

Cicero's Sincerity: A Roman Audience Perspective

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Texts cited:

Brutus and *Orator* from the OCT of Wilkins; *De oratore* from the Teubner of Kumaniecki; *Tusculanae Disputationes* from the Teubner of Pohlenz. Translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

I. Expectations of Roman Juries for Emotional Argument

1. Handbook prescriptions. See esp. *Inv.* 1.100-105 [*indignatio*]; 106-109 [*conquestio*]; *Rhet. Her.* 2.47 [*amplificatio*]; among the figures, esp. *Rhet. Her.* 4.55 [*exsuscitatio*].

2. *Orator* 69: Probare necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoria: nam id unum ex omnibus ad obtinendas causas potest plurimum.

To prove is a matter of necessity, to please is a matter of charm, to sway is a matter of victory; for this one thing in most powerful of all for winning cases.

II. To make an effective emotional argument, the speaker must display emotion himself.

3. *De or.* 2. 189-190: Neque fieri potest, ut doleat is qui audit, ut oderit, ut invidet, ut pertimescat aliquid, ut ad fletum misericordiamque deducatur, nisi omnes illi motus, quos orator adhibere volet iudici, in ipso oratore impressi esse atque inusti videbuntur. Quod si fictus aliquis dolor suscipiendus esset et si in eius modi genere orationis nihil esset nisi falsum atque imitatione simulatum, maior ars aliqua forsitan esset requirenda. nunc ego quid tibi, Crasse, quid ceteris accidat, nescio; de me autem causa nulla est cur apud homines prudentissimos atque amicissimos mentiar. non mehercule umquam apud iudices aut dolorem aut misericordiam aut invidiam aut odium dicendo excitare volui, quin ipse in commovendis iudicibus eis ipsis sensibus, ad quos illos adducere vellem, permoverer. neque est enim facile perficere, ut irascatur cui tu veli, iudex, si tu ipse id lente ferre videare; neque ut oderit eum, quem tu velis, nisi te ipsum flagrantem odio ante viderit; neque ad misericordiam adducetur, nisi tu ei signa doloris tui verbis, sententiis, voce, vultu, collacrimatione denique ostenderis. ut enim nulla materies tam facilis ad exardescendum est, quae nisi admoto igni ignem concipere possit, sic nulla mens est tam ad comprehendendam vim oratoris parata, quae possit incendi, nisi ipse inflammatus ad eam et ardens accesserit.

"In fact, it is impossible for the hearer to grieve, to hate, to envy, to become frightened at anything, to be driven to tears and pity, unless the selfsame emotions the orator wants to apply to the juror seem to be imprinted and branded onto the orator himself. Now if, for instance, the grief that we must assume would somehow be unreal and pretended, and if this mode of speaking would involve nothing but deception and imitation and feigning, then we would probably require some quite powerful art. Well, I'm not sure what happens to you, Crassus, or to others; but since I am in the company of great experts who are at the same time my closest friends, I have no reason to lie about myself. I swear to you that every time I have ever wanted to arouse grief or pity or envy or hate in the hearts of jurors through my oratory, I was invariably, while working to stir the jurors, thoroughly stirred myself by the same feelings to which I was trying to lead them. It isn't easy to make a juror

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get angry at the person you choose, if you are seen to take the matter calmly yourself; or to make him hate the person that you want him to, unless he has first seen you burning with hate; or to bring him into a state of pity, unless you have shown him signs of your own grief by your words, thoughts, voice, face, and even by bursting into tears. For no material is so easy to kindle, that it can catch fire unless fire is actually applied to it; likewise, no mind is so susceptible to an orator's power, that it can be set on fire unless the orator who approaches it is burning and all ablaze himself. (tr. May & Wisse)

III. If the orator is not emotionally moved, the jury's expectation requires him to pretend. (In the nature of the case, we have no direct evidence of a jury chiding a speaker for failing to pretend, only their reaction when he does not.)

4. *Brutus* 278: 'Tu istuc, M. Calidi, nisi fingeres, sic ageres? praesertim cum ista eloquentia alienorum hominum pericula defendere acerrime soleas, tuum neglegeres? Ubi dolor, ubi ardor animi, qui etiam ex infantium ingeniis elicere voces et querelas solet? Nulla perturbatio animi, nulla corporis, frons non percussa, non femur; pedis, quod minimum est, nulla supplisio. Itaque tantum afit ut inflammares nostros animos, somnum isto loco vix tenebamus.'

'Come now, Marcus Calidius, would you present your case in that way if it were not all a figment of your imagination? And that eloquence of yours, which you have always used so vigorously for the defence of others, is it credible that you should fail to invoke it for your own? What trace of anger, of that burning indignation, which stirs even men quite incapable of eloquence to loud outbursts of complaint against wrongs? But no hint of agitation in you, neither of mind nor of body! Did you smite your brow, slap your thigh, or at least stamp your foot? No. In fact, so far from touching my feelings, I could scarcely refrain from going to sleep then and there.' (tr. Hendrickson & Hubbell)

See also the case of P. Rutilius Rufus at *De or.* 1.229-230.

5. *De Or.* 3.214-215 [Crassus on expressive delivery]: Haec ideo dico pluribus, quod genus hoc totum oratores, qui sunt veritatis ipsius actores, reliquerunt, imitatores autem veritatis histriones occupaverunt. ac sine dubio in omni re vincit imitationem veritas; sed ea si satis in actione efficeret ipsa per sese, arte profecto non egeremus. verum quia animi permotio, quae maxime aut declaranda aut imitanda est actione, perturbata saepe ita est ut obscuretur ac paene obruatur, discutienda sunt ea, quae obscurant, et ea, quae sunt eminentia et prompta sumenda.

I am talking about this in some detail because the orators, who act in real life, have abandoned this entire field, while the actors, who are only imitators of reality, have appropriated it. And no doubt, reality always has the advantage over imitation. Yet if reality by itself were sufficiently effective in delivery, we would have no need for any art at all. But emotions, which must especially be expressed or imitated through delivery, are often so confused that they are obscured and almost smothered. So we must get rid of what obscures them and embrace their more prominent and most clearly visible features. (tr. May & Wisse)

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6. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.43: oratorem denique non modo accusantem, sed ne defendentem quidem probant sine aculeis iracundiae, quae etiam si non adsit, tamen verbis atque motu simulandam arbitrantur, ut auditoris iram oratoris incendat actio.

Moreover, they disapprove of the orator who speaks for the prosecution or even for the defense without the stimulus of anger. They think that even if the orator is not angry himself, he should still make a show of anger in his words and gestures, so that his delivery may kindle anger in the hearer. (tr. Graver)

Tusc. Disp. 4.55: Oratorem vero irasci minime decet, simulare non dedecet. Indeed, it is not at all appropriate for an orator to become angry. It is not inappropriate to pretend.

The boundaries of ethos

7. *De or.* 2.194: qua re nolite existimare me ipsum, qui non heroum veteres casus fictosque luctus vellem imitari atque adumbrare dicendo -- neque actor essem alienae personae, sed auctor meae -- cum mihi M'. Aquilius in civitate retinendus esset, quae in illa causa peroranda fecerim, sine magno dolore fecisse.

So, do not imagine that I (who have no desire to use my speeches for imitating and sketching out the ancient misfortunes and unreal, fictional griefs of heroes—I am not an actor of another's character, but the author of my own) – do not imagine that I didn't feel enormous grief in doing what I did when concluding my speech for Manius Aquilius, when I had to preserve his status as a citizen. (tr. May & Wisse)

The requirements of decorum

8. *De or.* 2.337 Ad consilium autem de re publica dandum caput est nosse rem publicam; ad dicendum vero probabiliter nosse mores civitatis; qui quia crebro mutantur, genus quoque orationis est saepe mutandum;

While the fundamental requirement for giving advice about affairs of State is to know the affairs of State, that for speaking persuasively is to know the character of the community. (tr. May & Wisse)

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