

# **Plautus'** **Pot of Gold**

**Instructor:**  
**Pragna Paramita Mondal**  
**Assistant Professor, Dept. of English**  
**Narajole Raj College**

**English Honours, Semester IV**  
**C8T: European Classical Literature**

# Characterization: Stock Characters

- **The principal theatrical device that characterizes a Plautine comedy is the use of stock characters. Euclio as the old miser is a typical stock character. It is Euclio's miserliness and his extreme greed for wealth that triggers the action of the play. In spite of his drawback, however, Euclio is redeemed in the end and is transformed into a balanced and reasonable person.**
- **The other stereotype used by Plautus is the character of the intelligent servant. Euclio's maid - Staphyla - is a sensible servant who looks after her master's well-being. She is receptive of the behavioural changes that Euclio undergoes after discovering the pot of gold and is also able to assess Phaedria's social situation due to her accidental pregnancy.**



# Stock Characters

- **Strobilus plays the role of the *servus callidus* in “Pot of Gold”. He is Lyconides’ servant and is able to steal Euclio’s gold despite all his surreptitiousness. He is the typical intelligent servant who outwits the masters, manipulates the other characters and exploits their naivety or lack of caution. Strobilus’ soliloquy on stage is the source of much comic laughter. He uses exaggerated expressions to describe the nature of Euclio’s miserliness and reckons the ways in which he has made himself useful to his master.**



# Stock Characters

- **The romantic interest in the plot is invoked by Phaedria and Lyconides' alliance and her impregnation is also used as a major point of complication in the play. Phaedria is the *puella* or the typical object of sexual desire and is pursued by the young Lynonides as well as the old but wealthy Megadorus. Euclio is initially suspicious of Megadorus' intention when he proposes marriage to Phaedria. But he agrees to the match at the prospect of saving the money needed for Phedria's dowry. Phaedria does not make an appearance on stage and does not contribute visibly to the action of the play but her lustful pursuit by the principal male characters leads to a conflict of purposes and an entanglement of situations in the drama.**



# Euclio's Education

- **The resolution of the play comes in the form of Euclio offering his pot of gold to Lyconides as a dowry for his daughter. This ending is the most plausible resolution that the translators have deduced from the prologue and the story and we can see that the entire action revolves round the actual pot of gold. Euclio's transformation is signaled by the pronouncement that he makes at the end of the play:**

**“A dozen times a night I have waked to hear a spade scratch or a lock turned. Now at last—I'm going to sleep.”**



# Questions

- 1. Discuss the art of characterization in Plautus' "Pot of Gold".***
- 2. Justify that Plautus' "Pot of Gold" is a play about the redemption of Euclio from miserliness.***

***or***

***Can Plautus' "Pot of Gold" be titled as the "Education of Euclio"?***

- 3. Comment on the ending of Plautus' "Pot of Gold".***



# Recommended Readings

- 1. Nidhi Verma. *Lesson: The Pot of Gold: Plautus* . Maitreyi College, University of Delhi.**
- 2. Dr. Nitai Chandra Saha. *A Passage from Euclio's Miserliness to Redemption: Critiquing Plautus's The Pot of Gold* . IJELLH Volume 6, Issue 11, November 2018.**
- 3. Miroslav Marcovich. "Euclio, Cnemon, And The Peripatos". *Illinois Classical Studies Vol. 2 pp. 197-218. 1977.***
- 4. Amanda Neill Krauss. "Untaming the Shrew: Marriage, Morality and Plautine Comedy". *The University of Texas at Austin. December 2004***



# Important Instructions

- **I am aware that many of you were unable to procure the text of the play before the lockdown. If you need the full text of the play in the e-book format, send me a request at [ppmondal@narajolerajcollege.ac.in](mailto:ppmondal@narajolerajcollege.ac.in)**
- **You can also write to me at [ppmondal@narajolerajcollege.ac.in](mailto:ppmondal@narajolerajcollege.ac.in) for seeking clarification on any of the Recommended Readings.**
- **Send me your answers for correction and feedback at the e-mail address given above.**