Chapter 1: Terence’s *Meretrices* in the New Comic Tradition

My decision to limit this analysis of the speech of New Comedy *meretrices* to the plays of Terence is based upon a distinction between the *meretrices* of Plautus and those of Terence. The two playwrights’ treatments of this stock character type differ by giving the *meretrices* different roles to play in resolving the citizen-based plots of their plays. While Plautine *meretrices* typically pursue their own interests more attentively than those of citizen families, thus adhering to stereotypes about the *meretrix* stock type, Terentian *meretrices* promote the success of citizen families or individual family members whenever the plot places citizens in precarious positions. Plautus and Terence have different degrees of interest in citizens: Plautus foregrounds the non-citizen characters such as slaves, while Terence devotes more time to citizen families. The distinction between *meretrices* who are interested and uninterested in citizen families corresponds to the differing degrees of interest that Terence and Plautus take in the citizen-based plots of their plays.

Most New Comedies involve more than one plot or subplot, and those plots do not all concern the families and social values of citizens. Many plays include a romantic plot involving the attempts of young people to marry or to carry on a relationship outside marriage. In many, the *servus callidus* is the hero, and his tricks and schemes entertain the audience. These two plot-
types often coexist within a play and depend upon each other.¹ A third element in the plays is a plot that involves some form of threat to the citizen family. The most common forms involve a temporary failure in the unity of the family (e.g., the division of the household into factions led by the husband and wife in Casina, and the argument between the elder brothers over how to raise the younger in Adelphoe); the adoption by a citizen of an inappropriate social role (e.g., Tyndarus’ role as a slave to his own father in Captivi or any of the numerous plots involving an adulescens and his father in disagreement over whom the adulescens should marry); or a breach, whether actual or threatened, of the sexual integrity of a citizen female (e.g., the many rape and lost-daughter plots).

Terence invests the bulk of his plays in the resolution of citizen plots and rarely gives much space to romance or to the servus callidus, except where those plots advance the citizen plot. Plautus, on the other hand, more often elaborates the servus callidus plot, or occasionally the romance plot, in more detail than the citizen plot: the most extreme example of the subordination of the citizen plot is Stichus, in which the citizen-based plot is all but resolved by the end of the second act.² In general Plautus prefers to devote his time to the servus callidus or a similar character. Even when the citizen-based plot does occupy the majority of the play, the actual resolution sometimes does not occur onstage. The marriage of the eponymous Casina, for example, is merely summarized by the company in the last ten lines. The citizen-based plot is not a priority for Plautus, as it is for Terence.

Terence’s increased interest in the citizen plots of his plays has relevance for his treatment of the meretrix character because it allows more of the characters to be involved in the pro-

¹ For example, Mnesilochus’ and Pistoclerus’ success with the Bacchis sisters depends upon the tricks and schemes of Chrysalus in the Bacchides, and Calidorus turns to Pseudolus for help buying Phoenicium’s freedom in the Pseudolus.
² Other noteworthy examples include Pseudolus, Bacchides, Truculentus, and Miles Gloriosus.
motion of citizen interests as they move the plot toward its conclusion. As a result, Terence’s *meretrices* are involved in the resolutions of the plots where Plautus’ are not. The Plautine *meretrix* is occasionally involved in resolving a citizen-based plot, but her role is coincidental: Erotium, for one, in *Menaechmi* enables the eventual discovery and recognition of the long-lost Menaechmus, but only because she happens to have a relationship with the other Menaechmus—she takes no independent action to further the plot. More often the Plautine *meretrix* is unconcerned with the citizen plot (like the twin sisters of the *Bacchides* who have their own agendas to promote), or is entangled in the citizen plot without taking action either to resolve it or to hinder its resolution, like Philaenium of *Asinaria*. Occasionally she even actively impedes the progress of the citizen plot.  

In contrast, the Terentian *meretrix* often plays a prominent role in resolving the citizen plot and nearly always demonstrates awareness of and interest in the citizen values from which she is excluded. Chrysis in *Andria* ensures that her adopted sister Glycerium is raised respectfully and takes pains to ensure Glycerium’s safety after her own death. Thais in *Eunuchus* plays much the same role for her own adopted sister Pamphila and attempts to restore the sister to her own citizen family. The Bacchis of *Hecyra* supplies the information that restores Philumena to her husband Pamphilus’ family and settles the question of Philumena’s sexual integrity. The Bacchis of *Heautontimoroumenos*, although she does not help to resolve the citizen plots, sympathizes with Antiphila and reflects on the desirability of practicing citizen virtues (381-395; see discussion in Chapter 3). Only Philotis, the young *meretrix* who opens the first scene of *Hecyra*,

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3 Phronesium falls into this category when her compromise with Diniarchus in *Truculentus* allows her to keep his infant son for three days beyond the end of the play, a circumstance which prevents Plautus from completing the reunion of the new family before the play’s conclusion.

4 Because *Andria* begins shortly after Chrysis’ death, she does not appear or speak in person. She is, however, quoted at some length by Pamphilus (286-296) and characterized in detail by Simo (69-79).
does not engage with citizen interests and values, but her role is in any case primarily to elicit Parmeno’s introduction of the citizen plot and to form expectations about Bacchis’ character.\(^5\) Terentian *meretrices* take serious interest in the citizen characters they assist. They admire the characters, especially the women, who enjoy the privileges of citizenship or who manage to mimic those privileges successfully.

Their Plautine counterparts do not share this investment in citizen values, with one major exception. The women of *Cistellaria* are unlike any others in Plautus’ plays.\(^6\) Melaenis is the character most responsible for the recognition of her adopted daughter Selenium, and she voluntarily decides to reveal Selenium’s identity and return her to the family of her birth (626-630)—she is not forced. Beyond the role of Melaenis as both *meretrix* and heroine of the citizen plot, *Cistellaria* shows a consistent theme of the awareness of difference between the non-citizen and citizen classes, beginning in the first act with Selenium’s insistence that although she does not belong to the citizen class (as far as she knows), she aspires to citizen values:

\begin{quote}
&*nam mea mater, quia ego nolo me meretricem dicier,*
& *obsecustas de ea re, gessit morem morigerae mihi,*
& *ut me, quem amarem graviter, sineret cum eo vivere.* (83-85)
\end{quote}

For my mother, since I don’t want to be called a *meretrix*,

obeyed me about that matter, accommodated my behavior as I am accommodating,

so that she allowed me to live with him whom I love very much.

The *meretrices* of *Cistellaria* engage with citizen social norms by understanding the different moral values applied to women of the citizen and non-citizen classes, and by objecting to citizens’ abuse of non-citizens.\(^7\) The theme of exclusion from citizen values is also evident in

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\(^5\) For the importance of Philotis in introducing Bacchis’ reputation, see McGarrity (1980).

\(^6\) *Cistellaria* appears to have been adapted from Menander’s *Synaristosai*; see discussion of Terence and Menander, below.

\(^7\) Konstan (1983) writes on the social commentary in *Cistellaria* that “the moral center of the play is Melaenis’ demand for respect and good faith,” and that the main *meretrix* of the play
the somewhat mystifying speech of the unnamed *lena*, on resentment and hostility between *matronae* and *meretrices* (22-41), a passage that Elaine Fantham (2004) has convincingly explained as a description of economically marginal women who depend at times upon prostitution for their income and at times upon the assistance of citizen women with greater financial security. In *Cistellaria*, Plautus demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between *meretrices* and citizen values and privileges. This play on its own, however, is so exceptional in the Plautine corpus that it cannot change the predominant nature of Plautus’ *meretrices.*

Aside from the significant exception of *Cistellaria*, Plautine *meretrices* do not share with Terentian *meretrices* any special interest in citizen values. In this respect, Terence has more in common with Menander. As Madeleine Henry (1985) describes, most of Menander’s *hetairai* are essential to the resolutions of their plots, and he characterizes them as kindly and helpful. In particular, the characters of Habrotonon from *Epitrepontes* and Chrysis of *Samia* show a close relationship to the *meretrices* of Terence. Both women play key roles in the resolutions of their plots, both of which revolve around the mischances of citizen families. Moreover, both women are cast as sympathetic to citizen troubles and sensitive to the demands of respectable citizen behavior. Chrysis has even been integrated to a certain extent into the citizen community: she is on friendly terms with the citizen wife next door, who comforts her and sympathizes with her when Demeas banishes her from his house (405-420, 425-428). Henry summarizes that “paradoxically, Menander’s comic family is both threatened and assisted by the courtesan. His male

recognizes that “the social boundaries that divide the orders do not sanction abuse or contempt for the courtesans” (112).

8 The *Cistellaria* independently nevertheless has relevance for this project, because its *meretrices* show many of the same qualities that I will discuss about Terence’s *meretrices*. Throughout this paper I will give relevant information about the *Cistellaria* in footnotes.

9 In fact, Habrotonon is the literary grandmother of Bacchis from Terence’s *Hecyra*, a play based on the *Hekyra* of Apollodorus, who adapted Menander’s *Epitrepontes*. 
characters perceive her as a threat, while in word and deed she assists their families’ reconciliations” (115). The same could be said of most of Terence’s meretrices; Plautus’, on the other hand, rarely assist citizen families outside of Cistellaria, although they are often perceived as threatening.

Because the purpose of this project is to use the speech patterns of the meretrices to examine their attitudes toward the citizen values from which she has been excluded, the separation of Terentian from Plauteine meretrices is justifiable on the grounds that the majority of Plauteine meretrices have no special involvement with citizen interests. Before my analysis begins, however, it is necessary to state briefly what this project is not about.

Any discussion of the meretrices’ encounters with citizen values and citizen characters, especially when those citizens are present or former clients of the meretrix, must eventually confront the problem of the bona or mala meretrix. The attempt to categorize New Comic courtesans based on the apparent morality of their characters dates back at least as far as Plutarch, and the validity of such categories is still the topic of scholarly debate.\footnote{Quaestiones conviviales 712b-c. See also Henry (1987) and Traill (2008) 3-9, on the problems of applying moral judgments to the courteSAN character.} It has been argued that the meretrices in Plautus and Terence are meretrices malae.\footnote{See Gilula (1980) on Terence’s meretrices and Gilula (2004) on the Cistellaria meretrices.} I disagree with this assessment, in large part because of the conclusions I have drawn from this project, but I also disagree with the assumption that a meretrix’s goodness or badness is relevant to any discussion of the stock type.

Moral goodness and badness correspond, respectively, to compliance and non-compliance with prevailing social ideology. The meretrix, by virtue of her non-citizen status, was automatically excluded from participating directly with social values. To judge a meretrix good or bad, then, is to apply to her a standard that by its nature cannot apply. Goodness and badness are
judged from the viewpoint of the predominant social class, in this case, from the perspective of citizens. The only way that a meretrix can be called bona or mala, then, is with explicit reference to the citizen class. That is to say, we can feel justified in concluding that a meretrix is a bona meretrix, but only if we understand that she is good because her actions benefit citizens.

My conclusions will suggest that almost all Terence’s meretrices are bonae in that their actions are ultimately approved by citizens,¹² but this conclusion, although valid and logically sound, answers a question that has little to do with this project. My interest is in the meretrices’ perspective on citizenship and their relationship to citizen values, but moral judgments can reflect only the citizen perspective. Nevertheless the legitimate question of whether a meretrix can be kind, generous, and responsible—whether she can be a good person as opposed to a good courtesan—has at times been confused with the question of her compliance with citizen morality, and I will address this confusion where it has relevance for my analysis. I do not hope to find an answer to the bona meretrix question: I suspect it was a tricky problem even in Terence’s time.

¹² The exception is the Bacchis of Heautontimoroumenos, about whom none of the citizen characters has anything good to say, despite the reality of her character (see discussion in Chapter 3).
Several analyses of speech and language in Roman New Comedy have been undertaken, including some that focus exclusively on the language of Terence. Evangelos Karakasis (2005) presents the largest-scale study of Terence’s construction of character types through language, but his analysis is concerned mainly with particular lexical and syntactic features alone, treating the social contexts of speech only in incidental observations. Additionally there has been work focused specifically on the women of New Comedy and their speech, notably by J. N. Adams (1984), which offers a comprehensive statistical analysis of speech features that appear primarily or only in the voices of female characters. Dorota Dutsch (2008) also explores female speech in Roman Comedy, focusing on playwrights’ representation of female speech and the probable reactions of the audience. This scholarship pursues the lexicon of comedy and the articulation through comedy of socially-prescribed gender roles, rather than the performance of personal attitudes and individual characterization through language. What has not yet been extensively applied to female speech in Roman New Comedy is the concept that unites language exchange with social context: register.

The concept of register originated in T. B. W. Reid’s paper “Linguistics, structuralism and philology” in 1956, but did not become influential until two decades later. The term gained currency throughout the 1960s and 1970s and was most influentially defined in 1976 by M. A.
K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan in *Cohesion in English*. According to Halliday and Hasan, a linguistic register is composed of “the linguistic features which are typically associated with a configuration of situational features” defined in terms of three variables (22). The first, *field*, refers to “the total event in which the text is functioning,” including the setting, participants, and subject of the language exchange. The other two variables, *mode* and *tenor*, are more social than linguistic: the former indicates “the function of the text in the event, including … both the channel taken by the language—spoken or written, extempore or prepared—and its genre or rhetorical mode,” and the latter, “the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations, permanent and temporary among the participants” (22). The key to understanding Halliday and Hasan’s definition of register is their emphasis not only on the lexical and syntactic features of a language exchange, but also on the situation in which it occurs.

The importance of context to register is of particular interest to Helen Leckie-Tarry in her theory of register. Leckie-Tarry highlights the role of context in determining register over the linguistic content of a speech exchange, writing that “while register may be recognized by its formal (i.e. linguistic) characteristics, its structure is semantic. Hence, and crucially, in this definition, the critical elements are seen to be firstly contextual and secondly, linguistic” (6). Leckie-Tarry’s concept of context is closely related to Halliday and Hasan’s variables of mode and tenor; that is, for Leckie-Tarry, the context underlying register is mainly the result of the social relationships involved in the language exchange. For an analysis of the plays of Terence, the importance of social relationships to the context of speech means that the registers used by the characters are variable throughout the plays and depend upon what each character is trying to ac-

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13 The linguists I cite tend to refer to instances of language use in general as “text,” whether spoken or written. Outside of these citations, I prefer to distinguish speech from text and take “text” to refer only to the written word. This distinction helps to avoid confusion between the plays I discuss and the speech of the characters in them.
complish in each scene, to whom each character is speaking, and what relationships exist among the characters.

Leckie-Tarry’s theory of register as a product of the social context of speech is relevant to Terence because of New Comedy’s concern with a (conventional, stylized) version of everyday life. The characters come from a variety of social backgrounds, and they interact with members of classes to which they do and do not belong. The social makeup of the plays shifts from scene to scene as characters come and go from the stage. This quality of comedy ought, according to Leckie-Tarry’s theory, to result in the inclusion of multiple registers in the speech of Terence’s characters. Furthermore, because characters are aware that there are differences between themselves and their interlocutors, the registers in which they speak ought to reflect the ways that they perceive their relationships. Such is, in fact, the case, and my project is to analyze the registers employed by *meretrices* in order to understand how they perceive their relationships to other social groups, specifically, to citizen values and institutions. Correspondingly, I have identified registers in the speech of Terence’s *meretrices* by field, mode, and tenor.

1. **Field.** For Terence’s *meretrices*, the field of a language exchange is the linguistic content of the exchange, that is, the information that they use their words to communicate. The field also includes the participants in the exchange.\(^{14}\) For example, Bacchis and her *ancilla* Phrygia hold this conversation in *Heautontimoroumenos*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bac.} & \quad \text{mea Phrygia, audisti modo iste homo quam villam demonstravit Charini?} \\
\text{Phr.} & \quad \text{audivi.} \\
\text{Bac.} & \quad \text{proxumam esse huic fundo ad dextram?}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{14}\) Halliday and Hasan include the setting of the language exchange in their definition of field; the setting of speech in Roman Comedy is, however, always the somewhat artificial setting of the outdoor area in front of the characters’ houses.
Phr.  
Bac.  curriculo percurre. apud eum miles Dionysia agitat.  memini.  

(731-733)

Bac.  My dear Phrygia, did you hear that man just now indicate which house belongs to Charinus?
Phr.  I heard.
Bac.  It was next to this farm, on the right?
Phr.  As I recall.
Bac.  Run over quickly. The soldier is celebrating the Dionysia with him. 15

Here the field includes Bacchis, a meretrix, and Phrygia, her ancilla. It consists of the location of Charinus’ house in lines 731 and 732, and then continues to include the activities of a soldier in line 733. Thus the field may change slightly over the course of a single exchange. In Terence’s comedies as a whole, the field of each register varies depending upon what the characters need to communicate to each other and to the audience.

2. **Mode.** The mode is not a significant factor in classifying Terence’s speech registers because it is so uniform throughout the plays. The meretrices nearly always communicate in direct speech. 16

3. **Tenor.** The tenor of the registers in Terence is, like the field, variable depending on the precise circumstances of each language exchange. It is always based on the social dynamics between participants. Knowing the social roles played by the characters is crucial to determining the tenor of their speech. Taking once again Heautontimoroumenos as an example, the conversation between Bacchis and Phrygia (731-733) occurs against the backdrop of their mistress-slave

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15 This translation, like all others in this paper, is my own.
16 There are no instances in Terence of written communication with a meretrix. Occasionally the speech of a meretrix is reported, as at Andria 286-296, but in such cases, the mode of the original exchange was also direct speech.
relationship. Thus Phrygia answers Bacchis’ questions immediately and directly (audivi; memini, 732), and Bacchis gives commands (percurre, 733). The tenor of Bacchis’ earlier conversation with Antiphila, a free woman, shows a more evenly-balanced dynamic:

Bac. quisdam hic adulescens est qui intuitur nos?
Ant. amabo, quid tibist?
Bac. disperii, perii misera!
Antiphila?
Ant. videon Cliniam an non?
Bac. quem vides? 

(403-405)

Bac. Who is this young man who’s staring at us?
Ant. Please, dear, what’s the matter?
Bac. in such a state, Antiphila?
Ant. Am I seeing Clinia? Or not?
Bac. Who do you see?

Here both women ask each other questions, and the only imperative (retine me, 403) is used rhetorically. All conversations in Terence demonstrate tenor in the disparity of social status between participants, a difference which may be great, as in the case of Bacchis and Phrygia, or small, as with Bacchis and Antiphila.

In combination, the variables field, mode, and tenor create register. I have identified five registers in the plays of Terence, each of which is briefly described below. Because the subject of my project is the social relationships between meretrices and their citizen acquaintances, I have given most attention to the tenor of each register.
1. Deferential

The deferential register develops from a situation in which the speaker is of inferior status to the interlocutor, or temporarily adopts an attitude of inferiority.\textsuperscript{17} The discrepancy may be, for example, between non-citizen and citizen, between slave and master, or occasionally between meretrix and client. The deferential register is characterized by increased formality and by imperatives softened with words that Adams has termed “polite modifiers,” including obsecro and amabo (55-67). It can also appear in particularly self-focused syntax, that is, speech that is structured around the speaker’s own thoughts and feelings rather than other people’s. For example, in the encounter between Mysis and Pamphilus early in Andria, the two characters discuss the likelihood of Pamphilus’ marriage to a woman other than Glycerium:

\begin{verbatim}
Mys. \quad haud verear si in te solo sit sum, 
\quad sed vim ut queas ferre.
Pam. \quad adeon me ignavom putas,
\quad adeon porro ingratum aut inhumanum aut ferum,
\quad ut neque me consuetudo neque amor neque pudor
\quad commoveat neque commoneat ut servem fidem?
Mys. \quad unum hoc scio, hanc meritam esse, ut memor esses sui. (276-281)
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
Mys. \quad I wouldn’t worry if it rested upon you alone, 
\quad but I fear you couldn’t hold out against force.
Pam. \quad Do you think I’m so useless, 
\quad and even so ungrateful, or unfeeling, or uncivilized, 
\quad that neither our intimacy nor love nor shame 
\quad could urge me or remind me to keep my word?
Mys. \quad I know this one thing: she deserves that you remember her.
\end{verbatim}

Here Mysis places all references to Pamphilus’ inability to keep his promise into clauses that depend upon first-person verbs. She refers only to what she thinks and feels about Pamphilus, and

\textsuperscript{17} For an example of the latter case, see Chaerea’s conversation with Thais at Eunuchus 850-858.
Mazzara

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does not make any absolute claims about his character. In this way, through constant reminders that she speaks only for herself, Mysis softens her accusations. Self-focused syntax of this kind, designed to avoid offending one’s interlocutor, sometimes contributes to a deferential register.

2. *Blanditia*

This register is named after the flattery or consciously charming speech that is stereotypically attributed to *meretrices* by their clients. It occurs when the speakers invoke sexual or emotional intimacy for a purpose, and in general in comedy, it is used by *meretrices* and their clients in an attempt to enhance the illusion that the relationship they share is voluntary and emotional rather than a business arrangement. Often *blanditia* occurs when the speaker is making a request. Some of Adams’ words apply to this register as well, including words that suggest an affectionate relationship, such as *amabo*; and addresses employing a possessive pronoun, a construction that Adams refers to as “the intimate form of address” (68-73).

Dutsch defines *blanditia* as a manipulative form of speech: “A courtesan’s *blanditia* ... consists in presenting her client an image (of him, of herself, and of the situation that has brought them together) that corresponds to his desires. Such indulgence is meant to divert his attention from the threat she poses to his property” (59). The manipulation, however, is often mutual. That is, *blanditia* is not restricted to *meretrices*, for their clients adopt this register as well, as when Thraso encounters Thais at *Eunuchus* 455 through 457:

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o Thais mea,  
meum savium, quid agitur? ecquid nos amas  
de fidicina istac?
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Oh my dear Thais,  
my sweetheart, how is it? Do you love me even a little  
on account of the music-girl?
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Thraso uses the intimate form of address (Thais mea, 455) and language that implies an affectionate relationship (the endearment meum savium, 456), but like meretrices he also describes the transactional nature of their relationship in terms of emotion, asking for love (amas, 456) in exchange for a gift (de fidicina istac, 457). Blanditia calls upon and confuses two types of social relationship: it expresses a business relationship between members of different classes, but it does so in the vocabulary of an emotional relationship between equals.

3. Derogatory

The derogatory register falls at the opposite end of the social and emotional spectrum from the deferential and blanditia registers. This register is an outgrowth as well of the stratified society in which comedy is set, but instead of reflecting the subordinate position in a context of social inequality, the derogatory register reflects the superior position and is used with social inferiors. It is characterized by abusive language, including insults and threats, and may also include sarcasm or mockery. This register demonstrates the speaker’s intent to degrade the interlocutor.

Although the derogatory register includes language that implies that the speaker is of higher status than the interlocutor, it is not uncommon to find the derogatory register in speech exchanges between characters of roughly equal status, as between Mysis and Davos:

Mys. ne me attigas, sceleste. Si pol Glycerio non omnia haec—
Dav. eho, inepta, nescis quid sit actum? (Andria 789-791)

Mys. Don’t touch me, criminal. By god, if I don’t tell all this to Glycerium—
Dav. What, fool, you don’t know what’s been accomplished?
Although Mysis and Davos are both slaves and occupy roughly the same social rank, they use derogatory speech with each other as a way of expressing anger. The purpose is the same as that of any other instance of insulting speech: each speaker casts the other as lower-class in some respect.

4. Emotional

The emotional register is distinguished from the previous three by its preoccupation with the speaker’s own situation.\(^\text{18}\) The emotional speaker openly voices her concern with her feelings and emotional reactions to her situation. Indications of emotion include exclamations and interjections, including oaths such as pol or edepol; inarticulate sounds, such as vae or au; and emotive words, such as miser.\(^\text{19}\) The emotional register may convey either positive feelings (see Bacchis’ soliloquy at Hecyra 816-840) or negative ones (any of the myriad instances of the woeful exclamation me miseram). It may also occur in combination with other registers, adding emotional color to speech exchanges where the field is not strictly emotional (see discussion in Chapter 3 of Bacchis in Hecyra).

5. Direct

My final register is not concerned with tenor, with social relationships, at all. This does not mean that the speakers involved in direct speech exchanges are not interested in the social context of the exchange, but simply indicates that the speaker’s register contains more attention

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\(^{18}\) It is distinct from the deferential register in the focus of its content. The emotional speaker is concerned with her own thoughts and feelings, and expresses that concern in self-focused syntax. The deferential speaker, on the other hand, is concerned with the interlocutor, but presents that concern as if she were concerned with herself.

\(^{19}\) Adams 47-55.
to the field, to the content of their speech, than to the tenor. Usually the speaker’s decreased attention to tenor is a result of a sense of urgency or overriding concern for the field (see discussion in Chapter 3 of Chrysis). The direct register may also appear in situations of limited or absent social tension, that is, between equals or in contexts in which no social discrepancy is involved. For such a situation, see the conversation between Parmeno and Philotis at Hecyra 82-197.

The registers I have identified are functions both of the variable social compositions of Terence’s scenes and of the ways that his speaking characters perceive social relationships. As I have explained, these registers can overlap, and so assigning each line of Terence’s plays absolutely to a particular register is an impossible task. My suggestion is not that the speech registers of Terence’s meretrices can yield with scientific precision a map of social relationships and perceptions within Roman New Comedy. Instead, I propose that paying attention to the different ways characters speak in different situations can be a helpful tool contributing to a fuller understanding of the way that Terence’s meretrices perceive their relationships to the citizen class, its values, and its ideals.
Chapter 3: The Speech of the Meretrices

1. *Andria*: Chrysis, the Unseen *Meretrix*

Of all Terence’s *meretrices*, Chrysis in his first play, *Andria*, speaks the least. Because *Andria* begins shortly after her death, she cannot appear onstage or speak with her own voice, but the *adulescens* Pamphilus quotes a speech that Chrysis delivered to him on her deathbed. Although it is only eleven lines long, the speech illustrates Chrysis’ character and Glycerium’s situation in a way that no other character can:

> “mi Pamphile, huius formam atque aetatem vides, 
> nec clam te est quam illi nunc utraque inutiles 
> et ad pudicitiam et ad rem tutandam sient. 
> quod ego per hanc te dexteram et genium tuom, 
> per tuam fidem perque huius solitudinem 
> te obtestor ne abs te hanc segreges neu deseras. 
> si te in germani fratris dilexi loco 
> sive haec te solum semper fecit maxumi 
> seu tibi morigera fuit in rebus omnibus, 
> te isti virum do, amicum, tutorem, patrem; 
> bona nostra haec tibi permitto et tuae mando fide.” (286-296)

“My dear Pamphilus, you see her beauty and her youth, 
and it is no secret from you how useless both are to her now 
for protecting both her respectability and her property. 
For this reason, by your right hand and by your good nature, 
by your sense of obligation and by her aloneness, 
I entreat you not to separate her from yourself, nor to abandon her. 
If I have loved you in the place of a twin brother, 
And if she has always thought most highly of you alone, 
And if she has been accommodating to you in all matters, 
I give you to her as husband, friend, guardian, and father; 
I confer upon you these goods of ours, and I entrust them to your honor.”
The register of this short but dense speech includes the characteristics of the direct register to the near complete exclusion of any other register. The first two words, *mi Pamphile*, constitute Adams’ intimate form of address, a figure more typically associated with emotional discourse, especially when used with proper names. Here the intimate address does express the affection that a close relationship between Pamphilus and Chrysis’ family has engendered, but Chrysis also uses it to invoke that affection, that is, to create a sense of emotional obligation in Pamphilus. Her reminder to Pamphilus of their past closeness earns her some leverage with which she can offset the magnitude of the request she is making. Chrysis essentially asks Pamphilus to marry Glycerium, that is, to enter a life-long relationship, and so her request is not a trivial one. In lines 292 through 295, Chrysis’ attempt to create a sense of obligation in Pamphilus becomes more explicit. Her phrasing suggests it is a natural result of Glycerium’s love for Pamphilus that he should accept responsibility for her welfare.

In some respects, Chrysis’ use of affectionate speech to strengthen her claim to Pamphilus’ attention resembles *blanditia*. The *blanditia* of *meretrices*, charming and irresistible to the lovers of New Comedy, provokes a feeling of helplessness and loss of control in those who listen that prompts them to surrender to the will of the *meretrix*. Such a function of charming and affectionate language appears with particular clarity in requests, which by their nature involve

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20 Dutsch defines several types of the intimate form of address, distinguishing between the use of *mi* with familiar relationships, with proper names, and with endearments. When used with proper names, “the pronoun merely indicates affection” and is not an instance of *blanditia* (55).

21 Ashmore (1908) writes that Chrysis’ speech to Pamphilus “amounted to a solemn betrothal, the marriage being sure to follow. ... The consent of Simo was necessary to make the marriage complete, but Chrysis went as far in this direction as she was able to go under the circumstances. Regarded from a modern standpoint Pamphilus and Glycerium were man and wife” (31).

22 See, for example, Diniarchus’ monologue at the beginning of *Truculentus* (esp. 1-9), in which he represents his business with Phronesium as fraud, as if his role in offering payment for the services he has received were unwitting. Diniarchus conceals his own action in becoming the client of a *meretrix* behind the *meretrix’s* interest in receiving payment for her time and services, creating the impression that the charm of the *meretrix* robs her client of self-control.
the adoption of the asker’s will by the asked. Chrysis makes a request of Pamphilus framed in affectionate language, but on the other hand, the blanditia strategy typically draws its efficacy from erotic feeling rather than familial affection. Chrysis explicitly characterizes her feelings for Pamphilus as sisterly (te in germani fratris dilexi loco, 292), thus undermining any hint of erotic undertone. Chrysis’ reminder to Pamphilus of their affectionate relationship falls into the category of genuine emotion rather than blanditia, even though she invokes her affection for the adulescens in order to arouse his feelings of responsibility.

Apart from these two emotional reminders, the register of Chrysis’ speech is remarkably direct. Its directness shows in the predominance of declarative sentences as opposed to questions, commands, or exhortations, even though the function of this speech is to make a request. Without question Chrysis asks much of Pamphilus here: she asks him to continue his devotion to Glycerium in Chrysis’ absence, and to serve not only as her husband, but also as her friend, guardian, and father (295). This request is significant, but Chrysis nevertheless asks no questions and makes no imperative demands. She does not stray from the indicative mood except where the subjunctive is grammatically necessary in dependent clauses. This relentless series of indicative verbs allows Chrysis not only to represent Glycerium’s situation as vividly and directly as she can, but also to minimize opportunities for Pamphilus to say no. Chrysis’ direct register presents her proposal to Pamphilus as if it were already settled.

The direct register here, although it is not explicitly emotional outside of the affectation touches that Chrysis adds to remind Pamphilus of his relationship with Chrysis’ family, does not reflect a lack of emotion. Chrysis has strong feelings about Glycerium’s future, as the content of her speech demonstrates. Instead, the direct register here illustrates how much Glycerium’s fate

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23 For this view of blanditia as an invasion of the addressee’s will, see Dutsch 58-63.
means to Chrysis. The direct register takes little account of tenor (the social dynamics of the language exchange) because in the mind of the speaker, the field of the speech (its content and purpose) overshadows the tenor in importance. On her deathbed, Chrysis cares more about the request she makes of Pamphilus than about their respective social roles. Glycerium’s future is of extreme importance to Chrysis, and Chrysis has nothing to lose in bypassing formalities.

Chrysis’ lexical choices contribute much to my understanding of her feelings about Glycerium’s future. The word with which she ultimately makes her request, obtestor, has remarkable strength in Roman New Comedy. It occurs in Terence only at Andria 291, but the verb appears five times in Plautus, nearly always in dire situations: twice the speaker uses obtestor to object to slave torture (Asinaria 18, Captivi 727), and twice again, when a crime has been committed (Aulularia 716, 791). Outside of comedy, obtestor has a formal, even legalistic sense. When Chrysis begs Pamphilus to take care of Glycerium by using the word obtestor, she demonstrates the intensity of her wishes for Glycerium’s security, but also imbues her words with a tone of formality that supports the imagery of legal marriage that she introduces in her next lines.

Chrysis’ vocabulary of citizen morality and marriage is striking in its application to Glycerium, whose status as a citizen, though known to Chrysis, will not be proven until later in the play. Chrysis’ primary concern is for the protection of Glycerium’s pudicitia (288). Pudicitia defines citizen female morality: the women who turn out to be lost citizens have been raised with

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24 The fifth occurrence of obtestor in Plautus is at Rudens 635, where Daemones asks Trachalio to explain why he demands help for Palaestra and Ampelisca in the temple of Venus. Daemones pairs the word with threats of torture if Trachalio does not answer.

25 TLL s.v. obtestor.

26 Glycerium’s property, rem, occurs in a position parallel to pudicitia in line 288, but given Chrysis’ history, in which her lack of property caused her to lose her pudicitia (according to Simo, 73-79), it is reasonable to assume that Chrysis understands the protection of Glycerium’s property to be a means of protecting her pudicitia.
pudicitia," and Plautus’ Alcmena includes *pudicitia* in her enumeration of wifely virtues (*Amphitruon* 840). In the same context Alcmena describes herself as *morigera* (842), another quality that Chrysis attributes to Glycerium (*Andria* 294). Next, it is by Pamphilus’ right hand (*per hanc ...dexteram*, 289) that she first beseeches him to look after Glycerium, a reference that recalls a common element of citizen marriage, the *dextrarum coniunctio*. It becomes explicit in line 285 that Chrysis considers the relationship between Glycerium and Pamphilus, the relationship that will provide security for Glycerium, a relationship of marriage: *te isti virum do* is a wedding phrase, in which *do* means “give in marriage”* and *virum* means “husband.”* Pamphilus also describes this speech as a wedding ceremony with the phrase *hanc mi in manum dat* (297), and as far as the characters present are concerned, Pamphilus and Glycerium are at least betrothed, if not actually man and wife.

In her deathbed address to Pamphilus requesting that he care for Glycerium, Chrysis not only addresses a citizen using a register that largely ignores his superior status, but also selects a citizen-based vocabulary. Chrysis’ only speech reveals two things about her attitudes toward citizen values and privileges. The first, clarified by her use of the direct register, is that there are some circumstances in which it is appropriate for a woman of low social class to address a citizen as if her concerns are of equal importance to—or even more important than—his own.*

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27 The typical descriptive phrase for the upbringing of a lost daughter is *bene et pudice*: see, for example, *Cistellaria* 173, *Curculio* 518 and 698, and *Heautontimoroumenos* 226.
29 The word *mando*, used in line 296, may also indicate giving a woman in marriage (*OLD* s.v. *mando*, 4 c), but it is unclear here whether Chrysis uses *mando* to confer property upon Pamphilus or a wife, or both.
30 Melaenis addresses Alcesimarchus in similarly direct language when she tells him that she will not allow Selenium to continue living with him at *Cistellaria* 492-519. Here Melaenis hopes to spare the daughter she loves from future pain, a concern that overwhelms her respect for Alcesimarchus’ status. Melaenis explicitly cites the disparity of social status between her own family
Chrysis’ concern for Glycerium’s future is so pressing that she feels free to speak to him without including verbal indications of her lower status.31

The second point this speech clarifies is that Chrysis understands the great value that the citizen moral code places upon the protection of a woman’s pudicitia. Although she knows with certainty that Glycerium is a citizen, Chrysis dies before that citizenship is recognized and confirmed. In securing Pamphilus’ promise of fidelity to Glycerium, Chrysis provides insurance for her foster-sister against two possible outcomes. If Chremes does not recognize and support Glycerium, then Glycerium will still have the security of a pro uxore marriage to Pamphilus. Then again, if Chremes does recognize her (the eventual outcome of the play) then she can be reintegrated into respectable society because her pudicitia remains intact. In her speech to Pamphilus, Chrysis demonstrates that even as an outsider to the Athenian citizen class and its values, she remains aware of those values, understands them, and recognizes their importance to the life of a young woman of uncertain status.

2. Heautontimoroumenos: Bacchis, the Second-Class Non-Citizen

Bacchis, the courtesan of Heautontimoroumenos, appears first in a conversation with a young woman named Antiphila whose citizenship is unknown at the beginning of the play. Although Antiphila is in fact the daughter of Chremes and Sostrata, the parents of her boyfriend’s

and Alcesimarchus’ (493–495), but she tells the adolescens that her lower status does not affect her morals.

31 Because Chrysis grew up as a citizen in her own hometown, her knowledge of the vocabulary and circumstances of citizen life is unsurprising. It is possible that we are to understand that Chrysis here does not assume the vocabulary of a class to which she does not belong, but resumes the status with which she was born and raised. This subtle distinction cannot, however, be made with any certainty based on her speech.
friend Clitipho, Terence introduces her as the daughter of a non-citizen described thus by Clinia’s father: *est e Corintho hic advena anus paupercula* (96). Despite Antiphila’s poverty, she has grown up *bene et pudice* (226),\(^{32}\) somehow supporting herself outside of the citizen class without losing her respectability. Bacchis comments upon this admirable situation to Antiphila in their first scene on the stage at lines 381 through 395. Bacchis uses a markedly emotional register, particularly in her first three lines:

\[
\text{edepol te, mea Antiphila, laudo et fortunatam \textit{iudico},}
\text{id quom studiuisti isti formae \textit{ut} mores consimiles forent;}
\text{minumeque, ita me \textit{di ament}, miror si te sibi quisque expetit. (381-383)}
\]

Heaven knows, my dear Antiphila, I praise you and consider you fortunate, since you have taken care that your habits are just like your beauty; and, bless me, I don’t wonder at all if anyone wants you for himself.

These three lines are saturated with emotional signals. The most obvious are the interjections *edepol* (381) and *ita me \textit{di ament}* (383).\(^{33}\) The gods have nothing to do with the content of Bacchis’ speech: Bacchis is not suggesting that Antiphila’s character is the result of divine intervention, nor that she perceives a close relationship between her lack of surprise and the gods’ approval. Bacchis’ mild oaths serve to express intensity of feeling rather than to contribute to the meaning of her speech. By themselves, these interjections convey no information about the type of emotion the speaker feels; it is the words surrounding the interjections that determine the quality of feeling. Here their context shows that Bacchis speaks in a positive emotional register.\(^{34}\)

\(^{32}\) On this phrase as an indication of citizen female morality, see n. 27.

\(^{33}\) The second of these oaths, *ita me \textit{di ament},* receives no attention from Adams and only a passing reference from Karakasis, in connection to the similarity of speech habits between Laches and Sostrata in *Hecyra* (120). Possibly its absence from my two primary references for speech habits in Terence results from its relative rarity, but in any case, *ita me \textit{di ament} here holds the same exclamatory force as *edepol*.

\(^{34}\) *Edepol* may equally be used in negative emotional contexts, as at *Eunuchus* 867, where Thais expresses her distress and confusion about how best to act in response to Pamphila’s rape, and at *Andria* 692, where Mysis confides Glycerium’s fears about Pamphilus’ approaching marriage.
The first hint that Bacchis has positive feelings toward Antiphila appears in the first line of her speech, in her use of the intimate form of address for her companion: mea Antiphila (381). As in the case of Chrysis’ address to Pamphilus in Andria, discussed above, Bacchis employs no blanditia in her conversation with Antiphila. There can be no erotic relationship between the two, and in any case, Bacchis has nothing to ask of Antiphila, nor can she expect to gain anything from flattering the young woman, who at this early point in the play has neither property nor status superior to Bacchis’ own. In this case, the words mea Antiphila merely express an affectionate attitude.\footnote{The affection implied by the intimate form of address receives confirmation in lines 404 and 405, where Bacchis questions Antiphila’s sudden reaction to the sight of Clinia with concern and interest.}

The collection of complimentary vocabulary in these first lines provides further evidence for Bacchis’ positive feelings toward Antiphila. Both laudo and fortunam iudico (381) show positive judgments, as does the acknowledgment of Antiphila’s beauty (formae, 382) and her matching character (mores consimiles, 382). The denial of any surprise (minume ... miror, 383) that Antiphila should be the object of desire offers a final compliment, perhaps intensified beyond its basic meaning by Bacchis’ occupational background, in which being attractive to male admirers is both a professional goal and an indication of success. The affection of Bacchis’ address to Antiphila, combined with the presence of complimentary words and phrases, confirm the positive quality of the emotional register that Bacchis employs so strongly in the beginning of her conversation with Antiphila. Bacchis approves highly of Antiphila’s mores.

Beginning in line 384, the intensity of Bacchis’ emotional register abates slightly, but her admiration does not. Following line 383, Bacchis’ speech contains no further interjections, and it

\footnote{For ita me di ament in negative contexts, see Heautontimoroumenos 569, where Chremes scolds his son for flirting with Bacchis.}
settles into a calmer, though still positive, pattern. In lines 384 through 395, Bacchis explains why her reaction to Antiphila is so positive. That explanation, which has to do with Antiphila’s adoption of citizen morality in the absence of citizen status, comes in a series of words and phrases that show Bacchis’ awareness of the class differences between herself and Antiphila.

Bacchis first distinguishes herself from Antiphila in lines 385 through 387:

\[
\text{et quom egomet nunc mecum in animo vitam tuam considero}
\]
\[
\text{omniumque adeo vostrarum volgus quae ab se segregant,}
\]
\[
\text{et vos esse istius modi et nos non esse haud mirabilest.}
\]

And when I, for my part, think to myself about your life, and likewise that of all of you who separate the common crowd from yourselves, it’s no wonder that you are the way you are and that we are not.

Bacchis’ use of the first person singular pronoun *ego* with the intensifying suffix *–met*, combined with her use of the same pronoun in another case two words later, contrasts sharply with the possessives *tuam* and *vostrarum*. With these two possessive adjectives, Bacchis does not distinguish herself only from Antiphila; the plural *omnium ... vostrarum* indicates her perception that there are also more women than Antiphila who, although apparently non-citizens, practice the kind of citizen morality that Antiphila pursues. Bacchis identifies a subclass of non-citizen women to which she does not belong: she refers to herself in one category (*nos*, 387), and to Antiphila’s type of woman in another (*vos*, 387).

Although legally they have the same status, namely non-citizen female, Antiphila and Bacchis belong to different social sets. Antiphila’s situation allows her to survive without turning to a disreputable profession for her income, but Bacchis works as a prostitute.\(^\text{36}\) Their different

\(^{36}\) It is unclear how Antiphila supports herself. Menedemus describes her foster-mother as poor (*paupercula*, 96), and Clinia characterizes the foster-mother as concerned about her financial situation (*quoii nil iam praeter pretium dulceest*, 234). The word *pretium* suggests payment, and Clinia’s bitter description of the foster-mother’s preoccupation with *pretium* recalls the irritation of other New Comic *adulescentes* with paying for *meretrices*, but Terence provides no confirma-
occupations distinguish them not only in financial means, but also in social habits. Antiphila and women of her sort (istius modi, 387), according to Bacchis, are able to avoid the society of the volgus, the “common crowd.” Volgus has negative connotations: it is a word of the lower classes. Antiphila and Bacchis move in different social circles.

Accordingly, Bacchis’ register changes slightly as she describes the class difference between herself and Antiphila. Her language remains emotionally expressive (haud mirabilest, 387), but a new tone enters her pronouns. With the words egomet and mecum (385), Bacchis carefully limits her opinion exclusively to herself, so as not to speak for others. This hint of distance in Bacchis’ speech helps to confirm her understanding that the class of non-citizen women to which she belongs, meretrices, occupies a social stratum different from that to which Antiphila belongs, non-citizen non-meretrices. The highly positive and laudatory language that Bacchis applies to Antiphila and her class of women suggests that Bacchis perceives that Antiphila’s class is superior to (and happier than) her own.

In the remainder of her brief speech to Antiphila, Bacchis differentiates the social classes to which she and Antiphila belong in terms of the social strategies that they use to promote their personal interests. Bacchis describes the meretrices in lines 388 through 391:

nam expedit bonas esse vobis; nos, quibuscumst res, non sinunt.
quippe forma inpulsi nostra nos amatores colunt:
haec ubi imminutast, illi suom animum alio conferunt.
nisi si prospectum interea aliquid est, desertae vivimus.

For it benefits you to be good; the ones with whom we have business don’t let us. Indeed, our lovers are forced by our beauty to support us: When this diminishes, they turn their attention elsewhere. Except if, in the meantime, there’s some provision, we live abandoned.

tion of Antiphila’s situation. The most likely solution to my mind is that Antiphila has supported herself with only one client, like Selenium in the Cistellaria, or through weaving alone.  

37 OLD s.v. uulgus 2 a.
According to Bacchis’ description of their professional lives, the meretrices have little agency themselves. Throughout these four lines, they are objects: nos is the object of non sinunt (388) and of colunt (389). Here, the amatores are the agents and the meretrices are the objects in the process that determines their occupation and social class. Where there is agency in the profession of the meretrix, Bacchis attributes the active power of the profession to the beauty of the meretrix, and not to her behavior (forma, ablative of agent with inpulsi, 389). The only verb of which the meretrices themselves are subject is vivimus (391), and even there the implied subject is modified by a passive participle (desertae). One of the defining characteristics of the meretrix in Bacchis’ mind is her inability to act meaningfully on her own, that is, her state of subjectivity to more powerful males and to their reception of her body.

When she contrasts Antiphila’s way of life in lines 392 to 395, Bacchis attributes to the other class of non-citizen women little more agency than she does to herself, but she describes their relationship to the men in their lives in far more equal terms:

vobis cum uno semel ubi aetatem agere decretumst viro, 
quois mos maxume consimilis vostrum, hi se ad vos applicant. 
hoc beneficio utrique ab utrisque vero devincimini, 
ut numquam ulla amoris vosstro incidere possit calamitas.

When it’s been decided once and for all for you to live your life with the one man whose character most matches yours, they devote themselves to you. In this arrangement, each of you is truly dedicated to the other, so that no misfortune can ever befall your love.

The imbalance of power between women and the men in their lives is much less noticeable in these four lines than it is in the earlier description of the meretrices’ lives. Women like Antiphila make their own decisions about how to live their lives, and their options are not limited to what men allow: the ablative of agent vobis places the decision of living one’s life with only one man in the hands of the woman herself (392). The subject of the passive verb devincimini includes
both the male and female participants in the relationship (394), and the final line attributes that relationship equally to both participants using the plural possessive *vostro*.

Socially, the characteristic that distinguishes Antiphila’s class from Bacchis’ is its allowance for women to make decisions about their living situations. Whether any women in Terence’s time could actually make decisions about their living situations without the pressure of male expectations is another matter, but Bacchis’ speech shows that she perceives that Antiphila, a non-citizen non-*meretrix*, has more freedom to control her behavior than a *meretrix*. This freedom, as Bacchis describes it, makes citizen-style morality more accessible to Antiphila than it is to Bacchis. In fact, Bacchis likens Antiphila’s lifestyle to that of an ideal citizen woman in the prepositional phrase *cum uno viro*, which modifies *aetatem agere*, and the adverb *semel*, which modifies *decretumst* (392). For women of Terence’s time, marriage once (*semel*), to one man (*cum uno viro*), was most admirable.

Bacchis implies that Antiphila’s lifestyle is more autonomous and closer to ideal citizen values than her own life. Her emotional registers establish her approval and admiration of Antiphila’s choices, first in the affectionate tone with which she addresses Antiphila and discusses her character, and second in the admiration she applies to Antiphila and her class of women. Bacchis respects women like Antiphila who are able to mimic citizen morality even though they are not citizens, and she perceives their situation as superior to her own.

Bacchis’ conversation with Antiphila does more than merely reveal the *meretrix’s* attitude toward different types of non-citizen life. It also provides insight into her character. Bacchis has received much scholarly scorn: Gilula (1980) writes that she is “actually one of Plutarch’s aggressive hetaerae” who truly deserves all the insulting descriptions that Clitipho, Chremes, and Syrus heap upon her (152-153), and even Gilbert Norwood, who typically takes a sympathetic
view of Terence’s *meretrices*, perceives “selfishness and extravagance” in her behavior (1923: 45). Such assessments of Bacchis’ character take into account only the content of her speech without considering its entire context. This conversation occurs just after Antiphila’s foster-mother has died, just as she is leaving a life of poverty, and just before she encounters for the first time in three months the man upon whom she has placed her hopes for the future. Antiphila’s life is in transition, but Bacchis praises her companion’s character and choices. This speech is not the official manifesto of an aggressive business woman, but a personal conversation meant to comfort and reassure a young woman who has every reason to feel uncertain. Thoughtful and considerate to her companion as well as observant and sensitive to class differences, Bacchis has more value as a character than the superficial classification of *meretrix mala* can admit.

3. *Eunuchus*: Thais and the Balancing Act

Of all Terence’s *meretrices*, by far the most visible is Thais of *Eunuchus*. While Terence’s other *meretrices* are confined to single parts of their plays, sometimes even to a few lines, Thais is in one sense the main character of the play in which she appears. *Eunuchus* has three plots: a lost-daughter plot, in which Pamphila is to be restored to her citizen family; a marriage plot, in which Chaerea and Pamphila are united; and a rival-lovers plot, in which Phaedria

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38 James (2013) writes: “Bacchis shows no bitterness, and she does not (as a Plautine *meretrix* might) counsel Antiphila to be faithless, to distrust Clinia’s devotion, to make as much as she can while she is young and beautiful. Instead, she ascribes a marital status to Antiphila’s relationship” (191). Bacchis, then, is the opposite of the *lena* in Plautus’ *Cistellaria*, who remains skeptical of Melaenis’ decision to allow Selenium to conduct a relationship with only one man and encourages her own daughter Gymnasium to entertain many clients in order to increase her profits (41-43). Bacchis, however, has nothing to gain from pressuring Antiphila, while the *lena* relies upon her daughter to provide her household’s income (38-39).
and Thraso contend for Thais’ affection and attention. Pamphila’s role as foster-sister to Thais before her recognition as a citizen daughter forces each of these plots to intersect at Thais’ house, and Thais plays a key role in each plot.

As a function of her importance to the plots of *Eunuchus*, Thais is highly vocal. She appears in person throughout the whole length of the play. Much of her speech reflects the affairs of citizens, especially in scenes concerning the lost-daughter plot in which Thais attempts to return Pamphila respectably to her family. I will discuss the two major scenes in which Thais interacts with Pamphila’s story, and thus, with citizen interests. The first takes place outside Thais’ house as Phaedria and Parmeno discuss Thais’ relationship with Phaedria, who is in love with Thais.

Dramatically, the purpose of this first scene is mostly expiatory. Pamphila’s history and the trajectory of the plot must be explained before the play can progress, and Thais supplies those explanations in this first scene with Phaedria and Parmeno. Her speech supplements the lack of a prologue character, and it also shows Terence’s dexterity as a playwright and especially as a developer of character in the way that the substitution of Thais for prologue character is both necessary and logical. As the only character who knows about Pamphila’s citizen status, Thais must deliver background information to the audience in the absence of a divine prologue, a

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39 On the status of courtesans as key players in Menander’s “love-intrigue” comedies, Henry (1987) writes: “the ‘hero,’ as traditionally defined, emerges as a pratton who does not further the play’s movement toward the final betrothal. ... Instead, hetairai and pseudohetairai lead the way” (144). Her statement applies in part to Terence’s *Eunuchus* as well, inasmuch as Thais is active in all three of the play’s plots. On the other hand, there can be no denying that Chaerea takes extreme action in promoting his betrothal to Pamphila (see discussion below). Henry’s assessment of the value of courtesans suits *Hecyra* perfectly, a play in which the “hero” Pamphilus does little more than lie and hide, while the meretrix Bacchis saves the day. Norwood cites Thais as an outstanding example of character development in Terence’s plays, writing that the play “leads us ... to ... the woman’s whole character. She dominates the action throughout—wise, gracious, affectionate, and resourceful. She is a courtesan, but that is far more a matter of social status than of morals. ... She is a splendid creation” (58-60).
circumstance that eliminates an unnecessary character. Furthermore, if Thais tells the story, her speech can explain her involvement in all three plots by explaining her feelings for and history with Phaedria, her relationship to the braggart soldier Thraso, and her consuming interest in Pamphila’s situation. This scene is remarkable not only for its role in characterizing Thais’ opinion of the citizens in her life—the main point of my interest—but also for Terence’s skill in writing a tightly-constructed plot.

As Thais introduces the plot of *Eunuchus*, her speech shows two especially striking characteristics: the strength of her affection for Phaedria, and her willingness to subordinate that affection to her concern for promoting Pamphila’s interests. The interplay of these two impulses helps to explain Thais’ interest in Pamphila and Pamphila’s return to respectable citizenship, a condition that sets the entire plot of *Eunuchus* in motion. It also gives fascinating insight into the role that language plays in the relationship between non-citizen *meretrix* and citizen client.

Thais’ role in *Eunuchus* is complicated, so I will begin by addressing her interest in Pamphila by exploring the balance Thais strikes between her desire to satisfy Phaedria and her need to establish Pamphila’s security.

Thais’ first lines form a short soliloquy, during which she stands onstage unaware of the approach of her client and his slave, and she talks to herself and the audience about her feelings for Phaedria:

miseram me! vereor ne illud gravius Phaedria
tulerit neve aliorsum atque ego feci acceperit,
quod heri intro missus non est.          (81-83)

I’m so unhappy! I’m afraid that Phaedria took it more seriously or received it in another way than I meant it, that yesterday he wasn’t allowed inside.
Thais uses a markedly emotional register in these lines, not in the positive way that Bacchis demonstrates in *Heautontimoroumenos* with Antiphila, but negatively. She begins with the quintessential comic expression of despair, the exclamation *miseram me*.\(^1\) She utters the expression in real distress, a feeling that she explains as anxiety (*vereor*, 81) over the reaction of Phaedria to her behavior of the previous day. Thais’ emotion here is not an act: by stage convention, the information relayed in a soliloquy is reliable. The sincerity of her concern for Phaedria’s hurt feelings contributes to Terence’s characterization of Thais as a *meretrix* who feels genuine affection for her client.\(^2\)

The emotional register of Thais’ speech remains when she discusses their relationship after she notices Phaedria, a continuity that, when combined with the affection in her speech to him, reinforces the sincerity of her feelings. She greets her client: *ehem! tun hic eras, mi Phaedria? quid hic stabas? quor non recta intro ibas?* (86-87). The solicitude of her repeated questions recalls the anxiety of Thais’ previous lines (81-83), while the intimate address *mi Phaedria* allows Thais to express her real affection for Phaedria. The affection continues occasionally throughout the scene (cf. 95-97, 144, 190-191), but after these initial lines, Thais’ affection is subordinated to her interest in Pamphila’s history. Thais’ emotional register, at least with respect to her relationship with Phaedria, diminishes after her greeting.

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\(^1\) Both Adams and Dutsch characterize the first-person use of the adjective *miser* as “self-pity.” I do not attribute *miser* to self-pity because I perceive a negative connotation of the word “self-pity” in English that I do not see Terence attaching to this expression of unhappiness. In general when Terence’s characters use this familiar phrase of distress, they have good reason to be upset.\(^2\) Gilula (1980) argues that Thais does not feel real affection for Phaedria, writing that he is “a lover whom she herself prefers” simply because “the novelty of [their relationship] has not yet worn off and the gifts have just started to arrive” (164). It is only Phaedria in this conversation, however, who makes mention of gifts. Thais’ concern with Phaedria in this scene is not that he provide compensation for her services, but that he do her a personal favor and not be offended.
On the surface of this scene, Thais demonstrates the intensity of her concern for Pamphila’s situation through the comments that surround the narrative. Her concern in lines 101 and 102, for example, that Parmeno not betray her secret, indicates that Thais feels sufficiently invested in Pamphila’s future for Thais to want to protect information about her foster-sister. She also resists interruptions both from Parmeno and from Phaedria as she tells Pamphila’s story:

Par. utrumque hoc falsumst: effluet.
Tha. qui istuc?
Par. quia neque tu uno eras contenta neque solus dedit.
Tha. nam hic quoque bonam magnamque partem ad te attulit.
(121-124)

Par. Each of these is a lie. It’ll leak out.
Tha. How’s that?
Par. Because you weren’t content with one man, and he wasn’t the only one who gave you presents.
This guy also brought you a good and large share.
Tha. It’s true. But let me continue how I want.

Phae. oh! dubiumne id est?
Tha. hoc agite, amabo. mater mea illic mortuast
nuper. ... (129-130)

Phae. Oh! Is that in doubt?
Tha. Pay attention to this, please. My mother recently died there...

Thais resists the interruptions from each man in a different way. She answers Parmeno with the imperative *sine* without a polite modifier, but replies to Phaedria using the modifier *amabo*. In both cases she entertains the interruptions only briefly, by indicating that she wants to continue

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43 Her use of *amabo* with Phaedria probably reinforces the intimacy of their relationship. For *amabo* as a modifier used by *meretrices* in Terence, see Dutsch 50-53.
telling her story. The only interruptions she tolerates are those directly related to her story and interests, as at lines 110 through 113, where she answers Phaedria’s question fully:

Phae. civemne?
Tha. arbitror.
certum non scimus. matris nomen et patris
dicebat ipsa. patriam et signa cetera
neque scibat neque per aetatem etiam potis erat.

Phae. Is she a citizen?
Tha. I think so.
We don’t know for sure. She herself told us the name of her mother and of her father. She didn’t know her country or other indications, and she wasn’t even able to because of her young age.

The citizenship of the young woman, unlike Phaedria’s insecurity over Thais’ affections, is a critical point for Thais, who hopes to return Pamphila to the family that will be in a position, as citizens, to help Thais with their friendship (144-148).

Thus even an analysis that takes no account of speech registers yields insight into the sincerity of Thais’ concern for Pamphila. Upon examination of Thais’ speech registers in the narrative sections of this scene, however, it appears that the register in which Thais tells the story of her foster-sister also contributes to the impression of urgency that Thais conveys. While telling Pamphila’s story, Thais uses the direct register almost without exception, including very few words or constructions associated with the emotional registers that discussion of a family member might elicit. The story of Pamphila begins at line 107: *Samia mihi mater fuit. ea habitabat Rhodi.* The first line sets the tone for the remainder of the story by demonstrating simple syntax and sharing few unnecessary details. In contrast, the lines spoken to Phaedria that are not related to Thais’ foster-sister include more redundant words or phrases, as in lines 95 through 97:

ne crucia te, obsecro, anime mi, mi Phaedria.
non pol quo quemquam plus amem aut plus diligam
eo feci; sed ita erat res, faciendum fuit.
Don’t torment yourself, please, my love, my dear Phaedria. Goodness knows I did it not for this reason, that I love or care more for anyone; but the fact was that it had to be done.

The address *mi Phaedria* repeats the sense of the previous phrase *anime mi* (95), and *plus amem aut plus diligam* (96) states Thais’ affection twice. This marker of the emotional register does not appear in the story of Pamphila, continued in lines 108 through 110, 110 through 120, 125 through 128, and 130 through 141.

Thais’ register in narrating Pamphila’s history to Phaedria differs greatly from that in which she first greets Phaedria, even though the tenor (the social composition of the exchange) remains constant throughout the scene. Her reasons for using the direct register in this speech recall Chrysis’ reasons in the beginning of *Andria* when she speaks in the direct register to Pamphilus about Glycerium. As in the scene from *Andria*, the speaker here feels that the importance of her field (the subject and purpose of her speech) overshadows the importance of the tenor. Thais’ unwillingness to entertain Phaedria’s and Parmeno’s interruptions might indicate disrespect or a lack of interest in other situations, but here Thais simply stresses that telling Pamphila’s story is too important to her to be put on hold.

In this way, Thais subordinates her concern for Phaedria’s feelings to her interest in promoting Pamphila’s wellbeing. By doing so, she shows the intensity of her investment in Pamphila’s situation. Even though she cares sincerely for Phaedria and worries about upsetting him, Thais nevertheless narrates Pamphila’s story with focus and clarity in the direct register, and pauses her story not even to offer reassurance to her client in his insecurity. Her use of the direct

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44 Dutsch separates endearments taking the intimate form of address, including *mi anime*, from *mi* in combination with a proper name (54-55; see n. 20), but even though these two phrases have different tones, their meaning is the same. Furthermore, Thais has already convincingly explained her real affection for Phaedria, and so all endearments may be equally demonstrative of that affection. That is to say, this occurrence of the phrase *mi anime* does not fit comfortably into the category of *blanditia*. 
register (a result of her sense of urgency), combined with Terence’s need to provide Pamphila’s backstory in a clear and understandable way, makes sense in this scene. A more surprising offering of this scene is the insight it gives into the dynamics of Thais’ relationship with Phaedria as meretrix and client.

The blanditia register is often associated with the dialogue between a meretrix and her client, especially when one party makes a request of the other; Thais, however, although she makes a significant request of Phaedria and one of which Phaedria does not approve, uses blanditia sparingly throughout this scene. In spite of her need to be persuasive and his not inconsiderable sexual attraction to her, she turns not to the erotically-based persuasive power of blanditia, but to an emotional register that stresses the companionship she and Phaedria have enjoyed together in the past.45

Even as she makes her request, Thais makes only a slight concession to blanditia, namely the polite modifier amabo in line 146:

quam ob rem, Phaedria,
cupio aliquos parere amicos beneficio meo.
id amabo adiuta me. quo id fiat facilius,
sine illum priores partis hosce aliquot dies
apud me habere. (148-152)

That’s why, Phaedria,
I want to get some friends with my good deed.
Please help me with this. So that it can happen more easily,
let him play the first role with me
for these few days.

Phaedria reacts with insecurity to the absence of language explicitly signaling Thais’ affection for him, responding to Thais’ attempts to reassure him (171-174) with a remark on her language:

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45 For Phaedria’s physical reaction to Thais, see lines 83 through 84: totus, Parmeno, | tremo horreoque, postquam aspexi hanc.
utinam istuc verbum ex animo ac vere diceres:  
“potius quam te inimicum habeam”! si istuc crederem  
sincere dicis, quidvis possem perpeti. (175-177)

If only you spoke that speech from your heart, and truly,  
“rather than have you as an enemy”! If I believed you said that  
sincerely, I’d be able to bear anything.

Phaedria quotes the only phrase in Thais’ reassurance that invokes the intimacy of their relationship in any degree, and wishes that those words had been spoken “from Thais’ heart” (ex animo, 175). It seems here that he asks to be addressed in a more emotional register, perhaps even with blanditia, a form of speech that would include more references to Thais’ emotional and sexual relationship with her client.46

Thais’ answer to lines 175 through 177 does not supply the blanditia that Phaedria looks for. She hints only at her distress that Phaedria does not believe her and will not help her:

ego non ex animo misera dico? quam ioco  
rem voluisti a me tandem quin perfeceris?  
egeo impetrare nequeo hoc abs te, biduom  
saitem ut concedes solum. (179-182)

46 For another example of a client apparently asking to be addressed intimately, see Thraso’s greeting to Thais at lines 455 through 457:

    o Thais mea,  
    meum savium, quid agitur? ecquid nos amas  
de fidicina istac?

    Oh my dear Thais,  
    my sweetheart, how is it? Do you love me even a little  
on account of the music-girl?

Here it is not the meretrix but the client who employs blanditia. The primary purpose of this speech is the comic effect of a soldier speaking in a stereotypically feminine register, but his request that Thais say she loves him suggests that her clients wish to hear charming and intimate speech, and perhaps also that Thais is not in the habit of supplying such speech readily.
Oh dear, don’t I speak from the heart? Really, what have you wanted
From me even as a joke that I didn’t do?
I can’t ask this of you with success, that you grant me
As much as one two-day span.

The word *misera*, used in line 179 as in line 81, indicates a negative emotional reaction in the speaker. The repeated questions in lines 179 through 180, also evident earlier in the scene during an emotional moment in lines 86 and 87, call for the participation of her interlocutor in remembering previous gestures received from the speaker. Thais does invoke their relationship in this phrase, but she does so not by using *blanditia*. By leaving her favors to Phaedria unspecific (*quam ... rem, 179-180*), Thais stresses rather her obliging attitude toward him in satisfying his requests. Her register falls more neatly into the category of emotional speech than of *blanditia*. Apparently this unexpected strategy is effective, because Phaedria agrees to her request at once (182-183).

The use of relationship history between *meretrix* and client in this scene illustrates the fundamental nature of high-class prostitution as a business relationship. Both Phaedria and Thais talk to each other about the favors they have performed for one another and the services they have received in exchange: Phaedria reminds Thais that he recently bought her an expensive gift of human property (162-171), and Thais reminds Phaedria that she has always treated him well. The relationship between any prostitute and client is a relationship of economic exchange, whether using a currency of gifts or of services. The distinguishing feature of the *meretrix*, however, is her ability to clothe economic exchange in the costume of a romantic relationship.

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47 Phaedria uses the same strategy in lines 162 through 171.
48 Zagagi (1980) writes that “a system of payment involving gifts differs from that involving regular fees alone in that the act of the giver, although intrinsically as self-interested as a regular act of remuneration, nevertheless assumed an aura of generosity and would normally have been expected to promote a feeling of gratitude in the recipient, that is, a readiness to take on the moral obligation to make a due return in the future” (119). With Phaedria, Thais turns this gift-giving
Making requests of the client is an inevitable part of the *meretrix*’s job: she requires payment and expects her clients to accommodate other demands on her time. Both requests strain the illusion of a voluntary and personal relationship, but the *meretrix* can maintain the illusion through *blanditia*, a form of speech that plays up the erotic aspect of the relationship as if it were personal and mutually satisfactory. She can also maintain it by downplaying the sexual nature of their relationship and emphasizing friendliness and companionship, as Thais does with Phaedria. Both methods are deceptive forms of speech. Thais feels real affection for Phaedria, however, and so her selection of the more emotional illusion contributes to Terence’s characterization of her as a caring *meretrix*. After she has secured Phaedria’s promise to help her and the request is made, Thais returns to a more natural expression of affection: *merito te amo, bene facis* (186), and *mi Phaedria, et tu. numquid vis aliud?* (191-192).

The predominance of the direct register in Thais’ speech here, interrupted only very briefly with emotional and *blanditia* markers, illustrates Thais’ concern with Pamphila to the near exclusion of her interest in Phaedria. The scene also contributes to an alternate understanding of the relationship between *meretrix* and client, in which the *meretrix* creates the illusion of a natural relationship not with the erotic charm of *blanditia*, but with a more emotional, although still artificial, appeal to the exchange of favors between companions. Both approaches have the effect of suggesting that the *meretrix* is closer to social equality with the client than she really is: the *blanditia* approach grants the *meretrix* the appearance of the sexual autonomy that the client actually has, and the emotional approach casts the *meretrix* as a social ally capable of exchanging friendly favors with the client. When Thais uses the latter strategy with Phaedria, she subtly sug-

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strategy to her own advantage, reminding her client of favors he has received from her in order to create in him a sense of obligation.
gests that she and Phaedria have a socially balanced relationship, in which it is appropriate for Phaedria to feel an obligation to Thais for favors she has performed for him.

The first scene in which Thais appears in *Eunuchus* illustrates her relationship with citizens in her professional life. She also interacts extensively with citizen interests in her personal life. Such interaction becomes most evident in the opening of Act Five, in which Thais hears news from Pythias of Pamphila’s rape by Chaerea. Her reaction is upset almost to the point of panic, and her speech shows her feelings throughout the scene as she searches for a solution that will spare Pamphila from rejection by her family and Thais herself from their anger. The scene opens with Thais speaking furiously to Pythias about what has happened in her absence from home, during which Pamphila was to be watched by the “eunuch” who turns out to be Chaerea in disguise.

Thais’ entire exchange with Pythias in this scene demonstrates her feelings of anger and anxiety as she alternates between, respectively, derogatory and negative emotional registers. Her anger, although it is actually the result of Chaerea’s action against Pamphila, is articulated through harsh language directed at Pythias, especially in the insulting names with which Thais addresses her slave: *scelesta* (817, 832), *venefica* (825), *sacrilega* (829), and *stulta* (837). Each of these epithets is used to vilify Pythias in the place of Chaerea, who is not only unavailable in this scene, but too much Thais’ social superior to be spoken to in an overtly derogatory register (but see my discussion below of her subtle mockery when Chaerea appears). Thais’ characterization of Pythias’ actions as especially foolish or irresponsible reinforces the vilifying effect of

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49 Ashmore writes that Thais’ anger is actually directed at Pythias, “who has been trying to evade her questions regarding Pamphila,” but Thais understands what has happened to Pamphila without being informed directly by Pythias (the exchange between the two occupying lines 817 through 839 never uses a word for rape). Thais’ anger here is directed toward Chaerea and merely vented at Pythias, who functions as a substitute for Chaerea.
Thais’ insults. Thais claims that Pythias has ignored or violated the instructions she was given earlier in the evening—*istucine interminata sum hinc abiens tibi?* (830)—referring apparently to her instruction at lines 505 and 506: *curate istam diligenter virginem; | domi adsitis facite.* Thais’ claim that she had warned Pythias against allowing exactly this (*istucine*) exaggerates Pythias’ culpability in allowing Pamphila’s rape. Thais’ claim at 832, *ovem lupo commisti,* similarly attributes to Pythias knowledge of Chaerea’s predatory intentions that Pythias could not have had. Thais admits herself that Chaerea’s disguise and deception were convincing: *dispudet sic mihi data esse verba,* she says (832-833).

The insulting language in this scene, combined with exaggerated summaries of Pythias’ actions, indicates the derogatory register that Thais uses with the intention of vilifying her slave and creating someone to blame. The urgency of Thais’ need to show anger, even to someone who bears no responsibility for the crime against Pamphila, shows how seriously Thais has taken Pamphila’s safety. The rape will have serious consequences if Thais cannot find a solution, a fact of which she is keenly aware. Thais demonstrates her awareness of the trouble she faces through her use of a negative emotional register that alternates with her abuse of Pythias.

Thais reveals the anxiety that she experiences because of the rape throughout the scene in which she questions Pythias. She structures even her angry speech toward Pythias in the repeated questions that tend to signal solicitude, anxiety, and impatience: the series *eunuchus abiit. quam ob rem? quid factumst? taces?* (821) is only the beginning of Thais’ interrogation, which continues in lines 823 through 826 without interruption. As she turns her attention to the implications of the situation after grasping the details, however, she begins to express anxiety for herself on account of the trouble she faces because of the rape: *hem! misera occidi, | infelix* (827-828). *Misera* is the most immediately recognizable indication of anxiety or despair in New Comedy, but
infelix communicates the same feeling, and expressions of ruin such as occidi and perii occur frequently in the speech of characters facing crises.\textsuperscript{50} Thais’ comment at lines 832 and 833 that she is ashamed of being deceived further illustrates her perception of the rape as partly a source of trouble for herself.

The negative emotional register that alternates with derogatory speech toward Pythias in this scene draws attention to Thais’ feelings of personal involvement in Pamphila’s situation. Thais’ investment in Pamphila’s wellbeing is equal parts benevolence for a foster-sister and self-preservation, as she explains in her first scene with Phaedria (144-147).\textsuperscript{51} Thais’ profession involves serious risks,\textsuperscript{52} and as a non-citizen she has no legal recourse for crimes committed against her property or her person. She relies on her own resources or upon help from citizens who have more influence. Thais’ awareness of the privileges to which Pamphila will have access once recognized as a citizen probably contributes to her desire to help her foster-sister by improving her social situation; but there is no reason that Thais should not be equally interested in reducing the risks of her own situation as much as she can.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. line 793 of Hecyra, where Bacchis exclaims: perii, pudet Philumenae. See also the speech of Plautus’ Pardalisca during the contrived crisis at Casina 621: nulla sum, nulla sum, tota, tota occidi.

\textsuperscript{51} Gilula (1980) writes about Thais’ motivations throughout Eunuchus: “What Thais needs is a patron who will protect her. This she planned to achieve by binding someone by a beneficium, in her case the restoration of a lost child to its Athenian family. The plot of the Eunuch is the story of Thais’ attempts to secure a patron, her interim frustrations, and her eventual success” (163-164). Gilula largely ignores the story of Pamphila in Eunuchus, and so misrepresents Thais’ character as self-centered rather than reasonably benevolent.

\textsuperscript{52} For a concise summary of the risks faced by a meretrix, see Astaphium’s speech about Phronesium’s household and clients at Truculentus 99-105.

\textsuperscript{53} Konstan (1986) also cites lines 172 through 186, where Thais and Phaedria argue about the sincerity of Thais’ feelings and the reasonableness of her request to Phaedria, as an example of Thais’ multiple motivations: “There is a range of meaning in Thais’ phrase, bene facis, that is difficult to capture, for it recalls beneficium, the kind of service by which one wins friends or supporters. When Thais spoke of providing herself with friends by restoring Pamphila to her family, beneficium was the term she employed. With Phaedria it occurs again in the same
Protecting Pamphila will create a relationship between Thais and Pamphila’s family, who will then be able to provide social support to Thais and her household. Thais tells Chremes that she does not expect anything in return for her efforts (749), but it is likely that she means that she does not want a specifically monetary reward (*pretium*). Chremes acknowledges this probability by responding that Thais will have earned goodwill and a sense of obligation from him: *et habetur et referetur, Thais, ita uti merita’s gratia* (750). For Thais, Pamphila’s situation is as much a provision for Thais’ future as it is for Pamphila’s. Thus although Thais cannot share directly in the privileges afforded to the citizen class, she can benefit indirectly from the promotion of citizen interests.55

The next scene, on the other hand, shows the risks Thais faces in engaging with citizen affairs. The confrontation between Thais and Chaerea, in which she holds Chaerea responsible for violence against Pamphila and at the same time seeks a solution to preserve Pamphila’s reputation, is her last appearance in *Eunuchus*, and in it, Thais shows what she has to lose if she fails in her negotiation of citizen values. At this point in the play, she must balance her need to find a solution for Pamphila’s situation and her desire to minimize the repercussions of Pamphila’s rape for herself. The scene is dangerous, as both Thais and the audience are aware: Chaerea holds greater social power than Thais, and he has already proven himself capable of violence against vulnerable women.

semantic ambience, since Thais’ concern not to have Phaedria as an enemy, *inimicus*, betrays a quite practical interest, however Phaedria may choose to understand her” (376). The *meretrix’s* combination of a risky profession and social insecurity forces many of her relationships to serve multiple purposes.

54 The word *pretium* generally indicates compensation, but its primary meaning is monetary (*TLL s.v. pretium*).

55 When Melaenis in the *Cistellaria* decides to return Selenium to her citizen family, her motivation is similarly mixed. Melaenis knows that returning to a citizen family is in Selenium’s own best interests (633-635), but she also hopes to create a good relationship for herself with Selenium’s family (628-629).
Thus Thais cannot openly show to Chaerea the anger that she feels on account of his rape of Pamphila. She cannot speak to him, that is, as she has spoken to Pythias, in an emotionally-charged, derogatory register. Chaerea is ashamed of being seen in the clothing of a slave (844-847), however, and Thais’ address to him as if he were actually a slave constitutes subtle mockery, the only way that Thais can express her anger to him safely:

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Tha. bone vir Dore, salve. dic mihi aufugistin?
Chae. era, factum.
Tha. satin id tibi placet?
Chae. non.
Tha. credin te impune habiturum?
Chae. unam hanc noxiam amitte. si aliam admisero umquam, occidito.
Tha. num meam saevitiam veritus es?
Chae. non.
Tha. quid igitur?
Chae. hanc metui ne me criminaretur tibi.
Tha. quid feceras?
Chae. paullum quiddam. (850-856)
Tha. Dorus, good fellow, hello. Tell me, Did you run away?
Chae. Mistress, that did happen.
Tha. Are you happy enough about that?
Chae. No.
Tha. Do you think you’ll get away with it unpunished?
Chae. Allow me This one offense. If I’ve ever committed another, put me to death.
Tha. You weren’t afraid of my cruelty, were you?
Chae. No.
Tha. What, then?
Chae. I was afraid she’d accuse me of something to you.
Tha. What had you done?
Chae. Just a little something.
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Making fun of Chaerea has little effect toward making the young man feel the magnitude of his offense, but that is not the point. Thais only uses the opportunity to express some of her feelings safely by taking advantage of Chaerea’s dress to mock him.
Following this concession to her anger, Thais must find a solution to Pamphila’s dilemma so that the young citizen can be returned to her family. Securing a respectable resolution for Pamphila is Thais’ most pressing goal at this point. When Thais drops the pretense of being Chaerea's mistress, she shows her awareness of the urgency of Pamphila’s situation by switching into the syntax of a more direct register to reproach Chaerea for his crime:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{non te dignum, Chaerea,} \\
\text{fecisti. nam si ego digna hac contumelia} \\
\text{sum maxume, at tu indignus qui faceres tamen.} \\
\text{neque edepol quid nunc consili capiam scio} \\
\text{de virgine istac. ita conturbasti mihi} \\
\text{rationes omnis ut eam non possim suis} \\
\text{ita ut aequom fuerat atque ut studui tradere,} \\
\text{ut solidum parerem hoc mi beneficium, Chaerea. (864-871)}
\end{align*}
\]

You did something unworthy of you, Chaerea. And even if I was most deserving of this offense, still you were not the right one to do it. And heaven knows, now I don’t know what course I should take about that girl. You’ve thrown all my plans into confusion so that I can’t give her over to her own people As was right and as I was eager to do, so that I could derive dependable help for myself from this, Chaerea.

This speech is remarkable for its restraint. Thais’ syntax is straightforward, avoiding fragments, redundant repetition, and the repeated questions that she uses elsewhere to indicate anxiety and concern. Her single use of the interjection *edepol* at line 867 is the only concession she makes to her feelings. Instead of using emotional language, she summarizes succinctly the consequences of Chaerea’s rape of Pamphila as they affect her: that her plans have been interrupted (867-869), that she can no longer behave in the way that she feels is morally correct (*aequom*) by returning Pamphila to her family (870), and that she can now derive no benefit (*beneficium*) from an association with Pamphila’s family (871). If the tenor (the social composition of the scene) were even or slanted in Thais’ favor, she might have continued to express anger in a derogatory register, as
she did with her social inferior Pythias. She might also have used a more emotional register. The
direct register that she uses instead demonstrates two things: in its lack of anger, it shows Thais’
feeling of powerlessness to communicate anger to a social superior, and in its lack of self-focus-
ed emotion, the direct register shows that Thais feels pressed by the seriousness of Pamphila’s
situation to suppress her personal feelings in favor of seeking a solution.

Not surprisingly for a non-citizen woman in a conversation with a citizen man, in her
lexical choices Thais shows a degree of deference to Chaerea. Her assertion that Chaerea has
behaved in a manner unworthy of him (non dignum, 864) calls attention less to his crime against
Pamphila than to his high status. In other words, she associates people of his status with better
behavior. Furthermore, the word that she uses for the rape of Pamphila, contumelia (865), is a
relatively mild term. Ashmore considers it “stronger than iniuria” and roughly synonymous with
the Greek word ὄβρις, but in New Comedy contumelia remains in the arena of social, rather than
criminal offenses, which range from insulting speech to inconsiderate behavior.\(^{56}\) Thais is in a
precarious situation in which speaking harshly to a citizen is unlikely to serve her well, and so
her use of contumelia as opposed to scelus or a similar word also shows an attempt to soften her
vocabulary in consideration of Chaerea’s higher status.

Thais takes the further step of drawing the effects of Chaerea’s offense away from Pam-
phila and onto herself, claiming that she, and not Pamphila, was not deserving of such actions
(nam si ego digna ... sum maxume, 865-866). By drawing the effects of Chaerea’s crime to her-
self, Thais demonstrates the self-focused diction of the deferential speaker. In this way, she
limits the presumption that she is in a position to communicate on behalf of another person (see

\(^{56}\) For contumelia as a word for insulting speech, see Menaechmi 520, Truculentus 299, and
Phormio 376; for inconsiderate behavior (a usage more prevalent in Terence), see Andria 237,
Heautontimoroumenos 566, and Adelphoe 606. Cf. also Mercator 704 for a Plautine use of
contumelia in the latter sense. See also TLL s.v. contumelia.
the “Deference” section in Chapter 2). By adopting the position of victim in the place of her foster-sister, she continues to present her accusations in understated terms: committing a minor social offense (*contumelia*) against a *meretrix* is a much less serious crime than the rape of a citizen. The hint of a deferential register in Thais’ speech to Chaerea, evident in her understated descriptions of his offense, begins a process that continues throughout the scene of the gradual resumption of normal social roles, as Thais stops speaking to Chaerea as if he were the eunuch in whose costume he appears and acknowledges more openly his higher status.

Thais’ direct speech, with hints of deference, contributes to the overall effect of this scene, which highlights Chaerea’s shameful behavior while forcing Thais to strike an effective balance between her awareness of her own vulnerability and her need to protect Pamphila. Chaerea appears throughout this entire scene in the humiliating dress of a eunuch, receiving abusive speech and threats from Pythias and reminders of the moral standard to which he ought to have conformed from Thais. Chaerea does not actually feel ashamed; rather, he advises Thais to look on the bright side by suggesting that she will actually benefit from his offense:

\[
\text{at nunc dehinc spero aeternam inter nos gratiam fore, Thais, saepe ex huius modi re quapiam et malo principio magna familiaritas conflatast, quid si hoc quispiam voluit deus?} \quad (872-875)
\]

But now I hope there will be lasting goodwill between us because of this, Thais; often because of some matter of this sort, even from a bad beginning, a great friendship has been forged. What if some god wanted this?

Chaerea here adopts the same unrepentant attitude that he describes in an earlier scene with his friend Antipho, repeating the assumption of divine sanction for the rape that he claimed to have received from a painting of Jupiter’s rape of Danae at lines 584 through 591. The contrast
between Chaerea’s shamelessness and Thais’ anxiety and consciousness of class roles is highly effective in characterizing Chaerea as despicable and Thais as conscientious and sympathetic.

Nevertheless, despite his cavalier attitude toward the damage that he has done, Chaerea begins to offer Thais a solution to her dilemma by saying that he wishes to establish a relationship of *gratia*\(^{57}\) between Thais and himself, using the same word that Chremes chose at line 750 to describe the kind of relationship that he intended to result from Thais’ return of Pamphila to her family. Chaerea’s family, citizens like Chremes’ family, are just as much in a position to provide the social connections that Thais has hoped throughout the play to gain. Thais’ direct and straightforward reminder to Chaerea of what his behavior has lost for her thus has an effect toward accomplishing her social goals, if not toward satisfying her anger.

Thais’ success in provoking a helpful response from Chaerea prompts her to relax her speech into a more emotional register in her next lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tha.} & \quad \text{equidem pol in eam partem accipioque et volo.} \\
\text{Chae.} & \quad \text{immo ita quaeso. unum hoc scito, contumeliae me non fecisse causa sed amoris.} \\
\text{Tha.} & \quad \text{scio, et pol propterea magis nunc ignosco tibi.} \\
& \quad \text{non adeo inhumano ingenio sum, Chaerea, neque ita imperita ut quid amor valeat nesciam.} \quad (876-881)
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{57}\) The words Chaerea uses, *gratia* and *familiaritas*, indicate relationships based on citizen values. Each word connotes political association (*OLD* s.v. *gratia*, 1, 2; s.v. *familiaritas*). Non-citizens were not eligible to participate in government, and so the application of political vocabulary to Thais suggests asymmetry between social ideology and actual practice. Chaerea (and Chremes), despite knowing that Thais’ class precludes her participation in citizen institutions, nevertheless offers her inclusion in a citizen relationship (see also Chaerea’s description of his father’s relationship to Thais, 1038-1040). Undoubtedly Thais has no official claim to citizen institutions, but her relationships with Chaerea and Chremes are private. The citizens can, and do, build relationships based on citizen values with non-citizens.
Tha. Heaven knows I certainly approve of it and wish for it in that way.
Chae. I hope so, truly. Know this one thing: that I didn’t do it
      For the sake of offending you, but because of love.
Tha. I know, and, goodness, because of that I forgive you now all the more.
      My nature is not so unfeeling, Chaerea,
      and I’m not so inexperienced that I don’t know what love can do.

Thais’ use of the interjection *pol* occurs twice in slightly more than four lines, compared to her single use (*edepol*, 867) in the fourteen lines from 850 to 872 during which she had been controlling indications of feeling in her speech. She also allows more intensifying particles and redundancies: *equidem* (876), *accipioque et volo* (876), and *magis* (879). When Thais perceives that Chaerea is willing to work with her to make the best of the situation, the emotion in her speech increases. Moreover, that emotion is positive, even though Chaerea does not show remorse or even much sense of responsibility. Thais’ chances of salvaging the situation depend so much upon Chaerea’s reaction that she receives even a partially favorable response as good news. It is Chaerea’s decision to be helpful that allows Thais to improve the situation into which he has placed her and her foster-sister: she cannot act on her own because she, a non-citizen, has little power when dealing with citizen affairs.

This scene is as much about Thais’ precarious balance between promoting citizen interests and protecting her own situation as it is about the crisis caused by the rape of a citizen woman and her uncertain status. The compromise of truth that Thais must make in accepting Chaerea’s absurd claim that he raped Pamphila because he loves her (877-878)\(^{58}\) is trivial in compari-

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\(^{58}\) Chaerea’s use of *amor* in this context is, however, problematic because of the enormous variety of feelings contained in this single Latin word. Possibly Chaerea means to confess that he raped Pamphila because he was in the grip of uncontrollable erotic passion, but the marriage proposal that follows at line 888 has led me to understand Chaerea’s meaning as affectionate. For the re-interpretation of the rape after the fact, see Konstan (1986) 388-389.
son to the benefits that Chaerea offers by extending a relationship of *gratia* to Thais and, a few lines later, by asking to marry Pamphila (887-888).

Chaerea’s readiness to create a socially happy ending both for Thais and for Pamphila restores the importance of tenor (the social relationships between speakers) to the shaping of Thais’ register. Her next lines to Chaerea show the fully deferential register that is appropriate from the social inferior in the conversation:

Tha. paullulumopperier  
   si vis, iam frater ipse hic aderit virginis.  
   nutritcem accersitum iit quae illam aluit parvolam.  
   in cognoscendo tute ipse aderis, Chaerea.

Cha. ego vero maneo.

Tha. vin interea, dum venit,  
   domi opperiamur potius quam hic ante ostium? (890-895)

Tha. If you want to wait  
   Just a little while, the girl’s brother himself will come soon.  
   He went to fetch the nurse who cared for her when she was little.  
   You yourself will be here for the recognition, Chaerea.

Cha. Indeed, I am staying.

Tha. Meanwhile, while he’s on his way, would you like  
   us to wait in the house rather than here, in front of the door?

Thais politely frames her requests that Chaerea not leave until the recognition scene has taken place and the marriage arrangements are settled in terms of Chaerea’s preferences, making his continued presence conditional on his willingness (*si vis*, 891). She later places a future verb, *aderis*, where an imperative might be expected (893), a substitution that conceals Thais’ command.59 Thais also takes care for Chaerea’s comfort, reversing her treatment of his humiliating dress from the understated mockery of her first confrontation with him at lines 850 through 856, where she exploits his appearance as a slave to treat him as if he were her social inferior rather

59 For the future tense used as an imperative, see *Allen & Greenough’s New Latin Grammar*, §449b.
than superior, to sensitivity to his feeling of discomfort at being seen in clothing inappropriate to his status, by asking him if he would like to wait inside where he cannot be seen.

Finally, it should be mentioned that Terence has included in the conclusion of this scene reason to believe that Thais will overlook Chaerea’s offense but that she will not forgive it. Her final comment to Chaerea at line 908, when the lost-daughter and marriage plots are all but concluded, constitutes one last bit of mockery based on Chaerea’s humiliating appearance:

Chae. perii hercle! obsecro abeamus intro, Thais: nolo me in via cum hac veste videat.
Tha. quam ob rem tandem? an quia pudet? (906-908)
Chae. My god, it’s a disaster! Please, let’s go inside, Thais. I don’t want him to see me in the street in this getup.
Tha. But why? Oh, are you embarrassed?

Thais knows very well that Chaerea has more than enough reason to feel ashamed of being seen in the street: in addition to his humiliating appearance in the dress of a eunuch, he has committed the serious offense of abandoning his military post (290-291). Still she asks him why he doesn’t want to linger outside. In this line, Thais takes advantage of Chaerea’s vulnerability once again to deliver at least the punishment of being teased. Thais does not leave the stage before expressing final discontent with Chaerea.60

Thais’ registers throughout the scene of confrontation with Chaerea reflect two pressing needs that come close to conflicting: she must find a respectable solution for Pamphila in the

60 Terence might have left the tension between Thais and Chaerea unresolved on purpose, to acknowledge the inadequacy of New Comedy’s socially happy endings. Officially the creation of a legal marriage between citizens is happy news, and yet by the end of this scene, Pamphila has become engaged to a man who caused her severe trauma (see Pythias’ and Thais’ descriptions at lines 645 through 646, 659, and 820). Thais’ failure to assume a completely cordial manner toward Chaerea at the end suggests that to her (regardless of the law) his offense unforgiveable.
wake of her rape by Chaerea, and she must protect her own interests by avoiding conflict with Chaerea. Thais is aware that offending Chaerea may jeopardize both her own safety and her chances of protecting Pamphila, but helping Pamphila requires Thais to hold Chaerea responsible for the young citizen’s welfare. Thais balances these interests through careful speech to Chaerea, adopting a direct register, colored at times by emotional and deferential language, in order to prompt Chaerea to assist both Thais with a relationship of gratia and Pamphila with the only respectable marriage available to her. Throughout, however, hints of emotion erupt into Thais’ speech in the form of interjections and intensifiers, and Thais ends the scene by mocking Chaerea for his appearance, a circumstance about which he feels ashamed and embarrassed.

Thais’ confrontation with Chaerea contains constant reminders of social class, both in the meretrix’s attempt to secure an advantageous social relationship for herself and in her efforts to establish Pamphila in a respectable marriage. Despite Thais’ awareness of their respective classes, her relationship to Chaerea remains unsettled throughout the scene, a tension that Thais’ speech registers illustrate. At Chaerea’s first appearance, Thais claims a position of social superiority, so that she speaks like a slave-owner addressing her slave. Her acknowledgement of his actual social superiority increases, however, as the two come closer to an agreement about Pamphila. The variance of the class roles that Thais and Chaerea adopt throughout their negotiation reflects the balancing act that the meretrix must play between her awareness of the seriousness of citizen values, which allow respectability only to women whose sexual integrity is intact, and her lack of social power, which is afforded only to the citizen class.
4. *Hecyra*: Bacchis, the Excluded Participant

Bacchis, the main *meretrix* of Terence’s final *meretrix* play, appears later in the play than do any of his other *meretrices*. Her first appearance on the stage is at line 727, when the *senex* Laches calls her outside so that she can assure him that she has not continued her previous business with his son Pamphilus. Bacchis’ late arrival onstage makes her unique among *meretrices* for the dramatic results of her appearance, the reality of which clashes severely with her characterization by Parmeno at the beginning of the play. Parmeno describes Bacchis with the adjectives *maligna* and *procax* (159), leading the audience to believe that Bacchis is a *meretrix mala*, when in fact she turns out to be fond of her former client and eager to do him a favor. The strategy of introducing Bacchis at the last minute to resolve the plot by turning out to be generous and helpful rather than selfish and demanding creates a dramatic resolution for *Hecyra*, but it also means that Bacchis’ in-person speech and actions must characterize her fully enough to counter Parmeno’s claims in a very short amount of time. *Hecyra* ends less than two hundred lines after Bacchis’ appearance.

Consequently, Bacchis’ speech is densely packed with characterizing details. Foremost in her self-characterization is Bacchis’ awareness of her status relative to the citizen families with whom she interacts at the end of *Hecyra*. In this respect she resembles Terence’s other *meretrices*, but Bacchis, unlike the others, admits to citizens not only the difference between herself

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61 See McGarrity for the creation and reversal of character expectations in *Hecyra*. Knorr (1995) describes a similar process applied to Bacchis of *Heautontimoroumenos*, whom Clitipho and Syrus describe “just like another of the stereotypical avaricious and cold-hearted hetaerae of Greek and Roman new comedy,” and whose conversation with Antiphila “comes as a surprise, for it displays a Bacchis quite different from the one we have learned about thus far” (224-225).
and the citizen class, but also the anxiety that she feels on that account. In addition to articulating her anxiety in meaningful words, she also allows emotional register markers into her dialogue with Laches. Thus Bacchis appears to be both self-aware and forthcoming about herself, describing accurately the feelings that her speech patterns demonstrate.

The first indication of the emotional register in which Bacchis speaks to Laches is her use of the interjection *pol*. Throughout *Hecyra*, *pol* seems to be a nervous speech habit of Bacchis’. It appears consistently in contexts in which Bacchis fears prejudicial treatment from others and has not received reassurance that her class and profession will not be held against her. Such is the case in the opening lines of the scene:

> Non hoc de nihilist, quod Laches me nunc conventam esse expetit; nec *pol* me multum fallit, quin quod suspicor sit quod velit. (727-728)

This isn’t about nothing, that Laches wants to meet me now; And, *goodness*, it doesn’t much escape me if I don’t know what it is that he wants.

Here Bacchis suspects that she knows what Laches wants from her, but cannot know for sure. When she approaches Laches and greets him, she also admits that her profession causes her concern because she suspects Laches judges her for it:

> ego *pol* quoque etiam timida sum, quom venit mi in mentem quae sim, ne nomen mihi quaesti obsiet; nam mores facile tutor. (734-735)

*Goodness*, I too am also anxious, when it occurs to me what I am, that the name of my profession will get in my way—but I defend my manners easily.

Bacchis uses another interjection, *ecastor* (741), in this scene, as well, when actually does make accusations based on his prejudices:
La. si vera dicis, nil tibi est a me pericli, mulier;
nam ea aetate iam sum, ut non siet peccato mi ignosci aequom:
quo magis omnis res cautius ne temere faciam adcurso;
nam si id facis facturave es, bonas quod par est facere,
inscitum offere iniuriam tibi inmerenti iniquom est.

Ba. est magnam ecastor gratiam de istac re quod tibi habeam;
nam qui post factam iniuriam se expurget, parum mi prosit. (736-742)

La. If you’re telling the truth, you have nothing to fear from me, woman.
For I’m of that age when it wouldn’t be right for me to be excused for a mistake.
All the more I’m anxiously taking care about everything that I don’t act rashly;
for if you do and are going to do what it’s right for good women to do,
it’s not right for me to insult you even unwittingly, when you don’t deserve it.

Ba. As to that, lord knows it’s a great favor that I have from you,
for he who excuses himself after the insult’s been made does me little good.

At this point, Laches has still not explained what he wants from Bacchis, leaving her in suspense.
He does, however, deliver a highly offensive series of insinuations about her: that she may not be
telling the truth (si vera dicis, 736), that she is unlikely to behave morally (si id facis facturave
es, bonas quod par est facere, 739), and that he will retaliate for any behavior of hers that does
not conform to his ideas of what is appropriate (nil tibi est a me pericli, 736). Where she had pre-
viously used pol nervously when faced with class anxiety, here Bacchis switches her exclamation
to ecastor in defending her behavior. Bacchis’ tongue-in-cheek response that Laches would be
doing her a great favor if he apologized after the damage was done says much for her confidence
in the integrity of her behavior, but his impolite and threatening way of speaking to her never-
theless prompts some indignation, which Bacchis expresses by the interjection ecastor. In spite
of her knowledge that Laches can follow through with his threat, Bacchis’ confidence in her in-
tegrity and her sense of self-worth are offended. Her offense prompts her to respond emotion-
ally, although not with anxiety, to his accusations.

When Laches begins to explain what he wants from Bacchis, thus relieving Bacchis’ sus-
pense, the presence of emotional exclamations declines:
La. meum receptas filium ad te Pamphilum.
Ba. ah.
La. sine dicam: hic uxorem hanc prius quam duxit, vostrum amorem pertuli.
mane: non dum etiam dixi id quod te volui. hic nunc uxorem habet:
quae re alium tibi firmiorem amicum, dum tibi tempus consulendi est;
nam neque ille hoc animo erit aetatem, neque pol tu eadem ista aetas tibi.
Ba. quis id ait?
La. socrus.
Ba. mene?
La. te ipsam: et filiam abduxit suam,
puerumque ob eam rem clam voluit, natus qui est, extinguere.
Ba. aliud si scirem qui firmare meam apud vos possem fidem,
sanctius quam ius iurandum, id polliceram tibi, Laches,
me segregatum habuisse, uxorem ut duxit, a me Pamphilum. (744-752)

La. You keep receiving my son Pamphilus at your house.
Ba. Oh!
La. Let me talk. Before he married this wife, I put up with your affair.
Wait! I haven’t yet said what I want from you. He has a wife now.
Find yourself another, more reliable friend, while there’s time for you to consider it;
for he won’t have that feeling forever, nor, god knows, will you always have your youth.
Ba. Who says so?
La. His mother-in-law.
Ba. About me?
La. About you yourself, and she took her daughter away,
and for that reason she wanted to kill secretly the boy who was born.
Ba. If I knew something more sacred than a solemn promise with which
I could establish my good faith with you, Laches, I would promise you
that I have kept Pamphilus away from me since he married his wife.

Once Bacchis understands what Laches asks of her, the anxiety disappears from her speech, and
she becomes more direct, asking clarifying questions (748) and speaking strongly in defense of
her behavior without using interjections or nervous repetitions (750-752). Her comfort with
Laches increases when she receives his approval of her speech (lepida es, 753), so that she
encourages him to ask her a further favor, even going as far as using an unsoftened imperative:
quin? cedo (753).
Bacchis feels acutely aware both of her status as a *meretrix* and of the probability that the people with whom she interacts will judge her for her status. The ill will of her citizen neighbors, as Laches reminds her, could be ruinous, and so Bacchis’ anticipation of negative reactions from citizens prompts an anxiety that is evident in her speech even when she does not talk about it, appearing mostly in emotional interjections. The decrease in her anxiety upon receiving assurance that Laches finds her acceptable does not suggest that Bacchis seeks approval for its own sake, however; in fact, Bacchis describes being motivated primarily by her own sense of morals. Her feelings about Laches’ reaction to her behavior show only awareness that the quality of her relationship with a citizen family can have a serious impact on her own life.

As a step toward establishing a relationship between his family and Bacchis, Laches asks the *meretrix* to do him a significant favor, and one that will cause her discomfort: he wants her to tell the women of Phidippus’ family in person that she has ended her relationship with Pamphilus. Bacchis’ anxiety returns again when she is faced with the prospect of approaching once more people whose reaction to her is uncertain:

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faciam, quod pol, si esset alia ex hoc quaestu, haud faceret, scio, ut de tali causa nuptae mulieri se ostenderet. (756-757)
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I’ll do what, *goodness knows*, if it were another of my profession, I know she wouldn’t do, that she would present herself for such a reason to a married woman.

Her anxious *pol* reappears in line 756, as does her acute awareness of her status. Bacchis’ speech shows in register the same anxiety based on her status that she describes in meaningful language. Her anxiety increases as she anticipates prejudicial treatment from citizens based on her status, and it decreases when she receives reassurance that her citizen interlocutors judge her on her own merits.
An encounter with Phidippus follows the scene with Laches. Now, although she is speaking to a new citizen who holds the same prejudices as Laches, Bacchis has the reassurance of knowing that Laches will reward her with friendship (amicitia, 764) for her services and of having Laches with her. While speaking to Phidippus, she retains in her speech the confidence of her promise to Laches (750-752). Then her anxiety and awareness of her lower status return when Laches repeats his request that she enter Phidippus’ home and speak to Myrrina and Philumena: perii, pudet Philumenae (793). When Bacchis feels confident in positive reception and protection from citizens, her anxiety diminishes, but it returns when she cannot be sure of the citizens’ reaction.62

Bacchis consistently shows awareness that her status as a non-citizen and a meretrix limits her acceptability among the citizen class. She expresses that awareness in an emotional register, and indications of a negative reaction to exclusion appear in her speech. Her limited ability to enjoy interaction with her citizen neighbors does not, however, eliminate her ability to participate in the system of morality prescribed for citizen women. She may be excluded from pur-

62 The end of this scene presents a further example of citizens informally applying the vocabulary of citizen relationships to non-citizens (see n. 56). After Bacchis enters Phidippus’ house, Laches says:

\begin{verbatim}
nam si est ut haec nunc Pamphilum vere ab se segregari,
scit sibi nobilitatem ex ea re natam et gloriem esse:
feret gratiam eius unaque nos sibi opera amicos iunget. (796-798)
\end{verbatim}

For if it is so that she has now truly separated Pamphilus from herself, she knows that her higher status will be created from this, and a good reputation. She will have his thanks and, with this one act, create a bond of friendship between us.

Citing these lines, Earl (1962) writes that by associating the nouns nobilitatem, gloriem, gratiam, and res (as well as amicos), Terence amasses “terms taken from the political vocabulary which together express one complex of ideas” (472), namely, the relationship that Laches offers to extend to Bacchis in exchange for her help in reconciling Pamphilus and Philumena. As in the case of Chaerea and Thais, discussed above, citizens are prepared in private contexts to grant non-citizens participation in citizen institutions.
suing a life that accords with that moral system, but she can, and gladly does, help another woman to return to respectable citizen life. Bacchis’ primary role in the citizen-based plot of *Hecyra* is to solve the dilemma in which Philumena finds herself, in which her rape and the consequent birth of a child jeopardize her status as a respectable citizen woman. Not only is Bacchis able in this way to engage with citizen values through the service she renders to Philumena and her former client Pamphilus, but she also recognizes the usefulness of her service and takes pleasure in it, as she explains happily in her soliloquy at lines 816 through 840.

Because Bacchis remains onstage alone after Parmeno leaves to find Pamphilus, no anxiety about her reception by other characters interrupts the positive emotional register that she uses throughout her soliloquy. She expresses her feelings with excited exclamations (*quantam...!*, 816; *quot...!*, 817), and she lists the solutions she provided for Pamphilus’ family, including saving Pamphilus’ son from exposure (818), restoring his marriage to Philumena (819), and absolving Pamphilus of the suspicion of his father and father-in-law (820). Bacchis then tells two stories, beginning with the story of receiving the ring from Pamphilus and learning that he had raped a young woman on his way to her house (822-829), and continuing to explain how she related that story to Myrrina and Philumena (830-832).

The first of these stories she narrates at length, because the buildup of suspense throughout the play about how Philumena became pregnant necessitates a full explanation in the resolution. The second story, however, which is merely a variation on the familiar stock recognition scene, can be compressed. Bacchis uses short sentences in rapid succession to fill in the audience about the recognition of Pamphilus as Philumena’s rapist and the father of her child:

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   eum haec cognovit Myrrina, in digito modo me habente.
   rogat unde sit: narro omnia haec; inde est cognitio facta,
   Philumenam compressam esse ab eo et filium inde hunc natum. (830-832)
```
Myrrina here recognized it, since I had it just now on my finger. She asks where it came from, I tell her everything, and so the realization happened: That Philumena was raped by him and that’s why this boy was born.

These quick, compressed sentences convey Bacchis’ excitement, and her explicit statement in the next line of her feelings, *haec tot propter me gaudia illi contigisse laetor*, reinforces the pleasure expressed in Bacchis’ syntax throughout this monologue (833).

The pleasure that Bacchis feels on this occasion results from the three class-related results of her actions. In the first place, she is pleased to have assisted someone who has treated her well, because she believes that such behavior is morally commendable: *multa ex quo fuerint commode, eius incommode aequomst ferre* (840). She has also distinguished herself from other *meretrices* in a positive way, proving that she does not reinforce the stereotypes that the male characters of the play have brought to bear against her:

> etsi hoc meretrices aliae nolunt; neque enim est in rem nostram, ut quisquam amator nuptiis laetetur. verum ecstor numquam animum quaesti gratia ad malas adducam partis. (834-836)

Even if other *meretrices* don’t want to do this; for it isn’t in our best interests that any lover be happily married. But lord knows I will never turn my mind to trouble for the sake of profit.

Finally, although Bacchis does not state this final positive result of her day’s work, some of her pleasure very likely comes from her knowledge that Laches has offered his friendship to her in return for her favors to his family. Like Thais in *Eunuchus*, who states that gaining the friendship of citizens is a personal goal, Bacchis can only benefit from having a relationship of *gratia* with more influential citizens, who can provide support to those like Bacchis and Thais who have no protection under the law.

Even in the midst of such happiness, however, the two interjections that I have previously associated with class awareness in Bacchis’ speech appear, occurring near the end of her solilo-
quy: *ecastor* (835) and *pol* (839). Again, both exclamations appear in contexts in which Bacchis feels especially aware of the inferiority of her class to the citizen class. In the first instance, she is defining her sense of right as different from that of most women of her class: *verum ecastor* | *numquam animum quaesti gratia ad malas adducam partis* (835-836). Here she responds with *ecastor* to the default assumption that *meretrices* are morally as well as socially inferior, just as she did with Laches at line 741.

In the second instance, she supposes that she had done nothing to encourage Pamphilus to fall in love with his wife more than with herself: *at pol me fecisse arbitror, ne id merito mi eveniret* (839). This use of *pol* especially falls in line with her previous uses of the interjection in conversation with Laches and Phidippus, where she used *pol* in contexts in which she was confronted with the possibility of being poorly received by citizens on account of her status. At this point, while she discusses her relationship with Pamphilus, Bacchis has had no contact with her client since ending their relationship, and it is natural that she should feel some anxiety about his response to her when Parmeno returns with his master. Here again, the nervous interjection disappears from her speech when she receives assurance of favorable reception from Pamphilus at line 856: *o Bacchis, o mea Bacchis, servatrix mea!*

Once more, during her interview with Pamphilus, Bacchis demonstrates in manner the feelings that she claims in meaningful language. She has hinted in her soliloquy at genuine fondness for Pamphilus (837, 840), and the following scene, her cordial conversation with Pamphilus confirms her affectionate attitude toward him. She addresses Pamphilus with politeness and affection at lines 860 and 861:
at tu ecastor morem antiquom atque ingenium obtines,
ut unus omnium homo te vivat nusquam quisquam blandior.  

And lord knows you still have your old manners and nature,
So that nowhere is any one man alive, out of all of them, more charming than you.

In her compliments to Philumena at lines 862 through 864, she also shows continued interest in Pamphilus’ life. Bacchis’ compliments to Pamphilus on his manners and nature (morem, ingenium, 860) correspond accurately to the feelings of affection that she has described earlier in the play. Her speech here contains no hint of blanditia, either, not even in a single instance of the intimate form of address. In addition to confirming Bacchis’ affection toward Pamphilus, this conversation also confirms her promise to Laches that Bacchis has ceased to consider Pamphilus a client. Terence has constructed each scene in which Bacchis appears so that it increases the strength of his characterization of the meretrix as honest, polite, and forthcoming, exactly the opposite of her characterization in most of the play.

Bacchis’ language in Hecyra demonstrates consistent, sometimes painful, awareness of the class difference between herself and the citizen characters with whom she interacts. She feels anxiety when confronted with the possibility of receiving unfair judgment from citizens, but her confidence increases when citizens who approve of her behavior offer her reassurance and support. In spite of her awareness that the citizen class excludes her in many ways, Bacchis becomes a participant in citizen interests by helping another woman to meet the moral standard applied to citizens. Like Thais’, her pleasure in helping a citizen in this way is twofold: in the first place,

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63 Following the assurance she received at line 856 of Pamphilus’ good opinion, no further indications appear in Bacchis speech of class awareness. The occurrence of ecastor in line 860, then, shows that Bacchis’ use of the interjection is not reserved for indignation when her own behavior is called into question. Instead, ecastor intensifies the feelings expressed in meaningful language in the phrase in which the interjection occurs. Here, ecastor reinforces Bacchis’ feeling that Pamphilus remains as charming as he ever was. In contrast, pol tends to appear in her speech when she feels an emotion that she does not discuss in meaningful language in the phrase to which she applies the word.
she is pleased to help a family to which she already has an emotional relationship; and in the second, she can promote her own interests by cultivating friendship with citizen families. In addition to characterizing Bacchis as a *meretrix* who finds ways to contribute rewardingly to the citizen class from which she is excluded, he creates in *Hecyra* a *meretrix* who is an honest, kindly, and decent woman by aligning the emotional resonance of her speech with the feelings she describes herself in meaningful language.
Chapter 4: Drawing Conclusions

This study of register in the speech of Terence’s *meretrices* has offered three insights into the role of the stock type in Terence’s New Comedy. It has also thrown my ideas about the representation of social class in Terence into confusion. One of these insights is fairly clear; the other two, less clear but no less important. The first and clearest is that Terence’s *meretrices* are constantly aware of their status as non-citizens and of the privileges to which citizens have access and from which non-citizens are excluded. Scarcely a moment passes for a *meretrix* onstage during which she does not perform some aspect of her relationship to the citizen class.

The speech of each of Terence’s four *meretrices*\(^{64}\) shows interest in the world of citizens, whether the *meretrix* discusses the social situation of a loved one, reflects upon her own status, seeks a position from which she can share some of the privileges of citizenship, or simply acknowledges the difficulties that class distinctions cause. These women live in a society that observes class distinctions strictly and legislates inequality, so that citizens and non-citizens have unequal access to the institutions that shape the social landscape, such as the political process, legal protection, and family formation. Furthermore, they live in a world without physical divisions between the space of citizens and the space of non-citizens: instead of being confined to red-light districts, the *meretrices* have citizen neighbors with whom they interact regularly. The *meretrices*’ lack of access to these citizen privileges, as well as the value of those privileges, were keenly felt, as the speech of the *meretrices* shows.

\(^{64}\) Again I do not include Philotis, the protatic *meretrix* from the first scene of *Hecyra*, among Terence’s *meretrices*; see the explanation in Chapter 1.
Some of the time, *meretrices* speak directly about the value of citizenship: Bacchis, for example, in her conversation with Antiphila (*Heautontimoroumenos* 381-395) expresses admiration for women who can conform to citizen values, and she claims that such conformation has value for them (*expedit*, 388). More often, however, the *meretrices* comment upon the consequences of lacking citizen privileges. Glycerium’s vulnerability in the interval between Chrysis’ death and her official recognition as a citizen by Chremes, a time during which Glycerium lacks the privileges of citizenship, prompts Chrysis to beg Pamphilus to care for the young woman. Otherwise, there will be no protection for her respectability (*pudicitiam*) or her property (*rem*, 288). Thais suffers from the same lack of protection, a condition that urges her to seek citizen friends to help her (*Eunuchus*, 147-149). Bacchis too, at the end of *Hecyra*, feels the effects of non-citizen status when she must defend herself repeatedly to citizens who judge her based on her social class.

Citizenship and its privileges thus do not only interest the *meretrices*. They actually shape their lives, even to the extent of motivating the *meretrices’* actions throughout Terence’s plays. The recognition of the strength and source of the *meretrices’* motivations to act is where speech register analysis is most valuable. The exclusion of *meretrices* from citizen privileges has serious negative consequences for the *meretrices*, consequences to which they react strongly and vocally, sometimes even violating social boundaries in order to communicate their needs.

Such is the case when Chrysis speaks to Pamphilus about Glycerium’s vulnerable position and addresses him not as a social inferior seeking a favor from a superior, but with all the directness of a caring sister eager to secure her family’s safety. Thais, who must respond to two threats at once when Chaerea rapes Pamphila and jeopardizes Thais’ chances of building a relationship with Chremes, goes a step further. She does not stop at ignoring social distinctions, but
actually reverses them in order to demonstrate her anger at Chaerea by briefly assuming the role of his social superior. The society portrayed in Terence’s plays makes no provision for non-citizens to protect their own interests in the face of the dangers of non-citizenship; consequently, the meretrix must act—or in this case, speak—outside of normal social roles when her security is in danger.

The conclusions that Terence’s meretrices constantly feel aware of their exclusion from citizen status and that they sometimes respond to that exclusion by speaking outside of their normal social roles are less surprising than the fact that they apparently harbor almost no resentment toward the women who do benefit from citizen privileges and values. Perhaps such charitable behavior is predictable in Chrysis and Thais, who have familial relationships to the women whose interests they promote, but the Bacchises remain kind and friendly to Antiphila and Philumenas as well. This benevolent nature is especially striking in Hecyra, where Bacchis’ business interests actually suffer for her involvement in Pamphilus’ and Philumenas’s marriage, but the meretrix still complements Philumenas:

recte amasti, Pamphile, uxorem tuam.
nam numquam ante hunc diem meis oculis eam quod nossem videram.
perliberalis visast. (862-864)

You have fallen in love with your wife rightly, Pamphilus. For never before this day had I seen her with my eyes, that I know of. She seemed like a very good woman.

The meretrices speak of the hardships they face as a result of their exclusion from citizenship, often in emotional registers that demonstrate their desire to be included, but they do not apply that emotion to other women except to praise and admire them. This characteristic of Terentian meretrices distinguishes them from Plautine meretrices like the Cistellaria’s lena, whose discus-

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65 *Hecyra* 834-835.
sion of citizen women shows some bitterness because of the social distinctions between *meretrices* and citizens.\(^{66}\)

My analysis of Terence’s *meretrices* has shown that these women are acutely aware of the citizen values from which they are excluded, that their exclusion from citizen privileges sometimes forces them to cope with hardships by abandoning normal social conventions, and that despite the difficulties that they face, they nevertheless treat more privileged women with kindness and respect. These conclusions are fairly clear. What is less clear now is the place that the *meretrix* actually occupies in the society in which she moves. Officially excluded from citizen institutions such as political alliances and marriage, they nevertheless receive invitations from citizens to join in such relationships: both Thais and Bacchis (*Hecyra*) are offered relationships of *gratia* and *amicitia* by citizen families, and Pamphilus practically receives Glycerium as a wife from Chrysis as if from a citizen father. There appears to be some confusion among citizens about which social category the *meretrix* belongs to.

The reasons that *meretrices* seem to belong, at least in the minds of citizens, to more than one social group must be too complicated to address adequately as a part of this project. But they probably have to do with gaps that existed between social ideology and practical reality, so that citizens could not realistically manage their lives without interacting socially with *meretrices*. In the world of Terence’s plays, citizens and *meretrices* could be next-door neighbors. They could ask and receive favors from one another, and feel gratitude and loyalty to one another. The demands of day-to-day life result in a confused social climate, in which stereotypes and prejudices about *meretrices* prevail in the citizen mind, only to be disproven when the *meretrix* appears and speaks for herself—and after she does, she becomes an exception, worthy of a citizen vocabulary

\(^{66}\) *Cistellaria* 22-41.
In light of their unstable social position, it is hardly surprising that Terence’s *meretrices* speak so strongly about citizen values.

I have drawn these conclusions about Terence’s *meretrices* from an analysis of their speech that relies upon speech register theory. Registers are complicated, depending upon some straightforward variables such as setting and medium of communication, and some that are much less absolute, such as the speaker’s intentions, social relationships, and the topic of conversation. The relevance of so many factors to the determination of register means that analyses of register are likely to vary according to who judges the register. Perhaps this is a weakness of my application of register theory to Terence, but on the other hand, readings of any literature, especially the literature of a culture so far removed from the present day, are always likely to be more or less subjective. The value of register theory lies in its demand that we pay attention to social contexts of speech as the speaker perceives them, and not as they are determined by prevailing social norms. Register theory suits the analysis of lower-class characters, then, in particular: lower-class characters have such limited access to prevailing social norms that they cannot be fully understood without attention to alternate perspectives.

Terence’s *meretrices* are excluded from the societies in which they live because they belong to a class that is designated low by citizens. Their perspectives on their relationships to the citizen class, however, are more complicated than simple acknowledgement of citizen superiority (although each of Terence’s *meretrices* acknowledges the value of citizen privileges). The *meretrices* reject the notion that their social class determines their personal characters and makes them less important, less deserving of respect, less good, than their citizen neighbors. By recognizing their own merits and finding ways to participate, even indirectly, in citizen interests, the *meretrices*...
trices reject the stereotypes that citizens apply to them. In doing so, they find a place, however precarious, in citizen society.
Works Cited


