

# What is rhetoric/oratory?

It is the art of speech for persuasive purposes.

# The three types of rhetoric

- Forensic/judicial: speeches in law courts
- Deliberative/political: speeches on political matters
- Epideictic/ceremonial: speeches to show off one's skills or mark an occasion

# Aristotle's Three Methods of Persuasion

- *Ethos* (credibility of the speaker)
- *Logos* (reasoned argument and evidence)
- *Pathos* (playing on the audience's emotions)

# Cicero's Five Canons of Oratory

- *inventio*
- *dispositio*
- *elocutio*
- *memoria*
- *actio*

# First Canon: *inventio*

- The thinking-up of arguments to make
- *Stasis*: asking questions to decide what the point of debate was

## Questions to find *Stasis*

Did he do it?

What did he do?

Was it just/expedient?

Is this the right venue for this issue?

## Kind of Question

of Fact

of Definition

of Quality

of Jurisdiction

## Kind of *Stasis*

Conjectural Stasis

Definitional Stasis

Qualitative Stasis

Translative Stasis

# Aristotle's Topics of Invention: Common Topics I

Definition

Genus / Species

Division

Whole / Parts

Subject / Adjuncts

Comparison

Similarity / Difference

Degree

# Aristotle's Topics of Invention: Common Topics II

## Relationship

Cause / Effect

Antecedent / Consequence

Contraries

Contradictions

## Circumstances

Possible / Impossible

Past Fact / Future Fact

# Aristotle's Topics of Invention: Common Topics III

## Testimony

Authorities

Witnesses

Maxims or Proverbs

Rumors

Oaths

Documents

Law

Precedent

The supernatural

Notation and Conjugates (arguing about word definitions)



# Aristotle's Topics of Invention: Special Topics

## Judicial

- justice (right)

- injustice (wrong)

## Deliberative

- the good

- the unworthy

- the advantageous

- the disadvantageous

## Ceremonial

- virtue (the noble)

- vice (the base)

# Second Canon: dispositio

- Organising your points in a logical order, usually:
- *exordium*: the **introduction**
- *narratio*: statement of the **facts**
- *partitio*: division (**outline** of what one will be saying in the speech)
- *confirmatio*: **Proof** of one's own points (main body of speech)
- *refutatio*: **Refutation** of opponent's points
- *peroratio*: **conclusion**

# Third Canon: *elocutio*

- Style: writing out the actual words of the speech and ornamenting them by diction and rhetorical devices
- Here the orator may use many different stylistic techniques (see <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/> and the HSC Latin Continuers syllabus for examples)
- It is essential that he/she not commit solecisms (errors of language), as this distracts from *ethos*.

## Fourth Canon: *memoria*

- Memorise the speech: no palm cards allowed!
- Memory palace technique may help

# Fifth Canon: *actio*

- Performance of the speech
- Modulate your:
  - Posture – stand straight with pride, collapse with grief, etc.
    - don't lose control of your toga!
  - Voice – must be pleasing in tone
    - must be loud enough to reach your audience, but still have room for volume and pitch changes to keep things interesting
  - Facial expressions and gestures as appropriate – nothing too extreme

# Progymnasmata

Exercises for students of rhetoric

# I: Fable

- Retell a fable, adding more detail and changing indirect speech to direct.
- Example: The parts of the body were debating about the usefulness of each. They all turned against the stomach, which merely took in food, and decided not to feed it. Only when the body began to starve did they realise that the stomach was essential, as are all parts of the body.

## II: Narration

- Retell a story clearly, concisely, believably, and with good use of language. Retell it from the middle, both backwards and forwards, to demonstrate your understanding of it.
- Example: Tell the story of Apollo and Daphne.



# III: Anecdote (chreia)

- Tell an anecdote about something a wise person said
- Praise the person or the anecdote, rephrase what they said, explain why it was said, say what happens if the opposite advice is followed, give an analogy, give an example, quote ancient authors saying the same, conclude.
- Example: Gandalf said that not all that glitters is gold.

# IV: Proverb

- Discuss a saying.
- Praise the saying, rephrase it, explain why it is said, say what happens if the opposite advice is followed, give an analogy, give an example, quote ancient authors saying the same, conclude.
- Example: “Don’t judge a book by its cover”

# V: Refutation

- Refute a story (usually mythological)
- Discredit those who tell the story, explain the story, then explain why it is unclear, implausible, impossible, inconsistent, improper, and pointless.
- Example: Refute the story of Apollo and Daphne.

# VI: Confirmation

- Give your support to a story
- Praise those who tell the story, explain the story, then explain why it is clear, plausible, possible, consistent, proper, and useful.
- Example: Confirm the story of Apollo and Daphne.

# VII: Commonplace

- Criticise a vice or a type of person
- Steps:
  - Begin with the opposite
  - Explain what the actual vice/type of person is that you're discussing
  - Compare something better with the thing attacked
  - Attack the motivation
  - Quote a proverb
  - Digress, criticising an imagined fault in the person's life
  - Reject the idea of pitying such a person
  - Consider the following topics: legality, justice, expediency, practicability, honour, consequences
- Example: a tyrant

# VIII: Encomium

- Praise a person (or sometimes a thing)
- Steps:
  - Introduction
  - Describe their background (their nationality, ancestors, parents)
  - Their upbringing (education, instruction in art, instruction in law)
  - Their deeds
  - How their deeds are the results of their excellent qualities of mind, body, and fortune
  - Compare them favourably to someone else
  - Conclude either with a prayer or by encouraging your hearers to copy the person
- Example: Harry Potter

# IX: Invective

- Attack a person (or sometimes a thing)
- Steps:
  - Introduction
  - Describe their background (their nationality, ancestors, parents)
  - Their upbringing (education, instruction in art, instruction in law)
  - Their deeds
  - How their deeds are the results of their flawed qualities of mind, body, and fortune
  - Compare them unfavourably to someone else
  - Conclude either with a prayer or by encouraging your hearers not to copy the person
- Example: Voldemort

# X: Comparison

- Compare two people in parallel
- Steps:
  - Introduction
  - Describe their background (their nationality, ancestors, parents)
  - Their upbringing (education, instruction in art, instruction in law)
  - Their deeds
  - How their deeds are the results of their various qualities of mind, body, and fortune
  - Conclude either with a prayer or by encouraging your hearers to copy one or both of the people
- Example: Achilles and Hector



# XI: Impersonation

- Compose and perform a speech for someone (real or imaginary), fitting the speech to the person's personality and style of speaking, and focusing on past, present, and future.
- Example: What might Odysseus have said after the fall of Troy?

# XII: Description

- Describe a person, place, or thing in detail
- Example: The Sydney Harbour Bridge

# XIII: Thesis/Theme

- Discuss a topic with pros and cons.
- Use the following divisions:
  - introduction
  - *narratio* (if appropriate)
  - Pro/con arguments on each of: legality, justice, expediency, practicability, decency, consequences
  - conclusion.
- Example: Should one marry?

# XIV: Defend/Attack a Law

- Discuss a law with pros and cons.
- Use the following divisions:
  - introduction
  - *narratio* (if appropriate)
  - Pro/con arguments on each of: legality, justice, expediency, practicability, decency, consequences
  - conclusion.
- Example: A law that causing death by a king-hit should be considered murder.

# Declamation

Practice orations

# Two types of Declamation

- *Suasoria*: Giving advice to a historical or mythological character on what course of action to take (deliberative oratory)
- *Controversia*: Arguing one or both sides of a legal case (forensic oratory)

# *Suasoria* examples

- Should Alexander the Great, having conquered all Europe, set sail to discover more places to conquer?
- Should Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, to persuade the gods to let the Greek army sail to Troy?
- Antony has given Cicero a choice: be executed, or burn all his writings. Which should he do?

# *Controversia* examples

- A man told his wife that he intended to marry his daughter to a certain man; the wife replied, “She will die sooner than marry him”. The daughter died of poison before the wedding day. The man put his wife’s slave-girl to torture, who said that she knew nothing about any poison, but did know that the wife had been having an affair with the man her daughter was to marry. The father accuses his wife of poisoning and adultery.
- Some slave-dealers entering Italy dressed an especially valuable slave in a *toga praetexta* (the garment of a freeborn boy) in order to avoid paying import taxes on him. He now claims that by doing so they have freed him.
- A son has left his father’s home to study medicine abroad. The father falls sick, and no doctor can cure him. The son returns and gives his father a potion which he claims will cure him, but when the father drinks it, he cries out that he has been poisoned, and dies. The son drinks the rest of the potion and is unharmed, but is charged with patricide.