



Cicero (/Cicero)

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Cicero (106-43 BCE) The Father of Rhetoric

Definition of Rhetoric = the civilizing moral force that makes human social life possible

De Oratore

= the learned and eloquent orator, the rhetor should know EVERYTHING

- Oratory was essential to Roman government and life, so knowing how to prepare an individual to be morally responsible as an orator was pivotal to the individual's education. Cicero believed that eloquence

was the foundation of civilization. *De Oratore* is Cicero's mature statement on rhetoric



and corrects *De Inventione*. This is presented as a dialogue between Antonius and Crassus where each discusses a common argument in rhetoric.

- Antonius—eloquence can be learned through training /Crassus—eloquence is innate talent that needs practice and knowledge of sophistic rhetoric and philosophy
- Qualities of an orator
 - Broad education
 - distinctive” style in language and delivery
 - full comprehension of the emotions and the ability to rouse and experience emotions simultaneously
 - comprehension of when and how to use humor
 - Cicero *De Oratore* is a dialogue, but nothing like Platonic dialogue. Here it is set speeches, not conversation. Cicero writes learned conversation.
 - Role of orator in Rome was to be a good advisor (juris)
 - Cicero gives theory with practice (Aristotle was just theory). Quintilian took *De Oratore* and turned it into a curriculum. It was lost for 1000 years, then found in 1412 and became basis for renaissance school system. Erasmus made a ton of money producing textbooks for it – it continues to be the model for Latin schools today. Quintilian = Erasmian, Jesuit curriculum
 - Augustine did not write, he dictated, but JDS thinks Cicero did write. What makes Cicero a great writer/orator? He talks writing. His speeches sound like writing (complete control), but they are not written first. Cicero has long sentences – to be able to talk like writing the practice is writing until you talk like that. Talk like writing is enormously impressive with an audience that is not very good at writing – or is very good at writing.
 - Why are there so few great orators? This is where *De Oratore* begins – answer – it’s hard!
 - Cicero wrote philosophical treatises. The Middle Ages saw him as a philosopher, not just as a rhetorician. **Cicero is the philosopher’s rhetorician.** Plato dedicated himself to showing that rhetoric and philosophy together was not possible, but Plato never asked why philosophy was good for the community. He was too focused on helping the individual find Truth.
 - P 325 – excellent summary of topics (way better than Aristotle)
 - P330 – speaker should feel the emotions he/she is trying to convey –method acting 2000 years early
 - JDS things we must know about Cicero –
 - This does not mean they read the law books – there were none
 - Judicial Topics – rhetorician know these separate, special common topics for

law – divided into 3 parts:

- Is it?
- What is it?
- What kind is it?
- These are the things you are supposed to ask in a law case. Each one of these has a whole raft of subquestions
- Roman law was generally made by courts and the government. The courts would announce what kinds of cases they were going to hear. Only the aristocracy knew when the trials were going to be held.
- The law was not really carefully defined, so orators (lawyers) could get away with a lot of stuff – it was all up to the jury. There was no procedural law (this is what we have). The could say anything they wanted.
- Some of Cicero's greatest speeches were shocking. He was also famous for his jokes and ability to ridicule. He was often in exile because not everyone laughed.
- **To be an orator meant politics** – there was no other reason to be an orator. Get education, become *juris prudente* (legal advisor), look for a patron to promote you to judge, censor, tribune, and eventually governor of a colony (corrupt tax collector), or even consul
- All this political stuff is what is behind what a rhetor needs to know. Cicero was a legal reformer, saying, hey – these law guys should know some law.
- **Periodic sentence** – from latin *membra* –portions of a sentence, lots of subordinate clauses that mostly come in beginning, a long time before you get to the main verb – suspended period sentences – you wait and wait for the main verb. What makes the periodic sentence impressive is control. It implies you know everything you are going to say before you open your mouth.
- **Word order** – we are *svo*, which supposedly replicates the thinking order
- Periodic sentence means you thought it all out and then rearranged it. Periodic sentence is always elevated.
- The same control you see in periodic sentence is evident in *De Oratore* writ large – manifests Cicero's superiority – arrangement is amazing.
- **Stasis – the three law questions: is it? What is it? What kind is it?** Stasis theory is what is the state of the case (handy way of interrogating a legal case to make sure you don't miss anything).
 - In Roman legal practice you have to reduce the case to one sentence, being extremely careful with language --

A rhetorician must know the law

JDS important terminology

Cicero and natural talent vs training

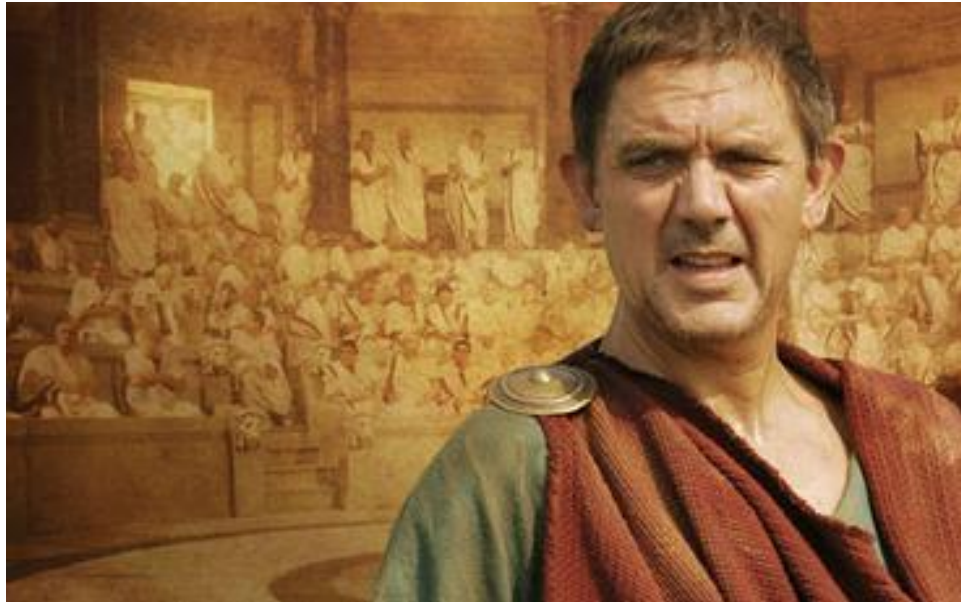
Can you get better through training? **For Cicero it was about education. You HAVE to know stuff – a mind “well-stocked” You also have to have memory** – be able to remember all of the stuff.

- Learning equaled imitation (originality is a romantic value) – began with imitation and took several levels
 - Steal phrases (plagiarize)
 - Replicate organizational pattern (memorize organizational patterns – a stock set of plots)
 - Have to have ability for dissoi logoi – you can see the value of that in law – you want a lawyer to be able to tell you how good the other case is – to see the other side
 - Cicero’s schools were not just language, they also learned to behave – grooming for code of behavior

Cicero Style

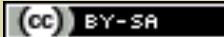
- P 308-309 pure and correct, simple lucidity, elegance, manner befitting the dignity of the topic (decorum/ fittingness) – manner for Cicero is decorum
 - High
 - Middle

- Low
- **The style depends on the SUBJECT**
- Perspicuousness – give every possible argument because you never know what the audience will find important
- **Cicero says rhetoric is wisdom.**
- **For Romans rhetoric is not ethically neutral – it is an education in virtue.** There is a long tradition in rhetoric on teaching virtue - interesting how those virtues change.



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