for this essay; Russell (1973: 94-95) names Theophrastus (next to Clearchus, Panaetius and Plato), Fraisse (1974: 434) believes that Plutarch's ideas were drawn from Aristotle and the Epicureans; finally, Sirinelli (1989: 68-69) remarks that Plutarch seems to be criticising Stoics from a Peripatetic point of view.

23. Cf. also 72 c, d where it is argued that a friend encourages the other to emulate his better self, and 73b, where Plutarch asserts that a friend is not indulgent and gives impulse towards what is noble.

24. Plutarch does not explicitly link κολακεία with effeminacy. Such a claim would be in conflict with the views on female virtues expressed in Mulierum Virtutes 242e-243e, where he disagrees with Thuc. 2.45 and his belief that "the name of a good woman, like her person, must be shut up indoors and never go out" (Mul. Virt. 242e) , and where he argues that both sexes have only one virtue (242f), and that the differences between the achievements of men and women, if any, are superficial (*ibid.* 243c-243d). The pervasive feminine motifs in the description of the flatterer could reflect the Peripatetic concept of virtue as gender-differentiated that Plutarch may have found in his source. In Char. 2.9. the flatterer is said to have no objections against bringing for his victim things from the women's market (ἐκ γυναικείας ἀγορᾶς). If Ussher's interpretation (1960: *ad loc.*) of ἐκ

γυναικείας ἀγορᾶς as the place where one bought things for women, rather than the place where female slaves were hired is correct, we may well have here an example of just such an implicit association of flattery with effeminacy, in Theophrastus.

25. A friend, in contrast, is the incarnation of temperance: he knows that speaking freely must be tempered with good manners (66b3); he administers praise and blame with moderation (66a-b); he strikes the golden mean between flattery and free speech (66d-e); he observes καιρὸς (68d), and dares to be severe if the situation requires severity (69f); a true friend does not hesitate to reduce the excess of pride in his prosperous companion (61a-b).

26. See *ibid.* for the references to comparisons with animals. Russell (1973: 124) also draws attention to versatility as the flatterer's essential feature.

27. Another definition of true friends is borrowed from Euripides: 63a 6: μὴ χαλῶντας ἐν λόγοις.

28. *Blandus, a, um* is used 11 times, *blandiloquus* 1, *blandidicus* 1, *blandiloquentulus* 1, *blande* 10, *blanditer* 2, *blanditia* 10, *blandimentum* 2, *blandiri* 5, *subblandiri* 5. Twenty-two remarks on *blanditia* serve as direct comments on the text uttered on stage; most of them are introduced by expressions such as *blande apellabo/ compellabo, blanditur, blandiloquust,* etc.

29. The importance the Romans attached to greetings may be a feature of an oral culture where prescribed formulae exchanged by the speakers were endowed with the power to forge and dissolve alliances: *spondeo* created a union between a father and his future son-in-law (cf. e.g. Pl. Aul. 256, Gaius, Inst. 3.92.2); *liber esto* put an end to a master-slave relationship (Ter. Ad. 970, Iust. Dig. 40.4.17.1); *patrone* used in address reinforced the affiliation between a client and his patron (Pl. Men. 1031, Hor. Ep. 17.92). For the formulaic character of *sermo cotidianus*, see Achard (1994: 29ff, 44ff).

30. For example, the third person formula *iubet salvere* is reserved for characters who have not seen each other for a long time; *quid agis* (never used by a slave in addressing his master) is far less formal and respectful than *salvos sis* (cf. Forberg 1916: 19); the vocative of the third person possessive conveys intimacy (see below for references). For a survey of greetings used in comedy and references to all the *loci* in Plautus and Terence, see Forberg (1916 *passim*).

31. See Segal (1968: 104 , 113ff) for a commentary on Asin. 651 and Cas. 444-445.

32. In the scene representing Peniculus accosting Menaechmus II, the latter responds by calling the parasite *adulescens* (Men. 495 ff). The parasite, whom Menaechmus I usually calls by his nickname, takes offence (Men. 496: *etiam derides quasi nomen meum non gnoveris?*) because terms indicating age and gender, such as *adulescens, mulier* and *senex*, are polite in address to strangers (e.g. Pl. Merc. 503; Men. 946, 954, 1065-1066, cf. also Cic. Arch. 24.4, Livy AUC. 29.1.81, Petr. Sat. 3.1.3, 20.7.1, 90.5.2, 137.8.1, Sen. Con. 1.4.3.5, 1.6.12.6), but convey reproach when addressed to friends, family and acquaintances (e.g. Amph. 836, 846; Merc. 305).

33. For the connotations of *homo*, see Santorio L'Hoir (1992: 20-32). The vocative of *hospes* is used in polite address in Asin. 416, 431; Mil. 635, 738, 746, 752, 754; Pers. 576, 604; Poen. 1050; Rud. 571. Third person greetings in general are used most frequently by

characters who are very intimate, but who have been separated for a long time, e.g. by Stratophanes to greet his mistress (Truc. 515: *"Mars peregre adveniens salutat Nerienem uxorem suam."*), by Lysimachus, who, caught red-handed, tries to entertain his wife (Merc. 713: *"iubet salvere suos vir uxorem suam."*), and by Amphitruo to salute his wife after a long absence (Amph. 676: *"Amphitruo uxorem salutat laetus speratam suam"*). The association of this formula with exchange of greetings between people who have been separated for a long time is made clear by Alcumena's response: (Amph. 683: *"sic salutas atque appellas quasi dudum non videris"*). It may be worth noting that this formula (regularly used in letters) has no equivalent in Greek (Forberg 1916: 18).

34. *Salvom te (ad)venire gaudeo* and *salvom te (ad)venisse gaudeo* are used to welcome an expected guest in Bacch. 456; Curc. 306; Epid. 7, 395; Mil. 897; Most. 448, 805; Stich. 584; Trin. 1097.

35. This formula was too familiar, for example, to be used by a slave speaking to his master (1916: 18-19). *Quid agis* is followed by an answer in Cas. 577, 801; Cist. 545, 685; Curc. 235, 610; Epid. 614; Men. 138; Merc. 284; Most. 719, 998; Pers. 208, 482, 576; Poen. 682; Rud. 337; Stich. 33; Truc. 126, 577.

36. A simple *salve! salvos sis*, or *et tu vale! et tu* which, used alone, denote a certain impatience, become friendly or respectful when a name or a title is added. See Bacch. 1106; Curc. 1009; Cas. 171, 541 for terms of address being used in friendly salutations; Curc. 306, Most. 569, Stich. 316 for an omission of a nominal form of address denoting the speaker's impatience. For *mi/mea* described as a *blandimentum*, see Plaut. Cas. 229, 917-18; Cist. 451-2; Men 626; Rud. 436; cf. Donatus Ad An. 685, 788; Ad Hec. 824, Ad Eun. 656, 834, Ad Ad. 289, 353.

37. Hofmann (1926, 1978: 137-138) made two claims about *mi/ mea*. He agreed with Donatus' observation that *mi* is a feminine expression, but felt that word order mattered: *mi* would express tenderness only when placed before the nominal term of address (e.g. *mea lepida* in Rud. 419); placed after it would be quite neutral. Hofmann's (and Donatus') intuition about the feminine character of *mi/ mea* in address has been proved correct: Adams (1984: 68). However, Hofmann's claim that only *mi* + vocative is a feminine mannerism, while the other variant (vocative + *mi*) may be used by men does not seem to be correct. For example, the very intimate *anime* does not follow the pattern he suggests. It is modified by *mi* nine times in all plays by Plautus: Asin. 644, 691; Bacch. 81; Curc. 99, 165; Men. 182; Mil. 1330, Most. 336; Rud. 1265). The variant *mi anime* occurs three times in the speech of men (Asin. 644, 692; Rud. 1265, while *anime mi* occurs three times in the speech of women (Curc. 99, 165, Men. 182, Most. 336), and appears to have an intimate character: such as in Leaena's canticum, stylized as a declaration of love (Curc. 99), or in Planesium's (Curc. 165) and Erotium's (Men. 182) conversations with their boyfriends.

38. Poen. 356ff confirms the reasonable assumption that terms of endearment qualify as *blandimenta*. Only a few idioms, e.g. *rosa* (once: Men. 191) and *ocelle* (four times: Asin. 664, 691; Most. 352; Poen. 336), occur without the possessive pronoun.

39. *Anime mi* occurs in Asin. 841; Curc. 96, 165; Men. 182; Most. 336; *mi anime*: Asin. 664; Bacch. 81; Mil. 1330; Rud. 1265; *mea vita*: Cas. 135, Poen. 365; Stich. 584; Trin. 391; *ocule mi*: Curc. 203; Mil. 1330; *meus oculus*: Cist. 53; Most. 311; Pers. 765; Stich. 764; *ocelle*: Asin. 664, 691; Most. 352; Poen. 336; *mea rosa*: Asin. 664; Bacch. 83; *mel meum*: Bacch. 1197; Curc. 164; Most. 325; Stich. 739; Trin. 244; Truc. 528; *meum mel:*

Poen. 367; *mea pietas*: Bacch. 1176; *mea voluptas*: Asin. 664; Men. 189; Most. 294; Poen. 365, 380, 1292; Rud. 436; Stich. 584; Truc. 353, 421, 521, 536, 687, 899; Cas. 136, 453; Mil. 1345a; Most. 294; Pseud. 52; Rud. 439; Truc. 426, 540, 546, 860; *mea amoenitas*: Cas. 229; Poen. 365.

40. Men use *pater* 53 times, and only four times in the nominal address modified by *mi* (7.5%). For women the figures are 29 and 12, respectively (41%). Given that male *personae* speak ca 90 lines addressed to their fathers and female *personae* ca. 80 lines, men use the endearing pronoun every 22.5, women every 6.6 lines on the average.

41. The number is based on Adams' estimate that in the 11 plays he investigated, women used the possessive pronoun with address by name in 30.3% of cases, while men used it in only 4.2%.

42. Male speakers use *anime mi* or *mi anime* twice, *rosa* once, *meus ocellus* three times, *mea vita* 3 times, *mea amoenitas* twice, and *mea voluptas* 15 times (=26). Female speakers use *anime mi* or *mi anime* six times, *rosa* twice; *ocule mi* twice, *meus ocellus* once, *mea voluptas* ten times (21). Given that male *personae* speak 138,422 lines and female 22,415 (cf. Gilleland 1979: 80-83), one of the above terms of endearment occurs once in every 5, 323 lines in male speech, and once in 1,067 lines in female speech. The incidence of *animus, mel, vita, oculus, amoenitas, voluptas*, and *rosa* is thus 4.98 times higher in female speech than in male.

43. While men use on the average slightly fewer diminutives (1: 227) than women (1: 161), the numbers for various stock-types seem to suggest that the criterion for the attribution of diminutives may not be the speaker's gender. For example *matronae* use diminutives as frequently (1: 205) as slaves (1: 206), and courtesans (1: 193) less frequently than soldiers (1: 108). Cf. Gilleland (1979: 250).

44. Adams (1984: 61) has calculated that this formula, is used 39 times in conjunction with a question by female characters and three times by males; in order, it is used 42 or 43 times by women and five to six times by men (for the doubtful Most. 476 see Adams 1984: 61n72). Women thus use *amabo* as a modifier of orders and requests 82 times, men eight times. Since women utter 22,415 and men 138,422 lines (cf. Gilleland 1979: 80-83), *amabo* occurs in female speech once every 276 lines and in male speech once every 17, 320. The incidence of this modifier is thus 62 times higher in female than in male speech. For the feminine character of *amabo* see Hofmann (1978: 127), Adams (1984: 61), Müller (1996: 96).

45. Adams (1984: 56-57) has calculated that *opsecro* is used 72 times by women and 94 times by men. Women thus use it every 311 lines (22 415 : 72) and men 1472 times (138,422: 94) on average. Other polite formulae have been described by Forberg (1916: *passim*), Hofmann (1926, 1978: 127-133), Adams (1984: 55-68), and more recently by Müller (1996: 93-101), but are not pointed out as *blandimenta* in the Plautine text, and none of them has been shown to occur more frequently in female than in male speech (Adams 1984: 65). Two of these idioms, *quaeso* and *sis*, which have been proved to have a higher incidence in male speech, denote in fact a certain impatience rather than affection or submission. For, *quaeso*, see Most. 896-897: *"Quaeso, hercle, abstine / iam sermonem de istis rebus."* or in Asin. 750: *"Age, quaeso, mihi hercle translege"* (cf. Most. 578, Pseud. 277, Mil. 496, Curc. 419, Rud. 1005, Most. 987.). For *sis* see Cas. 793: *abi hinc sis ergo*, Most. 569 *abi, sis bellua*, Cas. 456: *"servate istum sultis intus, servi"* (cf. also Cas.

739; Mecr. 169; Pers. 321, 422, 619; Poen. 225; Pseud. 1230; Rud. 828, Stich. 37, Trin. 1011).

46. A systematic classification of politeness strategies as speech acts has been proposed by Brown and Levinson in their influential (cf. Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1992: 167) study of politeness in English, Tzetzal and Tamil (1979, 1989). Brown and Levinson argue that certain speech acts, such as reproach or command, should be considered as intrinsically threatening to the addressee's 'face' (*ibid*: 65-66, 68). They maintain that politeness consists in either avoiding such acts, or formulating them as indirectly as possible, or else compensating for them. Certain acts, such as declarations of interest, approval, or sympathy, can be considered as intrinsically friendly, and are commonly used in various cultures to compensate for an unflattering remark or an imposition. Brown and Levinson term the linguistic behaviour aimed at making a positive impression on the addressee, "conversational strategies."

47. *Verum quod dicis, mea uxor, non te mi irasci decet. / clanculum abii: a legione operam hanc surrupui tibi,/ ex me primo <ut> prima scires rem ut gessissem publicam. / ea tibi omnia enarravi. nisi te amarem plurumum,/ non facerem.*

48. Paegnium describes as *blanda verba* Toxilus' letter to Lemniselenis (Pers. 250), whose content is not quoted in the text; the hopeless situation, not unlike those in Most. and Epid. (Lemniselenis begs Toxilus to buy her though he has no money) suggests however that the *blanda verba* would refer here to an almost unrealistic promise.

49. The remarks about *blanditia* describe the speech of slaves in Cas. 883, Cist. 539, Epid. 321, Most. 395, Poen. 357, of old men, (inculding the *leno*) in Aul. 184, 185, 196; Cas. 228; Merc. 169; Poen. 685; Pseud. 450, 1290; Rud. 507, and young men (including the *miles* and as well as gods and heros) in Amph. 507; Asin. 185, 525; Bacch. 876; Cist. 93, 302; Men. 626; Pers. 250; Poen. 136, 138. The sweet talk of the *meretrix* (including the *lena* and the *ancilla meretricis*) is referred to in Asin. 206, 22; Bacch. 50, 517, 518, 1173; Cas. 586; Men. 193, 262; Most. 221; Rud. 433; Truc. 28, 63, 225, 318, 572. One should add here the complaints about the *blandimenta* of Love from Lysiteles' diatribe against Amor, which targets love-affairs with *meretrices* (Trin. 239, 239a and 241). Four among the remaining comments on *blanditia* refer to the matrons (Cas. 274, 584, 707; Cist. 34), one to an *ancilla* (Stich. 659).

50. Gilleland's meticulous calculations yield the figure 138,422 lines for the male and 22,415 for the female characters in Plautus (1979: 80-83). Since *blanditia* is referred to 24 times to describe the speech of male *personae*, and 21 times to describe the speech of the female *personae*, the remarks would occur once per every 5,767 lines of male speech, and once per every 1,067 lines of female speech, that is, approximately five times more often.

51. As many as 16 out of 21 comments on *blanditia muliebris* concern the courtesan and the procuress. The lines of all *meretrices* (5,210 + 3,392) and *lenae* (1,502) add up to 10, 104. The spectator would be reminded of the courtesan's *blanditia* once every 631 lines.

52. Male characters subject to greed, *leno* (Rud. 544) and *danista* (Most. 619) are also portrayed as monsters (*beluae*).

53. Cf. Dessen (1977: 161): "Plautus certainly exploits the association of courtesans with food in this play to dramatize the fact that they devour a lover and his patrimony." The

motif of an Ogress (Lamia?) seems to have played an important role in Old Comedy: see Oeri (1948: 21-22) for references to comedy fragments and iconography.

54. Mouth and tongue are also named as essential ingredients of female persuasion in Mil. 189.

55. According to OLD, *viscus*, a masculine variation of *viscum*, means 'bird-lime made from the berries of mistletoe', but can also be applied to other sticky substances. The Plautine references to *viscus* (Bacch. 50, 1158; Poen. 477) are classified in the OLD as belonging to the first category.

56. Some later references to *viscus* appear to confirm its link with treachery (Verg. Georg. 1. 139, V.Fl. 6.263) and connote something repulsive (used to describe secretions of reptiles in Plin. Nat. 22.45, Rut. Lup. 2.7.).

57. Such a meaning is suggested for *sentis* in Cas. 592; cf. also Gaffiot (1934 *ad loc.*).

58. Schilling's interpretation of *venus* was accepted by Latte (1960:183), and with small modifications by G. Dumézil (1966: 409-411). See esp. 409n1 and the summary of the discussion that followed Schilling's proposal. Dumézil offered a more detailed analysis and reinterpretation of the meaning *venus*, *venustus*, and *venerari*, stressing their emotional rather than their magical aspects in Idées Romaines (1968: 248-252).

59 Cf. Dumézil (1968: 248-251). His claim (*ibid.* 248) that in Stich. 277 *venus* does not signify feminine charm is however not convincing, given that the speaker, the *puer* Pinacium, 'Pretty Face', is likely to refer to a courtesan getting ready for the arrival of her lover.

60. *Venustas* and *venustus* describe female behaviour in Bacch. 115; Most. 161, 182; Poen. 255, 1113, 1177, 1178; Rud. 320 and Truc. 714.

61. *Venenum* is believed to have been derived from **wenes-no-*, cf. Ernout (1932: 1041).

62. The enchantress capable of turning men into animals was a popular figure in Greek comic tradition. Aristophanes mentioned Circe's mixing of poisons (Plut. 244, 302, cf. Thesm. 561); Middle Comedy seems to have associated the sorceress with the courtesan, and to have made the hetaera's seduction into a metaphor for witchcraft. Cf. esp. Anaxilas' Calypso (11 K, KA) and Circe (12-13K, KA). On the motif of the witch in Greek comedy see Oeri (1948: 2325, 48-50) and Henry (1988: 34-36), who offers several references to plays and fragments.

63. For *immutari* used in a similar sense, see Amph. 846, Curc. 146 and Mil. 432. It may be worth noting that in Hyginus *immutari* refers to magical transformations of appearance such as those affected by Proteus (Fab. 64.4.4) or Alpheos (Fab. 31.7.2).

64. The only exception seems to be the reference to Ulysses' winning his freedom back from Hecuba (Bacch. 964 ff: *"se blanditiis exemit et persuasit se ut mitteret."*)

65. The scene in the Poenulus gains some amusing ambiguity from the fact that Agorastocles' *blandimenta* are to be delivered by his slave Milphio (357).

66. The distinction between sex considered 'natural' and love, a futile obsession with one body, expressed so eloquently by Lucretius at the end of Book 4, seems to harmonize with the Roman concept of *modus* expressed in the anecdote about Cato's encouraging a young man to visit the brothel from time to time, but not to live there.

67. While Zagagi (1980: 81n. 67, 96) indicates Greek sources for the motif, Flury (28n.60) points out that the reservation that *amor* attacks only the lustful man is important because this differentiates Plautus from the Hellenistic epigram, and from Menander.

68. The concept that some men are more womanly than others corresponds to the fourfold division of the infant's gender in the Corpus Hippocraticum: a) manly boy b) wimpy boy c) feminine girl d) masculine girl (cf. Hanson 1992: 43). Thornton (1997: 107-108) points out that Aristophanes makes explicit the association of sexual incontinence with softness and effeminacy when ridiculing the type of the dainty young catamite. Not only passive homosexuality, but also excessive heterosexual activity appears to be associated with effeminacy in later Latin literature (Mart. 3.63, 10.65). See Richlin (1992: 3-4, 139, 222), and Parker (1992: 98-99, 1997: 58n27). The Plautine courtesan has often been said to abase or even emasculate her lovers. So e.g. Grimal (1971- 74: 538), and Dessen (1977: 145) on Phronesium.

69. Barsby has observed that the fact that both *turtur* (Isid. etym. s.v. *turturilla*) and *machaera* (Pseud. 1181) can be used for *penis* may be accidental. Cf. also Adams (1982: 32) "A pun has sometimes been found in *turturem* at Plaut *Bacch.*, [See F. Buechler. ALL, 11 1885, P.117] but this interpretation is not compelling." However, the interpretation of *turtur* would fit in very well with the other emblems of the debilitating effect pleasure and the company of women can have on a man.

70. The idea that an effeminate man is the very opposite of the brave soldier is also to be found in Martial 7.58, 5, where he describes the impotent husbands of Galla as *inbelles*, unwarlike (see Richlin 1992: 139). Cf. Bacch. 845-846: *"Non me arbitratur militem sed mulierem, qui me meosque non queam defendere."*

71. Cf. Gratwick (1993: 152) *ad loc.* "types of champion 'pretty boy' whom Zeus and Venus respectively (as types of superhuman) find irresistibly attractive." Menaechmus' position in his marriage, at least as his wife would have it, is compared to Hercules' role in Omphale's house in Men. 795-797 (cf. Leech 1969: 37). The Epidamnian Menaechmus has been identified by Segal (1968: 43-50) as the personification of a man in search of Saturnalian release. Leach (1969: 36) calls attention to his self-indulgence, which remains in contrast to the parsimonious ways of his brother, and concludes that the Epidamnian brother is "emasculated by his search for pleasure" (1969: 42).

72. The motif of Lysidamus' homosexuality is discussed by Lilja 1982 (58-59).

73. Parker (1997: 55) argues that the adjective *mulierosus* was used to describe men interested exclusively in women, pointing out their lack of interest in the same sex, which, Parker argues, would be perceived as unusual. The element of excess is clearly emphasized in Cic. Tusc. 4.25.2 and 4.26.9 where *mulierositas* is presented as a form of lack of restraint, along with *avaritia*, *ambitio* and *gloria cupiditas*. Nig. Fig. ap. Aul. Gel. Noct. 4.9.2.3 specifies that adjectives in *-osus* in general express excessive inclinations: *inclinamentum semper huiusce modi verborum, ut 'vinosus', 'mulierosus', 'religiosus'*

significant copiam quandam immodicam rei super qua dicitur. Mulierosus is thus a man excessively interested in women.

74. As Loraux (1990: *passim*) has recently argued, Heracles may be one of the figures of Greek mythology representing femininity in a man. The episode describing the hero's servitude at Omphale's house seems to represent the archetype of male submission that is apparently ridiculed in the Plautine motive of *servitium amoris*. Cf. MacCary and Willcock 1976: 37.

75. Olympio's status as a *catamitus* has been established earlier in the play, since the audience would have already seen him yielding to his master's sexual advances (Cas. 451-466).

76. *PA. num radix fuit? OL. non fuit. PA. num cucumis?* (Cas. 911).

77. The association of manliness and impenetrability is argued by Walters (1999, *passim).* About the ancient perception of gender as active versus passive see (Dover 1978: 16, 81-91, 168-70); Richlin (1992: 131-139); Foucault (1985: 46, 84-84, 210-211), and more recently Parker (1997: 48-49). Desperate to gain access to the object of their passion, the Plautine *amatores* sometimes find themselves obliged to ask humbly for help, not only from women, but also from the male *personae* representing those to whom they would give orders in real life. Scenes featuring a man in love who must abase himself and use *blandimenta* to negotiate with his own slave (Cas. 274, Poen. 136-138) are a variation on the festive role inversion between masters and slaves described by Segal (1968: 99-136).

78. See Thornton (1997: 11-117, 119) for references. Corbeil (1997: 107-111), argues convincingly that in the literature of the late Republic other forms of incontinence, immoderate love of dining and exaggerated care for appearance, were associated with effeminate sexual appetite. For a context suggesting a parasite's effeminacy see Men. 410 K-A.

79. Labrax seems to refer to the compliments and promises Charmides used in an effort to convince him to move his enterprise to Sicily. Cf. Rud.: 51: *"laudare infit formam virginis"* and 55: *"dicit potesse ibi eum fieri divitem."*

80. For the equivalence of beating and sexual penetration for the Romans, see Walters (1999: 36- 40).

81. Cleomachus' compliance is reminiscent of Bacchis' words, identified as 'soft speech' by Nicobulus (Bacch. 1172). One lone figure may be added to the gallery of Plautine 'soft men': a *senex blandus*. Pseudolus (450ff) features an old man, Simo, who, at a friend's advice, tries to outwit Pseudolus with gentle questions (*adire atque exquirere blandis verbis*). Simo (Pseud. 1290), like Laches in the Hecyra (cf. Don. Ad Hec. 744), is perturbed by his son's love affair. Indirectly affected by the young man's *cupiditas*, he finds himself forced to seek the support and cooperation of slaves or courtesans. Another reference in the Pseudolus calls the audience's attention to the failure of Simo's second attempt to behave like *senex blandus*. His intention is to be gentle (Pseud. 1290), but he cannot stand the sight of the drunk Pseudolus: *i in malam crucem* (1294). There is also Megadorus in the Aulularia (185, 196), unjustly suspected of flattery by the miser Euclio, who expects everyone to be as blinded with greed as he is himself (Aul. 185-186: *"non temerarium est ubi dives blande appellat pauperem./ iam illic homo aurum scit me habere*

eo me salutat blandius."This association of the old man with the 'effeminate register' is not surprising in light of the ancient concept of linguistic diversity, which, centred as it was around the ideal of the middle-aged male citizen (*supra*: 16), relegated old men, as it did women, children, and foreigners, to a place on the margins of linguistic and stylistic norms. The idea that the speech of old men is lacking in virility seems to reflect a general belief that old men are effeminate. In Greek thought, old age was conceived as a condition without μένος (cf. Giacomelli 1980: 14-15), a concept often associated with sperm and potency (*ibid.* esp. 11-13, 18-19). M. Skinner (1997: 135) notes that active sexual behaviour, thought to be the essence of virility, was believed to disappear with age, and cites Caelius Aurelianus' opinion that boys and old men are inclined toward passive anal sex (4.9.137).

82. A notion that corresponds well to Gleason's (1995: 59) statement that "masculinity in the ancient world was an achieved state, radically undetermined by anatomical sex." See Foucault (1985: 82, 86), Giacomelli (1980).

83. For *obsequium* as a bipolar religious notion referring both to human obedience and divine leniency, see Schilling (1982: 28-30).

CHAPTER 6

Quae se ipsa miseratur: Female Self-Pity in Plautus.

In his 1984 article, "Female Speech in Latin Comedy," Adams argues that women in Terence are prone to express self-pity, and he gives the numbers proving that the adjective *miser* (referring to the speaker) indeed occurs more frequently in the lines spoken by female *personae*.[1] His opinion of Plautus is quite different: "In Plautus *miser* is very common. It is not especially characteristic of women." In this chapter, I will attempt to disprove his claim, demonstrating that many excerpts of Plautine comedies suggest that both the propensity for self-pity and its emblematic adjective may be associated with feminine nature.

1. The Topos of Lamenting Women

Self-pity and despair are recurrent motifs in the *cantica* and the monologues of Plautine 'women'. There is Bromia lamenting before giving her account of Hercules' birth, (Amph. 1053-1075): "*spes atque opes vitae meae iacent sepultae in pectore,*" Pardalisca pitying herself as she pretends to be frightened by Casina's madness (Cas. 621-630): "*Nulla sum, tota, tota occidi,/ cor metu mortuomst, membra miserae tremunt.*" Halisca, having lost Selenium's casket, feels sorry for herself (Cist. 671-694: *Nisi quid mi opi' di dant, disperii, neque unde auxilium expetam habeo*)." In the Rudens, the ship-wrecked girls pour out streams of complaints (185-219, 220-229). Even the perfect wives of the Stichus have their (modest) share in female misery (Stich. 1-9, 13-19).

This association of suffering, words of self-pity, and feminine nature is conventional enough to be an object of mockery. Complaining is depicted as a passtime of wealthy matrons, when Cleustrata abandons her household duties (Cas. 147-150) to engage in some weeping on her neighbour's shoulder (162: "*nunc huc meas fortunas eo questum ad vicinam*"). A joke inserted in the Bacchides (41-42) justifies the link between suffering and

female nature: "Why is there nothing more miserable than a woman? Because she deserves it." A mother's excruciating anxiety is parodied by Phronesium who, worried that the child whom she bought might die and ruin her plans (Truc. 454-456), mockingly impersonates a distressed mother: "*ut miserae matres sollicitaeque ex animo sumus cruciamurque*" (Truc. 449-450).

The link between femininity and self-pity is not only manifest in a gallery of lamenting women: the male *personae* who are given to desperate lamentations are those emasculated by their lack of self-control. An old miser weeps over his stolen treasure (Aul. 713-726) *perii, interii, occidi*. (cf. esp. 721f: *heu me miserum, misere perii*); a *leno* who has lost all his possessions boasts of being more miserable than anyone else (Rud. 1281ff); lovers, debilitated by their weakness for women, shed tears of frustration.[2]

2. Speech Patterns

2.1. Words and Tears: Emblems of Self-Pity

2.1.1. *Miser-*

Plautus' female characters do in fact use the adjective *miser, -a, -um* to refer to themselves more frequently than male characters, though the numbers are far from being as impressive as those for Terence.[3] Women employ the nominative of the adjective to refer to themselves 2.6 times more often than men, and the incidence of the accusative of exclamation *me miserum/ me miseram* is 3.4 times higher in female speech.[4] *Mulier misera*, or *misera* referring to the first person, is an obligatory element of the lamentations of dowered wives and frightened maidservants.[5] A brief monologue of Ampelisca, repeating *misera* three times in four lines, appears to draw the audience's attention to this feminine refrain:

> *ut etiam nunc misera timeo ubi oculis intueor mare!*
> *sed quid ego misera video procul ab litore?*
> *meum erum lenonem Siciliensemque hospitem,*
> *quos periisse ambos misera censebam mari.* (Rud. 441-452)

Women's exaggerated penchant for this adjective is ridiculed in Astaphium's habit of

pitying herself under the most banal pretexts: when accosted on the street (Truc. 119: *enicas me miseram*), or when annoyed by Truculentus' screams (Truc. 291: *erubui mecastor misera*).

While these passages already indicate a female propensity for the use of *misera*, a look at Philippa's initial lines demonstrates that feminine lamentations may depend not only on the use of *misera* grammatically linked to the subject, but on the accumulation of *miser-* in one passage, even when the words using the stem refer to the speaker indirectly:

> *si quid est homini miseriarum quod miserescat, miser ex animost,*
> *id ego experior.* (Epid. 526)

The reiteration of *miser-* in one line creates an impression of redundancy, which marks Philippa' complaint as immoderate, and, therefore, as Donatus would argue, feminine, in spite of the generalizing *homo*. Clusters of *miser-* are the leitmotif of feminine lamentations in the Rudens. *Miser-*, *me miseram*, *me miserari* reverberates not only in the canticum of Palaestra, but also in the exchanges between Ampelisca and Palaestra, and in their plea for help.[6] *Misera* is again declined when both girls consider suicide (676, 682, 685, 691).[7] Such reiterations of *miser*, *miseria* and *miserari*, forming a refrain, do not occur in male speech, in the Rudens, or anywhere else.[8] The male *personae* who use the adjective more than once are either physically humiliated, like Sosia, beaten up by Mercury (Amph. 160, 167), or rendered unmanly by their lack of restraint: Euclio debilitated by his greed, and Nicobulos finally overwhelmed by Bacchis' charm, repeat the adjective twice in one scene.[9]

2.1.2. *Fletus*

In Plautus, most interjections expressing pain and fear are to be found in lines spoken by men. All instances of *ei mihi* and *heu* occur in male speech; *vae mihi* is used 7 times by a male, once by a female persona, *oh* 19 times by a male, once by a female; *ah* 16 times by a man, 6 times by a woman.[10] Almost no use is made of *au*, an unarticulated expression of pain used by women in Terence, which Hofmann describes as "*stark vulgär und nur von*

Frauen gebraucht"(1926, 1976: 14).[11] This surprising rarity of interjections in female speech calls attention to the margins of the linguistic system as a source for gender differentiation. The interjection, Priscian notes (Prisc. Inst.15. 41), is barely an articulated sound. It is pronounced with a strangled voice (*abscondita voce*) and affected by the speaker's emotions (15. 42).[12] However, while in a written text, interjections are the least articulate means of expression, drama opens other possibilities, and certain lines in Plautus suggest that the tearful tone of female words might have been emphasized on stage by sounds even less articulate than interjections.

At the end of Act IV of the Epidicus, Philippa suffers a disappointment: the girl whom Periphanes takes for their daughter proves to be an impostor. As one can expect, Philippa yields to despair. She is comforted by Periphanes, who tells her to stop crying: "*PH. Perii misera! PE. ne fle, mulier*" (Epid. 601). It is not unlikely that the female impersonator playing Philippa would have imitated a weeping woman while pronuncing *perii misera*. The same words uttered (shrieked?) by Syra in the Mercator are described as 'wailing' (*eiulare*):

> *SY. disperii, perii misera, vae miserae mihi!*
> *DO. satin tu sana's, opsecro? quid eiulas?*(Merc. 681-682)

Several references to *fletus* and *plorare* suggest that crying or moaning would take place on the stage to emphasize the presence of distraught women.[13] Not only Philippa, but also Virgo in the Persa (622, 656), Planesium (Curc. 520), Phoenicium (Pseud.1036, 1041) and Pasicompsa (Merc. 501) are told to stop crying; the girls in the Rudens are described as *mulierculae flentes* (560, cf. also 388).[14] In one scene in the Curculio (487-532), weeping would have been Planesium's sole task, as she has no lines to speak, yet her presence is implied by the *leno*'s "*quid stulta ploras?*"(520). An identical situation occurs in the Pseudolus (1039ff), where the *leno* talking to Phoenicium seems to hear weeping as the

only answer (Pseud.1036, 1041). In theatre, the otherness of female complaints could thus have been marked by the inarticulate expression of grief as well as by the excessive use of *miser-*.

2.2. *Muliebres Querellae*: Features of Female Discourse

2.2.1. *Se Ipsa Miseratur*

At the beginning of Act IV of the Epidicus, a *mulier* comes on the stage and laments over her fate. Before going *in medias res* and announcing to the audience the abduction of her daughter, she painstakingly explains that she is flooded by sorrows and suffers from palpitations. Poor, frightened, and alone, she has no place to go:[15]

> *PHI. Si quid est homini miseriarum quod miserescat, miser ex animost,*
> *id ego experior, quoi multa in unum locum confluont quae*
> *meum pectu' pulsant*
> *simul: multiplex aerumna exercitam habet,*
> *paupertas, pavor territat mentem animi,*
> *neque ubi meas conlocem spes habeo mi usquam munitum locum.*
> *ita gnata mea hostiumst potita neque ea nunc ubi sit scio."* (Epid. 526-532)

Periphanes, the other character present on the stage, comments on this lamentation in words that are reminiscent of Donatus' remark that *se commiserari* is typical of women (Ad Ad.291.4): "*quis illaec est mulier timido pectore peregre adveniens/quae ipsa se miseratur?*"(Ep. 533). Though Periphanes' remark bears no trace of generalization, it can hardly be a coincidence that the wording of his comment (*se ipsa miseratur*), as well as Philippa's long list of sorrows happen to correspond very closely to Donatus' stereotype of women's 'piling up' irrelevant *querellae* instead of naming the real reason for their distress.[16] Philippa's lines appear to confirm the scholiast's belief that theatrical *mulieres* not only often complained, but that the manner in which they complained, and the reasons they gave, were all essential to feminine whining. Other passages of female complaints also reveal certain irregularities in pragmalinguistic features of discourse structure that appear to reflect the disorder of a woman's mind.

2.2.2. Scattered Pain

Mulieres and *mulierosi* in Plautus have a predilection for describing their own unpleasant physical sensations. While it is not unusual for both men and women in love to announce that their heart (Bacch. 1159, Cist. 65, Most. 149), their spirit (Merc. 388), or their entire body (Aul. 410: *totus doleo)* is in pain,[17] it is characteristic of distraught female characters to fritter away their anguish in confused lists of petty aches. Interestingly enough, though the source of the suffering always lies in the psyche, it is almost invariably transposed onto the woman's body.[18] Bromia's excited report of Hercules' birth is a good example: it begins with a chaotic description of the maid's physical and emotional discomfort, where her 'sore spirit' is listed along with a request for water, and where physical symptoms (headache, plugged ears and blurred vision) are named with the precision of a medical diagnosis:

> *(...) vae miserae mihi,*
> *animo malest, aquam velim. corrupta atque apsumpta sum.*
> *caput dolet, neque audio, nec oculis prospicio satis,*
> *nec me miserior femina eat neque videatur magis."* (Amph.1057-1060)

Selenium's account of her *peine d'amour* corresponds to the lines of Bromia, not only in its paratactic account of her feelings. The speaker's fourfold portrayal of her suffering psyche is underscored by an allusion to the effects that her anguish has on her body: a pain in her eyes and a general malaise.[19]

> *misera excrucior, mea Gymnasium: male mihi est, male maceror;*
> *doleo ab animo, doleo ab oculis, doleo ab aegritudine."* (Cist. 59-60).

The comic convention of assigning distressed female speakers lists of small aches, presumably to ridicule their obsessive interest in the minutiae of their physical well-being, appears to be an object of parody in the Casina. First the audience is reminded of the usual pattern by Pardalisca's account of her (imaginary) feelings, where her anguish is translated

into physical sensations: an arrested pulse and trembling limbs (Cas. 622: *cor metu mortuomst, membra miserae tremunt."*). A few lines below, the maid gives the old man instructions on how to resuscitate her by tending to sundry body parts. Pardalisca first demands a chest massage, than wants to be fanned (Cas. 636), and finally, to be held by both ears (640). The replica of the old Lysidamus, who is not fooled as to the utility of the latter request, mocks the girl's irrelevant meticulousness, as he curses her, naming the body parts concerned, and specifying that he is going to knock her brains out, unless she gets to the point soon:

> *péctus, aurís, caput téque di pérduint,*
> *nám nisi ex té scio, quídquid hoc ést, cito, hoc*
> *iám tibi istúc cerebrúm dispércutiam, éxcetra tu.* (642-644).

Lysidamus' brutal rebuke appears to corroborate our interpretation of the lines of Bromia, Selenium and Philippa. Incapable of pinpointing the real reason behind their emotions, women simply describe their general discomfort. The ease with which spiritual pain is translated into concrete physical symptoms is striking, and may suggest that the speakers are thought of incapable of drawing a sharp line between their psyches and their physiques. Chaotic lists of petty complaints may thus be meant to be symptomatic, not only of the speakers' inability to rationalize and categorize their feelings, but also of a drastic lack of self-awareness (cf. Arist. E.N. 1166b1-29).

2.2.3. Growing Distress

Representations of women discussing the pangs of childbirth are a revealing example of the Comedy's construction of female pain. Besides the usual *virgo* in labour crying for help,[20] and one brief but telling allusion to the hardships of motherhood (Epid. 555-556), Plautus offers a generous sample of a *puerpera*'s discourse: in the Truculentus, Phronesium stages an imitation of a woman recovering post-partum. Among the cliches evoked to render her performance convincing, we find a detailed account of her poor physical condition. Though

the text (Truc. 526-528) is not sound, it is quite clear that she complains about several *sequellae* of labour: she is in pain, has trouble lifting her head, and is unable to walk on her own.[21] Phronesium's account of her painful sensations appears to be purposefully confronted with the point of view of the (alleged) new father:

> *ST. quom tu recte provenisti quomque es aucta liberis,*
> *gratulor, quom mihi tibique magnum peperisti decus.*
>
> *PH. salve qui me interfecisti paene vita et lumine*
> *†quidem ibi† magni doloris per voluptatem tuam*
> *condidisti in corpus, quo nunc etiam morbo misera sum.* (516-520)

These two visions correspond to the ancient division of space into outside and inside; male and female. Stratophanes defines birth in 'political' terms: Phronesium's household has been 'increased' by her giving birth to a pride (*decus*) of both parents. In contrast, the mother's answer is confined to her body and totally absorbed with her pain. The child appears to be absent from her discourse, unless we read into the corrupt text an obscure allusion to the infant as a source of *dolor*.[22] Remarkably, the woman speaks of herself as of a place where one can bury germs of disease, implying that her flesh is easily infiltrable and particularly liable to pain. Such a vision of motherhood would probably be quite typical, for it corresponds very closely to Philippa's definition of becoming a mother (Epid. 556-557), which represents her experience as growing grief within her body.[23] She speaks, as does Phronesium, of a distress which has germinated in her (*tun is es qui per voluptatem tuam in me aerumnam opsevisti gravem*?). Likening their flesh to soil in which one can plant pain, the women imply both the permeablity of their bodies and their intimate knowledge of suffering. Both *personae* are represented as overwhelmed by their painful sensations and unable to see beyond them. The exchange in the Truculentus, suggesting that the joy of parenthood is a male experience while portraying the mother as obsessed with her own physical well-being is a particularly striking variation on the topos of female

petty-minded querulousness.

2.2.4. Stolen Sorrows

Mulieres are at any rate not only very receptive to the pain within them. Heedless of interpersonal limits, they absorb outside worries and bewail them as their own. It is typical of the *ancilla* to appropriate the misfortunes of her mistresses for herself, deforming them into her own petty concerns.[24] The *ancilla*'s concept of self simply seems to include her mistress. Syra, who discovers a *meretrix* in her mistress' house, bewails her own misery (Merc. 681). Halisca pities herself for the loss of Selenium's casket (Cist. 673). Astaphium declares that she is heartbroken at the very mention of Phronesium's labour pains (Truc. 195). Bromia, the servant who has witnessed Alcumena's labour, suspects that all the elements have plotted to destroy her personally: "*ita mi videntur omnia, mare, terra, coelum, consequi ut iam opprimar, ut enicer* (Amph. 1056)," and this conspiracy makes her feel terribly sorry for herself:

> *nec me miserior femina est neque ulla videatur magis.*
> *ita erae meae hodie contigit.* (Amph. 1061-1062).

The lines of the maidservant, comically centred around the speaker's very personal response to an event that does not concern her directly, have no equivalent in the lines given to male slaves.[25] Such exclamations of the *ancilla* were felt as a specific and recognizable genre of the comic *querellae*. The reader of Horace's Sermones (1. 2.130) was expected to guess without any further indication that the subject of *miseram se conscia clamat* must be the servant of the matron caught in adultery.[26]

The discourse of distraught women in Plautus appears to reveal an adversity between female nature and order. Lists of complaints confusing spiritual and physical suffering reflect the women's internal chaos, while the obsession with pain seems to expose the speakers' unawareness of the limits of self. Women impose detailed accounts of their

sensations on others, granting themselves, as Cicero might put it, too generous a ration of importance (cf. De Orat. 2.17). On the other hand, showing an appetite for alien worries, they ask to be imposed upon, and appear to declare their own personal boundaries open to others.

2.2.5. Disproportions

If Donatus were to have examined the correlation between the words of grief uttered by female characters in Plautus and the dramatic situations in which they occur, he would probably have made a point of writing that some of the monologues and cantica feature women engaging in complaints where it would make more sense to weep for joy or relief. Bromia's story has a very happy ending (Amph.1070-1071), Pardalisca (Cas. 621-630) has escaped the allegedly mad Casina, and the crying girls of the Rudens (185-229) have survived a shipwreck, yet they focus exclusively on their fear and misery.

The figure of the whining *dotata* is a grotesque incarnation of the lamenting female. All Plautine *dota fretae* are granted lines conveying self pity. The fierce Artemona feels tormented by jealousy: "*Perii misera, ut osculatur carnufex*" (Asin. 892). Dorippa, the spouse of the terrorised Lysimachus, claims to be the most wretched of all wives: "*miserior mulier me nec fiet nec fuit*" (Merc. 700). Matrona in the Menaechmi, the very archetype of the "enraged dog-woman," also describes herself as a *mulier misera.*[27] The ridicule of the dowered wife lies in her perverse ambition to rule instead of accepting\ her husband's guidance. The jurisdiction to which she aspires includes control over the husband's freedom and ownership of his body.[28] Artemona expresses this possessive attitude most poignantly when she complains about her husband's poor bedroom performance:

> *ille operi foris faciendo lassus noctu <ad me advenit>*
> *fundum alienum arat, incultum familiarem deserit* (Asin. 873-874)

The wives' aspirations to have\ exclusive access to their husbands' bodies would have come across as extravagant (Asin. 990-941, Cas. 190). Plautus has Matrona's father advise her

to comply with her husband's wishes and to abstain from her unhealthy interest in his life:"*viro ut morem geras/ quid ille faciat ne id opserves, quo eat, quid rerum gerat.*"(Men.788-789).[29] In fact, all *amatores mariti* in Plautus keep their affairs within the limits prescribed by law, which did not penalize a man for having an extramarital affair, as long as the object of his desire was a slave whom he owned, or a prostitute.[30] The impudent lamentations of betrayed wives are then to reflect their transgressive and disproportionate concept of self-importance.

3. Connotations:

3.1. *Fletus* and *Questus*

A fragment of Niptrae, a lost tragedy by Pacuvius (Trag. 268-269) and preserved in Cicero's discussion of unmanly lamentation (Tusc. 2.50. 13), confirms the legitimacy of the link between the feminine nature and *fletus*:

> *Conqueri fortunam adversam, non lamentari decet*
> *Id viri est officium, fletus muliebri ingenio additus*

There are two ways of complaining: *conqueri* and *lamentari*, manly and unmanly. The first has strong civic connotations in Latin. *Conqueri* implies the presence of a benevolent listener, and is therefore unthinkable in places removed from civilization (Cat. 64.164). It belongs to political discourse (cf. *conqueri pro republica* in Pro Sest. 3.3), and may be a synonym for legal proceedings;[31] it is done with indignation (De Invent. 109.12) and brave spirit (Rhet. ad Her. 2.50). The second kind of complaint, often identified with *fletus* and *eiulatio* of funeral rites, denotes inarticulate and extravagant expression of pain.[32] Mourning was considered a form of intemperance (cf. Cic. De nat. 1.42), and the city, both Greek and Roman, had to pass legislation to impose limits on *fletus*.[33] Sometimes associated with the chaos of a captured city and an anonymous *turba mulierum* (Liv. AUC. 5.40.3, 2. 40. 9), in times of peace, *lamentari* is the domain of mothers, wives, and sisters

(e.g. Cic. De Inv. 2.78; Sen. Cont. 1.5.1; Tac. Ann. 12.47). The impulse to lament is so embarrassing and so intimate that Cicero yields to it unwillingly even in the utmost privacy (Epist. Ad Att. 12.15).

The manly protest is embedded in the structure of the *polis* as the citizen's right to bring a matter for debate to the attention of other citizens, so that an equitable solution can be found. *Fletus* is associated with the absence of the *Urbs*, her laws and structure. Feminine complaints are essentially private and seek no goal other than the expression of pain itself. Such pointless melting into tears was believed to disarrange and disrupt social composure, and limits had to be imposed on the practice.

3.2. Trembling Limbs

Plautus' perception of the physiology of *fletus* appears to link it to the boundlessness of the female body.[34] While the obsession with pain manifest in the words of theatrical women may depend on the presumably generalized deficiency of this colder, sluggish, and imperfect creature (Galen De Usu 14.6), the painful symptoms described by the *mulierculae flentes* conform to a very specific variety of weakness. Most of the distraught *personae* (*supra* 2.2.2.) are *puellae*, that is, young women who, according to the theory of hysteria, were allegedly likely to suffer from excess of blood gathered in the womb (Hipp. De Virg. 8.466-70; Littré G). The blood rushing up to the heart and to the lungs, and thus making the heart sluggish, was believed to cause insanity in women (*ibid.*). While shivers and fever were the physical symptoms of this state, the mind was exposed to terrible visions, or simply given to "the desire to love death as though it were a form of good" (*ibid.*).

Palaestra's words about death— "*neque est melius morte in malis/ rebus miseris*" — appear to be reminiscent of this Hippocratic description of hysterical morbidity: (Rud. 675-675). Intriguingly, the self-analytic accounts of distraught female *personae* in Plautus, focusing on overwhelming tiredness (Amph. 1057, Cist. 59), trembling limbs (Cas. 622), numbness of heart (Cas. 622), headache (Amph. 1058), impaired vision (Amph. 1059,

Cist. 60) and hearing (Amph. 1058) correspond quite well to the symptoms associated with hysterical disorders. While shivers and stopped hearts are mentioned in De virginum morbis, quoted above, Aretaeus of Cappadocia (De Caus. 2), a second-century supporter of the Hippocratic doctrine, insists that tremors are typical of womb-related conditions, and names more of the symptoms that we know of from Plautus: a woman whose womb moves upwards becomes sluggish and weak, loses the faculties of her knees (cf. Truc. 527), and suffers from vertigo, headache, and a heaviness of the head (cf. Truc. 526). When frightened by extraordinary events, the distraught *puellae* in Plautus manifest some of the symptoms of classical hysteria.

The idea of a partly psychological motivation for hysteria is not unfamiliar to orthodox Hippocratic theory. Though virgins, we read in De virg. (8.466), are physiologically more prone to suffer from morbid excess of blood, gruesome and often fatal visions can affect other women, and even men (sic!). The severity of a person's reaction to the disease is said here to depend on more than purely physical factors: women are more liable to choke to death or commit suicide "because their nature is less courageous and weaker" (*ibid.*).

3. 3. *Aporia*

In Plautus, the complaints of women are represented as excessive. Palaestrio in the Miles briefly calls attention to the overabundance of a woman's tears as he asks Philcomasium: "*quid modi flendo hodie facias?*" (Mil. 1311ff). Other male characters also make efforts to stop female weeping, most commonly by offering a comforting piece of information to the weeper. Cappadox comforts Planesium by saying that he has made a good profit selling her (Curc. 520: "*Quid stulta ploras, ne time, bene hercle vendidi ego te*"). Callidorus' girlfriend is told that she is not being taken to the soldier (Pseud. 1038: "*ne plora, nescis ut res sit, Phoenicium*").[35] Virgo in the Persa receives the doubtful consolation that she is going to regain her freedom if she "just lies there" frequently enough (Persa 656: "*ne sis*

plora; libera eris actutum, si crebro cades").[36] The friendly old man, Lysimachus, trying to reassure a young slave, reminds her about her looks (Merc. 501 *ne plora: nimi' stulte facis, oculos corrumpis talis*).[37]

These attempts to reduce female tears to reasonable proportions are probably meant to be comically inadequate (esp. Curc. 520, Persa 656), but the dramatic situations in which they occur are interestingly similar, and seem therefore to expose a common belief about the state of mind of the tearful *puellae*. Girls in Plautus cry when they are afraid of something that is beyond their understanding (cf. esp. Curc. 520), and the speakers, making efforts to cure these tears with explanations, imply that the best remedy against *fletus* is knowledge.

Fear and ignorance are repeatedly associated not only with female tears, but with female complaints. Bromia feels helpless (Amph. 1053: "*Spes atque opes vitae meae iacent sepultae in pectore*") because she has witnessed events beyond her understanding (Amph.1057: *mira*). Terror dominates her description of the epiphany. Jupiter's voice calls upon servants "deadly terrified by the fear of him" (1066: "*terrore meo occidistis pro metu*"). Bromia herself is horrified as Alcumena calls upon her (1067: "*ea res me horrore adficit*"), but a more familiar fear (*metus erilis*) helps her to control her panic. This victory of earthly considerations over panic is described as desire for knowledge. The *ancilla* runs to learn ("*ut sciscam*") what her mistress wishes (1068).

Pardalisca, given the task of persuading the old man that Casina has lost her reason, stages a brief monologue, pretending to experience very similar emotions. Like Bromia, she feels helpless and sorry for herself because she has been scared to death by *mira*:[38]

> *nulla sum, nulla sum, tota, tota occidi,*
> *cor metu mortuomst, membra miserae tremunt,*
> *nescio unde auxili, praesidi, perfugi*
> *mi aut opum copiam compararem aut expetam:*
> *tanta factu modo mira miris modis*
> *intus vidi.* (Cas. 621-626)

It is worth noting that, when referring to her feeling of helplessness, Pardalisca does not claim that there is no place or person who could offer her help, shelter, and safety; she says that she does not know where to look for them. Her mind, faced with things allegedly far beyond its capacities (*tanta mira*), has reached an impasse, and this appears to be the reason behind her overwhelming despair.

Philippa, describing her state of mind, makes the connection between the terror paralyzing her mental capacities and her lack of knowledge even more evident:

> *(...) pavor territat mentem animi,*
> *neque ubi meas conlocem spes habeo mi usquam munitum locum.*
> *ita gnata mea hostiumst potita neque ea nunc ubi est scio.* (Epid. 529-531)

A consistency can be observed in the way these three distraught women represent the condition of their minds. All face a miraculous event (*mira*) or an enigma (*neque ... scio*), feel frightened (Amph. 1068, Cas. 622, Epid. 529) and confused. This condition is perceived as the opposite of knowledge (Amph. 1068) and is contrasted with the mind's capacity to find resources, help and support (Cas. 623-634, Epid. 530).[39] Practical intelligence is therefore the antidote against female despair.

In the tragicomedy Rudens, another frightened girl, Palaestra, (Rud. 188: *timida*) sings a *canticum* in which this condition of impasse seems to find its visual equivalent in a laconic description of the sea-shore: [40]

> *nunc quam spem aut opem aut consili quid capessam?*
> *ita hic sola solis locis compotita*
> *[sum]. hic saxa sunt, hic mare sonat...* (Rud. 204-206)."

Palaestra, like Bromia, Pardalisca, and Philippa, feels resourceless and unable to imagine where to look for food and shelter (208). Her lines appear to disclose a parallel between her state of mind and the place where she is, between her inability to find a path and her inability to find a way out. [41]

nec cibo nec loco tecta quo sim scio:
quae mihi spes qua me vivere velim?
nec loci gnara sum nec† diu† hic fui.
saltem aliquem velim qui mihi ex his locis
aut viam aut semitam monstret, ita nunc
hac in illac eam incerta consili. (208-213).

The correlation of wilderness—a landscape without roads—with want of means, appears to be of Greek origin, since the absence of passage and helplessness converge in the Greek word ἀπορία, which reveals a perception of lack of resources as a lack of πόρος, passage. Πόρος, as Detienne and Vernant have convincingly argued, is an intellectual power. It can be associated with the mind's capacity to overcome confusion through the creation of divisions and categories.[42]

When frightened female characters in Plautus describe the state of their minds, they are stressing the *aporia* of their own intellect and their need for guidance. Such an inner landscape, deprived as it is of paths of intelligence, is hardly surprising in a being whose nature has been described as ἄπειρον, lacking in external limits and internal structure. Women are prone to complain because their intellect is unable to find the resources necessary to deal with adversity.

Palaestra again draws upon the analogy between the absence of a cognitive 'passage', which could take her mind towards a solution, and the state of physical impasse (*quam in partem . . . non scimus*) in the *canticum* she sings later in the play, when she and her friend find themselves back in Lyco's power:

nunc id est quom omium copiarum atque opum,
auxili, praesidi viduitas nos tenet.
<nec salust> nec viast quae salutem adferat,
<nec quam in partem> ingredi persequamur
scimus. tanto in metu nunc sumus ambae (Rud. 664-668).

Her mind, paralyzed by *metus*, points out one last way to escape: suicide (*"par moriri est. neque est melius morte in malis rebus miseris"* 675 -676).[43] In the light of the evidence of

Greek tragedy, where voluntary death is often the only exit for the heroine, Palaestra's thought, not new in her discourse (cf. 209), is typical of a woman overwhelmed by crushing misfortunes.[44] But if the thought is an easy one, the act of suicide remains a death for noble women. Helen, the very paradigm of female vanity, is criticised for not ending her own life as a γενναία γυνὴ would have done (Eur. Troades. 1012-1014). Her daughter Hermione, who is overfeminine, as Loraux observes, would like to die, but does not find the courage to act on her threats (811, 841-844).[45]

Palaestra's friend, Ampelisca is given lines which parody the topos of the tragic heroine who is too feminine and too indolent even to commit suicide. As soon as she thinks of death, the poor woman tells the audience, her feminine nature takes over, and fear overpowers her body:

> *certumst moriri quam hunc pati <saevire> lenonem in me,*
> *sed muliebri ingenio sum tamen. miserae cum venit in mentem*
> *mihi mortis, metus membra occupat* (Rud. 685).

Since Ampelisca is arguably stylized as weaker, and, therefore, the more 'feminine' of the two *mulierculae*,[46] we can conjecture that the mind's *aporia* is not only linked, but also directly proportional, to femininity. Panic, as *fletus* in the fragment of Pacuvius' Niptrae, is regarded as an attribute of *ingenium muliebre*. The descriptions of the state of mind of the confused women seem to rationalize both fears and tears as a consequence of the boundlessness of the female mind.

3. 4. Cicero's *Fletus*

In mid-January 45 B.C. in Tusculum, Cicero's daughter Tullia died. Her father left his beloved villa behind to stay with Atticus in Rome, and then retired to a secluded property in Astura, where he could burrow into thick woods to mourn his daughter:

> *in hac solitudine careo omnium colloquio, cumque mane me in silvam abstrusi densam et asperam, non exeo inde ante vesperum. (...) in ea* [*scil. solitudine* D.D.] *mihi omnis sermo est cum litteris. eum tamen interpellat fletus; cui repugno quoad possum, sed adhuc pares non sumus.* (Epist. Ad Att. 12.15)

As we can see in another letter, this indulgence in grief threatened Cicero's reputation seriously, and the loyal Atticus was anxious about his friend's credibility: "*scribis te vereri ne et gratia et auctoritas nostra hoc meo maerore minuatur*" (Ad Att. 12.40.9-12).[47] In the same letter Cicero tries to appease his friend's anxiety, providing him with arguments to oppose his critics. His defence gives an interesting insight as to why mourning threatened a man's *auctoritas*.

Two themes are recurrent in Cicero's apology. First, as if the rumor had it that Cicero had become strangely alienated and had lost some of his *urbanitas*, he ennumerates painstakingly all the gestures he has made in order to safeguard his social *persona*. While staying in Atticus' house, immediately after Tullia's death, he received all visitors with due respect; he forced himself to spend thirty days in his villa at Baiae (*in horto*), and made efforts to entertain with cheerful conversation everyone who came to see him in Astura ("*quis aut congressum meum aut facilitatem sermonis desideravit?*"). Second, he stresses that he has remained active, as though there were gossip in Rome that the pain he was harbouring had robbed him of his usual vigour. Cicero hides himself behind his writings: some of his joyful detractors (*isti laeti qui me reprehendunt*), he ventures, would not be able to read as much as he has written. And again, as though his courage were doubted, Cicero attempts to prove his valour, boasting that he deals with matters about which no one could write without courage (*abiecto animo*). Retiring to Astura to mourn his daughter, Cicero risked, and had to defend, his reputation as a vigorous and courageous member of the *civitas*.

Servius's famous letter (Ad Fam. 4.5) reveals a reasoning similar to that which seems to underlie Cicero's defence. Affected by an intimate and private pain (*dolor intestinus*), the former consul and eminent political figure is believed to dismiss his obligations towards the Republic (2.1).[48] Mourning one little womanly life (*unius mulierculae animula*), while outstanding men have died, and the power of the Roman people

had been diminished (4.15), undermines not only the credibility of Cicero, the statesman (5.1., 5.10), but it seems to cast a shadow over his mental capacities, jeopardizing his reputation for *sapientia* (6.1) and *prudentia* (6.10).

In the Tusculanae Disputationes, written later that year, Cicero himself assigns to mourning and wailing the label that his friends have politely avoided. Exclusive concern for private matters, lack of vigour and courage, and impaired mental capacities should have earned him the epithet of *effeminatus*. Mourning is, according to Cicero, 'soft' and 'effeminate', because endurance is 'manly'.[49] The correlation of tolerance of pain and manliness is focused on in Tusc. 2.42-52, and Cicero's choice of Latin examples indicates that he regarded the association of virility and endurance as being rooted in the Roman system of values.[50] Endurance is a virtue, *virtus*, and its very name bears witness to its link to virility: *appellata est enim e viro virtus*.[51] A man should stand any pain resolutely, and steadily display an attitude diametrically opposed to female lightness (Tusc. 2.46.5: *constanter et sedate*); and there could not be anything less decorous for a man than effeminate *fletus* (2.58.1).

Pacuvius in the Niptrae, Cicero tells us, understood the importance of this distinction better than Sophocles, in the original play where Odysseus only cries and weeps (like a Plautine *muliercula*).[52] Pacuvius' hero errs at first, and screams in pain and self pity:

> *Retinete, tenete, opprimit ulcus,*
> *nudate, heu miserum me: excrucior.*

But Ulixes, the most resourceful of heros, knows that to silence the pain of his body, he needs to overcome the pain of his mind (*animi dolor*). The words about manly protests and womanly lamentations are, according to Cicero, inspired by this knowledge:

> *Conqueri fortunam adversam, non lamentari decet*
> *Id viri est officium, fletus muliebri ingenio additus.*

Lamentations are feminine because the skill of self-control is a feature of manly intellect.

When describing *fletus*, Cicero stresses its correlation with feminine mind. The soft part of the spirit (2.47.10: *molle quiddam, demissum, humile, enervatum*) is shamefully given to tears and lamentations like a woman (2.48.1: *se geret turpissime . . . se lamentis muliebriter lacrimisque dedet*).[53] This part must be restrained by *ratio*, whose action is compared to that of friends and relations putting bonds and chains on someone mentally ill (2.48.5: *vinciatur et constringatur amicorum propinquorumque custodiis*).[54] Otherwise the womanish and frivolous way of thinking that lies behind the female sound of *fletus* can soften men and melt them into women (Tusc. 2.52: *liquescimus fluimusque mollitia*). Cicero writes that this debility of the effeminate mind is precisely what one finds objectionable in mourners (Tusc. 4.60: *obicimus maerentibus imbecillitatem animi ecfeminati*). Cicero's own inconsolable pain after his daughter's death would have been qualified in all likelihood as a feminine *infirmitas*, and would have cast doubt on his mental capacities.

Conclusion

In the Plautine drama, self-pity is associated with feminine nature. The complaints of women have a distinct character which is best rendered by the Latin term *fletus*, inarticulate expression of intimate pain. Aimless, private, eluding the institutions of the city, unlike the civilized *questus*, lamentation represents woman's boundless nature. The accumulation of *miser-* is not the only manifestation of *fletus*. Prone to express pain in the least codified way, women cry or scream on stage. When they talk, their multiple sorrows tend to overflow. Incapable of assessing both the relevance of their own feelings, and unable to perceive the boundaries between the self and others, women dwell on their own misfortunes and seize on those of others to lament them as their own. Small aches grow out of proportion as sore body parts are bewailed together with fear and helplessness. Psychological pain is confused with physical discomfort, as though pain travelled

particularly easily in the lax and soft body. From the *animus* of distraught women it penetrates to their eyes, heads and trembling limbs. The pangs of childbirth, said to penetrate the mothers' flesh, concealed (Epid. 520) or sewn in it (Truc. 556) persist for years (Epid. 544) permeating women's thoughts and words.

Fletus reflects the reality of raw pain not ordered by intellect. The skill of self-control needed to rationalize and understand pain is, as we have argued, considered an attribute of virility. The difference between *fletus* and *questus* rests on the power of intellect, and this is the reason why Cicero chose Ulixes as the champion of manly endurance. Women, unlike men, do not know how to rationalize suffering, how to distinguish between great pain and small aches, the pain of the body and that of the soul. Unable to impose the discipline of reason on their boundless pain, they can only cry and lament. Weakness of mind (*imbecillitas animi*) is thus the cause behind *fletus*.

ENDNOTES

1. Cf Adams (1984: 73). *Miser* in apposition to the subject of a first person verb appears on the average once every 37.2 lines in the speech of women, once every 300.3 lines in the speech of men. The accusative of exclamation (*me miserum/ miseram*) is used once every 21.6 lines in the speech of women, and once every 245.7 lines in the speech of men.

2. We should name the monologue of Alcesimarchus (Cist. 206-228), who says Amor was a pioneer in the trade of executioners, and Charinus' farewell (Merc. 829-841) before the suicide he is planning: *Limen superum inferumque salve, simul autem vale.* It is worth noting that by Greek standards, Charinus' monologue would probably have been perceived as unmanly. Aristotle (EN. 3.7: 1116a 12ff) claims that suicide caused by love (or poverty) is unmanly. One might add to the rather short list of male lamentations Ergasilus' monologue about the dark side of his occupation (Capt. 461-469): *miser homo est qui ipse sibi quod edit quaerit.* Again, the parasite, because of his excessive interest in food, is, by Roman standards, hardly a paradigm of manhood.

3. *Supra* n.1.

4. There are 59 examples of *miser/ misera* referring to the first person in male speech (1 : 315 lines); 22 examples in female lines, (1 : 119), cf *idem* (1984: 73). *Me miseram* occurs ten times (Rud. 189, 216a, 684, Cist. 672, Truc. 119, Aul. 42, 69-70, Amph. 879, 1055-56), *me miserum*, 18. Since men speak 138,422 lines, and women 22,415 (cf. Gilleland 1979: 80-83), men would use *me miserum* once in each 7,690 lines, women, once in 2,241 lines, that is, 3.4 times more often.

5. The wives: *Perii misera* in (Asin. 892); *"miserior mulier me nec fiet nec fuit"* (Merc. 700:);*"ne ego mecastor mulier misera"* (Men. 614),*"sumne ego mulier misera* (Men. 852)." The *ancillae*: Amph. 1056ff, Cas. 621ff, Cist. 672ff, Merc. 681ff, Truc. 119, 195, 291.

6. Cf. 189: *miseram me*; 197a *minus me miserer*; 216a: *"parentes hau scitis, miseri, me nunc miseram esse ita uti sum."* Here the reiterated *miser-*, might be justified by the effort to imitate the lamentations of tragedy, which, as Marx argues, Plautus would have found in his Greek original (1959: 90). This is less likely to be the case of the repetition of *miser-* in the dialogues: 232 AMP.: *"eximes ex hoc miseram metu?"* 257-258 "PAL.: *nos... miseras*; 270: *miseriarum ambarum."*

7. Ampelisca and Palaestra use words with the stem *miser-* fourteen times: Rud. 189,197a, 216a (2x), 232, 258, 270 , 441, 452, 676, 682, 685, 691. Approximately once in 14 lines.

8. The *leno* and his adviser use *miser* to refer to themselves eight times in 241 lines, i.e. approximately one in 30 lines (Rud. 485, 496, 520 (2x), 863, 1281, 1308). The *leno* Labrax and his friend use *miser* not only fewer times, but in a different way than the girls. They mix self-pity with irony (Rud. 485-486: *"qui homo sese miserum et mendicum volet, Neptuno creadat sese"*), verbal agression (Rud. 494-496: *"utinam (...)/ malo cruciatu in Sicilia perbiteres,/ quem propter hoc mihi optigit misero mali;"*), and rivalry as they curse one another and compete for the title of the most miserable (Rud. 520-521: *"L. eheu quis vivit me mortalis miserior? / CH. Ego multo miserior quam tu, Labrax.")* The latter type of utterance ('who is more wretched than I?') is more frequent in male than in female speech in Terence, where it occurs three times in the speech of men and once in the speech

of women (cf. Adams 1984: 73).

9. For Euclio, see Aul. 409, 411, 462, 464 and 721, for Nicobulus, Bacch. 853, 862 and 1101, 1108.

10. *Ei mihi:* Amph. 798, 1109; Aul. 391, 796; Bacch. 411, 116, 1174; Men. 303; Mil. 1249; Most. 265, 395, 962, 1030; Stich. 735. *Heu*: Aul. 721, Bacch. 251, Merc. 624, 701, Pseud. 1320 (3x), Rud. 821. *Vae mihi*: Asin. 410, 924; Merc. 217, 616, 722; Mil. 180; Most. 367 (exception: Amph. 1080 Bromia). *Ah*: Asin. 614; Capt. 200a, 835, Cas. 236, 522, 907; Epid. 3, 177; Men. 179-180; Most. 243; Pers. 405, 406, 764; Poen. 430, 988; Rud. 358, Trin. 1163 (exceptionaly female: Ampelisca at Truc. 118). *Ah*: male: Asin. 37; Bacch. 74, 707, 879; Cas. 366, 659; Merc. 156, 323, 431; Most. 577, 810; Pers. 48a, 316, 622; Pseud. 1219, Rud. 681, 366 (female: Amph. 520; Bacch. 73; Cas. 659; Curc. 131; Ep. 554; Truc. 525).

11. Cf. also Don. Ad An. 751.1 *au interiectio est consternatae mulieris*. The only Plautine example is Stich. 258, while Terence uses this interjection eight times, and only in the speech of women. An. 781, Adelph. 336 (2x) Eun. 656, 680, 899; Heaut. 1015; Phorm. 754, 803.

12. This remark is made in the margins of a brief discussion of the difficulty in establishing accent in the interjection. Cf. also Donatus, Ars. II, 17.

13. In contrast with *fletus*, the references to *lacrumae* seem to evoke quiet tears (cf. Asin. 620: *oculi lacrumantes* and *ibid.* 983 *lacrumans tacitus*). Roccaro (1974: 30) quotes later sources, which make it possible to narrow down the meaning of the Latin verbs for crying: *flere* refers to weeping, *plorare* to weeping accompanied with certain gestures.

14. Only three allusions involve male characters crying on stage: two *adulescentes amantes* (Curc. 138, Merc. 624) and a greedy *leno* mourning his lost fortune (Rud. 557). Other instances of *flere*, *fletus*, and *plorare* do not refer to the dramatic situation: Amph. 256, 1099; Asin. 32f; Aul. 308, 317, 318; Cist. 567; Poen. 377, yet are revealing of the connotation of *flere* as an unmanly act: the conquered leaders in Amph. 256 and abused slaves in Asin. 32 are *flentes*. Terence has only one instance of *fletus* (An. 129), and it does not refer to the action on stage.

15. She first recites a trochaic octonarius, then sings in bacchiacs, a meter suitable both for women and for lamentation, according to Tobias (1980: 9). Almost half of the Plautine bacchiacs (45%) are given to female *personae*. While more than half of all the bacchiacs (263) express fear, the second largest group, 160 lines, Tobias argues (1980: 10-15), emphasizes the Roman *dignitas*, an opinion expressed already by Lindsey (1922: 289-290), who asserts that bacchiacs are "admirably suited to Roman *dignitas*." The two final lines (530-531) are composed in iambic octonarii, which, as Tobias has observed (1980: 18), are systematically used by Plautus to express strong emotions. Lamentations are, however, not necessarily associated with bacchiacs. For example, Amph. 1053ff is using *iambic octonarii* before introducing anapests, *trochaic septenarii* and iambs; Cas. 621-630 is a combination of cretics, trochais and choriambs.

16. A similar shift of focus can be observed in Bromia's monologue (Amph. 1060-1061): " *nec me miserior femina est neque ulla videatur magis. ita erae meae hodie contigit.*"

17. Alcesimarchus's speech describing the tortures of love (Cist. 206-228) differs from the

passages below in that it does not mention physical pain or any organs affected, and uses the motif of torture as an abstract concept.

18. The association of pain and disease with feminine discourse seems to be exploited in Curculio, where the pimp Lycos is portrayed as both sick and obsessed with his disease (cf. 236ff). Lycos' fascination with Asclepios is named as the very reason why he presented no threat to Planesiums' *pudicitia* (698-670, cf. Curc. 51, 57, 518). The pimp would probably be expected to undertake Planesium's sexual initiation: (cf. Curc. 58 where Palinurus expresses doubt that Phaedromus' beloved can be *pudica* while living with the *leno*: *"Credam si pudor cuiquam lenoni siet."* The *leno's* womanly weakness lends credibility to the plot of the play, which requires that Planesium, a future matron, remain chaste.

19. For *aegritudo* as a physical sensation, see OLD 1.

20. Pl. Aul. 691: *"opsecro te, mea nutrix, uterum dolet."* Ter. And. 473: *"Iuno Lucina fer opem, serva me opsecro;"* Ad. 288: *"opsecro, mea nutrix, quid nunc fiet?"*

21. *Dolet*, proposed by Spengel for *do ut* of B, D, and C is printed both by Lindsay (1905) and by Enk (1953). For *mea sponte* meaning, 'without help', see Spengel (1866: *ad locum*).

22. The text seems hopelessly corrupt. *Quique ibi* found in B, C, and D does not justify *magni doloris*; Buecheler's emendation *vi<m>que mihi*, printed by Enk (1979, 1953) is not quite convincing because the collocation *vim doloris condidisti* would be somewhat odd. *Vis* meaning power is too abstract to form a congruous metaphor with *condidisti*, while *vis*, meaning a large supply, could hardly be modified by the abstract *doloris*, as this idiom requires that the element modifying *vis* denote a person, an object, or a substance (cf. OLD on *vis* 8 a. and b.).

23. The contrast between the male and female accounts of procreation is particularly drastic in the Epidicus, because Periphanes fathered Philippa's daughter by rape (540b), an act that he defines as 'alleviating the maiden's poverty' (Epid. 555-556:*"virgini pauperculae/ tuaeque matri me levare paupertatem?*). Periphanes' definition of rape reflects in fact New Comedy's treatment of the topos. Fantham 1975 (53-54) and Wiles (1989: 35) have convincingly argued that rape in New Comedy is a convenient plot device which brings together a young man and a young woman without introducing scenes of seduction. By the standards of Greek and Roman moral thought, seduction would be more objectionable than rape, since it implies that the man is acting with premeditation and the woman is consenting. As a sign of weakness rather than corruption, rape is not as disgraceful for a future matron as an amorous conversation would be. *Contra*, Rosivach (1998: 37n99) argues that such scenes would not be objectionable since there are in New Comedy seduction scenes leading to marriage. These scenes, however, involve the *pseudohetaerae*, young women of slave status (who are only later to be recognized as free-born *virgines*), who are thus compelled by the circumstances to behave in a way that does not befit a *virgo*. Rape and the motif of free-born girls enslaved are two different ways of bringing together Aphrodite and marriage (cf. Wiles 1991: 31-36). Second, as Rosivach points out in his detailed discussion of the rape motif in New Comedy (which, strangely enough, omits the passage at Epidicus), rape often makes it possible either for the victim (immediately Men. Georg., Plokion, Samia; Plaut. Aul.; Ter. Ad. or later Plaut. Cist., Epid.) or for her daughter (Men. Phasma, Plaut. Cist., Ter. Phorm.) to marry a rich man. Thus—though such a view is extremely distressing to a modern reader—one must admit that rape in Comedy is construed as a means of

achieving the 'final harmony' through a more even distribution of wealth. For a critical approach to the motif of rape in Ovid literature, see Richlin (1992c).

24. The topos of female petty concerns is exploited by Cicero in his second speech against Verres: *"Hic quos putatis fletus mulierum, quas lamentationes fieri solitas esse in hisce rebus? quae forsitan vobis parvae esse videantur, sed magnum et acerbum dolorem commovent, mulierculis praesertim, cum eripiuntur e manibus ea quibus ad res divinas uti consuerunt, quae a suis acceperunt, quae in familia semper fuerunt"* (In Ver. 2.4. 47).

25. A male slave never identifies himself with his master's feelings, typically keeping a 'mocking distance'. Cf. Leonidas and Libanus in Asin. 591ff, Palinurus in Curc. 1ff, Epidicus in Epid. 124ff and 337ff, Messenio in Men. 226ff, Palaestrio in Mil. 624f, Milphio in Poen. 129ff, and Pseudolus Pseud. 1ff. The closest equivalent to the whining of *ancillae* is the relatively sober exclamation of Tranio in Most. 348f: *"Iuppiter supremus summis oibus atque industriis/ me periisse et Philolachetem cupit erili filium."*

26. Cf. Pomp. Porphyrio Com. Hor. Serm. 1.2. lemma 129-130.

27. *"Ne ego mecastor mulier misera"* (Men. 614),*"sumne ego mulier misera quae illaec audio?"*(Men. 852). See also Cas. 176-177: *"ita (i.e. tristes esse) solent omnes qui sunt male nuptae."*

28. Artemona orders Demaenetus to come back home (Asin. 921, 923, 925) where he is going to be judged (937) and punished (903) with her kisses (Artemona has bad breath: 895). In contrast, Matrona in the Menaechmi refuses to allow her husband to enter his house (Men. 662).

29. I take this view as representative, though the dramatic situation in the Menaechmi requires that the *senex* be particularly unsympathetic towards his daughter's complaints about her husband's liaison with Erotium in order to make his indignation at the theft episode more amusing.

30. Only with the *lex Iulia de adulteriis* was adultery recognized as an offence on the part of both partners. In the Republic a man committed *stuprum* only in assaulting a citizen's child or wife, and his offence was against the *dignitas* of his victim, not against the laws of marriage. On the other hand, a matron committing *stuprum* risked divorce, financial penalty, or even death (Cf. Gardner 1989: 120-124). All Plautine *amatores mariti* are interested in slaves (Lysidamus in the Casina and Demipho in the Mercator), or courtesans (Demaenetus in the Asinaria and Menaechmus) and, by the standards of Roman legislation, there is nothing wrong with their desires. The asymmetry of the Roman divorce law is the topic of Syra's monologue in the Mercator (817f: *"ecastor lege dura vivont mulieres/ multoque iniquiore miserae quam viri."*). However, the dramatic situation (Syra's master is terrified of her mistress when Pasicompsa is discovered in their house) undermines her message, and in fact renders her complaint ridiculous, and her dream (*"utinam lex esset eadem quae uxori est viro"*) utterly extravagant (cf. Wedeck's note on Syra's pledge for equality 1928: 116). Neither the legislation, nor the prevailing system of values would have lent any support to the cause of the Plautine *uxores*. An improving tale in Valerius Maximus praises Aemilia, the wife of Scipio Africanus, a brave woman, who not only tolerated Scipio's flirtation with a young slave girl, but took care of her after his death, offering her a dowry and marrying her off to her own freedman (Mem. 6.7.1).

31. *Conqueri* is used repeatedly by Cicero with a meaning close to 'accuse' or 'denounce': Pro Quinct. 59.10; In Ver. 1.1.40, 2.1.84, 2.2.155, 2.4.11; Pro Rab. 6.7; Pro Murena 55.3.

32. Cf. Cic. De Invent. 2.78.2, De leg. 2.55.2. and 2. 55 8 (about the limitations imposed on funeral laments by the XII Tables); Plin. Nat. Hist. 8.21.7, Seneca Dial. 12.3. 2., Sen. Contr. 1.5.1, Sen. Phaed. 852, Serv. Ad Aen. 6.482.2, Val. Max. Mem. 4.1.12.

33. See Loraux (1998: 10-11) for references to the prohibitions concerning mourning women in the Greek city.

34. Soranus reports that in Rome the hair and dress of a woman in childbirth were untied in a magical ritual meant to enhance the natural boundlessness of her flesh (Gyn. 2.6).

35. Phoenicium is a 'faithful *meretrix*' and the audience would know from her letter (Pseud. 41-44, 51-59), where she declares to be *"lacrumans titubanti animo, corde et pectore"* (43), that the reason why she cries is her separation from Callidorus and not a particular dislike for the soldier.

36. Woytek (1982: *ad loc.*) observes that this perspective is hardly reassuring for Virgo, and quotes TLL 3, 22, 73, as well as Tib. 4. 10, 2, as examples of *cadere* used as the synonym of *succumbere*.

37. Donatus' comments on Hec. 753 and 754 suggest that it was not unusual for a *senex blandus* talking to a courtesan to imitate her register. A few female *personae* in Plautus make remarks the intention of which appears to be to reveal women's excessive interest in their own appearance or in that of others. Gymnasium is surprised to see Selenium leave her house without dressing herself properly and insists on arranging her mantle (Cist. 113ff). The girls in the Rudens hesitate to look for help wearing wet clothes (Rud. 251), a concern that appears less unreasonable when the otherwise magnanimous priestess Ptolemocratia greets them with a comment on their *vestis uvida* (265), and criticizes them for not wearing white (269-271). The topos of women's excessive interest in clothes is exploited in the Poenulus (283ff). Adelphasium, a 'virtuous' woman who understands the rules of economy that impose limits on the expenses for her wardrobe (288), is confronted with her sister, who is never satisfied with her looks (283), and is prone to compare herself with others (299).

38. Cf. Amph. 1056-1057: *"me miseram quid agam nescio. ita tanta mira in aedibus sunt facta.*

39. For *habeo*, especially in indirect deliberative questions, used to denote the possession of knowledge, see OLD on *habeo* 11. a and b.

40. About Rudens as tragicomedy, see Marx (1959: 274-278). Fear is often pointed out as the reason behind the lamentations of the *mulierculae flentes* in the Rudens. Palaestra calls herself *timida* (188); Ampelisca describes her state of mind as *metus* (Rud. 232). See also 348ff: *ex malis multis metuque summo capitalique ex periculo . . . recepit*, where Ampelisca claims that the priestess has saved them from fear, among other misfortunes. Tears and anxiety are associated as Scepharnio describes the frightened girls in the temple, embracing a statue and crying: *duae mulierculae . . . flentes . . . nescioquem metuentes miserae* (Rud. 559-561). It may be worth noting that Plautus uses the adjective *timidus* mostly to describe the mentality of female *personae*: Amph. 526, 1079; Bacch. 106, Cas.

630, 632; Curc. 649; Epid. 533; Rud. 75, 188, 366, 409. There are only 5 examples of fearful males: Epid. 61, Merc. 220, 22; Most. 1041; Pseud. 576.

41. Marx (1959: 93) observes that *tecta* is in itself an allusion to both shelter and protective clothing (*bedeckende Kleidung*). This remark sheds an interesting light on Palaestra's reference to herself as *induta*. *Induta* may signify that she is wearing something less than the usual costume, revealing more of 'her' body than the actor's costume usually did. This would explain the allusions to the girls' *vestis uvida* (Rud. 216, 265).

42. See *supra* 24-25 for a reference to a Greek source featuring *Poros* as the mythological personification of the powers of intellect.

43. For the 'last path' cf. Soph. Antig. 806-807: "τὰν νεάταν ὁδὸν στείξουσαν." To Euadne in Eurip. Suppl. (1012) the suicide appears as the end or as a boundary: ὁρῶ δὴ τελευτάν.

44. The majority of suicides in tragedy are committed by women. For an exhaustive list of references to suicide in tragedy, see Katsouris (1976: 9n8) and Loraux (1987: 8). Loraux (1987: 7-11) argues that suicide (by hanging) often is the death women choose in tragedy instead of intolerable pain. However, she calls attention to meaningful exceptions: while some women die a manly death by plunging swords into their bodies (ibid: 14), others, overfeminine, like Hermione, do not even dare to hang themselves (ibid. 15). In Plautus, as demonstrated by Basaglia (1991: 277-292), the suicide motif is an object of parody. The comic context, where men are allowed to be unmanly, accounts for the fact that the thought of suicide appears often in the lines of male *personae*. All of them can be qualified as *mulierosi*. Most are young *amatores*. In Plautus: Argyrippus in Asin. 606-615, 630 ff, Chalinus (a slave serving as a substitute for an *adulescens amans*) in Cas. 111, Alcesimarchus in Cist. 639, Stratippocles in Epid. 362; Charinus in Merc. 60, 487ff, 483, 601f, Callidorus in Pseud. 85-96, 348f. In Terence: Pamphilus (Davus fears for him) in An. 209ff, Charinus in An. 322, Phaedria (as Parmeno suspects) in Eun. 66, Antipho in Phorm. 201f, 483. The thought of suicide is also given to men humiliated by their greed: a *parasitus* (Gelasimus in the Stich. 631-640), a ruined *leno*, Lycus, in Poen. 306-313, 769f, 794f, 1341ff, and Gripus deprived of his find (Rud. 1189f). Among the female *personae* who mention suicide there are two faithful *meretrices* in love (Philaenium Asin. 608, 611ff, Plan. Curc. 173f), one maltreated old servant (Staphyla in the Aul. 50f, 77f), and Palaestra and Ampelisca in the Rudens, where the motif is given more prominence than elsewhere: 220ff, 684-686, 674f. In Terence there is a reference to Glycerium's attempt at suicide: she tries to throw herself on her sister's funeral pyre in An. 129-131, in a gesture reminiscent of that of Euadne in Euripides' Suppliants (1012ff).

45. I have found no evidence in the Euripides' Andromache to support Loraux's claim that Hermione actually 'boasts' that she is too feminine to end her life (1987: 15).

46. She must be told where to go (250), has to be instructed not to think about her appearance (252), must be comforted (256), and remains passive when Palaestra negotiates with Ptolemocratia (263ff). Ampelisca and Palaestra are one of a series of Plautine female odd couples, one stronger, the other weaker, one a leader, the other a follower, as are the Bacchides, Selenium and Gymnasium (Cist.), Adalphasium and Anterastilis (Poen.), Panegyris and Pamphila (Stich.). As Arnott (1972: 55) observed, when commenting on the wives in the Stichus, this tradition goes back to Sophocles' Antigone (1-100), where the heroine is contrasted with her sister Ismene. With the notable exception of the Bacchides,

where Bacchis is simply more of an entrepreneur than her Soror, it is usually the 'leader's' role to represent female virtues, and censure the 'follower's' weakness. Cf. Poen. (210-330) and Stich. (1-57).

47. Similar concerns would have been expressed by L. Lucceius (Ad Fam. 15.5.).

48. Without the republican order of things Tullia's life would be deprived of its very goal: creating a bond between Cicero and some worthy young man, and giving her husband sons who could in their turn duly follow the *cursus honorum* (10).

49. For the date of the Tusculanae, see e.g. Lacey (1978: 132-133).

50. The notion is thus not necessarily borrowed from one of his philosophical sources, though it is believed that Cicero owes his arguments in Book Two to an essentially Stoic source, mixed with elements of the doctrine of Chrysippus represented by a dualist concept of soul. The *Quellenforschung* has argued for Chrysippus on the one hand, Panaetius and Poseidonius on the other. See Dougan (1901: XXV), Pohlenz (1957: 132-133); Lévy (1992: 472-473). Classen, moreover, points out some Peripatetic elements in Cicero's thought (1989: 198).

51. Cf. Varr LL 5.73: *Virtus ut viritus a virilitate.*

52. Sophocles' Niptrae is known only from its title and a few words (Radt 4.373-4). Odysseus, wounded by Telegonos (who did not recognize him), appears in Akanthoplex (Radt 4.374.8). Pacuvius' play would have covered both subjects (so Douglas *ad loc.*).

53. Grief is also described as 'soft' in Tusc. 2.27.2, 2.41.16.

54. For the idea of reason dominating the 'soft part' of a man, see also: 2.51: "*Huius animi pars illa mollior rationi sic paruit ut severo imperatori miles pudens.*"

GENERAL CONCLUSION

1. From Tymicha's Fear to Malleus Maleficarum

Women are the Devil's favourites, because they know no limits in either goodness or vice, argued the Malleus Maleficarum (1.6). Jacob Sprenger had no trouble finding excerpts from ancient texts to justify his thesis. One of the authorities called to witness is Terence. Sprenger proudly flaunts the line of Hecyra in which it is asserted that women are intellectual infants: *"idem illae mulieres sunt ferme ut pueri levi sententia"*(312-313). This citation is, however, not the only argument that the famous Inquisitor's 'how-to' book borrows from ancient Comedy.

More than once, Sprenger chooses to evoke prejudice against female speech as a proof of womanly weakness. His collection of stereotypes gives the student of *palliata* an impression of *déjà vu*. Slippery tongue, *lubrica lingua* (1.6.17), the medieval equivalent of *largiloquium*, is identified as the reason why witches share their secrets too easily with other women. Sprenger explains that female speech is treacherously pleasing (1.6.20), and compares it, as did Anaxilas, with the voices of Sirens:

> *Sicut est mendax in natura, sic et in loquella. Nam pungit et tamen delectat. Unde earum vox cantui syrenarum affiliatur, que dulci melodia transeuntes attrahunt et tamen occidunt.*

The reader was also instructed to be on his guard against a witch's tears, since "tearful grieving, whining and cheating are said to be proper to women" (3.15.112).

Apparently, the most perilous time for the Reverend Judge was the moment the accused was exposed to torture, when the devil could easily bewitch him, disguised in the very sounds the tormented 'witch' uttered (*ibid.*). This experienced witch-hunter shares with Tymicha, the Pythagorean heroine trained to mistrust her female nature the conviction that, when put to trial, the fragile shell of feminine decorum will instantly shatter, releasing all the demons of a woman's raw psyche. Both in Iamblichus' impossibly virtuous

paradigm of female self-contempt and in the writings of the pious Father Jacob, mistrust of the female voice and words is linked to the pervasive fear of the woman's inner nature.

2. Boundless Nature

In early Greek thought, the male principle represents the binding power of the Universe. We have traced the primary contrast between male and female back to the Pythagorean and Peripatetic lines of thought, and have identified it as a polar opposition associating the male principle to the limit or connection, the female principle to its lack. The archetypal interaction between male and female—the male imposing limits and boundaries on female chaos—shaped not only Milesian and Pythagorean cosmogonies, but also the Hippocratic theory of generation and the Aristotelian concept of gender. This same model appears to have determined Aristotle's belief that the speech of the middle-aged man was the yardstick against which female diction (and other 'substandard' variants) must be measured.

Fragments of New Comedy suggest that the association to ἄπειρον has influenced the concept of female nature and behaviour inherent in the plays; many excerpts reveal an anxiety about woman's position with respect to various boundaries. The borderline between human and animal nature appears to be considered particularly fluid in females: courtesans are equated with half-human monsters (Skylla and Siren); wives are compared to the child-devouring Lamia, or to dogs. Male speakers in Greek comedy see it as their responsibility to keep women within the physical limits of the *oikos*, and to civilize their actions and words by imposing moral restrictions on them.

Plautus, portraying women as congenitally adverse to *modus*, appears to have assessed Greek views on female nature as familiar to his audience: women's limitless chatter, *largiloquium*, is said to transport information without restraint. Two figures for transgressive verbal behaviour define feminine subversiveness both with respect to interpersonal boundaries, and with respect to the limits of the house. While the insatiable courtesan represents a threat to a man's moral integrity, the *canis femina rabiosa* strives to

cross both the inner and outer limits, that is, both her husband's personal boundaries and the civilizing precinct of his *domus*.

3. Boundless Speech

Ἀνδρὸς χαρακτὴρ ἐκ λόγου γνωρίζεται (Men. 66): a man's speech, as the Greek proverb has it, discloses his nature. A woman's speech, it follows, reveals hers. Donatus seems to act on this very assumption, when he rationalizes Terence's stylistic choices for his female *personae*. His comments explain both the lexical patterns, discussed in scholarly literature (Gilleland 1979, Adams 1984), and certain semantic and pragmalinguistic features of speech as supposedly determined by female nature.

Donatus' belief that female speech in Roman Comedy was meant to imitate the speakers' mind is confirmed by the Plautine texts. Not only are 'softness' and self-pity associated with femininity, but certain self-reflexive comments identify as *blandimenta* the very same features that Donatus counted among the symptoms of female softness. The modifier *amabo*, the use of *mi, mea* in address, and certain speech acts aimed at 'anointing' the other's ego, are described as symptoms of *blanditia*, and are consistently attributed to characters suffering from lack of self-control. 'Soft register' in Plautus therefore seems to be intimately linked to the absence of moral boundaries. Moreover, Roman discourse emphasizes the contrast between *blanditia*, relying on *venus*, the illicit power of swaying the will of gods and men, and honest argumentation based on the bonds of *fides*. The association of women with *veneratio*, the prayer bereft of the symmetry and orderliness of *precari*, serves to reinforce the definition of the female as fundamentally adverse to harmony.

To the Roman mind, complaints, like persuasion, were gendered. *Fletus*, representing the pointless, chaotic, destructive, and private lamentations of women, was viewed as a sign of weakness, and was contrasted with the manly *questus*, the brave and constructive protest built into the structure of the *urbs*. The topos of querulousness is

manifest not only in the famous *me miseram*, and in frequent allusions to weeping, but also in the very srtucture of female utterances. Disorderly lists of complaints depict the wilderness of the female mind, as a place without connections, where self and other, body and soul, are fused in a perplexed *aporia*. *Poros*, the sparkle of intelligence necessary to overcome this primitive state of confusion, must usually come from outside the female mind.

4. 'Female Latin' and *Infirmitas Sexus*

While rationalizing 'softness' as a weakness of spirit and self-pity as a weakness of mind, the texts of Plautus seem to define female speech as a symptom of *infirmitas sexus*.[1] Adams' claim (1984) that language in Roman Comedy represents politeness and "emotionalism" contradicts both the ancient conception of civility as an attribute of a manly spirit, and the commonplace interpretation of female kindness in Comedy as a mere illusion of love and friendship. Both registers associated with female nature are perceived as dangerous: *blanditia* constitutes a threat to the individual's moral excellence; *commiseratio* jeopardizes a community's morale. Roman customs and legislation were anxious to confine female speech within the four walls of the *domus*, because the weakness inherent in words was believed to be contagious. The ease with which some men, when exposed to female words, could 'melt down' into women, and begin to speak like them, reveals a perception of manhood as a fragile condition, one not guaranteed by physiological sex. Virility, like virtue, needed to be cultivated through the exercise of self-control; without it, man would morph into a 'woman'.

The semiotic impact of 'feminine' words as signals of effeminacy suggests that, as Adams conjectured, Plautine mannerisms are likely to correspond to some socio-linguistic reality. Without a real-life equivalent these idioms would not have been recognizable as womanly or woman-like, nor would they have been funny. But even this (speculative) linguistic differentiation of women cannot be purely accidental: it corresponds too well to

the official dogma defining female nature as soft and weak. If playing the social role of a *mulier* involved the use of speech patterns expressing and reinforcing the stereotypes of *imbecillitas sexus*, the 'female idiom' itself can be regarded a social construct. Expressions such as *amabo* or *mi* would have passed for attributes of femininity, and women would have used them because they would have been educated to speak and behave 'like women', that is in a manner corresponding to a patriarchal society's concept of the feminine. But the comedy goes further than the (putative) everyday practice: it reinforces the semiotic implications of female speech patterns, repeatedly interpreting them as vicious, poisoned and dangerous. Feminine stage-language in Plautus uses idioms, speech acts and situations stereotyped as 'feminine' to convey the idea that both the female and the effeminate male threaten social order and moral perfection. 'Female Latin' in Plautus serves to reinforce the stereotype of Woman as the opposite of what Man aspires to be.

ENDNOTE

1. See Beaucamp (1976 *passim*) for a forceful argumentation of the classical rather than Christian origins of the concept of *infirmitas*.

APPENDIX 1

Tradition, Originality and the *Bacchides*

1.1. Tradition and Originality in the Plautine 'Amatory Motifs'

Reflections on 'female nature' have to my knowledge never been paid much attention by the students of 'tradition and originality'. Mack in his dissertation Mulieres Comicae, Harvard 1966, focuses on a census of women appearing on stage, rather than on theatrical images as a reflection of concepts of female nature. The number, kind and 'dramatic function' of female roles in Aristophanes, Menander and Plautus are thus carefully discussed, but the reflections on female speech and nature (except for a few references to 'charges against women') seem to be of little interest to the author.

However, certain *topoi* have been studied under the heading of 'amatory motifs' as a part of the quest to separate 'tradition' from 'originality' in Plautus.[1] Leo in Plautinische Forschungen expresses an interest in the Plautine treatment of the motifs of love, lover, and *hetaera*. Convinced that all Plautine characters show the influence of the Greek models and their 'philosophically-schooled' observation of human characters (130-132), he is particularly affirmative when writing about the *hetaerae*: *"So sind die plautinischen Hetären am unzweideutigsten attisch geblieben (ibid. 140)."* Numerous lines from Lukian's Dialogues, Alciphron's Letters of Courtesans and Roman elegy reveal reflections on love, with metaphors and comparisons strikingly similar to those found in Plautus (see *ibid.* 149-155). These appear to support Leo's firm conviction that Plautus' amatory conventions are clearly Greek in origin.

In Plautinisches in Plautus, Fraenkel where he isolates certain phenomena either unknown or rare in the extant passages of New Comedy: mythological comparisons unattested to in Greek sources (1960: 55-96), a predilection for personification (95-104), opera-like dialogues (203-222), the tendency to accord great importance to the role of the slave (153ff), polymetric cantica (307-354), and a penchant for legalese (223-242), to

mention some of the main 'Plautisms'. Each time Fraenkel observes differences in the treatment of 'amatory motifs', his findings concern the adaptation of the plot to the social realities of Rome. Such is, for example, the character of his discussion of Plautine originality in the Pseudolus, where he points out that the social status of the *meretrices* is reminiscent of that of the employees of a Roman *lupanar*, and suggests that Plautus might have elaborated Ballio's speech addressed to his staff (Pseud.132-229) to provide his audience with an opportunity to admire a parade of actors disguised as courtesans (1960: 140-141). Likewise, Fraenkel's discussion of the ending of the Epidicus, changed in order to eliminate the motif of a marriage between half-siblings. Interesting as these findings are, they do not concern the very concept of female nature that Plautus might have found in his originals.

Flury's study devoted exclusively to amatory motifs in Menander, Plautus, and Terence (1968) strives to demonstrate Plautus' original approach to Greek erotic tradition: his predilection for comic imagery, irony, parody and exaggeration. Flury argues, moreover, that Plautus enriched the repertory of erotic motifs by introducing an archaic Roman concept of the lover's surrender of his 'animus' to the beloved (1967: 31). [2]

The most recent re-examination of Plautine amatory motives (Zagagi 1980) yields results that would no doubt delight Leo. Plautus' attitude towards Greek erotic tradition, Zagagi concludes, is that of a creative adapter whose inventiveness nevertheless largely depends on his sources. Even in the *cantica*, Zagagi has traced elements that certainly belong to the wider framework of the Greek erotic tradition (*op. cit.* 104-105). Only once does Zagagi touch upon the *topos* of female nature, suggesting that the figure of the greedy *meretrix* is as Greek as other *topoi*: not only the motive of the unquenched greed of a *hetaera* evoked in Trin. 244-246, but even the wording of her request, as Zagagi argues, is likely to echo Philemon (1980: 97).

2.1. *Bacchides* and *Dis Exapaton*

The discovery of eighty lines of Menander's Dis Exapaton in 1968,[3] confronted the students of 'tradition and originality' in Plautus with the real meaning of *vortit barbare* in the Plautine *sphragis*. Though the newly deciphered excerpts correspond to the action of Bacchides 494-562, they bear witness to significant changes made by the 'translator(s)'.

A brief synopsis is necessary to expose the differences. In the Bacchides, a young man comes back to his home city, in hopes of finding a friend protecting a girl whose freedom he is prepared to buy with money stolen from his father. He soon meets his friend's father and learns that his friend has been seduced by a girl bearing his girl-friend's name. Only snatches of their conversation appear in the papyrus, but the following lines (D.E. 19-112; Bacch. 500-572) offer a unique opportunity to compare Menandrean and Plautine dramaturgy. Menander's young man expresses his disappointment in a monologue, and decides to return the money to his father (18-46). Then father and son engage in two dialogues, separated by a choral interlude, during which the money is returned (47-63 and 64-90). Once left alone on stage, the young man, in another monologue, imagines his encounter with the unfaithful girlfriend (91-102), and is later joined by his friend (102-112).

Plautus has his young man pronounce one monologue (500-525),[4] and leave the stage. In the next scene, the friend enters first (526-529); the young man appears later and, before noticing the other and engaging in a conversation, he declares that he has just returned the money (530-533).[5] Two Menandrean monologues are thus fused into one, while two father-son dialogues are deleted. The structural changes that the lines of the Menandrean Dis Exapaton underwent in the course of its transformation into Plautine Bacchides have commonly been interpreted as an effort to adapt the Greek text to the stage conventions of Roman theatre and the tastes of Roman audience. Gaiser (1970) argues that, cutting the two conversations between Sostratos and his father, Plautus eliminates

psychological detail that would be of little interest to his audience. Gomme and Sandbach view the changes as the result of the lack of choral interlude in Roman theater: since in Menander's play the transfer of the money takes place during a choral interlude, Plautus had to find another way of signalling the passage of time. "He did so," declare Gomme and Sandbach, "rather inadequately by bringing 'Pistoclerus' on (526) before 'Mnesilochus' disappeared (530)."

This view is refuted by Goldberg, who draws attention to the fact that the passage of time was signalled by a musical interlude and the stage business necessitated by Mnesilochus' baggage porters (1990: 196).[6] Since the stage would not have been empty, and the musical interlude would probably allow for the necessary lapse of time, Plautine modifications may be more than a clumsy craftsman's "plastering over" (Handley 1968: 14) of some embarrassing hole left by the absent chorus. If we ask ourselves what effect Plautus achieved by excising two father-son conversations and producing a long monologue exposing the young man's confusion, we are likely to agree with Goldberg (1990: 201) and Halporn (1993: 205-207), who conclude that suchan omission results in a change of emphasis.[7] While money and filial piety appear to be a motif essential to Menander's plot, Plautine theatre reveals the weakness of fathers and sons, and focuses on the power of marginal characters, call-girls and slaves.[8]

The translation of Menander's title, The Man Who Deceived Twice, as The Demimondaine Duo, suggests immediately that in the Roman adaptation the two girls are regarded as the central figures. *Palliata*'s predilection for lively representations of shameless and greedy *hetaerae* was already commented on by his ancient readers (Gel. Noct. Att. 3.3.6).[9] The irreverent epilogue of the play featuring fathers preparing to join their sons in feasting and flirting with the girls, viewed by Fraenkel (1960: 68-69) as very 'Plautine', would seem the most efficient ending for a play revealing the power of the

meretrix. This shift of subject from the 'pillars of society' to the 'marginal' characters is particularly relevant to our investigation, because, as both the fragments of Dis Exapaton (20-23) and the Bacchides (50, 55, 62-64, 517, 1166, 1174) emphasize, the courtesan's quasi-magical power depends largely on her words.

The Latin translation of the lines describing the young man's expectations of female words is quite close, but not literal:

> ... πιθανευομένη γὰρ παύσεται
> ὅταν ποτ' αἴσθηται, τὸ τῆς παρομίας
> νεκρῷ λέγουσα μῦθον. (27-29)

> *igitur mi inani atque inopi subblandibitur*
> *tum quom mihi nihilo pluris [blandiri] referet,*
> *quam si ad sepulchrum mortuo narret logos*. (Bacch. 517-519)

In the Greek text, the tremendous force of persuasion is glossed over as excessive use of oaths (21-24). Plautus renders πείθω 'to persuade' by *subblandiri* (517), a verb meaning to 'fawn on in an insidious manner' (cf. OLD). *Blanda verba*, ingratiating words, are, conjecturably, the equivalent of the *chrestoi logoi* of Menander's fragments (*supra*: 47). Plautus does not translate Menander literally, but chooses to replace the motif of persuasion by 'kind words'. Yet once again, in his creative adaptation, he reaches for a motif that does have an equivalent in the Greek literary tradition.

ENDNOTES:

1. See Gaiser (1972: 1027-1035) for a critical survey of the literature arguing for and against Plautine originality. Zagagi (1980: 13-14) offers a succinct examination of the opinions on 'amatory motives' in Plautus.

2. Counter-evidence from Greek sources, proving that the motif of the lover's surrender of his soul to the beloved also belongs to the Greek tradition, has been presented by Zagagi (1980: 134- 137).

3. The papyrus fragment of Dis Exapaton was first published by E.W. Handley in his University College of London Inaugural Lecture "Menander and Plautus: A Study in Comparison" (1968: 22-24, cf. Wright 1971: 440). See also Arnott (1970: 51-52). Further parts, edited by Sandbach, have appeared in the Oxford Classical Texts Series (1972).

4. As Questa (1970: 196-197) has observed, the Plautine monologue is quite independent from its 'original', it takes in fact only two elements from the Menandrean monologues: the exclamation "I don't know whom to blame" (DE 99-102; Bacch. 500-501) and the idea that money must be returned to the father in order to punish the unfaithful girlfriend.

5. A detailed comparison of the two texts is offered by Blanchard (1983: 278-293), see also Handley (1968), Bain (1979: 21), Gomme and Sandbach (1979: 120-121).

6. Gomme and Sandbach's point about the lack of choral interlude as the main reason for Plautine changes is shared e.g. by Bain (1979: 22-23), Questa (1985: 39-40) and Hunter (1985: 38). For an argumentation against the assumption that in the Roman comedy action was continuous, see Primmer (1987, 1988). Goldberg's view is corroborated by Lowe's argument for the choruses of 'advocati' in Poen. and fishermen in Rud. (1990: 274-297) and Write's note on the baggage porters in the Bacchides (1971: 440-441). An opinion very close to Goldberg's was presented by Halporn (1993: 205-208).

7. Long before the discovery of the fragments of Dis Exapaton, Fraenkel (1960: 233), comparing the text of the Bacchides with that of Terence's Adelphoi, suggested that in the original play, education would have been the central topic.

8. Fraenkel (1960: 231ff) draws attention to the Plautine tendency to accord to the *personae* of slaves a greater importance than they were given in the Greek originals, and argues that in the Bacchides, Plautus probably made numerous additions to the role of Chrysalus, especially in his monodies and in his monologue. See Slater (1985: 94-117) for an interpretation of the Bacchides as a play about the power of marginal characters, focusing on the role of Chrysalus.

9. On Plautus' tendency to accord to the characters of *hetaerae* a greater importance than they enjoyed in his models, see Gaiser (1972: 1083, esp. n. 261).

APPENDIX 2

Malitia

The traditional division of female *personae* in Comedy into 'good' and 'bad' is based on the criterion of female obedience. Duckworth, for example, apparently partakes in the ancient concept that submission is the yardstick of female excellence, arguing without a shade of doubt that obedient wives in Comedy are 'good', while disobedient are 'bad', and that "mercenary" courtesans are 'bad', while those devoted to their lovers are 'not so bad' and are "more attractive and sympathetic"(1952: 252-259). The true nature of the segregation of wives into *pudicae* and *dotatae* is briefly commented on by Schuhmann, who remarks that this classification represents the husband's point of view, rather than an impartial moral judgement (1987: 48). An analogous reasoning underlies the notorious discrimination between the *bona* and *mala meretrix* advocated by Donatus: the 'good harlots' Bacchis in the Hecyra (cf. Ad Hec. 774) or Thais in the Eunuchus (cf. Ad Eu. 198) benefit their lovers. Since, as Dwora's exhaustive discussion of Terence's *bonae meretrices* proved, the characters in question are simply a variation of *mala meretrix* (1980:165), occasional good actions on the part of the *meretrices* are but a brilliant device of character portrayal that renders the *personae* more human and more credible, but that does not undermine their inherent *malitia.*

Like Terence's courtesans, the Plautine harlots are not always portrayed as absolute monsters. Some have deserved Duckworth's blessing as "attractive" because of their preference for one lover. Philaenium (Asin. 540) compares herself to a shepherd who looks after other people's sheep, yet tends to one of them with a particular care. Philematium (Most. 214ff) remains faithful to her lover in spite of Scapha's advice. The *pseudo-hetaera* Selenium (Cist. 83) represents the *imponderabile*: a courtesan in love. Yet their goodness depends on accepting the happiness of one man as the goal of their actions. The presence

of such *personae* in the plays of Plautus does not contradict the concept of the courtesan's bestiality and *malitia*. Like the wife, a harlot can redeem her natural wickedness if she agrees to live *by* one man (cf. *supra* 29: πρὸς δὲ τόν ἄνδρα).

The idea of the relative goodness of women goes back in fact to Greek comedy. Menander makes some courtesans better than their detractors would expect (cf. Henry 1988: 110). This, however, merely implies that a meretrix, while acting in her own interest may do something unexpectedly beneficial, a sort of *deus ex machina* (Harbotronon in the Epitr.), or that women who are devoted to one man (as Chrysis in the Samia is attached to her concubine's family, or Glycera in the Periceiromene to her brother) can sometimes behave better than one would expect. These exceptions do not affect the conception of female nature in the plays, as the women's good actions are only an accident (Harbotronon) or are made possible by their devotion to one man.

The Latin idiom imposes, through the primary connotations of *malitia*, a negative moral judgement on the intelligence of those whose excellence lies in obedience: *malus* and *malitia* are particularly often associated with the intelligence of women and slaves.[1] This undesirable intelligence is contrasted—most clearly in the confrontation of Philippa and Periphanes in the Epidicus (545ff)—with the more honourable (and predominantly male) *astus*.[2] The 'wicked harlot' is, therefore, 'wickedly clever' and dangerously cunning, rather than plainly 'bad'. A courtesan's *malitia* (cf. Capt. 57ff) allows for a certain degree of 'goodness', provided that the woman uses her vicious cunning in a man's interest, as does Acroteleutium in the Miles, or Thais in Terence's Eunuchus. Female wickedness and female goodness are therefore relative and are calculated according to a male *modus*.

ENDNOTES

1. *Malitia* is used pejoratively in Poen. 300: *invidia... neque malitia*; Truc. 810 *ista malitia*; Rud. 496 *contra malitiae lenonis*; Bacch. 54: *lectus malitiam .. suadet;* in Mil. 188: *malitiam* is an item on the long list of female vices. The absence of this vice is praised in respectable men and women. In Aul. 215 *civem sine malitia* is a compliment for Euclio; in Bacch. 1131 *sine malitia* means 'harmless'. Trinummus features a young man who declares his readiness to marry, despite the unfortunate lack of financial encouragement to do so, because his future bride is free from the vice of *malitia*: Trin. 338 "*quia sine omni malitiast, tolerare eius egestatem volo*." Intelligence of women is described as *malitia* in Epid. 546, Merc. 523-514; Mil. 887-888,1218; Truc. 465-471; Pers. 382, that of slaves in Amph. 269, Epid. 732; Pers. 238; Pseud. 582, 705a.

2. The intelligence of men is described as *astus* in: Capt. 222; Epid. 545, Pers.148; Poen. 111, 1223; Rud. 928; Trin. 963, that of women only in Truc. 462, where the speaker refers boastfully to her intellectual capacities.

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