

Prosopopoeiae

Pro Caelio (tr. Berry)

(Appius Claudius Caecus and Clodius)

[33] But I should like to ask her first whether she would prefer me to deal with her in a stern, solemn, old-fashioned way or in a relaxed, easy-going, modern way. If she chooses the severe mode of address, then I must call up from the underworld one of those bearded ancients—not with the modern type of goatee beard that she takes such pleasure in, but the rough type such as we see on antique statues and masks*—to castigate the woman and speak in my place (for otherwise she might become angry with me!). Let me therefore summon up a member of her own family—and who better than the famous Caecus?* He, at any rate, will be the least shocked at her, since he will not be able to see her!

[34] If he appears, this is, I am sure, how he will treat her, this is what he will say: 'Woman! What do you think you are doing with Caelius, with a man much younger than yourself, with someone from outside your own family? Why have you been either such a friend to him that you lent him gold or such an enemy that you were afraid of poison? Did you not notice that your father, or hear that your uncle, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, your great-great-grandfather and your great-great-great-grandfather were all consuls? And were you not aware that you were recently the wife of [pg 142] Quintus Metellus,* that illustrious and valiant lover of his country, who only had to step out of his front door to surpass virtually every one of his fellow citizens in excellence, fame, and standing? Coming from such a distinguished family yourself, and marrying into one so illustrious, what reason did you have for linking yourself so closely to Caelius? Was he a blood-relation, a relation by marriage, a friend of your husband? He was none of these. What, then, was the reason—unless it was some reckless infatuation? And if you were not influenced by the masks of the men in our family, did my own descendant, the famous Quinta Claudia,* not inspire you to rival our family's glory in the splendid achievements of its women? Or were you not inspired by the famous Vestal virgin Claudia* who, at her father's triumph, held him in her arms and so prevented him from being pulled down from his chariot by a hostile tribune of the plebs? Why was it your brother's vices that influenced you, rather than the virtues of your father and ancestors, virtues that have been repeated down the generations from my own time not only in the men but particularly in the women of our family? Did I destroy the peace treaty with Pyrrhus so that you could strike the most disgraceful sexual bargains on a daily basis? Did I bring water to the city for you to foul with your incestuous practices? Did I build a road so that you could parade up and down it in the company of other women's husbands?'

[35] But why, members of the jury, have I brought on this solemn character when there is a danger that Appius might suddenly turn round and start accusing Caelius with that censorial severity of his? But I shall take care of that later on; and I am confident, gentlemen, that I shall be able to defend Marcus Caelius' private life before even the strictest judges. But as for you, woman (I am no longer using a character, but am speaking to you directly), if you intend to justify your actions, your assertions, your charges, your intrigues, your allegations, then you must give a full account and explanation of this familiarity, this intimacy, this entire relationship. The prosecutors go on about orgies, love-affairs, adultery, Baiae, beach parties, dinner parties, carousing, singing, musical entertainments, pleasure-boats—and they imply that they have your approval for everything they say. And since in what appears to be a moment of sheer, unbridled madness you have wanted all this brought up in the forum and in court, you must therefore either explain it away and show it to be untrue or [pg 143] else admit that neither your charge nor your evidence is to be believed.

36] You may, on the other hand, prefer me to deal with you in a smart, modern way; if so, this is what I shall do. I shall get rid of that harsh and almost rustic old man, and choose instead a different member of your family: your youngest brother.* He is the very model of smart, modern manners, and he is exceedingly fond of you. Indeed, when he was a little boy, being, I assume, of a somewhat timid nature and inclined to feel frightened at night for no reason, he always used to sleep with you, his elder sister!* So imagine what he would say to you: 'What's all this fuss about, sister? Why have

you gone mad? Why do you protest so much, and make so much of nothing? You happened to notice a boy who lives nearby. You were attracted by his fair complexion, his tall figure, his face, his eyes. You wanted to see him more often. You sometimes spent some time with him in the same pleasure-gardens. You are a noble lady and he has a stingy, parsimonious father. You want to keep him tied to you with your money, but you can't: he kicks against the goad, spurns and rejects you, and thinks nothing of your presents. Try somewhere else, then! You own pleasure-gardens on the Tiber carefully sited where all the young men like to come for a swim. You can pick up whatever you fancy there any day you like. So why go on bothering this man who is not interested in you?"

In Catilinam 1 17-19 prosopopoeia

At 17ff, Italy wishes she could be rid of Catiline:

"As it is, your native land which is the mother of us all hates you and dreads you and has long since decided that you have been planning nothing but her destruction. Will you not respect her authority, bow to her judgement, or fear her power? She addresses you, Catiline, [18] and though silent somehow makes this appeal to you: "For some years now you have been behind every crime, involved in every scandal. No one but you has killed a host of citizens and oppressed and plundered the allies unpunished and scot-free. Not only have you been able to ignore the laws and law-courts but you have been able to overturn and shatter them. I tolerated as well as I could those earlier crimes, insupportable as they were, but that I should now be in a state of total terror on your account, that Catiline should be feared at every sound, that no scheme can be hatched against me without assuming your criminal complicity, truly this is intolerable. Depart, then, and free me from this dread; if it is well founded, that I may not be destroyed: if groundless, that I may at long last cease to feel afraid." If our country were to appeal to you with [19] these words, should not her request be granted, even if she cannot force you?" (*In Cat.* 17-19)

At 27ff Italy herself speaks "At this point, gentlemen, in order most firmly to reject a complaint by our fatherland that might be thought justified, listen carefully, I beg of you, to what I say, and memorize it deep down in your hearts and minds. If my country, which means much more to me than my own life, if all Italy, if the whole commonwealth were to say this to me: "What are you doing, Marcus Tullius? Are you going to let this man who is, as you have discovered, a public enemy; who will, as you see, be the leader in war; who, as you know, is awaited in the enemy's camp as their general, who is the instigator of crime, the leader of the conspiracy, the recruiter of slaves and society's outcasts; are you going to let him leave, not apparently despatched by you from the city but let into it? Are you not going to order him to be put in chains, taken off to execution and suffer the supreme penalty? What on earth is stopping you? The practice of our ancestors? In this Republic even private [28] individuals have frequently punished dangerous citizens with death. Is it the laws that have been passed concerning the punishment of Roman citizens? Never in this city have those who have rebelled against the State kept the rights of citizens. Or do you fear the hatred of posterity? Fine thanks indeed you are giving to the Roman people who have raised you so quickly through all the steps of office to the supreme power, when you were a man known only through your own efforts and without any backing from ancestors! Fine thanks if you neglect the safety of your fellow citizens because you are afraid of unpopularity or any danger to yourself! If you [29] are afraid of unpopularity, surely the unpopularity caused by severity and resoluteness is not to be feared any more than that caused by sloth and negligence. Or when Italy is laid waste by war, when her cities are destroyed, her dwellings in flames, do you not think that then you will be consumed by a blaze of unpopularity?"

To these most solemn words of the Republic and of those who share her feelings I shall give a brief reply." (*In Cat.* 27-29)