

Describe, with evidence from the text, one of two strategies which Cicero uses in the portrayal of Clodia in Cicero's *Pro Caelio*. Then, from the point of view of a prosecutor, outline what arguments you would use as counters.

Pro Caelio is a speech delivered and written by Marcus Tullius Cicero in defence of Marcus Caelius Rufus on the charge of being involved in the murder of a philosopher named Dio¹. The prosecution consisted of Lucius Sempronius Atratinus, whose father, Lucius Calpurnius Bestia, had been charged unsuccessfully by Caelius². Additionally on the prosecution was Caelius' former lover and sister of Clodius, a political enemy of Cicero, Clodia³. The speech consists of Cicero opposing and discrediting the argument of the prosecution, who had given a speech beforehand. He begins with reminding the audience that the court is taking place on a public holiday before immediately suggesting that the reason they attend on such a day is because of one woman⁴, a point Cicero will circle back to multiple times throughout the entire speech. He continues by addressing each of the prosecutions concerns, starting with defending Caelius' actions in his youth and his association with the conspirator Cataline⁵, which Cicero defends by stating that even he was fooled by Cataline. He then diverts the audiences' attention to one of the prosecution's witnesses, Clodia, and spends a significant amount of time discussing her actions and character, as well as her relations to Caelius and the charges he had been accused of⁶. A large amount of the speech is dedicated to victimising Caelius and shifting the blame instead to Clodia, and Cicero concludes by asking the audience to observe Caelius as "a citizen of sound education, sound principles, and sound loyalties,"⁷ and to think of the stress it is causing his father.

Cicero addresses the accusation that Caelius used gold lent to him by Clodia to murder the philosopher Dio, and then his intention to have Clodia poisoned, or, as Cicero states, "so the prosecution claim."⁸ Whilst introducing these two charges, he also addresses what

¹ (Craig, 1989)

² (Dorey, 1958)

³ (McCoy, 2006)

⁴ (Cicero, Cael. 1)

⁵ (Cicero, Cael. 10)

⁶ (Cicero, Cael. 31-35)

⁷ (Cicero, Cael. 77)

⁸ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

he describes as “slander”⁹ from the prosecution, including the implication of Caelius being an “adulterer, pervert, dealer in bribes,”¹⁰ all which Cicero states is not “the language of prosecution.”¹¹ He starts to shift the attention of the audience from Caelius to Clodia in 31, beginning by discussing the transfer of gold between the two parties. Supposedly, Clodia lent Caelius an unspecified amount of gold “without a witness being present”¹² for an undefined amount of time. Cicero uses this event as evidence of Caelius and Clodia sharing a close relationship. Later, in 52, he returns to this concept by discussing whether Caelius shared the reasons for his needing of the gold. Cicero claims that if Clodia asked Caelius what he intended to use the gold for, then she must be complicit in the charge, and if she did not ask him, he wishes to know why. In 53, Cicero states that the prosecution claim “Clodia was kept in the dark,”¹³ and that Caelius lied about what he needed the gold for. His argument against this is that Caelius must not have been as “close of a friend of Clodia’s”¹⁴ as made out when the prosecution were discussing his morals, otherwise he would not have lied to her about what he needed the gold for.

Throughout the speech, Cicero makes attempts to discredit Clodia as a witness as well as present Caelius as a victim of her wrongdoings. Despite later saying that such terms as “adulterer”¹⁵ and “pervert”¹⁶ are slander, he labels Clodia as a prostitute within the first section of the speech. His choice to depict her in such a way would continue throughout the speech, using the grey area of Roman sexual morality to gain favour for his defence. As Langlands states, “the ethical problems of sex are treated at length”¹⁷ by Roman authors. Presenting Clodia as a sexual deviant and pulling her private life into a public forum allows Cicero to, as Leen states, ‘caricature’¹⁸ her as he wishes, which happens to be as a *meretrix*. Doing this casts doubt on the statements made by Clodia during her time on the witness stand and calls the entire case into uncertainty. Such accusations, Cicero states, must either be “explained away”¹⁹ and shown to be untrue, or that Clodia can not be believed.

The argument that Clodia did not know what Caelius intended to use the money for, if he did in fact borrow money and use it to organise the murder of Dio, still could stand,

⁹ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

¹⁰ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

¹¹ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

¹² (Cicero, Cael. 31)

¹³ (Cicero, Cael. 53)

¹⁴ (Cicero, Cael. 53)

¹⁵ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

¹⁶ (Cicero, Cael. 30)

¹⁷ (Langlands, 2006)

¹⁸ (Leen, 2000)

¹⁹ (Cicero, Cael. 35)

regardless of what the audience's, or Cicero's, belief of the relationship between Caelius or Clodia is. Cicero claims that Caelius and Clodia are too good of friends for Caelius to have lied to Clodia, however, Caelius is also displayed by Cicero as an ambitious man who, misguidedly, associated himself with Cataline to further his career. If he was naive enough to associate with Cataline, he could be naive enough to lie to a potential ally to booster himself higher. Another explanation for Caelius lying to Clodia about his reasoning for the gold could be related to the fact they were in a close relationship. Assuming that Caelius was in fact in a close relationship with Clodia, as implied by Cicero's caricature of her as a *meretrix* and his emphasis on Caelius' mistakes as a youth, Caelius may have lied to Clodia about the true intent for the gold to prevent her from knowing in the event he was caught. This would prevent her from being held accountable, assuming he had some care for her, or could prevent her from standing against him, as is occurring, unsuccessfully, in the court. His supposed decision to then poison her could be the result of a panicking young man attempting to cover his tracks.

Cicero's apparent dislike for Clodia can be explained by his personal vendetta against members of her family. Her brother, Clodius, played a part in Cicero's exile in 58BC²⁰. Additionally, Cicero makes a habit out of insulting Romans, specifically women, who do not conform to the standard he defines. The concept of an elite woman especially becoming a *meretrix* would have stigma attached to it²¹. As Crownover suggests, Clodia is likely to have "defied conventions as openly as she pleased"²² due to her status as a free, widowed woman and aristocrat. Cicero does address these concerns, stating he is "restrained by personal enmity"²³ with her brother and "forgetting the wrongs"²⁴ she has done him. However, his consistent decision to shift the blame from Caelius to Clodia and his hypocrisy in using language he claims is 'slander' by the prosecution suggests otherwise.

Cicero's *Pro Caelio* appears more as *In Clodium*, with Cicero's strategy of defence to be the redirection and insult of one of the witnesses to the case, a woman who believed her life to be at risk. His attack on Clodia would result in her disappearance from the public eye²⁵. The depiction of her as a sexual deviant is deliberate to bring the audience to the defences side and to discredit her telling of the story to the jury. His turning around of the

²⁰ (McCoy, 2006)

²¹ (McCoy, 2006)

²² (Crownover, 1934)

²³ (Cicero, Cael. 32)

²⁴ (Cicero, Cael. 50)

²⁵ (Crownover, 1934)

lending of gold to minimise the impact of Caelio on the case and maximise her involvement with the murder that occurred was ultimately successful.

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