

Seminar Questions

- What medical imagery does Cicero apply in the *First Book against Catiline* and to what effect?
- How is the portrayal of Catiline different in Cicero's speech defending Caelius, the *Pro Caelio* (56 BC) (passage below), and the *First Book Against Catiline* and Sallust's *War Against Catiline* (passages below)? Why might this be?

"[10]As for the charge that Caelius was a friend of Catiline, he should by rights be wholly above any suspicion of that kind. You know that he was still very young when Catiline, together with myself, was standing for the consulship. If he ever attached himself to Catiline or detached himself from me—even though there were many patriotic young men who did become supporters of that vile traitor—then let Caelius be reckoned to have been too friendly with Catiline. 'But we know that later on he even became a political adherent of his: we could see it with our own eyes.' Who is denying it? But at the moment I am only defending that period of youth that is by itself unstable, yet threatened by the passions of others. In that period, when I was praetor, Caelius was constantly by my side, and did not know Catiline, who was serving as praetor in Africa. In the year that followed Catiline was tried for extortion; Caelius stayed with me, and did not even appear in support of Catiline at his trial. The next year was the year in which I stood for the consulship; Catiline also stood alongside me. Caelius never attached himself to him, and never separated himself from me.

[11] So it was only after he had spent many years in the forum without any suspicion or any ill repute that he became a supporter of Catiline, when Catiline was standing for the second time. How long do you think his youth should have gone on being protected? Back in my day a single year sufficed for keeping our arms inside our togas, and for our physical training on the Campus Martius, when we wore our tunics; and if we went straight into the army we served a similar probationary period, in the camp and on campaign. At that age, unless a young man could defend himself by his own strictness of conduct and purity of morals, coupled with a stern upbringing and a certain inborn virtue, he could not escape a bad reputation (and justified, too), however closely his own people kept guard over him. But a man who preserved those first beginnings of youth pure and undefiled never had aspersions cast on his reputation and morals, once he had finally grown up and become a man among men.

[12] Yes, he did support Catiline, after he had spent a number of years in the forum, Caelius that is—just as many others did, from every class and of every age. For Catiline had, as I am sure you remember, a great many indications of the highest qualities—not fully developed, mind you, but sketched in outline. He mixed with numerous individuals of bad character; yet he pretended to be devoted to the best of men. He had the effect of degrading those around him; yet he could also stimulate them to effort and hard work. The fires of passion burned within him; yet he was a keen student of military affairs. For my part I do not think the world has ever seen a creature made up of such contrary, divergent, and mutually incompatible interests and appetites.

[13] Who was more agreeable, at one particular time, to men of high rank,* and who more intimate with scoundrels? Who at one time a more patriotic citizen, and who a more loathsome enemy of this country? Who more corrupt in his pleasures, and who more able to endure hard work? Who more avaricious in rapacity, and who more lavish in generosity? That man, gentlemen, had many features that were paradoxical. He had a wide circle of friends, and he looked after them well. What he had, he shared with everyone. He helped all his friends in times of need with money, influence, physical exertion, even, if necessary, with recklessness and crime. He could adapt and control the way he was to suit the occasion, and

twist and turn his nature this way and that. He could be stern with the serious, relaxed with the free-and-easy, grave with the old, affable with the young, daring with criminals, and dissolute with the depraved.

[14] And so this complex, ever-changing character, even when he had collected all the wicked traitors from far and wide, still held many loyal, brave men in his grasp by a sort of pretended semblance of virtue. Indeed, that dastardly attempt to destroy this empire could never have come into being had not that monstrous concentration of so many vices been rooted in certain qualities of skill and endurance.

Therefore, members of the jury, you should reject the prosecution's argument, and refuse to allow my client's association with Catiline to count against him: this is something he has in common with many other people, including some fine patriots. I, I myself, I tell you, was almost taken in by him on one occasion, when I took him to be a loyal citizen, eager to be on good terms with all the best people, and a dependable and faithful friend. I did not believe his crimes until I came upon them with my eyes, or suspect them until I had laid my hands on them. If Caelius was also among his wide circle of friends, it is better that he should be angry with himself at his own mistake (just as I sometimes am about my own misjudgement of Catiline) than that he should have to fear a charge of having been a friend of his." (Cicero *Pro Caelio* 10-14, tr. Berry)

"Lucius Catiline, born of a noble family, had great vigor of both mind and body, but an evil and depraved nature. From an early age he delighted in civil wars, bloodshed, pillage, and political dissension, and amid these he spent his early manhood. His body could endure hunger, cold and want of sleep to an incredible degree. His mind was reckless, cunning, adaptable, capable of any form of pretense or concealment; covetous of others' possessions, he was prodigal of his own; he was intense in his passions; he possessed adequate eloquence, but too little discretion. His insatiable mind always craved the excessive, the incredible, the impossible. After the tyranny of Lucius Sulla,² Catiline had been assailed by the greatest passion for seizing control of the government, and he did not consider it at all important by what means he achieved his objective, provided he gained sovereignty for himself. His fierce spirit was goaded more and more every day by his lack of wealth and a consciousness of his crimes, both of which he had increased by the practices I have already mentioned. He was spurred on, also, by corrupt public morals, which were being exacerbated by two very destructive evils of an opposite character, extravagance and greed." (Sallust *BC* 5)

"10. But when our country had grown strong through toil and the practice of justice, when great kings had been vanquished in war,⁸ savage tribes and mighty peoples subdued by force of arms,⁹ when Carthage, the rival of Rome's dominion, had perished root and branch,¹⁰ and all seas and lands lay open, then Fortune began to be savage and to throw all into confusion. Those who had easily endured toil dangers, uncertain and difficult undertakings, found leisure and wealth, desirable under other circumstances, a burden and a curse. Hence a craving first for money, then for power, increased; these were, as it were, the root of all evils. For avarice subverted trustworthiness, integrity, and other virtuous practices; in place of these, it taught insolence, cruelty, to neglect the gods, to set a price on everything. The desire for advancement drove many mortals to become false; to have one thought locked in their breast, another ready on their tongue; to value friendships and enmities not on their merits but by the standard of self-interest, and to show a good front rather than a good heart. These vices grew little by little at first; from time to time they were punished; later, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the community was changed, and governmental authority, instead of being the most just and best, became cruel and intolerable.

11. But at first men's minds were stirred less by avarice than a desire for advancement—a fault, yet one not so far removed from virtue; for the noble and the ignoble man alike crave for themselves glory, public office, and power; but the former strives by the true path, whereas the latter, being without noble qualities, contends with craft and deception. Avarice entails the pursuit of money, which no wise man covets; avarice, as though steeped with noxious poisons, renders a manly body and mind effeminate; it is always boundless and insatiable; it is lessened neither by plenty nor want. But after Lucius Sulla had regained control of the state by arms^u and brought about bad results despite good beginnings, all men began to rob and pillage; one coveted a house, another lands; the victors showed neither moderation nor restraint, but did shameful and cruel deeds against their fellow citizens. To this was added the fact that Lucius Sulla, so as to secure the loyalty of the army which he had led in Asia, had allowed it luxury and excessive license contrary to our ancestral custom; charming and pleasure-filled places had easily sapped the warlike spirit of his soldiers in their idle moments. There it was that an army of the Roman people first became accustomed to indulge in women and wine; to admire statues, paintings, and chased vessels; to steal them from private houses and public places; to pillage shrines, and to desecrate everything, both sacred and profane. These soldiers, therefore, after they had achieved victory, left nothing to the vanquished. In truth, prosperity tries wise men's souls; still less could men of depraved character like those temper victory.

12. After riches began to be held in honor and led to the acquisition of glory, positions of authority, and political influence, then virtue began to lose its edge, poverty to be considered a disgrace, blamelessness to be regarded as spitefulness malevolence. Therefore, as a result of riches, the youth were suddenly consumed with luxury and greed, together with insolence. They robbed, squandered, valued little their property, coveted that of others; they treated without distinction modesty, chastity, things human and divine; they had no scruples and no moderation.

It is worthwhile, when you have acquainted yourself with houses and villas built on the scale of cities, to visit the temples of the gods fashioned by our forefathers, most reverent mortals. But those men adorned the shrines of the gods with piety, their own homes with glory, while from the vanquished they took nothing except the license to do harm. The men of today, on the contrary, most worthless fellows, through their supreme wickedness take from our allies all that those most courageous men had left them in the hour of victory; as though to do a wrong were precisely what it means to exercise power.” (Sallust BC 10-12)

Reading on imagery:

Gildenhard Part II. Section 1 The Body Politic

Walters, B. 2020 *The Deaths of the Republic: Imagery of the Body Politic in Ciceronian Rome*. pp31-32