

Terence's *Hecyra* stages disturbing moral ambiguities (Anderson, Goldberg, Kostan, Penwill). Both Slater and James confront the repulsiveness of a plot that begins with a rape (that is never avenged) and hinges on its concealment. In attempting to keep the resulting pregnancy a secret, Myrrina conspires to end the crisis by lying to her husband, while Sostrata is, according to Anderson, "still another victim of this conspiracy" (2000, 316-7). For Konstan, even the play's metatheatrical anagnoresis (lines 865-8) is a "conspiracy" (1983, 140). Drawing on Clarke's philosophical defense of an ethical warrant for conspiracy theory, I situate this conspiratorial anagnoresis within the larger framework of the play, both its internal plot structure and its external circumstances of production. By the time Bacchis and Pamphilus promise to keep a secret from everyone else, the audience is steeped in conspiracy theory.

From the start, Laches blames the family's misfortunes on a conspiracy of women in a tirade that sets the tone for the play: *pro deum atque hominum fidem, quod hoc genus est, quae haec est coniuratio!* (lines 198-9). Pamphilus hides the fact that he has not consummated his marriage; Myrrhina hides her daughter's pregnancy; Bacchis conspires first with Laches, and finally with Pamphilus. Clarke argues that conspiracy theories are flawed because they are highly dispositional. When seeking to understand the behavior of others, the overestimation of a dispositional explanation to the exclusion of a situational explanation is a widespread and frequent mistake (Clarke 144-6). So for example, two explanations are proffered for Philumena's unexpected and sudden departure. The first attributes her departure to a mortal illness; she does not wish to subject her husband to the pain she will cause. The second attributes her departure to a general disposition that obtains among in-laws; she and her mother-in-law hate each other so much that she is forced to leave the marriage. Throughout the play, characters favor dispositional explanations over situational, giving the *Hecyra* its conspiratorial force.

According to the prologues, performances were twice interrupted. For Konstan, the moral ambiguity of the play may have offended audiences; on the other hand, Parker suggests that rivals may have broken up the play. James effectively douses the debate with the lucid observation that, whatever else the prologues may tell us, they indicate unequivocally that "Terence deliberately presents his play as being difficult" (James 35 n. 19). For our purposes, it does not matter which explanation for the failed performances is more persuasive; instead, the problems that the prologues generate recapitulate the conspiracy theory embedded in the play itself (cf. Gowers on the interplay between prologues and plots). At every turn, the audience is conditioned for conspiracy theory, from the footing on which the play begins, with Laches' conspiracy theory that casts women as participants in a vast web of secret operations, to the quicksand into which the play inescapably sinks, with the degenerating ethics of a conspiratorial anagnoresis that plainly—and paradoxically—seeks to keep even the audience in the dark.

A great conspiracy was once rumored to be planning a coup against the legitimate government of the Roman Republic. The consul, however, having been informed of the threat via the evidence of a humble woman in a domestic dispute with her young lover, took decisive action in the senate and in a *contio* before the People, thereby preventing the conspiracy from being successful. We might easily surmise that the above description refers to the celebrated events of 63 B.C., when Cicero, as consul, thwarted Catiline's plot to overthrow the *res publica*. In fact, the above summary just as readily applies to the perceived threat posed by the Bacchanalian conspiracy in 186 B.C., as narrated by Livy in Book 39.8-19. Livy recounts the threat posed to the state by worshippers of Bacchus; the means by which the threat was revealed to the consul, Sp. Postumius Albinus; and the measures taken by the Senate to suppress such dangerous religious activity. This paper focuses on the actions of Postumius Albinus and argues for a close connection between Livy's portrayal of the consul of 186 and the more famous actions of Cicero during the Catilinarian conspiracy.

Livy's account of the *coniuratio* is a rich source of religious and legal information, and has proven to be fertile ground for scholars in those fields (e.g. Frank; McDonald; Paillet; Gruen). The episode is also an engaging literary narrative, as A. Scafuro and P.G. Walsh (*G&R* 1996) have shown. In particular, Walsh argues persuasively that the narrative of Aebutius and Hispala Faecenia in the first half of the episode (39.8-14.2) has its roots in Plautine comedy. Indeed, the story of the two informers is of a type frequently seen in Livy, reminiscent of the Lucretia's dramatic demise in 1.56-59.

What has not been recognized is that the more "historical" second half of Livy's Bacchanalian episode (39.14.3-19) echoes Cicero's *Catilinarian Orations*. For example, although most of the speeches in Book 39 are delivered in indirect discourse, Livy has Postumius speak in *oratio recta*, and in a fully developed example of deliberative oratory, conforming to standard rhetorical structure (Walsh 1994, 12). Moreover, at key points Postumius is referred to by the simple term *consul*, evoking Cicero's references to himself (*Cat.* 1.2; cf. *Cat.* 4.18, 4.23) as a singular consul in spite of the collegiality normally associated with Roman magistracies. Postumius lists in brief form the types of people associated with the conspiracy (39.15.8-9), surely an allusion to Cicero's famous six kinds of conspirators (*Cat.* 2.18-23). Finally, Postumius echoes Cicero's repeated exhortations (e.g. *Cat.* 2.26; 4.4) to vigilance and swift action: although the conspiracy is not yet able to overpower the state, still it grows daily and must be suppressed (Livy 39.16.3-4). Indeed the general tenor of Livy's narrative is reflective of Cicero's shining moments: the keen instincts of the consul, his constant vigilance, his bold actions and his authoritative handling of the crisis. V.E. Pagán (2004) has identified a typology of conspiracy narratives that is consistently apparent in Roman historiography. Livy's account of the Bacchanalia conforms to that typology but develops it in a way not noted by Pagán; he creates in Postumius a heroic consul who single-handedly saves the state. Cicero would no doubt be pleased that even if no historian of his own period had taken up the call to write his *res gestae*, elements of that *gloria* were remembered for posterity.