

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

Joy Connolly: The State of Speech

is published by Princeton University Press and copyrighted, © 2007, by Princeton University Press. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher, except for reading and browsing via the World Wide Web. Users are not permitted to mount this file on any network servers.

Follow links for Class Use and other Permissions. For more information send email to: permissions@pupress.princeton.edu

Introduction

RHETORIC AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

JUST AS ROME'S LEGIONS left their mark on the map of Europe, Roman ideas about citizenship and constitutions helped frame Western political thought. The concept of individual liberty guaranteed by law, the beliefs that the end of political rule is the common good and that the community stands and falls on the civic virtue of its citizens, a strong notion of collective identity expressed in terms of cultural solidarity and common love for the fatherland—these compose the core of republican political ideas that, through the texts of Sallust, Cicero, Vergil, and Livy, were revived starting in the twelfth century by European thinkers seeking to develop alternatives to feudal government, and that remain matters of concern to political theorists today.¹ In this book I pursue a new approach to republican political thought in Rome, one that explores notions of civic virtue and collective identity in texts that seek to guide and govern public speech—in writings belonging to the discipline known since Plato's time as rhetoric. I treat rhetoric, especially the work of Cicero, as an extended engagement with the ideals and demands of republican citizenship. Above all, I concentrate on rhetoric's representation of the ideal orator, which I read as an exploration of the ethos of the ideal citizen. Just like the persuasive speech he utters, this citizen is a complex, paradoxical construction, at once imperious and responsive, masterly and fragile, artificial and authentic, who seeks civil concord through the exercise of seductive authority.

Active, reactive, and rich with resources for self-reflection, rhetoric in Rome always meant much more than learning to deliver a speech, which is why it has lived for so many centuries not in dusty library corners or the memories of curious antiquarians but at the center of European culture, in monasteries, rural schools, and royal courts. One of the three members of the trivium of the liberal arts, along with grammar and dialectic, rhetoric constituted the core of study for educated Romans by (at the latest) the first century BCE. With the emergence of a cosmopolitan Greek- and Latin-speaking elite in urban centers across the empire, rhetoric formed the pedagogical and political bedrock of a common imperial culture stretching from Spain to Syria and from southern Britain to north

¹ "We obey nothing and no one but our own laws," Sallust, *Hist.* 1.55; "all of us are slaves to the law so that we may be free," Cicero, *Cluent.* 146: discussion in Viroli, *Republicanism*, 47–52, 69–76, 79–90.

Africa, creating a literal language of *imperium* that was preserved by Rome's European and Byzantine descendants and their global colonies. Transmitted in the form of technical handbooks of logic and composition, the study of classical rhetoric spurred early modern practices of politics and political communication, and survives today in literary criticism, writing manuals, and even self-help books on fashion and public speaking.²

Rhetoric arises from the practice of oratory, acts of formal speaking before citizens gathered together—political orations, sermons, law court arguments—and also bears the influence of artistic performances and casual exchanges of conversation. All these practices, in different ways, influence the formation of civic identity and relate directly to the exercise of popular sovereignty and the achievement of social justice. Not only will we better understand classical Rome and the political work done by the spoken word in senate and Forum, we will also enrich our own political culture, I propose, if we examine Roman rhetoric's contribution to ideals of civic identity—if we explore the meaning, in rhetorical discourse, of dialogue, civility, and compromise, of the expression and the critique of traditional authority, the limits of reason, and love of country.

However remotely we sense the connection, each of us is a member of a political community. At the same time, we are all individual subjects, isolated bundles of sensation, imagination, memory, and desire. What shapes us as subjects from without, and enables us to reach out to other citizens from within, is language, the spoken word. "There is no way we could be inducted into personhood except by being initiated into a language," Charles Taylor asserts, citing George Herbert Mead's contention that we emerge as selves out of our common embedding in "webs of interlocution."³ Concerned as they are with interlocution, rhetorical texts shed light on the process by which language connects human beings within the community and effects change in the world. Eloquence is power: the power to convey ideas and information, to persuade, and to bring pleasure: *docere movere delectare*.⁴ "It is easily understood how much we owe to language," Thomas Hobbes wrote in *Man and Citizen*, echoing Isocrates and Cicero,

by which we, having been drawn together and agreeing to covenants, live securely, happily, and elegantly: we can so live, I insist, if we so will. But

² On the place of rhetoric in the early modern period, see Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 23–48; a finer-grained picture emerges in Cox, "Ciceronian rhetoric in Italy, 1250–1360," esp. 284–88, and Ward, "Rhetorical theory and the rise and decline of *dictamen*," 192–93, 211–15. On the return of rhetoric in other fields, Bender and Wellbery, "Rhetoricality," provide a good guide and bibliography.

³ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 36.

⁴ "Eloquence is power": John Quincy Adams, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, 1.26. To Gorgias, rhetoric is *dunamis* (*Encom.* 4); to Cicero, *vis* (*Brut.* 64).

language also hath its disadvantages; namely because man, alone among the animals, on account of the universal signification of names, can create general rules for himself in the art of living just as in the other arts; and so he alone can devise errors and pass them on for the use of others. . . . Therefore by speech man is not made better, but only given greater possibilities. (1.3)

No practice is more central to politics than communication, and to the Roman writers that I discuss in this book, as to Hobbes, no act of communication exists in isolation from moral judgment. If philosophy may be “divided into three branches, natural philosophy, dialectic, and ethics,” Cicero declares in his dialogue *de Oratore* (*On the Orator*), “let us relinquish the first two,” but, he continues, rhetoric must lay claim to ethics, “which has always been the property of the orator; . . . this area, concerning human life and customs, he must master” (1.68). It is crucial to understand from the start that Cicero is not principally concerned in his rhetorical writings with the ethical formation of the private individual but with a civic ideal whose dynamic constitution reflects the constitution of the republic, what I call the state of speech. This is a key difference between my work and that of previous studies of self-fashioning in classical rhetoric that have concentrated on the formation of the internal self, its construction through self-contemplation, and its grasp of its relation to the external world.

The resources rhetoric offers the republic are rich. Classical rhetoric nowhere offers a robust theory of knowledge that can compete with the epistemologies of Plato and other philosophers, but it seeks, in the competition it cultivates with philosophy, to understand and refine the processes by which citizens make decisions and consensus is forged—in short, the ways in which public knowledge, if not philosophical knowledge, is determined. Roman rhetorical writings are also, of course, the textual articulations of a particular political form: they constitute a theoretical and practical discourse of power in the republic (*res publica*).⁵ The demanding blend of bodily and mental skills involved in rhetorical training, which combined and mingled rival discourses of traditional senatorial authority, logical reasoning, literary knowledge, deportment, theatrical strategies of popular appeal, and sheer pleasure in the grain of the voice, prescribed normative practices of identity formation designed to reflect the values of the Roman governing class and reinforce its traditional dominance.

It is not surprising that Roman rhetoric has played a historically significant role in welding what would come to be the Western ideal of

⁵ I have avoided translating *res publica* with the English “state,” given its modern bureaucratic implications. For the broader term *civitas*, I have generally preferred “polity” or “political community” and, when it is used to describe a Greek city (polis), “city-state.”

civic identity, the *vir civilis*, to properties like glory-seeking and autonomy that are associated with masculinity—with important consequences for the cultures of modern democratic republics and the experiences of non-*viri* in them. Not every *homo* is a *vir*: all women stand outside the circle, in the company of the poor, immigrants, and other classes legally or culturally determined to lack the authority necessary to act in the political arena.⁶ What is surprising, and what I seek to show, is how in its exposure of persuasive language's power to sway, mislead, theatricalize, distract, and delight, rhetorical discourse reveals unexpected (if often explicitly disavowed) points of resemblance between the reason and honorable authority of free citizen men and the confusion and abjection that is supposed to be everyone else's lot.

Rhetoric's peculiar power to absorb the other renders it a useful lens through which to observe and understand the workings of republican politics. Though it certainly seeks to discipline language and behavior according to standards imagined to embody elite norms, its appropriation of purportedly alien elements means that its prescriptions construct political power in terms of communication—as fundamentally *dialogic* in nature—thus illuminating how authority, resistance, and consent achieve expression and interact with one another in the world. Rhetoric sets limits on the arbitrary exercise of authority (itself an object of republican law, which protects citizens from arbitrary interference) by figuring it as a practice constrained in part by “natural law,” in part by the consensual standard of public approval. Rhetorical discourse, I argue, directly reflects and mediates the historical negotiation of power in the Roman republic among members of the elite senatorial order and between that order and the citizenry, a relation expressed in the well-known formula *Senatus Populusque Romanus*.

Further, though it is constructed as an elite domain, rhetoric operates as a discourse of citizenship in a broader sense, the collection of rights and obligations that endows individuals with a formal legal identity as free, male, and Roman.⁷ The gap that exists between the citizen-subject that rhetoric theorizes and any identifiable person in the real world is carefully fostered by writers who seek to preserve rhetorical training in the elite domain, and in this effort they largely succeed. It is a peculiarity of Roman education that many teachers were slaves or freedmen, but the

⁶ Walters, “Invading the Roman body,” points out that “not all males are men” in the sense that *viri* connotes: not only manly in behavior (and indeed some *viri* are not) but free and economically independent (32).

⁷ On citizenship theory: Walzer, “Citizenship,” broadly surveys the evolution of the notion; Turner, “Citizenship studies,” discusses sociological theories of citizenship. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*, argues that the desire to exclude is the driving force behind political theory as such, a view that supports my treatment of rhetoric (a discourse intent on excluding improper modes of speech) as a mode of political thought.

enslaved and otherwise disadvantaged people were excluded from the student ranks. One of my aims, however, is to explore the ways in which the rhetoricians' ideas fail to make a perfect match with their elite agenda, thus creating an opening that more than a few readers, centuries later, would try to exploit.⁸

After a century or so during which rhetoric took a back seat to other areas of Western culture, classicists and scholars of early modernity have taken up its study with renewed energy.⁹ Influenced by the New Historicism, cultural materialism, performance theory, and psychoanalysis, they have explored the ways in which oratory enables the "performance" of identity, the psychological antinomies embedded in the harsh self-disciplines of self-fashioning, and the relations between persuasion and ancient theories of optics, the origins of language, and epistemology. Studies of Latin drama, elegy, and epic have shown how rhetorical strategies originally designed for public persuasion seeped into literary texts, and vice versa.¹⁰ Rhetoric's role in transmitting and inculcating masculinist and imperialist values, from the infant's first controlled vocalizations to the adolescent's advanced exercises in declamation, makes it a major resource for scholars seeking insight into the history of notions of class, gender, and national identity.¹¹ Cicero, always intensively studied for the light his work sheds on the chaotic political developments of the 60s through the 40s BCE and on Hellenistic philosophy, has recently found more readers for his rhetorical and political theory. He is being reread by scholars interested in the transmission of traditional ideology; his "invention" of Roman high culture in his dialogues, especially *Brutus*, a history of rhetoric, has played an important role in studies of intellectual life in Rome; and his abiding interest in self-promotion through self-presentation, once the object of withering accusations of self-importance, has enriched studies of Roman self-fashioning.¹²

⁸ One provocative piece of this history is explored by Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power*, which traces the way American colonies framed their own models of eloquence in order "to speak back to the imperial center" in narratives that brought (for instance) Native Americans into the domain of "republican" rhetoric (117).

⁹ And other disciplines: Bender and Wellbery, "Rhetoricity," and Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, survey the rise and fall of the discipline in philosophical and literary studies.

¹⁰ On the interaction between rhetoric and various literary genres, see the essays in part 3 of Dominik, *Roman Eloquence*; also Keith, "Slender verse," an insightful discussion of the overlap of aesthetic terms in elegy and rhetorical theory.

¹¹ On Roman rhetoric: Gleason, *Making Men*; Bloomer, *Latinity and Literary Society at Rome*; Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity and Declamation, Paternity, and Roman Identity*; Narducci, *Cicerone e l'Eloquenza Romana*; Richlin; "Gender and rhetoric"; Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*; Vasaly, *Representations*.

¹² For example, on aristocratic values (including competition): Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter*, Hall, "Social evasion and aristocratic manners," Fantham, *The Roman World of Cicero's De Oratore*; on the construction of Roman cultural history: Habinek, "Ideology

While the story I want to tell about the political polyvalence of rhetoric draws gratefully on these developments, it is directly inspired by two different intellectual encounters with Roman antiquity, one in early modernity and the other currently under way. When the humanists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gradually uncovered and circulated the full range of Cicero's and Quintilian's writings on rhetoric, their elation stemmed not only from the philological and exemplary value of the works but also from their obvious importance to developments in political thought that contemporary social and political changes rendered urgent and necessary—the emerging understanding of human social life “as a universality of participation rather than a universal for contemplation.”¹³ Classically educated men in early modernity viewed ancient rhetoric as a way to reframe questions of citizenship and the aims of the political community in terms of dialogue and persuasion rather than scripture or edict, and as a source of practical techniques for life in a world where the paradigm and the vocabulary of governance were undergoing radical epistemic change. From the medieval practice of teaching secretarial skills (concentrating on the production of official documents), new genres emerged, the most important being panegyric histories of city-states and political advice manuals, that were heavily indebted to Cicero and Quintilian. Scholars seeking to examine virtue outside the field of Catholic theology treated the rhetorical writings of Aristotle and Cicero as practical manuals for the application of their moral philosophy. In the 1260s, Brunetto Latini mixed Greek and Latin historical, philosophical, and rhetorical traditions in his claim that of the three types of government, the popular is the best, and “the chief science in relation to the government of cities is that of rhetoric, that is, of the science of speech.”¹⁴ Two centuries later, working within the classical tradition of panegyric rhetoric, the Florentine Leonardo Bruni found linguistic and ideological resources with which to bolster civic identity and to call citizens to take part fully in the life of the city: this is the driving force behind his *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis*, modeled on Aelius Aristides' Panathenaic oration in the early years of the fifteenth century, and his 1428 speech in praise of Nanni Strozzi.

The old argument over the aims and sources of work like Latini's and Bruni's—whether it should be given the political label of “civic humanism” or the ideologically nonaligned tag “rhetorical humanism”—does not

for an empire in the prefaces of Cicero's dialogues”; on Ciceronian self-fashioning, Riggsby, “Pliny on Cicero and oratory: Self-fashioning in the public eye”; now Dugan, *Making a New Man*, esp. 31–39, 104–68, 267–87.

¹³ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 75.

¹⁴ Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, cited in Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, I. 40.

diminish the fact that the two men and their contemporaries cast their revival of the classical rhetorical tradition as the reincarnation of a certain kind of political knowledge. These intellectual developments, against the turbulent background of papal, noble, and kingly conflicts, provided the foundation for modern political thought.¹⁵ The self-contained, civil Roman of eloquence and reason praised by Castiglione, Puttenham, Elyot, Peacham, and Vives is the direct ancestor of the rational moral agent of Locke and Hobbes, Rousseau and Kant, and distant but related kin to the moral agent of Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, and K. Anthony Appiah.

The second encounter with Rome that shapes this study began in the middle of the twentieth century, with the paradigm shift in American history and political thought that has been described as having a Kuhnian scale and dynamics.¹⁶ At that time, “republicanism”—variously referred to as a vocabulary, a concept, a style of thought, a conception, a set of attitudes, a disposition—vaulted into dominance as a way of explaining the war of independence and subsequent developments in the making of the U.S. Constitution, and American political culture more generally.¹⁷ Early in the twentieth century, American intellectual historians and political theorists had been split mainly according to their stand on the interpretation of American political culture advanced by Charles Beard just before and after World War I. Beard portrayed America as a nation-state constituted through an ongoing conflict of class interests, founded by men intent on warding off economic revolution and protecting their own extensive interests.¹⁸ In subsequent decades, liberal historians seeking to do better justice to American cultural identity—its individualism, ambition, legalism, moderation, and high valuing of property and capital—enshrined John Locke as the source of American revolutionary identity and the constitutional thinking of the founders. Republicanism seemed

¹⁵ An example worth examining is Marsiglio of Padua, whose allegiance to the Holy Roman Emperor led him (somewhat paradoxically) to produce one of the earliest revivals of classical republicanist notions of government and accountability, by way of Franciscan criticism of papal intervention in the secular sphere.

¹⁶ Rodgers, “Republicanism: The career of a concept,” 11.

¹⁷ All terms regularly appearing in the three scholarly works that opened the floodgates of republicanism studies in the late 1960s and 1970s: Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*; Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*.

¹⁸ Beard, *The Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913), *Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy* (1916), and *The Economic Basis of Politics* (1922). Rodgers, “Republicanism,” describes his work as the first modern paradigm of American history, followed by Louis Hartz’s liberal response that American culture is notable for its consensus around key Lockean doctrines, ranging from the protection of property to preference for a relatively limited form of government, in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955).

to offer a third way between radical and liberal approaches; it explained much about the civic culture of the early United States, particularly its habit of citing ancient Rome as a model, and its persistent, paradoxical blend of tolerance and exclusionism, hopeful optimism and fundamentalist fear.¹⁹ The paranoiac strains of Puritan oratory, the identification of white manly virtue with citizenship, institutionalizing prejudices against women and people of color, and the stubborn national penchant for “country” culture in an increasingly urbanized and cosmopolitan society—these are examples of phenomena that historians sought to explain by seeking the roots of the American experiment in the republican theorists of an earlier modernity, from Machiavelli to James Madison.

The intensity of this debate in American historical studies has faded, but not before exerting an enduring influence on political theory.²⁰ Two issues of importance in the move to recuperate the republican tradition are most relevant to this book: the intrinsic value of political deliberation and civic virtue. Political theorists exploring a middle way between liberalism and republicanism tend to be concerned with social fragmentation, widespread apathy among citizens, and the general impoverishment of political discourse, and they find an exemplary model of citizen activism in the classical republican tradition’s definition of active citizenship as the best pursuit in life. One prominent advocate of democratic participation, Cass Sunstein, has blended the language of classical republicanism with deliberative democracy theory in his argument that the revolution in communication technologies makes possible new “town halls,” flexible, virtual modes of political participation that bind citizens more tightly together in the shared enterprise of democratic government.²¹

¹⁹ “Republicanism was the distinctive political consciousness of the entire Revolutionary generation”: Kelley, “Ideology and political culture from Jefferson to Nixon,” 536.

²⁰ Notwithstanding claims like those of Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, who dismisses republicanism as an impossible ideal (294–98). Of the large scholarly literature critical of the modern “revival” of republicanism, milestones include the early response of Herzog, “Some questions for republicans,” which argues that republicanism offers no advantages that it does not covertly draw from liberalism (490); and Nippel, “Ancient and modern republicanism,” and McCormick, “Machiavelli against republicanism,” both pointing out that it “guarantees the privileged position of elites more than it facilitates political participation by the general populace” (McCormick, 615). Ignatieff, “Republicanism, ethnicity, and nationalism,” is skeptical about the republican love of country best expressed in Viroli, *For Love of Country*; Phillips, “Feminism and republicanism: Is this a plausible alliance?” sees republicanism as an “uneasy ally” for feminism because of its masculinist and military roots, its gendered definition of public space, and its downplaying of conflict of interests, but applauds it as a way to reconsider citizenship as a communal activity (esp. 293).

²¹ Sunstein, *Republic.com*. A good example of this kind of thinking is Dagger’s defense of compulsory voting, *Civic Virtues*, 145–50.

For deliberative democrats, civic knowledge and communication among citizens has emerged as an important area of study in its own right. Some scholars seeking a theoretical model for deliberation, such as Seyla Benhabib, have sought inspiration in Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action.²² This posits communication as a practice that is doubly contingent, requiring that participants in dialogue reach intersubjective agreement regarding the validity of any utterance.²³ Drawing on speech act theory, Habermas distinguishes locution (the content of a speech act, which is subject to evaluations of truth value), illocution (the performative force of the locution), and perlocution (the effect of a locution on the hearer, such as fury or the desire to obey). He argues that speakers must meet corresponding standards of intelligibility, propositional content, and sincerity: effective deliberation is a matter of refining and maintaining these proper standards.

But what of the speaker whose communicative acts are compromised as a result of prejudice or incompatible standards of intelligibility? And what of the gap between perlocution and citizen action—a gap that rhetoric explicitly fills in its promise to move (*movere*) but that Habermas leaves to the operation of rational choice? We might, drawing on Aristotle's tripartite definition of the parts of rhetoric, define these as problems of *ethos* (character), *logos* (argument), and *pathos* (the intense feeling that moves audiences to action). In its attempt to protect modes of rational discourse from rhetorical "taint," Habermasian theory remains embedded in the tradition of Western philosophy that tries to "purify" communication of emotion and prejudice.²⁴ The greatest potential of the classical rhetorical tradition lies in the resources it offers citizens: strategies of 'framing' issues and arguments appropriate to various perspectives and experiences, moving citizens to action, and understanding how communicative standards reinforce social inequalities.²⁵

²² See Benhabib, *Situating the self* (89–120), and "Deliberative rationality and models of democratic legitimacy"; J. Cohen, "Discourse ethics and civil society"; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, with extensive references, 364 (note that Gutmann and Thompson do not adhere to Habermasian epistemological claims; see Hardin, "Deliberation: Method, not theory," 103, 107).

²³ Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, 89–93, drawing on Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, esp. 17–76.

²⁴ Further exploring this critique of Habermas is Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 65.

²⁵ Notable work to date includes Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, which pairs analysis of classical rhetorical theory with investigations of modern examples of rhetoric (Franklin Roosevelt, Mario Cuomo, others), and Allen, *Talking to Strangers*, 140–59. See also Hariman, *Political Style*: "The classical accounts of rhetoric, and particularly of stylistics and decorum, might be read as provisional solutions to perennial problems," 186 (see 177–95 more generally).

The second issue of relevance in contemporary republican theory is its promotion of the civic virtues of liberty, autonomy, tolerance, justice, and patriotism. If all but the last of these call to mind liberal values, republican theorists argue, they are not identical. Philip Pettit, a path-breaking voice in the field, has defined republican freedom not as the absence of interference (the classical liberal definition) but as nondomination. What is lacking in the liberal, rights-based definition of freedom, in his view, is that it overlooks conditions of oppression, like those experienced by the underpaid factory worker or a partner in a marriage with an unequal distribution of power (even if the employer or spouse happens to be benign).²⁶ Republicanism, by Pettit's lights, because it pays close attention to the interactions between human beings, places a high moral and legal standard on the bearer of power. In practice, this means reorganizing government around practices of accountability and inclusive contestation, with a heavy emphasis on popular deliberation.²⁷ Patriotism—the answer to the puzzle of what binds citizens together in the political collective, what gives them the sense of actually belonging to a polity—is a special case. No contemporary republican theorist would suggest that chauvinistic nationalist patriotism of the kind perpetuated largely by the forces of populism in modern nation states is desirable. One solution is to promote instead love of the political values on which the state is founded, especially political liberty, tolerance, personal commitment, and public accountability.²⁸

My belief that these virtues may be understood as resting on communicative practices, and that speech must be a central concern of citizenship theory, informs my approach to Roman rhetoric. Following Isocrates, both Cicero and Quintilian define rhetoric as a normative system designed to produce the virtuous man through the practice of eloquence. The best sort of virtue, in their view, is that which is devoted, however indirectly, to regulating the *res publica*, especially in the microcosm of the law court, the guardian of justice and equality before the law. Virtue is fully

²⁶ Pettit, *Republicanism*, 52–66, 82–90.

²⁷ Springborg, “Republicanism, liberty, and the Cambridge historians,” queries whether accounts like Pettit's have anything to do with the historical tradition of republicanism; Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, acknowledges the confusion the term can cause (22–23, 44–45); Viroli, *Republicanism*, offers a more sympathetic reading of Pettit and Skinner (45–55).

²⁸ Viroli, *For Love of Country*, emphasizes that he has no love for cultural homogeneity or nationalism. What concerns him is that the liberal polity cannot and does not generate a sufficient sense of affective connection: “no attachment, no love, no commitment” (13). His particular version of civic patriotism, however, is not the love of “historically and culturally neutral political principles” (a position advocated by Habermas) but allegiance to the “laws, constitutions, and ways of life of specific republics, each with its own history and culture” (*Republicanism*, 90; cf. 14, and Canovan's critical response, “Patriotism is not enough”).

incarnated not in the individual's mastery of selfhood in isolation but in interactive communicative performances in the civic context.

Rhetoric emerges in Cicero as a practice of virtue located firmly in the *political* community—a significant issue that should encourage us to think carefully about to what degree the self in Cicero's work corresponds to modern liberal conceptions of what it means to be a self.²⁹ Moreover, ancient rhetoricians well understood the challenge implicit in Hobbes's observation (quoted above), that mastery of language is no automatic proof of virtue. Their insistence on the pursuit of oratorical perfection—an always unfinished and indeed unfinalizable task—simulates the always imperfect practices of citizenship and discloses the inconsistencies, gaps, and fissures in the political system the rhetorical treatise itself is designed to uphold.

In Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, written late in the first century CE, this sense of imperfection is tied to the new political conditions created by autocracy. This is emphatically not to say that oratory fell silent under the Caesars; the younger Pliny, Plutarch, Apuleius, Philostratus, and others testify that Tacitus's report of oratory's demise is greatly exaggerated (*Dial.* 41).³⁰ Rather, by the end of the first century CE, the network of dispositions and expectations underpinning republican oratorical practice, which yoked public contests in the law court to electoral victory and status in the public eye, and in which the rhetoric of liberty and popular will played out the dramatic antagonism between senate and people that was the core trope of republican politics, had begun to assume a new shape. If it retained a certain consistency with tradition—and it is well-known that the principate's legitimacy lay substantially in its appropriation and reenactment of republican values and practices—these patterns were fundamentally different in that they identified the emperor as the figure of intercession between speaker and *populus*, and they derived the virtue

²⁹ On the relevant differences between ancient and modern views on citizenship, the modern *locus classicus* is Benjamin Constant, "The liberty of ancients compared with that of the moderns"; a harsher view is adopted by Fustel de Coulanges' 1854 *La cité antique*. Berlin, "Two concepts of liberty," (in *Four Essays on Liberty*), is the seminal twentieth-century analysis. All these works, which interrogate the way ancient and modern societies define freedom and autonomy, should inform our approach to the study of ancient subjectivity or selfhood, especially when we look to postmodern theories of the decentered or multiple self. Modern analyses should certainly not be barred automatically from application to premodern societies like Rome, but the fact that they are deeply rooted in the experience of the postindustrial (and post-world war) modern nation-state must be taken into careful account. An exception to the rule is the psychoanalytic approach (Gunderson's *Staging Masculinity*, for example), which adheres to a notion of the psychic self that is essentially ahistorical and which thus introduces a different if no less challenging set of methodological questions.

³⁰ On the survival of Roman oratory under the first century of autocratic rule, see Goldberg, "Appreciating Aper," Dominik, "Tacitus and Pliny on oratory," and Rutledge, "Oratory and politics in the empire."

and legitimacy of the *res publica* not in the performances of many citizens over time but in the body of the ruler, a new, singular body politic. Caesar is reported as having infuriated his contemporaries with his observation that “the republic was nothing, just a name with neither body nor form,” but by the younger Seneca’s lifetime the philosophical objections to engaging in political life were helping to make sense of the new political ethic: “What do you want, Cato? Liberty is off the table: it decayed a long time ago. The question is whether Caesar or Pompey will rule the republic” (*Ep.* 14.13).³¹ This alteration in the horizon of perceptions and expectations in Roman elite culture of the first century CE means that postrepublican rhetoric, including Augustan declamation and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, are discussed only briefly in the last chapter of this book.

As Livy observed in a phrase often repeated by early modern political theorists, republican Rome was a self-governing community in which “the power of the laws (is) greater than that of men” (*imperia legum potentiora quam hominum*, 2.1.1). But politics exists in a space that is framed, not filled, by law. And for all the efforts to invent a civil science over the past four centuries, politics is not necessarily rational. On the contrary, to paraphrase Cicero, the nature of the republic defies reason (*vincit ipsa rerum publicarum natura saepe rationem*, *Rep.* 2.57). The space of politics is filled by dispute, contingency, inconsistency, unreason, and passion: here the arts of persuasion rule. Rhetoric is thus the key to untangling the legal and extralegal tensions shot through life in the community, where the networks of identity that make up the civic self intersect and blur together: the traits “proper” to masculinity and femininity, nature and culture, body and mind, obedience and autonomy, self-restraint and the rule of law, sincerity and hypocrisy, the competing interests of individual and community. Rhetoric might be said to make precise distinction between these terms impossible, resolving them as it does through invocations of the corporeal and the performative. Rhetorical texts represent the speaking body as the virtuous self, the highest fulfillment of human nature, an entity in which inheres the essence of “I” that we are now accustomed to imagine as our “private” internal self, as well as the expressive index of character that presents our selves to the world.

But this repository of virtue remains a living body, an entity always under construction over time, the aestheticized, fetishized object of the gazes of other embodied selves—a condition whose anxieties will claim my attention throughout the book. The rhetoricians’ focus on identity formation through speech means that their imaginings of selfhood

³¹ Caesar’s comment in Suetonius, *Julius* 77: discussion in L. Morgan, “‘*Levi quidem de re*,’” 25–30. On aristocratic ethics in the first century CE, especially in Lucan and Seneca, Roller, *Constructing Autocracy*, esp. 124–26.

always start from performative constraints, what we might call structures of discipline, coercion, unfreedom, the panopticon, the Law. But like all performances, spoken language and its effects are impossible fully to master, both in theory and in practice. The inevitable failure of self-mastery and the hopeless, compelling fantasy of mastery that always supplements it in rhetorical discourse forms the context in which each chapter scrutinizes the various ethical and epistemological conflicts that arise from the Roman coupling of virtue and performance.

Republican political ideology is both a product and a cause of the sense of failure immanent in Roman rhetorical discourse. For those familiar with Roman history, the most immediate failure that will come to mind in the context of the late republic is the meltdown of law and order witnessed by the first century BCE: the devastating Social War between Rome and its Italian allies from 91 to 89, the struggle between Marius and Sulla, then Cinna and Sulla, that peaked with massacres in Rome in 87 and 82, Lepidus's brief revolution in 78–77, the slave revolt of Spartacus in 73, the Catilinarian conspiracy during Cicero's consulship in 63, growing unrest and gang violence in Rome through the 50s, and two brutal rounds of civil war: in Tacitus's words, "the power of Pompey and Crassus swiftly yielded to Caesar, the armies of Lepidus and Antony to Augustus" (*et Pompei Crassique potentia cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere, Ann. 1.1*).

In addition to the immense body of research into the upheaval of republican politics in the first century BCE, also significant for my study is the work of the Slovenian theorist Slavoj Žižek, who argues that the fear of failure, isolation, endings, and death at the level of the unconscious is the driving force behind political ideology in all its iterations. Ideology, in his view, functions as a discursive supplement to a unsettlingly perceptible constitutive lack in the human subject: the suturing of political signifiers within the ideological domain masks the terrible contingency and instability inherent in subjective experience.³² Political thought, as a genre or discipline, is a series of representations that express desire for the always absent object: victory, unity, homogeneity, harmony, wholeness, immortality, even representation itself, in both the aesthetic and the political sense.

Along similar lines, the intellectual historian J.G.A. Pocock identifies the awareness of finitude, lack, and mortality as that which defines republicanism as a political theory and practice. This is what he calls "the Machiavellian moment," by way of contrast to medieval conceptions of

³² Žižek, *Plague of Fantasies*: "We indulge in the notion of society as an organic Whole, kept together by forces of solidarity and cooperation" (6); see also *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 5, 124–25.

an eternal, deity-derived and deity-sustained polity. “Only as a partnership in virtue among all its citizens could the republic persist; if virtue were less than universal, its failure at one point must in time corrode its existence at all others,” he writes, concluding, “the aim of politics is to escape from time . . . the dimension of imperfection.”³³ Pocock views the (re)invention of the humanist man of manners in early modern Italy, England, and North America (and their notional republics of letters) precisely as a response to republican fragility: the integrity of the civil man’s personality becomes a normative control, a performed, visible source of stability, in a political order eternally poised on the brink of literal or ideological destruction. Beliefs about moral virtue and bodily beauty are consequently made to cohere; indeed, they become virtually indistinguishable; but as social practice becomes aestheticized, it takes on a paradoxical immunity from rational analysis and critique. And certain aspects of aestheticism, especially theatricality and ephemerality, emerge as flaws in the republican political unconscious. If the virtuous civic man created through rhetorical training is a potent construction, he is also a fragile one. What rhetorical discourse shows is that fragility, multiplicity, and artifice are the ideal citizen’s greatest strength.

They are unlikely bedfellows, but Žižek and Pocock share what I see as a key insight into Roman rhetoric and the political ethos that is its concern: the looming awareness that the living web of communal virtue is always, somewhere, being torn apart by human vice and mortality; that the basis for legitimacy is slowly eroding; that the citizen and the state must die together. Rhetorical discourse enshrines the impossible: most obviously, in its quest for the best orator, who for Cicero (and even more so for Quintilian) remains eternally absent, inhabiting only the realms of the hopeful imagination or death, as in Cicero’s *Brutus*, a history of Roman rhetoric written after the death of the great orator Hortensius, which deals only with dead men.³⁴ If the impossible quest for moral perfection that characterizes rhetoric and republican political thought alike is symptomatic of a weakness at the center of the republic, that quest also keeps rhetoric sufficiently flexible for the distinctive demands of republican politics. Eloquence, Cicero declares, is one of the greatest virtues (*eloquentia est una quaedam de summis virtutibus, de Orat.* 3.55, cf. 3.143). By identifying eloquence as the key connection between civic virtue and individual

³³ Pocock, “Civic humanism and its role in Anglo-American political thought,” 87, 88. On the implications of this notion for aesthetics (see below), see Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 37–38.

³⁴ It might be said that Quintilian’s ideal is the dead Cicero, but the point remains essentially the same. Cicero makes a point of discussing only dead men in his own first-person “voice” in the dialogue (*Brut.* 249, 251): the admirable style of (the still living) Julius Caesar is discussed briefly by Brutus (his eventual assassin).

virtue, Cicero locks the future of the republic to the virtue of its speaking citizens: speech simultaneously stabilizes the republic and spurs the dynamic interactions of intra-elite competition and popular resistance.

This book does not provide a full-fledged account of Roman rhetoric as a product of late republican political policies. My interest in the normative and its discontents means that I will refer only briefly, and piecemeal, to Cicero's fifty-eight surviving speeches. Nor do I aim to explain the rhetoricians' personal motives in writing or to define "Roman values" wholesale. Recent years have witnessed a small flood of fine studies on Ciceronian and Roman self-fashioning, largely inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's work on bodily *habitus* in social practice, studies of the technologies of selfhood undertaken by Michel Foucault, Teresa de Lauretis, and other feminist theorists, and Stephen Greenblatt's essays on Renaissance writers such as Thomas More.³⁵ That rhetorical education "fashioned" the self is beyond question. My discussion of subjectivity in Roman rhetoric is trained on the conceptual questions emerging from the relationship between self-as-subject and self-as-citizen. Representations of cultural values and practices are an important ingredient in the book, but they are the means, not the end, of my analysis.³⁶

Instead, by reading rhetoric in light of what Roman rhetoricians conceived as its natural arena, the *vita activa* of politics, we can glimpse the logics structuring Roman political thought, and to a certain degree its relevance for modernity. In the hope of advancing contemporary debates about civic identity and deliberative politics, I will occasionally handle rhetorical discourse in disarticulated form, as a living body of ideas, testing the Roman ethics of eloquence against some contemporary political theorists. This approach is perhaps closer to current habits of reading Latin poetry than prose. The dispute over the nature of the *Aeneid*, as Joseph Farrell has noted, finds its proximate origins in the wars of the twentieth century, meaning that recent philological readings of the epic prompt us to reexamine what we think about the social and political role of poetry while they teach us about Vergil's Latin.³⁷ The case is similar for psychoanalytic readings, the most successful of which are engaged in scrutinizing the self we bring to the text even as they examine representations of selves in ancient texts. We bring ourselves to studies of the past, and we

³⁵ Early and important work in this now well-studied area includes P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion*; Gleason's influential *Making Men*; and Richlin, "Gender and rhetoric."

³⁶ Alan Liu condemns the weaknesses of historicism in early modern cultural studies in "the power of formalism," arguing that scholars too easily find in the individual voices of the past a way to work out their own political fantasies: "In the mirror of desire named 'the Renaissance,' the interpreter can *fantasize* about subverting dominance while dreaming away the total commitments of contestation" (75, italics his).

³⁷ Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin Culture*, 3ff.

should never lose sight of our readings' motives. My main motive is to lift out of a historically grounded reading of Roman rhetorical texts questions that remain relevant today, questions about what it means to be a citizen. Each chapter identifies a familiar question in the rhetorical tradition—What is the best type of orator? Is rhetoric a product of nature or culture? What is the significance of style? Why is *decorum* so important?—and demonstrates how rhetoric's answers illuminate political problems. As Seyla Benhabib has observed, since tradition has largely lost the special legitimacy granted it by simply being part of the past, “the legitimacy of tradition rests now with resourceful and creative appropriations of it in view of the problem of meaning in the present.”³⁸

If a reception-focused approach risks our losing a grip on historical context, the risk seems worth taking, given its potential to prompt thought about issues of speech and civic identity that are as urgent today as they were in the first centuries BCE and CE. Today as in ancient Rome, talk is the interface between our public and private faces; the modification of bodily behaviors and attitudes remains a viable type of social resistance. Ancient rhetoric can help build a model of ethics that draws on postmodern and poststructuralist insights into performance and subjectivity but repudiates the obscurantist tendencies scattered through some performance studies and some recent directions in feminist theory. And it sharpens our understanding of the extent to which, historically, public speech has been conceived fundamentally as the proper tool of men and of elites. Work by Habermas and other critics of models of liberal citizenship that are based on the Enlightenment's construal of the nation-state reconsiders how theories of citizenship and selfhood may and must change in our rapidly shifting, globalized, commodified world. What if civic and personal identity worked itself loose from traditional national boundaries, from ethnic and religious ties, or even, through modern communication technologies, from the physical communities in which everyday life is lived? Surely this process is already happening, and equally surely we must look for new ways to invigorate civic bonds. Commitment to speech and shared debate—and to the right and ability for all to engage in debate—is one nexus of values that cuts across the personal and the civic, and it is central

³⁸ Benhabib, *Situating the Self*, 104. See also Rorty, “The historiography of philosophy: Four genres”:

[W]e are interested not only in what the Aristotle who walked the streets of Athens ‘could be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done’ [here he quotes Skinner's articulation of Cambridge-style intellectual history], but in what an ideally reasonable and educable Aristotle could be brought to accept as such a description. . . . It is perfectly reasonable to describe Locke as finding out what he really meant, what he was really getting at in the *Second Treatise*, only after conversations in heaven with, successively, Jefferson, Marx, and Rawls. (51, 54)

to many contemporary liberal projects, such as Habermas's effort to reinvent national patriotism as constitutional patriotism. In a limited sense, as I argue in my conclusion, Cicero is there before us.

I begin by looking back to the institutionalized origins of Roman rhetoric, from scraps of second-century speeches to the earliest extant treatises written in Latin, Cicero's *de Inventione* and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, both composed in the 80s BCE. Chapter 1 is most closely concerned with the rhetoricians' engagement with republican political practice, in particular their characteristic focus on dialogic argumentation. Exploring the connection between the study of rhetoric and periods of intense social and political stress, I address the consequences of the rhetoricians' treatment of speech as the civic act par excellence.

A central methodological concern in the study of rhetoric, and one that holds profound implications for my historical analysis, is whether we should approach it as a tool for those who seek power through emotional manipulation and misinformation—what we might call the Weberian charismatic model of rhetorical performance—or as a system of communicative practices intrinsically capable of escaping or transcending elite claims of exclusive ownership.³⁹ In addressing this issue, I hope to enrich the current debate among Roman historians over what label to apply to the *res publica* before the Caesars: oligarchy, democracy, or some variety of mixed regime. Two additional questions are relevant. The first belongs to contemporary cultural studies, especially the sociology of literature, and asks to what degree we may accurately say that ruling elites *master* language, from educational practices to literature, theater, and political communication in its conventional modes. Formalized language—song and drama no less than oratory—is deeply implicated in the maintenance of aristocratic hegemony, in Rome and perhaps in every human society.⁴⁰ Yet an excessively rigid view of language as the tool and property of the powerful curtails exploration of the mechanisms of

³⁹ In her defense of rhetoric as an instrument for an inclusive model of deliberative democracy, Young surveys the debate in political theory, from Thomas Spragens's critique of rhetorical passion in his *Reason and Democracy* to Jürgen Habermas's attempt to distinguish rhetoric from rational speech in *Theory of Communicative Action* to Plato's *Gorgias* (*Inclusion and Democracy*, 63–66). Farrell, *Norms of Rhetorical Culture*, admits that “nobody admits to liking rhetoric very much” but seeks to revise Habermasian discourse ethics by foregrounding issues of context and audience (230; see also 202–204, 232–275).

⁴⁰ On the “invention of Latin literature” as a buttress for aristocratic hegemony and the ground for cultural commodification in Rome's imperial expansion, see the provocative discussion in Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature*, 36 (and chap. 2 and 8 *passim*). Bloch, introduction, *Political Language and Oratory*, is a classic example of cross-cultural anthropological analysis of formalized language; Gellner, *Anthropology and Politics*, explores the implications of viewing stylized speech as the essence of the coercive power of the ruling classes (esp. 57).

change and encourages a deformed, overly static view of republican thought and practice. Here I am guided in part by work done in the context of Athenian democracy, especially Josiah Ober's exploration of oratory as the primary mechanism for airing tensions between mass and elite, as well as by scholarship on tragedy and comedy that has clarified the role of speech in constituting the polity and citizens' collective sense of belonging.⁴¹ By these lights, speech is never simply an expression of dominance but an essentially dynamic interchange, a dialogue that may not name itself as such but that retains its characteristics nonetheless. The second question, related mainly to political theory, seeks to understand the privileged place of reason in political communication. Since Plato, theorists have appropriated rhetoric's structured modes of argumentation while seeking rational modes of political discourse that are cleansed of what they take to be the stains of oratorical performance, from passion to the "cosmetics" of style. Some recent work in political science has sought to recover the positive functions of these latter aspects of rhetoric, and I hope to contribute to this effort as well in my analysis of Cicero's *de Inventione* and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

The next four chapters concentrate on Cicero's later rhetorical writing, especially his ambitious three books *de Oratore* (55 BCE) and the shorter *Brutus* and *Orator* (46 BCE), in dialogue with *de Republica* and *de Legibus*, composed in the middle to early 50s, and *de Officiis* (44).⁴² Fresh from the completion of *de Oratore*, and embarking on *de Republica*, Cicero tells his brother Quintus that his new book is about "the best state of the republic and the best citizen," and the surviving fragments of the fifth and sixth books suggest that eloquence was a major theme (*Q. fr.* 3.5.1).⁴³ It is not simply the case that Cicero's treatment of the demands of republican citizenship shapes his prescriptions for a manly *ars rhetorica*, or vice versa, but that thinking about the republic sculpts the ideological imperatives of Cicero's rhetorical discourse, with rhetoric in turn leaving its own stamp on his theories of republican civic identity. His conceptions of citizenship and of public speech take shape together. In emphasizing the complexities of this relation, I hope to advance the insights of scholars such as Erik Gunderson and John Dugan, who focus on the nature of the masculine subject produced through oratorical training and represented in rhetorical texts,

⁴¹ A good place to start is Ober, "Power and oratory in democratic Athens," which applies the broad perspective on oratory developed in *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* to Demosthenes 21 (*Against Meidias*). On the related performances of oratory, drama, and ritual, see Goldhill, "Programme notes." Morstein-Marx, *Mass Oratory and Political Power*, responds to Ober (14–15) and summarizes key theoretical issues (16–31).

⁴² On the date of *de Oratore*, see *Att.* 4.13.5, which refers to the completion of a work in three books, and *Fam.* 1.9.23.

⁴³ Ferrary, "The statesman and the law," 49–50.

and especially Alberto Grilli, who has brilliantly limned the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric in the formation of Cicero's conception of the perfect "political man."⁴⁴ My concern is primarily with the ways in which speech about trained speech functions as a refractor of concerns about living in a polity—another human practice that, like persuasion, is subject to utopian fantasy and deep fear.

Romans are quick to remind themselves that Greeks, not Romans, invented rhetoric and imported it into the city and the culture of Rome.⁴⁵ Despite such protests, the combination of fear and fascination that colors Cicero's views of rhetoric has less to do with his suspicion of rhetoric as a Greek invention per se than with his insight into the conflicted nature of Roman civic identity, and the role of speech-making within it. In *de Oratore*, Cicero suggests that Greek philosophers and rhetoricians speak an unnatural, artificial language that bars them from the rolls of virtuous men and good citizens. He seeks to make the difference between virtuous Roman rhetoric and other types of speech an essential difference, one of nature rather than degree. As a result, his strategy exploits essentialist notions of national and gender identity in order to redescribe the artifices of trained eloquence as the quintessence of manly nature, which in Cicero's always universalizing hands becomes assimilated to Roman citizenship and, in turn, human nature. If Cicero aims to present his ideal orator and ideal citizen as undifferentiated, whole, pure, and uncomplicated embodiments of Roman virtue, however, these impressions are always undone from within. The good Roman, too, must speak the unnatural language of artifice and spectacle. What unfolds in chapters 2 through 5 is a portrait of the orator as a man who embodies the central tensions of republican citizenship: a construct of nature and culture, passion and restraint, emotion and reason, body and mind, autonomy and interdependence, consent and coercion.

Is eloquence an acquired art or a natural talent? Or, to put the question in a more practical vein, do eloquent men become so by means of innate character or external training, by nature or culture? Chapter 2 takes a new look at this old chestnut—Socrates' opening gambit in Plato's *Gorgias*—arguing that the importance of the nature versus culture debate in Cicero's rhetorical writings arises from his understanding of certain related tensions in republican civic identity. In a close reading of the interplay among Crassus, Antonius, and other interlocutors in Cicero's *de Oratore*, I show how Cicero constructs ideal *eloquentia* as a hybrid of *ars* and *natura*. In the dialogic conflicts of this work, Cicero's

⁴⁴ On the formation of identity in rhetorical discourse, see Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*; Dugan, *Making a New Man*; and Grilli, "Cicerone tra retorica e filosofia."

⁴⁵ The Greeks, too, viewed rhetoric as a foreign import from Sicily, according to a now lost work of Aristotle, the *Synagoge Technon* (*Brut.* 46–48). See Cole, "Who was Corax?"

longest and most ambitious rhetorical treatise, a strategy I call the rhetoric of naturalization unfolds. Its conceptual progression is complicated and not without problematic inconsistencies, but in the end, the logic of the argument from nature wins over even Crassus, the speaker who, in the beginning, seemed to hold a different view. The chapter then turns to *de Republica* and other works to show that the hybridization of nature and culture in Cicero's account of the formation of the orator echoes his claim that nature forms the basis of the ideal polity, which has already, if tautologically, been cast in the mold of Rome. The drive to claim nature as both property and origin for the citizen orator grows out of a political fantasy of Roman purity and power.

The key to the citadel of the self, for Cicero and centuries of republican theorists after him, is oratory. But here an objection immediately interposes itself. Can a good orator be a good man? Cicero insists that he can, but a long tradition, beginning with Plato's *Gorgias* and *Republic*, stands against him. But where Aristotle, in his critical response to Plato's approach to politics, turned back to the household to cement "natural" channels of domination that retained sharp distinctions between male and female, Cicero chooses a more challenging course: the rewriting of masculine civic ideals in an ideal republican sensibility that embraces many of rhetoric's potentially unmanly, unfree aspects: its corporeality, its reliance on passion, and its fostering of multiple voices in the eloquent citizen. In chapter 3, points of contact with feminist theory are crucial to understand what I call Cicero's theory of the corporeal citizen, a usefully flexible if somewhat self-contradictory ideal. My point is to explain the implications of Ciceronian practices of self-fashioning for what they can tell us about the embodied, mortal nature of the republican community.

Chapter 4 turns to the virtue of *decorum*, which plays a central role in Ciceronian rhetorical and ethical discourse as the quintessential virtue-practice, since it involves not only action but reflection and demands constant attention to communal norms as well as individual sensibility and taste. Cicero's transformation (following the Greek Stoic Panaetius) of Greek philosophy's *sophrosune* (by most readings, a decidedly internal state), *decorum* is defined by an incompatible combination of the law of nature and social custom. It offers nonarbitrary aesthetic criteria on which to judge goodness as the visible enactment of the sociability that, in Cicero's Stoicizing view in *de Officiis*, makes communal life both possible and rewarding. This chapter rounds out and opens up the analysis of rhetorical discourse by reading Catullus against Cicero, in an effort to show how in both authors, the link between *decorum* and affection constitutes the emotional economy of the *res publica*. If the republican community is glued together in part by emotional sensibility, *decorum* in oratory and poetry

help direct it, controlling the passions that in the wrong incarnation can destroy the state they make possible. Ciceronian rhetorical training offers a stylistics of living based in natural law; Catullan poetry probes and critiques the stylized life and the unfreedom prescribed by its laws.

Republican political thought and republican rhetoric perpetuate and are perpetuated by a complex, violent desire to define the natures and behaviors of the dominant against those of the disenfranchised: male *versus* female, Roman *versus* Greek or Asiatic, free *versus* slave, individual leader *versus* popular mass. Yet in practice, and even in theory, these categories defy their own distinctions. Chapter 5 turns to the role played by the disempowered and the weak in the formation of civic ethics, concentrating on the much-studied question of gender. In the ancient world, women did not possess full, autonomous political rights. Yet in more ways than ancient political theorists are prepared to admit, the ideal citizen resembles the ideal woman, and the bad citizen and the bad woman commit similar crimes. This explains the shattering effect of a “genuinely” perverted performance, the effeminate speech and behavior that Cicero abhors both in formal speech and in daily conversation. But the anxieties reflected in Cicero’s gendered language, I argue, should be understood as a symptom of deeper concerns about the necessary deceits of civility and the affectations of oratorical style. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Cicero’s ideal orator, the ornate grand speaker, and the troubling implications of his vision of a listening community bound together by the orator’s passionate performance.

With Cicero’s death comes the end of republican rhetoric, and the end of republican political theory. His successors are interested in different problems, especially the relation of elites to autocracy and the shifts in imperial governance that permanently altered the economic and political structure in Rome. Chapter 6 discusses early imperial rhetorical practice, beginning with declamation, originally a school exercise involving arguments for fictional cases and famous characters. In this changed world, imperial rhetoricians rework the core of Ciceronian rhetoric, exploring rhetoric’s capacity to prompt experiments with language and values. I close with Quintilian’s twelve-book handbook on Ciceronian rhetoric, the *Institutio Oratoria*, which reveals the proximity of ideals of republican citizenship and imperial courtly life—a proximity that unsettles Cicero’s idealizing claims but helps explain the persistence of rhetoric into late antiquity and beyond.

Why write a book about Roman rhetoric? The view still to be found among literary scholars, intellectual historians, and some classicists, that Roman rhetoric is “de-intellectualized,” “a rhetoric of trope, not persuasion,” limited to the study of highly stylized and artificial forms, I hope my readers will join me in finding totally insupportable and in need of radical

revision.⁴⁶ Nor do I think it possible to see rhetorical discourse as an endless elaboration of physical, social, or psychological repression. On the contrary, its disciplines must be viewed as moving along paths that defy and question dominant modes of being as well as uphold them, similar to the structures of confession and self-revelation that Michel Foucault studied in his late work on sexuality. Cicero is no democrat, but his belief in trained speech as a living and lived connector of citizen and community shares common ground with early modern theorists of natural sociability, such as Adam Smith, and contemporary theorists of deliberative democracy such as Amy Gutmann and Iris Marion Young. The Augustan declaimers are not performance artists in the modern sense, but their experiments with language and staged emotion test the limits of language in the transition from republic to empire and reveal ways in which rhetorical eloquence resists the rules with which practitioners seek to enforce language. Quintilian is no Cicero, but his reinvention of republican eloquence in an age of imperial autocracy helps explain the persistence of rhetoric in Roman society after its original conditions of production had disintegrated—as a pedagogy promising robust resources for that late antique self so occupied with the body, its health and appearance, even as it undoes the promises of republican rhetoric to preserve the state against the tyranny of autocracy.

My answer to the question, briefly elaborated in my conclusion, is that these writers, especially Cicero, helped shape our world—our educational system, our mixed admiration and suspicion of eloquence, our troubled relation to consensus and collective identity—and that the ways they wrestled with the inconsistencies and incoherences of what it means to be a citizen can still enlighten us. Like the Renaissance readers who rediscovered these texts, we should approach the rhetorical tradition not only as readers and scholars but as writers and citizens, actors on a political stage both fractured and inspired by longing for full-fledged democracy. These pages express my commitment to bringing the study of antiquity to bear on contemporary debates about education and citizenship, and the questions asked in them should interest anyone committed to thinking through the vistas opened and the anxieties unleashed when we imagine the republic as a state of speech.

⁴⁶ Roland Barthes, “The old rhetoric,” 24.