

Cicero's *orator perfectus*: tasks, challenges, success

A. Material (from Cicero *de oratore*, *Brutus*, *orator*)^{*}

1a) *de orat.* 1,63 [...] neque tamen verum, quod Socrates dicere solebat, omnis in eo, quod scirent, satis esse eloquentis; illud verius: neque quemquam in eo disertum esse posse, quod nesciat, neque, si optime sciat ignarusque sit facundiae ac poliendae orationis, diserte id ipsum, de quo sciat, posse dicere.

[...] what Socrates used to say, that all people are sufficiently eloquent about what they know, is [...] nevertheless untrue. It is nearer the truth to say that no one can express himself well without knowing his subject; nor will anyone, if he knows a subject intimately but is ignorant about how to fashion and polish his speech, be able to express himself well about the very subject he knows.

1b) *de orat.* 1,116 magnum quoddam est onus atque munus suscipere atque profiteri se esse, omnibus silentibus, unum maximis de rebus magno in conventu hominum audiendum; adest enim fere nemo, quin acutius atque acrius vitia in dicente quam recta videat; ita quicquid est, in quo offenditur, id etiam illa, quae laudanda sunt, obruit.

It is a huge burden and a huge responsibility you undertake, when you claim that, before a vast assembly of people where all others stand silent, you alone are to be heard on affairs of the highest importance. For there is hardly anyone in such a crowd who will not notice the speaker's faults with a sharper and more discriminating eye than he does his merits; thus, whatever mistake he makes smothers even his points of excellence.

2a) *orat.* 43 [...] tria videnda sunt oratori: quid dicat et quo quidque loco et quo modo [...]

The orator must consider three things, what to say, in what order, and in what manner and style to to say it.

2b) *Brut.* 110 [...] his quidem non omnino ingenium, sed oratorium ingenium defuit. neque enim refert videre quid dicendum sit, nisi id queas solute et suaviter dicere.

I do not say that these two were quite without talent, but they lacked talent for oratory. For it is not enough to discern what is to be said unless you have the ability to say it fluently and with some charm.

2c) *de orat.* 3,49 [...] quibus rebus adsequi possimus, ut ea, quae dicamus, intellegantur: Latine scilicet dicendo, verbis usitatis ac proprie demonst-

^{*} Translations:

De oratore: James M. May, Jacob Wisse: Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator (De Oratore)*, 2001.

Brutus, Orator: Loeb Classical Library, Cicero vol. V: *Brutus*, by G. L. Hendrickson; *Orator*, by H. M. Hubbell.

tibus ea, quae significari ac declarari volemus, sine ambiguo verbo aut sermone, non nimis longa continuatione verborum, non valde productis eis, quae similitudinis causa ex aliis rebus transferuntur, non discerptis sententiis, non praeposteris temporibus, non confusis personis, non perturbato ordine.

[...] in what ways we can see to it that what we say will be understood – obviously by speaking correct Latin, by employing words in common use that properly designate the things we want to be signified and indicated, by avoiding ambiguous words or language, excessively long periodic sentences, and spun-out metaphors, by not breaking up the train of thought, confusing the chronology, mixing up people, or muddling the order.

3a) *Brut.* 276 [...] tria [...] esse, quae orator efficere deberet, ut doceret, ut delectaret, ut moveret.

[...] there are three things which the orator must effect, to teach to please and to move.

3b) *orat.* 24 semper oratorum eloquentiae moderatrix fuit auditorum prudentia. omnes enim, qui probari volunt, voluntatem eorum, qui audiunt, intuentur ad eamque et ad eorum arbitrium et nutum totos se fingunt et accommodant.

The eloquence of orators has always been controlled by the good sense of the audience, since all who desire to win approval have regard to the goodwill of their auditors, and shape and adapt themselves completely according to this and to their opinion and approval.

3c) *Brut.* 89 [...] ex hac [...] narratione suspicari licet, cum duae summae sint in oratore laudes, una subtiliter disputandi ad docendum, altera graviter agendi ad animos audientium permovendos, multo [...] plus proficiat is, qui inflammet iudicem, quam ille, qui doceat [...].

From this story [...] one may conclude, that of the two chief qualities which the orator must possess, accurate argument looking to proof and impressive appeal to the emotions of the listener, the orator who inflames the court accomplishes far more than the one who merely instructs it.

4a) *Brut.* 142 [...] illud, quod Demosthenem ferunt ei, qui quaesivisset quid primum esset in dicendo, actionem, quid secundum, idem et idem tertium respondisse. nulla res magis penetrat in animos eosque fingit format flectit talisque oratores videri facit, qualis ipsi se videri volunt.

[...] how all this bears out the truth of the dictum attributed to Demosthenes; who when asked what was first in oratory replied to his questioner, “action”, what second, “action”, and again third, “action”. Nothing else so penetrates the mind, shapes, moulds, turns it, and causes the orator to seem such a man as he wills to seem.

5a) *orat.* 55 quo modo autem dicatur, id est in duobus: in agendo et in eloquendo. est enim actio quasi corporis quaedam eloquentia, cum constet e voce atque motu.

Manner of speech falls into two sections, delivery and use of language. For delivery is a sort of language of the body, since it consists of movement or gesture as well as of voice or speech.

5b) *orat.* 59 ac vocis bonitas quidem optanda est; non enim est in nobis, sed tractatio atque usus in nobis.

Certainly natural excellence of voice is to be desired; this is not in our power, but the use and management of the voice is in our power.

5c) *de orat.* 3,41 [...] sed etiam lingua et spiritus et vocis sonus est ipse moderandus. nolo exprimi litteras putidius, nolo obscurari neglegentius; nolo verba exiliter exanimata exire, nolo inflata et quasi anhelata gravius. nam de voce nondum ea dico, quae sunt actionis, sed hoc, quod mihi cum sermone quasi coniunctum videtur: sunt enim certa vitia, quae nemo est quin effugere cupiat; mollis vox aut muliebris aut quasi extra modum absona atque absurda.

[...] but we must also control our tongue, our breath, and the actual sound of our voice. I don't like letters to be overarticulated with too much affectation, and I don't like them to be obscured by being pronounced too carelessly; I don't like words to sound thin by being pronounced with too little breath, and I don't like them to be puffed up and uttered, as it were, with too full and heavy a breath. As to the voice, I am not yet speaking about the points that fall under the category of delivery, but about what, as it seems to me, is somehow connected with the normal use of language. There are, of course, certain faults that everyone wants to avoid: a voice that is soft or effeminate, or unmusically harsh, so to speak, and discordant.

5d) *de orat.* 3,222 oris non est nimium mutanda species, ne aut ad ineptias aut ad pravitatem aliquam deferamur. [...] (223) qua re [...] secundum vocem vultus valet; is autem oculis gubernatur.

We should not alter the appearance of the face itself too much, so as to avoid distorting it or acting like a fool. (223) So the most effective element in our delivery, next to the voice, is the expression of our face; and this is controlled by our eyes.

5e) *Brut.* 225 Sex. Titius, [...] homo loquax sane et satis acutus, sed tam solutus et mollis in gestu, ut saltatio quaedam nasceretur, cui saltationi Titius nomen esset. ita cavendum est, ne quid in agendo dicendove facias, cuius imitatio rideatur.

Sextus Titius was [...] a voluble fellow and not lacking in acuteness, but in bearing so languishing and effeminate that a kind of dance came into vogue which was called "the Titius". It shows what care must be used to avoid anything in style of action or speaking which can be made absurd by imitation.

6a) *orat.* 71 *semperque in omni genere orationis ut vitae, quid deceat, est considerandum; quod et in re, de qua agitur, positum est et in personis, et eorum, qui dicunt, et eorum, qui audiunt.*

The universal rule, in oratory as in life, is to consider propriety. This depends on the subject under discussion, and on the character of both the speaker and the audience.

6b) *orat.* 123 [...] *probabo [...] eum, qui, quid deceat, viderit. haec enim sapientia maxime adhibenda eloquenti est, ut sit temporum personarumque moderator. nam nec semper nec apud omnes nec contra omnes nec pro omnibus [...] eodem modo dicendum arbitror. is erit ergo eloquens, qui ad id, quodcumque decebit, poterit accommodare orationem.*

[...] I shall [...] approve of one who can observe what is fitting. This, indeed, is the form of wisdom that the orator must especially employ – to adapt himself to occasions and persons. In my opinion one must not speak in the same style at all times, nor before all people, nor against all opponents, nor in defence of all clients [...] He, therefore, will be eloquent who can adapt his speech to fit all conceivable circumstances.

B. Discussion

Point out parallels and differences between

Cicero's ideal orator and a modern (school or university) teacher;

keep in mind different styles for lecture, seminar, exercises[...]

C. Exercises

Text 1: From *Hermann Hesse, The Glass Bead Game* (Das Glasperlenspiel), translated by Richard and Clara Winston, 1970, p. 56.

[...] Thus the bulk of former elite pupils find their ultimate destiny as schoolmasters. The tiny remainder, the top flight of the Castalian schools, can devote themselves to free study for as long as they please. A contemplative, diligent intellectual life is reserved for them. Many a highly gifted person who for one reason or another, perhaps some physical defect or quirk of character, is not suited to become a teacher or to hold a responsible post in the superior or inferior Boards of Educators, may go on studying, researching, or collecting throughout his life as a pensioner of the authorities. His contribution to society then consists mostly of works of pure scholarship. Some are placed as advisers to dictionary committees, archives, libraries, and so on; others pursue scholarship as art for art's sake. A good many of them have devoted their lives to highly abstruse and sometimes peculiar subjects, such as Lodovicus Crudelis who toiled for thirty years translating all extant ancient Egyptian texts into both Greek and Sanscrit, or the somewhat peculiar Chattus Calvensis II who has bequeathed to us four immense folio volumes on *The Pronunciation of Latin in the Universities of Southern Italy toward the End of the Twelfth Century*. This work was intended as Part One of a *History of the Pronunciation of Latin from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries*. But in spite of its one thousand manuscript pages, it has remained a fragment, for no one has carried on the work. It is understandable that there has been a good deal of joking about purely learned works of this type. Their actual value for the future of scholarship and for the people as a whole cannot be demonstrated. Nevertheless, scholarship, as was true for art in the olden days, must indeed have far-flung grazing grounds, and in pursuit of a subject which interests no one but himself a scholar can accumulate knowledge which provides colleagues with information as valuable as that stored in a dictionary or an archive.

Exercises, 1.: Reading aloud in small groups

- 1a) Read Text 1 as fast as possible.
- 1b) Read Text 1 in your "normal" speed, make a small pause after each sentence, look up away from the paper, looking every time in the same direction and at the same point (which you choose and announce before beginning).
- 1c) Read Text 1, making pauses not between the sentences, but at least one pause within each sentence, *but*: at the wrong place, so that the sense is disturbed by your pause. (this may be prepared by inserting signs into the text).
- 1d) Read Text 1, making small pauses that help the listeners to follow, *and*: read every sentence with another speed *and* voice (high, deep, loud, quiet, soft, harsh ...).

Exercises, 2.: Observing the speaker

2. Look at the pictures and interpret the "body language" of the speaker; what do the gestures tell you?

Homework: Read the following text every time before you address an audience:

Kurt Tucholsky (1930): RATSCHLÄGE FÜR EINEN SCHLECHTEN REDNER

Fang nie mit dem Anfang an, sondern immer drei Meilen vor dem Anfang! Etwa so: „Meine Damen und meine Herren! Bevor ich zum Thema des heutigen Abends komme, lassen Sie mich Ihnen kurz [...]“

Hier hast du schon so ziemlich alles, was einen schönen Anfang ausmacht: eine steife Anrede; der Anfang vor dem Anfang; die Ankündigung, daß und was du zu sprechen beabsichtigst, und das Wörtchen kurz. So gewinnst du im Nu die Herzen und die Ohren der Zuhörer.

Denn das hat der Zuhörer gern: daß er deine Rede wie ein schweres Schulpensum aufbekommt; daß du mit dem drohst, was du sagen wirst, sagst und schon gesagt hast. Immer schön umständlich.

Sprich nicht frei - das macht einen so unruhigen Eindruck. Am besten ist es: du liest deine Rede ab. Das ist sicher, zuverlässig, auch freut es jedermann, wenn der lesende Redner nach jedem viertel Satz mißtrauisch hochblickt, ob auch noch alle da sind.

Wenn du gar nicht hören kannst, was man dir so freundlich rät, und du willst durchaus und durchum frei sprechen [...] du Laie! Du lächerlicher Cicero! Nimm dir doch ein Beispiel an unsern professionellen Rednern, an den Reichstagsabgeordneten - hast du die schon mal frei sprechen hören? Die schreiben sich sicherlich zu Hause auf, wann sie «Hört! hört!» rufen [...] ja, also wenn du denn frei sprechen mußt.

Sprich, wie du schreibst. Und ich weiß, wie du schreibst.

Sprich mit langen, langen Sätzen - solchen, bei denen du, der du dich zu Hause, wo du ja die Ruhe, deren du so sehr benötigst, deiner Kinder ungeachtet, hast, vorbereitest, genau weißt, wie das Ende ist, die Nebensätze schön ineinandergeschachtelt, so daß der Hörer, ungeduldig auf seinem Sitz hin und her träumend, sich in einem Kolleg wähnend, in dem er früher so gern geschlummert hat, auf das Ende solcher Periode wartet [...] nun, ich habe dir eben ein Beispiel gegeben. So mußt du sprechen.

Fang immer bei den alten Römern an und gib stets, wovon du auch sprichst, die geschichtlichen Hintergründe der Sache. Das ist nicht nur deutsch – das tun alle Brillenmenschen. Ich habe einmal in der Sorbonne einen chinesischen Studenten sprechen hören, der sprach glatt und gut französisch, aber er begann zu allgemeiner Freude so: «Lassen Sie mich Ihnen in aller Kürze die Entwicklungsgeschichte meiner chinesischen Heimat seit dem Jahre 2000 vor Christi Geburt [...] » Er blickte ganz erstaunt auf, weil die Leute so lachten.

So mußt du das auch machen. Du hast ganz recht-. man versteht es ja sonst nicht, wer kann denn das alles verstehen, ohne die geschichtlichen Hintergründe [...] sehr richtig! Die Leute sind doch nicht in deinen Vortrag gekommen, um lebendiges Leben zu hören, sondern das, was sie auch in den Büchern nachschlagen können [...] sehr richtig ! Immer gib ihm Historie, immer gib ihm.

Kümmere dich nicht darum, ob die Wellen, die von dir ins Publikum laufen, auch zurückkommen – das sind Kinkerlitzchen. Sprich unbekümmert um die Wirkung, um die Leute, um die Luft im Saale; immer sprich, mein Guter. Gott wird es dir lohnen.

Du mußt alles in die Nebensätze legen. Sag nie: «Die Steuern sind zu hoch.» Das ist zu einfach. Sag: «Ich möchte zu dem, was ich soeben gesagt habe, noch kurz bemerken, daß mir die Steuern bei weitem [...] » So heißt das.

Trink den Leuten ab und zu ein Glas Wasser vor – man sieht das gern.

Wenn du einen Witz machst, lach vorher, damit man weiß, wo die Pointe ist.

Eine Rede ist, wie könnte es anders sein, ein Monolog. Weil doch nur einer spricht. Du brauchst auch nach vierzehn Jahren öffentlicher Rednerei noch nicht zu wissen, daß eine Rede nicht nur ein Dialog, sondern ein Orchesterstück ist: eine stumme Masse spricht nämlich ununterbrochen mit. Und das mußt du hören. Nein, das brauchst du nicht zu hören. Sprich nur, lies nur, donnere nur, geschichtele nur.

Zu dem, was ich soeben über die Technik der Rede gesagt habe, möchte ich noch kurz bemerken, daß viel Statistik eine Rede immer sehr hebt. Das beruhigt ungemein, und da jeder imstande ist, zehn verschiedene Zahlen mühelos zu behalten, so macht das viel Spaß.

Kündige den Schluß deiner Rede lange vorher an, damit die Hörer vor Freude nicht einen Schlaganfall bekommen. (Paul Lindau hat einmal einen dieser gefürchteten Hochzeitstoaste so angefangen: «Ich komme zum Schluß.») Kündige den Schluß an, und dann beginne deine Rede von vorn und rede noch eine halbe Stunde. Dies kann man mehrere Male wiederholen.

Du mußt dir nicht nur eine Disposition machen, du mußt sie den Leuten auch vortragen - das würzt die Rede.

Sprich nie unter anderthalb Stunden, sonst lohnt es gar nicht erst anzufangen.

Wenn einer spricht, müssen die andern zuhören - das ist deine Gelegenheit! Mißbrauche sie.

RATSCHLÄGE FÜR EINEN GUTEN REDNER

Hauptsätze. Hauptsätze. Hauptsätze.

Klare Disposition im Kopf - möglichst wenig auf dem Papier.

Tatsachen, oder Appell an das Gefühl. Schleuder oder Harfe. Ein Redner sei kein Lexikon. Das haben die Leute zu Hause.

Der Ton einer einzelnen Sprechstimme ermüdet; sprich nie länger als vierzig Minuten. Suche keine Effekte zu erzielen, die nicht in deinem Wesen liegen. Ein Podium ist eine unbarmherzige Sache – da steht der Mensch nackter als im Sonnenbad.

Merk Otto Brahms Spruch: Wat jestrichen is, kann nich durchfalln.

Exercises, 3.: Preparing a presentation

Text 2: *Elaine Fantham, Orator and/et actor*, p. 362-376 in: P. Easterling, E. Hall: *Greek and Roman Actors, Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, Cambridge 2002. (copies are included in the «reader»)

3a) Read Text 2 once, do not take notes; then deliver a short report (2 minutes, offhand) on the main points of the article.

3b) Read the following two passages of Text 2: (p.363f.) “Our own experience [...] For Cicero the stage actor [...] ends the treatise.” Write these passages anew, that is: express the same ideas, using different words, in order to produce a text for a lecture, not for a written article. *And*: compose two variants, for two different audiences and occasions.

3c) Deliver the texts that you produced for 3b in such manner that you seem to speak extempore; tell your listeners what kind of audience they represent.

Exercises, 4.: Handout

4. Compare the two handouts on page 1 and page 13. Point out the mistakes in the layout of p. 13. What do you await of a handout you get at a lecture; how can it support the lecture?

D. Final discussion

Conversations are an *active* method of dialogue. Speeches, on the other hand, are a *latent* dialogue, since they are based on dialogue. Of course, for the duration of the speech, only one person is speaking. But the decisive factor for the structure and the content of a speech and for its success is that it communicates with the audience, involves the listeners. So then, a speech may be defined as the overall number of answers which the speaker, in his role as representative for his audience at a given occasion, has put to himself.

E. Extra exercises if / as required