

Recent work on the *palliata* has uncovered speech patterns specific to character types, to individual characters, and to each gender (Adams 1984, Karakasis 2005, Dutsch 2008). This paper discusses two cases in which a character adopts a speech pattern typically belonging to a character-type different from his own. In the *Eunuch* Chaerea takes on the speech patterns of female and slave characters, when dressed as a eunuch, and in the *Adelphoe*, Demea, a *senex iratus*, adopts the speech-patterns of his brother Micio, an easy-going *senex lepidus*. In order to demonstrate that each character speaks in a way unusual for him, I rely on statistics based on exhaustive counts of several categories of linguistic data, including directives (e.g. commands, requests, suggestions), request softeners, and questions. Ultimately, like consummate actors, Chaerea and Demea convince others of their new role by adopting the appropriate language.

Chaerea sustains an assumed identity, that of a eunuch, by changing his idiom. When in disguise as a eunuch, Chaerea adopts speech habits more characteristic of female and slave characters. For example, slave characters in Terence speak three of a total four instances of *obsecro*, with the imperative in ellipsis, a construction which has a humble tone (*Eun* 669, 715; *Phorm* 319). The fourth is attributed to Chaerea in his eunuch guise (887). Chaerea furthermore utters a 1st person plural hortatory subjunctive, modified by *obsecro* (906), which appears only once elsewhere in Terence when spoken by a maidservant (*Ad* 309).

As for Demea in the *Adelphoe*, he begins to sound more like his brother, that is, more like a *senex lepidus*, after his famous “great monologue” in which he announces his decision to be more lenient (855-881). The brothers trade idioms as follows: (1.) while all of Demea’s echo-questions had occurred before this point, all but one of Micio’s occur *after* it; (2.) before his “change of heart” speech, Demea dispenses with a greeting altogether, either refusing to give one (556, 720, 792) or refusing to return one (81, 374, 768), but after it, makes a pointed effort to greet others (883-884, 890-891, 901). (3.) Demea utters roughly two-thirds of his total directive acts after his “change of heart”; Micio utters only one-tenth of his total after this point. Demea has a metatheatrical awareness of his new role (896-897): *meditor esse adfabilis/ et bene procedit* (“I am rehearsing being affable, and it’s going well”), he says, just after his “change of heart.” Indeed his new language is part of the new character which he “rehearses” in the final scenes of the play. In sum, the observations on Demea’s assumed speech patterns give support to Donatus’ remark that the brothers switch roles in the last scene of the play, with Demea becoming more generous, Micio more stingy (*ad* 981).