

THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF PSEUDOLUS

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Throughout its history, Plautus' *Pseudolus* has always been one of his most highly regarded comedies. Modern scholars have called it his masterpiece.¹ To the Romans it was a classic: more than a century after Plautus' death, it served as a vehicle for the great comic actor Roscius, and Cicero could take it for granted that the jurors he was addressing in a law suit knew and admired the actor's part in the play (*QRosc.* 7.20, 17.50). And Cicero tells us elsewhere (*Sen.* 14.50) that the *Pseudolus* was one of Plautus' own favorite plays—a statement which, if nothing else, would suggest that it was one of *Cicero's* favorites. Yet this judgment is apt to be something of a mystery to modern readers. First, the plot of the *Pseudolus* is as trite as could be: a clever slave uses his trickery to free his young master's girl friend from the clutches of a *leno*. Second, though Plautus has been accused of careless construction in many plays, in no Plautine comedy does this putative carelessness seem so glaring as in the *Pseudolus*, especially at the beginning, where, in I.i, the young lover, Calidorus, tells his slave, Pseudolus, that a *leno* has sold his girl to a soldier, but only two scenes later both Pseudolus and his master explode with astonishment and fury when the *leno* triumphantly informs them of this very fact (342–54). The third, and perhaps the most important problem, is the apparent weakness of the central character himself, the slave Pseudolus. It has long been known that Plautus particularly exerted himself in the creation of *serui callidi*,² and recently discovered evidence would indicate that he was not only proud of these creations but regarded them as a major element in his superiority over the Greek playwrights from whom he

¹ E.g., Gordon Williams, who states that it “is probably Plautus’ greatest play”: “Some Problems in the Construction of Plautus’ *Pseudolus*,” *Hermes* 84 (1956) 424.

² E. Fraenkel, *Elementi plautini in Plauto*, tr. F. Munari (Florence 1960) 223–41.

took his plots.³ But what are we to make of Pseudolus as a clever slave? A third of the play has gone by before he does anything at all, clever or foolish. Contrast Tranio in the *Mostellaria*, who takes complete charge of the situation in his play as soon as he appears. And when Pseudolus finally does play his trick it turns out to be a simpleminded and obvious bit of substitution which depends entirely on an accidental piece of good luck and is actually accomplished not by Pseudolus at all but by a new character who is suddenly brought into the play out of nowhere in order to do the job.

To answer the questions I have raised about this play I would like to begin by examining a much smaller problem than any I have mentioned so far. In III.ii, halfway through the play, the *leno* Ballio returns home from the forum accompanied by the cook whom he has hired to prepare the feast for his birthday celebration. Ballio and the cook engage in a conversation that takes 114 lines, which is very long for a Plautine scene. The main problem with the scene is that it seems to be completely unnecessary: it does nothing to advance the plot, it has no connection with the trick Pseudolus uses to deceive Ballio, and no apparent thematic point is made. The scene consists entirely of jokes and insults. Stylistically it would appear to be Plautus' own addition to the play,⁴ suggested, perhaps, by something like the brief interchange with a cook in *Samia* 283–95.⁵ Such lengthy padded scenes are usually explained by saying that Plautus will do anything to get a laugh, even if it means wrecking his own play. And Plautus himself, if we could question him about this scene, would probably wink and agree—even though this play, like many others, is full of statements to the effect that we had better hurry up and get things over with, since plays are long enough as it is (388, 720–21). Of course it is not Plautus' job to explicate his own play, but the critic

³ In *Bacch.* 649–50, the slave Chrysalus says, *non mihi isti placent Parmenones, Syri, qui duas aut tris minas auferunt eris*; we now know that the Greek original of this character was named Syrus. See E. W. Handley, *Menander and Plautus: A Study in Comparison* (London 1968) 9.

⁴ Fraenkel (above, note 2) 64, 77–78; E. Paratore, "La structure du Pseudolus," *REL* 41 (1963) 163; H. Dohm, *Maeciros: Die Rolle des Kochs in der griechisch-römischen Komödie* (Munich 1964) 152. For a recent detailed examination of the scene see W. E. Forehand, "Pseudolus 868–872: Ut Medea Peliam concoxit," *CJ* 67 (1971–72) 293–98.

⁵ In other recent Menandrian material, the cook in *Mis.* 270–75 receives a few brief instructions and enters without a word; there is an eighteen-line cook scene in *Aspis* 216–33. The cook in *Dysc.*, of course, plays a far more central role than any of these.

must go a little further than simply accepting the theory that he will do anything for a laugh. Is this cook scene in fact useless? Does it really retard the plot? Has it nothing at all to do with the eventual defeat of Ballio?

The last time we saw Ballio he was on top, the absolute master of the situation. This was established in I.ii, where Ballio makes arrangements with the prostitutes and slaves of his establishment for the celebration of his birthday. This magnificent monody is Plautus' original creation entirely,⁶ the most sumptuously staged scene in Roman comedy;⁷ it offers one of the juiciest parts for a comic actor in all of Plautus—the role, incidentally, for which Roscius was famous (*QRosc.* 7.20). Ballio leaves the stage after this scene and does not reappear for some time. But his continuing power is emphasized later on by the despairing monologue of a catamite *puer* from his household (III.i), a monologue which immediately precedes this cook scene. The *puer* is trembling with helpless fear at the thought of his master. But what happens now? A cook, a mere hireling, runs rings around the mighty Ballio, not through any objective power of his own, but simply on the basis of his manipulation of words. When the cook, for example, complains that his rivals poison their clients with meals more fit for cattle than for men, Ballio obligingly feeds him a straight line (826–28):⁸

quid tu? diuinis condimentis utere,
qui prorogare uitam possis hominibus,
qui ea culpes condimenta?

The cook, taking the hint, replies (828–36):

audacter dicito;
nam uel ducenos annos poterunt uiuere
meas qui essitabunt escas quas condiuero.
nam ego cocilendrum quando in patinas indidi
aut cepolendrum aut maccidem aut saucaptidem,

⁶ Fraenkel (above, note 2) 136–42.

⁷ Sumptuously staged, presumably, because the play was commissioned for a very special event: the dedication of the Temple of the Magna Mater in 191 B.C.; see Fraenkel (above, note 2) 142, 414; and L. R. Taylor, "The Opportunities for Dramatic Performances in the Time of Plautus and Terence," *TAPA* 68 (1937) 290.

⁸ The text quoted here and elsewhere is the O.C.T. of W. M. Lindsay (Oxford 1910²).

caepsae se patinae feruefaciunt ilico.
 haec ad Neptuni pecudes condimenta sunt:
 terrestres pecudes cicimandro condio aut
 hapalopside aut cataractria.

Ballio can only explode with a helpless curse (836-38):

at te Iuppiter
 dique omnes perdant cum condimentis tuis
 cumque tuis istis omnibus mendaciis!

After a brief interruption in which the cook appears to be becoming even more conscious of the power of his speech (839: *sine sis loqui me. :: loquere atque i in malam crucem*), he continues his boasting, once again taking the hint from Ballio, this time from his mention of Jupiter (840-46):

Co. ubi omnes patinae feruont, omnis aperio:
 is odos demissis pedibus in caelum uolat.
 eum odorem cenat Iuppiter cottidie.
 BA. odos demissis pedibus? Co. peccaui insciens.
 BA. quidum? Co. "dimissis manibus" uolui dicere.
 BA. si nusquam is coctum, quidnam cenat Iuppiter?
 Co. it incenatus cubitum. BA. i in malam crucem.

By the time the cook and his assistant go in to go to work, Ballio is not a little nervous, as he himself admits (894-904):

profecto quid nunc primum caueam nescio,
 ita in aedibus sunt fures, praedo in proxumo est.
 nam mi hic uicinus apud forum paullo prius
 pater Calidori opere edixit maxumo
 ut mihi cauerem a Pseudolo seruo suo
 ne fidem ei haberem. nam eum circum ire in hunc diem,
 ut me, si posset, muliere interuorteret;
 eum promississe fortiter dixit sibi
 sese abducturum a me dolis Phoenicium.
 nunc ibo intro atque edicam familiaribus
 profecto ne quis quicquam credat Pseudolo.

The cook, then, frightens and controls Ballio using no other weapon but language. Here is the connection, made explicit in the speech by Ballio just quoted, between this apparently extraneous character and the hero of the play. For it is language that provides the key for

understanding the comic greatness of Pseudolus, and ultimately the comic achievement of Plautus himself.

To demonstrate this completely would require an explication of the entire play, and, as Plautus himself says, *sat sic longae fiunt fabulae* (388). I should like therefore to take only one facet of Plautine language and concentrate exclusively on this.

Eduard Fraenkel has shown that one sure sign of original Plautine composition is a verbal habit which Fraenkel called transformation and identification.⁹ The paradigm for this is *Merc.* 361: *muscast meu' pater: nil potest clam illum haberi*. It is a kind of quick comic metaphor which seems to have been characteristic of the Latin language and cannot, according to Fraenkel, really be paralleled in Greek usage. It appears, of course, in isolated examples throughout Plautus' plays.

I should like to argue that this sort of metaphorical transformation is used by Plautus in this play in a broader way as well. Pseudolus, in fact, undergoes, purely through language, a series of transformations which establish his comic superiority in a way almost totally independent of the objective facts of the plot. Language transforms him into a series of figures, such as the obvious one of a general, or the obvious mythological paradigm, Ulysses, which embody the idea of manipulation, control, and power. But more important, language transforms him from a serious into a comic character. The more comic he is, the more triumphant he is. And, as we shall see, he ends up transformed into the greatest comic paradigm of all. Consider, to begin with, an earlier part of the text, the great scene with Ballio mentioned above. Ballio, as we saw, is on top here: objectively, because of his power, his money, his possessions, and so forth. But subjectively he is on top because of his command of comic language, including Fraenkel's transformation and identification motif (190-93):

fac sis sit delatum huc mihi frumentum, hunc annum quod satis,
mihi et familiae omni sit meae, atque adeo ut frumento afluum,
ut ciuitas nomen mihi commutet meque ut praedicet
lenone ex Ballione regem Iasonem.

He is, as the eavesdropping Calidorus admits to Pseudolus, *magnificus* (194), and his speech has both his listeners enthralled (Pseudolus, 195: *sed tace atque hanc rem gere*; Calidorus, 208: *male facis mihi quom*

⁹ Fraenkel (above, note 2) 21-54.

sermone huic obsonas). Meanwhile Pseudolus, instead of using comic language, is making the mistake of being serious (202–06):

huncine hic hominem pati
colere iuuentutem Atticam?
ubi sunt, ubi latent quibus aetas integra est, qui amant a lenone?
quin conueniunt? quin una omnes peste hac populum hunc liberant?
sed uah!
nimium stultus, nimium fui
indoctus: illine audeant
id facere quibus ut seruiant
suos amor cogit? simul prohibet faciant aduorsum eos quod nolint.

No wonder Calidorus is bored with such conventional moralizing (207: *uah! tace*).

In the ensuing scene (I.iii), which is really no more than a continuation of this one, while Ballio brags—in the appropriate ritual language—that he would interrupt the most solemn religious ritual to make a little money (265–68):

nam si sacrificem summo Ioui
atque in manibus exta teneam ut poriciam, interea loci
si lucri quid detur, potius rem diuinam deseram.
non potest pietati opsisti huic, utut res ceterae,

Pseudolus can only respond with a feeble statement of conventional religiosity: *deos quidem quos maxume aequom est metuere, eos minimi facit* (269). Pseudolus' pusillanimous declaration that his young master is embarrassed at not having paid his debt to Ballio (279–80: *hunc pudet*, e.q.s.) is met by the *leno* with a brisk pun on *pudet* and *piget* (281–82). When Ballio suggests that Calidorus behave like a proper *palliata* hero and steal from his father (286–88: *si amabas . . . surruperes patri*), Pseudolus' response is an indignant outburst of conventional Roman *pietas*: *surruperet hic patri, audacissime? non periculumst ne quid recte monstres* (288–89).¹⁰ *Non lenoniumst*, answers Ballio, coolly accepting his appointed role. Equally coolly, Ballio replies to Calidorus' astonished

¹⁰ The contrast to the irreverent bantering on this subject in the play's first scene (120–22: *si neminem alium potero, tuom tangam patrem. :: di te mi semper seruent! uerum, si potest, pietatis caussa—uel etiam matrem quoque*) is surely deliberate; there (and throughout I.i, which functions, I would argue, as a kind of prologue) Pseudolus and his master were acting as proper comic characters.

indignation¹¹ at his announcement that the girl has already been sold by employing magically transformational language (347: *quid ego ex te audio? :: amicam tuam esse factam argenteam*) and by deftly twisting the young man's Roman legal terminology (353: *nemp' conceptis uerbis? :: etiam consutis quoque*). Meanwhile Pseudolus is weakening his position in the Plautine universe by expressing a very uncomic wish to be a free man: *numquam ad praetorem aequo cursim curram, ut emittar manu* (358).¹²

The *flagitatio* scene that follows is hilarious in its context, but it is Ballio, not Pseudolus, who controls it (359–68):

CALI.ingere mala multa. Ps. iam ego te differam dictis meis.
inpu dice. BA. itast. CALI. sceleste. BA. dicis uera. Ps. uerbero.
BA. quippini? CALI. bustirape. BA. certo. Ps. furcifer. BA. factum
optume.

CALI. sociofraude. BA. sunt mea istaec. Ps. parricida. BA. perge tu.
CALI. sacrilege. BA. fateor. Ps. peiure. BA. uetera uaticinamini.
CALI. legerupa. BA. ualide. Ps. permities adulescentum. BA. acer-
rume.

CALI. fur. BA. babae! Ps. fugitiue. BA. bombax! CALI. fraus
populi. BA. planissume.

Ps. fraudulente. CALI. inpure. Ps. leno. CALI. caenum. BA. can-
tores probos!

CALI. uerberauisti patrem atque matrem. BA. atque occidi quoque
potius quam cibum praeberem: num peccaui quippiam?

Flagitatio, however bizarre it might appear to the modern reader, is of course serious business to a Roman, an earnest, if not very sedate, mode of redress;¹³ it is Ballio, with his pert and clever responses, not Pseudolus, with his conventional insults, who is here the comic manipulator of language. Pseudolus, as he himself admits, is wasting his time: *in pertussum ingerimus dicta dolium, operam ludimus* (369).

But the moment Ballio leaves the stage, Pseudolus speaks two very

¹¹ If Calidorus and Pseudolus are *feigning* this indignation—an action that would make sense in terms of the plot and would not be at all difficult for good actors to portray—the play's greatest inconsistency disappears. (I owe this suggestion to Professor Frank Brown.)

¹² See E. Segal, *Roman Laughter: The Comedy of Plautus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968) 164–68.

¹³ On this scene see Williams (above, note 1) 430, and H. Usener, "Italische Volksjustiz," *RhM* 56 (1901) 23–27; on *flagitatio* in general see A. W. Lintott, *Violence in Republican Rome* (Oxford 1968) 6–10.

significant lines: *illic homo meus est, nisi omnes di me atque homines deserunt. exossabo ego illum simulter itidem ut murenā coquos* (381–82). The first is a traditional comic line, spoken when a trickster realizes he has caught his victim.¹⁴ With it Pseudolus has entered the world of comedy, an entry that is reinforced when he breaks the dramatic illusion a few lines later (388: *nolo bis iterari, sat sic longae fiunt fabulae*). And with the second line he undergoes the first of his many transformations, a transformation, interestingly enough, into a cook.

These metaphorical transformations start piling up immediately, and continue throughout the play. I should like to concentrate on a few examples from the next two scenes. Liv is a soliloquy.

Postquam illic hinc abiit, tu astas solus, Pseudole.
 quid nunc acturus, postquam erili filio
 largitu's dictis dapsilis? ubi sunt ea?
 quoi neque paratasti gutta certi consili
 neque adeo argenti neque—nunc quid faciam scio.
 neque exordiri primum unde occipias habes
 neque ad detexundam telam certos terminos.
 sed quasi poeta, tabulas quom cepit sibi,
 quaerit quod nusquam gentiumst, reperit tamen,
 facit illud ueri simile quod mendacium est,
 nunc ego poeta fiam: uiginti minas,
 quae nunc nusquam sunt gentium, inueniam tamen.
 atque ego me iam pridem huic daturum dixeram
 et uolui inicere tragulam in nostrum senem;
 uerum is nescioquo pacto praesensit prius.
 sed comprimunda uox mihi atque oratiost:
 erum eccum uideo huc Simonem una simul
 cum suo uicino Calliphone incedere.
 ex hoc sepulcro uetere uiginti minas
 ecfodiam ego hodie quas dem erili filio.
 nunc huc concedam unde horum sermonem legam.

As he admits in the opening seven lines of this speech, objectively Pseudolus is in a hopeless situation. He has no money, no plans, no notion of where to begin. But immediately transformations through language begin to do their work. The figure of a playwright (*poeta*: 401) is introduced, diffidently at first, as a simile rather than a metaphor,

¹⁴ Cf. *Miles* 334: *meus illic homo est, deturbabo iam ego illum de pugnaculis*; Naevius, *Stalagmus* 70 R³: *Visam: deo meo propitio meus homo est*.

and restricted in its point of contact to *inuentio*, ignoring the manipulative implications of the image.¹⁵ Then comes the spear-thrower, but this image of power is softened by its context: regret for a lost possibility (*uolui inicere tragulam in nostrum senem*: 407). But the process is nevertheless building up Pseudolus' spirits. He concludes with a violent and utterly impudent metaphor, not softened in any way: *ex hoc sepulcro uetere uiginti minas exfodiam ego hodie quas dem erili filio* (412-13). With these words Pseudolus is transformed into a grave-robber, a *bustirapus*: one of the very epithets flung at Ballio in the *flagitatio* episode of the previous scene (361), when Pseudolus was still making the mistake of taking himself seriously.

In the ensuing scene (I.v), Pseudolus encounters his aged master, and destined victim, Simo. Nothing objective occurs in this scene to justify Pseudolus' increasing self-confidence: while at the start of the scene he is announcing that *occisa est haec res, haeret hoc negotium* (423), before long Simo is remarking on his *statum . . . quam basilicum!* (458). It is Simo himself who first transforms Pseudolus through comic language: *hic dux, hic illist paedagogus* (447), and then, more elaborately: *conficiet iam te hic uerbis ut tu censeas non Pseudolum, sed Socratem tecum loqui* (464-65). And soon Pseudolus transforms himself, through language in its most literal sense, into the Delphic oracle (479-88):

Ps. si quid uis roga.
quod scibo Delphis tibi responsum dicito.
SIMO. aduerte ergo animum et fac sis promissi memor.
quid ais? ecquam scis filium tibicinam
meum amare? Ps. *ναὶ γάρ*. SIMO. liberare quam uelit?
Ps. *καὶ τοῦτο ναὶ γάρ*. SIMO. ecquas uiginti minas
per sycophantiam atque per doctos dolos
paritas ut a me auferas? Ps. aps ted ego auferam?
SIMO. ita, quas meo gnato des, qui amicam liberet?
fatere, dic *καὶ τοῦτο ναί*. Ps. *καὶ τοῦτο ναί*.

Note how Pseudolus stubbornly persists in acting out this role, even when, at the conclusion of this interchange, it works to his practical

¹⁵ If, as Leo maintains (*Plautinische Forschungen* [Berlin 1912²; repr. Darmstadt 1966] 87), the image came from the Greek original, it was perhaps this relatively timid simile that suggested to Plautus the boldly and elaborately developed metaphor that extends throughout the play.

detriment. But only objectively: subjectively Simo's acceptance of the transformation (in the last line quoted above) is strengthening Pseudolus' comic position. As the scene progresses, Pseudolus, who in the previous scene had wanted to be free, now boasts of the irrelevance to the comic world of his "real" status: *seruitum tibi me abducito, ni fecero* (520). His brashness amazes Simo and his companion Callipho, who now are as eager to listen to him as he was to Ballio: *studeo hercle audire, nam ted ausculto lubens* (523).¹⁶ With the word *ludi* they each transform Pseudolus into an aedile: *indice ludos nunciam, quando lubet* (546); *lubidost ludos tuos spectare, Pseudole* (552). Verbal magic has worked so well that Pseudolus can now order both of them around in thoroughly insulting terms (557-58: *agite amolimini hinc uos intro nunciam ac meis uicissim date locum fallaciis*) and they meekly obey, leaving Pseudolus alone on the stage. He concludes the scene by addressing the audience (562-73a):

suspicio est mi nunc uos suspicari,
 me idcirco haec tanta facinora promittere,
 qui uos oblectem, hanc fabulam dum transigam,
 neque sim facturus quod facturum dixeram.
 non demutabo. atque etiam certum, quod sciam,
 quo id sim facturus pacto nihil etiam scio,
 nisi quia futurumst. nam qui in scaenam prouenit,
 nouo modo nouom aliquid inuentum adferre addecet;
 si id facere nequeat, det locum illi qui queat.
 concedere aliquantisper hinc mi intro lubet,
 dum concenturio in corde sycphantias.
 <sed mox> exhibo, non ero uobis morae;
 tibicen uos interibi hic delectauerit.

With these words Pseudolus identifies himself with a military commander (572: *concenturio . . . sycphantias*), draws the audience to his side, emphasizes the pure theatricality of his position, and, most important, demonstrates his complete control over the whole play: not only can he order the two old men around, he can also, with no better reason than his own whim, force the entire play to come to a

¹⁶ Simo's almost identical line, 523a, *agedum, nam sati' lubenter te ausculto loqui*, excised since Ritschl's day, might well be retained, on the ground that both he and Callipho have temporarily been reduced to inarticulate stuttering by Pseudolus' brashness.

halt, to be resumed again only when he allows it to.¹⁷ No wonder the monody he sings when he returns to the stage (II.i) is so triumphant.

Here and in the scenes that follow, Pseudolus' transformations include a victorious Roman general (developed most elaborately in the monody just cited), a blacksmith (614: *nam haec mihi incus est: procudam ego hodie hinc multos dolos*), a schoolmaster (933: *qui magister mihi es*), and Ulysses (1063: *Visso quid rerum meus Vlixes egerit*; see also 1244). But it is the theatrical metaphor that becomes most important. Pseudolus repeats the traditional announcement of the *seruus callidus* (600a: *tace, tace, meus hic est homo, ni omnes di atque homines deserunt*), becomes an actor playing the role of a comic slave (636-37: *seruos est huic lenoni Surus, eum esse me dicam. Surus sum*), produces a magnificent parody of the Roman tragic style (703: *io te, te, turanne, te, te ego, qui imperitas Pseudolo, e.q.s.*), gives his friends a lesson in stagecraft (720-21: *horum caussa haec agitur spectatorum fabula: hi sciunt qui hic adfuerunt; vobis post narrauero*), and sums up the *argumentum* of his own play (751-54, concluding *em tibi omnem fabulam!*). Objectively, he defeats Ballio by the simple trick of a substitute messenger. But far more important than the technical details of the trick are Pseudolus' attitude and language as he brings it to a successful conclusion—an attitude and language in which the theatrical metaphor is paramount. The substitute must be a slave, Pseudolus insists (728: *immo multo mauolo quam liberum*), since this is the world of comedy. Pseudolus will provide him with props and a costume (751: *ubi hominem exornauero*) and teach him his part (764: *onerabo meis praeceptis Simiam*). The result is a splendid *seruus callidus* (911: *sed eccum uideo uerbeream statuam: ut it, ut magnifice infert sese!*), so full of wickedness that he terrifies his very creator (912: *ehem, te hercle ego circumspectabam, nimi' metuebam male ne abiisses*), whom he immediately starts to insult (914: *cur ergo quod scis me rogas? e.q.s.*), and to whom—an almost bewildering twist—he even, by implication, begins to give lessons in stagecraft (940-41: *potin ut taceas? memorem inmemorem facit qui monet quod memor meminit. teneo, omnia in pectore condita sunt, meditati sunt mihi doli docte*).

The trick has to be entrusted to Simia, Pseudolus' appropriately named creation, for a practical reason: Pseudolus would of course be

¹⁷ The autonomy of this episode has been demonstrated by E. Paratore, "Il flautista nel *Δύσκολος* e nello *Pseudolus*," *RCCM* 1 (1959) 310-25.

recognized by Ballio. But, more important, this puts Pseudolus in the position of a theatrical director, making concrete the metaphor that has been building up so rapidly. Now we can actually watch as, like an opera prompter in his box, Pseudolus hides, hovering and worrying over his plot and his actor, approving of his *exordium* (970: *iam inde a principio probe*), praising his development (974: *saluos sum, iam philosophatur*), terrified for a moment when he seems to have forgotten his lines (984–85: *perii! nunc homo in medio lutost; nomen nescit, haeret haec res*), and finally, after a worried monologue while his actor is off the stage, announcing in triumph as he sees the girl and knows all is well, *uictor sum, uici cautos custodes meos* (1037).

Like Pseudolus' victory, Ballio's objective defeat is made subjective by language. When Simo asks him what Pseudolus said to him in their earlier meeting, Ballio replies (1081–83):

nugas theatri, uerba quae in comoediis
solent lenoni dici, quae pueri sciunt:
malum et scelestum et peiurum aibat esse me.

The *leno* will pay dearly for this insulting attitude to the comic theater. He has already, with unconscious irony, made the mistake of echoing Pseudolus' self-confident bet with Simo (line 1073, *roga, opseco hercle; gestio promittere*, echoes the very words with which Pseudolus got the whole play moving in 116), a bit of foolishness that will double his misfortune. When the real messenger arrives, Ballio, again with unconscious irony, misappropriates the traditional *hic homo meus est* line (1124). And he joins in Simo's misappropriation of the term *ludos facere* for the series of insults they fling at the supposed hireling of Pseudolus (1167–68: *exploratorem hunc faciamus ludos suppositicium adeo donicum ipsus sese ludos fieri senserit*). It is a hilarious show indeed, but Ballio and Simo are its victims, not its directors. No wonder that Ballio, after the truth has been discovered, tells the audience, as he makes his last exit, not to expect to see him on the comic stage again: *nunc ne exspectetis dum hac domum redeam uia; ita res gestast: angiporta haec certum est consecrariet* (1234–35). Meanwhile Simo saves himself by being such an appreciative audience to Pseudolus and by admitting that he is in a comic world (1238–45):

Bene ego illum tetigi, bene autem seruos inimicum suom.
nunc mi certum est alio pacto Pseudolo insidias dare

quam in aliis comoediis fit, ubi cum stimulis aut flagris
 insidiantur: at ego iam intus promam uiginti minas
 quas promisi si ecfecisset; obuam ei ultro deferam.
 nimis illic mortalis doctus, nimi' uorsutus, nimi' malus;
 superauit dolum Troianum atque Vlixem Pseudolus.
 nunc ibo intro, argentum promam, Pseudolo insidias dabo.

The artificiality of this world is further emphasized by the next scene, a monody in which Pseudolus describes his victory celebration. The following section is of particular interest (1272a-78a):

sed post
 quam exsurrexi, orant med ut saltem.
 ad hunc me modum intuli illis sati' facete
 nimis ex disciplina, quippe ego qui
 probe Ionica perdidici. sed palliolatim amictus
 sic haec incesi ludibundus.
 plaudunt, "parum" clamitant mi uti reuortar.
 occepi denuo, hoc modo: nolui:
 idem amicae dabam me meae,
 ut me amaret: ubi circumuortor, cado:
 id fuit naenia ludo.

Such expressions as *ad hunc . . . modum*, *sic*, and *hoc modo* make it clear that Pseudolus is here acting out for us the dance he performed within. Metaphor and reality have combined: a comic performer, *palliolatim amictus*, is enacting the role of a comic performer.

Simo enters, and Pseudolus, insisting (for the time being) on the full payment of the bet he had with his master, meets his anguished protests with the proverbial *uae uictis!* (1317), thus transforming himself for a moment into Brennus, republican Rome's most successful foreign enemy. Finally he relents, inviting Simo in for a drink. When the old man asks, *quin uocas spectatores simul?* (1331-32), Pseudolus concludes the play by replying (1332-35):

hercle me isti hau solent
 uocare, neque ergo ego istos;
 uerum sei uoltis adplaudere atque adprobare hunc gregem
 et fabulam in crastinum uos uocabo.

And where is he inviting us? To another play, of course. Pseudolus, a Greek slave who in the opening scenes of this play was in danger of

becoming a solemn Roman, a Roman of dignity, discipline, and decorum, has instead been transformed into the masterful manipulator of the Latin language, the penniless Umbrian actor who made his fortune mocking everything from Roman solemnity to the very dramatic genre in which he was working. Pseudolus has been transformed into Plautus himself.¹⁸

¹⁸ An earlier version of this paper was presented at the American Academy in Rome in January, 1974 (*et alias alibi*). I am grateful to all my listeners, especially to Professor Frank Brown of the American Academy, and to two anonymous readers as well, for their helpful comments and suggestions.