

Discussion



TERENCE The famous play by Terence called *The Brothers* is one of the finer pieces of theatre belonging to antiquity. It concerns how best to raise a child, how best to educate them, and to a lesser extent what is better: town or country. There are many interesting characters in this instructive and philosophical play, but for the purposes of this assignment I will focus on Micio, the older brother bachelor of Demea whose two sons are the subject of the play more than any other characters. Their education is the key plot point of the play.

For many Romans of ancient times there were many public policy issues to discuss, among the most important: where is the best place to educate someone—in the city or the country. Two brother try to raise two brothers according to these different standards. Micio, the older brother, raises his nephew, Aeschinus, in the city. Micio is kind and genial and open-minded. You would probably describe him as a cosmopolitan who, because he lives in a city, knows he must be tolerant because cities are full of many different kinds of people. In a comparison between the two brothers most people would agree that Micio is the better man and provides a better education to his nephew than Demea does. He is a responsible individual and knows that it is important in life to keep one's words to one's fellows. He also knows that so much depends on how a person is raised: their whole life can be decided in their education. He is a liberal but responsible individual.

Micio sometimes lies, but usually he is an honest person. He is patient and has an open-mind and he also leads an exciting life. I think many people would be happy to have him as an uncle. The contrast between him and his brother is so clear, that Micio often appears in a good light. By the end of this

play and his eventual marriage I found I had a good deal of respect for Micio and wish he had educated me.