THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

MAKING THE MORAL ORATOR: WANTING THE GOOD IN QUINTILIAN'S *INSTITUTIO ORATORIA*

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

BY
MARY ROSALIE STONER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
AUGUST 2021

Optimis parentibus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.......v

Abstract.......vi

Acknowledgments.......vii

Introduction to the Dissertation.......1

1. Rhetoric and Morality: Ramus, Quintilian, and Plato.......1

2. A Brief Sketch of Quintilian's *Vir Bonus Dicendi Peritus*.......4

3. Contributions to Scholarship on Quintilian and the *Vir Bonus*.......7

4. Contributions to Scholarship on *Voluntas*.......12

5. Overview of the Dissertation.......14

Chapter One: Origins and Originality of Quintilian's Moral Orator.......15

1. Introduction.......15

2. Quintilian's Catonian Catchphrase.......15

3. Sailing Beyond Cicero.......23

4. What Quintilian Wants Plato to Want.......31

5. Quintilian Qualifies the *Sapiens*.......41

6. Conclusion.......47

Chapter Two: The Internalization of Motivation in the Orator's Moral Development.......48

1. Introduction.......48

2. Internalizing Good Material Through Imitation (Book One) 51

3. Motivating Younger Children with External Goods (Book One) 54

4. Motivating Older Children Through Reciprocal Affection (Book Two) 59

5. Internalizing Good Criteria: The Development of *Iudicium* (Books Two and Ten) 62

6. The Mature Student's Internalized Motivation (Book Ten) 70

7. Philosophy Within the Oratorical Curriculum (Book Twelve) 73

8. Conclusion 76

Chapter Three: Quintilian's Persona and the Task of the Text 78

1. Quintilian's *Ethos*: Sweetness 79

2. Quintilian's *Ethos*: The Moral Character of a *Vir Bonus* 88

3. Quintilian's *Pathos*: Anger and Disgust 92

4. Quintilian's *Pathos*: Pity 96

5. Friendship as the *Institutio*'s Final Relationship 103

Chapter Four: The Good *Voluntas* of the Moral Orator 108

1. Introduction: *Voluntas* in the *Institutio* 108

2. The Good Will of the Good Man 111

3. Bent Speech and Upright *Voluntas* 117

4. *Recta Voluntas*: Between Craft and Vegetal Growth 128

5. Quintilian's Last Word 135

Conclusion 140

Dissertation Bibliography 145

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison of Pl. *Grg.*460b-c with Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27-28..33

ABSTRACT

This study examines Quintilian's portrayal of the ideal orator in his *Institutio Oratoria*— "a good man skilled in speaking" (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*)—as a response to the Platonic problem of how to make sure that a trained speaker uses the power of speech for good rather than for evil. Departing from Quintilian's recontextualization, in *Institutio* 2.15, of Plato's *Gorgias* 460b-c ("therefore it is necessary for the rhetorical man to be just, and for the just man to want to do just things"), I suggest that Quintilian answers the Platonic critique by claiming to educate an orator who will *want* the good and will therefore use his powers of speaking in the service of the community. This approach opens up a reading of the orator's education as an illustration of how the orator-in-training can gradually be led, over the course of his lifetime, to want the good of his own accord. By accepting the invitation of Quintilian's authorial persona to enter into a series of relationships outlined and mediated by the *Institutio*—teacher and student, father and son, and friendship—the reader can begin to experience the education of the virtuous orator for himself and so develop the *bona voluntas* that Quintilian claims is the *Institutio*'s most important legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my **d**iss**e**rtati**o**n committee—Peter White, Elizabeth Asmis, and Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer—for their challenging questions and enc**o**urage**m**e**n**t over the course of th**is** project. Peter White in particular has been an incomparable mentor, editor, and tutelary spirit for me since my earliest days in Chica**g**o. For time**l**y and gener**o**us p**r**ofess**i**on**a**l advice, I am especially grateful to Emily Austin, Cliff Ando, Chris Faraone, Michèle Lowrie, Sarah Nooter, and Helma Dik. I am thankful as well to Jonathan Hall, Sofía Torallas Tovar, and, very specially, Kathy Fox for outstanding administrative support during an unusual year. Jenna Sarchio, David Williams, Jordan Johansen, Kate Miller, Amber Ace, and Andrew Horne have been particularly generous and incisive collaborators in the development of this project and throughout my graduate career. I also owe debts of gratitude to Bob Kaster, Yelena Baraz, Peter Burian, Curtis Dozier, David Konstan, W. Martin Bloomer, Francesca Romana Berno, Sarah Byers, Michael Winterbottom, Stephen Brock, James Redfield, and Boris Maslov, all of whom helped or inspired me in some way to develop this project. In addition, I found Kevin Majeres' Optimal Work program and Victor Austin's *Friendship: The Heart of Being Human* to be valuable resources during the final months of writing and revising.

I am deeply grateful to my family, especially my wonderful parents, my grandparents, and my godparents, as well as to the many teachers and mentors whose examples have fueled my academic and personal fascination with *paideia*. Finally, I am humbled and touched by the support of new friends and old: special thanks are due to Natalie, Rebekah, and Peitong; Lucy, Gemma, Laura, and Peggy; Carol, Maria, Emily, Sunwoo, and Sara; Seema, Annemarie, Rita, Alexa, Eden, and cousin Brian; and so m**a**ny more lo**ve**d ones whom I cannot name but to who**m—a**nd fo**r** whom—**I a**m no less grateful.

Introduction to the Dissertation

1. Rhetoric and Morality: Ramus, Quintilian, and Plato

At the outset of his *Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum* (*Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*), the influential sixteenth-century French logician Pierre de la Ramée (Petrus Ramus) disparages Quintilian's definition of the perfect orator as a "good man" (*vir bonus*) who possesses both outstanding skill at speaking and all the moral excellences.[1] According to Ramus, Quintilian's insistence on the orator's goodness is "empty and silly" and his definition of the orator is "exceedingly void and faulty" because it overshoots the limits of the rhetorical art by claiming moral goodness within its purview.[2] If moral virtue is really a part of rhetoric, Quintilian should include moral instruction in his *ars rhetorica*, but he does not in fact do this. Quintilian is guilty, in Ramus' view, of confusing moral and intellectual virtues and contaminating the methodology of the arts by introducing elements that are not proper to them. Along these lines of argument, the orator's goodness, which Quintilian emphasizes so passionately in his work, is detachable from the rhetorical enterprise, and rhetoric as an art is morally neutral, capable of being used by bad and good alike.[3] Ramus' Quintilian sounds misguided and muddle-headed, unable to secure the philosophical cohesion of his project and ignorant of the art he professes to teach.

Although he does not acknowledge it in the text of the *Rhetoricae Distinctiones*, Ramus is following Quintilian into a theoretical melee generally thought to have been initiated by Plato in the *Gorgias*. In this dialogue Socrates asks Gorgias, the famous Sicilian rhetorician, whether or not he is able to teach his students "about the just and the unjust" if they do not already know.[4] Gorgias says that he can, presumably because he is too embarrassed to admit otherwise, and so is entrapped by Socrates into contradicting himself.[5] The implication of Socrates' discussion with Gorgias, and of his ensuing disputes with Gorgias' admirers, Polus and Callicles, is that rhetoric, construed as the power of persuading groups of people by means of speech, is not just amoral, as Ramus suggests,[6] but immoral and pernicious.[7] For Socrates, rhetoric (in a non-esoteric sense, at least) is the provenance of unscrupulous politicians like Callicles who believe that might makes right and that skill in speaking is a means of power that can be used to manipulate others for one's own ends.[8] Detached from knowledge and the practice of virtue, it is incompatible with true education (παιδεία) and so with happiness.[9]

---

[1] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*9.

[2] See Carole Newlands' and James Murphy's 1986 edition of Ramus' 1549 *Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum*: 168-171.

[3] Cf. Lanham 1993: 155-159 for a discussion of Ramus in his provocative essay on the crisis of humanities education entitled "The 'Q' Question," in which "Q" stands for "Quintilian."

[4] Pl. *Grg.*459d-460a: περὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον.

Although Plato's later dialogue *Phaedrus* seems to offer a more moderate view,[10] the problems raised in the *Gorgias* remain troubling and continue to fuel scholarly discussion not only in classics and philosophy but also in political theory.[11] Can an art or skill that capitalizes on the ignorance and (largely negative) emotions of others be a good thing itself? Furthermore, how do we ensure that people who come into the possession of such an art use it for the good of the community and not for its destruction? The consequences of destructive rhetoric are all around us, albeit transmuted into new forms. Speech that accuses, divides, infuriates, humiliates, alienates, polarizes, or incites cruelty and greed may once have occurred in the form of an hours-long oration to a popular assembly of thousands but can now reach an audience of millions in the space of 280 characters.

---

[5] Pl. *Grg.*460a-461b.

[6] Cf. Lanham 1993: 157-159 on Ramus' revaluation of rhetoric as "cosmetic."

[7] E.g., Pl. *Grg.*464e-465a, where Socrates tells Polus that rhetoric is a form of "flattery" (κολακεία) and therefore shameful.

[8] Cf. Pl. *Grg.*500c for the opposition between the lives of the politician-rhetor and the philosopher and 502e-503a for the politician-rhetor's gratification of the mob for his own ends.

[9] Cf. Pl. *Grg.*470e4, where Socrates' vision of παιδεία seems to be connected with justice (δικαιοσύνη), which Socrates exhorts Callicles to practice at the dialogue's end in order to find happiness (527c-e).

[10] Cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 271d-273a and 277b-c, where Socrates outlines the criteria of an art of rhetoric based on knowledge of the true rather than the merely probable.

[11] E.g., Gary Remer's *Ethics and the Orator* (2017), Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion* (2006), and the last chapter ("Is Rhetoric a Good Thing?") of Danielle Allen's *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since* Brown v. Board of Education (2004).

My dissertation seeks to re-appraise the significance of Ramus' target, Quintilian, to this theoretical fray by reading Quintilian's twelve-book treatise, the *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Orator's Education*), as a serious engagement with the Platonic problem of whether and how the skilled speaker's morality, and that of his art, can be guaranteed. I contend that Quintilian's treatise offers a profound and thoughtful response to the problem, though not in a form that Ramus would have acknowledged or appreciated. By contrast with the systematic outline of moral philosophy that Ramus demands, Quintilian's contribution to the question of the orator's morality lies not so much in the strength of his arguments as in his illustration of a good person: the ideal orator, whom he defines as a "good man skilled in speaking" (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*). Departing from Quintilian's appropriation of a phrase from the *Gorgias* ("therefore the rhetor must be just and the just man must want to do just things"),[12] I argue that the *Institutio* can be read as endeavoring to answer the questions of what it means for the orator to *want* what is good and just and, furthermore, how to get him to want this. I draw out the special emphasis Quintilian places on *voluntas*, or "wanting" the good, as an essential element of his moral vision. To the Platonic problem of how to ensure the orator's goodness, Quintilian's response seems to be: "Make sure he *wants* to be good."[13] Through the *Institutio* Quintilian outlines how the orator can be educated so as to want the good; at the same time, he actively urges readers to want the good, thus trying to bring into being, to the best of his ability as an author and a teacher, the good orator with good *voluntas*.

---

[12] Pl. *Grg.*460c: οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη τὸν ῥητορικὸν δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι δίκαια πράττειν, quoted at Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27 and discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation.

[13] Cf. Winterbottom 1998: "Quintilian's whole aim was to train a speaker who *would* not, though he could, misuse the art of speaking" (323).

2. A Brief Sketch of Quintilian's *Vir Bonus Dicendi Peritus*

Quintilian's moral ideal of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus* is multi-dimensional. Readers hoping for a single succinct summary from Quintilian will be disappointed. It is, however, eminently possible to assemble a cohesive picture of Quintilian's moral orator by bringing together passages from across the *Institutio Oratoria.* As the foundation on which the remainder of my dissertation builds, I lay out in this section my own understanding, supported by scholarly consensus, of the moral orator's most salient features.

First and most obviously, Quintilian's orator possesses the traditional array of moral virtues and generally agreeable qualities that befit a Roman *vir bonus.*[14] He has embraced the virtues of "justice, fortitude, abstinence, temperance, [and] piety."[15] Frugality, moderation, sexual purity, and manliness are all likewise important.[16] He is trustworthy and possesses moral authority.[17] His own personality makes him pleasant to others: he is good-natured and easy to get along with.[18] At the same time, his moral uprightness means that he is hard on the wicked and an enforcer of justice.[19] None of these lists is meant to be exhaustive; rather, they emphasize the polyvalence of the orator's virtue, which remains constant even as different aspects of it come to the fore in different circumstances.

---

[14] Cf. Kennedy 1969: 125 for the "self-evident" quality of the orator's "conventional virtues." Quintilian clearly envisions the *vir bonus* as an elite male with sufficient resources to pursue the expansive studies he recommends, though he occasionally adopts a more universalizing tone (e.g., *Inst.*1.1.1-2).

[15] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.17: *an de iustitia fortitudine abstinentia temperantia pietate non plurima dicet orator?* Although Quintilian lists these virtues primarily as things the orator will speak about, he clarifies in the next sentence that, as a *vir bonus*, he has already interiorized these virtues himself and is thus empowered to speak about them.

[16] See, for instance, Quint. *Inst.*11.3.19 and 12.1.8 for *frugalitas*; 12.10.80 for recommendation of the "middle way" as the path to virtue; and 1.8.9 for *sanctitas* and *virilitas.* See Connolly 2007 in Dominik and Hall (eds.) for bibliography on masculinity in Roman oratory.

[17] See, e.g., Quint. *Inst.*11.3.155 for *constantia* and *auctoritas* and 12.1.13 for *fides* (whose importance is shown in this instance by its absence). See also the quotation of Verg. *Aen.*1.151-153 in Quint. *Inst.*12.1.27, where Quintilian characterizes Vergil's *pietate gravis ac meritis...vir* as a *vir bonus.*

[18] Quint. *Inst.*11.1.42: *iucundissima vero in oratore humanitas facilitas moderatio benivolentia.*

[19] Ibid.: *sed illa quoque diversa bonum virum decent: mala odisse, publica vice commoveri, ultum ire scelera et iniurias, et omnia, ut initio dixi, honesta.*

Second, Quintilian treats the orator's goodness as consisting in living according to nature.[20] This opens up for him a rich tradition of philosophical backing for his ideal by enabling him to argue for an intrinsic connection between moral character and speech as mutually grounded in *natura*. Living according to nature is the essence of upright moral behavior; as water is for fish and air for birds, so is the "upright and blessed life" of moral virtue natural and fitting for human beings.[21] Likewise, it is a benevolent *natura* (or, relatedly, a divine creator) who has uniquely endowed human beings with reason and speech.[22] Arguments like these posit a common identity for both virtuous moral character and excellence in speaking as perfections of *natura*. Along these lines, skill in speaking, insofar as it is the perfection of something natural, can be treated as inherently moral. This gives Quintilian a foundation for his practice of discussing stylistic and moral virtue interchangeably, a habit that is jarring for many modern readers but by no means unparalleled in Roman (or Greek) literature.[23]

Quintilian often seeks to reinforce this natural connection of speech and character by means of psychological arguments:[24] moral virtues (and vices) shape the mind in a particular way, and from the mind comes speech. The shamelessness of bad people is manifested when they speak, while the good person naturally communicates his inner virtue.[25] Quintilian argues, in addition, that only a virtuous person has the mental freedom and energy to embrace the demanding study of eloquence.

---

[20] Cf. Kennedy 1969: 34: "No concept is more dear to Quintilian than nature" and Fantham 1995.

[21] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.12-13.

[22] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.16.12-18, which emphasizes reason and speech as gifts of a creator god (*deus ille princeps, parens rerum fabricatorque mundi*) and *Inst.*12.1.2, where the giver of these gifts is a personified *natura* who would be "not a parent but a [wicked] stepmother" if she had intended them for pernicious use. Fantham 1995 argues that the concepts of *providentia* and the divine creator are more or less proxies for nature (126), and that personified nature is an externalization of human nature (e.g., 134).

[23] See Winterbottom 1998: 327, n.18 for a sample list of passages in Quintilian where stylistic qualities are termed "vices." Although Winterbottom acknowledges that Quintilian is not unique in doing this, he suggests "that he does it far more systematically and on a larger scale" than other authors in antiquity. Sen. *Ep.*114 is a *locus classicus* for the connection between style and character.

[24] Cf. Kennedy 1969: 124.

[25] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.12-13 and 29-30 for the manifestations of character through speech (and the impact of this on persuasiveness) and 12.2.17 for the good man's spontaneous ability to speak virtuously.

Vices render the mind unstable and distracted, while virtue allows it to concentrate its powers on its truly worthwhile goal.[26] These psychological arguments identify the mind, alongside the principle of *natura*, as the point of connection between moral character and speech, and so suggest that it is a proving point of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*.

Third, the virtue of Quintilian's orator is essentially public-facing.[27] Quintilian's portrayal of human beings as inherently social and political, brought together into communities by the power of speech, eagerly joins a tradition of conjectural history on this theme.[28] Political leadership is presented as the orator's highest task,[29] and the future orator must be prepared from a young age to prefer the brilliant light of society (exemplified by school) to the sickly shadows of isolation (i.e., private learning).[30] Light is associated with health, virtue, and the orator's socially oriented role, while shadow hangs over the self-enclosed insignificance of the professional philosopher or the declaimer who never applies his practice of rhetoric in public life.[31]

The final element that I would like to highlight is one that Quintilian gives special prominence to in Book Twelve; in some sense, it can be treated as the principle that coordinates all the other elements I have mentioned so far. This is the idea of *voluntas*, or "wanting," which Quintilian labels the chief component of moral goodness in *Institutio* 12.11.[32] I will undertake a more detailed analysis of this term in Chapter Four; for now, I mention only these two points. First,

---

[26] See Quint. *Inst.*12.1.4-7 for the vices that maul the *mala mens*. Quintilian's description of a bad mind and its tortured state sounds very similar to Plato's discussion of the tyrannical soul in book 9 of his *Republic*: enslaved to its passions, miserable in its fears and anxieties, and unable to partake of the true pleasure of the philosopher. Cf. e.g., Pl. *Resp.*573a-b and 577d- 578b for descriptions of the disastrous state of the tyrannical soul. For Socrates' awarding of the most pleasant life to the philosopher, cf. 9.582e-583a. For the intellectual focus and delight of the person whose aim is eloquence, see Quint.*Inst.*1.12.18.

[27] Cf., e.g., Winterbottom 1998: 323 and Morgan 1998b: 251-252.

[28] Compare Quint. *Inst.*2.16.9-10 with, for instance, Arist. *Pol.*1253a and Cic. *Inv. rhet.*1.2-3 and *De or.*1.30-34.

[29] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*10, 2.16.19, 12.1.26, 12.2.6-8 and 21, 12.7.3-4.

[30] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.9: *lumen tamen illud conventus honestissimi tenebris ac solitudini praetulissem* and 1.2.18.

[31] See *Inst.*12.2.6-8 for the comparison of the philosopher with the orator and 10.5.18 for the story of Porcius Latro, a declaimer who became so accustomed to the schoolroom that he was disoriented by having to plead in the forum.

[32] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.11: *nam id quod prius quoque maius est, ut boni viri simus, voluntate maxime constat.*

Quintilian suggests here that *voluntas* is a major (even "the" major) component of being a *vir bonus*: goodness consists chiefly in wanting to be good, and wanting to be good shows that a person is already good at some fundamental level. Second, the context of this statement links *voluntas* with progress or movement towards a moral goal.[33] The idea of wanting as a fundamental commitment to a moral goal, as well as movement towards that goal, is important in Quintilian's map of the orator's education, as well as in his theory of rhetoric and his own use of persuasive appeals in the *Institutio*. The recurrence of this theme in the *Institutio*, culminating in its most forceful exposition in Book Twelve, is a connecting thread that, I argue, constitutes a robust response on Quintilian's part to the tradition of debate over the moral status of rhetoric and the problem of educating virtuous speakers.

3. Contributions to Scholarship on Quintilian and the *Vir Bonus*

My project anticipates and accompanies a revival of interest in the *Institutio Oratoria*, an influential text in humanistic pedagogy that has not received the critical attention it deserves from classical scholars in recent decades.[34] This neglect is likely due, in part, to the prevalence of what some scholars have called a " 'mining' approach" to Quintilian, whereby the *Institutio* is valued mainly as a source of information on Roman culture (e.g., educational practices, rhetoric, literary criticism) rather than as a unified project with its own distinctive aims.[35] My work advocates for a scholarly turn towards recognizing Quintilian's *Institutio* as a literary work in its own right,[36] one that offers rhetorical instruction through its use of rhetorical appeals[37] and exceeds the scope of traditional rhetorical handbooks to join a wider tradition of thought on rhetoric, education, and political theory.[38] Rather than faulting Quintilian or the *Institutio* for failing to adhere to some externally conceived standard of philosophical rigor or method,[39] I focus on examining the work for the concerns and structuring principles that arise from the text itself.

---

[33] See Quint. *Inst.*12.11.11-12 and Chapter Four of this dissertation.

[34] Cf. the "Texts and Translations" section from Elaine Fantham's Oxford Bibliography on Quintilian (2009). Noteworthy exceptions include Francesca Romana Nocchi's *Quintiliano* (2020) and three volumes of essays, mostly in Spanish, that grew out of a conference in Spain celebrating the nineteenth centennial of the *Institutio Oratoria* (*Quintiliano: Historia y Actualidad de la Retórica*, 1998). In the Anglophone world, Donald Russell and Michael Winterbottom have published significant works on Quintilian in recent decades: Russell's 2001 translation for the Loeb Classical Library has become the new standard in English, while a career's worth of Winterbottom's essays on Quintilian have recently been published by his colleagues under the title *Papers on Quintilian and Ancient Declamation* (2019). With Tobias Reinhardt, Winterbottom also published a commentary on Book Two of the *Institutio* in 2006. In America, Quintilian has received still less attention: two noteworthy exceptions are a series of articles in ongoing stages of publication by Curtis Dozier and a chapter of Irene Peirano Garrison's 2019 monograph, *Persuasion, Rhetoric, and Roman Poetry*. Apart from George Kennedy's 1969 eponymous overview *cum* biography of Quintilian, which is more descriptive than argumentative, I know of no English-language monograph entirely devoted to Quintilian.

As an organizing principle of the *Institutio,* Quintilian's ideal of the orator as a *vir bonus* has drawn a great deal of scholarly attention, much of which tries to evince a particular philosophical tradition or historical concern as Quintilian's dominant inspiration.[40] The effort to ground Quintilian's ideal in a philosophical tradition or historical crisis, while it has yielded many valuable insights, seeks to resolve a general feeling of awkwardness arising from Quintilian's persistent claim that the orator has to be a good man. Richard Lanham, for instance, in a famous 1993 essay on the crisis in humanities education entitled "The 'Q' Question," where "Q" stands for "Quintilian," suggests that Quintilian's claim is naïve and evasive.[41] Using Quintilian's rhetoric as a springboard for discussing the humanities in general, Lanham calls Quintilian the "most famous nonanswerer" of the question of whether teaching rhetoric—or any other "discipline of discourse"— actually "does conduce to virtue more than to vice."[42] Even Michael Winterbottom, one of Quintilian's more sympathetic readers,[43] seems to characterize Quintilian as quixotic when he writes that "to define the orator as the *vir bonus*, and to deny the title of orator to those less than good, is to express a pious wish, to put forward an aim, but in no way to solve a problem. But at least Quintilian is on the side of the angels."[44] Readings like this suggest that Quintilian's work is idealistic but ultimately impractical: he makes a noble claim—that the orator must be morally good—but does not seem to give a plausible answer to the question of how the orator becomes a good person through rhetorical education.

---

[35] Cf. Dozier 2014: 72, n.6 and Morgan 1998b: 245-246.

[36] Cf., e.g., Gerbrandy 2020: 39 and Morgan 1998b: 246.

[37] Cf., e.g., Gunderson 2009: 109, 111 and Dozier 2014: 72-73.

[38] Cf. Morgan 1998b: 246, especially notes 7-8.

[39] This approach of measuring the *Institutio* and its author against an external standard of philosophical cohesiveness or rigor is evident in Ramus' project but also in more recent scholarship. For instance, Brinton 1983 attempts to explain the philosophical dimension of Quintilian's project "by making reference to his more sophisticated philosophical ally," Plato (167). Brinton suggests that Quintilian's ideal is not sufficiently "intelligible" or "plausible" on its own terms and needs to be explained in terms of a Platonic model (ibid.). Likewise, Kennedy 1969 criticizes the prologue to Book Six, in which Quintilian laments the deaths of his wife and sons, as philosophically unclear and unoriginal (29). But this assessment, which prioritizes the consistency of a hypothetical philosophical system over the immediate internal concerns of the text itself, fails to take into account the context of the passage as a rhetorical performance (cf. Leigh 2004, Zinsmaier 2003, Dozier 2014, Gunderson 2009) in which the very inconsistency of Quintilian's philosophical statements (on grief, the gods, fate, etc.) may be designed to mimic the intense suffering and conflicting emotional impulses of a bereaved parent.

[40] For Brinton 1983, this is Platonism; for Walzer 2003, Stoicism. For Winterbottom 1964, the main motivator of Quintilian's moral emphasis lies not so much in a theoretical system as in the historical problem of informants under the Flavians.

On the other end of the spectrum of responses to Quintilian's ideal lies Curtis Dozier, who thinks that the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* is a red herring, "a patently artificial ideal supported by facile references to Cato and ancient philosophers and justified using the most deceptive techniques rhetoric had to offer."[45] Dozier's deeply skeptical reading of the *Institutio* tries to undermine the centrality of the moral ideal of the orator to Quintilian's project. On Dozier's reading the *vir bonus* is not in fact "the key to Quintilian's rhetorical theory" but instead a sort of dummy that readers, who have learned from Quintilian how to recognize and analyze rhetorical argumentation on their first reading of the *Institutio*, can deconstruct during a second, skeptical reading that Quintilian invites us to perform.[46] Dozier's suggestion that Quintilian equips readers to "recognize" and "resist" rhetorical argumentation is interesting, and he succeeds in his avowed aim of taking Quintilian "much more seriously than when we regarded him as nothing more than a compiler of rhetorical theory."[47] Nevertheless, his dismissal of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* as a sincere ideal and his disparagement of Quintilian's discussion of childhood education as "absurd" and "preposterous" suggest an unwillingness to treat as potentially genuine aspects of the text that he finds unconvincing or unsettling.[48] Like the proponents of a naïve Quintilian (albeit from a different angle), Dozier, with his skeptical approach, suggests that the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* cannot be a serious response to the problems posed by rhetorical education.

---

[41] Cf. Lanham 1993: "To confront this question honestly [*sc.*, the question of whether the "perfect orator" is "a good man as well as a good orator"] would imperil [Quintilian's] entire endeavor and so, with that genial resolution which illustrates his sweet nature throughout the *Institutio*, he assumes the answer he wants and then goes on to bolster it with inventively adapted Platonism" (155).
[42] Ibid.
[43] Cf. Dozier 2014: 83.
[44] Winterbottom 1998: 326.
[45] Dozier 2014: 86.

My own approach to Quintilian's ideal is to attempt "the richest possible sincere reading" of it,[49] skirting both the Scylla of skepticism and the Charybdis of credulity. By integrating a more traditional acceptance of Quintilian's ideal as genuine with more recent analyses of its rhetorical construction and framing, I hope to prompt a renewed appreciation of Quintilian's work as a response to the perennial problem of rhetorical education. My project draws on what Rita Felski, quoting Paul Ricoeur, has called a "hermeneutics of trust" and thus runs counter to Dozier's skeptical project.[50] For Dozier, based on the principle "that rhetoric must be concealed to persuade," articulated by Quintilian himself in *Inst.*2.5.8, the very fact that Quintilian calls attention to his artful use of rhetorical techniques in defending a moral ideal of the orator undercuts the possibility of accepting this ideal as sincere.[51] Where Dozier emphasizes the ways in which Quintilian's presentation of rhetorical theory encourages and equips the reader to "resist" his arguments the second time round, I do not agree that Quintilian means for the *vir bonus* ideal to be eviscerated through recognition and resistance of its rhetorical presentation.[52] This is because I see Quintilian's system of rhetorical education as based ultimately on trust and collaboration rather than on suspicion and resistance.

---

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Dozier 2014: 81.

[49] I owe this phraseology to Robert Stone.

[50] Cf. Felski 2015: 9, 30-31 for "a hermeneutics of trust, of restoration, of recollection" (9) as expanding the possibilities of interpretation beyond "suspicion" alone. In Chapter 1 ("The Stakes of Suspicion") of *The Limits of Critique*, Felski seeks to rebalance the priorities of textual interpretation, pointing to a hyper-valuation of suspicious readings as constituting the "aesthetic and social worth" of texts in terms of "a rhetoric of *againstness*" (17). My own approach to Quintilian accords with Felski's declaration that "works of art do not only subvert but also convert; they do not only inform but also transform—a transformation that is not just a matter of intellectual readjustment but one of affective alignment as well" (17).

It is true that rhetorical training involves an empowerment of students with skills that could be used to resist the teacher.[53] So does training in an agonistic sport, like boxing, to which Gorgias famously (and fatally, at least for his own case) compares rhetoric in the eponymous Platonic dialogue (456d-457c). The legendary beginning of rhetorical training itself involved a scandalous lawsuit between Corax and his pupil Tisias.[54] Quintilian is aware of the dangerous and subversive potential of teaching others to speak skillfully, but he also—and, I think, more fundamentally—appreciates the positive potential of the empowerment of the student by the teacher. He does this by figuring education as a process of nourishment[55] and collaboration in which the mutual *concordia* of the teacher and student serves as a foundation for the student's gradual empowerment with skills passed on by the teacher.[56] A foundation of trust enables even the student's increasing ability to resist or argue against the teacher to remain within a context of benevolent and collaborative pursuit of eloquence. In this vein, recognizing the rhetorical presentation of Quintilian's arguments should not automatically lead us to suspect the sincerity of his moral claims; that a teacher of rhetoric argues rhetorically in support of a moral position, drawing from the repertoire of ethical and pathetic appeals that he theorizes about, should come as no surprise. If anything, it is a demonstration of pedagogical earnestness and professional competence, a proof that he himself can effectively use the techniques he is recommending and is thus a qualified and trustworthy teacher.

---

[51] Dozier 2014: 82-86, especially 85-86.

[52] Cf. Dozier 2014: 86: "Quintilian's invitation to his readers to reread as skeptics creates a profoundly different experience of the work, a reading where Quintilian does not try at all to persuade us but to expose all the weaknesses and fissures in his argumentation for us to see, analyze, and ultimately explode."

[53] The very exercise of argument on both sides of a case (*in utramque partem*) so fundamental to rhetorical education provides an opportunity for resistance (cf., e.g., Quint. *Inst.*3.8.43 for the claim that one needs to understand the *ratio* of the unfair argument in order to better defend the fair). But this is all envisioned within the context of a classroom where the teacher is trying to help the student grow in skill and, in Quintilian's presentation, in moral character too.

[54] See Kennedy 1963: 59 for the transmission of this story.

[55] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*23-24.

[56] Quint. *Inst.*2.9.3.

4. Contributions to Scholarship on *Voluntas*

A handful of scholars have previously noted the importance of *voluntas* (or of some idea of "will") in Quintilian's work. Both Kennedy and Winterbottom allude to it without developing the idea at length.[57] A more extensive, though somewhat confusing, treatment can be found in a dense 1997 essay by Suzanne Gély, who notes the significance of *bona voluntas* in Quintilian and uses it to explain a tension between the "imitation of truth" (*imitatio veritatis*) that Quintilian counsels in Book Five (5.12.22) and his statement in Book Six (6.2.5-7) that an orator is most in his element when distracting the judge from the truth. Like Gély, I read *bona voluntas* or *recta voluntas* as Quintilian's solution for the moral problem of preserving the orator's integrity while allowing him to lie or use other questionable tactics to ensure a just outcome. My analysis also accords with Gély's in emphasizing the role of *voluntas* in directing and sustaining the laborious efforts required by rhetorical education.[58] However, where Gély extrapolates from *bona voluntas* in the *Institutio Oratoria* to make a series of broad (and ultimately unprovable) claims about truth, power, and being in Roman literature and history writ large,[59] my own interest lies is showing more thoroughly and precisely how Quintilian's use of *voluntas* can open up a new reading of the *Institutio* itself by highlighting the motivational dimension of the text. By this I mean that the *Institutio* tries in specific ways to launch students into the quest for excellence that it describes, illustrating how the rhetorical pupil can become the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* and stirring readers to pursue this goal for themselves.

---

[57] Cf. Kennedy 1969, summarizing *Inst.*12.11ff., mentions the importance of "will power and motivation" (129), while Winterbottom 1998 notes the importance of the "will to virtue" in connection with the same passage (321, n.10).

[58] Cf. Gély 1997: 58-59 and 62.

[59] Cf. especially Gély 1997: 64-66.

Finally, any examination of *voluntas* in imperial Latin literature must situate itself vis-à-vis an extensive and contentious philosophical literature on the development of a notion (or notions) of "will" in Greco-Roman antiquity, and particularly vis-à-vis the importance scholars have attributed to Seneca the Younger's use of *voluntas* in his *Epistulae Morales* and *Dialogi*.[60] Brad Inwood, for instance, has convincingly argued that Seneca's use of *voluntas* in these works need not imply anything more than a general, non-technical idea of "considered desire or willingness" rather than some sort of mental "faculty" that produces "volitions," an idea that Inwood argues is anachronistic.[61] In parallel with Inwood's context-centered approach, I focus on the role *voluntas* plays within the *Institutio Oratoria*, building an understanding of its characteristics and connotations from its placement in particular passages rather than on a preconceived philosophical definition. Although it is beyond the scope of my present project to catalogue and evaluate all the resonances between Seneca's and Quintilian's uses of *voluntas*, the work I have done on Quintilian may help to illuminate the state of the problem in Seneca by suggesting the *Institutio Oratoria* as an overlooked point of comparison for Seneca's use of *voluntas*.[62] Writing approximately three decades after

---

[60] Inwood 2005 compiles and responds to a rich bibliography on the state of the will question as it pertains specifically to Seneca. Other treatments of the conceptual history of the will include Frede 2011, a readable survey, in English, of the various origins of the notion of "free will" in Greek and Roman philosophy; Voelke 1973, in French, which brings together an admirable array of primary sources on Stoic psychology and concepts relevant to an understanding of will (though his position has been compellingly criticized by Inwood 2005); Kahn 1988, which attempts a useful disentangling of various Christian and non-Christian concepts involved in the free will problem; and Byers 2006, which adapts insights from Inwood 1985 to argue that Augustine's uses of *voluntas* in *De Civitate Dei* corresponds with the Stoic concept of *hormê* (171).

[61] Inwood 2005: 142 for *voluntas* as "considered desire or willingness" and 133 for his summary of the features of "traditional will," Inwood's term for the notion of will as a faculty of mind. Inwood does, however, claim that Seneca contributed to the formation of "traditional will" not through the lexical resonances of his use of *voluntas* but through his "reflections on mental causation, self-control, self-awareness, and self-shaping" (143).

[62] In a fascinating passage discussed by Taoka 2011, Quintilian implies his own awareness and deliberate adaptation of Senecan *voluntas* with a biting *sententia*: *digna enim fuit illa natura [Senecae] quae meliora vellet; quod*

Seneca, Quintilian may allow us to see how Seneca's psychological ideas and exhortative strategies were received and adapted into new contexts and for different purposes than Seneca himself likely envisioned.

5. Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter One of the dissertation analyzes four of Quintilian's major sources of inspiration for his moral ideal of the orator to show how, in each case, Quintilian selects and re-contextualizes material in crafting his own distinctive project. Chapter Two offers a reading of the educational pathway that Quintilian outlines for the ideal orator (in Books One, Two, Ten, and Twelve) as involving a progressive internalization of motivation towards the good such that the mature orator wants the good—eloquence, which encompasses moral virtue and skilled speech—of his own accord. Chapter Three analyzes Quintilian's use of ethical and pathetic appeals in trying to move readers to embrace his own authorial persona—as a *vir bonus*—and his project of educating orators who are also *boni viri*. Finally, Chapter Four seeks to unify these strands by focusing on Quintilian's use of good *voluntas*, particularly in Book Twelve, as the core of the orator's moral integrity, the engine of his progress towards the goal of eloquence, and the desired outcome of reading the *Institutio*.

---

voluit effecit (*Inst.*10.1.131, the close of Quintilian's celebrated canon of reading material for shaping the prospective orator's style).

Chapter One: Origins and Originality of Quintilian's Moral Orator

1. Introduction

In constructing his ideal of the moral orator, Quintilian appropriates material from, among other sources, Cato, Cicero, Plato, and the Stoics. There can, at times, be a tendency to treat Quintilian as a transparent transmitter of his sources. "Fortunately for us," comments one recent author, "Quintilian was not an original thinker but a teacher concerned with transmitting the ideas of others."[1] Yet a close reading of Quintilian's text indicates, rather, that Quintilian consistently recontextualizes the material he draws from each source to form a distinctive moral vision that is irreducible to any of its parts. In this first chapter, I examine Quintilian's appropriations of material from select sources to show how, in each instance, Quintilian incorporates some elements while resisting others as he crafts his own ideal of the moral orator.

2. Quintilian's Catonian Catchphrase

Quintilian begins the major discussion of his final book with Cato the Elder's dictum defining the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*. Quintilian likes this pithy statement because it comes from a venerable authority whom he can use as a source for the claim that moral goodness is essential to the orator. Much of Book Twelve's impassioned opening is centered on proving that this definition holds true regardless of circumstances that may appear to compromise the orator's moral goodness, like lying to the judge.[2]

---

[1] Liebersohn 2010: 19. Liebersohn is interested in Quintilian as a source for reconstructing the "metarhetorical debate" of the second century BCE (13-14, 19-21). Although he is not specifically referring to Quintilian's moral vision in the quotation above, and although he does acknowledge that Quintilian had his own purposes in arranging his material in a particular way (20-21), this statement is symptomatic of the larger trend of "mining" Quintilian for information about other thinkers (cf. Dozier 2014: 72 and Morgan 1998b: 245-246). For an assessment of Quintilian's "aspirations toward an originary and proprietary authorship" (371), see Logie 2003.

> Therefore, let that orator whom we have prepared be the one who is defined by Cato as "a good man skilled in speaking." But what Cato himself placed first, a consideration that is by its very nature more forceful and important, let him be, at any rate, a good man (Quint. *Inst.*12.1.1).
>
> Sit ergo nobis orator quem constituimus is qui a M. Catone finitur vir bonus dicendi peritus, verum, id quod et ille posuit prius et ipsa natura potius ac maius est, utique vir bonus.

According to Quintilian, Cato's placement of *vir bonus* before *dicendi peritus* suggests a prioritization of the orator's moral goodness over his skill in speaking. In the context of the argument that follows (*Inst.*12.1.4-7), it is possible to read a relationship of dependence between these two criteria. On a psychological level, skill in speaking is built upon moral goodness: Quintilian claims that the mind cannot devote itself to studying oratory unless it is rid of vices and distractions that drain energy from intellectual application.[3] Quintilian offers a weighted interpretation of Cato's dictum (i.e., *vir bonus* comes before *dicendi peritus* because it is more important) in order to set up his own argument for the necessity of moral goodness to the orator.

Scholars sometimes assume that, because Quintilian adopts Cato's definition of the orator, Cato and Quintilian shared an ideal of the orator as well. However, the fragmentary transmission of the quote, let alone the vast cultural and political changes that Rome underwent in the intervening centuries between Cato and Quintilian, should make us hesitant to accept a static identity for the definition.[4] Typically understood as a fragment of a lost work composed by Cato for his son

---

[2] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.44. Even if the orator has to engage in questionable practices in order to win his just case, the definition of him as a good man skilled in speaking still holds true: *sit tamen vera finitio oratorem esse virum bonum dicendi peritum*.

[3] Quint. *Inst.* 12.1.4-7.

[4] Kennedy 1972 is off the mark when he says that Cato's "definition of the orator...is the first expression of a persistent ideal of Roman rhetoricians, the perfect orator, discussed in Cicero's *De Oratore* and especially in Quintilian" (57). Nothing about the surviving Cato quote suggests that Cato is defining the *perfect* orator, and the idea that Cato is the starting point for the Roman ideal-oratorical project is itself a backward projection of Quintilian's framing onto Cato.

Marcus, a work that may also have included precepts about agriculture and medicine,[5] the dictum does not offer enough evidence for us to be able to situate it in a more specific context, much less to speculate about an entire lost book by Cato on oratory, as some have done.[6] In order to try and flesh out the moral resonances of this dictum for Quintilian's project, we will have to examine other evidence from Cato about the meaning of *vir bonus* in his thought, as well as his opinion on the moral implications of skilled speaking. After a brief assessment of the meaning of *bonus* and *vir bonus* in Cato's *De Agri Cultura*, his only work to survive in full, I suggest three potential points of connection between the moral thought of Cato as we know it through the testimony of other authors and that of Quintilian as presented in the *Institutio*.

An important bone of contention among scholars is whether the meaning of *vir bonus* in Cato is primarily moral or socioeconomic.[7] One of its more famous appearances is in the preface to *De Agricultura*, which states that, at least in ancestral times, the fullness of praise for a "good man" (*vir bonus*) was to be called "a good farmer and a good cultivator."[8] *Bonus* and its adverb *bene* appear frequently throughout *De Agricultura* and usually describe the fitness of a person, tool, or operation for its role in the agricultural enterprise. Cattle-stalls (*bubilia*) should be *bona*, as should mangers (*bonae praesepes*); the steward should exercise *bona disciplina* over the *familia*; root vegetables should be planted in land that is well-fertilized with manure (*bene stercoratus*), and so on.[9] *Vir bonus* has a more overtly moral flavor when it appears in the discussions of harvesting olives, selling wine, and leasing pasture land: Cato says that issues of quality control and damage by the contractor or renter are to be referred to the judgment (*arbitratus*) of a *vir bonus*.[10] Presumably this would have been a person with a reputation for fairness and sufficient social standing to be able to make a pronouncement acceptable to both the owner and the contractor.[11] These ideas of fairness and respectability do have moral resonance, though Cato does not develop it much: if we apply these qualities to the dictum about the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, Cato's orator may be simply a "decent" or "upstanding" person who is an able speaker. For more emphatic moral values that Cato's dictum may evoke for Quintilian, we will have to search beyond *De Agri Cultura*.

---

[5] Cf. Astin 1978, Appendix 8 "The Nature of Cato's *Ad filium*."
[6] Astin 1978: 333-334.
[7] This has been especially important for scholars of Roman law trying to trace the origins of the term *vir bonus* in the republican period (cf. Falcone 2011: 59 for bibliography). Although Falcone mentions scholars who treat Cato's use of *bonus* as an instance of "banalità" (79, n. 53), in general he wishes to highlight the moral dimensions of *bonus* and related terms and to push back against a purely socioeconomic assessment (e.g., 56, 90). See Villa 1953 for an integrated assessment of the moral and socioeconomic resonances of this vocabulary in Cato.
[8] Cato, *Agr.* pr.2: *et [maiores nostri] virum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam bonumque colonum. Amplissime laudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur.* Falcone 2011: 79-81 argues that the superlatives used to describe farmers in *Agr.*pr.4 (e.g., *viri fortissimi, maximeque pius quaestus, minimeque invidiosus, minimeque male cogitantes*) are linked to the *vir bonus* via the superlative *amplissime*, thus providing moral context for the *vir bonus*.
[9] Cato *Agr.* 4, 5, 35, respectively.

In the hopes of fleshing out Cato's orator dictum further, scholars have suggested additional Catonian texts and anecdotes that can be read as supplements. Bearing in mind the different historical and social circumstances that separate Cato and Quintilian, three ideas, all persistent themes in Roman moralizing, seem particularly promising. First is the notion of a deep connection between moral character and speech.[12] Astin wants Cato's *vir bonus dicendi peritus* dictum to be viewed "within the context of that concern for integrity which is a recurring feature of his career."[13] He demonstrates that consistency between inner virtue and external expression was important to Cato with two supplementary anecdotes from Plutarch's *Life of Cato*: Cato's comment upon his visit to Athens in 191 BCE that the Greeks spoke from their lips and the Romans from their hearts, and his rebuke to the Senate in 155 for entertaining the embassy of philosophers with their unscrupulous persuasive abilities.[14] The adjective ἄπρακτος in the second passage implicitly links the idleness of the philosophers to their potentially dangerous influence on the Roman youth—presumably, if the embassy had been kept busy and sent packing right away, Carneades would not have had time to make his scandalous arguments for and against justice.

---

[10] Cato *Agr.* 144-145 (olives), 148 (wine), 149 (pasture). Production of olive oil and wine was the principal operation of the farms Cato describes in *De Agri Cultura* (cf. Astin 1978: 243).

[11] See Villa 1953: 99-100 for the connection between *fides* and the *vir bonus* in Cato. Cf. also Fiori 2008: 471, n.37 and Hellegouarc'h 1972: 265-266. Hellegouarc'h connects *fides* and the *vir bonus* through *iustitia* by means of Cic. *Off.*1.23 (*fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides*) and Cic. *Off.*2.38 (*iustitia, ex qua una virtute viri boni appellantur*).

[12] For the ubiquity of this connection between character and speech in Roman literature, see Winterbottom 1998 and Sen. *Ep.*114.

[13] Astin 1978: 154.

Like Cato and other Roman authors, Quintilian manifests a similar concern with the expression of character through speech. In 12.1 he claims that only a person who is sincerely convinced within himself can speak persuasively.[15] And in the prologue to Book 8, discussing stylistics, he uses gendered moral language as an image for proper word choice.[16] While "lawful and dignified clothing adds authority to men…womanish and luxurious clothing does not beautify the body" but rather reveals a corrupted mind within.[17] Words, whether sober or extravagant, reveal truths of character, so it is essential that the morally good orator express virtue in his speech so as to provoke dignified, respectable pleasure in his audience.[18] Quintilian seems to be exuding Catonian *ethos* here. His disparagement of feminine luxury (*muliebris et luxuriosus*) is reminiscent of Cato's stringent support for sumptuary laws, and his emphasis on the priority of caring for matter more than for words sounds not unlike another of Cato's famous dicta: "Hold on to the matter, the words will follow" (*rem tene, verba sequentur*).[19] These similarities between Quintilian's text and the fragmentary remains of Cato's utterances concerning speech evince a shared belief in the direct and intimate connection between moral character and the spoken word.

---

[14] Ibid. Greek text and section numbering from Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 12.5 and 22.5.

[15] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.29.

[16] Cf. Winterbottom 1998: 331 for discussion of Quintilian's gendered moralizing about stylistics. Connolly 2007 discusses Quintilian within a broader treatment of the construction of masculinity in Roman rhetorical discourse.

[17] Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*20: *at muliebris et luxuriosus non corpus exornat, sed detegit mentem*.

[18] Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*33.

[19] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*20: *curam ergo verborum, rerum volo esse sollicitudinem*. Quintilian is polemicizing against people who obsess over word choice to the neglect of the actual material to be discussed. The Catonian dictum *rem tene, verba sequentur* is preserved in the section on invention near the beginning of Julius Victor's *Ars rhetorica* (Giomini and Celentano 1980).

A second point of moral emphasis shared by Cato's *vir bonus* and Quintilian's is a valuation on hard work, although the two authors conceptualize work in different ways. In this regard, another *vir bonus* statement attributed to Cato—this one concerning the farmer—appears in Servius' commentary on Vergil's *Georgics* 1.46 and provides a useful point of comparison for the orator dictum.[20] According to Servius, Cato said in a discourse to his son, "The good man, son Marcus, is skilled in cultivating, and his tools gleam" (*vir bonus est, Marce fili, colendi peritus, cuius ferramenta splendent*).[21] Aside from a change in gerund (*dicendi* to *colendi*), this *vir bonus* has an additional attribute: his shining tools. Regarding the Vergilian phrase he is explicating, *attritus splendescere vomer* ("the worn-down ploughshare glistens"), Servius employs the Cato quote as evidence that the plough's shining signifies its frequent use.[22] In Servius' understanding, the shining of the good man's tools shows that he has used them assiduously in his work of cultivation. Like the hard-working farmer, Cato's orator was, presumably, expected to be diligent in his task, even if Cato did not envision speaking as a full-time profession or occupation in the way that farming was.

Likewise, Quintilian emphasizes the need for hard work in the *Institutio*'s many moralizing sections, though his vision of hard work is intellectualized in a way that Cato's does not seem to be. By contrast with the work of managing a farm, Quintilian applies the idea of labor to studious pursuits: in *Institutio* 12.1.8, for instance, he claims that frugality is necessary for sustaining scholarly "labors,"[23] while in the final exhortation to study he declares that no "labor" should be off-limits in the pursuit of the noble goal of eloquence.[24] Quintilian even tries to fit Cato himself into this intellectual conceptualization of hard work. Alongside Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, Quintilian names Cato as an *exemplum* of a busy person who nevertheless acquired immense learning. Quintilian praises Cato for spending his old age studying Greek literature although he already had many other accomplishments in politics, oratory, history, law, and agriculture.[25] For Quintilian, as mentioned in the discussion of integrity above, there is a strong psychological link between moral goodness and intellectual or verbal skill: a bad person with a vice-ridden mind simply will not be able to concentrate on the skills necessary for oratorical perfection and therefore will always come out below a good person whose mind is free to apply itself.[26] In Quintilian's view, diligent study and vigorous activity are essential characteristics of the orator who is to be effective in the battleground of the forum.[27] Whether Cato's agricultural formulation of the *vir bonus* was known to Quintilian as well as his oratorical one is hard to say, but Quintilian's use of Cato as a model of intellectual assiduousness suggests that he was aware of Cato's reputation for, and probably also his valuation of, diligence. Even if Cato himself is not known to have conceptualized intellectual pursuits as a form of work, Quintilian's wider interest in the connection between diligent study and moral goodness shows that he considered zealous application to these pursuits a sign of virtue and an essential aspect of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus.*

---

[20] Kennedy 1972: 56 writes that this agricultural *vir bonus* dictum is characteristically "Roman and Catonic" "for it couples ethos and hard work." Kennedy does not deny Radermacher's attribution of this phrase to Cato's having heard Diogenes (1899: 291), but he does not think it is necessarily Stoic.

[21] Serv.*Ad Georg.*1.46. Astin says Cato is defining the farmer here in parallel to the orator (154), but this is not exactly true. Cato seems to be defining a good man as a farmer, not a farmer as a good man.

[22] The relevant part of the comment on *Georgics* 1.46 (*attritus splendescere vomer*) reads as follows: *quod evenire frequenti aratione novimus, ut et splendidior fiat et teratur: Cato in oratione ad filium "vir bonus est, Marce fili, colendi peritus, cuius ferramenta splendent."* Latin text from Thilo and Hagen 1881: 145.

[23] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.8: *age, non ad perferendos studiorum labores necessaria frugalitas?*

A third and final piece of what *vir bonus* suggested for Cato—and, *mutatis mutandis*, given the change of regimes and historical circumstances, continued to imply for Quintilian—is an ideal of public-spiritedness, of political involvement and service to the state. In his own oratory Cato liked to cultivate a persona of uncompromising dedication to the state. In *De Sumptu Suo*, a self-defense against charges of private luxury, Cato portrays himself editing the speech before delivery and striking out passages about his self-restraint in public office for fear of *invidia*.[28]

---

[24] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.10: *tum cogitent quantam rem petant quamque nullus sit hoc proposito praemio labor recusandus.*
[25] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.23. Cf. Morgan 1998b: 261 for Quintilian's depiction of Cato as exemplifying many of the qualities of the ideal orator.
[26] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.4-7.
[27] In 10.1.30, Quintilian envisions orators as standing armed in the front line of battle with a terrifying gleam (*fulgor*) in their literary and verbal weapons. These gleaming oratorical weapons may be compared to the shining ploughshare of the *vir bonus colendi peritus.*

> Examine if you please the position of the republic, considering that what I had done well for the state, for which I formerly received gratitude, now I do not dare to recount, lest it be a source of ill-will. Thus has it come to pass that it is licit to do evil unpunished, and to do good not without punishment.
>
> Vide sis quo loco re<s> p. siet, uti quod rei p. bene fecissem, unde gratiam capiebam, nunc idem illud memorare non audeo, ne invidiae siet. ita inductum est male facere impoene, bene facere non inpoene licere. [29]

In this masterful piece of *praeteritio*, Cato displays his many acts of forbearance and service to the common good by pretending to pass over them, thus cementing his reputation for dedication to the republic and exhibiting his rhetorical skill.[30] Both Cato's skill in speaking and his projection of moral uprightness in a civic context are evident in this fragment; all things considered, he would not have been loath to apply to himself his own adage of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*.

Similarly, Quintilian portrays his own *vir bonus dicendi peritus* as a political figure whose highest tasks are his services to the state.[31] Almost immediately after introducing the idea that the perfect orator must be a good man in the work's prologue (*qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest*), Quintilian states that the real citizen in the fullest sense of the word is the orator.[32] At the other end of the *Institutio*, in discussing the orator's retirement, Quintilian again brings public service to the fore as the task of the orator, who is a good citizen (*officium boni civis*).[33] A range of political activities (perhaps somewhat anachronistic under the principate)[34] is portrayed as an *opus sanctissimum* befitting the very best man (*optimus vir*), who will use his skill in speaking for the good of the whole political community.

---

[28] See Kennedy 1972: 42-44.

[29] Latin text from Malcovati 1955: 8.173. Translation mine, aided by Kennedy 1972: 43-44.

[30] See Kennedy 1972: 43.

[31] See, e.g., Morgan 1998b, Winterbottom 1998: 323, and Kennedy 1969: 131-132 for discussion of Quintilian's political and civic ideals.

[32] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*9-11.

[33] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.1 specifically alludes to the *contio*, or public meeting, as well as meetings of the senate, trials, and councils. Kaster 1998: 262-263 alludes broadly to the marginalization of speech in imperial politics.

In sum, Quintilian and Cato shared values that were part of a larger Roman cultural matrix, including a recognition of speech as a manifestation of character, a moralizing outlook that emphasized hard work, and an ideal of virtue that was essentially outward-facing and public-spirited. At the same time, however, much had changed between Cato's age and Quintilian's: styles of speaking, modes of learning, and the political regime had all undergone vast transformations. Despite Quintilian's praise of Cato's erudition, and despite the persistence of Cato's persona as a moralizing influence on Roman literary culture, the meaning of *vir bonus dicendi peritus* in Quintilian must not be equated too strictly with its meaning in a Catonian context.

3. Sailing Beyond Cicero

Quintilian's philosophically infused treatment of the orator's education owes much to the prior work of Cicero, whom Quintilian reveres as an outstanding orator, statesman, and philosopher.[35] However, the specific nature of Cicero's influence on the morality of Quintilian's ideal is debatable: the very question of whether or not Cicero's orator, like Quintilian's, has a moral identity is fraught with disagreement. It is true that Cicero provides Quintilian with the philosophical apparatus for establishing the original unity of rhetoric and philosophy, a principle that undergirds Quintilian's moral ideal.[36] However, some scholars have called into question the extent to which Cicero's ideal orator should be understood as explicitly moral. For instance, May and Wisse and Classen have challenged the assumption that Cicero intends the study of philosophy to be morally improving for the orator.[37] Although Quintilian's emphasis on the need for the orator to study philosophy is Ciceronian, he seems to link this study with the orator's moral development in a way that Cicero does not. While I believe *De Oratore* provides evidence that can be read as consistent with and preliminary to Quintilian's moral ideal, I think that the contentiousness of the debate over whether or not the Ciceronian orator was necessarily a *vir bonus* arises in part from Quintilian's suggestive framing: only after Quintilian has portrayed Cicero furling his sails and stowing his oars on the sea of rhetorical theory—forbearing to discuss the perfect orator's moral character and obligations—is it possible to look back at the Ciceronian ideal and feel that something is missing.[38] What emerges most clearly from examining Quintilian's self-positioning vis-à-vis Cicero is Quintilian's assertion that he is carrying out a distinctive project by specifying moral principles and duties for the ideal orator.[39]

---

[34] Cf. Winterbottom 1964 and Morgan 1998b.

[35] Cf., e.g., Quint. *Inst.*10.1.105-112 for Cicero's supremacy in oratory. See also *Inst.*10.1.123, where Quintilian says that Cicero is Plato's rival (*aemulus*) in philosophy. For Cicero's excellence as a statesman, see *Inst.*12.1.15-17, discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

[36] See e.g., Cic. *De or.*60-61 for Socrates' separation of the "science of thinking wisely" from that of "speaking ornately." Cicero had given an alternative story in his earlier *De Inventione* 1.2.2- 1.3.5. Quintilian cites Cicero when he discusses the split between rhetoric and philosophy in *Inst.*1.*praef.*13.

There is significant textual evidence for Cicero's awareness of rhetoric's dangerous potential and his consequent concern for the orator's good character, though the relevant passages have been interpreted in different ways. Disputing Radermacher's claim that Cicero's ideal of oratorical education does not require the orator to be a *vir bonus*, Grant takes *De Oratore* 3.14.55, where Crassus states that bestowing verbal resources (*copia dicendi*) on people who lack *probitas* and *prudentia* is equivalent to giving weapons to madmen, as a self-evident proof that Cicero's orator is necessarily moral.[40] Against Grant, Classen argues that, overall, the discussions of virtue in *De Oratore* are more focused on the orator's *appearing* to be virtuous than on his actually being so.[41] Classen passes over

---

[37] See especially May and Wisse 2001:11-12 and Classen 1986, discussed below.

[38] See Quint. *Inst.*12.*praef.*4.

[39] On Quintilian's authorial project see Logie 2003, Gowing 2013, and Classen 1986: 51. Gowing and Classen in particular situate Quintilian's work with respect to Cicero's.

[40] Cf. Radermacher 1899 and Grant 1943: 473-478. Cf. Cic. *De or.*3.14.55. Quintilian likewise uses the image of giving weapons to madmen at *Inst.*12.1.1-2.

[41] Classen 1986: 43-55, esp. 44-46. Classen argues that the main point of learning philosophy in *De Oratore* 3 is to sharpen argumentative skills, not to develop moral virtues. He also downplays the moral connotations of *bonus* in 3.84 and 3.86 and links *summa virtus* in 3.87 with the individual but not necessarily the orator (46).

De Oratore 3.14.55 too quickly, however.[42] At this moment in the text Crassus has just described the outstanding beauty of *eloquentia* among the otherwise equal virtues, a beauty that enables it to drive listeners wheresoever it inclines. If this power were given to people who lack *probitas* and *prudentia,* then "we would not have made them orators, but would have given arms to madmen."[43] Without *probitas* and *prudentia*, there is no making an orator (*non…oratores effecerimus*), just as for Quintilian, the orator cannot be an orator unless he is a good man.[44] The moral resonances of *probitas* and *prudentia* suggest common ground between Cicero's claim that oratorical power must be joined to moral virtue and Quintilian's insistence on the morality of the orator, though Cicero does not argue that moral virtue is intrinsic to eloquence, as Quintilian does.

It has also been argued that Cicero does not frame the development of moral character as explicitly connected with the orator's study of philosophy, and so his recommendation of the study of philosophy does not, properly speaking, signify that his ideal orator is necessarily moral. As May and Wisse point out, the orator's "high moral qualities" "are part of the *prerequisites* for becoming a speaker worthy of the name of orator," neither intrinsic components of eloquence itself nor outcomes of an education in eloquence: the orator's moral virtue is not portrayed as dependent upon his acquisition of philosophical knowledge, and so discussions of the latter cannot be assumed as evidence for the former.[45] Yet there are suggestions in *De Oratore* 3 that Cicero conceives of a good education as a combination of moral training with training in eloquence. In 3.15.57, the old

---

Seeming good and actually being good, however, need not be in conflict: seeming can be important without necessarily excluding being. As Quintilian notes in *Inst.*6.2.18, seeming bad (*malus*) when one is not is itself a flaw.

[42] He mentions it (46) within a summary of the passage but does not devote serious attention to it.

[43] Cic. *De or.*3.14.55: *non eos quidem oratores effecerimus, sed furentibus quaedam arma dederimus.*

[44] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*9: *qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest.* With reference to Cic. *De or.*3.14.55, May and Wisse 2001 point out that "Crassus (Cicero) does not say that supreme eloquence, which is based on knowledge, will automatically be morally upright; on the contrary, it is 'necessary' to join such powerful eloquence to moral qualities" (n. 64, *ad loc*) and that "the moral issue, then, is not connected with the knowledge theme [i.e., the acquisition of philosophical knowledge], and plays a very minor part in *De Oratore*" (12).

[45] May and Wisse 2001: 12.

doctrina is described as having afforded teaching in both "acting uprightly" (*recte faciendi*)[46] and "speaking well" (*bene dicendi*), while in 3.19.72, teachers before Socrates linked the *ratio dicendi* with "the whole understanding and science of all things which pertain to human morals, life, virtue, [and] the political community."[47] In the person of Crassus, Cicero puts forward an ideal of education that combines training in eloquence with training in the study of virtue, though he does not offer specific information about how this training takes place.[48] Naturally, this evidence is insufficient for proving that Cicero thinks studying philosophy makes someone a better person; but neither should we assume, on the contrary, that the study of philosophy and the development of moral character are unrelated in his thought simply because he does not emphasize an explicit connection here.

In sum, although Cicero is not as emphatic about the orator's moral character and moral training as Quintilian is, excessive skepticism about the morality of his orator, or the moral resonances of his recommendation of philosophy, seems misplaced. It is more likely that Quintilian's framing of his own originality vis-à-vis Cicero (i.e., as consisting in his development of a moral identity for the orator) is responsible for scholarly scruples about attributing moral virtue to Cicero's ideal. Furthermore, the use of Cato's *vir bonus dicendi peritus* formulation to describe or evaluate Cicero's ideal orator is technically a backward projection of Quintilian's framework onto Cicero's ideal: Cicero himself never uses the phrase.[49] Where Cicero himself may not have felt the need to hammer home the orator's good character, Quintilian perceives and exploits this as an opportunity to frame his own work as an original contribution.[50]

---

[46] *Recte faciendi* shows the culmination of education in the actual performance of morally upright actions (as opposed to the idea that learning philosophy does not necessarily entail practicing virtues). Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.3.12 and Hom. *Il.*9.438-443.

[47] Cic. *De or.*3.19.72: *namque, ut ante dixi, veteres illi usque ad Socratem omnem omnium rerum quae ad mores hominum, quae ad vitam, quae ad virtutem, quae ad rempublicam pertinebant cognitionem et scientiam cum dicendi ratione iungebant.*

[48] Classen 1986: 43 points out that knowledge of philosophy is not the same thing as possession of the virtues, but I see no reason to doubt that the two are supposed to go together. *De or.*3.15.57, in which *recte faciendi* is paired with *bene dicendi* within the compass of the old philosophical-rhetorical form of teaching seems to me like good evidence for their coincidence.

[49] See Classen 1986: 47 for confirmation. Zetzel 2003: 133 uses the phrase (mistakenly, I think) to describe Cicero's ideal orator. Cicero comes closest to the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* formulation in *De or.*2.20.85, where Antonius speaks of an *excellens orator* who is also a *vir bonus*, but he passes on quickly without elaborating on it, almost as if he is unaware of Cato's formulation. The reason for this is not necessarily that he did not think the orator's morality was important: as Winterbottom 1964 has suggested, Cicero "may have thought it

Encasing his claim to authorial originality in an elaborate nautical metaphor, Quintilian specifies his contribution as an attempt to deliver *mores* and *officia* to the orator. As the young orator finishes his training in the rhetorical school and prepares to navigate on his own, Quintilian claims to feel overwhelmed by the immensity of his authorial task and imagines himself being borne off into deep waters.[51]

> Now "sky on all sides and on all sides the swell." Only one person do I seem to pick out in that boundless waste, Marcus Tullius, and even he himself, although he has entered upon this sea with such a great and well-outfitted ship, draws in his sails and restrains his oars and considers it sufficient to discuss only that style of speaking which the perfect orator will use. But my own rashness will try to give the orator habits of character as well and will assign him duties (*Inst.*12.*praef.*4).
>
> Nunc 'caelum undique et undique pontus'. Unum modo in illa inmensa vastitate cernere videmur M. Tullium, qui tamen ipse, quamvis tanta atque ita instructa nave hoc mare ingressus, contrahit vela inhibetque remos et de ipso demum genere dicendi quo sit usurus perfectus orator satis habet dicere. At nostra temeritas etiam mores ei conabitur dare et adsignabit officia.

Cicero's ultimate action is to speak about or discuss (*dicere*) the style of the perfect orator; Quintilian, by contrast, portrays himself as actively attempting to give something to the orator that will perfect him and not merely sketching out what constitutes his perfection. Quintilian's emphasis on his own dynamic interaction with the perfect orator also hints at his assertive transformation of the Ciceronian legacy.

---

indelicate or superfluous to stress that the perfect orator must be a good man" (90). In any event, Quintilian's framing does suggest that Cicero's ideal falls short in articulating a moral component, and this framing has set up a problem that continues to exercise scholars of Cicero.

[50] See Winterbottom 1964 for a historical account of Quintilian's emphasis on the orator's moral goodness as a response to the pernicious informers of the early Empire. Classen 1986: 51 adds a generic reason: Quintilian, unlike Cicero, is writing an exhaustive textbook. He also suggests that Quintilian's ideal expands into moral territory as a consequence of rhetoric's loss of political scope under the principate.

[51] Quint. *Inst.*12.*praef.*3.

What Quintilian means by "assigning duties" to the orator seems evident from 12.7-12.9 and 12.11.[52] In addition to all the obligations incumbent on an aristocratic *vir bonus*, the orator's profession imposes further duties on him, since the demands of civic life are never far from the orator as the person uniquely suited for managing political affairs.[53] For instance, the orator as a *vir bonus* will prefer to defend rather than to prosecute, but if obliged by a public or private duty (*officium*) he will not fail in this task, since helping to excise the dangerously wicked from the community is like fighting in the front lines for the fatherland.[54] In addition, the orator has *officia* that pertain specifically to his management of individual cases:[55] he must not let the desire for praise distract him from the best interests (*utilitas*) of his case; he should take up cases that arise from personal duty (*officium*), even if they are not glamorous; he must abide by professional standards (*communia officia*) and avoid gratuitously slandering the opposing counsel; he should prepare thoroughly for each case ahead of time.[56] Finally, after fulfilling "every duty of a good citizen" (*officium boni civis*) in every conceivable sector of political affairs,[57] the orator will be prompted by "the common duty of [shared] humanity" (*humanitatis commune officium*) and by his "love for the task" to transmit his knowledge and experience to others.[58] The orator's human *officium* of passing on what he knows may take the concrete form of responding to legal queries, writing his own *ars eloquentiae*, or expounding moral precepts with all the beauty and grace that his eloquence has to offer.[59] It will result in the orator being visited by droves of the "finest youths" (*optimi iuvenes*), to whom he will act "as a father of eloquence."[60] These lists of duties allude to a broader understanding of the duties of the *vir bonus* as citizen (*civis*) and specify some professional applications of these civic duties that are proper to the orator. Moral virtues are exercised and obligations fulfilled (respect for others, conscientiousness, generosity, *humanitas*) in the context of an orator's career and life.

---

[52] *Inst.*12.10 (on the finished orator's style) feels like an interlude in this discussion. As Quintilian notes in *Inst.*12.10.1, this section deals with the third aspect of the three-part division Quintilian had made in 2.14.5, where he promised to discuss the *ars,* the *artifex,* and the *opus* (a *bona oratio*) and so ties off one of the *Institutio*'s multiple organizational schemes, although in doing so it sits a bit awkwardly with surrounding material.

[53] E.g., Quint. *Inst.*12.2.6, 12.11.1. See *Inst.*1.*praef.*10 for the orator as *vir ille vere civilis et publicarum et privatarumque rerum administrationi accommodatus.*

[54] Quint. *Inst.*12.7.1-3.

[55] Quint. *Inst.*12.9.1: *pauca tamen propria huius loci, quae non tam dicendi arte quam officiis agentis continentur, attingam.*

[56] See Quint. *Inst.*12.9.2, 12.9.7, 12.9.11, and 12.9.15-21, respectively.

[57] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.1: *in iudiciis consiliis contionibus senatu.* At present I leave aside the question of whether an orator under Domitian had any meaningful scope for activity in all the political institutions Quintilian lists, particularly the *contio.*

[58] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.5.

What Quintilian means by "trying to give the orator *mores*" is more difficult to pinpoint, but he seems to be alluding to the extended discussion in 12.2 where he recommends thorough cultivation of moral character through the study of philosophy.[61] While Quintilian's recommendation of the study of philosophy for the orator and his philosophical pluralism are inspired by Cicero,[62] his emphasis on the use of these studies in actually shaping the orator's *mores* is more pronounced. The orator will need to study the moral virtues in depth and, in the process of studying, will have the opportunity to put them into practice; for instance, he will learn to purge his own fear by means of *ratio*.[63] Quintilian also uses Cicero's authority to argue for what he sees as a more controversial point: that a person who has not studied philosophy cannot be considered skilled in speaking.[64] But Quintilian goes further than Cicero in specifying the role of these philosophically derived studies in actually shaping the orator's moral character.[65]

---

[59] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.4-5. Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.16.10, where Quintilian says that good moral precepts have greater power "to shape minds" (*ad formandas mentes*) when eloquent speech brings out their beauty (*pulchritudo*).

[60] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.4-5: *quasi eloquentiae parens*. Quintilian himself seems to perform this final *officium* of being *eloquentiae parens* in 12.11.8, when he says that he has come to the end of what he can teach: *atque id viro bono satis est, docuisse quod scierit.*

[61] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.1: *mores ante omnia oratori studiis erunt excolendi atque omnis honesti iustique disciplina pertractanda.* All of 12.2 discusses the orator's study of philosophy in its three branches: logic (10-14), ethics (15-20), and natural philosophy (20-23), as well as the question of which philosophical school is most conducive to the orator's formation in eloquence (23-31).

[62] Cf. Cic. *Off.*1.6.

[63] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.3-4.

[64] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.4-5.

[65] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.4-6: *mores praeceptis ac ratione formarit*. The study of philosophy is neither the first nor the only means of moral formation in the orator's education, as I will show in Chapter Two. The formation of

Behind the hint of ironic self-deprecation, the "rashness" (*temeritas*) that Quintilian professes in the prologue to Book Twelve—a *temeritas* that consists in trying to give *mores* and assign duties to the orator— subtly asserts his own authorial originality vis-à-vis Cicero. Although he at first seems to be drawing attention to his own inadequacy in the prologue, describing the crushing weight of the task he has undertaken,[66] the weakness he feigns is thoroughly disingenuous, a rhetorical technique whose exploitation by Cicero himself Quintilian had traced in *Institutio* 11.1.[67] Later in 12.5, Quintilian recommends a display of anxiety and weakness when the orator gets up to speak, even suggesting that these feelings be faked if they do not happen on their own.[68] No matter how feeble the façade, writes Quintilian, an underlying consciousness of self-control must stabilize the endeavor.[69] Quintilian is following his own advice—or, better yet, performing it— in the prologue to Book Twelve. The implied fragility of his own boat, bereft of companions and launching into a watery waste beyond even Cicero's solitary skiff, thinly veils an assertion of authorial self-confidence. Like declarations of inadequacy by many an ancient poet, from Callimachus to Ovid, Quintilian's own *inbecilla frons* serves as the vehicle for his self-definition vis-à-vis Cicero. His *temeritas* is aggressively opposed to shame (*verecundia*) and fear (*timor*).[70] It is the opposite of the *timiditas* with which Cicero's enemies charged him[71] and which Cicero seems to exhibit in Quintilian's nautical imaginary by stopping short (*contrahit vela inhibetque remos*). Although Quintilian

---

moral character (*mores*) has begun in earliest childhood (cf. *Inst.*1.3.12). Quintilian's exposition in 12.2 suggests that the systematic study of *mores* through philosophy allows the orator to deepen and perfect his commitment to moral goodness by building up its intellectual foundations in his mind, which in turn enables him to speak more authentically (cf. 12.2.17).

[66] Quint. *Inst.*12.*praef.*1.

[67] Quint. *Inst.*11.1.19-20, quoting *Pro Archia* 1 and *Pro Quinctio* 4 (Russell *ad loc.*).

[68] Quint. *Inst.*12.5.4

[69] Ibid.: *quamlibet inbecilla frons magna conscientia sustinetur.*

[70] In 12.5.2, Quintilian lists *temeritas* along with *confidentia, improbitas,* and *adrogantia* among the vices opposed to the median virtues of *fiducia* and *fortitudo,* with *verecundia* and *timor* lying at the other end of the scale.

[71] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.1.17, discussed in Chapter Four.

defends Cicero from accusations of moral timidity, he frames Cicero as theoretically timid in order to create an opportunity for his own authorial boldness.

4. What Quintilian Wants Plato to Want

Quintilian's *temeritas* takes on a further dimension of boldness when considered as a response to the question posed in Plato's *Gorgias* about whether the rhetor can teach his students justice (459c-461a).[72] Quintilian's *temeritas* can be counterpoised with Gorgias' shame (αἰσχύνη, 461b) in defending the morality of rhetorical education.[73] Where Gorgias had proven unable to deliver on his claim to be able to teach his pupils justice (461a), Quintilian asserts that he can and will give moral instruction and duties to the orator he is educating. Keenly aware that the *Gorgias* can be read as an attack on the very discipline of rhetoric, not to mention its morality, Quintilian recontextualizes Plato's text to make it more unambiguously favorable to the vision of moral rhetoric he himself is interested in.[74] Even as Quintilian selectively curates the Platonic text for his own purposes, he also engages with it on a deeper level by highlighting the importance of wishing or wanting to the problem of morality and rhetoric, an issue that proves crucial not only to the *Gorgias* but also to his own account of what constitutes the orator's moral goodness.

Before insisting that Plato has a favorable attitude towards rhetoric, Quintilian seeks to demolish the views of those who interpret the *Gorgias* as an attack on rhetoric by giving readers a lesson in the difficulties of Platonic interpretation. The interpretations of his opponents, he argues, result from a sloppy reading of Plato that ignores the context in which statements are made: those who base their claims that Plato had a negative view of rhetoric on the *Gorgias* are guilty of cherry-picking quotations out of context without having read the entire dialogue or the rest of the Platonic corpus.[75] Quintilian's own interpretation of Plato's views on rhetoric rests on a series of three distinctions that the writers whom he criticizes have failed to draw. First is a distinction among dialogic genres: drawing on an ancient classification of Plato's works, Quintilian shows that, since the *Gorgias'* generic purpose is to refute opponents, not every statement Socrates makes can be taken as his candid teaching.[76] Second, he argues that, depending on the interlocutor and his particular prejudices, Socrates' statements may be attempts to refute the other party's mistaken position rather than genuine criticisms of rhetoric.[77] Finally, Quintilian picks up on a distinction at least implicit in the *Gorgias* between how rhetoric is actually practiced by Athenian politicians like Callicles[78] and how it should be practiced by a person who is knowledgeable about just things and therefore *wants* to do just things.[79] Quintilian triumphantly concludes that Plato agrees with him that rhetoric is not a bad thing and that, in its true sense, it can only exist in relation to "a just and good man."[80]

---

[72] See Brinton 1983: 183 (cited in Logie 2003: 371) for Quintilian's indebtedness to Plato's *Gorgias* for the setup of the question of the orator's moral goodness.

[73] In their commentary on *De Oratore*, May and Wisse suggest a connection between *De or.*3.14.55 and *Gorgias* 456c-457c and 469c-479c around the analogy between teaching rhetoric to a wicked person and giving arms to a madman; by the time of Cicero this trope "had probably become widespread" (n. 64, *ad loc.*). Pl. *Resp.*331-332a, which discusses the immorality of returning a deposit to a madman, may be another source. Quintilian draws on the arms-to-a-madman trope in *Inst.*12.1.1-2.

[74] Greek text of the *Gorgias* follows, for the most part, Dodds 1959, and translation is from Terence Irwin's 1979 volume.

At first glance, Quintilian seems to offer a convincing interpretation of Plato. Upon closer examination, however, the edifice shows cracks. Quintilian shrewdly recognizes that Socrates' utterances are context-dependent when it comes to undermining the interpretations of his (Quintilian's) opponents. But his own reading of the *Gorgias* lifts passages out of their context and makes him liable to the same accusation he has leveled against others. For instance, comparison of Quintilian's account of 2.15.26-28 with the actual text of *Gorgias* 460b-c shows that Quintilian's presentation of the latter is not altogether straightforward.

---

[75] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.24-25.

[76] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.26. Russell (n. 30 *ad loc.*) cites Diogenes Laertius 3.49 for one classification schema that divides Plato's dialogues into "hyphegmatic" or "expository" and "zetetic" or "investigative." Apparently, Diogenes considered the *Gorgias* "'anatreptic' ('subversive'), a subdivision of the 'investigative.'"

[77] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.28. This is why the hotheaded Polus, who thinks a rhetoric that gratifies people is καλόν (462c), needs to hear the argument about rhetoric as flattery in order to realize that his understanding of τὸ καλόν is misplaced.

[78] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27, quoting *Grg.*500c (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ὃν ὑμεῖς πολιτεύεσθε).

[79] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27-28, cf. Pl. *Grg.*508c (ἐπιστήμονα τῶν δικαίων) and 460c (τὸν δὲ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι δίκαια πράττειν).

[80] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.28: *ut appareat Platoni non rhetoricen videri malum, sed eam veram nisi iusto ac bono non contingere.*

Table 1: Comparison of Pl. *Grg.*460b-c with Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27-28

Pl. *Grg.*460b-c	Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27-28.
S. Then according to this account isn't also the man who has learnt just things just? *G.* Certainly, I presume so. *S.* And, I take it, the just man does just things. *G.* Yes. ***S.* Then isn't it necessary for the rhetor to be just, and for the just man to want to do just things? (Οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη τὸν ῥητορικὸν δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι δίκαια πράττειν;)**[81] *G.* Yes, apparently. *S.* Then the just man will never want to do injustice. *G.* Necessarily. *S.* And it is necessary from this account for the rhetor to be just. *G.* Yes. *S.* Then the rhetor will never want to do injustice. *G.* Apparently not.[82]	[Socrates or Plato] understands rhetoric to be true and upright.[83] Thus, the argument with Gorgias is concluded in this way: **"therefore it is necessary for the rhetorical man to be just, and for the just man to want to do just things."** At this point Gorgias shuts up...
	[Socrates autem seu Plato] veram autem et honestam intellegit; itaque disputatio illa contra Gorgian ita cluditur: **οὐκοῦν ἀνάγκη τὸν ῥητορικὸν δίκαιον εἶναι, τὸν δὲ δίκαιον βούλεσθαι δίκαια πράττειν**. Ad quod ille quidem conticescit...

In Quintilian's treatment, the justice of the rhetor and of his wishes appears as a declaration of fact, the triumphant conclusion to Socrates' discussion with Gorgias. But in Plato's text this question is one of the final nails that Socrates drives into the coffin of Gorgias' claim to be able to teach about justice.[84] It is not clear from the Platonic text that the argument between Gorgias and Socrates ends with a straightforward affirmation that the rhetor has to be just and want just things, as Quintilian implies.[85] Rather, Socrates drowns Gorgias out when it becomes clear that his agreement here contradicts his earlier caveat that teachers of rhetoric must not be blamed for the unscrupulous behavior of their students.[86] If the students had really learned justice from the teacher of rhetoric, implies Socrates, then they would actually be just people and would want to do just things. But Gorgias himself, in his anxiety to shield teachers of rhetoric from punishment, has revealed that students can and do abuse their knowledge and put their teachers in danger of expulsion from the city.[87] Socrates' goal in this part of the text is not to affirm the justice of rhetoric and the just wishes of the speaker but rather to back Gorgias into a corner from which he cannot emerge.[88]

---

[81] The use of bold in the quotations here and throughout the remainder of the dissertation indicates my own emphasis.

[82] Here I quote Terence Irwin's 1979 translation of the *Gorgias*. Greek text is from Dodds 1959.

[83] Alternatively, "he knows that there is a true and upright [form of] rhetoric."

[84] Pl. *Grg.*460a.

Similarly, Quintilian's other quotation of the *Gorgias* (about the rhetor having to be knowledgeable about just things in 508c) need not imply Socrates' belief in a just rhetor. True, at 503e-504d Socrates describes a good rhetor using his speeches to temper the citizens in accordance with virtue. But this is in the context of proving to Callicles that none of the famous Athenian politicians of the present or past were good men who actually succeeded in improving the people.[89] The "fine" rhetoric he alludes to (καλόν, 503a) seems never to have existed.[90] And though Socrates does continue to mention the possibility of a "true rhetoric" (ἀληθινὴ ῥητορική, 517a), it is not clear that he considers this anything more than a hypothetical idea that signifies, at best, a form of discourse much closer to dialectic than to "rhetoric" in the ordinary sense of the term (i.e., as a form of persuasive speech in political context, as in Gorgias' definition in 452e). Quintilian's presentation of Plato's text as evidence in his favor indicates his adoption of a deliberate interpretive spin.[91]

---

[85] I think it is certainly possible to read Socrates as actually propounding the existence of a just and upright rhetoric in *Gorgias*, but this is an interpretive choice: the text itself can also be read as deeply skeptical of the possibility of a moral rhetoric at all. The skeptical reading I adopt here has been influenced by James Redfield.

[86] Pl. *Grg.*456d-457a.

[87] Pl. *Grg.*456d-457c.

[88] Pl. *Grg.*461a-b.

[89] Pl. *Grg.*503a-d.

[90] Pl. *Grg.*503b.

This decision on Quintilian's part to present Plato's text as evidence for his own position confirms the pattern of Quintilian's assertive adaptations of earlier sources that we have witnessed above in the cases of Cato and Cicero. It may also help explain the intensity of Quintilian's search for a definition of rhetoric in *Institutio* 2.15 (and the intensity of the other theoretical chapters in Book Two).[92] More is at stake here than the question of whether or not Quintilian is an inconsistent or hypocritical reader of Plato. If the critique of rhetoric leveled in the *Gorgias*, which the dialogue itself never fully rescinds, is allowed to stand unchallenged, then Quintilian's own moral uprightness as a teacher of rhetoric deserves to be questioned.[93] Quintilian portrays his own good intentions in educating the orator as unambiguous; neither will he permit Platonic irony and ambiguities to stand in his way. Offering a nuanced interpretation of the *Gorgias* that faithfully captures the ambiguities of the text and leaves open the question of Socrates' (and Plato's) true opinion is not the aim of *Institutio* 2.15. Rather, the aim of 2.15 is to establish a definition of rhetoric that will frame the orator's project philosophically, and his representation of Plato is ancillary to this end.

Quintilian's approach to his difficulty is to create an interpretation of *Gorgias* that he deems amenable to his present purposes; quote it in such a way that it seems to support his position; and strengthen his interpretation of *Gorgias* with evidence from the *Phaedrus*, which he deems an easier source for proving that Plato had a positive vision of rhetoric. Quintilian writes that Plato shows even more clearly (*manifestius*) in the *Phaedrus* that rhetoric as an art and science cannot be complete without justice, an opinion Quintilian agrees with (*cui opinioni nos quoque accedimus*). In *Phaedrus* Plato also disapproves of rhetoric teachers who divorce rhetoric from justice and prize the verisimilar over the true.[94] One wonders why, if *Phaedrus* is so comparatively straightforward in its support of a morally upright rhetoric, Quintilian bothers to bring up the *Gorgias* at all. But it is precisely because the *Gorgias* critiques rhetoric so powerfully and memorably that Quintilian has to grapple with it. It is the *Gorgias* more than any other text that the opponents of rhetoric quote in order to reduce rhetoric to "the image of a particle of politics and the fourth part of flattery."[95] If the *Gorgias* can be salvaged for Quintilian's cause, then the *Phaedrus* can be used as *a fortiori* proof of Plato's support for Quintilian's position.

---

[91] One could of course explain the discrepancy between the Platonic text and Quintilian's presentation of it as careless reading or a memory error on Quintilian's part, though his accurate verbatim quotations from the Greek text of the *Gorgias* suggest that he was working with the text in front of him (thus making it less likely that he was quoting purely from memory). It is also hard to believe that, immediately after complaining about the careless readings of other people, Quintilian would unwittingly make a contextual error.

[92] Winterbottom 1964 posits a historical explanation (the notoriety of informers) for "much that might seem irrelevant or academic in the *Institutio*," particularly the second half of Book Two with its series of "*quaestiones* about the status of rhetoric" (96).

[93] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.1.1: *si vis illa dicendi malitiam instruxerit, nihil sit publicis privatisque rebus perniciosius eloquentia, nosque ipsi, qui pro virili parte conferre aliquid ad facultatem dicendi conati sumus, pessime mereamur de rebus humanis si latroni comparamus haec arma, non militi*.

There remains the question of whether readers are supposed to catch on to what Quintilian is doing and, if so, what they are to make of it. It is possible that many readers will not even notice and will take Quintilian's word about Plato's opinion.[96] But mentioning the mis-quotations of his predecessors right before his own dislocation of the text certainly seems like a signal to the watchful.[97] Those who pay close attention will see Quintilian transform a potentially hostile piece of evidence into something profitable for his case.[98] They may also observe Quintilian beating Plato at his own game of editing and censorship: just as Socrates edits Homer in Book Three of the *Republic* so as to make him suitable for the education of the good man (395d) who will play a politically consequential role, so Quintilian must ensure an interpretation of Plato that favors his own program of moral education.

---

[94] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.29-32. Quintilian also mentions the *Apology* and the speech in the *Menexenus,* which he does not acknowledge as parodic, to prove Plato's approval of rhetoric (Quint. *Inst.*2.14.29 and Russell note 35 *ad loc.*).

[95] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.25: *civilitatis particulae simulacrum et quartam partem adulationis.*

[96] For instance, Brinton 1983: 172 calls Gorgias' assent about the rhetorician's justice "Plato's own clearest statement of the *vir bonus* doctrine." This is precisely what Quintilian wants it to look like but *not* what its context within the *Gorgias* implies.

[97] Cf. Dozier 2014: 78 for the suggestion that Quintilian gives subtle indications to readers of how to read the *Institutio* in unexpected ways as well as for bibliography on other imperial authors' signaling tactics (n. 18).

[98] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*5.11.43: *nonnumquam contingit iudicis quoque aut adversarii aut eius qui ex diverso agit dictum aliquod aut factum adsumere ad eorum quae intendimus fidem.* This tactic necessarily involves removing a statement or action from its original context and turning it to one's own purposes.

The dislocation of *Gorgias* 460b-c is also important in *Institutio* 2.15 because it touches on an issue at the very heart of both authors' concerns: the relationship between wanting or wishing and goodness (or justice). Indeed, the *Gorgias* itself is preoccupied with the question of wanting: what it means for a person to want something (i.e., is it possible truly to want something that is not good?) and the political consequences of the wishes of a person whose speech gives him power to achieve what he wants. Not long after Socrates presents his four-part system of flattery, Socrates gets Polus to agree that a person ignorant of the harmful consequences of his actions—like a rhetor or tyrant who unjustly kills people— cannot truly be doing what he wants. Even the progression of the dialogue depends on wanting and willingness. At 505d,[99] Socrates asks who else is willing to finish the discussion with him since Callicles apparently is not (506b),[100] and Gorgias intervenes to reassure Socrates of his own wish to keep listening.[101] Without a clarification of what it means to want something (i.e., one can only truly *want* the good), as well as the willing cooperation of his interlocutors, Socrates and the dialogue cannot proceed. In fact, Callicles' grudging reluctance to cooperate with Socrates, which he displays at every step after Socrates forces him to admit that pleasure and the good are not the same (497a), is a serious and perhaps fatal obstruction to Socrates' aim. Although Socrates claims at the end of the dialogue that his argument is the best (527b) and exhorts Callicles to a life of justice and virtue (527e), there is no indication that the sullen Callicles agrees or will ever agree with him.[102] Socrates' best arguments and most impassioned exhortations can do nothing for Callicles if he is unwilling to participate in the therapeutic elenchus.[103]

---

[99] Pl. *Grg.* 505d (ἐθέλω).

[100] Pl. *Grg.*506b (ἐθέλω).

[101] Ibid. (βούλομαι).

As in the *Gorgias*, the theme of wanting (*volo* and cognates) both structures the debate in *Institutio* 2.15 and serves as a topic of discussion. At the outset of *Institutio* 2.15, Quintilian uses *volo* to differentiate himself from people who think rhetoric is detachable from goodness and capable of being used for good or for evil.

> The first and outstanding difference of opinions is with respect to this: that some people think that even bad men are able to be called orators, while others, with whose opinion I agree, **want** this name and art about which I am speaking to be attributed only to good men (*Inst.*2.5.1-2).
>
> Prima atque praecipua opinionum circa hoc differentia, quod alii malos quoque viros posse oratores dici putant, alii, quorum nos sententiae accedimus, nomen hoc artemque de qua loquimur bonis demum tribui **volunt**.

In the context of 2.15, the sense of *volo* is not merely casual: *volo* is one of Quintilian's favorite ways of expressing his opinion on the necessity of goodness to the orator, and it implies a positive choice in a situation open to doubt.[104] Quintilian portrays his opponents as intending to disgrace the orator's noble office, presumably because they allow a wicked man to share the title of "orator."[105] And he is quick to insist that Plato, despite having Gorgias define rhetoric as the "craftsman of persuasion," does not *want* (*volo*) this definition to be seen as his own opinion.[106] Quintilian need not actually know (or think he knows) what Plato intended, but he can and does claim to express Plato's true intentions.[107] Quintilian's use of *volo* and cognates in this passage (2.15.1-6) maps out the battleground of opinions, aligning Plato with himself in opposition to people who posit an amoral definition of the orator. Competing wishes and intentions thus shape the grounds of the theoretical dispute.

---

[102] And as Socrates tells us at 472b-c, if he cannot produce his interlocutor as a witness to the truth of his deliberation, then he has failed.

[103] For example, Callicles shows his unwillingness when he refuses to accept Socrates' correction (*Grg.*505c).

[104] As in the English "they would have it that...", *volo* may imply that the following proposition is open to doubt or dissent. Its adoption is thus a deliberate choice that can be disagreed with. See *Inst.*2.15.33, discussed below, and also 1.2.3, 12.2.6, and 12.11.9.

[105] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.4: *qui cum longe sit a* **voluntate** *infamantium oratoris officia, finem artis temere comprendit dicens esse rhetoricen persuadendi opificem, id est πειθοῦς δημιουϱγόν*. Quintilian is saying that Isocrates, while he does not share the dishonorable intentions of rhetoric's disparagers, nevertheless gave an unsatisfactory (and lowly) definition of rhetoric as *persuadendi opifex*. The disparagers (*infamantes*) must be the people mentioned at the outset of 2.15 who think that bad men too can be orators.

[106] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.5: "Also in [the writings of] Plato, Gorgias, in the book inscribed with his name, says almost the same thing [as Isocrates], but Plato **wishes** this opinion to be taken as Gorgias', not his own."

But *wanting* is also key to the matter under discussion, namely, the definition of a rhetoric that is intrinsically moral. One of the unsatisfactory definitions of rhetoric that Quintilian discusses is that of Theodectes, who says that rhetoric is "to lead people by means of speech to that end which the pleader wishes" (*ducere homines dicendo in id quod actor velit*).[108] Quintilian rejects this definition by pointing out the dangers of "wanting" pure and simple: harlots, sycophants, and seducers are capable of using speech to persuade others to do what they want.[109] This definition lacks a guarantee of morality and suggests that the moral quality of *wanting* in itself depends on the object wanted and on the character of the wanting subject.[110] It is this concern with the object of wanting and the character of the person doing the wanting that motivates the out-of-context quotation of *Gorgias* 460c that we have examined above: "therefore it is necessary for the rhetorical man to be just, and for the just man to *want* to do just things."[111] Quintilian's use of this quotation picks up on a key concern of the *Gorgias* that has also been important in *Institutio* 2.15: the need for the motivation of rhetorical action to be directed towards the good.

---

[107] This move is an important preparation for the more difficult interpretive work that will follow in *Inst.*2.15.24-32, where Quintilian must confront the argument that rhetoric is a mere τριβή and an *ars fallendi*.

[108] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.10.

[109] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.11: *persuadent enim dicendo vel ducunt in id quod volunt alii quoque, ut meretrices adulatores corruptores.*

[110] As Quintilian explains in *Inst.*7.1.34-37 while discussing division, *voluntas anceps est*. If an action is good, the advocate wants to show that it was done deliberately; a bad or problematic action is better framed as an accident.

[111] I am not trying to make an argument for a lexical equivalency between βούλομαι and *volo* at present even though I think both words are capturing the same (or sufficiently similar) themes in the relevant passages of Plato and Quintilian. Both authors are struggling with the problem of how to be sure that the power of speech will be used for good, and I think they agree to some extent that good use of speaking has to proceed from the speaker's deliberate desires and decisions.

Conceptually, the shift of meaning between the statement in Plato and Quintilian's interpretation of it in the *Institutio* may hinge on a distinction in the senses of necessity (ἀνάγκη). In the *Gorgias*, the ἀνάγκη connected with the justice of the rhetor is the necessity of argument. Since Gorgias has claimed that the rhetor can teach justice and has conceded the points (1) that the person who learns just things is just and (2) that a just person does just actions, then the proposition that the rhetor must be just and want to do just actions follows of necessity from his prior admissions. For Quintilian, however, the proposition that the orator must be just and want just things is a premise that underpins the workability of his educational program: if the orator is not just and does not want to do just things, everything collapses and Quintilian himself is a villain, keeper of an arsenal for evil.[112] Quintilian seems keen to foreground his own choice in the debate, his own self-presentation as a person who opts for an intrinsically moral rhetoric with a moral definition to match. As he reminds us emphatically in 2.15.32-33, he is not giving weapons to evildoers but choosing to empower the good.[113]

> But let those people see to an account of their own opinion; since I, however, have set out to form the perfect orator, whom in the first place I **want** to be a good man, let's return to those authors who have better views on this topic (*Inst.*2.15.33).
>
> Sed illi rationem opinionis suae viderint; nos autem ingressi formare perfectum oratorem, quem in primis esse virum bonum volumus, ad eos qui de hoc opere melius sentiunt revertamur.

Quintilian's wish that the orator be *bonus* forms the basis of all further educational decisions, including his presentation of Plato. One could say that Quintilian wants Plato to want the orator to want just things and to be a just man, and that Quintilian wants his students, unlike the unscrupulous students of the Gorgianic rhetor, to opt for justice by embracing his final definition of rhetoric as *scientia bene dicendi*. Since the end of speaking is, by this definition, *bene dicere*, an end tied to the person's character and activity rather than to results, the student who wants to master the craft and gain the knowledge it entails must embrace goodness into the bargain. In order to appreciate the full significance of this definition for Quintilian, we must turn to the philosophical tradition that most vigorously expounded it: Stoicism.

---

[112] Compare Quint. *Inst.*2.15.32 with 12.1.1-2.

[113] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.32: *consensisse autem illis superioribus videri potest etiam Cornelius Celsus, cuius haec verba sunt: 'orator simile tantum veri petit', deinde paulo post: 'non enim bona conscientia sed victoria litigantis est praemium': quae si vera essent, pessimorum hominum foret haec tam perniciosa nocentissimis moribus dare instrumenta et nequitiam praeceptis adiuvare.*

5. Quintilian Qualifies the ***Sapiens***

The influence of Stoicism on Quintilian's ideal orator is so pervasive that Arthur Walzer has gone so far as to claim that Quintilian's *vir bonus* is identifiable with the Stoic *sapiens*.[114] While there is some truth in Walzer's statement that the *Institutio* is "a synthesis of Cicero's ideal of the liberally educated orator with the Stoic ideal of the Wise Man," his assimilation of Quintilian's orator to the Stoic Wise Man is misleading.[115] First, a salient feature of Stoic thought sits uneasily with a key emphasis of the *Institutio*: the role of the emotions in oratory. Walzer tries to skirt this difficulty by arguing that Quintilian justifies his departures from Stoic principles by exploiting Stoic exceptions, thus demonstrating consistent commitment to Stoicism.[116] But when Quintilian tells us in *Institutio* 6.2.26 that the pinnacle of achievement in arousing the emotions, which itself is the orator's proper task (6.2.5, *proprium oratoris opus*), is *feeling* the very emotions one is trying to arouse in the judge (*summa enim, quantum ego quidem sentio, circa movendos adfectus in hoc posita est, ut moveamur ipsi*), it is difficult to see him as a Stoic Wise Man in any recognizable sense of the term.[117] Second,

---

[114] Cf. Walzer 2003: "Quintilian's presentation of his concept of the 'good man trained in speaking' is coherent only if we assume that Quintilian intended the 'good man' to be the Stoic Wise Man'" (26). See Atherton 1988: 423 and Kennedy 1969: 127 for discussion of Quintilian's ideal orator and Stoicism.

[115] Walzer thinks Atherton and Kennedy are overly cautious in their assessments of Stoicism's influence on Quintilian (26-27), but his own eagerness to read Quintilian's orator as "a Stoic Wise Man with training in Ciceronian eloquence" leads him to overlook Quintilian's rather distanced treatment of the Stoics (discussed below and Atherton 1988: 423).

[116] Walzer 2003: e.g., 33, 38.

[117] Walzer's aim may be to show that Quintilian is proposing a more flexible version of the Stoic ideal, as he suggests at times (e.g., 29: "Quintilian intended to...liberate Stoic rhetoric with a large dose of Cicero"), but his frequent use of the capitalized "Stoic Wise Man" to describe Quintilian's orator is misleading. It would make more sense to argue that Quintilian's orator is a "wise man" in a modified sense (cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.1.18-19), not in the strict sense implied by "Wise Man."

Quintilian's treatment of the Stoics is in reality more complex than Walzer implies, manifesting the same selectivity and shifting of emphasis that we have seen him employ thus far in his adaptations from Cato, Cicero, and Plato. Stoicism's main usefulness for Quintilian lies in grounding his argumentation for the non-negotiable moral goodness of his orator. It is equally important, however, as a stringent foil against which Quintilian's moderate, flexible image of the perfect orator can show up more attractively.

By far the most appealing feature of Stoicism for Quintilian is its insistence on the moral goodness of rhetoric's practitioner and therefore of rhetoric itself as *scientia*, *ars,* and *virtus*.[118] Among the concepts that Quintilian adopts for his project from the Stoic tradition is his preferred definition of rhetoric. Sextus Empiricus tells us that both the Platonist Xenocrates and the Stoics used "the science of speaking well" (ἐπιστήμη τοῦ εὖ λέγειν) to define rhetoric, but that Xenocrates meant ἐπιστήμη as more or less interchangeable with τέχνη, while for the Stoics ἐπιστήμη amounted to an unshakeable κατάληψις, a certainty of knowledge belonging only to the perfectly virtuous sage.[119] Quintilian's translation of ἐπιστήμη τοῦ εὖ λέγειν is *scientia bene dicendi*, and he insists that *bene* signifies moral goodness as well as technical proficiency.[120] This double resonance of *bene* unites both aspects of the perfect orator within a single definition, just as the perfect orator himself embodies the union of moral worth and skillful speech.[121] In addition to the moral connotations of *scientia*, which, as a possession of the sage, presupposes virtue for the Stoics,[122] the adverb *bene* emphasizes the virtuous manner in which the action of speaking (*dicere*) is performed, and thus the character of the orator as performer of the action (*cum bene dicere non possit nisi bonus*).[123] Quintilian is by no means equating his orator with the Wise Man in the strict Stoic sense, but he is interested in how the Stoics use the goodness of an ideal figure to ground the goodness of rhetoric as science and art.[124] For the Stoics, the morality of the practitioner anchors that of the enterprise, just as the first principle of Quintilian's work is the *vir bonus*, without whom the orator cannot exist.[125]

---

[118] Cf. Asmis 2017: 120-121.

[119] Sext. Emp. *Math.* 2.6. Cf. Russell, n. 41 to *Inst.* 2.15.34. Diogenes Laertius tells us even more specifically that rhetoric was, for the Stoics, "the science of speaking well in regard to continuous discourses" (ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν τοῦ εὖ λέγειν περὶ τῶν ἐν διεξόδῳ λόγων), while dialectic was "the science of correct conversation about discourses in question-and-answer form" ([ἐπιστήμην οὖσαν] τοῦ ὀρθῶς διαλέγεσθαι περὶ τῶν ἐν ἐρωτήσει καὶ ἀποκρίσει λόγων). The translation of the definition of rhetoric is from Long and Sedley 31A.4, p. 183. Greek text is from LCL *Diog. Laert.* 7.42.

[120] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.34.

[121] Cf. *Inst.*12.1.31.

In accord with Stoic ideals of the stability of moral goodness, Quintilian approves of these definitions because they establish the orator on a firm theoretical foundation rather than making his status as an orator depend upon the successful outcome of his speech. When Quintilian refutes Apollodorus' claim that the task of forensic rhetoric is "to persuade the judge and lead his thought into what the orator wishes" (*persuadere iudici et sententiam eius ducere in id quod velit*), he reasons that this definition— like any definition that relies on persuasion—stands or falls with the outcome of the case. The definition of rhetoric should be such that even an occasional failure to persuade does not deprive the orator of his title.[126] Quintilian's desire to protect the orator from the influence of *fortuna* (*nam et ipse [Apollodorus] oratorem fortunae subicit*) is akin to the Stoic idealization of the *sapiens* as existing beyond the ravages of fortune, secure in the fortress of his virtue. For the Stoics, the unassailable virtue and security of the *sapiens* form the basis for their school's strict definitions and tight argumentation. Similarly, Quintilian's insistence on a definition of rhetoric grounded not in the changeable outcomes of persuasion but in the non-negotiable goodness of the orator gives him theoretical backing to combat skepticism about rhetoric's moral worth.[127]

---

[122] Cf. Atherton 1988: 121, n. 65 for the Stoic distinction between a science and an "expertise" (τέχνη or *ars*).

[123] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.34-35.

[124] Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 2.15.34 and 2.17.27-31 (the former deals with rhetoric as *scientia*, the latter with rhetoric as *ars*).

[125] Recall Quintilian's statement in the prologue to the work about the perfect orator he is educating, "who cannot exist unless he is a good man, and therefore I require of him not only an extraordinary ability at speaking but also all the excellences of the rational soul" (*oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest, ideoque non dicendi modo eximiam in eo facultatem sed omnis animi virtutes exigimus. Inst.*1.*praef.*9). Cf. also *Inst.*2.15.33, cited above.

[126] Quint. *Inst.* 2.15.12: *nam et ipse oratorem fortunae subicit, ut, si non persuaserit, nomen suum retinere non possit.*

Although Stoic ideas are such an important inspiration for Quintilian's formulation of the orator's moral goodness, however, Quintilian is careful to avoid showing allegiance to any particular philosophical school, Stoicism included. His adoption of the Stoic definition of rhetoric in *Institutio* 2.15.34 comes after a lengthy, argumentative survey of other definitions of rhetoric (2.15.1-33), as if to emphasize his deliberate selection of this definition from among many competing ones: his own judgment of what is best (*quod est optimum*), not some dogmatic adherence, is what led him to adopt this definition.[128] And in *Institutio* 12.2, the very section in which he seems to suggest Stoicism as the most appropriate philosophical school for forming the orator's moral principles, he dismisses the quibbles of the Peripatetics and Stoics as petty philosophical infighting unworthy of the true orator's notice.[129] Moreover, at the very moments when he evokes the Stoic *sapiens* as an analogue for the perfect orator, he takes special pains to distinguish the two figures. In *Institutio* 1.*praef.*18, for instance, he says that he wants his orator to be "the sort truly able to be called a wise man" (*vir talis qualis vere sapiens appellari possit*) due to a combination of perfect moral character with knowledge and skill in speaking, even though *some people* may disagree.[130] Likewise, in 12.2.7 he says that he is trying to educate “a kind of Roman wise man” (*Romanus quidam sapiens*) who will excel in actual deeds on behalf of the community rather than in closeted disputes.[131] The qualifiers to *sapiens* (*vere sapiens, Romanus sapiens*) set up Quintilian’s enterprise as a pointed departure from the Stoic *sapiens*. This *sapiens* is going to be *truly* worthy of the name because of his moral character combined with his proficiency in speaking; he is to be a *Roman sapiens* who uses eloquence to get things done for the community.

---

[127] Quintilian's audience of elite Romans in the late first century CE would have been familiar with basic Stoic habits of mind like the concept of the Wise Man and the attainment of freedom from *fortuna* through an uncompromising commitment to virtue. By alluding to Stoic principles or evoking aspects of Stoic arguments, Quintilian can draw on a much larger background of Stoic conceptual apparatus without dogmatically committing himself to it. See Brunt 1975 (revised and reprinted 2013): 275-276 on the permeation of elite Roman culture with Stoic ideas between Panaetius (2nd century BCE) and Marcus Aurelius (late 2nd century CE).

[128] At the end of 2.15 Quintilian complains about the perverse desire of theorists to formulate new definitions just for the sake of originality. By contrast, when Quintilian adopts a previously formulated definition, he is doing it because in his judgment it is the best one (*Inst.* 2.15.38). The emphasis is on Quintilian's judgment and approbation, not on the lineage of the definition.

[129] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.2.26-27.

[130] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*18: *sit igitur orator vir talis qualis* ***vere sapiens*** *appellari possit, nec moribus modo perfectus (nam id mea quidem opinione, quamquam sunt qui dissentiant, satis non est), sed etiam scientia et omni facultate dicendi*. See also

Similarly, many of the other moments when Quintilian seems to be closest to the Stoics show, upon examination, a subtle but consistent distancing strategy. When Quintilian uses *sapiens* without a qualifier, he is often referring to the Stoic *sapiens* in contradistinction to his own orator. For instance, in *Institutio* 1.10.5, while arguing that the orator should have a broad and detailed training in the liberal arts, Quintilian states that even the Stoics, who are educating the perfect Wise Man (*nam et sapientem formantes eum qui sit futurus consummatus undique et, ut dicunt, mortalis quidam deus*), make sure to train him in logical niceties like the “horn” fallacy and the “crocodile” dilemma so that his perfection is not marred by trifling errors. This statement portrays the Stoics as engaged in an alternative educational enterprise, that of “forming the Wise Man” (*sapientem formantes*). In 2.17.22, responding to the accusation that rhetoric cannot be an art because it makes use of vice (i.e., deception), Quintilian counters that even a *sapiens* is allowed to tell a lie sometimes for a good reason (*nam et mendacium dicere etiam sapienti aliquando concessum est*). In these passages, the Stoics and their *sapiens* serve as the extreme of good behavior and rectitude that Quintilian appeals to in order to justify the privileges that he wants to grant his orator. If even the Stoics, who are considered the sternest and harshest of all sects (*quae aliis severissima aliis asperrima videtur*), permit the *sapiens* to dabble

---

11.1.35, in which Quintilian again speaks of the orator as a wise man of a different order (*vir civilis* ***vereque sapiens***).

[131] Here *Romanus* connotes vigor, activity, the embodiment of virtue and its practical application in contrast to Greek theorizing. Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.2.30: *quantum enim Graeci praeceptis valent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis.*

in music, why should not the orator?[132] If even the harshest of Stoics (*Stoicorum asperrimi*) allow the *bonus vir* to tell a lie under certain circumstances, why should Quintilian's orator be faulted for it?[133] If even the great Stoic masters Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus accepted fees from their students, an orator whose household requires support should be able to receive remuneration for his services.[134]

All in all, Quintilian's treatment of Stoic models suggests that he juxtaposes his orator with the Stoic ideal of the *sapiens* for both associative and differentiating purposes. On the one hand, appealing to the Stoics allows Quintilian to affiliate his orator with the impeccable moral credentials of the most rigorous of schools. No allegiance to virtue could be greater than Stoic absolutism; if the Stoics vouch for the morality of a practice, there is no stricter authority to overrule them. On the other hand, setting up the inflexible Stoics on one extreme end of the spectrum allows the moderation and well-roundedness of Quintilian's orator, with his Ciceronian charm and emotional mastery, to appear more attractive by comparison. In Quintilian's view, the ideal orator's moral integrity guarantees him the right to make full use of rhetorical embellishments in pursuit of his worthy aims.[135] The Stoics are present in Quintilian's project to guarantee the sureness of those upright aims. But just as importantly, they are also present—at arm's length— as ineffective foils to the ideal orator.[136]

---

[132] Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.17.

[133] Quint. *Inst.* 12.1.38-39: *ac primum concedant mihi omnes oportet, quod Stoicorum quoque asperrimi confitentur, facturum aliquando bonum virum ut mendacium dicat*, and a little further on, *ut hoc, quod alias in servis quoque reprendendum est, sit alias in ipso sapiente laudandum*. As when Cicero appeals to Panaetius as *gravissimus Stoicorum* in *De Officiis* 2.51 to justify the advocate's freedom to defend the verisimilar rather than the true in some circumstances (*iudicis est semper in causis verum sequi, patroni non numquam veri simile, etiamsi minus sit verum, defendere*), Quintilian relies on the authority of certain "very weighty teachers of wisdom" (*gravissimos sapientiae magistros*) for the prerogative of the *vir bonus* to distract the judge from the truth under certain conditions (*ut vir bonus in defensione causae velit auferre aliquando iudici veritatem,* 12.1.36). Russell's n. 26 *ad loc.* makes this connection.

[134] Quint. *Inst.* 12.7.9.

[135] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.45: *quapropter ut res feret flectetur oratio, manente honesta voluntate.* I will discuss this passage at greater length in Chapter 4.

[136] On the inefficacy of the Stoics as orators, see Atherton 1988 and Bartsch 2014.

6. Conclusion

Even as Quintilian adapts some elements of earlier sources on the morality of the orator, he resists or expands upon others in the creation of his own moral ideal. In each of the four case studies discussed above, Quintilian has asserted his authorial autonomy in quoting, arranging, re-contextualizing, or qualifying his source material to support his own vision of the moral orator. The case studies examined in this chapter complicate the picture sometimes painted of Quintilian as a straightforward transmitter of the ideas of others and suggest that we should approach the *Institutio* not simply as a compendium of Greek and Roman literary and cultural knowledge but rather as a work with its own moral vision and agenda that guides its use of other material.

Chapter Two: The Internalization of Motivation in the Orator's Moral Development

1. Introduction

Quintilian's assertion that the orator must be a good man rings hollow unless he can somehow show how the orator's education is supposed to make him good. We have seen already that the Platonic tradition has sounded a note of skepticism in this regard: if Gorgias the rhetor really can teach his students justice, as he claims, how can it also be true that students of rhetoric sometimes cause disruptions in the political community, on Gorgias' own admission?[1] Even the *Phaedrus*, whose portrayal of rhetoric appears more positive, makes the practitioner of true rhetoric resemble a dialectician more closely than any figure that would be recognizable as an orator.[2] When, following Ciceronian precedent, Quintilian parries this thrust by claiming philosophical doctrine and moral virtue as the proper domain of rhetoric (rather than the other way round),[3] his sixteenth-century critic Petrus Ramus cries foul, arguing that Quintilian has overstretched the art of rhetoric by attributing to it a moral character and moral content beyond its purview.[4] Quintilian seems caught between two damning alternatives. Either, in order to satisfy the Platonic criteria, rhetorical education must effectively become philosophical education and shed much of what is recognizably rhetorical about it, or, in order to satisfy Ramus, he must justify his placement of moral philosophy within the art of rhetoric by systematically expounding its principles, which he does not in fact do.[5]

---

[1] See Pl. *Grg.*456c-457c for Gorgias' admission that some students use rhetoric unjustly, contrary to the intentions of their teachers, and 460e-461b for Socrates' exposition of Gorgias' self-contradiction.

[2] Socrates' descriptions of the true rhetor in *Phdr.*271d-272b and 277b-c portray him tailoring speeches towards individual souls based on his knowledge of those particular souls and what is best for them. This sort of individually directed, knowledge-based speech-making may be well suited for a dialectic exchange like the Socratic *elenchus* itself, but it makes little sense in the context of public oratory, when the audience is a crowd of different souls who have different natures and different needs from one another.

[3] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*11-17 and 12.2.8-9. See also Cic. *De or.*3.60-61, where Crassus traces the "sundering" (*discidium*) of the tongue from the heart or mind to Socrates, within a longer discussion of the relationship between eloquence and wisdom (56-81).

[4] See Ramus' *Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum* (1549): 84-85. Page numbers are from Carole Newlands' 1986 translation and text, which does not have section numbers.

In this chapter, I propose that Quintilian's solution to the problem of an orator's moral education comes in a form that a reader like Ramus, who insists on systematic exposition, may not expect. I suggest that Quintilian does offer a plausible and cohesive theory of moral development that depends on the student's gradual internalization of motivation towards the good, or gradually coming to want the good and pursue it of his own accord. The raw material for this process is the expanded educational curriculum that Quintilian outlines, and we experience his theory not through a systematic exposition of its principles but through his portrayal of a child who virtually embodies it.[6] Departing from the child's earliest exposure to speech, Quintilian's expanded curriculum includes the various studies of the *enkyklios paideia* (like grammar, geometry, music, gymnastics); the traditional rhetorical curriculum offered at the school of the rhetor; self-directed practice in reading, writing, revising, and improvising that continues after the school days in preparation for the courts; and, finally, the formal study of philosophy, along with law and history, undertaken on the mature student's own initiative and within the context of his oratorical profession. Throughout these stages, Quintilian's description of the orator's development points to two truths that reinforce each other to create what might be called a "virtuous circle."[7] First, moral virtue is portrayed as the necessary psychological foundation for progress in eloquence. Second, the very exercises that a student engages in to make progress in eloquence are framed as opportunities for the practice—and consequent growth—of virtue. Quintilian portrays the orator-in-training gradually growing over the course of his lifetime to identify with the good of virtuous eloquence until he wants it for its own sake.

---

[5] See Ramus in Newlands 1986: 89-90 in particular, within a larger discussion of the absurdity of Quintilian's moral definition of the orator (83-92).

[6] Cf. Citroni 2009: 209 for the "fictive" quality of Quintilian's imagined pupil and his career.

[7] "Virtuous circle," the inverse of the more common "vicious circle," is used in modern psychology, for instance, to describe a positive behavioral feedback loop. I am grateful to Dr. Kevin Majeres of Harvard's Beth Israel Deaconness Medical Center for introducing me to this concept through his platform Optimal Work (optimalwork.com) and discussing it briefly with me over e-mail (April 22, 2021).

This chapter follows Quintilian's depiction of the orator's education in Books One, Two, Ten, and Twelve to show how the student gradually internalizes the principles and practices that bind rhetoric to moral goodness.[8] Departing from a brief analysis of imitation, a foundational concept in surviving accounts of ancient Greek and Roman education, it tracks the inward shift of motivation that I have posited above. In broad outline, this shift can be said to unfold in three stages: the young student progresses from (1) wanting the external rewards offered by the teacher to (2) wanting the teacher's affection and so obeying and imitating him and, finally, to (3) wanting and pursuing the good on his own initiative.[9] Quintilian's mature orator is a person who is virtuous and wants to continue making progress towards the virtuous goal of eloquence. In wanting the good and pursuing it, he will not abuse rhetoric—quite the contrary in fact—and so, at least on a theoretical level, he resolves the dilemma in which Plato's Socrates traps the rhetor Gorgias.[10]

---

[8] Book One deals with early childhood, the school of the grammarian, and the teaching of the other liberal arts. Book Two treats the school of the rhetor and also addresses general questions about the nature and purpose of rhetoric. Books Three through Eleven are largely organized around the five traditional parts of speaking—invention (Books Three through Six), organization (Book Seven), elocution (Books Eight through 11.1), memory (11.2), and delivery (11.3)—although other schemata are interwoven with these, like the three genres of speaking (Book Three) and the parts of a forensic speech (Books Four through Six). Book Twelve deals with the mature orator's character and career, which ends with his retirement. As the framing books, Books One, Two, and Twelve are most overtly focused on the figure of the orator and his development, but Book Ten picks up this "biographical" thread by outlining the exercises that the orator-in-training will practice as he continues to hone his skills in preparation for the courts, so I include it in my analysis here. For a more detailed outline of the text of the *Institutio Oratoria*, see Russell 2001 (vol.1): 12-19. For the suggestion that the *Institutio* exhibits "a structure of concentric circles," see Gerbrandy 2020: 45-47.

[9] These stages correspond to a general progression that I believe can be traced in the text. Naturally, I do not mean to imply that Quintilian's recommendations rigidly adhere to this model: there are areas of overlap and exceptions. Most notably, *Inst.*10.7.17 suggests that some of the things I call "external rewards" continue to play an important role in the mature student's motivation, though I think that, when read alongside other passages like 12.11.29, it need not present a major problem for my general schema. Overall, I think the progression I sketch here is a useful tool for simplifying Quintilian's system and making it more understandable.

[10] Instead of an unscrupulous brigand who uses his powers of speaking for evil, Quintilian gives us a person who will not even want to do evil at all and so will not abuse his powers. Of course, this all makes sense on

2. Internalizing Good Material Through Imitation (Book One)

As in other ancient theorizations of education, imitation forms the basis of the vision of moral development that Quintilian outlines.[11] Through imitation, a child observes, emulates, and eventually assimilates patterns of speech or behavior. Something that was originally external to the child (an accent or a gesture, for instance) becomes internalized by dint of repetition until it is part of the child's own way of speaking and behaving, of his or her own character. For very small children, imitation seems to take place more or less automatically based on the child's exposure to environmental factors: children absorb habits, especially bad ones, as wool absorbs dye.[12] In addition to imitating and acquiring linguistic faults,[13] Quintilian thinks children can be morally corrupted by copying adults whose debauchery they observe in their own homes: he paints a grim picture of children shamelessly repeating the obscenities they have heard from even more shameless adults, only to be applauded and pampered for their shamelessness.[14] The negative potential of imitation that Quintilian illustrates here throws into relief two important truths. First, as he will reiterate throughout, language and moral character are intertwined and mutually constitutive.[15] Second, environment and other external factors play a dominant role in moral formation during the absorptive years of early childhood.

---

paper, but the more fundamental question is whether it packs a punch in practice. I think Quintilian is aware of this problem and addresses it in the closing words of Book Twelve, which I discuss in Chapter Four.

[11] Cf. Pl. *Resp.*395c-396a, for instance, on the moral role of imitation in educating the guardians. The theme is also implicit in Pseudo-Plutarch's "The Education of Children," though the uncertain date of this text makes it difficult to qualify its relationship to Quintilian's; see Berry 1958: 387-388 and Jones 1907: 35 for discussion of relative dating. For discussion of imitation and its importance throughout the educational process, especially as described in the *Institutio*, see Morgan 1998a: 251-255.

[12] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.5. As the child grows, he develops the ability to assimilate material selectively and thus to exercise greater agency over the boundaries between self and environment through the use of judgment (*iudicium*, see section 5 below).

[13] See Quint. *Inst.*1.1.4 on the need for nurses to speak correctly and 1.1.11 on the importance of having at least one person present in the child's environment who can patrol and correct speech.

[14] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.7-8.

[15] This idea is by no means unique to Quintilian. As noted in the discussion of Cato the Elder in Chapter One of this dissertation, the idea that style and moral character are connected is a commonplace. Cf. Sen. *Ep.*114.2: *talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita.*

Quintilian's alternative to the absorption of bad environmental material is to surround the child with good things to imitate and assimilate into his or her character from early on.[16] Learning to write, in particular, is an imitative process (*imitatio scribendi*) that Quintilian thinks can be useful for moral training. Since children learn to write fluently by copying sentences, the lines provided for this purpose ought to contain moral lessons.

> And because I am still lingering on slight things, I would like those verses which are set before [children] for copying practice to contain not idle sentiments but ones that advise something upright. This memory accompanies [children] until old age and, impressed upon the inexperienced mind, will be profitable to moral character (*Inst.* 1.1.35-36).
>
> Et quoniam circa res adhuc tenues moramur, ii quoque versus qui ad imitationem scribendi proponentur non otiosas velim sententias habeant, sed honestum aliquid monentis. Prosequitur haec memoria in senectutem et inpressa animo rudi usque ad mores proficiet.

Proffering moral content as the material for copying practice enables moral ideas to enter and shape the child's as-yet unformed mind. The concept of impression (*inpressa*) recalls an earlier passage in which Quintilian recommended that letters be carved (*insculpi*) into a wooden tablet so that the child can trace the grooves with a *stilus* and so learn their shapes.[17] By tracing the shapes of the letters again and again in the measured grooves, the child will at length be capable of reproducing the letters firmly and confidently without needing the help of a guiding hand.[18] Something similar is happening in the slightly later, and more advanced, exercise of copying morally formative precepts. As the child writes and rewrites these maxims, which are external aids analogous to the carved grooves on the alphabet tablets, their content gradually becomes a habit of mind, a part of moral character, at the same time as their form, the letters and words being written, becomes habitual for the hand. Impressed with the wisdom of these *sententiae*, the child is no longer a "blank slate" (*animus rudis*) but has acquired moral definition.

---

[16] As he says in *Inst.*1.3.12, "no age should appear so feeble that it cannot directly learn what is upright and what is depraved" (*modo nulla aetas tam infirma quae non protinus quid rectum pravumque sit discat*). I accept the distinction drawn in Morgan 1998a: 252 ("absorption comes first, imitation afterwards and grasping some indefinite time later") but do not think it substantially affects what I am laying out here.

[17] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.27-28: *non inutile erit eos [ductus] tabellae quam optime insculpi, ut per illos velut sulcus ducatur stilus.* See also Bonner 1977: 167-168 for a more detailed discussion of the exercise recommended in this passage.

[18] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.27-28.

Moreover, the very technique of copying down moralizing statements to practice writing reinforces the nexus of morality, language, and physicality that Quintilian is so keen on. From the beginning of his work and consistently throughout, Quintilian portrays correct thinking, correct speech, and correct behavior as intertwined and based on *natura*.[19] Moral and intellectual development are portrayed as inseparable and must progress side by side.[20] The use of moral maxims for copying practice, albeit not unique to Quintilian,[21] inculcates this principle in a practical manner: moral development (assimilation of the content of the *sententiae*) and intellectual development (acquisition of literacy and writing skills), as well as bodily training (disciplined movement of the hands), are experienced as an organic unity. A child who learns to write by copying out moral sentences embodies the key truth on which the integrity of Quintilian's ideal rests: namely, that there is an intrinsic connection—not an accidental association— among moral character, language, and the body.

What is true of writing is true more broadly of Quintilian's sketch of primary education: in all aspects of their early education, children must be surrounded with good material to imitate and sheltered or prevented from imitating bad material. When studying with the comic actor, they should not be allowed to imitate drunkenness, servility, and greed lest these vices imprint themselves on their tender minds, for "frequent imitation translates into moral character."[22] In music, likewise, they should not be exposed to the "effeminate" and "lewd" melodies of the stage but rather to musical modes that praise and inculcate manliness.[23] Similarly, providing children with morally edifying reading material, and ensuring that they read it aloud in a dignified manner, is a must.[24] Children's "tender" and "unformed" minds should be supplied with passages that are not only clearly expressed but also morally edifying.[25] The "loftiness" of the epic poets is best suited to stimulating mental and moral growth in children, while elegy and hendecasyllables should be avoided, or at least postponed until moral character is more solid.[26] As with writing, so with the reading of literature and the studies of music and acting: children's moral character is molded holistically, through the ear and the limbs as well as the mind, and environmental, externally arranged material is the preeminent shaping force of their character. As children perform actions based on an externally provided model, they are shaped by these actions to become the kind of persons who think good thoughts, speak wise words, and behave uprightly according to the principles that they have imbibed from their surroundings, which parents and teachers must manage with utmost care.[27]

---

[19] See Fantham 1995 for discussion and resolution of the tensions in Quintilian's use of *natura*. Quintilian makes similar arguments for the primacy of *natura* in determining excellence at the work's very beginning (*Inst.*1.1.1) and at its very end (12.11.12-13), in what Fantham calls "the framing protreptic of Books 1 and 12" (134).

[20] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.1.17 and Quint.1.2.3.

[21] See Bonner 1977: 172-176 for a broader overview of this practice.

[22] Quint. *Inst.*1.11.2: *nam frequens imitatio transit in mores*. Cf. Pl.*Resp.*395c-396e.

3. Motivating Younger Children with External Goods (Book One)

In the material examined so far, it may seem that children are portrayed as more or less passive beings, raw material to be shaped or blank slates to be written on by adults.[28] But Quintilian also imputes to children a spontaneity that cannot be forcibly implanted or coerced, thus imputing to them some degree of agency in the educational process.[29] Granted, this agency is a limited one that is still heavily dependent on external factors; nevertheless, it serves as the seed of the mature orator's self-motivation. It also reminds us that people do not become good or learned automatically, by default. There is always a space of indeterminacy in education that needs to be overcome by the student's desire, which the skillful teacher must try to arouse. My aim in this section is to show that getting children to want to learn (and to keep wanting to) is the most important task of the primary educator. It is mainly carried out by presenting children with "external goods," desirable objects or rewards that make them want to improve in the hopes of gain or achievement.[30] Although desiring these "external goods" is not inherently virtuous (and may even be the opposite!), it does enable children to keep moving forward along the educational pathway and so to begin developing moral virtues that are crucial to character and success.

---

[23] Quint. *Inst.*1.10.31. For an overview of masculinity and Roman oratory, see Connolly 2007 in Dominik and Hall (eds.).

[24] Quintilian's description of reading that is *virilis et cum sanctitate quadam gravis* exemplifies his general position that speaking manifests virtues that are part of (gendered) moral character (1.8.2).

[25] Quint. *Inst.*1.8.4-5: *non modo quae diserta sed vel magis quae honesta sunt discant.*

[26] Quint. *Inst.*1.8.5-7: *ad firmius aetatis robur reserventur.*

[27] They are not yet capable of discernment and selection from among materials of differing qualities; that will come later. Cf. Morgan 1998a: 252: "imitation is still a carefully controlled process, activated only in appropriate contexts and owing nothing to the pupil's own discretion."

[28] Cf. Morgan 1998a: 250-251, who emphasizes the passivity of Quintilian's imagery of memory.

To begin with, Quintilian thinks that very small children must be stimulated to learn with external devices that provoke pleasurable emotions. Quintilian approves of ivory letter-blocks as toys that spur infants to learn (*irritandae ad discendum infantiae*) by affording them pleasure and enjoyment (*gratia*).[31] Slightly older, but still small, children also must be motivated by pleasure so that they will not associate learning with bitterness.

> I am not so oblivious of age that I think the boy should be hard-pressed in his tender years and that work should be outright demanded of him. For in the first place, it is necessary to be cautious that he should not hate the studies which he cannot yet love and that he should not dread, even beyond the early years, a bitterness once perceived. [Learning] should be a game, and he should be questioned and praised and rejoice to have accomplished something, and sometimes, when he is unwilling to learn, another whom he can envy should be taught, and sometimes he should try his strength and quite often think that he is winning: also let him be lured by the prizes which his age seizes upon (*Inst.*1.1.20).
>
> Nec sum adeo aetatium inprudens ut instandum protinus teneris acerbe putem exigendamque plane operam. Nam id in primis cavere oportebit, ne studia qui amare nondum potest oderit et amaritudinem semel perceptam etiam ultra rudes annos reformidet. Lusus hic sit, et rogetur et

---

[29] Cf. Bloomer 2011, especially footnote 10 on p. 112 for Quintilian's emphasis on the child's "agency" as opposed to portrayals like that of Pseudo-Plutarch that emphasize children's passivity.
[30] Here I use "make" in a casual sense of "successfully persuade," not in the sense of "force" or "compel."
[31] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.26. Other pleasure-related words in this passage include *lusus, gaudeo,* and *iucundus.*

> laudetur et numquam non fecisse se gaudeat, aliquando ipso nolente doceatur alius cui invideat, contendat interim et saepius vincere se putet: praemiis etiam, quae capit illa aetas, evocetur.

The spectrum of attitudes that the very young may have towards study is bounded by love on one end and hate on the other, with a punned opposition drawn between *amare* and *amaritudo*. Games, praise, and prizes are among the components of the educator's toolkit for helping the child experience joy in learning and develop an attraction towards it while he is as yet incapable of loving it for itself. Conversely, unreasonable demands and pressure produce an experience of bitterness that results in fear and hatred. These negative emotions turn the desire to learn into revulsion, which the educator must avoid producing at all costs.

Despite the educator's influence, however, there remains a degree of spontaneity and resistance beyond his control: some days, the child may simply be unwilling (*nolens*). The role for *invidia* that Quintilian recommends in this circumstance is surprising. By and large, *invidia* and its cognates in the *Institutio* refer to a negative emotion that the orator wants to arouse in the judge and direct towards his opponents and, conversely, that he wants to avoid arousing against himself and his client.[32] In this passage, however, *invidere* describes a competitive jealousy that the educator tries to provoke in the child as a means of overriding his unwillingness. Although *invidia* may seem like a risky emotion to play with, Quintilian here attributes to it the positive effect of spurring the child to compete and to want to learn again.[33]

Indeed, attending school alongside other children affords the young student a new set of pleasures to strive for. These pleasures, still external, involve the social acclaim that arises from competition, and they help to stimulate the child's moral development in a social context. Arguing for the preferability of school attendance over homeschooling, Quintilian claims that school provides supplementary moral education in the form of discipline and praise that the student can receive vicariously through observing the teacher's interactions with his classmates.

---

[32] See, for instance, Quint. *Inst.*5.10.34, where *invidia* appears (along with *odium*) in a list of *errores* and *pessimi adfectus*; 5.6.5, in which the advocate accuses his opponent of trying to provoke *invidia*; and 11.1.22, where Demosthenes is described as redirecting *invidia* from himself to his opponent.

[33] Surprising as it may seem, Jerome, in a passage heavily reminiscent of Quintilian, recommends the same strategy of provoking competitive jealousy to spur Paula, the future *templum domini,* on in her lessons (Jer. *Ep.*107.4).

> On a daily basis he will hear many things approved of, many things corrected; he will progress by means of another's laziness rebuked or hard work praised; his emulation will be spurred by praise, he will think it shameful to give way to an equal and glorious to have surpassed the older boys. All these things enkindle [boys'] minds, and while ambition itself may be a vice, it is yet frequently a cause of virtues (*Inst.*1.2.21-22).
>
> Audiet multa cotidie probari, multa corrigi, proderit alicuius obiurgata desidia, proderit laudata industria, excitabitur laude aemulatio, turpe ducet cedere pari, pulchrum superasse maiores. Accendunt omnia haec animos, et licet ipsa vitium sit ambitio, frequenter tamen causa virtutum est.

Hearing another praised for industriousness activates the child's own competitive spirit (*aemulatio*), which leads him to strive for excellence. Vocabulary of arousal and enkindling (*excito, accendo*) highlights the motivational power of school, where children learn side by side, as a catalyst of growth and development.

As he did with *invidia* in 1.1.20, Quintilian here accords the vice of *ambitio* a productive role in keeping the student motivated and so allowing him to develop virtues and make progress. *Ambitio*, a competitive spirit and desire for self-advancement, is not framed as a good in itself (quite the opposite—it is a *vitium*); but Quintilian does portray it as instrumental in bringing about other goods, namely, virtues (*causa virtutum est*). Two specific virtues are implied. First is *industria*, or diligent effort, which is here motivated by a competitiveness that makes the boy strive to excel. Hard work is both a moral gain (opposing the vice of laziness, *desidia*) and a precondition for intellectual gain: as Quintilian will affirm in 12.1.4-7, only a focused mind free from vices will have the energy to conquer the demanding studies required by eloquence. Second is the development of a sense of honor, indicated by perception of what is noble (*pulchrum*) or shameful (*turpe*) and consequent pursuit of the former and avoidance of the latter. Like *industria*, this sense of the noble and the shameful is focused around scholarly achievement, as Quintilian makes clear by means of an example from his own school days. In order to channel the desire for glory and the fear of ignominy towards oratorical progress, Quintilian describes a system whereby students declaimed in an order based on their abilities and the progress they were judged to have made by their teachers.[34] Leading the class was an exhilarating honor (*pulcherrimum*), but it could be a short-lived one: the order was revised every month to reflect new developments, so the leader had to work hard if he wanted to maintain his pre-eminence and the defeated had every reason to redouble their efforts in hopes of removing their disgrace (*dolor victum ad depellendam ignominiam concitabat*).[35] The honor of victory (*ingens palma*) and the pain and shame of defeat (*dolor*) served as the goal and the goad, respectively, for students' struggles to improve. Competition, then, appears as a means of motivating students to make progress in their studies, and relatedly as a catalyst for virtues like industriousness and a sense of honor.[36]

Quintilian's treatment of useful vices (*ambitio* and *invidia*) supports the idea that, at present, the child is still motivated by external goods (like praise and social acclaim) rather than by intrinsic ones (like knowledge and virtue). At a young age, the child is primarily motivated to learn by something other than the joy of learning itself: the pleasures of toys or games or prizes, or the pleasure taken in praise and acclaim, a social pleasure that is somewhat more sophisticated.[37] The child wants to learn in order to get at something else and not yet because he perceives knowledge of eloquence and its exercise as a good in itself to which other goods are mere add-ons.[38] Much further growth and development are needed before the mature student can savor the good fruits of education for their own sake and move himself toward them; at present, it is enough that he keeps wanting to move forward.

---

[34] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.23. While *declamare* in this passage suggests an older group of students than the primary and grammatical students who are the focus of Book One, Quintilian may have seen value in adapting a system like this to various levels of education. Declamation proper does not take place until the school of the rhetor (see *Inst.*2.1.3).

[35] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.24.

[36] Quintilian's ideal pupil is one who is motivated by praise and stung by rebuke in such a way that he will never give in to laziness (*Inst.*1.3.7). A good boy (*probus*) is far removed from laziness (1.3.2-3).

[37] Of course, the child finds delight (*gaudium*) in achieving something through learning (1.1.20), but this seems to be an "accidental" effect rather than the main motivator, at least at this stage.

[38] See *Inst.*12.11.29, discussed below in section 6 below.

4. Motivating Older Children Through Reciprocal Affection (Book Two)

In discussing the school of the rhetor in Book Two, Quintilian narrows the scope of motivation to reside primarily in the relationship of mutual affection between teacher and student. In a sense, he portrays all the motivational energy that previously had been dispersed in the external environment as concentrated in the single person of the teacher, thus marking a new stage in the pupil's advance toward self-motivation.

The rhetoric teacher's personal virtue, most outstandingly his moderation, is key to eliciting positive responses from students so that, of their own accord, they want to imitate—to become like—their virtuous teacher. On the most basic level, the teacher's personal virtue establishes the boundaries of the classroom by balancing out the baseline excesses and deficiencies of the pupils: his moral purity (*sanctitas*) defends the more vulnerable students, while his seriousness (*gravitas*) and sternness (*severitas*) restrain the unruly (and potentially licentious) impulses of the more aggressive.[39] Within the safety and decorum of the space that he has organized with his own virtue, the teacher must manage his own emotions and comportment towards students so as to strike a virtuous mean.

> He himself must neither have vices nor put up with them. His rigor should not be morose, his affability should not be over-loose, because from the one arises hatred and from the other, contempt. Very often his discourse should be about what is honorable and good: for the more often he admonishes, the less often will he chastise. He should be not at all irritable, and yet he should not feign ignorance of those things which need to be corrected; straight-forward in teaching, enduring in his labor, persistent rather than excessive. He should respond freely to those asking questions and further cross-examine those who do not ask. In praising the speeches of his students, he should be neither stingy nor effusive, because the former produces disgusted weariness at their work and the latter, a false sense of security. In correcting what needs correction he should not be harsh, let alone abusive, for this puts to flight many students from the proposed plan of studying, because some teachers rebuke them as though they hate them (*Inst.*2.2.5-8).

---

[39] Quint. *Inst.*2.2.3-4.

> Ipse nec habeat vitia nec ferat. Non austeritas eius tristis, non dissoluta sit comitas, ne inde odium, hinc contemptus oriatur. Plurimus ei de honesto ac bono sermo sit: nam quo saepius monuerit, hoc rarius castigabit; minime iracundus, nec tamen eorum quae emendenda erunt dissimulator, simplex in docendo, patiens laboris, adsiduus potius quam inmodicus. Interrogantibus libenter respondeat, non interrogantes percontetur ultro. In laudandis discipulorum dictionibus nec malignus nec effusus, quia res altera taedium laboris, altera securitatem parit. In emendando quae corrigenda erunt non acerbus minimeque contumeliosus; nam id quidem multos a proposito studendi fugat, quod quidam sic obiurgant quasi oderint.

Moderation characterizes all the teacher's actions and dispositions in this passage. He should avoid extremes in his attitude (*minime iracundus nec…dissimulator*; *nec malignus nec effusus*); even his virtues must be qualified so that they cannot be confused with neighboring vices (*non austeritas eius tristis, non dissoluta sit comitas*; *adsiduus potius quam inmodicus*). The moderation that infuses the teacher's actions and attitudes manifests his own self-controlled character; at the same time, Quintilian portrays it as the *sine qua non* for eliciting a balanced response from students. A gloomy severity or a dissolute jollity on the teacher's part results in students' reactions of hatred (*odium*) or contempt (*contemptus*), respectively. Likewise, the teacher's feedback on students' performances should neither begrudge praise nor bestow it in excess, as the teacher's extreme response provokes in turn an extreme response from the student: on the one hand, loathing for work (*taedium laboris*) and on the other, complacency (*securitas*). All these potential reactions by the student (*odium, contemptus, taedium, securitas*) share a common feature: they inhibit progress in oratory by snuffing out or dissipating the motivation that is so necessary to oratorical progress.

Avoiding extremes establishes the boundaries within which growth is possible, but it is the positive emotional experience of reciprocal affection and love that actually drives students' moral development and progress along the oratorical pathway. It is through his moderation and kindliness in managing the classroom—asking and answering questions, correcting mistakes, bestowing appropriate praise—that the teacher elicits students' positive feelings toward himself.[40] Quintilian says that the teacher should assume "the mind of a parent towards his students."[41] This benevolence characterizes his teaching as a form of nourishment, which he supplies by means of live performances for students to listen to and imitate.

---

[40] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.4.10 and 2.6.3-4 for harmful emotional reactions that students can have in response to overly harsh criticism from the teacher.

> The teacher himself should deliver something, indeed many things, each day that his hearers can take with them. For although he may furnish them with sufficient examples for imitation from reading, nevertheless the "living voice," as they say, is more amply nourishing, and especially the voice of a teacher whom the students—if only they have been correctly educated—both love and revere. Really, it can scarcely be expressed how much more eagerly we imitate those whom we like (*Inst.*2.2.8).
>
> Ipse aliquid, immo multa cotidie dicat quae secum auditores referant. Licet enim satis exemplorum ad imitandum ex lectione suppeditet, tamen viva illa, ut dicitur, vox alit plenius, praecipueque praeceptoris quem discipuli, si modo recte instituti, et amant et verentur. Vix autem dici potest quanto libentius imitemur eos quibus favemus.

The students' dispositions of love and reverence (*amare* and *vereri*) are the respective opposites of *odium* and *contemptus*. These positive feelings make students spontaneously want to be like their teacher (*libentius imitemur*); the connection between these feelings and education is underscored (*si modo recte instituti*).[42] Once again, morality and eloquence are portrayed as intertwined: as the students listen to the skillful performances of the good teacher whom they have come to love and admire, they become eager to imitate him. Since the teacher in his very person integrates skill in speaking with moral goodness, students observe and wish to imitate this union of moral goodness with rhetorical proficiency of their own accord.

Quintilian further develops the importance of students' love for their teacher as a motivational force in 2.9 to highlight students' co-agency with the teacher in the educational process. He assigns students the sole duty (*officium*) of loving their teachers as they love their studies and considering them "the parents not of their bodies but of their minds."[43] This love (*amor*) constitutes a sort of filial *pietas* that fuels students' progress in their studies.[44]

---

[41] Quint. *Inst.*2.2.5. Russell translates *animus parentis* as "paternal attitude," but I think the more inclusive "parent" would be better here: Quintilian associates oratorical teaching with nourishment (e.g., *alo* in *Inst.*2.2.8 and 1.*praef.*23-24) and compares teachers to nurses giving young students the "milk of more agreeable learning," thus giving the teacher maternal overtones as well as paternal ones (*Inst.*2.4.5-6).

[42] See Quint. *Inst.*1.3.12 and 2.4.20-21, as well as Chapter Four of this dissertation, for the moral overtones of *rectus*.

> Reverence like this will confer great benefit on their scholarly enthusiasm; for in this way they will listen willingly and trust what is said and desire to be similar [to their teachers], and they will assemble for their very classes joyfully and eagerly, when corrected they will not grow angry, when praised they will rejoice, and they will merit by their zealous application to be very dear [to their teacher] (*Inst.*2.9.2-3).
>
> Multum haec pietas conferet studio; nam ita et libenter audient et dictis credent et esse similes concupiscent, in ipsos denique coetus scholarum laeti alacresque convenient, emendati non irascentur, laudati gaudebunt, ut sint carissimi studio merebuntur.

Quintilian highlights the spontaneity of students' dedication to their studies that arises from love for their teacher (*libenter, laeti alacresque*). This spontaneity or eagerness characterizes their desire to make progress so as to become like the teacher and earn more of his affection: of their own accord they want to attend classes, receive correction, and merit praise for their accomplishments. Students are still aiming for an external good (the teacher's affection), but it is a good concentrated in a single person whose role is to model the practice of virtuous oratory and so to transmit this ideal to willing students. Wanting to imitate the teacher, who is eloquent, is another step closer to wanting the good of eloquence for oneself.

5. Internalizing Good Criteria: The Development of ***Iudicium*** (Books Two and Ten)

While at present desire for the teacher's affection seems like the motor that drives students' progress in their oratorical studies, Quintilian does not intend for dependence on the teacher to last forever. The student will not always be under the teacher's guidance; if he were, there would be no point in educating him.[45] One of the rhetor's most important tasks, therefore, is to help students form their critical judgment (*iudicium*) on the pattern of his own. By observing and imitating the teacher's judgments about speeches, students assimilate the teacher's criteria and learn to exercise judgment about what models to imitate and avoid. Quintilian links judgment and imitation with motivation in Book Ten, calling it a "comprehensive principle of life" that "we ourselves wish to do the things we approve of in others."[46] Approval of another's words or actions leads to our wishing to imitate them so that we ourselves can assimilate and possess the good that we have apprehended. But we must be careful to approve of the right things so that we can desire and imitate them.[47] The formation of proper judgment, then, is a precondition for successful self-motivation towards and appropriation of the good.

---

[43] Quint. *Inst.*2.9.1-2. I have been unable to improve on Russell's translation of *et parentes esse non quidem corporum, sed mentium credant.*

[44] In Latin, "piety" and "impiety" pertain to familial and patriotic relationships as well as to religious duties.

[45] Quint. *Inst.*2.5.13.

In treating formal rhetorical schooling in Book Two, Quintilian highlights practices by which the teacher trains students' judgment, gradually equipping them with the tools to resist stylistic –and moral –depravity and to set the right course for themselves. I will focus on three of these practices that he develops at more length. First, Quintilian thinks judgment must be trained during the declamatory performances of students. His portrayal of current practice, whereby students raucously applaud and leap up during each other's speeches in the hopes that they will receive the same admiration when their turn comes, points to moral concerns that have repercussions on students' scholarly progress.[48] The formation of a mutual admiration society among students discourages virtues like diligence and hard work (*cura ac labor*) and puffs students up with a false opinion of themselves that makes them hostile to the less effusive but more accurate judgment of the teacher. This attitude makes them incapable of real progress.[49] The correct approach is rather for all the students, including the declaimer, to keep their eyes on the teacher's face during the performance in order to learn what they should approve and disapprove of.[50]

---

[46] Quint. *Inst.*10.2.2: *atque omnis vitae ratio sic constat, ut quae probamus in aliis facere ipsi velimus.*

[47] Quint. *Inst.*10.2.3.

[48] Quint. *Inst.*2.2.9-10 and 12.

[49] Quint. *Inst.*2.2.10 and 2.2.12: *hinc tumor et vana de se persuasio usque adeo ut illo condiscipulorum tumulto inflati, si parum a praeceptore laudentur, ipsi de illo male sentiant.* This bad feeling is, of course, the opposite of the love and trust students should show in their teacher (2.2.8 and 2.9).

> Therefore, those who are listening as well as the one who is speaking ought to watch the face of the teacher: for in this way they will discern what things must be approved and what disapproved; in this way fluency comes about by writing, judgment by listening (*Inst.*2.2.11-12).
>
> Vultum igitur praeceptoris intueri tam qui audiunt debent quam ipse qui dicit: ita enim probanda atque improbanda discernent; sic stilo facultas continget, auditione iudicium.

Quintilian shifts the focus away from the unruly ranks of students clamoring their approval, away even from the declaimer himself, and onto the face of the teacher.[51] Students should be listening to the declamation but watching the teacher's face, wherein another performance is taking place for their benefit, including the benefit of the declaimer himself. As the teacher listens to (and presumably watches) the student delivering the declamation and modifies his facial expression to reflect his assessment of various points, students imitate the teacher's reactions (at least mentally, if not physically) and thus develop their own *iudicium* on the model of his.[52]

Additional moral formation, albeit more subtle, is taking place here as well. The restraint of boisterous applause and other physical demonstrations of approval (like jumping up and surging forward) helps to discipline boys' physical impulses and channel this energy in a more intellectual direction, towards the careful listening (*auditio*) so necessary for good judgment. By withholding empty demonstrations of praise, students follow the teacher's lead in creating an environment that encourages conscientiousness, hard work, and appreciation for the truth about their own achievements and those of others. Instead of resenting the teacher for his sparing praise, students align their critical judgments with his and maintain the eager, loving openness to his teaching that allows their education to progress.

---

[50] Discernment of a speech's strengths and flaws and consequent approval or disapproval are the ingredients that make up *iudicium.*

[51] See Quint. *Inst.*11.3.72 for discussion of facial communication of emotions.

[52] Quint. *Inst.*2.2.9-10: *ita fiet ut ex iudicio praeceptoris discipulus pendeat, atque id se dixisse recte quod ab eo probabitur credat.*

The second method for training judgment involves the teacher delivering declamations and watching students' reactions so that he can gauge the development of each one's *iudicium*.[53]

> Indeed, if possible, [the teacher] should also apply his mind to observing what each boy praises and how he praises it, and he should be delighted if his well-spoken words give pleasure, not so much for his own sake as for the sakes of those who judge correctly (*Inst.*2.2.13).
>
> Quin, si fieri potest, intendendus animus in hoc quoque, ut perspiciat quae quisque et quo modo laudet, et placere quae bene dicet non suo magis quam eorum nomine delectetur qui recte iudicabunt.

Whereas, during a student's declamation, the declaimer and other students were supposed to watch the teacher's face to observe his reactions, here it is the teacher who at once delivers the declamation and observes the responses of his students.[54] He is not seeking to align his own judgment with theirs but rather to see that their judgment, manifested by their praise (*laudare*) and pleasure (*placere*), aligns with his, which is presented as an objective standard: the ability to appreciate the teacher's skillful speech is a sign of the student's right judgment. For the student to feel pleasure at the right things and, by extension, to praise them are signs of a successful education and a worthy motive for the teacher's gladness (*delectare*).[55] As Quintilian reveals in 2.15, speaking well is the activity and end of rhetoric defined as the "science of speaking well," or *scientia bene dicendi*.[56] The student's recognition and praise of the teacher's skill in speaking is important because it shows that the student has assimilated the teacher's criteria of what constitutes good speaking and has learned to apply them, in this case as a mirror of the teacher's own performance.

---

[53] Presumably the teacher's observation of "what each boy praises and how he praises it" will lead to some practical action (either affirmative or corrective).

[54] Although *perspicere* in its literal sense refers to vision, I think it is being used here in a metaphorical sense to cover all aspects of the teacher's observation, including auditory feedback. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how students could communicate *laus*. *Probatio* can be observed visually based on facial expression, but *laus* seems to require verbal articulation.

[55] Cf. Pl. *Resp.*401e- 402a, where Socrates says that the person who praises fine things and accepts them into his soul will become καλὸς τε κἀγαθὸς and Pl. *Laws* 653a-c for a similar discussion. Arist. *Eth. Nic.*1104b10 and following is a *locus classicus* for this idea (Bekker numbers approximated from Ostwald's 1999 translation). Cf. also Quint. *Inst.*1.12.18 for the intellectual delight (*delectatio*) of the man whose ideal is eloquence and 10.1.112 for the appreciation of Cicero as a sign of progress.

[56] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.38.

A third exercise—the reading aloud of famous speeches from oratory and history accompanied by the teacher's commentary on the stylistic features of the texts—opens up the possibility of exercising the mature judgment that the previous two exercises tried to form and assess, respectively.[57] Given the many stylistic virtues that the teacher can praise as evidence of the "manly composition" (*virilis compositio*) of a good speech,[58] Quintilian's parallel recommendation of reading *bad* speeches aloud and pointing out their vices may at first seem surprising. Upon closer examination, however, it turns out to be a useful indicator of the student's maturing capacity for judgment: the very possibility of exposing students to bad material implies that they have sufficient maturity to reject or disaffiliate themselves from it rather than soaking it in indiscriminately.[59] The teacher's object in pointing out the flaws of a bad speech is to show students what *not* to approve, what to despise and reject and refuse to imitate in their own speaking.

> I even think it is useful sometimes for corrupt and vice-ridden speeches—which, however, many people admire because of their depraved judgment—to be read aloud so as to point out in them how many things are inappropriate, hard to understand, swollen, base, vulgar, lascivious, and effeminate: not only are these things praised by many people but, what is worse, they are praised on account of the very fact *that* they are depraved (*Inst.*2.5.10-11).
>
> Ne id quidem inutile, etiam corruptas aliquando et vitiosas orationes, quas tamen plerique iudiciorum pravitate mirentur, legi palam, ostendique in his quam multa inpropria obscura tumida humilia sordida lasciva effeminata sint: quae non laudantur modo a plerisque, sed, quod est peius, propter hoc ipsum quod sunt prava laudantur.

---

[57] Quint. *Inst.*2.5.1-9.

[58] Quint. *Inst.*2.5.6-9.

[59] See Quint. *Inst.*2.5.23-26. Quintilian suggests that judgment, like moral character, becomes more or less "set" at a certain point (*Inst.*2.5.23: *firmis autem iudiciis iamque extra periculum positis*). Once the boy's good judgment has been established, he can be given the hoary ancients and indulgent moderns to read without harm (23-24). Imitation must result from judgment, not precede it (26).

Characteristically, Quintilian's evaluation of some speeches as "corrupt and vice-ridden", as opposed to "upright and natural" conveys simultaneous moral and stylistic censure.[60] *Effeminata,* which rounds off the list of vices, presents a stark contrast with the *virilis compositio* that had marked the excellent speech. *Pravitas*, a key term of this passage, suggests a perversity both moral and stylistic.[61] Since praise does not belong to what is crooked, warped, and unnatural (*prava*), praise of depravities is itself the ultimate depravity.

For Quintilian, as author of *De Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae* and denouncer of instant gratification and popular pleasures, the exercise of disparaging bad speeches may well be as important as appraising good ones. In his view boys are prone to the corruptions of easy pleasures and must be protected against them by the vigilance of the teacher, who nourishes them on wholesome speeches and inoculates them against bad ones.[62] By showing his disapproval of certain features—particularly those features that are, in Quintilian's view, popularly but wrongly admired—the teacher seeks to condition the student's aesthetic sense, which connects perception of the beautiful with perception of things as accordingly admirable, desirable, and imitable.[63] Modeling for students a taste and judgment that contradict the preferences of the crowd (*plerique*), the teacher tries to mold in them a judgment that will someday be able to resist the seductions of vice on its own.[64]

In Book Ten, when the orator's traditional schooling is over but he still needs further preparation for the *certamina* of the courts, Quintilian offers a picture of mature judgment that, although it can still benefit from guidance, displays greater self-command and agency.[65] Quintilian's famous reading list (*Inst.*10.1.46-135) mediates between the accompanied reading that boys undertake at the rhetorical school and the private reading that the mature student undertakes on his own in order to acquire intellectual and verbal equipment (*copia rerum ac verborum*) that he can draw on to meet any challenge that arises.[66] Although Quintilian gives short indications of the virtues (or vices) that can be found in each author, he makes it clear that the student is responsible for making further judgments (*iudicare*) about what to read in order to develop his own style.[67] This attitude emphasizes the shift of autonomy and agency onto the student.

---

[60] See the next sentence in 2.5.11: *nam sermo rectus et secundum naturam enuntiatus nihil habere ex ingenio videtur.* On Quintilian's moralizing assessments of style, see e.g., Winterbottom 1998.

[61] For more on the moral connotations of *pravus* and its opposite, *rectus*, see Chapter Four.

[62] See Quint. *Inst.*2.5.18-22, especially 22: *ne recentis huius lasciviae flosculis capti voluptate prava deleniantur, ut praedulce illud genus et puerilibus ingeniis hoc gratius quo propius est adament.*

[63] Quintilian's connection of aesthetics with morality becomes clearer as the passage goes on: admiring speeches that are affected and unnatural is akin to the morbid obsession felt in gazing upon physical deformities, and even to cultural preferences for hair removal, hair dye, and makeup rather than the natural beauty of the unenhanced human body (*Inst.*2.5.11-12).

[64] In light of this discussion a comparison of *Inst.*2.5 with 10.1.125-131 (Quintilian's treatment of Seneca) is interesting for the collocation of *prava, iudicium, vitia,* and imitation. On this passage see Taoka 2011.

Quintilian portrays the exercise of *iudicium* through the mature student's largely self-directed course of reading as directly related to the practice of important moral virtues. First, the process of private reading is itself morally and intellectually formative because it liberates the student from social pressures to conform to the depraved approval of the crowd (*prava iudicia*) and leads him to place appropriate trust in his own well-formed judgment.

> In reading, judgment is more certain, because frequently for a listener either his own partiality or the very noise of other people's praise wrests it [from him]. For it is shameful to disagree, and we are inhibited by a sort of unspoken bashfulness from trusting more in ourselves, while at the same time faulty things are pleasing to the many, and by those who are called together [for the purpose], even things that are not pleasing are praised. But on the flip side it also happens that depraved judgments do not give favor to things that have been excellently said (*Inst.*10.1.17-19).
>
> In lectione certius iudicium, quod audienti frequenter aut suus cuique favor aut ille laudantium clamor extorquet. Pudet enim dissentire, et velut tacita quadam verecundia inhibemur plus nobis

---

[65] At *Inst.*10.1.4 Quintilian tells us, somewhat abruptly, that his discussion of the orator's education is over (*verum nos non quomodo sit instituendus orator hoc loco dicimus*): he has already said enough about "education" in its traditional sense and is now concerned with preparing the mature orator for the courts as an "athlete" is coached for a competition. This passage at first seems to imply that the *institutio* of the orator has ended almost three books before the end of the work, but in 12.1.28 (*ille vir quem instituimus*) and 12.2.7 (*illum quem instituo Romanum quendam velim esse sapientem*), Quintilian describes the mature orator's *institutio* in the present tense, as if it is still ongoing. Perhaps the discrepancy can be reconciled if we see *institutio* as referring sometimes to the orator's entire education, broadly conceived, and at other times referring specifically to the *beginning* or *basis* of that education in the schools (the related verb *instituo* carries the sense of a foundation or planting).

[66] Quint. *Inst.*10.1.6.

[67] Quint. *Inst.*10.1.45: *facile est autem studiosis qui sint his simillimi iudicare.*

> credere, cum interim et vitiosa pluribus placent, et a conrogatis laudantur etiam quae non placent. Sed e contrario quoque accidit ut optime dictis gratiam prava iudicia non referant.

Through solitary reading, the individual reader can exercise his own *iudicium* on a surer footing (*certius*) without the moral debasement of succumbing to the whims of the many. This resistance to the crowd, which we have already seen emphasized at the school of the rhetor, requires a certain amount of self-confidence and autonomy: the ideal is to be able to trust one's own judgment (*plus nobis credere*) rather than that of the many.

Second, *iudicium* also demands that the reader exercise moderation, treading a middle path between admiring the very weaknesses of great authors and being overly quick to criticize them.[68] Judgment should be "modest" and "well considered," and Quintilian's preference that students err on the side of admiring rather than criticizing suggests that reverence and a certain intellectual humility towards renowned authorities are moral qualities linked to the student's *iudicium.*

> However, pronouncements on such great men must be made with a judgment that is modest and cautious so that [readers] do not, as happens to many people, condemn what they do not understand. And if it is necessary to err one way or another, I would prefer everything from the great authors to please readers rather than for many things to displease them (*Inst.*10.1.26).
>
> Modesto tamen et circumspecto iudicio de tantis viris pronuntiandum est, ne, quod plerisque accidit, damnent quae non intellegunt. Ac si necesse est in alteram errare partem, omnia eorum legentibus placere quam multa displicere maluerim.

The modesty and consideration of a student's judgment are expressions of his good character; they also provide the foundation for further growth by allowing him to continue learning and benefiting from these authors.[69] The mature orator knows both how to appreciate the good qualities of all authors and how to be selective in choosing only their good qualities to imitate. This selectivity, coupled with the self-confidence of someone who knows how to make his own judgments and stick to them, defying popular depravities, marks him as having a stable and balanced character. Through his strong and discerning *iudicium*, he proves that he is personally committed to the high standards of virtuous eloquence.

---

[68] Quint. *Inst.*10.1.24-26. Quintilian notes that even Cicero found faults in Demosthenes, and Horace in Homer (24). Some people idolize great authors so much that they even imitate their failings (25).

[69] As Quintilian has pointed out in *Inst.*2.2.5, contempt (*contemptus*) for a teacher prevents further learning.

6. The Mature Student's Internalized Motivation (Book Ten)

Once he has mature *iudicium*, a student can be trusted to discern the good more or less independently. He can select his own reading material, apply a critical eye to his own work, and choose an orator to follow and imitate as he prepares for his own entry into the fray of the courts.[70] All this activity, undertaken on the young orator's own initiative, depends on his ability to self-direct and self-motivate, in contrast with the earlier stages of education. In Book Ten, movement toward the good is no longer presented primarily as a matter of being coaxed or attracted by an external force, but rather of perceiving eloquence as desirable and undertaking strenuous efforts on one's own initiative to move towards it.

Quintilian's treatment of the orator's continuing education in Book Ten posits a virtuous circle whereby the inherent difficulties of the task demand moral virtues on the student's part, and progress is contingent on these virtues; at the same time, performing these exercises gives the student opportunities to practice and grow in moral virtues, thus reinforcing them. Growing in moral virtue and becoming eloquent appear as two interconnected components of a growth process driven forward primarily on the student's initiative.

Quintilian portrays writing as an ideal locus for the development of oratorical virtue, depending as it does on the subject's active shaping of material. Contrasting the "external help" of reading (*auxilia extrinsecus*) with the personal effort of writing, Quintilian claims that the difficulty of writing guarantees its fruitfulness.[71]

> We must write, therefore, as diligently and as much as possible. For just as earth deeply delved is more fertile for generating and nourishing seeds, so progress sought beyond the surface bears fruit

---

[70] Quint. *Inst.*10.5.19.

[71] Quint. *Inst.*10.3.1: *ut laboris, sic utilitatis etiam longe plurimum adfert stilus*.

> more abundantly and preserves it more trustily. For indeed without this constancy, the ability to speak extemporaneously will yield only loquaciousness and words born upon the lips (*Inst.*10.3.2-3).[72]
>
> Scribendum ergo quam diligentissime et quam plurimum. Nam ut terra alte refossa generandis alendisque seminibus fecundior, sic profectus non a summo petitus studiorum fructus et fundit uberius et fidelius continet. Nam sine hac quidem constantia ipsa illa ex tempore dicendi facultas inanem modo loquacitatem dabit et verba in labris nascentia.

In this passage, moral qualities that entail consistent effort (like *diligentia* and *constantia*) appear as the precondition for gathering the fruits of the labor of writing. It is through the repeated practice of writing that an ever deeper mental transformation comes about in the writer: when true eloquence is deeply rooted in the mind, it can manifest itself even on the shortest notice.[73] Moral virtues facilitate the laborious process of deepening eloquence through writing; conversely, engaging in this labor requires exercising these virtues and so, presumably, growing in them to become a more virtuous person.[74]

Closely related to persistence is Quintilian's recommendation of *intentio*, or purposeful concentration on the achievement of a desired object.[75] In the effort to make progress in one's writing, Quintilian asserts that external circumstances do not matter as much as internally determined drive.

> But although silence and solitude and an utterly clear mind are greatly desirable, yet they do not always happen, and therefore we should not immediately throw away our books and bewail a lost day if something interrupts us, but we must resist these inconveniences and make it a matter of discipline that concentration should conquer all obstacles. And if we direct our concentration towards this work with our entire mind, nothing that bombards our eyes or ears will enter into our consciousness. If it often happens that even a chance thought overwhelms [sensory stimuli] so that we do not see people in front of us and we lose our way, will we not achieve the same result *by dint of wanting to*?[76] We must not indulge excuses for laziness. For if we think that we cannot apply ourselves unless we are refreshed, in a good mood, and free from all anxieties, we will always have a reason to excuse ourselves. Therefore, in a crowd, on the road, even at table, thought should carve out for itself a private space (*Inst.*10.3.28-29).

---

[72] Presumably, as opposed to word born in the mind (i.e., through deep thought and deliberate selection).

[73] Quint. *Inst.*10.3.3.

[74] Quint. *Inst.*10.3.3-4. The powers of persistence and endurance need to be developed actively: *vires faciamus ante omnia quae sufficiant labori certaminum et usu non exhauriuntur.*

[75] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*10.3.23 for *intentio* as concentrated on an object (*ab intentione operis destinati*) and 10.3.24-25 for *intendere* as a mental action of concentration opposed to relaxation or dispersal (*remittere*). Cf. also Gély 1997: 58-59.

[76] Emphasis mine.

> Sed silentium et secessus et undique liber animus ut sunt maxime optanda, ita non semper possunt contingere, ideoque non statim si quid obstrepet abiciendi codices erunt et deplorandus dies, verum incommodis repugnandum, et hic faciendus usus, ut omnia quae impedient vincat intentio: quam si tota mente in opus ipsum derexeris, nihil eorum quae oculis vel auribus incursant ad animum perveniet. An vero frequenter etiam fortuita hoc cogitatio praestat, ut obvios non videamus et itinere deerremus: non consequemur idem si et voluerimus? Non est indulgendum causis desidiae. Nam si non nisi refecti, non nisi hilares, non nisi omnibus aliis curis vacantes studendum existimarimus, semper erit propter quod nobis ignoscamus. Quare in turba, itinere, conviviis etiam faciat sibi cogitatio ipsa secretum.

Quintilian's framing in this passage suggests a distinction dear to the Stoics between things that are within our control and things that are not.[77] Environmental factors like seclusion or the absence of noise, though desirable, are not always within our control.[78] What is in our control is the way we respond to them, and this response should be a virtuous resistance that takes the form of total concentration. *Intentio* seems to be synonymous with a type of thought (*cogitatio*) whereby the entire mind is focused on its object. Since it can be achieved "by dint of wanting to" (*si et voluerimus*), it is deliberate and within our power (Quintilian points up its deliberate quality by contrast with "chance," *fortuita*). The deliberate choice and exercise of concentration seems to be a sort of inner core that is always available as a refuge from external circumstances (e.g., a noisy environment) and even from disruptive internal circumstances as well (e.g., moods). If we think that our ability to concentrate on our studies depends on these other conditions rather than on the inner core, we fall into the vices of laziness and self-indulgence and, in so doing, cut off the possibility of progressing in eloquence. The effort, then, to focus one's attention on working in spite of distractions is itself a virtuous psychological action with moral and intellectual consequences.

---

[77] Cf. the discussion of whether or not the emotions are *in nostra potestate* in Chapter Four, Section 3.

[78] Although a *liber animus* ("a free mind") connotes interiority, I think Quintilian groups it with other environmental conditions because, at least if *liber* is understood as "vacancy" from cares (*omnibus aliis curis vacantes*), it is not within our control. As this passage and others suggest, the mind can be filled up with anxieties (*curae*) that are related to external affairs like property, hunting, spectacles, or schemes (12.1.6-7). The mental repercussions of some of these anxieties and distractions can be eliminated by discontinuing the practices that give rise to them, but it seems unlikely that all cares can be definitively abdicated.

Quintilian's portrayal in Book Ten of the mature oratorical pupil's ability to maintain focus on his goal, resisting pressures from without and within, shows a figure who can set his own course and maintain it by means of strenuous efforts.[79] These efforts depend on his appreciation of eloquence as something noble and fine, as something worth striving for: the inherent desirability of the goal is what makes strenuous effort towards it possible.[80] The external rewards that accrue to eloquence may be very helpful motivations, but they are secondary to the intrinsic pleasure and desirability of eloquence itself.[81] The mature product of oratorical education is a person who wants this good for its own sake and moves towards it, no matter what difficulties and challenges arise. A person like this wants only what is good and honorable and therefore will never misuse his powers of speech for a lesser gain.

7. Philosophy Within the Oratorical Curriculum (Book Twelve)

Quintilian draws on this idea in the epilogue of Book Twelve when he compares the value of eloquence for its own sake to the philosophical pursuit of virtue for its own sake.

> And it would not have been difficult to show with both ancient and recent examples that greater riches, honors, friendships, and present and future praise accrue to people from no other source [than eloquence], were it not unworthy of our education to claim this lesser reward from the noblest work—whose practice and its very possession makes the amplest return on one's studies—in the manner of those people who say they do not seek the virtues but rather the pleasure that comes from them (*Inst.*12.11.29).
>
> Neque erat difficile vel veteribus vel novis exemplis palam facere non aliunde maiores opes honores amicitias, laudem praesentem futuram hominibus contigisse, nisi indignum litteris esset ab opere pulcherrimo, cuius tractatus atque ipsa possessio plenissimam studiis gratiam refert, hanc minorem exigere mercedem, more eorum qui a se non virtutes sed voluptatem quae fit ex virtutibus peti dicunt.

---

[79] Although I have concentrated my analysis in this section on writing, many of these considerations apply also to the speaking exercises Quintilian lays out for the grown student in 10.7. See *Inst.*10.7.27 (*studendum vero semper et ubique*) and following.

[80] Quint. *Inst.*10.3.4: *nihil enim rerum ipsa natura voluit magnum effici cito, praeposuitque pulcherrimo cuique operi difficultatem.* Eloquence is the epitome of a surpassingly beautiful and glorious goal; cf. *Inst.*1.12.16 (*rerum pulcherrima eloquentia*) and 1.12.18 (*'reginam rerum orationem'*).

[81] See Quint. *Inst.*1.12.17-18 for the intrinsic value of eloquence as opposed to monetary or other material reasons; 10.7.17 for the idea that eloquence's greatest *voluptas* is in itself; and 12.11.29 for the superiority of eloquence's intrinsic value over its other, still attractive and legitimate, fruits (wealth, honor, money, praise).

Education (the *litterae* of which we must be worthy) requires appreciation of the good of eloquence for its own sake, as itself the *plenissima gratia* that it bestows on its enthusiasts. All the other rewards that accrue from excellence (wealth, honor, even praise) are akin to the pleasure that accrues from practicing the virtues: desirable benefits that are nevertheless secondary to the essential aim. In some sense, Quintilian's assimilation of eloquence to virtue as a "good-in-itself" is not surprising, given that he established rhetoric as a virtue in 2.17 and has intermingled moral and stylistic criticism throughout the *Institutio*.[82] If, however, we read *virtus* in this passage as referring specifically to the goal of philosophers, Quintilian is here advocating the replacement of philosophy by a philosophized rhetoric as the highest human endeavor.[83] Quintilian presents eloquence as a more expansive "good-in-itself" for which to aim, one that encompasses the practice of moral virtues within a speech-focused, public-facing ideal. In this vision, the formal study of philosophy becomes not the quintessential virtuous pursuit but rather part of a larger, ongoing project of moral formation that has already been taking place since early childhood through a *rhetorical* (or rhetorically oriented) curriculum.

Quintilian's recommendations for how the orator should study philosophy in Book Twelve clearly indicate that this further moral formation is undertaken on the orator's own initiative. In the prologue to Book Twelve, Quintilian describes the orator-in-the-making as "dismissed from the teachers of speaking" and "either carried along under his own steam" or seeking "greater help from the very innermost sanctuaries of wisdom."[84] The orator moves by his own *impetus*, not that of the teacher; if he relies on external help, it is help he has actively sought after (*petere*). It is during this time of maturity that Quintilian counsels the orator to make a direct and thorough study of morality;

---

[82] Quint. *Inst.*2.17.4: *verum haec quam instituere conamur et cuius imaginem animo concepimus, quae bono viro convenit quaeque est vere rhetorice, virtus erit.*

[83] Cf. Bloomer 2011, n. 9.

[84] Quint. *Inst.*12.*praef.*3: *postquam vero nobis ille quem instituebamus orator, a dicendi magistris dimissus, aut suo iam impetu fertur aut maiora sibi auxilia ex ipsis sapientiae penetralibus petit, quam in altum simus ablati sentire coepimus*.

the emphatic gerunds he uses (*virtus perficienda, mores excolendi, honesti iustique disciplina pertractanda*) may suggest the completion of something already begun, or the more systematic study of something that has already been an organic part of his life and education so far.[85]

In seeking this further moral formation, the orator's autonomous activity is the guiding force. Quintilian concedes that, given the circumstances that have divorced philosophy from rhetoric in practice, much of this moral knowledge must at present be sought from teachers of philosophy, though this is not the ideal.[86] Specifically, Quintilian seems to have in mind a program of reading; he also hints at participation in philosophical disputations and, even more obliquely, at some form of philosophical exercise.[87] Yet Quintilian insists that the orator must preserve his independence from philosophical sects; the loftiness of his profession transcends the differences among philosophical schools and gives him the liberty to pick and choose from among their offerings what is most helpful for the development of his own eloquence and character.[88]

Since the orator's autonomy and initiative structure his engagement in formal philosophical studies, and since Quintilian justifies the study of logic, ethics, and natural philosophy in part by their usefulness in rhetorical situations (i.e., determining the issue of a case, or discussing religion in a senate meeting),[89] we may well ask: if the orator engages in philosophical studies for the sake of anything else, is he really doing philosophy at all?[90] Quintilian seeks to circumvent this difficulty by portraying eloquence as a more holistic ideal of good-in-itself, one that includes not just theoretical knowledge but also action taken through the medium of speech.[91] In the final analysis, philosophy is not the main method Quintilian puts forth for acquiring moral formation, for learning about goodness and becoming good. Although the formal study of philosophy can play an important role in deepening and systematizing this knowledge, the orator's whole *rhetorical* education has been a process of inculcating virtue in him and especially of getting him, little by little, to want the good of his own accord.

---

[85] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.1.

[86] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.8-9. See *Inst.*1.*praef.*10-20 for Quintilian's treatment of the divorce between rhetoric and philosophy that Cicero had thematized in *De Inventione* and *De Oratore*. Quintilian imagines an ideal future in which the same teachers transmit philosophy and rhetoric, expressing philosophical principles with the full force and adornment of eloquence (12.2.9).

[87] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.2.8 for the orator's reading program and 12.2.3 for the orator's participation in discussions or disputes about justice and the laws. Also in 12.2.3, Quintilian refers to a purgation of fear through reason that may allude to a meditative exercise like that recommended by Seneca in *Ep.*98 (e.g., section 14: *nos modo purgemus animum sequamurque naturam, a qua aberranti cupiendum timendumque est et fortuitis serviendum*).

[88] As opposed to adhering exclusively to one school's dogma. See Quint. *Inst.*12.2.26-27. This selectivity is not mere caprice but is drawn towards the very best things (12.2.28: *plurimus in maximis quibusque ac natura pulcherrimis*).

[89] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.2.10-14 for logic, 15-20 for ethics, and 20-23 for natural philosophy.

8. Conclusion

Quintilian's portrayal of moral formation—which is inseparable from the rhetorically-oriented curriculum in which it is embedded—shows the gradual internalization of moral standards. Beginning with externally provided precepts to be read or copied, the student assimilates moral attitudes so thoroughly that he can eventually generate morally imbued speech that in turn moves others towards the good.[92] Through the power of his example and his affection, the rhetoric teacher has played a crucial role in helping students make the transition from wanting pleasure to wanting eloquence—which encompasses moral virtue— for its own sake. In the next chapter, we will examine how Quintilian plays out this dynamic in his own text by crafting a lovable authorial persona to model the characteristics of the *vir bonus* and elicit readerly allegiance and commitment to his project.

---

[90] In a sense, Quintilian gives us the inverse of Plato's philosophized rhetoric. Instead of philosophy overpowering and engulfing rhetoric, as seems to happen in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Quintilian situates philosophy within rhetoric, making eloquence include virtue within itself and rhetoric include philosophy.

[91] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.31: the perfect orator both knows how to speak uprightly and *dares* to do it (*qui honeste dicere et sciet et audebit*). Quintilian has just presented the aphorism *Quantum enim Graeci praeceptis valent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis.* The active sense of *audere* corresponds to the power of Roman example (over Greek precept).

[92] E.g., Quint. *Inst.*12.1.28-29 for the image of the orator, who has studied philosophy and is himself courageous, exhorting troops to be courageous before a battle. See also 12.2.17 for the spontaneity of the orator's speech about the virtues as arising from his deep psychological embrace of the virtues ([*qui*] *virtutes ipsas mente complexus ita sentiet, nec in cogitando laborabit et quod sciet vere dicet*).

Chapter Three: Quintilian's Persona and the Task of the Text

Quintilian's sketch of the orator's education, which I have argued is a process of internalizing the good such that the student comes to want the good of his own accord, offers a conceptual solution to the problem of educating an orator in virtue. But Quintilian's treatise does more than just outline a solution to this problem: it actively impels the reader to embrace Quintilian's persona as virtuous orator, teacher, and author of the *Institutio* and, by extension, his ideal of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*. Quintilian's crafting of an emotionally compelling authorial persona—through appeals to both the milder emotions associated with *ethos* and the more vehement ones affiliated with *pathos*—invites readers to enter with him into the principal relationships he has described as key to the orator's education: teacher and student, father and son, and ultimately, I propose, friendship in pursuit of the same goal of perfect eloquence. By means of these relationships with Quintilian that are mediated through the text, the reader can begin to experience the education of the virtuous orator that the *Institutio* describes.

This chapter analyzes Quintilian's use of the emotional appeals to *ethos* and *pathos* that he theorizes in *Institutio* 6.2 in creating an authorial persona that seeks to muster trust and mobilize energy in support of his theoretical ideal. In parallel to the process of gradual internalization described in the previous chapter, whereby the student gradually comes to want the good of his own accord, the reader is invited to align with the judgments and emotional expression of Quintilian's authorial persona and, over the course of the *Institutio*, to come to share his ideal and aspirations. While I appreciate the insights of Dozier, who argues that Quintilian equips readers with the tools to resist his own persuasive appeals, my reading of the *Institutio* relies on collaboration, not suspicion, as its guiding hermeneutic.[1] Rather than labeling Quintilian's emotional appeals with suspicious-sounding descriptors like "manipulative," I see them as paradigmatic of rhetorical education, which involved students observing—and emotionally experiencing—their teachers' declamations on a frequent basis.[2] Attempting to move students emotionally, and making them aware of this attempt, are actions that need not operate at cross-purposes in the context of rhetorical education; Quintilian's emotional appeals in support of his persona and his project need not be dismissed as insincere because they are artful.[3] Rather, in motivating and teaching prospective orators, Quintilian makes use of emotional appeals to plead for his ideal and to show his audience how to do the same, thus equipping them with oratorical knowledge and providing them a template for exercising oratorical skills. This empowerment of students by the teacher is the basis for positing a relationship of goodwill and collaboration between them. The possibility of resistance or competition with the teacher that arises from teaching is compatible with mutual respect and admiration between the teacher of oratory and the oratorical pupils as *boni viri*: in a word, with the collaboration and friendship that Quintilian implies arise from the educational process and from reading the *Institutio*.

1. Quintilian's *Ethos*: Sweetness

Quintilian communicates his *ethos* as a *vir bonus* in a generally mild and pleasant tone. So adeptly does Quintilian employ his own criteria of gentleness and amiability, qualities that he considers part of the orator's *ethos*, that even nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers do not hesitate to praise his "sweetness" and congeniality.[4] Rather than accepting these qualities as straightforward evidence of Quintilian's character, we should read them instead as evidence of something else: namely, that Quintilian's strategy of courting a favorable disposition (*benivolentia*) from his audience through the projection of a gentle, well-intentioned *ethos* continues, across intervening centuries, to have the desired effect.[5]

---

[1] See Felski 2015: 9, 30ff. for a discussion of Paul Ricoeur's phrase "the hermeneutics of suspicion" and a proposal of alternative hermeneutics (e.g., trust). Dozier 2014 advances a skeptical reading of Quintilian's ideal.

[2] I generally avoid terms like "manipulative" in describing emotional appeals because they suggest that non-rational means of persuasion are inherently malevolent or harmful.

[3] See Quint. *Inst.*2.5.8 and Dozier 2014: 82-86.

[4] Cf. Lanham 1993: 155: "with that genial resolution which illustrates his sweet nature throughout the *Institutio*" and the 1891 *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "Even in this portion of the work the illustrations are so apposite and the style so dignified and yet sweet that the modern reader, whose initial interest in rhetoric is of

Quintilian's discussion in *Institutio* 6.2 of how to craft an agreeable persona provides a theoretical basis for interpreting his projection of personal *ethos* in the remainder of the work.

> *Ethos* as I understand it and as I want to see it used by speakers is something which before all else is made agreeable by goodness, not only gentle and placid, but for the most part smooth and refined and amiable and pleasing to the audience. In expressing it the highest excellence is this: that everything [that is said] seems to proceed smoothly from the nature of affairs and of people, so that the character of the speaker may be visible from his discourse and be somehow apprehended (*Inst.*6.2.13).
>
> Ἦθος, quod intellegimus quodque a dicentibus desideramus, id erit quod ante omnia bonitate commendabitur, non solum mite ac placidum, sed plerumque blandum et humanum et audientibus amabile atque iucundum, in quo exprimendo summa virtus ea est, ut fluere omnia ex natura rerum hominumque videantur, quo mores dicentis ex oratione perluceant et quodam modo agnoscantur.

The concatenation of goodness (*bonitas*) with gentleness, calmness, pleasantness, and the like suggests that *ethos* lies at a nexus between moral goodness and the mild emotions.[6] These same qualities are useful for soothing and inducing favor: in 6.2.12, *ethos* is associated with *caritas* and the soothing function (*mitigare*), as opposed to *pathos,* which is connected with *amor* and strong emotional arousal (*concitare*). The combination of moral qualifications with the manifestation of a pleasant, attractive persona to an audience makes *ethos* particularly important to Quintilian: as pleasure and

---

necessity faint, is carried along with much less fatigue than is necessary to master most parts of the rhetorical writings of Aristotle and Cicero" and "To comprehensive sympathy and clear intellectual vision Quintilian added refined tenderness and freedom from self-assertion. Taking him all in all, we may say that his personality must have been the most attractive of his time…"(187-188).

[5] See Quint. *Inst.*6.2.9-10, where Quintilian cites the common opinion that the milder emotions associated with *ethos* are geared towards producing *benivolentia.*

[6] While *bonitas* can be rendered as "goodliness, good-naturedness" instead of "goodness," I think Quintilian is using it in a moralizing sense here: when he says in 6.2.18 that *ethos* requires a "good and affable man" (*bonus et comis vir*), *bonus* seems likely to evoke the definite moral meaning it has elsewhere in the *Institutio* (e.g., 1.*praef.*9, 12.1.3) while *comis* encompasses the range of affable qualities discussed in 6.2. Even though *dulcis* and cognates do not appear explicitly in this passage, they too are generally associated with mildness and smoothness (cf. *Inst.*1.10.24: *iucunda dulciter* and 12.10.71: *comiter remisse subtiliter blande leniter dulciter breviter urbane*, although Russell here brackets *dulciter*).

enjoyment make the goodness of education more attractive and desirable, so the affability of the speaker, by illustrating the goodness of his person to the audience, makes his case more acceptable to them.[7] Having good character *and* presenting oneself as having good character, which is best done through gentleness and good humor, are both important to the orator's goal of speaking well[8] and, by extension, to the noble causes he is safeguarding through his speech.[9] There is not an inherent opposition between being good and seeming to be good; in fact, "seeming good" is essential to speaking well.[10] The attractiveness of the orator's personality, which gives pleasure to his audience and disposes them to trust him, thus plays an important role in advancing the cause of goodness.

By pointing to the pleasantness of his writing at programmatic moments in the *Institutio*, Quintilian suggests that, like his own orator, he is engaged in the enterprise of projecting an attractive persona for a persuasive purpose. Quintilian's highlighting of his own sweetness operates on multiple levels. As outlined in the theorization of *ethos* in 6.2, Quintilian's sweetness first of all seeks to delight and attract readers, to dispose them favorably toward his educational project. Second, insofar as his project is educational, Quintilian's drawing attention to his own sweetness points readers towards appreciating the text as a template for how to build their own *ethos*, modeling for their future use the geniality and attractiveness that will best serve them in their own oratorical endeavors. Rather than reading these levels as mutually incompatible (i.e., the second undercuts the first by the principle that art apprehended is no longer art),[11] I read them as mutually reinforcing within an educational context: the text seeks to affect readers, and it also calls attention to this endeavor in order to alert readers to the educational benefit they can glean from observing it. Reading and rereading Quintilian's text so as to learn from him, rather than undermining his own artistry and credibility, serves rather to reinforce the pedagogical relationship between Quintilian as teacher of rhetoric and the reader as student of rhetoric and, relatedly, their mutual status as orators (or orators-in-the-making). On this reading, Quintilian's invitations to readers to recognize the emotive techniques of the text does not detract from the text's ability to attract and move, or deconstruct its ideal; rather, it allows the reader to make a more enlightened decision to cooperate with Quintilian in pursuing his educational ideal.

---

[7] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.1.20 (on the role of games and fun in early education, discussed in Chapter Two above) and 6.2.18-19.

[8] An orator who seems bad when he speaks, even if he is really good, will not be able to speak well (cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.2.18-19 and 2.15.34-38 for the "end and goal" of rhetoric as speaking well).

[9] Quint. *Inst.*6.1.7-8, discussing the morality of moving judges emotionally, says that even philosophers who think emotions are vicious will permit their use in order to obtain what is "true and just and in the public interest" (*vera et iusta et in commune profutura*). Cf. the orator's prerogative to lie as discussed in 12.1.33-45 in order to secure a noble end.

[10] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.18: *nam qui dum dicit malus videtur utique male dicit.* Cf. 3.8.13 for the sentiment that "anyone who wants everyone to trust his opinion about what is useful and what is honorable ought to be and to be considered very prudent and very good" (*nam et prudentissimus esse haberique et optimus debet qui sententiae suae de utilibus atque honestis credere omnes velit*). In 3.8.44-45, Quintilian quips that "there is no one so wicked that he wishes to seem wicked" (*neque enim quisquam est tam malus ut videri velit*); the desire for a good appearance, even in a wicked person, seems to manifest some shred of moral goodness—or at the very least, the absence of this desire indicates utter depravity.

In this collaborative educational context, Quintilian's remarks on the "sweetness" of his text are not so much gratuitous boasting as indications of how to read the text and invitations to the reader to align with him in his endeavor. The *dulcedo* he claims for his discussion of a liberal education at the end of Book One is a case in point. After describing the noble person who finds satisfaction in intellectual delights rather than in the useless pleasures of the theater, gaming, and banquets, Quintilian says that the "sweetness" of his theme has caused him to digress (*sed nos haec ipsa dulcedo longius duxit*). The ability to take delight in the inherent sweetness of eloquence is a characteristic both of his own authorial persona and of his ideal reader, as he suggests in this miniature encomium of rhetorical education.

---

[11] Cf. Dozier 2014: 82-86, especially 85-86. For Dozier, based on the principle "that rhetoric must be concealed to persuade," articulated by Quintilian himself in *Inst.*2.5.8, the very fact that Quintilian calls attention to his artful use of rhetorical techniques in defending a moral ideal of the orator undercuts the possibility of accepting this ideal as sincere.

> I would not even want to be given a reader who will compute what return his studies could make. But that person who conceives the very image of eloquence by means of some godlike intellection and who places before his eyes "speech, the queen of things" (as a well-known tragedian puts it) and who seeks fruit that persists independent of fortune, not from the stipend of his legal counsels but from his own mind and contemplation and knowledge—he will easily persuade himself to spend the time which is worn away by spectacles, the training ground, dicing, and frivolous conversations (not to mention sleep and the delay of banquets) on geometry and music instead. How much more delight he will derive from these [disciplines] than from those vulgar pleasures! For heavenly foresight has given this gift to humans, that upright things are more pleasing. But this very sweetness has led me on for a rather long time (*Inst.*1.12.18-19).
>
> Ne velim quidem lectorem dari mihi quid studia referant computaturum. Qui vero imaginem ipsam eloquentiae divina quadam mente conceperit, quidque illam, ut ait non ignobilis tragicus, 'reginam rerum orationem' ponet ante oculos, fructumque non ex stipe advocationum sed ex animo suo et contemplatione ac scientia petet perpetuum illum nec fortunae subiectum, facile persuadebit sibi ut tempora, quae spectaculis campo tesseris, otiosis denique sermonibus, ne dicam somno et conviviorum mora conteruntur, geometrae potius ac musico inpendat, quanto plus delectationis habiturus quam ex illis ineruditis voluptatibus. Dedit enim hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis iuvarent. Sed nos haec ipsa dulcedo longius duxit.

Quintilian's own sense of *dulcedo* in his theme portrays him as just the sort of godlike person who savors the sweetness of eloquence for its own sake and who is therefore a model for the ideal reader he envisions.[12] In this passage, Quintilian establishes a litmus test of pleasure whereby the (young, elite, male) reader he envisions can evaluate himself. Spectacles, gaming, and partying are uneducated pleasures (*ineruditae voluptates*), the sort of behaviors that characterize a person whose desires are base and who is greedy for gain.[13] By contrast, the ideal reader is high-minded enough to appreciate Quintilian's valuation of the liberal arts and to seek the true security and delight that eloquence affords. In linking eloquence with philosophical contemplation and calling it a "queen" (*regina*), Quintilian combines the desirable ends of wisdom, power, freedom from fortune, and deep delight within the single ideal of eloquence that his *Institutio* seeks to foster. The placement of this passage at the end of Book One serves the rhetorical purpose of presenting readers with an attractive ideal to contemplate, thus disposing them favorably to the arguments of the following books. By marking the *dulcedo* of this passage, Quintilian also encourages readers to align with him in savoring the intrinsic value of eloquence. If readers enjoy and appreciate the same things as Quintilian, namely, the intellectual delights afforded by eloquence, then at some fundamental level they are sharing in his commitment to his oratorical ideal and are thus favorably disposed to accept the progression of his teaching.

---

[12] Cf. *Inst.*2.12.12, where Quintilian says that writing the *Institutio* is a source of personal *voluptas*.

[13] In *Inst.*1.12.16-17, immediately before this passage, Quintilian decries the base, profiteering reasons for which eloquence is commonly sought (*ad vilem usum et sordidum lucrum*). These mercenary motives are beneath the dignity of eloquence (*rerum pulcherrima eloquentia*).

At the beginning of Book Three Quintilian further develops the theme of sweetness to extend an even stronger bid for readerly favor and cooperation. Quoting Lucretius' famous image of the honey-laced cups of medicine given to children as emblematic of his own practice, he expresses concern that the technical discussions on which he is embarking will prove "more wholesome than sweet" to readers.[14] Quintilian writes that his admixture of grace (*nitor*) with precepts was designed to attract the young by means of pleasure (*iucunditas*) to undertake the more serious and difficult task of learning the art of rhetoric.[15] Quintilian's use of the Lucretian simile evokes the programmatic strategy Lucretius outlines in Book One of *De Rerum Natura* (lines 936-950) of encasing difficult material in enjoyable writing so as to increase its appeal for the audience. Just as Lucretius encapsulated his philosophical arguments within the honeyed hexameters of his poetry so that they would be easier for his audience to take in, even so, Quintilian implies, has he himself mixed pleasurable elements into his rhetorical teaching so that readers will accept it more easily.[16] Quintilian subtly transforms the Lucretian context, however: while the honeyed elements of Lucretius' style (i.e., his use of poetry) persist throughout his entire poem, Quintilian suggests that his own sweetness is concentrated in particular parts of his work. On this reading, Books One and

---

[14] Quint. *Inst.*3.1.4-5, cf. Lucr.1.936-938 and 4.10-25.

[15] Quint. *Inst.*3.1.3.

[16] Ibid: *in ceteris enim admiscere temptavimus aliquid nitoris*. *Nitor* itself refers to beauty or grace of appearance or speech, but Quintilian indicates that it is the cause of pleasure for readers.

Two, with their delightful discussions of childhood and their encomia of music and rhetoric,[17] would be the equivalent of the honeyed rim of the cup, while the coming books (Three and following) are a bracing tonic that will require greater rigor and endurance.[18] Quintilian's commentary on his own strategy serves the immediate rhetorical purpose of launching readers into the *Institutio*'s dense inner core (Books Three through Eleven), alerting them to their position in the text and preparing them for what is coming next.

In addition to evoking Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* as a didactic literary precedent, Quintilian's self-portrayal in this passage recalls the picture of teacher and children he has developed in Books One and Two. In *Institutio* 3.1, readers are likened not only to the children of the Lucretian simile but also, implicitly, to the children of Book One whose teacher must entice them with games and prizes in order to elicit their desire to learn and prevent them from associating learning with bitterness (*amaritudo*).[19] Quintilian's concern in 3.1.3 about the repulsiveness of dry teaching (*ieiuna atque arida traditio*) recalls his warning against the arid teacher (*magister aridus*) in 2.4.9, while the eagerness he wants to see in his readers (*libentius discerent*) mirrors the eagerness with which students attend the lectures of their beloved teacher in 2.2 (*libentius*) and 2.9 (*laeti alacresque*). In the context of the orator's educational pathway, Quintilian implicitly inhabits the position of the good teacher, while readers are the pleasure-loving children who must be enticed to learn by enjoyment. Although finding oneself set in the role of a pleasure-seeking child who needs to be enticed by a teacher may at first feel offensive,[20] it also goads the reader to move beyond the mere desire for sweetness and amusement and gird up for more challenging material to come.[21] With this barb, Quintilian prompts readers to engage more maturely with the text, to begin to shift the object of their desires from mere enjoyment to knowledge.

---

[17] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.10.17, where Quintilian flags the preceding passage on music as a miniature *laus* (*laudem adhuc dicere artis pulcherrimae videor*) and 2.17.1, where he likewise alludes to the pleasurableness of the preceding passage (2.16.5-19), a defense of the usefulness of rhetoric that slips into an impassioned encomium (*finis non erit si expatiari parte in hac indulgere voluptati velim*).

[18] This idea is based on the "construction of concentric circles" posited by Gerbrandy (2020: 46); Books One and Two and, on the other end, Book Twelve—the books that present the timeline of the orator's education—create a ring around the more traditional material that comprises a rhetorical *ars*.

[19] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.1.20, discussed in Chapter Two above, where Quintilian warns that "bitterness" (*amaritudo*) will repulse small children from learning; instead, they should be lured to their studies with games, fun, and prizes (*lusus, gaudium, praemia*). See also 1.1.26 for pleasure as an aid to children's learning (*gratia, lusus, gaudere, iucundus*).

As further proof that Quintilian seeks to enact the role of the good teacher, *Institutio* 2.2 and 3.1 can be triangulated with Quintilian's description in the prologue of Book One (23-25) of the style of teaching he will use in his work. Just as the ideal teacher in 2.2 is supposed to nourish (*alere*) his students by live performances of speeches that they can imitate, in the Book One prologue, Quintilian says that the purpose of his own *ratio docendi* is to "nourish" (*alere*) students' eloquence, by contrast with the matter-of-fact approach of other rhetorical manuals that tends to "suck all the juice and lay bare the bones" of eloquence.[22] Quintilian's richer, more nourishing approach seems to entail a generally engaging style; more intensely performative interludes (e.g., the argument for rhetoric's usefulness in 2.16 or Quintilian's praise of music in 1.10); and the portrait of the life and education of the ideal orator. All these are ways in which he makes reading the *Institutio* more enjoyable and thus fulfills the nourishing role of a good teacher.

Just as the figure of the lovable teacher described in Book Two helps students transition from wanting pleasure to wanting knowledge, Quintilian's own attractive and benevolent persona plays a role in engaging readers' cooperation. In 3.1 he communicates this benevolence primarily through his self-portrayal as a physician who is both concerned for students' health (i.e., their knowledge of the rhetorical art) and sympathetic with their desire for sweetness (enjoyment of his pleasant style and subject matter).[23] His concern for the well-being of his audience is suggested, more obliquely, in the extension of the Lucretius passage to which he refers (*et quae secuntur*),[24] where the purpose of smearing the rim of the cup with honey is "that unthinking childhood be deluded as far as the lips, and meanwhile may drink up the bitter juice of wormwood, and though beguiled be not betrayed, but rather by such means be restored and regain health."[25] "Beguiled but not betrayed" (*deceptaque non capiatur*) by Quintilian, readers are prompted to recognize that they have already consented to the author's enticement by tasting the honey of Quintilian's artful prose: they have already been "deceived" and taken in. But, as in Lucretius, Quintilian's scheme of deception is gentle, not violent: it is employed for the salutary purpose of helping readers learn.[26] In revealing his sweet and salutary "deception," which readers have consented to by reading thus far, Quintilian hopes to obtain more deliberate readerly consent to drink the medicine he is offering—to recognize the value of his more technical discussions and commit themselves to this greater challenge.

---

[20] Quintilian's allusion to his fear of scraping readers' "ever-so-delicate ears" (*aures praesertim tam delicatas raderet*) has a satirical sting (cf. Pers.1.107-8: *sed quid opus teneras mordaci radere vero auriculas?*)

[21] Another technique Quintilian uses to enhance the appeal of the drier technical books is to describe its desirability to other readers: *nec sum ignarus hoc a me praecipue quod hic liber inchoat opus studiosos eius desiderasse* (3.1.2). The supposed eagerness of other *studiosi* may help the reluctant reader take a renewed interest, not unlike the way in which an unwilling child could be spurred to learn by watching another child be taught in 1.1.20.

[22] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*23-24: *nudae illae artes...omnem sucum ingenii bibunt et ossa detegunt.*

In 3.1, then, Quintilian performs and illustrates the attractiveness of *ethos* that he will theorize more completely in 6.2. With his own framing, imagery, and style he manifests the affability that an orator must project in order to dispose his audience favorably to his argument. At the same time, indicating to readers that he is doing this provides them with a model of an attractive authorial persona that they can appreciate and someday imitate in their own writing or speaking. He also presents readers with the opportunity to make a formative moral decision, inviting them to make the transition from desiring pleasure to desiring knowledge of eloquence, figured here as health. As the imagery of honey and medicine illustrates, sweetness in itself is not everything.[27] Rather, it plays an ancillary role in the acquisition of knowledge, an arduous good that requires commitment and virtue from the reader and is ultimately of more substantial benefit. In his own writing, Quintilian offers a *dulcedo* that is not employed for its own sake but is geared towards a sounder goal beyond itself: the acquisition of a virtuous moral character expressed through a self-controlled oratorical style. Committing to drink the bitter (or, at any rate, less sweet) medicine of Quintilian's rhetorical teaching in the demanding inner books of the *Institutio* is itself an opportunity to practice moral virtue, to mature and make progress along the road to eloquence.

---

[23] Quint. *Inst.*3.1.5: *sed nos veremur ne parum hic liber mellis et absinthii multum habere videatur, sitque salubrior studiis quam dulcior.*

[24] Quint. *Inst.*3.1.5.

[25] Lucr.1.939-942: *ut puerorum aetas inprovida ludificetur/ labrorum tenus, interea perpotet amarum/ absinthi laticern deceptaque non capiatur,/ sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat...* Text and translation are from Rouse's 1942 translation with Martin Smith's revisions (LCL 181).

[26] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*3-4, in which Quintilian recommends that the teacher select the most straightforward and easy path for beginners without overwhelming them by pointing out all the conflicting views of other teachers and writers. As students grow and learn more, they will come to appreciate the wisdom of their teacher's choice of their own accord: *idem primo solum iter credant esse in quod inducentur, mox illud cognituri etiam optimum.*

2. Quintilian's *Ethos*: The Moral Character of a *Vir Bonus*

In addition to manifesting a pleasant and attractive persona, Quintilian models the moral character of a *vir bonus* through his writing of the *Institutio*. One purpose of this is to establish his own moral authority in accord with his statement in 6.2.13 that *bonitas* is the primary feature of *ethos*. By the time he lists the attributes of the *vir bonus* in Book Twelve, he has already represented himself as practicing these virtues in the preceding books.[28] Particularly in the prologues of books, Quintilian makes a show of fortitude, highlighting his own perseverance through difficulties like the complexity of his material, the emperor's high expectations, and the tragedy of personal loss.[29] He exemplifies purity and self-control by censuring the evils of pederasty and then scorning to linger on such a distasteful topic.[30] He displays scholarly moderation, avoiding quibbles by compromise and recommending the virtuous mean in style as in everything.[31] So strong is his concern for helping his students that, he tells us, he is willing to risk his scholarly reputation by updating his teaching to reflect what he believes is a more helpful perspective on a topic than the one he had held in the past.[32] He fulfills the obligations incumbent on him: as a friend (especially vis-à-vis the *Institutio*'s dedicatee, Marcus Vitorius), as a teacher, and as a trustee of Domitian's favor. When, announcing the completion of the *Institutio*, Quintilian opines that "it suffices for the good man to have taught what he knows," readers have been well primed over the course of the text to recognize Quintilian's fulfillment of this precept.[33] Quintilian's association of himself with the *vir bonus* encourages readers to identify him, in his overlapping personae of author and teacher, with the performative illustration of his own moral ideal.[34]

---

[27] As Quintilian warns elsewhere in the *Institutio,* there can even be pernicious types of rhetorical sweetness that lure readers into vice. Modern self-indulgence and addiction to depraved sweetness of speech are among Quintilian's favorite objects of invective in the *Institutio*: cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.2.6-8 on *mollis educatio* and *indulgentia*; 2.5.22 on the *prava voluptas* of modern eloquence that is particularly tempting for boys (*praedulce*); and 10.1.130 for the *dulcia vitia* that abound in Seneca's style.

[28] Quintilian catalogues the virtues that a *vir bonus* needs to speak about and possess in *Inst.*12.2.17: *an de iustitia fortitudine abstinentia temperantia pietate non plurima dicet orator?* In 12.2.30 he provides a similar list: *fortitudo, iustitia, fides, continentia, frugalitas, contemptus doloris ac mortis*.

[29] Quint. *Inst.*4.*praef.*7; 6.*praef.*15; 12.*praef.*1-2. See Gerbrandy 2020: 47-8 for Quintilian's evocation of difficulty as "a persuasive device pressing the reader, by an implicit appeal to empathy, to give his best efforts."

Quintilian's portrayal of himself as a *vir bonus*, therefore, is a crucial component of his own *ethos*, and this *ethos* in turn undergirds the larger persuasive strategy of the *Institutio.* In Book Four, Quintilian points to the importance of the orator's perceived moral character in eliciting *benivolentia* ("goodwill" or a favorable disposition) from the audience: if the orator is believed to be a good man (*si vir bonus creditur*), he brings to the case the "trustworthiness" (*fides*) of a witness.[35] And as Book Six further explains, the orator's perceived goodness is the basis for the audience's trust (also *fides*), and thus for the orator's success at persuading them.[36] Quintilian draws attention to his own *ethos* as a *vir bonus* in order to garner support for his project: to educate the morally good orator defined as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*.

---

[30] Quint.*Inst.*1.3.17 and 2.3.14. Unlike other imperial writers (e.g., Persius, Tacitus), Quintilian does not indulge in graphic descriptions of the misbehaviors he censures. See also *Inst.*8.3.39, where he professes to respond to obscenity with silence.

[31] See Quint. *Inst.*1.3.38; 1.7.33; 8.6.2 for Quintilian's avoidance of *cavillationes*. See 12.10.80 for Quintilian's recommendation of "middle way" as the route to virtue.

[32] Quint. *Inst.*3.6.63-64.

[33] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.8: *atque id viro bono satis est, docuisse quod scierit.* Cf. Gerbrandy 2020: 48.

[34] Cf. Gerbrandy 2020: 48.

[35] Quint. *Inst.*4.1.7: *plurimum tamen ad omnia momenti est in hoc positum, si vir bonus creditur.*

Two aspects of Quintilian's relationship to the *vir bonus* need to be distinguished here. First is Quintilian's self-portrayal as a *vir bonus* for the purpose of gaining credibility with his audience and convincing them of his claim. Second is the identity of the *vir bonus* as the particular content of this claim: Quintilian asserts that the orator is first and foremost a *vir bonus* and urges readers, as a result, to embrace this ideal and try to become orators who are first and foremost *boni viri.* Put together, Quintilian's self-portrayal as a *vir bonus* seeks to persuade readers to embrace his larger program, whose most controversial and important claim is precisely that the orator must be a good man (*vir bonus*). Although Quintilian makes many claims over the course of the *Institutio*, this is the one he is keenest to press. It occupies a climactic position at the beginning of Book Twelve, the book that shows off the mature orator as the product of the educational program Quintilian has laid out in the preceding eleven books.[37] Readers are invited to trust Quintilian on the basis of his *ethos* as a *vir bonus* and imitate him, becoming *boni viri* who are themselves skilled in speaking.

On my reading, Quintilian's performance of a *vir bonus* persona may in fact be intended as the most compelling proof of its worth as an oratorical ideal, even more so than the train of arguments he musters on its behalf in 12.1. This argumentative train runs as follows: if speech really were something nefarious, then *natura* would be a wicked stepmother to humanity, to say nothing of Quintilian himself (12.1.2); the stupidity of choosing vice precludes a bad person from being a proper orator (12.1.3-4); even if the good man and the bad man were equal as orators, the good man would be more believable and thus more successful as an orator (12.1.10-13); and so on. Quintilian does not, I think, mean for the arguments of 12.1 to impress readers with their logical rigor and so constitute the definitive proof of the morality of his ideal. In fact, his arrangement of them suggests his awareness of their weakness in and of themselves.[38] In his deployment of these arguments, Quintilian is adhering to a recognizable rhetorical paradigm that he has outlined in Books Four and Five: using contradictory arguments in tandem to support a case.[39] If the stronger argument admits of doubt on its own, he writes in Book Four, another may be used to fill in the gaps, even if it apparently contradicts the first: "a certain hand can be content with one spear, an uncertain one must scatter its shots so as to have a lucky hit."[40] In Book Five he adds that piling up weaker arguments allows them to bolster one another and gain strength by their sheer number.[41] Analyzing the argumentative lineup of 12.1 in light of these techniques suggests that the important thing about these arguments may not be the persuasiveness of their content (i.e., as evidence for or against the sincerity of Quintilian's advocacy of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* as an ideal). Rather, their value comes from their deployment by the person (or persona) putting them forth in support of a cause: *ethos* is more fundamental than *logos*. Quintilian's manifestation of an ethical commitment to the morality of the orator through his presentation of an ethical persona is what must convince us of his claim. The speaker, not the speech itself, is the guarantor of moral uprightness, as Quintilian suggests at the end of this section.[42] Like the affectionate teacher whose kindness towards his students elicits their affection and enthusiasm for himself and thus for their studies, Quintilian's own expression of sweetness, virtue, and moral steadfastness under pressure aims to evoke in readers a reciprocal sense of benevolence and cooperation in the common project of education in eloquence.

---

[36] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.18: *sic [orator] proderit plurimum causis, quibus ex sua bonitate faciet fidem.*

[37] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*9; 12.1.1; 12.1.3. The argument that the orator is a *vir bonus* makes up the self-contained unit that modern editors call 12.1. It begins with Cato's definition of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus* (12.1.1), and since 12.2.1 begins with the words *quando igitur orator est vir bonus*, we can safely accept that the argument concluded in 12.1.45, immediately prior, even though the assertion that the orator is a *vir bonus* continues to reverberate throughout Book Twelve.

---

[38] Dozier 2014 discusses the weaknesses of the arguments in the latter part of 12.1, but some of his insights could be extended throughout all of 12.1.

[39] See Quint. *Inst.*4.5.13-16.

[40] Quint. *Inst.*4.5.14-15: *ut certa manus uno telo potest esse contenta, incerta plura spargenda sunt, ut sit et fortunae locus.*

[41] Quint. *Inst.*5.12.4-5, especially: *haec inbecilla [argumenta] natura mutuo auxilio sustinentur. Ita quae non possunt valere quia magna sunt valebunt quia multa sunt.*

[42] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.45, to be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

3. Quintilian's *Pathos*: Anger and Disgust

While Quintilian's ethical appeals mainly work to dispose readers favorably and establish an affectionate rapport between them and his authorial persona, his appeals to *pathos* attempt a more powerful mobilization of readerly commitment to him and his moralizing project. By and large in the *Institutio*, the attractive and virtuous aspects of Quintilian's persona (what we might call the "ethical" side of his persuasive strategy) predominate; the moments where his authorial voice tries to provoke intense emotional arousal (the "pathetic" side) are fewer and shorter, in accordance with his own advice for optimizing emotional effectiveness.[43] The ethical aspect undergirds and disposes readers to receive the full force of the pathetic aspect, to experience and be moved by the stronger emotions—hatred or disgust, pity, love—in accord with the author's purpose. In this section and the next, I analyze the ways in which Quintilian's attempts to arouse these stronger emotions can be read as morally operative, spurring the reader to reject vice, love virtue, and embrace Quintilian's authorial persona as the guide to eloquence.

Quintilian's attempts to mobilize anger, hatred, or disgust tend to be embedded in polemics that define his own authorial project vis-à-vis objections or alternatives. At 2.11-2.12, for instance, he swaps insults with theoretical opponents who argue that oratory is more vigorous without teaching.[44] Although people like this think that educated speakers are "incompetent and lean and lukewarm and wimpy" (*inepti, ieiuni, tepidi, infirmi*), they themselves are violent and rude, undisciplined and vulgar.[45] After sarcastically congratulating his opponents on becoming skillful speakers without effort or intelligence,[46] he presents his own project—the fruit of his experience in court, his years of teaching, and his diligent research—by way of contrast. Scorn for his opponents, who are implicitly vulgar and lazy, shifts into a statement of his benevolence in producing something useful for the young. Another favorite target of Quintilian's outrage, sarcasm, and scorn is modern stylistic decadence, which elicits a lengthy tirade in the prologue to Book Eight, again in a polemical setting.[47] Quintilian's mockery of his opponents as superficial and effeminate seeks to arouse disgust and shape readers' tastes in accordance with his own moderate and conservative judgment.[48] Even Quintilian's impassioned indictment of degenerate moral behavior (see discussion of 1.2 below) is situated within a polemical context: that of defending public schooling against the objections of people who think school is morally corrupting for children.[49] By means of insults and sarcasm he seeks to ridicule opposing viewpoints and practices, alienate the audience from them, and prepare them to accept his own more moderate vision.[50] The polemical contexts of Quintilian's sarcasm, scorn, and shaming indicate that he is trying to mobilize anger and disgust for a programmatic purpose: to discredit his theoretical opponents and eliminate objections to his own project.

---

[43] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.2.29: *non patiamur igitur frigescere hoc opus, et adfectum cum ad summum perduxerimus relinquamus.*

[44] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.11.1: *quamquam video quosdam in ipso statim limine obstaturos mihi, qui nihil egere eius modi praeceptis eloquentiam putent.*

[45] Quint. *Inst.*2.12.9-11. Quintilian illustrates the violence (*violentia*) of these speakers with a series of verbs describing the physical gestures they use so frequently (*collidere, incutere, caedere*) with a physicality that appeals

Given the moralizing nature of this project, Quintilian's use of inflammatory language also plays a morally formative role: that of portraying vice—moral or stylistic— as shameful and stupid

---

to the mob (*mire ad pullatum circulum facit*, 2.12.9). Quintilian's use of gladiatorial imagery in 2.12.2 may also contribute to his portrayal of his opponents as vulgar and violence-obsessed. In a similar vein, Cicero's second *Philippic*, in a passage much admired by Quintilian (e.g., *Inst.*8.4.16, 9.4.29-30), lambasts Antony for his "gladiatorial vigor" (*gladiatoria firmitas*, Cic. *Phil.*2.63).

[46] Quint. *Inst.*2.12.12: *verum illis quidem gratulemur sine labore, sine ratione, sine disciplina disertis.*

[47] Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*18-33. See Winterbottom 1998: 331-332.

[48] See Quint. *Inst.*8.*praef.*18 for the superficiality of orators who obsess over words; 8.*praef.*19-20 for the effeminacy, and consequent shamefulness, of this preoccupation (esp. *muliebriter, foedissima* in 19); and 8.*praef.*17 for a typical maneuver of positioning his own opinion between two stylistic extremes. For the Asianist-Atticist debate evoked in this last passage, see also Quint.*Inst.*12.10.16-26 and summary in Kaster's 2020 commentary on Cicero's *Brutus* and *Orator* (20-23).

[49] Quint.*Inst.*1.2.6-9, discussed in the next paragraph, is situated within a larger argument for public schooling that spans all of 1.2.

[50] Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 2.12.12; 8.*praef.*32-33; and 1.2.17ff, respectively, for Quintilian's portrayal of his own views after heaping scorn or shame on his opponents.

and urging readers to reject it. For example, Quintilian's picture of aristocratic moral corruption and its ruinous effects on children in *Institutio* 1.2, which mocks the vices of luxury and sexual promiscuity, seeks to provoke disgust at the state of society (as Quintilian portrays it) and, in turn, to prompt a stronger alignment with Quintilian's ideas of a disciplined upbringing.[51]

> We are delighted if [our children] say something naughty: with a laugh and a kiss we welcome words not even allowed to Alexandrian "pets." No surprises here: *we* taught them, they heard it from *us*; they see our girlfriends, our *boyfriends*; every banquet resounds with obscene ditties, things shameful to speak of are on display (*Inst.*1.2.7-8, emphases mine).
>
> Gaudemus si quid licentius dixerint: verba ne Alexandrinis quidem permittenda deliciis risu et osculo excipimus. Nec mirum: nos docuimus, ex nobis audierunt; nostras amicas, nostros concubinos vident; omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit, pudenda dictu spectantur.

The outraged tone of this passage seeks to arouse shame and disgust by its portrayal of a lifestyle that inculcates vices in children and so misshapes them at a tender age.[52] Quintilian figures a dissolute home life as a perverse form of schooling: a *mollis educatio* (as opposed to *severa disciplina*) that features an *institutio* of the palate rather than the mouth (*os*, cognate with *oratoria*), with licentious adults as teachers (*nos docuimus*).[53] This flabby education and the moral shapelessness that results are the inverse of the disciplined schooling he outlines, which is presided over by a grave and virtuous teacher and creates a balanced environment where children are protected from vice, particularly sexual predation.[54] The negative feelings—anger, shame, disgust— that he hopes to arouse with this emotive picture of aristocratic moral corruption seek to alienate readers from corrupt societal norms and orient them towards the vision of good education that Quintilian wants to promote.

---

[51] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.6-8. Quintilian deploys a string of *sententiae* to hammer home the impact of his words (e.g., *quid non adultus concupiscet qui in purpuris repit?* and *ante palatum eorum quam os instituimus* and [*liberi*] *non accipiunt ex scholis mala ista, sed in scholas adferunt*).

[52] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.1.14, where Quintilian says that shamefulness (*turpitudo*) produces the feeling of hatred or disgust (*odium*) in the judge.

[53] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.5-7, where the *severa disciplina* of a good teacher is contrasted with *mollis illa educatio, quam indulgentiam vocamus*. The quip *ante palatum eorum quam os instituimus* alludes to the work's title.

[54] See Quint. *Inst.*1.2.8 for the corruption of children at home as producing a sort of shapelessness (*inde soluti ac fluentes non accipiunt ex scholis mala ista, sed in scholas adferunt*). For the virtuous teacher see 1.2.5 and all of 2.2. See 1.3.11 for the moderation (*modus*) that must shape school schedules between excess rigidity and laxity. See 1.3.17 and 2.2.14-15 for the need to protect children from sexual exploitation by adults. In the latter passage, Quintilian implies that failing to protect children from sexual victimization renders the remainder of his educational advice useless.

Quintilian's use of the first-person plural to inveigh against moral problems is a shrewd technique that seeks to channel anger into action without alienating the audience from himself.[55] By allowing him to convey the impression of a shared cultural and moral dilemma that implicates both author and readers,[56] the first-person plural can also be the basis for shared aspirations towards improvement, as happens at *Institutio* 1.12.16-17. In this prelude to 1.12.18-19 (see section 1 above), Quintilian seeks to arouse shame and disgust—this time against the vices of laziness and greed—and to transform these strong feelings into zeal for the noble goal of eloquence.

> We plead "difficulty" as a pretext for laziness; for we have no love for the work, nor is eloquence sought because it is upright and the most beautiful of things, but we gird ourselves for cheap profit and sordid gain (*Inst.*1.12.16).
>
> Difficultatis patrocinia praeteximus segnitiae; neque enim nobis operis amor est, nec quia sit honesta ac rerum pulcherrima eloquentia petitur ipsa, sed ad vilem usum et sordidum lucrum accingimur.

Quintilian counterpoises the baseness of greed for profit, which should provoke disgust and shame, with the nobility of eloquence (*honesta, pulcherrima*), which deserves love (*amor*) and devotion instead of neglect. Likewise, at the other end of the *Institutio*, in 12.11.18, he uses disparaging vocabulary to ridicule the business and entertainments that take away time from learning (e.g., *vanus salutandi labor, insana corporis cura*). The first-person plural again allows Quintilian to implicate his authorial voice—albeit subtly—in the faults he is denouncing, as in this rhetorical question: "But *we* have cut short the time for ourselves: for how little of it do we portion off for studying?"[57] or this lament: "At present we reckon up the years not in which we have studied but in which we have lived."[58] Strictly speaking, Quintilian's virtuous and hard-working persona cannot justly be accused of the frivolity in which he implicates himself with statements like these. But by including himself within the condemnation of a practice, Quintilian lays a foundation for camaraderie that enables him to exhort readers who themselves may need help detaching themselves from frivolous pleasures or false opinions in order to devote themselves to the virtuous pursuit of eloquence. He thus models for readers a process of self-examination, self-criticism, and desire for change and mimetically accompanies them on this journey of moral (and intellectual) improvement. The loathing he arouses with his denunciations is directed against opposing visions of rhetoric; he then capitalizes on the strength of these feelings by transforming them into an impetus for positive growth.

---

[55] Condemning vice in the second-person plural would risk alienating the audience by making them feel personally attacked, while using the third-person plural would make the problem seem more remote.

[56] Without, of course, suggesting that he and they are literally to blame for the sexual and material excesses that have been outlined.

[57] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.18: *sed breve nobis tempus nos fecimus: quantulum enim studiis partimur?*

[58] *Sc.* "for enjoyment's sake" (Russell n.12 *ad loc*): Quint.*Inst.*12.11.19-20: *nunc computamus annos non quibus studuimus sed quibus viximus.*

4. Quintilian's *Pathos*: Pity

Quintilian's most extended and powerful deployment of *pathos*, however, occurs in the prologue to Book Six, one of the most famous sections of the entire work. In this passage Quintilian narrates the untimely deaths of his wife and two sons, asking pardon for a putative delay in composition caused by the ravages of his misfortune and grief.[59] As the prologue to a book that discusses perorations and emotional appeals, this passage has been widely recognized as an example *par excellence* of how Quintilian demonstrates the very tactics he teaches; it is thus a prime location for advocates of suspicious readings to advance their cases.[60] In keeping with my own practice in this chapter, my reading instead focuses on the ways in which Quintilian appeals to readerly pity in order to draw his audience into a more intense emotional engagement with his persona and his text and thereby to secure their fuller cooperation in his project.

---

[59] See Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*14-15 for his suffering as an apology for delay and imperfections in the text.

[60] Russell 2001 points out that the connection suggests "deliberate choice: we should not infer that the final crushing blow struck just as Quintilian go to this point in the work" (3). See also Zinsmaier 2003, Leigh 2004, and Dozier 2014 (e.g., 73). Some find it disturbing that Quintilian uses this "apparently heartfelt lament" about the deaths of his family as a prologue to "instructions for how to display emotions when not feeling them," and Dozier goes so far as to suggest that the wife and children themselves, to say nothing of Quintilian's grief, may be entirely fictive (71-72). But Quintilian does not think the speaker should display emotions that he does not feel but rather that he should *feel* the emotions he means to display (cf. *Inst.*6.2.26-36), and it is difficult to see how a prominent public figure like Quintilian could have invented a wife and two children and then staged their deaths in his book without doing serious damage to his *ethos*. See Quint. *Inst.*7.2.56 for ridicule of the declamatory practice of inventing family members.

Quintilian tries to draw readers into a visceral experience of his paternal grief in order to obtain pity for himself, and by extension support for his program. He twice describes the deaths of his wife and sons as wounds, or *vulnera*.[61] These bereavements brought him terrible pain and exposed him to the tortures of fortune.[62] Displaying one's *vulnera,* as Quintilian will tell us in *Institutio* 6.1.30 (*vulnera resolvi*), is a powerful tactic for arousing pity and sorrow in one's audience.[63] Another such tactic Quintilian mentions in the context of forensic oratory is the practice of parading the defendant's children and other family members before the court.[64] Theatrical actions like these, says Quintilian, have immense power: they make the events more vivid, more *present*, in order to arouse stronger emotional reactions.[65] Quintilian is doing precisely this in the prologue to Book Six, albeit with a twist: the wife and children he displays are themselves the causes, by their untimely deaths, of his *vulnera.* Quintilian inhabits the role of defendant as well as advocate: in *Institutio* 6.*praef.*14-15, he begs pardon for the delay of his work and its imperfections. He thus sets up the prologue as a sort of trial speech in which he pleads his own case, displaying his *vulnera* and re-enacting the deaths of his family members, in order to lead the souls of his readers, as the orator must lead the souls of judges, where he wants them to go: toward a stronger embrace of his persona and the project of the *Institutio.*[66]

---

[61] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*2-3: and 6.*praef.*5. The first passage refers to the death of his older son; the second, to the death of his wife.
[62] Quint. *Inst.*6.pr.5 and 6.*praef.*8. The first passage refers to the death of his wife; the second, to the death of his younger son.
[63] Quint. *Inst.*6.1.30.
[64] Ibid. Likewise, in 6.1.34 he lists "children, wife, and parents" as useful grounds for appealing to the judge's pity.
[65] Quint. *Inst.*6.1.30.
[66] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.2.1: *movendi iudicum animos atque in eum quem volumus habitum formandi et velut transfigurandi.*

Quintilian infuses his portrayal of the text of the *Institutio* itself with emotional significance by linking it with the dead body of his eldest son and, implicitly, with his own body. After the death of his eldest son, he writes, he should have burned the *Institutio* and all his literary ambitions on the same pyre that was to consume his deceased offspring.[67] Quintilian's placement of the words *viscera mea* within the consuming flames (*consumpturis viscera mea flammis*) visually illustrates the destruction he imagines; readers are invited to envision Quintilian casting his writings into the flames that envelop the body of his dead son and feel the wrenching grief that leads Quintilian to imagine the burning of his own *viscera*.[68] On the metaphorical level, the most obvious referent of *viscera* is the deceased boy; Spalding, however, posits an identification of *viscera* with Quintilian's own writings.[69] Although this suggestion seems redundant on a grammatical level (the writings have already been mentioned as *infaustum opus* and *quidquid hoc est in me infelicium litterarum* earlier in the sentence and are not clearly the antecedent of *mea viscera*), the image of their joining the deceased boy on the funeral pyre nevertheless suggests an association between the dead son and a different type of offspring: the father's literary productions.[70]

This association between different types of offspring takes on programmatic significance when we recognize how Quintilian's rendition of the deaths of his family members reprises—or represents, or reenacts— the material of the *Institutio* so far, particularly the account of orator's elementary education. For instance, in Book Six Quintilian describes his wife as having possessed all the virtues proper to women and calls her *mater optima*.[71] Emphasizing the importance of the mother's *eruditio* (along with the father's) in Book One, Quintilian has given much credit to Cornelia, the quintessential Roman matron, for the eloquence of her sons, the Gracchi brothers.[72] In both passages, the virtuous mother is an important figure in the budding orator's background. But the escalation of Quintilian's grief in the Book Six prologue as he goes on to describe the loss of the younger son, and then the elder, shows that losing their mother was actually the least painful blow of the three: sons are what matter most in the project of forming the perfect orator.[73]

---

[67] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*3.

[68] Ovid uses *viscera* for "offspring" in the story of Meleager and Althaea in *Met.*8.478. The burning of *viscera*-offspring on a pyre is alluded to here, while in 8.515-17 the burning *viscera* are literally Meleager's insides.

[69] Cf. Spalding 1803 *ad loc.*

[70] Cf. the identification between the poet, his dead firstborn, and his literary work in Ben Jonson's "On My First Son" ("Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd say 'Here doth lie/ Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry'"). Jonson was an admirer of Quintilian.

[71] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*5 and 9.

Quintilian's description of his younger son continues to illustrate the educational program he has outlined in Book One and begins to model the response he desires the reader to have. The little boy of five possessed promising qualities: good looks, pleasing speech, sparks of brilliance, and even the makings of a noble mind.[74] This last quality is best evidenced by his apparent preference of Quintilian over his nurses, his grandmother, and indeed, all those whom a five-year-old is usually drawn to.[75] In addition to heightening the pathetic momentum of Quintilian's narration, this description focuses our attention on Quintilian as a recipient of affection and an object of preference (*me…me…me…anteferret*). By preferring his father, the great teacher, over all the other figures involved in his upbringing, the little boy proves his worth and models the choice Quintilian hopes his readers will make to privilege his persona and program over competing attractions.

Quintilian's portrayal of his older son shows, united in a single person, the moral and intellectual capacities that he requires of the perfect orator. Alongside a resumé of moral virtues, Quintilian gives two hints in this passage that the success of his educational recommendations was embodied in his older son. First, after describing the boy's pleasing voice and countenance, he mentions his near-native command of both Greek and Latin pronunciation.[76] This remarkable fluency fulfills (or even exceeds) Quintilian's expectation of equal care for both languages (introducing Greek first, and Latin soon after) from earliest childhood.[77] Second, and more important, is the boy's devotion to his studies manifested by his deathbed delirium.[78] Even as his life fails him, little Quintilian is dreaming fevered dreams of school and reading. The dying boy's scholastic ambitions bespeak his fitness for the training of the perfect orator and accentuate the disappointment of his loss. In accordance with his father's expectations, young Quintilian embodied the union of great talent with noble character.[79] The spontaneity of *studium* that Quintilian describes here (*studiique iam tum non coacti*) shows that the boy was self-motivated to choose and pursue these good goals even at a young age.[80] Quintilian conjures up an image of his son, virtuous and studious in life and in death, to illustrate his ideal of the orator (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*) in miniature.[81] He seems to be suggesting that it is possible for readers to begin realizing this attractive ideal by following his own educational program. By embodying the success of Quintilian's educational recommendations, the figure of the older son serves as a sort of proxy or analogue for the text of the *Institutio* thus far, a promising but as yet incomplete portrayal of the orator's education.

---

[72] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.6. For Cornelia's exemplary status as a Roman matron, see also Plut. *Vit.Ti.Gracch.*1.
[73] See Quint. *Inst.*1.1.1 and 1.1.3 for the exquisite care that must be taken of the son.
[74] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*7. Compare Quintilian's list in 1.*praef.*26-27 of the preconditions that boys must have in order to avail themselves of his program.
[75] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*8-9: *ut ille mihi blandissimus me suis nutricibus, me aviae educanti, me omnibus qui sollicitare illas aetates solent anteferret.*

The overlay of the person of the son, the ideal of the orator, and the text of the *Institutio* has yet another layer: Quintilian suggests that the text of the *Institutio* serves as a proxy for himself as both father and teacher. He writes that had hoped to finish the work before his own death so that his son "could still make use of his father as his teacher" when he himself was gone (*praeceptore tamen patre uteretur*).[82] In this vision, reading the *Institutio* should have provided a form of continued contact, even communication, between Quintilian the son and Quintilian the deceased father: the text would somehow have made Quintilian the teacher and Quintilian the father present for his son as reader in such a way that it could serve as a substitute for his person.[83] With the boy's tragic and premature death, Quintilian portrays himself and the text as thrown into crisis. The natural order of things is inverted: because Quintilian has "impiously" survived his much younger wife and sons, the *Institutio*, the fruit of his labors, is accursed and purposeless.[84] The unfinished work deserves to be thrown onto the flames, like the prematurely deceased boy who represented the hopes of realizing its ideal. The death of the son and, in him, the premature destruction of the *Institutio*'s ideal, are presented, for emotional effect, as reasons for the destruction of the text itself and of the author's purpose in life.[85] It is precisely in this presentation of despair, however, that Quintilian develops the possibility of a new purpose for himself and the *Institutio* and invites readers to embrace it.

---

[76] Quint. *Inst.*6. *praef.*11.
[77] Quint. *Inst.*1.1.12-14.
[78] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*11.
[79] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.3.2: *nam probus quoque in primis erit ille vere ingeniosus*. As elsewhere (cf. *Inst.*1.3.8, 2.9.2), *studium* is a fine locus for observing the fusion of moral and intellectual excellence. Listed between intellectual acumen (*ingenium ad percipiendas disciplinas*) and an array of moral virtues (*probitas, pietas, humanitas, liberalitas*, and later on, *constantia, gravitas, robur*), *studium* serves as a bridge between them. Ostensibly directed towards the acquisition of knowledge and skill, *studium* is also quasi-moral in itself: it demonstrates diligence and industry in seeking the good of knowledge.
[80] Cf. the discussion of *cogo* and cognates in Chapter Four of this dissertation.
[81] Quintilian says in *Inst.*6.*praef.*13 that the boy had been adopted by a consular family; that he was supposed to marry into a praetor's family; and that it was hoped he would follow in his grandfather's footsteps in *eloquentia*.

Quintilian's portrayal of his intense suffering—he is wounded, eviscerated, tortured by fortune, hateful to himself, and grimly secure in his despair—is complemented by his profession of selfless concern for the readers to whom he will bequeath the *Institutio*, which has now become his only comfort and reason for living.[86] The combination of Quintilian's plight and his profession of altruistic devotion to the good of others (*alienae utilitates*) seeks to evoke a corresponding response of pity and love on the part of readers for his bereaved fatherly persona. The adoption of readers as sons and heirs of the *Institutio*, the "best part of my inheritance," marks an intensification of the relationship Quintilian as author has been cultivating with readers throughout the *Institutio* thus far.[87] Quintilian has mentioned at the outset of the prologue that he has in mind the advantage that "good young men" (*boni iuvenes*) can glean from his work. Over the course of the prologue, he tries to garner their support for his project by portraying its continuance—and his own— as dependent on their commitment. After the death of his son, the only way of restoring the usefulness of the text and of Quintilian himself as its bereaved author is for readers to embrace the *Institutio* as their own, step into the place of the deceased son, and strive to bring to fruition Quintilian's dashed hopes for oratorical perfection.[88]

---

[82] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*1-2.

[83] This passage communicates Quintilian's envisioning of the text as making present his persona in a particularly overt way.

[84] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*3 for the *infaustum opus* and 6.*praef.*3 and 6 for Quintilian's impious survival (*impia vivacitas* and *nefas,* respectively).

[85] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*3-4. Quintilian suggests that the destruction of his work would give fitting expression to his sense of purposelessness after the thwarting of his paternal hopes.

[86] For Quintilian's *securitas* in the knowledge that fortune can do no worse, see 6.*praef.*15. For the *Institutio* as his *solacium* and *ratio vivendi*, see 6.*praef.*14 and Gerbrandy 2020: 48 ("Rhetoric is central to the author's existence, which increases its potential appeal for readers.")

By drawing readers into a more intense relationship with his persona and his text, Quintilian seeks to galvanize them into a more active enthusiasm for his demanding project. From a structural point of view, Book Six is a particularly apt moment for stirring up enthusiasm and getting readers to re-commit their energies, punctuating as it does two dense technical stretches (Books Three through Five and Books Seven through Nine). Furthermore, like the discussion of the beginning of Book Three above, the Book Six prologue can be read as a performative illustration not just of a rhetorical lesson but also of a phase in the orator's education. In this case, the concentration of emotional energy onto Quintilian's paternal persona resembles the description of rhetorical pupils in Book Two focusing their affection onto the person of the teacher.[89] Through the framing and emotional appeals of his own text, Quintilian models the progressive development in wanting that he has portrayed as key to the orator's moral and intellectual development: a progression from wanting pleasure to wanting the love of the teacher, and thenceforth to wanting the good of knowledge and eloquence for itself.

---

[87] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*1: *hanc optimam partem relicturus hereditatis videbar* and 6.*praef.*16: *nos miseri sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus aliis praeparabamus, aliis relinquemus.*
[88] Cf. Gunderson 2009: 112.
[89] See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

5. Friendship as the *Institutio*'s Final Relationship

In the foregoing analyses, I hope to have shown that Quintilian fosters readers' emotional engagement with his authorial persona to recreate, in a virtual manner mediated by the text, the chief relationships he describes as important for the orator's education: not only the relationship of teacher and student but also that of father and son. In this section, I propose a third relationship that, while less prominent on the surface of the *Institutio*, is also working to create a bond between author and readers and to carry out the *Institutio*'s moral project: friendship. Conceptualizing Quintilian's treatment of readers as a bid for their friendship, especially in Book Twelve, allows us to appreciate Quintilian's project as essentially collaborative, based upon mutual goodwill and oriented towards the common goal of eloquence. As we have seen in Chapter Two of this dissertation, desiring the goal of eloquence, which encompasses the more traditional ends-in-themselves of knowledge and virtue, is a sign of moral maturity. By the end of the *Institutio*, a reader who accepts Quintilian's invitation to become his student and his heir and so to receive and assimilate his advice can come to share Quintilian's vision on an equal footing. As a fellow *vir bonus* seeking eloquence, he has thus developed into someone who can be Quintilian's friend.

Although friendship is not discussed as extensively as the teacher-student relationship or the parental relationship, Quintilian does mark its importance at several key moments in the text. In Book One, he implies that the friendships children make at school are a particularly strong reason for sending them there rather than educating them at home: friendships from the school years are sacrosanct, comparable to the relationships among initiates of the same mysteries.[90] In Book Twelve, at the other end of the orator's education, he portrays the mature orator operating in a network of *amicitiae* that help him select what cases to pour his limited time and energies into. As a *vir bonus* himself, the orator will naturally have friendships with other men of the very highest character, and he can rely on the recommendations given by these trustworthy friends.[91] Finally, the *Institutio* itself is framed by Quintilian's profession of ardent friendship for Marcus Vitorius (*amicissimus nobis*).[92] Just as the virtuous orator is moved to take on a case by the wishes (*voluntas*) of his friends, so, Quintilian claims, was he motivated to undertake the writing of the *Institutio* at Marcus Vitorius' wish (*voluntas*).[93] Quintilian's friendship with Marcus Vitorius, evoked in a series of programmatic prologues (Books One, Four, Six) and in its epilogue (12.11), provides a template for the kind of relationship he wants to extend to a larger group of readers, in particular the "good young men" (*boni iuvenes*) who form the cohort of potential virtuous orators.[94]

Comparing Quintilian's language and framing of the *Institutio* with Cicero's theorization of friendship in his philosophical dialogue *De Amicitia* further reinforces the hypothesis that the relationship between Quintilian's authorial persona and readers can be understood, particularly by the end of the *Institutio*, in terms of a friendship. In the words of the character Laelius, Cicero writes that friendship (*amicitia*) means "the ultimate accord of wishes, pursuits, and sentiments" (*voluntatum studiorum sententiarum summa consensio*) and that such a profound union of minds and wills can only occur among the good.[95] Pursuit of the same goal—living virtuously, which means living well and living according to nature[96]—is the basis for the complete agreement of friends: they *want* the same thing, so each one's desires and actions harmonize with those of the other(s). Because of this, virtuous people are naturally attractive to one another; they naturally seek each other's fellowship and love one another.[97] Quintilian's ideal of eloquence as a goal encompassing all the other virtues enables his vision to be understood within the framework established by Cicero. Characterizing eloquence as desirable in and of itself enables it to serve as a proxy for virtue or, more accurately, as a more expansive ideal of virtue.[98] Quintilian's vision, in which orators are necessarily *boni viri* and eloquence, their goal, encompasses all the virtues, can thus be mapped onto Cicero's portrayal of friendship as a harmonious agreement of *boni viri* practicing and pursuing virtue ever more perfectly.

---

[90] Quint. *Inst.*1.2.20.

[91] Quint. *Inst.*12.7.5-6. Since he cannot take on every good case, the orator will be influenced by the wishes of other *viri boni*, with whom he will naturally have a friendship: *ut optimi cuiusque voluntate moveatur: namque hos et amicissimos habebit vir bonus.*

[92] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*6. Quintilian describes the *Institutio* as a "token of shared affection between us" (*mutuae inter nos caritatis pignus*).

[93] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.7.5-6 (quoted above in note) and 6.*praef.*1: *haec, Marce Vitori, ex tua voluntate maxime ingressus.* I will return to these passages when I discuss *voluntas* in Chapter 4.

[94] For the *boni iuvenes* see especially *Inst.*6.*praef.*1 and a variation (*studiosi iuvenes*) in 12.11.31.

An apparent difficulty with conceptualizing readers, particularly youthful readers, as Quintilian's potential friends is the disparity of age and knowledge between them and the venerable retired teacher. As Cicero's Laelius points out, if there is a disparity between partners, it is essential that the superior partner come to the level of the inferior one and work to elevate him.[99] The educational context of Quintilian's work offers a solution to this difficulty. By transmitting his knowledge to others, Quintilian raises them to his own level, a task that he shows himself having completed in the epilogue to Book Twelve: he has now set forth for the benefit of others the fruits of his research and fulfilled the duty of a *vir bonus* to teach others what he knows.[100] By the end of the treatise, readers have access to all Quintilian's knowledge and expertise, including his most prized discoveries and the secrets to his own success.[101] Like the figure of the orator, whose mature activity Book Twelve portrays, readers have also come to the fulfillment of the orator's education and are now, in some sense, raised up to Quintilian's level.

---

[95] Cic. *Amic.*15 and 18: *sed hoc primum sentio, nisi in bonis amicitiam esse non posse.*

[96] Cf. Cic. *Amic.*19 for *natura* as the guide to living well.

[97] Cf. Cic. *Amic.*28 for the love that virtue naturally inspires, a love that even extends to virtuous people one has never met, and 50 for the natural attraction of good people to each other.

[98] See Chapter Two of this dissertation. Like Roman ideals of virtue, eloquence is both individually fulfilling and socially oriented. At least some of the virtues of a *vir bonus* listed at Cic. *Amic.*19 are fundamentally social in character (e.g., *fides*, *liberalitas*; *aequitas* also fits this pattern, if we adopt this editorial correction of the manuscript *aequalitas*, which makes no sense in context).

[99] Cic. *Amic.*69-72, especially 72: *quam ob rem, ut ei, qui superiores sunt, submittere se debent in amicitia, sic quodam modo inferiores extollere.*

[100] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.8: *atque id viro bono satis est, docuisse quod scierit.*

Quintilian reinforces this sense of equality by portraying himself, particularly in Book Twelve, going side-by-side with readers in search of the same goal of eloquence, creating an impression of camaraderie and channeling it for a protreptic purpose.[102] We can interpret Quintilian's image of readers ascending the hill of eloquence together with him on multiple levels. First, Quintilian can be imagined as another person engaged in the same pursuit of eloquence with the reader, like a mentor and friend who exhorts and encourages from alongside rather than commanding from on high. Furthermore, recalling Quintilian's use of the *Institutio* as a stand-in for himself in the Book Six prologue, we can also interpret his accompaniment of the reader as taking place through the very process of reading the *Institutio.* Reading and rereading the *Institutio* affords readers continual access to Quintilian's accompaniment, guidance, and encouragement as they strive for the goal. It also allows Quintilian, even in his absence, to continue pursuing the goal by helping others towards it. Quintilian thus establishes a framework in which he (or his authorial persona) and readers are figured as fellow students, comrades, and friends united in pursuit of the same goal, which is actualized through reading the *Institutio*. From this perspective, the *Institutio* does more than lay out the orator's education as a progression of wanting (i.e., from wanting pleasure to wanting the teacher's affection to wanting the good of eloquence for itself). By using emotional appeals linked to Quintilian's authorial persona, it also seeks to impel readers to progress along a parallel path: from craving enjoyment to feeling intense devotion to the paternal persona of their teacher and, finally, to desiring and pursuing the goal of eloquence alongside him as friends, *viri boni* who are always growing together in knowledge and skill in speaking.

---

[101] See Quint. *Inst.*6.2.25-36, where Quintilian professes to share his own special discoveries about emotional mastery, and Leigh 2004 on this passage.

[102] E.g., Quint. *Inst.*12.11.30: *toto animo petamus, nitamurque semper ad optima, quod facientes aut evademus in summum aut certe multos infra nos videbimus*. Once again, the first-person plural becomes useful for establishing a sense of fellowship with readers, a common basis for exhortation and encouragement.

Chapter Four: The Good *Voluntas* of the Moral Orator

1. Introduction: *Voluntas* in the *Institutio*

In previous chapters I have sought to explain how Quintilian's moral vision of the orator responds to the Platonic problem of ensuring that rhetoric's practitioners use it for good and not for evil. As Quintilian's reading of Plato's *Gorgias* suggests, if the orator can be made to *want* what is good, there is no danger that he will use his powers of persuasion for ends that threaten the good of the community.[1] The education of the orator, therefore, seeks to help him want the good of his own accord: it supplies him with good material to imitate, forms his judgment on the model of the teacher's own upright standards, and motivates him with a graduated series of goods (pleasure, love of the teacher, and finally, eloquence figured as a good-in-itself).[2] Furthermore, Quintilian uses an intricate strategy of ethical and pathetic appeals in the *Institutio* to move readers to embrace his persona and his project and thus to begin experiencing the orator's education for themselves.[3] This happens through the mediation of the text of the *Institutio*, which works to bring about its ideal by prompting readers to *want* to join forces with Quintilian as good men skilled in speaking.

In this fourth and final chapter, I argue that Quintilian relies on a concept of *voluntas*—specifically, *voluntas* that is *recta, honesta,* or *bona*—as a solution to the theoretical problem of educating the virtuous orator, who always *wants* the good and pursues it in his actions, particularly through exercising his faculty of speaking for the good of the community.[4] At the same time, *voluntas* is more than the solution to a theoretical problem: Quintilian also considers it a real psychological phenomenon that is essential for education and thus for his own educational project.

---

[1] See the discussion of Quint. *Inst.*2.15 in Chapter One of this dissertation.

[2] See Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[3] See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

[4] Cf. Winterbottom 1998: 323.

In Quintilian's view, rightly oriented *voluntas* is the touchstone of goodness. When properly engaged, *voluntas* enables the educational process to work towards bringing the ideal—the good man skilled in speaking—into existence. *Voluntas* thus serves as a link between Quintilian's demands for theoretical perfection and the practical details of a rhetorical education, with the long, arduous training it entails. By setting one's mind on the ideal as a goal and following up with constant, diligent efforts, progress towards the ideal becomes possible. This progress is something valuable and real, even if (strictly speaking) the ideal itself cannot be reached.[5]

Since *voluntas* and its cognates appear in a wide variety of contexts throughout the *Institutio*, in this chapter I focus on the subset of uses that I think are most relevant to the moral goodness of the orator and his education.[6] In linguistic or legal contexts, Quintilian frequently uses *voluntas* to refer to the "intended meaning" of a text or utterance, as opposed to the actual words written or spoken.[7] Since texts and utterances are "purposive" productions of human beings, however,[8] predicating *voluntas* of persons is a more fundamental usage: an orator choosing words to carry out his aims, Milo planning to kill Clodius, and a friend wishing for a service can all be said to be acting on *voluntas*.[9] With reference to persons, I generally treat *voluntas* as referring to the act of "wanting" rather than to a nominalized "will," though I often have to rely on the latter as a translation for idiomatic reasons.[10] This approach enables me to use the verb *volo* as evidence for Quintilian's conceptualization of wanting and to avoid getting entangled in philosophical debates about, for example, whether a notion of "will" as a faculty of mind existed in Quintilian's time.[11]

---

[5] Cf. Brinton 1983: 182.

[6] Based on a search I conducted using the online Cross Database Search Tool of Brepols Publishers, *voluntas* itself makes 73 appearances, while the verb *volo* appears over 400 times throughout the *Institutio*'s twelve books.

[7] Cf., e.g., Quint. *Inst.*3.6.43 for the importance of determining *voluntas* in cases of ambiguous meaning and 7.1.49 for the *voluntas* of a law as opposed to the *verba*.

[8] Cf. Chapter 3 of Heath 2002 for the text as "the product of [an author's] purposive action" (87).

[9] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*7.3.21 for the orator's *voluntas* underlying the choice of appropriate words; 7.1.34 for Milo; and 12.7.5 for the *voluntas* of one's friends.

[10] When I use "will" I generally mean "a person's sustained wanting of a particular end."

In general, I think Quintilian sees *voluntas*, or wanting, as the human act of fixing on and pursuing some goal.[12] When he gives *voluntas* a moral resonance, qualifying it as "good" or "upright" or corrupt, he implies that the goodness or badness of a person's *voluntas* depends on the goodness or badness of the end they are pursuing. A person who pursues a rigorous education with a view to attaining true eloquence is a good person with good *voluntas*; a person who wants something shameful, like Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, has corrupt or bad *voluntas*.[13] In a certain sense, *voluntas* cuts to the heart of the problem of rhetoric and of the moral orator: Quintilian acknowledges that the tremendous power of rhetoric can be used for domination and exploitation, particularly through deception and emotional arousal, as a means for the speaker to achieve *what he wants*. The only safeguard is for the orator to have good *voluntas*, to be a good person who wants the good of the community and acts so as to pursue it. Since no one can force the *voluntas* of another person, there is a certain elusiveness or open-endedness to the solution: there is simply no way to *make* someone else want the good. Ultimately, I think Quintilian recognizes this and opts to do the most that any educator or orator can do: to invite his audience to cooperate, willingly and enthusiastically, in the good enterprise he presents.

In the following pages, I first examine the equivalence Quintilian proposes between being a good person and having good *voluntas*, which he treats as a stable orientation towards a good goal that enables progress. Next, I apply this understanding to argue that Quintilian is relying on the orator's good *voluntas* as the guarantee that he will use his powers of speaking for the good, even in apparently compromising situations. Turning to two significant uses of *voluntas* in educational contexts (in *Institutio* 1.3.8 and 12.1.31), I then examine how Quintilian's connection of *voluntas* to moral rectitude in these passages supports the idea that a student's will can be engaged and directed through the educational process so that it develops into the *bona* or *honesta voluntas* so necessary to the orator's moral integrity. Finally, in light of the foregoing analysis, I offer a rereading of the *Institutio*'s closing words to suggest that Quintilian sees his greatest contribution to rhetorical education as the endeavor to help students of rhetoric *want* to be good men.

---

[11] Cf., e.g., Inwood 2005, discussed in the Introduction.

[12] Cf. Inwood 2005: 142 for the idea that in Seneca "*voluntas* seldom means more than considered desire or willingness."

[13] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*8.4.23, where Quintilian describes Socrates' withstanding the corrupting power of Alcibiades' *voluntas* in Plato's *Symposium*.

2. The Good Will of the Good Man

Quintilian's strongest statement of the necessity of *voluntas* to the orator's moral goodness comes in the epilogue to Book Twelve, where he portrays it as the determining characteristic of a *vir bonus.*

> For that which is first and also more important, that we be good men, consists mainly in wanting it. And someone who assumes this [*voluntas*] with real confidence will easily grasp those arts which teach virtue (*Inst.*12.11.11-12).
>
> Nam id quod prius quodque maius est, ut boni viri simus, **voluntate** maxime constat: quam qui vera fide induerit, facile eas idem quae virtutem docent artis accipiet.

The *voluntas* Quintilian speaks of is aimed at a specific end: being a good man. At the same time, he describes wanting to be a good man as the most important component (*maxime*) of actually being one. Wanting to be good is, at some fundamental level, already the hallmark of goodness. At the same time, it enables a person who is already good at a fundamental level to become even better. Quintilian uses the verb *induo*, "to put on" or "assume," often used of putting on clothing, to express the idea of a purposive commitment, a stable orientation towards a good goal.[14] "Putting on" good *voluntas*, decisively wanting to be a good man, predisposes a person to act in pursuit of the goal (here, to "accept those arts which teach virtue"). The firm commitment to goodness that

---

[14] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.12.16 (discussed in Chapter Three), where Quintilian uses another clothing verb, *accingo* ("to gird oneself" or "to undertake"), to describe purposive action (*ad vilem usum et sordidum lucrum accingimur*).

Quintilian suggests with the idea of putting on good *voluntas* is what constitutes an individual as a *vir bonus* and enables him to be called an orator, for whom being a good man is the *sine qua non*.[15]

Quintilian's claim that good *voluntas* is the main part of being a *vir bonus* relies on a kind of feedback loop (or virtuous circle) whereby wanting the good makes the journey towards it easier and more attractive, which in turn makes the goal more desirable.[16] The passage sets up a contrast between an attitude of reluctance or resistance, which makes learning more difficult, and an attitude of willingness to improve, which makes it increasingly easier and more intuitive.[17] Actively fostering the disposition of willingness to learn what is upright leads, Quintilian tells us, to a deep and transformative cooperation with nature: to one looking out at the panorama of human life from the vantage point of a *vir bonus*, who appreciates the ease and spontaneity of life in accordance with nature, the sight of so many wicked people provokes surprise.[18] Readers are invited to inhabit, at least momentarily, this perspective of the *vir bonus*, a person so imbued with the goodness of nature—and the positive capacities of his own nature—that evil seems counterintuitive, as in fact it is. A person whose sights are set on growing in knowledge and virtue—like the *vir bonus* with *bona voluntas*—experiences things differently because he sees things differently. In his rectified vision of reality, where virtue involves living according to nature, a life of virtue is as natural to a human being as swimming is to a fish or flying to a bird.[19] This different way of seeing things has a transformative effect on his psychological experience of difficulty: because he is able to appreciate the good that he is aiming for, he will eagerly embrace the arduous process of becoming an even better person.[20]

---

[15] Cf., e.g., Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*9 and 12.1.3.

[16] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*12.10.78-79 for the image of a hill that is difficult to climb at first but becomes progressively easier and more rewarding the higher one goes. See Cribiore 2001: 1-3 for discussion of the hill-climbing trope as an image for education and Chapter Two of this dissertation for discussion of virtuous circles.

[17] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.12. Contrast the prolongation caused by repugnance (*longam enim facit operam quod repugnamus*) with the shortening effect caused by a good attitude (*brevis est institutio vitae honestae beataeque, si credas*). Quintilian uses some variation of *facilis, brevis,* and *promptus* five times in 12.11.11-13.

[18] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.12-13: *natura enim nos ad mentem optimam genuit, adeoque discere meliora volentibus promptum est ut vere intuenti mirum sit illud magis, malos esse tam multos.*

[19] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.13 for the comparison between the virtuous person, who lives according to nature, with the fish in water and the bird in the air. Cf. *Inst.*2.16.15-17 for speech as the activity that distinguishes humans from animals and so constitutes our greatest excellence.

A potential problem for seeing *voluntas* as both the constitutive element of the *vir bonus* and the foundation for someone to make progress in virtue is that it seems to be circular: how can someone who already has good *voluntas* and is a *vir bonus* become virtuous by "putting on" good *voluntas*? This difficulty can be resolved by examining the flexibility that both *voluntas* and *vir bonus* have in Quintilian's vision. First, [*bona* or *recta* or *honesta*] *voluntas* seems to act like an internal compass needle that points a person in the right direction and then underlies and sustains movement towards the end. Good *voluntas* both directs and sustains progress towards the goal of being a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*. Second, with regards to the meaning of *vir bonus*, Quintilian adopts the Stoic technique of differentiating between colloquial and rigorous definitions of a term; just as only a perfectly wise person meets the criteria to be called a *sapiens* in the strictest sense, but the word is still used respectfully to designate people who have attained a great degree of wisdom, so there is a difference between calling someone a *vir bonus* in the strict sense, which would mean that he possesses all the moral virtues, and using *vir bonus* to speak about someone who is fundamentally good but not quite perfect.[21] The flexibility afforded by these multiple senses of *vir bonus* allows Quintilian to maneuver between different registers of speech, between the strictness of philosophical precision and the looseness of everyday understanding. The idea of *voluntas*, meanwhile, as something both fixed and productive of movement, affords Quintilian the flexibility both to make claims about a person's essential character and to allow for further growth.

---

[20] On the greatness of the goal, see Quint. *Inst.*12.11.10-11: *tum cogitent quantam rem petant quamque nullus sit hoc proposito praemio labor recusandus est.*

[21] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.18-20. See *Inst.*1.*praef.*9 for the idea that, as a *vir bonus*, the orator must have "all the virtues of the rational soul" (*omnis animi virtutes*).

The importance of the flexibility of these concepts to Quintilian's moral vision finds support in *Institutio* 12.1, where Quintilian defends his definition of the orator as a "good man skilled in speaking" (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*). In 12.1.16, Quintilian rests his claim that Cicero, despite the accusations of his detractors, was fundamentally a *vir bonus* on Cicero's exemplary *voluntas*. Since Quintilian treats Cicero as orator *par excellence*, criticisms of Cicero on moral grounds, like those mounted by Asinius Pollio and Seneca the Younger in the intervening century-and-a-half between Cicero's death and Quintilian's writing, put Quintilian in the awkward position of having to defend both his definition of the orator and his reliance on Cicero.[22] Quintilian appeals to *voluntas* as the basis for defending Cicero's fundamental goodness and thus his fitness to be called an orator. He can thus justify using both the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* formula as the definition of the orator and Cicero as an *exemplum*.

> I do not see that Cicero in any way lacked the will of a very fine citizen. As evidence, his consulship was conducted most nobly, his province was administered with utmost integrity and he refused a place on the Land Commission, and in the civil wars, which fell as very weighty burdens on his time, his spirit did not swerve from joining the best party (namely, the republic) because of hope of gain or fear of loss. He seems insufficiently strong to some people, to whom he himself gave the best response: that he was timid not in accepting dangers but in foreseeing them; and he proved this fact also by his very death, which he met with outstanding strength of spirit (*Inst.*12.1.15-17).
>
> Nec M. Tullio defuisse video in ulla parte civis optimi **voluntatem**. Testimonio est actus nobilissime consulatus, integerrime provincia administrata et repudiatus vigintiviratus, et civilibus bellis, quae in aetatem eius gravissima inciderunt, neque spe neque metu declinatus animus quo minus optimis se partibus, id est rei publicae, iungeret. Parum fortis videtur quibusdam, quibus optime respondit ipse non se timidum in suscipiendis sed in providendis periculis: quod probavit morte quoque ipsa, quam praestantissimo suscepit animo.

Quintilian relies on Cicero's exemplary *voluntas* as the basis for positing his fundamental moral excellence without having to prove the perfection of every one of his actions. He lays out the moral defense of Cicero in terms of choices that Cicero made, choices in which he embraced and refused the proper things. Cicero knew both how to choose or accept arduous goods and how to decline attractive evils. On the one hand, he joined the noble defenders of the republic and accepted his own death in an impressive manner. On the other, he refused a place on Caesar's Campanian land commission (*repudiatus vigintiviratus*). His espousal of the nobler side in the civil war involved hardening his mind against the distracting lures of *spes* and *metus*. Alongside his adherence to the *res publica*, his resistance to *spes* and *metus* counteracts the charges of *levitas* and mental unsteadiness levied by his critics.[23] The abundant superlatives in this passage contrast Cicero's virtues with the grave dangers that he faced (*civis optimi, nobilissime, integerrime, gravissima, optimis partibus, optime respondit, praestantissimo animo*). These strong affirmations of Cicero's nobility drown out words that suggest he was lacking in something (*defuisse, parum*). Quintilian's brief and selective biography of Cicero thus portrays him equipped with the *voluntas* of an exemplary citizen, embracing noble and difficult things that benefitted the *res publica* while refusing unjust or unworthy things that could have harmed it. Even if Cicero did not attain consummate virtue,[24] he can be accounted a *vir bonus* on the basis of his *voluntas*, his upright desire for the good of the *res publica* that enabled him to perform virtuous actions for its sake.

---

[22] See Quint. *Inst.*12.1.14-15 for Quintilian's set-up of the problem as a *conspiratio* that he must address in order to defend his moral definition of the orator. On Asinius Pollio's criticism of Cicero, preserved in the *suasoriae* of Seneca the Elder (cf. Sen. *Suas.*6.24), see also La Bua 2019: 107-110, Keeline 2018: 135-137, and Austin 1948: 63. For Seneca the Younger's moral assessment of Cicero in *De Brevitate Vitae* (5.1), see Degl'Innocenti Pierini 2018: 24-29 and Gowing 2013: 239-244. See also the pseudo-Sallustian invective against Cicero (Novokhatko 2009 is a good critical edition).

Alongside the stability of Cicero's *voluntas*, Quintilian also highlights Cicero's potential for further progress as a favorable quality, albeit in a context where moral and stylistic evaluations seem especially blurred.[25] Quintilian qualifies his admission that Cicero did not reach the heights of oratorical perfection with the suggestion that if Cicero had lived longer, he would have been an even better speaker.[26]

---

[23] Cf., e.g., ps.-Sall.1 (in Novokhatko 2009) for Cicero's *morbus animi* and 5 for his fickleness (*homo levissimus*), as well as Sen. *Dial.*10.1.5 for Cicero's instability. See Fulkerson 2013 and Keeline 2018: 155-158 on Pseudo-Sallust, as well as La Bua 2019: 110-111 on Seneca.

[24] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.18: *quod si defuit his viris summa virtus* (the plural refers to Demosthenes as well as to Cicero).

[25] A slippage occurs between a moral evaluation of Cicero (*Inst.*12.1.14-19) and the stylistic evaluation displayed in 12.1.19-22, which is itself part of the larger discussion of whether a bad man can be an orator (12.1.1-44). The change of modes from moral criticism to stylistic criticism may strike readers as incongruous, but it is symptomatic of Quintilian's insistence on the unity and inter-permeability of speech and goodness. In addition, I suggest that Quintilian may be deliberately shifting the discussion from Cicero's morals to his

> Nevertheless, because he did not fasten to himself the appellation "wise" (even though he was far from being his own critic) and would certainly have been able to speak better if he had been given a longer life and a time safer for composing, I would not be mean-spirited to think that he fell short of that summit which no one has approached more closely (*Inst.*12.1.20).
>
> Tamen, quando nec sapientis sibi nomen minime sui contemptor adseruit et melius dicere certe data longiore vita et tempore ad componendum securiore potuisset, non maligne crediderim defuisse ei summam illam ad quam nemo propius accessit.

The idea that Cicero could have been a more perfect orator if he had lived longer echoes Quintilian's judgment of the poet Serranus in *Institutio* 10.1. Serranus' untimely death cut short an otherwise promising career directed by a "will of the right kind" (*recti generis voluntas*).[27] Although it is unclear in what sense Quintilian means that Serranus had the right kind of *voluntas*, this passage suggests that the combination of his talent (*indoles*) with his *voluntas* would have led to outstanding achievement if Serranus had lived longer. Serranus' *voluntas*, fixed on a worthy goal and implicitly capable of steering him towards greater excellence, fits in with the picture that emerges in Book Twelve of good *voluntas* as both a stable orientation and a foundation for progress. As in the case of Serranus, Quintilian's confidence that, given longer time, Cicero would have surpassed even his own achievements seems based on a constant quality inherent in Cicero, a stable orientation and driving force that propelled Cicero's own quest to discover the perfect orator.[28] In the context of the larger defense of Cicero (12.1.14-22), it seems reasonable to connect Cicero's capacity for progress with the upright *voluntas* that forms the basis for this defense. As in 12.11.11, the defense of Cicero

---

style as a kind of bait-and-switch that allows him to avoid further awkward discussion of Cicero's moral weaknesses and instead justify him on the stronger grounds of his prowess as a speaker and stylist.

[26] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.19: *sed cum proprie et ad legem ipsam veritatis loquendum erit.*

[27] Quint. *Inst.*10.1.89: *Serranum consummari mors inmatura non passa est, puerilia tamen eius opera et maximam indolem ostendunt et admirabilem praecipue in aetate illa recti generis voluntatem.*

[28] Cf. *Inst.*12.1.19-20, where Quintilian says that, like Cicero, he is still in quest of the perfect orator (*eum quaeram oratorem quem et ille quaerebat*).

reinforces the idea that the right kind of *voluntas* is the core of the orator understood as a good man skilled in speaking.

3. Bent Speech and Upright *Voluntas*

The notion of upright *voluntas* outlined above can help us appreciate the full significance of Quintilian's controversial argument in favor of the orator's prerogative to lie to the judge.[29] This passage (*Inst.*12.1.33-45) concludes Quintilian's defense of his definition of the orator as a *vir bonus* (*Inst.*12.1.1-45). It also serves as the final response to a problem he had postponed dealing with in Book Three: how can the orator be a good man if practicing rhetoric involves using deceptive and underhanded techniques?[30] After sketching a variety of scenarios in which the morally upright orator can justifiably lie to the judge (e.g., if he is defending a tyrant in the tyrant's court),[31] Quintilian pronounces a *sententia* emphasizing the orator's good *voluntas*: "therefore the speech will be bent as the affair requires, with the will remaining upright" (*quapropter ut res feret flectetur oratio, manente honesta voluntate*).[32] By making *voluntas* the final word in the passage, and thus also the final word in the larger defense of the orator as a *vir bonus*, Quintilian reinforces the centrality of the concept of an upright and stable *voluntas* to his moral vision and establishes it as the guarantor of the orator's moral integrity. With the idea of upright *voluntas* Quintilian offers a theoretical solution to the anxieties surrounding rhetoric, to the concern that the power of persuasion can be used for evil purposes. Quintilian is taking pains to portray his ideal orator as fulfilling the Socratic criterion expressed in the *Gorgias*: he is literally "a just man who *wants* to do just things."[33]

---

[29] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.33-45.

[30] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*3.8.42 for Quintilian's postponement of answering readerly misgivings about the uprightness of this behavior. For purposes of argument here, I treat actual lying and arousing someone else's emotions as two species of deception (cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.17.27-29), since emotional arousal generally distracts people from the truth (cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.2.5-7).

[31] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.40.

[32] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.45. Russell 2001 translates *manente honesta voluntate* with "so long as our intentions are honourable."

[33] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.15.27-28 and Pl. *Grg.*460c, discussed in Chapter One.

In order to appreciate the theoretical solution Quintilian is offering in 12.1.33-45, we need to see how this passage corresponds to Quintilian's set-up of the problem at earlier moments in the text. With the provision in 12.1.45 that the orator maintains an upright *voluntas*—and thus his identity as a *vir bonus*— even if he has to lie, Quintilian echoes earlier discussions of the orator's use of deceptive techniques in Books Two, Three, and Six. In this series of passages Quintilian suggests two potential obstacles to the achievement of justice in political processes: (1) the will of the speaker (i.e., what end he wants to achieve by speaking) and (2) the ignorance or opposition of the audience. Since the process of arriving at an outcome, especially in a forensic setting, involves the speaker trying to persuade the audience to want what he wants, it is important that the speaker both wants what is good and has the power to present it as good to the audience and induce them to embrace it in whatever ways he can. The failure of either the speaker or the audience (or both) to want what is good results in an unjust outcome, while the speaker's firm commitment to the good and his ability to persuade the audience to embrace it results in a just outcome.

Quintilian thinks that what the speaker wants is important precisely because his skill in speaking gives him such tremendous power to move his audience in accordance with his wishes: the weapons of rhetorical skill are too powerful to be entrusted to someone with malicious intent.[34] As we have seen in the discussion of *Institutio* 2.15 and Plato's *Gorgias* in Chapter One, Quintilian rejects the definition of rhetoric as the ability "to lead people by means of speech to that end which the pleader wishes" (*ducere homines dicendo in id quod actor velit*) at least in part because it does not include a moral qualification: prostitutes, flatterers, and seducers can also use speech to persuade people to do what they want.[35] If the speaker is a *vir bonus*, however, it is "useful and appropriate" for him to lead others where he wants because, implicitly, he wants the good of others, both his personal friends and the political community.[36] Although in a broad sense the orator's goal is always the same (i.e., "speaking well"),[37] Quintilian makes the orator responsible for determining what is upright in a given situation (*constituere quid honestum sit*) and using the means necessary to pursue it.[38] The orator does not accept every case, but only those which he understands to be just based on the recommendations of good men and his own investigation; if in the course of working up a case he discovers that it is unjust, he should inform his client and give it up.[39] In 12.1 Quintilian lists a variety of hypothetical defendants for whose sake the orator could justifiably lie: the would-be assassin in the tyrant's court (mentioned above); a guilty person who is capable of changing for the better; an arraigned leader whose services are needed for the preservation of the country.[40] Quintilian thinks that in these situations the orator should pursue the outcome that he determines to be good for the individual concerned or for the community or for both, since these goods are not generally incompatible. Seeking the acquittal of a guilty general so that he can save the state from imminent danger is a proper course for the orator as a *vir bonus* who desires the safety of his country, while the possibility of a guilty person's rehabilitation is framed as beneficial not only to the guilty person himself but also to the *res publica*.[41] In every case, the orator's actions are based on his

---

[34] Cf., e.g., Quint. *Inst.*12.*praef.*1-2.

[35] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.19-11. Quintilian cites the definition as belonging to Theodectes and gives a similar formulation by Apollodorus in 2.15.12 (*persuadere iudici et sententiam eius ducere in id quod velit*). The other problem with this definition is that it seems contingent upon the orator's success at persuading, whereas

---

Quintilian thinks that a definition of rhetoric should hold good whether or not the desired outcome is actually achieved.

[36] Quint. *Inst.*2.16.19: *nam ut omittam defendere amicos, regere consiliis senatum, populum exercitum in quae velit ducere, quam sit utile conveniatque bono viro.*

[37] Quint. *Inst.*2.15.38, where Quintilian says that, as *scientia bene dicendi*, "the end and height of rhetoric is speaking well" (*bene dicere*). Cf. *Inst.*2.17.22-23.

[38] Quint. *Inst.*11.1.35.

[39] Quint. *Inst.*12.7.4-7 (e.g., *certe non convenit ei quem oratorem esse volumus iniusta tueri scientem*).

[40] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.40, 42, and 43, respectively.

[41] Quint. *Inst.*12.1.43, 42. The case of the tyrant-killer is trickier, but since killing tyrants was generally taken to be an act of patriotism, the orator's saving the failed assassin is just because it ensures that a righteous deed is not unfairly punished.

conscientious determination of what is just and beneficial for others rather than his own private advantage.

The orator's good will is also important because, combined with his power to move others by means of rhetorical persuasion, it safeguards justice against the ignorance and corruption of those who hold decision-making power. In *Institutio* 2.17, Quintilian says that the people with the power or authority to judge are often ignorant and likely to make mistakes unless they can be tricked into doing the right thing.[42] Quintilian says he is thinking not only of judges in a court but also of other types of audiences with decision-making power, like the people in an assembly or the members of a council. If judges were *sapientes* and every *contio* and *consilium* were made up of *sapientes* as well, the audience would have the wisdom and honor to decide rightly of their own accord, and there would be no need for the orator to use falsity or stir up negative emotions. Alongside ignorance, the moral corruption of the audience can be an obstacle to the achievement of justice, as Quintilian suggests in 3.8.[43] Ignorance and moral corruption are related through psychology: unlike the orator, whose mind is focused on the study of eloquence and thus consumed with virtuous activity, vicious people do not see the point in noble motives and are motivated primarily by fear.[44] Having portrayed the orator's audience as, by and large, ignorant and morally debased,[45] Quintilian suggests that the orator's morally upright exercise of his art bears the burden of ensuring that justice is done: the orator alone, it seems, will both know what is truly just and be able to persuade those with decision-making power to act according to his determination, even in spite of their own weakness or wickedness.

---

[42] Quint. *Inst.*2.17.28: *imperiti enim iudicant et qui frequenter in hoc ipsum fallendi sint, ne errent.*

[43] Quint. *Inst.*3.8.38. Persuading upright people of upright things is easy, but trying to get corrupt people (*turpes*) to do what is right is difficult and requires the orator to adopt a different approach that caters to the things such people are more likely find motivational.

[44] Quint. *Inst.*3.8.39.

[45] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*3.8.40: *apud plurimos plus valeat malorum timor quam spes bonorum*.

The orator's commitment to pursuing the good anchors his moral integrity amid the swells of the deceptive techniques by which he tries to overpower and direct the ignorance and badness of his audience towards a good outcome. At a fundamental level, Quintilian claims, the orator is on the side of truth, justice, and the common good (*vera et iusta et in commune profutura*),[46] and only for the sake of preserving these values will he lie, shift or spin the issue at stake, and arouse emotions to distract the judge. Quintilian appends a moral qualification to his four major discussions of deceptive rhetorical techniques (i.e., *Institutio* 2.17, 3.7-8, 6.1-2, and 12.1), insisting that the orator must always have a "good reason" (*bona ratio* in 2.17.27, *honesta ratio* in 12.1.40).[47] The parallel ablative absolute constructions *remota ratione honesta* (12.1.40, see footnote) and *manente honesta voluntate* (12.1.45) suggest a relationship between the grounds on which the orator takes a case (*ratio honesta*) and his personal adherence to the standard of uprightness by which he made the decision (*honesta voluntas*). Although *ratio* as used in 2.17.27 and 12.1.40 does not refer strictly to the reasoning power of the orator's mind, it is related to it insofar as the orator's "reason" for doing something is his cognitive determination of what is good or just or publicly advantageous in a given instance. In Quintilian's theoretical set-up, the orator's *honesta voluntas* is inherently connected to the good and to reason (i.e., to a "good reason") and retains this connection even when the orator has to perform apparently problematic actions, like lying, in order to achieve the good that he intends.[48]

---

[46] Quint. *Inst.*6.1.7-8.

[47] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.17.27: neither lying (*mendacium*) nor emotional arousal (*adfectus*) is shameful provided its use proceeds *ex bona ratione.* In *Inst.*3.7.25 Quintilian says that the orator can make a vice look like its neighboring virtue for the sake of *communis utilitas*, which I have translated freely as "the common good" but which may be more accurately rendered by "the public advantage," whatever advances the wellbeing of the community. In *Inst.*6.1.7-8 Quintilian says that moving the judge's emotions may be the only way of advancing the cause of "the true and the just and the public advantage" (*vera et iusta et commune profutura*). And in 12.1.39-40 he says that there are many scenarios in which an orator could undertake a case that he would not have undertaken without an upright reason (*remota ratione honesta*).

[48] Quint. *Inst.*11.1.35.

Paradoxically, Quintilian's discussion of the orator arousing the judge's emotions in *Institutio* 6.2 strengthens this connection between the orator's reason and his *voluntas*, which drives the mobilization of both his own and the judge's emotions towards a particular end.[49] By attending closely to a heavy concentration of *velle* uses in 6.2.1-30, we can see Quintilian grappling with the philosophical problem of whether the rhetorical rousing of emotions is vicious[50] and suggesting a solution that will culminate, I argue, with the formulation of *honesta voluntas* he will posit in 12.1.45. Beginning in 6.2.1, Quintilian lays out the central concern of his forthcoming discussion as the supremely difficult and important task of moving the judges in accordance with the orator's wishes.

> There still remains to be discussed a task that is both the most powerful for obtaining what we want and far more difficult than what has been said above: the task of moving the minds of the judges and of shaping them and, as it were, transforming them into the disposition which we want (*Inst.*6.2.1).
>
> Quare adhuc opus superest cum ad optinenda quae **volumus** potentissimum, tum supra dictis multo difficilius, movendi iudicum animos atque in eum quem **volumus** habitum formandi et velut transfigurandi.

The two objects of *volumus* in this passage can be distinguished as (1) the orator's goal, the desired outcome for his speech (*ad optinenda quae volumus*) and (2) the chief means that he must employ for the achievement of that goal, namely the transformation of the judge's mind to accord with his desired outcome (*in eum quem volumus habitum*). The orator both wants a particular outcome for the case or speech and wants the judge's mind to be of a particular frame that favors this desired outcome. In order to accomplish his aim, the orator must have such prodigious power to mobilize the judge's emotions that the judge cannot resist him and is borne along almost passively by this emotional current.[51]

> The orator who can seize the judge and carry him through into that frame of mind which he wants, by whose speech weeping and anger are compelled, has been rare. But this is what dominates in the courts, this sort of eloquence rules (*Inst.*6.2.3-4).

---

[49] A good end, if we see 6.2 as framed by 6.1.7-8 and 12.1.33-45.

[50] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.1.7.

[51] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.2.6-7: *aestu fertur et velut rapido flumini obsequitur.*

> Qui vero iudicem rapere et in quem **vellet** habitum animi posset perducere, quo dicente flendum irascendum esset, rarus fuit. Atqui hoc est quod dominatur in iudiciis: haec eloquentia regnat.

The gerundives *flendum* and *irascendum* accentuate the irresistible nature of the orator's prowess at stirring the judge's emotions, while *perducere* suggests a psychagogic role for the orator in relation to the judge. Language of violence (*rapere*) and domination (*dominatur*)[52] used to describe the orator's power over the judge's mind may strike a disturbing chord in contrast with the orator's otherwise affable and decent personality.[53] At the same time, however, it emphasizes the orator's agency and command of the situation, thus producing an apparent shift in the locus of power and decisiveness in the courtroom from the judge to the orator.

Although the judge does have an active role, an active will, in the proceedings, Quintilian's portrayal reduces the judge's agency to a vehicle for the orator's.

> To be sure, proofs can make it happen that the judges think our cause is the better one, but passionate feelings make it so that they also **want** it to be: and that which they **want**, they also believe. For once they have begun to feel angry, to favor, to hate, or to pity, they straightaway think their own case is being pled and, just as lovers cannot make accurate judgments about beauty because their heart rushes ahead of their eyes' perception, even so the judge who is preoccupied by passions neglects the business of ferreting out the truth: he is carried along by the surge and yields as if to a rushing river (*Inst.*6.2.5-7).
>
> Probationes enim efficiant sane ut causam nostram meliorem esse iudices putent, adfectus praestant ut etiam **velint**: sed id quod **volunt** credunt quoque. Nam cum irasci favere odisse misereri coeperunt, agi iam rem suam existimant, et, sicut amantes de forma iudicare non possunt quia sensum oculorum praecipit animus, ita omnem veritatis inquirendae rationem iudex omittit occupatus adfectibus: aestu fertur et velut rapido flumini obsequitur.

Judges' wanting (*velle*) appears as direct consequence of the emotional states (*adfectus*) aroused in them by orators. In the judge's psychology, emotions (*adfectus*) lead to wanting (*velle*), and this emotionally induced wanting overpowers and directs the judge's cognitive abilities (*quod volunt credunt quoque* and *omnem veritatis inquirendae rationem iudex omittit*). Prejudiced by emotional identification with the orator's cause (*agi iam rem suam existimant*), judges want and believe the orator's case to prevail, and the implied outcome is a favorable sentence. What the orator wants thus becomes, through the orator's emotional maneuvering, what the judge wants, and what the judge wants translates into a decision that enacts the orator's wishes. The judge serves as a vehicle for the accomplishment of the orator's will and the enactment of justice, which the virtuous orator will always want and which he must protect against the potential ignorance or injustice of the judge himself.[54]

---

[52] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.4: *atqui hoc est quod dominatur in iudiciis: haec eloquentia regnat.*

[53] For the orator's congeniality see, for instance, *Inst.*6.2.18 and Chapter Three of this dissertation.

Quintilian again relies on *velle* to undergird and direct the process of simulating emotional states himself and arousing them in others in 6.2.26-31. Promising a climactic revelation drawn from his own experience,[55] Quintilian identifies the key to moving others emotionally as being moved oneself (*ut moveamur ipsi*).[56] Therefore, the orator must identify the desirable disposition that he wishes to effect in the judge and work on producing that disposition in himself by internalizing the emotions of those whose case he is pleading.

> Consequently, where we wish to give an impression of reality, let us assimilate ourselves to the emotions of those who really suffer; let our speech spring from the very attitude that we want to produce in the judge (*Inst.*6.2.27).[57]
>
> Quare, in iis quae esse veri similia **volemus**, simus ipsi similes eorum qui vere patiuntur adfectibus, et a tali animo proficiscatur oratio qualem facere iudici **volet**.

Once again, the orator has a specific goal in mind that he pursues with calculated intent. Since he wishes to produce a certain mental disposition in the judge (*a tali animo...qualem facere iudici volet*), and he therefore wishes to give as realistic an impression as possible so as to achieve this (*in iis quae esse veri similia volemus*), he must become as like as possible to people who are really suffering. If he is going to affect the judge with emotions, he must be affected with them first.[58] Here he runs up against a problem: if the emotions are not in our power (*in nostra potestate*), how can the orator be affected by them on his own terms and “at will,” so to speak?[59] Quintilian’s solution lies in the deliberate cultivation of mental representations (*visiones,* φαντασίαι) so vivid that they can provoke realistic emotional states.[60] He suggests that these representations, which are psychologically compelling even when they happen at random, can be purposefully provoked and amplified so that, by means of them, the orator can simulate the emotional states he hopes to induce in the judge.

---

[54] Cf. *Inst.*12.1.40-44 for instances in which the orator may rightly deceive a judge (e.g., *quid si quaedam bene facta damnaturus est iudex nisi ea non esse facta convicerimus*). Similarly, when discussing deliberative oratory in 3.8.2, Quintilian says that it would be appropriate to identify "the useful" (*utile*) with "the upright" (*honestum*) if one were always addressing the morally enlightened (*et est haec ratio verissima, si consilium contingat semper bonorum atque sapientium*), but since most people are ignorant the orator must speak colloquially and speak of these two values as if they were separable (*discernenda sunt*). See 2.15.28 for the inseparability of rhetoric and justice.

[55] See Leigh 2004 for the rhetorical significance of Quintilian's performance of intimacy in *Inst.*6.2.25 and 36.

[56] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.26: *summa enim, quantum ego quidem sentio, circa movendos adfectus in hoc posita est, ut moveamur ipsi.*

[57] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.27. Translation Russell's, emphases mine.

> And indeed it is easy to make this happen **when we want it to**. During times of mental vacancy and vain expectation and, as it were, daydreams, these images about which I am speaking pursue us so persistently that we seem to be traveling or sailing or fighting a battle or addressing the people or distributing riches that we do not have the use of, not in thought but in actuality: shall we be unable to turn this vice of the mind to our advantage? (*Inst.*6.2.30)
>
> Quod quidem **nobis volentibus** facile continget; nisi vero inter otia animorum et spes inanes et velut somnia quaedam vigilantium ita nos hae de quibus loquor imagines prosecuntur ut peregrinari navigare proeliari, populos adloqui, divitiarum quas non habemus usum videamur disponere, nec cogitare sed facere, hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus?[61]

With *nobis volentibus* and *transferre*, Quintilian suggests that the orator can, through deliberate application, transform an apparently involuntary mental event into a means of mobilizing his own emotions. Through mental effort, he can thus arouse and harness the power of emotions in order to achieve his ends; the emotions turn out to be, in fact, *in nostra potestate.*

While Quintilian’s emphasis on simulating emotions may seem inauthentic and suspicious, and therefore undercutting his avowed moral aims, Quintilian’s emphasis on the verisimilar in this chapter is actually playing an important theoretical role in his moral vision: that of keeping the orator from himself being overwhelmed by passions and thus incapable of adhering to his upright aims.[62] In 6.4.10, Quintilian opines that anger (*iracundia*) is the passion that is most greatly opposed to *ratio* and, by extension, to the orator's efficacy, at least if it gets out of control.[63] If in the course of arguing with his opponent the orator gets angry—if he actually "loses his cool" on the job, as opposed to simulating anger, which requires some cognitive distance—he can lose his grip on the case, alienate the judges, and undermine his own endeavor. Unlike the judge, whose susceptibility to the orator's emotional wizardry denudes him of his power of judging,[64] the orator must not give up his cognitive control. The calculated duplicity of the orator's emotional simulation in 6.2, his constant attention to the desired outcome, and his deliberate attempts to sway the judge emotionally fulfill an important theoretical role: to protect a space for rational control that enables the orator's *voluntas* to remain tethered to reason and therefore upright.

---

[58] Once again, note the use of *volo* in *Inst.*6.2.28: *primum est igitur ut apud nos valeant ea quae valere apud iudicem* ***volumus****, adficiamurque antequam adficere conemur.*

[59] *In nostra potestate* is the Latin translation of ἐφ’ἡμῖν, “up to us,” an important phrase in the debate about the origins of “free will” in ancient philosophy. See e.g., Frede 2011: 91.

[60] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.29.

[61] I have altered Russell’s punctuation of the last sentence of the Latin text to better accord with my (and his own) translation of this sentence as a rhetorical question.

By specifying in Book Twelve that the orator's *voluntas* has to be upright (*honesta*), oriented towards achieving a just outcome, Quintilian is saying that the true orator firmly wants the good of others and is thus free to use whatever means he needs to use in order to achieve it. If he must use deception and emotional arousal in order to overcome the prejudice or unwillingness of his audience and secure justice, he may do so without himself becoming morally corrupt and causing damage to the community. The *honesta voluntas* Quintilian predicates of the orator in 12.1.45 seeks to respond to the risk of the speaker's having power to achieve what he wants: an orator with *honesta voluntas* need not be feared because his wishes are in alignment with the good of the larger political community. It is also a response to the problem of an obstructive audience (e.g., a tyrannical judge, an ignorant crowd): the morally upright orator's *honesta voluntas* licenses his use of deception, including intense and distracting emotional appeals, to get the audience to decide in accordance with the good that he himself has determined.[65]

---

[62] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.17.27-29 for Quintilian's Stoicizing argument that it is not vicious for the orator to use deception or emotional arousal as long as he has a good reason (*bona ratio*). See Russell n.22 *ad loc.*

[63] Quint. *Inst.*6.4.10: *quare bonus altercator vitio iracundiae careat; nullus enim rationi magis obstat adfectus et fert extra causam plerumque et deformia convicia facere ac mereri cogit et in ipsos nonnumquam iudices incitat.*

[64] See Quint. *Inst.*6.2.6, where judges are compared to lovers who cannot accurately judge beauty (*sicut amantes de forma iudicare non possunt*): the orator thus deprives the judge of his ability to judge and usurps his authority.

Quintilian is aware that his licensing of deception for the moral orator may not be completely satisfying to his readers. His apologies and appeals to Stoic precedent suggest a persistent discomfort with the philosophical implications of lying and using the emotions to distract the judges from reason and truth that even his elaborate, Stoicizing explanations cannot completely dispel. He insists, however, that the problem lies not with the moral orator but with the adverse circumstances of society itself, where truth and justice encounter damaging obstacles all the time.[66] The contrast between the bent speech (*flectere oratio*) and the upright will (*honesta voluntas*) of 12.1 (the defense of the orator) echoes the defense of the art of rhetoric that Quintilian had made in 2.17: when someone has been driven off the "right path" (*recta via*), Quintilian opines, the only way to get back on track is by means of another bend (*flexus*).[67] Steering affairs onto the right path is part of the orator's duty: while a philosopher may be able to abdicate responsibility and withdraw from affairs in order to preserve his moral purity, the orator must intervene to preserve truth and justice.[68] Quintilian's solution in 12.1.45 portrays the orator as maintaining a fundamental uprightness, an adherence to what is right that cuts even deeper than the words he uses, since these may in a given instance be false. This move gives rise to a sort of rupture between *verba* and *voluntas* that goes against the grain of the otherwise prevalent idea that speech expresses a person's inner character. But Quintilian suggests that this tension is a product not of the orator himself nor of the rhetorical art, but rather of a wicked external environment to which the morally upright orator must respond constructively, using rhetorical weapons in the effort to bring about a better situation.

---

[65] Quint. *Inst.*11.1.35.
[66] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.17.29.
[67] Ibid.: *neque enim qui recta via depulsus est reduci ad eam nisi alio flexu potest.*
[68] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*6.1.7-8.

4. *Recta Voluntas*: Between Craft and Vegetal Growth

Two further uses of *voluntas* in proximity to moral rectitude, one in *Institutio* 1.3.8 and the other in 12.1.31, at either end of the orator's education, suggest that Quintilian is interested in how the orator's *voluntas* can be engaged and directed through the educational process so that it develops into the *bona* or *honesta voluntas* so necessary to his moral integrity. In keeping with the lexical focus of this chapter, I analyze imagery and diction in and around these passages to supplement the understanding of good *voluntas* as a personal orienting principle and the foundation for further growth that I have sketched so far.[69] While the first education-related use of *voluntas* (1.3.8), with its accompanying networks of craft and vegetal imagery, suggests the spontaneous dimension of a student's *voluntas,* the second (12.1.31) hints at the receptivity of the student to exhortation so that, guided by *recta voluntas*, he can undertake strenuous labors in pursuit of eloquence.

Quintilian's very first use of *voluntas* in the *Institutio* (1.3.8) shows that he thinks of it as an inalienable component of a student's psychological makeup that undergirds his desire to learn.

> Nevertheless, some relaxation must be given to everyone, not only because nothing exists which can bear nonstop labor, and even those things which lack sense perception or life are, as it were, slackened by alternating rest [and work] in order that they may be able to preserve their power, but also because enthusiasm for learning rests upon will, which cannot be forced.[70] Therefore, renewed and freshened, the boys will bring more vigor to their studies and a sharper mind, which generally opposes compulsion (*Inst.*1.3.8-9).
>
> Danda est tamen omnibus aliqua remissio, non solum quia nulla res est quae perferre possit continuum laborem, atque ea quoque quae sensu et anima carent ut servare vim suam possint velut

---

[69] Although this section revisits the educational theme of Chapter Two, it has the distinct purpose of focusing on the semantic networks surrounding two education-related uses of *voluntas* in order to continue fleshing it out as a concept. In addition, the lexically focused argument of this chapter gives additional support to the view advanced in Chapter Two: namely, that Quintilian's system of moral education through rhetoric can be read as a gradual process of coming to want the good of eloquence for itself (i.e., of developing good *voluntas*).

[70] Russell gives "because study depends on the will to learn, and this cannot be forced." This translation is incorrect because it treats *voluntate* as belonging with *discendi* when in fact *discendi* qualifies the kind of *studium* and *voluntate* is an ablative determined by *constat.* I am grateful to Bob Kaster for assisting me with this observation.

> quiete alterna retenduntur, sed quod studium discendi **voluntate**, quae cogi non potest, constat. Itaque et virium plus adferunt ad discendum renovati ac recentes et acriorem animum, qui fere necessitatibus repugnat.

As in 12.11.11, Quintilian is locating goodness or a good quality (here, *studium discendi*) in *voluntas.*[71] We learn here that *voluntas* is spontaneous, intrinsic to each individual and ultimately unable to be compelled or forcibly implanted; that it is the quality on which *studium* depends; and that it is dampened by grueling work and needs periods of recuperation in order to maintain its vigor and propel the student forward along the educational path. While encouraging the use of games as a means of arousing interest in learning and also of allowing moral character to be observed (1.3.10-12), he cautions that vacations and times of rest need to be moderated in order to facilitate proper psychological attitudes in the student: "Nevertheless there should be measured proportion in times of relaxation, lest in being denied they produce hatred of studies, and in being over-abundant, the habit of inactivity."[72] Given too few times of relaxation, the *voluntas* on which *studium* depends will rebel and the educational process will backfire, producing *odium* instead of *studium.* Given too many breaks, the easily formed but incorrigible habit of inactivity (*otii consuetudo*) will take over and sap the momentum of education. *Odium* and *otium* stand as the two extremes to be avoided by the teacher in organizing the activity and rest of the prospective orator. The teacher's decisions about scheduling breaks and his creativity in engaging students through games and personalized attention are of great importance in ensuring that the student has the proper conditions under which to flourish. It is ultimately on the student's own inviolable determination to learn, however, that success depends.

Two major networks of images and vocabulary at work in this and surrounding passages are key to understanding the framework in which Quintilian positions the learner and his *voluntas*. One set of imagery comprises a vocabulary of breaking, straightening, and hardening that implies a process of craft, while the other is vegetal.[73] The craft imagery emphasizes the formative role of the teacher, but it also hints at the dangers of an education based on domination of the student by the teacher. The vegetal imagery, by contrast, emphasizes the agency of the student and portrays a good education as a relationship of benevolent collaboration between student and teacher.[74]

---

[71] Cf. *Inst.*12.11.11 (*ut boni viri simus voluntate maxime constat*) with 1.3.8 (*studium discendi voluntate...constat*).
[72] Quint. *Inst.*1.3.11: *modus tamen sit remissionibus, ne aut odium studiorum faciant negatae aut otii consuetudinem nimiae*

Quintilian's use of craft imagery participates in a network of ancient metaphorical language surrounding education that treats the child as more or less passive material that needs to be worked on or shaped by the teacher,[75] who seems to be the protagonist of education. It is up to the teacher to make sure that the student takes on the correct (i.e., morally good) shape.

> Moral character also uncovers itself more simply in the process of playing; but no age should seem so weak that it cannot learn what "upright" and "crooked" are, and [the child's mind] is most effectively formed when it is ignorant of pretending and gives way very easily to those teaching it; for you can break more quickly than you can correct things that have hardened into a crooked shape (*Inst.*1.3.12-13).[76]
>
> Mores quoque se inter ludendum simplicius detegunt: modo nulla videatur aetas tam infirma quae non protinus quid rectum pravumque sit discat, tum vel maxime formanda cum simulandi nescia est et praecipientibus facillime cedit; frangas enim citius quam corrigas quae in pravum induruerunt.

Here, moral vocabulary of right and wrong, virtue and vice, is couched in the materially suggestive terms *rectum* and *pravum*, "straight" and "crooked." Along with the verbs *frango*, *corrigo,* and *induro*, these words conjure up images of materials—cement or clay, glass or even wood—undergoing a process of craft.[77] The implied teacher is the craftsman, while the student's *mores* are the material under operation. Since this material will harden irreparably over time, the craftsman's opportunity to make interventions is limited, and the best approach is to make sure that the material "sets" properly the first time. After it has hardened, corrections (literally, trying to make *rectum* what is *pravum*) are useless. This extended metaphor implies that character, once preliminarily formed, is static; after the basic habits and tendencies have become "set," attempted overhaul is doomed to failure, perhaps even a violent failure.[78]

---

[73] Perhaps Quintilian means to evoke a craft like woodworking, blacksmithing, or pottery, but he applies the verbs I have listed (breaking, straightening, hardening) to the minds and natures of children without specifying a particular material process.

[74] Cf. Bloomer 2011 for a sensitive treatment of Quintilian's emphasis on the "agency" and "subjectivity" of the child, by contrast with tropes that envision children fundamentally passive receivers of impressions (see esp. n.10).

[75] Cf. Morgan 1998a: 259-260 and Bloomer 2011: 112, n.10. See also Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[76] Winterbottom 1998: 328 discusses the moral resonances of *pravus*. I am deliberately choosing the more literal meanings of *rectum* and *pravum* in order to highlight the material resonances of the vocabulary Quintilian is using to describe moral development.

[77] *Frango*, however, seems to imply a failed process.

Although in this passage Quintilian uses the trope of the teacher as craftsman and the student as material to emphasize the importance of laying the foundations properly, the craft imagery takes on a more decidedly ominous tone in the famous discussion of corporal punishment that follows, where vocabulary of "breaking" and "hardening" is used to describe psychological harms that befall children as a result of educational abuses.

> I do not like at all for pupils to be beaten, although it has been a custom and Chrysippus does not disapprove. In the first place, because it is ugly and slavish and certainly (as happens if you change the child's age) an injury; then because, if a student has such an un-free mind that he cannot be straightened out by rebuke, he will also be hardened to the blows like the worst of slaves; finally, because there will be no need of this punishment if a diligent "foreman" of studies presides. Now it almost seems as if the negligence of pedagogues is corrected in this way, that the boys are not compelled to do what is upright but are punished because they did not do it. Furthermore, when you force a little fellow with blows, what will you do to a young man on whom a beating cannot be used and by whom greater matters must be learned? Add to this the fact that many things ugly to speak of and soon to be a source of disgrace often happen to the beaten children because of pain or fear, and this shame shatters their mind and casts it down and dictates a flight from light itself and disgust (*Inst.*1.3.13-17).
>
> Caedi vero discentis, quamlibet et receptum sit et Chrysippus non improbet, minime velim, primum quia **deforme** atque servile est et certe, (quod convenit si aetatem mutes) iniuria; deinde quod, si cui tam est mens inliberalis ut obiurgatione non **corrigatur**, is etiam ad plagas ut pessima quaeque mancipia **durabitur**: postremo quod ne opus erit quidem hac castigatione si adsiduus studiorum exactor adstiterit. Nunc fere neglegentia paedagogorum sic emendari videtur ut pueri non facere quae **recta** sunt **cogantur,** sed cur non fecerint puniantur. Denique cum parvolum verberibus **coegeris**, quid iuveni facias, cui nec adhiberi potest hic metus et maiora discenda sunt? Adde, quod multa vapulantibus dictu **deformia** et mox verecundiae futura saepe dolore vel metu acciderunt, qui pudor **frangit** animum et abicit atque ipsius lucis fugam et taedium dictat.

As above, the verbs *frango*, *duro*, and *corrigo* recur, along with *cogo* and the adjectives *rectus* and *deformis*. The personality of the child takes on a definite form, hopefully upright but in danger of being misshapen by ill-chosen actions on the part of the teacher. In addition to causing physical pain and perhaps even physical breakage, beatings shatter the child's psychological and mental faculties and alienate him from the "light" of society, the very light that is supposed to be the appropriate home for the ideal orator (1.2.18). The language of compulsion (*cogo*) hearkens back to Quintilian's earlier statement that the child's *voluntas*, and consequently his enthusiasm for learning, cannot be forced.[79] Forcing a boy by beating him (*cum parvulum verberibus* ***coegeris***) is ultimately ineffective because, when that boy becomes a young man and can no longer be beaten, there will be no remaining way of making him be good; furthermore, being beaten destroys the child's morale and sense of worth. The threat of deformity and illiberality—the opposites of education's aims—dog the discussion of corporal punishment as if to show the failure of an education that neglects the initial stages of development and then tries to force corrections later on. The material vocabulary of hardening and breaking becomes a negative vocabulary that describes an education gone wrong, which is not really an education at all.

---

[78] Quint. *Inst.*1.3.13: *frangas enim citius quam corrigas.*

By contrast, vegetal imagery in *Institutio* 1.3, echoed in 2.4, offers a positive vision of the child's development and points to the way education should function: by allowing and fostering the natural unfolding of the child's character and psychological energy. Insisting in 1.3.13 that the boy be rid of vices right away through proper admonishment, Quintilian cites a verse from the *Georgics* to compare impressionable students to vegetal shoots. "Straightaway therefore the boy must be warned not to do anything greedily, improperly, or in a headstrong manner, and that verse of Vergil's should be kept always in mind: 'so much does habit count in tender years.'"[80] The quote is from *Georgics*

---

[79] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*1.3.8: *quod studium discendi voluntate, quae cogi non potest, constat*. The use of *cogo* to describe the pedagogue's "enforcement" of study is metaphorical rather than literal in this context. Given that Quintilian is arguing against corporal punishment and thus against physical coercion, he probably means that diligent supervision will "compel" the student to finish his work in a healthy, non-violent way. Quintilian is otherwise skeptical of the value of coercion in education.

[80] Quint. *Inst.*1.3.13: *protinus ergo ne quid cupide, ne quid improbe, ne quid inpotenter faciat monendus est puer, habendumque in animo semper illud Vergilianum: 'adeo in teneris consuescere multum est.'*

2.279, where the poet discusses the transfer of vines from their initial nursery to the orchard and the importance of keeping the plantings in the same position relative to the sky so that they can continue to thrive, letting the accustomed sides face the southern heat and the icy polar winds.[81] In Quintilian's appropriation of this quote, young students are envisioned as delicate plants that must be properly oriented from the beginning in order to ensure their continued flourishing. Likewise, in 2.4.8-12 he twice compares students to "delicate plants" (*tenerae plantae, frondes tenerae*). In the first instance he warns against having a dry teacher for boys; like dry soil for vegetal shoots, a stale teacher can inhibit young students from developing higher aspirations: "especially for boys, no less than for plants that are still delicate, desiccated and moisture-less soil must be avoided."[82] In the second instance, he warns against overly stern criticism of students that may permanently discourage their efforts.

> Not even this point is unworthy of mention, that the talents of boys may in the meantime fail because of excessive harshness in correction. For they lose hope and feel pain and end up hating [their studies] and, what is most harmful of all, attempt nothing while they are afraid of everything. And this fact is even noticed by rustics, who do not think that the sickle should be used on delicate foliage because it seems to shun the iron and not yet to be able to endure an incision (*Inst.*2.4.10-12).
>
> Ne illud quidem quod admoneamus indignum est, ingenia puerorum nimia interim emendationis severitate deficere; nam et desperant et dolent et novissime oderunt et, quod maxime nocet, dum omnia timent nihil conantur. Quod etiam rusticis notum est, quo frondibus teneris non putant adhibendam esse falcem, quia reformidare ferrum videntur et nondum cicatricem pati posse.

Quintilian's alliterative list of the consequences of severity in 2.4.10 (*deficere, desperare, dolere, odisse*) reiterates the danger that a student's *studium discendi* and *voluntas* can be worn down and extinguished by immoderate work. Here again, Quintilian compares students, especially young ones, to vulnerable growths that need nourishment and gentle treatment in order to flourish. Arid soil does not provide a sufficient substrate for their natures to unfold, while overly harsh correction, figured as pruning, discourages them from developing their talents, thus cutting off the educational process.

---

[81] See Conington 2007 *ad loc.* (n. 267-272).

[82] Quint. *Inst.*2.4.8: *quapropter in primis evitandus, et in pueris praecipue, magister aridus, non minus quam teneris adhuc plantis siccum et sine umore ullo solum*.

This imagery of student as plant captures the collaborative interplay between the spontaneous, self-directed growth of an organism (student) and the nourishing influences it requires in order to reach its full potential (teacher).[83] Without underestimating the importance of the teacher's role and the potential for harm as well as for good contained in it, plant imagery displays a special sensitivity to the importance of the student in determining the success of education: it is ultimately the plant that is the subject of the growing, although environmental factors can be devastating or enhancing.[84]

In his discussion of education at its earliest stages, Quintilian has shown that the learner's *voluntas* cannot be coerced, but he does believe it can be encouraged so that, given proper conditions, the boy embraces the demanding educational curriculum necessary for making him a virtuous and masterful orator. The role of good *voluntas* in oratorical education is not limited to small children, however. In the second major use of *voluntas* being treated in this section—12.1.31, the heart of his defense of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*—Quintilian declares that his ideal, and the role of an upright *voluntas* in realizing it, belongs to every age.

> Therefore, let young people and indeed people of every age (for no time is late **for an upright will**) strive towards this with our entire minds, let us work painstakingly for this; and perhaps it may happen that we achieve it (*Inst.*12.1.31).
>
> Quare iuventus, immo omnis aetas (neque enim **rectae voluntati** serum est tempus ullum), totis mentibus huc tendamus, in haec elaboremus: forsan et consummare contingat.

Quintilian clearly applies the invitation to study and self-improvement to people of all ages.[85] The pairing of the adjective *recta* with *voluntas* is a verbal link back to the discussion in 1.3.12 of the importance of children's *mores* being properly established to discern between *rectum* and *pravum*. Here, an upright will seems to be the precondition for oratorical progress, particularly for those hoping to increase their abilities later in life. For people with this characteristic, making progress towards the lofty goal of oratorical perfection is always within reach. *Recta voluntas* seems to be a determining characteristic that orients a person towards the good goal. The impassioned hortatory subjunctives that follow (*huc tendamus, in haec elaboremus*) suggest a more active quality for the *recta voluntas* as well. Language of totality (*totae mentes*), striving (*tendere, elaborare*), and attainment (*consummare, consequi*) contributes to this sense of energetic activity that Quintilian wants to inspire in his listeners. Growth in moral goodness and improvement in rhetorical skill appear here as intertwined processes, like two strands making up a single rope or two legs on which the person advances towards the goal. The prerequisites for this process are *recta voluntas* and diligent, all-consuming effort, which seems to be an outgrowth of *recta voluntas.* Quintilian himself plays an important role in engaging *voluntas* and encouraging effort: not only does he instruct the reader in the precepts of the rhetorical art, but he also, and more importantly, offers a powerful exhortation designed to set in motion the struggle to realize his educational ideal.

---

[83] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*2.9.3 and Morgan 1998a: 255-259.

[84] By contrast, in craft imagery, the material is more clearly subject to the will of the craftsman.

[85] This may seem at first to jar with his pessimism in Book One about the possibility of correcting something that has become set in its ways (*frangas enim citius quam corrigas quae in pravum induruerunt,* 1.3.12-13) and his observations on mental plasticity in *Inst.*1.1.22. In this passage Quintilian is addressing people who are already *boni*: their wills are already in the right place (vs. needing correction).

5. Quintilian's Last Word

The foregoing analysis allows us to read Quintilian's parting words in Book Twelve—and the whole *Institutio*—in a new light. Immediately after describing students standing high up on a slope looking down on those below, he brings his treatise to a close with a final address to its dedicatee.

> These, Marcus Vitorius, were the things with which I thought I was able to do my part in advancing the precepts of speaking, the knowledge of which, even if it does not bring great usefulness to enthusiastic young men, yet certainly will impart what I am seeking even more—good will (*Inst.*12.11.31).
>
> Haec erant, Marce Vitori, quibus praecepta dicendi pro virili parte adiuvari posse per nos videbantur, quorum cognitio studiosis iuvenibus si non magnam utilitatem adferet, at certe, quod magis petimus, bonam voluntatem.

At first glance, Quintilian may seem to be apologizing for the weakness of his efforts (i.e., "Even if I have failed in my poor efforts, I am counting on your good will and indulgence to make up for what

I lack").[86] But in the context of his portrayal of the orator's *voluntas* (i.e., as a firm commitment to the good and the engine of progress in eloquence), what may initially seem like a bid for indulgence begins to look more like a triumphant claim of success. If Quintilian's moral orator has to be a *vir bonus*, and the chief part of being a *vir bonus* is, as Quintilian has stated in 12.11.11, the right kind of *voluntas*, then Quintilian is effectively claiming that he has given readers everything they need to become morally upright orators on the pattern of the ideal orator whose education the *Institutio* has portrayed.

The weight Quintilian places on *bona voluntas* in this passage becomes even clearer when it is situated vis-à-vis a larger network of prologues that frame the *Institutio*'s program. In addition to *voluntas*, three elements of 12.11.31 make conjoined appearances in the prologues of other books, thus setting up a chain of programmatic passages that unwinds over the course of the work to culminate in the epilogue of Book Twelve. These three elements are Marcus Vitorius, the named addressee; a larger envisioned audience of enthusiastic young men (*studiosi* or *boni iuvenes*) whose identities are not further specified; and the notion of the *Institutio*'s "usefulness" or "benefit" (*utilitas*) to its various overlapping audiences. In the prologue to Book One, Quintilian expresses his hopes that the work will be useful to Marcus Vitorius in the education of his son, Geta.[87] By the prologue to Book Six, Quintilian shifts the referent of *utilitas* to a larger audience of good youths, as well as to his own son.[88] Since the boy's death eliminates Quintilian's claim to any personal fruits for his labors, he says that all remaining *utilitas* is transferred to others.[89] Finally, in the epilogue to Book Twelve, Quintilian downplays the *utilitas* of his work for his studious young audience and instead claims that its real significance lies in contributing to the *bona voluntas* of its youthful readers. Like

---

[86] For protestations of weakness, see e.g., Quint. *Inst.*4.*praef.*7 and 6.*praef.*14-16.

[87] Quint. *Inst.*1.*praef.*6: *quod erudiendo Getae tuo…non inutiles fore libri videbantur.*

[88] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*1-2: *ad iuvenes bonos pervenire posset utilitas* and *praeceptore tamen patre uteretur.*

[89] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*16: *quod in nullum iam proprium usum perseveramus, sed omnis haec cura alienas utilitates*, *si modo quid utile scribimus, spectat.*

utilitas, *voluntas* has shifted ground throughout these passages. Quintilian had opened Book Six by naming the *voluntas* of Marcus Vitorius as the motivating force of his own work.[90] Throughout the text Quintilian's own *voluntas* has been a prominent player in articulating his vision of the orator as a good man skilled in speaking.[91] In the final words of Book Twelve, Quintilian passes the baton of *voluntas* to his readers. What is most important from this point on is the *bona voluntas* with which the *studiosi iuvenes* move forward, inspired by Quintilian's exhortation and example and committed to the moral ideal of the orator. The *Institutio* may be at an end, but its work must continue through the *bona voluntas* of readers whom it has recruited.

Strictly speaking, Quintilian says that a sort of knowledge (*cognitio*) is what will give *bona voluntas* to his youthful readers. Although the referent of *haec* is unspecified, it would seem to encompass all the material Quintilian has assembled in the *Institutio*: not only rhetorical precepts but also advice, exhortations, and the lifelong map of an educational project that he lays out. The knowledge that leads to *bona voluntas* may require rereading the *Institutio*, reconsidering Quintilian's arguments, and seeking ways of putting his advice into practice. At any rate, the idea of *cognitio* points to the necessity of buy-in from the reader: it is not the text of the *Institutio* itself, but the reader's interaction with the text—his "getting to know" it, or *cognitio*—that leads to *bona voluntas*. Quintilian seems to suggest that someone who really knows what he (Quintilian) is talking about and appreciates the value of the ideal he is setting forth will *want* it, like the ideal reader at the end of Book One who savors the goal of *eloquentia* and is willing to invest time and effort into acquiring it.[92]

---

[90] Quint. *Inst.*6.*praef.*1: *haec, Marce Vitori, ex tua voluntate maxime ingressus*. In the Book One prologue he mentions additional motives: the pressure of some unnamed friends who wanted him to write on the art of oratory (*Inst.*1.*praef.*1-2), as well as the over-enthusiasm of his young admirers, who prematurely published his lecture notes, as one motive for his publishing the *Institutio* (*Inst.*1.*praef.*7). In the prologue to Book Four, he also alludes to Domitian as a motivating force (*dexterque ac volens adsit et me qualem esse credidit faciat*).

[91] E.g., Quint. *Inst.*12.11.2: *eundem virum bonum esse et dicendi peritum velim*. See also 2.15.1-2 and 2.15.33, discussed above in Chapter One, and especially *Inst.*1.2.3: *neque enim esse oratorem nisi bonum virum iudico et fieri, etiam si potest, nolo*. The words *quod magis petimus* in 12.11.31 seem like a final indication of Quintilian's own wishes: he wants his readers to have *bona voluntas*.

As we have seen in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Quintilian presents the orator's education as a gradual process of coming to want the good of eloquence. Furthermore, as Chapter Three has shown, he creates an authorial persona that helps readers experience the orator's education in a virtual manner mediated by the text. By the end of the *Institutio*, readers are figured as Quintilian's friends pursuing the same goal –eloquence– with parallel *voluntates* alongside him. As a means of catalyzing readerly development of *bona voluntas*, Quintilian outlines a psychological exercise in the passage that introduces 12.11.11: he lays out a series of mental steps that daunted readers can follow in order to overcome their hesitation and embrace his program of studies.[93] After deeply considering (1) the power of the human mind to accomplish what it wants to (*quae velit*) and (2) the greatness of the goal of eloquence, whose pursuit is worth every effort, readers will understand that the path is by no means so impassable or so difficult as it had seemed.[94] This is because, as we have seen above, being a *vir bonus*, the most important aspect of being an orator, is mainly a matter of having a good *voluntas*. Having a good *voluntas* seems to be something that a person can choose to "put on" by adopting a mental attitude or making a commitment that enables him to move towards the goal with enthusiasm.[95] The series of mental operations that Quintilian invites readers to perform (*renuntiare sibi, cogitare, mente concipere*) seems aimed at getting people to perceive the goal of eloquence as desirable, to view themselves as capable of reaching the goal, and so to *want* to reach it by following the program Quintilian has provided as a means towards it.

---

[92] Quint. *Inst.*1.12.18.

[93] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.9-11. The anxiety that readers may "be thoroughly terrified and give up hope before trying out" his program (*perhorrescant et desperent ante experimentum*) evokes the fear that students may become discouraged and give up if they are corrected too harshly when they are unable to bear it (cf. *Inst.*2.4.10: *et desperant et dolent et novissime oderunt*, as well as 8.*praef.*2.

[94] Quint. *Inst.*12.11.10.

[95] Recall *induo* from 12.11.11, discussed above in Section 2.

Although these mental steps are meant to facilitate the development or engagement of *voluntas*, the very act of performing them suggests that the person who does so already wants the good. Quintilian's text thus draws out once again the apparent paradox at the heart of wanting. In one sense, wanting something seems to involve a deliberate application of mental concentration and energy to a particular object that it is in our power to want or not to want. At the same time, the choice to apply this energy in a particular direction presupposes that we already *want* it on some level.

In the final analysis, wanting remains in the realm of personal spontaneity; a reader may well decide not to apply the effort needed to get to know Quintilian's work and embrace his project, and there is nothing the text or the author can do to guarantee that he will. At the same time, however, Quintilian's exemplary persona and the appeals of the *Institutio* suggest that external factors—a persuasive speech, an inspiring teacher—can help a person to want something by catalyzing or intensifying a commitment to the goal that would almost certainly not have arisen unaided. The *bona voluntas* that Quintilian names as his objective (*quod magis petimus*) at the end of the *Institutio* is at once a deeply personal quality and the fruit of collaboration. Like the good teacher who can foster the growth of the plant but cannot force it, Quintilian knows that, although he cannot make others want the good, he can help them to do so, and this in itself may be the greatest moral success that a teacher of rhetoric can claim.

Conclusion

The reading of the *Institutio* that I have offered in the foregoing pages aspires to draw out the richness and dynamism of Quintilian's text and project. To the Platonic problem of whether a rhetor can teach his students how to be just and good, Quintilian responds with a daring "Yes!" and, as I have argued, attempts to make good on this claim through his appeals to readers. Quintilian's artful presentation of the orator's educational pathway, by the end of which the student is envisioned as wanting the goal of eloquence for himself, is nested in persuasive appeals that aim to engage the *bona voluntas* of readers— the very *bona voluntas* on which the ideal of "the good man skilled in speaking" depends.

While the current version of the project focuses around concerns internal to the *Institutio*, I envision two main directions for extending the argument that I have developed here. The first is towards a more nuanced assessment of the relationship between Quintilian and Seneca the Younger, of whom Quintilian, even in his own day, was generally thought to disapprove.[1] It is true that much evidence seems to favor the idea of an opposition or hostility between Quintilian and Seneca. Leaving aside their major stylistic disagreements, the aim of Quintilian's educational project runs counter to Seneca's: while Seneca in the *Epistulae* disparages orators and counsels Lucilius to leave behind speech-making in order to devote himself to philosophy,[2] Quintilian ridicules philosophers who shield themselves from the rigors of the forum in the crannies of philosophical schools.[3] The cryptic *sententia* with which Quintilian closes his treatment of Seneca, itself the ending of the *Institutio*'s famous reading list in 10.1, seems to exude sarcasm: suggesting that Seneca's nature "was worthy of wanting (*velle*) better things," Quintilian opines that Seneca "accomplished what he wanted" (*quod voluit effecit*), as if to impale Seneca on his own pet concept of *voluntas*.[4] However, this statement also suggests that Quintilian, aware of the prominence of *voluntas* in Seneca's writings, is interested in co-opting it for his own purposes.

---

[1] Cf. Quint. *Inst.*10.1.125, where Quintilian complains about the "popular but false opinion" that he hates Seneca.

[2] Sen. *Ep.*75 and 20, respectively.

[3] Quint. *Inst.*12.2.8.

In light of the analysis of *voluntas* in the *Institutio* that I have conducted in Chapter Four, striking similarities emerge between Quintilian's usage and more famous appearances of *voluntas* and *velle* in Seneca's *Epistulae*. For instance, Seneca portrays "wanting" as a purposeful quality stably oriented towards the good that, as in Quintilian, already constitutes a large part of goodness.[5] Like Quintilian, Seneca links *voluntas* with deliberate commitment and sustained perseverance.[6] Arguing that true wisdom consists in stably wanting the good—indeed, the only thing it is possible to want with stability, since human beings are oriented for what is "upright" and good and will rest in it once they have found it—Seneca makes "wanting" the proving point of a person's moral progress.[7] Furthermore, the correspondence between Seneca's moral exhortation in the *Epistulae* and Quintilian's own attempts at motivating readers suggests a protreptic quality for the *Institutio*, especially Book Twelve, that has yet to be explored fully. Seneca's portrayal of the dynamic interplay between the wish of the teacher and the willingness of the student, and the friendship between them,[8] sheds light on Quintilian's portrayal of the good teacher inspiring love in his students and helping them willingly imitate him and become good men who are capable of being his friends.[9] When Quintilian uses exhortative techniques and tropes like urging in the first-person plural, emphasizing the total dedication required by this enterprise, and envisioning progress as a slope from which you can look down on those below you, he is harnessing the power of Senecan protreptic for his own oratorical project. Examining the extent of Quintilian's adaptation of Senecan motifs enables a reading of Book Twelve, the culmination of the *Institutio*, as a unique phenomenon: an exhortation to a life of moral and intellectual excellence not through philosophy but through oratory. Quintilian may be making use of Seneca's imagery, terminology, and exhortative techniques to set up an alternative educational project that can capture the interests of the Seneca-obsessed youths in whom he hopes to instill his own educational priorities.[10]

---

[4] Quint. *Inst.*10.1.130: *digna enim fuit illa natura quae meliora vellet; quod voluit effecit.* I am grateful to Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer for this observation.

[5] Compare Sen. *Ep.*34.3 (*itaque pars magna bonitas est velle fieri bonum*) with Quint. *Inst.*12.11.11 (*ut boni viri simus, voluntate maxime constat*).

[6] Cf. Sen. *Ep.*16.1-2: *perseverandum est et adsiduo studio robur addendum, donec bona mens sit quod bona voluntas est* and *Ep.*23.8: *ideo constituendum est, quid velimus, et in eo perseverandum*. "Enthusiasm" (*studium*) and tenacity are also important elements in Quintilian's portrayal of the psychological attitudes needed to strive for eloquence.

[7] Cf. Sen. *Ep.*20.5: *quid est sapientia? Semper idem velle atque idem nolle* and *Ep.*35.4: *quotiens experiri voles, an aliquid actum sit, observa, an eadem hodie velis, quae heri. Mutatio voluntatis indicat animum natare...*

[8] Cf., e.g., Sen. *Ep.*6.2-4 and *Ep.*35.

The second direction for extending my project requires situating Quintilian's work vis-à-vis the situation of oratory in Roman society of the late first and early second centuries CE. The limitation of oratory's political scope under the principate, as well as pessimism about the moral status of orators in general, are common themes that may make Quintilian's project seem, to many, quixotic.[11] But Quintilian, who survived and prospered under the Flavians, could not have been as detached from the political and social challenges of his time as caricatures of him suggest.[12] Not even Quintilian's lavish praise of Domitian in the prologue to *Institutio* Book Four can entirely obscure an undercurrent of skepticism about authoritarian rule that suggestively surfaces in his discussions of the orator's interactions with the judge. Drawing on and extending the reading of

---

[9] See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

[10] In *Inst.*10.1.126 Quintilian describes a craze for reading Seneca among young men earlier in his career that he strove to counteract.

[11] Cf., e.g., Winterbottom 1964.

[12] Cf. Morgan 1998b: 247-248. Juv.6.75 pokes fun at Quintilian as a paragon of propriety, the opposite of the gladiators and actors whom Roman women are in love with, while Martial in *Spect.*2.90 jokingly calls Quintilian "supreme director of wandering youth" and the "pride of the Roman toga" (*Quintiliane, vagae moderator summe iuventae, gloria Romanae, Quintiliane, togae*). Juv.7.188-190 (and following) remarks on Quintilian's freakishly good fortune in acquiring vast wealth as a rhetoric teacher. On Tacitus' implicit ridicule in the *Dialogus* of Quintilian's project as hopelessly out of touch, see Barnes 1986 and, less emphatically, Brink 1993.

Teresa Morgan, who sees Quintilian as having a substantive political theory,[13] I propose that Quintilian's theorization of *voluntas* may be read as responding in part to the political situation under Domitian.[14] Since political power and decision-making are concentrated in the hands of a supreme individual, the *princeps*,[15] Quintilian champions an ideal in which another individual (the orator) develops the power to override the potential injustice of the *princeps* in a judicial setting. Quintilian alludes to the potentially problematic power of the emperor's will in *Institutio* 5.13.6. Since the *princeps* can make up his mind however he wishes (*cui utrum velit liceat*) without being bound by existing laws,[16] the orator can adopt a different persuasive strategy than he would use with an ordinary judge: before the emperor, the orator can plead for mercy, begging the emperor to show his *clementia* by sparing the guilty defendant.[17] This technique affords the orator scope for the kind of emotional maneuvering that Quintilian claims is the orator's highest achievement.[18] As we have seen in Chapter Four, it is through this emotional mastery that Quintilian portrays the orator as dominating the judge, sweeping him away by the force of his emotional appeals to get him to carry out what the orator intends.[19]

Putting together Quintilian's treatment of the orator-judge relationship with passages where Quintilian alludes to the emperor as a potential judge, we can envision scenarios in which the will of the *princeps*, which ordinarily can override or determine the law, is counterpoised by that of the orator, on whom Quintilian lays the moral responsibility for bringing about a just outcome.[20] By qualifying the orator's will as upright and committed to the achievement of justice in 12.1, Quintilian establishes the orator as a sort of moral check on the emperor.[21] Acknowledging Quintilian's participation in techniques of doublespeak[22] without denying that he may have been genuinely grateful to the emperor for benefits bestowed, I propose that Quintilian resists the possibility of imperial domination not so much by seeking to subvert an unjust regime as by seeking to form individuals who are equipped to balance and transform it from within.[23] In laying out the education of an orator who always wants the good—and has the power to achieve it through skillful speaking—Quintilian offers a means of resisting injustice in the political regime while empowering younger people, including the emperor's potential successors, to aspire to build a better one.

---

[13] Morgan 1998b.

[14] Cf. Morgan 1998b.

[15] Quint. *Inst.* 6.1.35: *cum omnia curae tutelaeque unius innixa periclitari nullo iudicii exitu possint.*

[16] Cf. Brunt 1977 on the *lex de imperio Vespasiani.*

[17] Quint. *Inst.*5.13.7.

[18] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.4-5.

[19] Quint. *Inst.*6.2.1, 3-6. See also Chapter Four, Section 3.

[20] Quint. *Inst.*6.1.7-8.

---

[21] Insofar as there are situations in which the emperor may be acting as a judge, as in *Inst.*5.13.

[22] Cf. Bartsch 1994.

[23] Considering that the education of Domitian's grand-nephews and prospective heirs was committed to Quintilian (*Inst.*4.*praef.*2), this is not as far-fetched as it sounds.

Dissertation Bibliography

Editions and Translations of Texts

Austin, R. G. *Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae Liber XII.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948.

Babbitt, F. C. *Plutarch's Moralia, Volume I: The Education of Children. How the Young Man Should Study Poetry. On Listening to Lectures. How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend. How a Man May Become Aware of His Progress in Virtue.* Loeb Classical Library 197. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Basore, John W. *Seneca: Moral Essays.* 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library 214, 254, 310. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.

Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato.* 2nd ed. [New York]: Basic Books, 1991.

Braund, Susanna Morton. *Juvenal and Persius.* Loeb Classical Library 91. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Bury, R. G. *Plato: Laws.* 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library 187, 192. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Sextus Empiricus: Against Professors. Loeb Classical Library 382. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949.

Conington, John and Henry Nettleship. *Conington's Virgil: Georgics.* Bristol: Phoenix Press, 2007.

Dodds, E. R. *Plato: Gorgias.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

Fairclough, H. Rushton and G. P. Goold. *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid.* 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library 63-64. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Falconer, W. A. *Cicero: On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination.* Loeb Classical Library 154. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923.

Giomini, Remo and Maria Silvana Celentano. *C. Iulii Victoris Ars Rhetorica.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1980.

Griffin, M. T. and E. M. Atkins. *Cicero: On Duties.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Gummere, Richard M. *Seneca: Epistles.* 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library 75-77. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917, 1920, and 1925, respectively.

Hicks, R. D. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Volume II: Books 6-10.* Loeb Classical Library 185. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925.

Hooper, W. D. and Harrison Boyd Ash. *Cato, Varro: On Agriculture.* Loeb Classical Library 283. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.

Hubbell, H. M. *Cicero: De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica.* Loeb Classical Library 386. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Irwin, Terence. *Plato: Gorgias.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

Kaster, Robert. *Cicero: Brutus and Orator.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Long, A. A. and David Sedley. *The Hellenistic Philosophers.* 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Malcovati, Henrica. *Oratorum romanorum fragmenta liberae rei publicae* (2nd edition). Torino: Paravia, 1955.

May, James M. and Jakob Wisse. *Cicero: On the Ideal Orator (De Oratore).* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Miller, Frank Justus and G. P. Goold. *Ovid: Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8.* Loeb Classical Library 42. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916.

Miller, Walter. *Cicero: De Officiis.* Loeb Classical Library 30. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913.

Mynors, R. A. B. *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Nehamas, Alexander and Paul Woodruff. *Plato: Phaedrus.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995.

Newlands, Carole. *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian: Translation and Text of Peter Ramus's* Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum *(1549).* DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986.

Novokhatko, Anna A. *The Invectives of Sallust and Cicero.* Berlin: DeGruyter, 2009.

Ostwald, Martin. *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Perrin, Bernadotte. *Plutarch: Lives, Volume II: Themistocles and Camillus. Aristides and Cato Major. Cimon and Lucullus.* Loeb Classical Library 47. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Plutarch: Lives, Volume X: Agis and Cleomenes. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Philopoemen and Flaminius. Loeb Classical Library 102. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Rackham, H. *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics.* Loeb Classical Library 73. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926.

Aristotle: Politics. Loeb Classical Library 264. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932.

Cicero: On the Orator: Books 1-2. Loeb Classical Library 348. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942.[24]

Cicero: On the Orator: Book 3. On Fate. Stoic Paradoxes. Divisions of Oratory. Loeb Classical Library 349. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942.

Reinhardt, Tobias and Michael Winterbottom (eds.). *Quintilian: Institutio Oratoria Book 2.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Rouse, W. H. D. and Martin Smith. *Lucretius: On the Nature of Things.* Loeb Classical Library 181. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924.

Russell, Donald A. *Quintilian: The Orator's Education.* 5 vols. Loeb Classical Library 124-127, 494. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Shackleton Bailey, D. R. *Cicero: Philippics 1-6.* Revised by John T. Ramsey, Gesine Manuwald. Loeb Classical Library 189. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Martial: Epigrams, Volume I: Spectacles, Books 1-5. Loeb Classical Library 94. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Spalding, Georg Ludwig. *M. Fabii Quintiliani De Institutio Oratoria Libri Duodecim.* 6 vols. Leipzig, 1803.

Thilo, Georg and Hermann Hagen. *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1881.

Winterbottom, Michael. *Seneca the Elder: Declamations, Volume II: Controversiae Books 7-10. Suasoriae, Fragments.* Loeb Classical Library 464. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Wright, F. A. *Jerome: Select Letters.* Loeb Classical Library 262. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Yunis, Harvey. *Plato: Phaedrus.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

General Bibliography

Allen, Danielle. *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since* Brown v. Board of Education. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Asmis, Elizabeth. "The Stoics on the Craft of Poetry." *Rheinisches Museum* 160 (2017), 113-151.

---

[24] This volume containing the first two books of *De Oratore* was begun and substantially translated by E. W. Sutton, and then completed upon Sutton's death by H. Rackham. I have listed it under Rackham's name for the reader's ease of reference.

Astin, Allan. *Cato the Censor*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Atherton, Catherine. "Hand over Fist: The Failure of Stoic Rhetoric." *The Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988), 392-427.

Ballaci, Giuseppe. *Political Theory Between Philosophy and Rhetoric: Politics as Transcendence and Contingency.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Barnes, T. D. "The Significance of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 90 (1986), 225-244.

Bartsch, Shadi. *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

"Philosophy and Rhetoric at Rome." In M. MacDonald (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199731596.013.017

"Senecan Metaphor and Stoic Self-Instruction." In Shadi Bartsch and David Wray (eds.) *Seneca and the Self.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 188-220.

Berry, Edmund G. "The *De Liberis Educandis* of Pseudo-Plutarch." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63 (1958), 387-399.

Bloomer, W. Martin. "Quintilian on Education." In W. Martin Bloomer (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Education*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015: 347-357.

"Quintilian on the Child as Learning Subject." *Classical World* 105 (2011), 109-137.

Bonner, Stanley F. *Education in Ancient Rome: From the elder Cato to the younger Pliny.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977.

Brink, C. O. "History in the 'Dialogus de Oratoribus' and Tacitus the Historian: A New Approach to an Old Source." *Hermes* 121 (1993): 335-349.

Brinton, Alan. "Quintilian, Plato, and the 'Vir Bonus.'" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 16 (1983):167-184.

Brunt, P. A. "Lex de Imperio Vespasiani." *Journal of Roman Studies* 67 (1977): 95-116.

Studies in Stoicism. Miriam Griffin and Alison Samuels (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Byers, Sarah. "The Meaning of *Voluntas* in Augustine." *Augustinian Studies* 37 (2006): 171-189.

Citroni, Mario. "*Ego, Nos et Tu* dans L'*Institutio Oratoria*: Les identités de la voix parlante et les domaines de destination du discours didactique." In Danielle van Mal-Maeder, Alexander Burnier, and Loreto Núñez (eds.), *Jeux de voix: Enonciation, intertextualité et intentionnalité dans la littérature antique.* Bern: Peter Lang, 2009: 201-224.

Classen, Carl Joachim. "Ciceros *orator perfectus*: ein *vir bonus dicendi peritus*?" In *Commemoratio: studi di filologia in ricordo di Riccardo Ribuoli* 2 (1986): 43-55.

Connolly, Joy. "Virile Tongues: Rhetoric and Masculinity." In William Dominik and Jon Hall (eds.), *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007: 83-97.

Cribiore, Raffaella. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Degl'Innocenti Pierini, Rita. "Cicerone in Seneca: alcune riflessioni su un tema sempre attuale (con un'appendice su: Cicerone *gradarius* in Seneca ep. 40,11." *Ciceroniana on line* 2 (2018): 13-38.

Dozier, Curtis. "Quintilian's *Ratio Discendi* (*Institutio* 12.8) and the Rhetorical Dimension of the *Institutio Oratoria*." *Arethusa* 47 (2014): 71-88.

Falcone, Giuseppe. "L'attribuzione della qualifica '*vir bonus*' nella prassi giudiziaria d'età repubblicana (a proposito di Cato, *or. frg.* 186 Sblend.= 206 Malc.)." In *Annali del Seminario Giuridico della R.Università di Palermo* 54 (2011): 55-93.

Fantham, Elaine. *Quintilian.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Oxford Bibliographies Online.

"The Concept of Nature and Human Nature in Quintilian's Psychology and Theory of Instruction." *Rhetorica* 13 (1995): 125-136.

Felski, Rita. *The Limits of Critique.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Fiori, R. "Fides et bona fides. Gerarchia sociale e categorie giuridiche." In *Modelli teorici e metodologici nella storia del diritto privato* 3 (2008): 465-481.

Frede, Michael. *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought.* A. A. Long (ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Fulkerson, Laurel. "Cicero's Palinode: Inconsistency in the Late Republic." *Greece & Rome* 60 (2013): 246-261.

Garsten, Bryan. *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Gély, Suzanne. "'Bona voluntas.' Vouloir, pouvoir et devoir dire chez Quintilien (*Just. Or.,* XII, II, 31)." *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 1 (1997): 58-66.

Gerbrandy, Piet. "Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* as a literary work." *Hermes* 148 (2020): 38-52.

Gnocchi, Francesca Romana. *Quintiliano: Modelli pedagogici e pratiche didattiche.* Breschia: Scholé, 2020.

Grant, W. Leonard. "Cicero on the Moral Character of the Orator." *The Classical Journal* 38 (1943): 472-478.

Gowing, Alain M. "Tully's boat: responses to Cicero in the imperial period." In Catherine Steel (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Cicero.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013: 233 250.

Gunderson, Erik. "The rhetoric of rhetorical theory." In Erik Gunderson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 109-125.

Güngerich, Rudolf. "Der *Dialogus* des Tacitus und Quintilians *Institutio Oratoria.*" *Classical Philology* XLVI (1951): 159-164.

Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault.* Edited by Arnold I. Davidson. Translated by Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

Heath, Malcolm. *Interpreting Classical Texts.* London: Duckworth, 2002.

Hellegouarc'h, J. *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la Republique*. Paris, 1972.

Inwood, Brad. *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.

Jones, W. H. S. "Quintilian, Plutarch, and the Early Humanists." *The Classical Review* 21 (1907): 33-43.

Kahn, Charles H. "Discovering the Will: From Aristotle to Augustine." In John M. Dillon and A. A. Long (eds.), *The Question of "Eclecticism": Studies in Later Greek Philosophy.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988: 234-259.

Kaster, Robert. "Becoming 'CICERO.'" In *Style and Tradition: Studies in Honor of Wendell Clausen.* Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998: 248-263.

"Controlling Reason: Declamation in Rhetorical Education at Rome." In Y. L. Too (ed.), *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001: 317-337.

Keeline, Thomas J. *The Reception of Cicero in the Early Roman Empire: The Rhetorical Schoolroom and the Making of a Cultural Legend.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Kennedy, George. *Quintilian.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969.

The Art of Persuasion in Greece. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.

La Bua, Giuseppe. *Cicero and Roman Education: The Reception of the Speeches and Ancient Scholarship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Lanham, Richard A. "The 'Q' Question." In *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993: 154-194.

Leigh, Matthew. "Quintilian on the Emotions (*Institutio Oratoria* 6 Preface and 1-2)." *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 122-140.

Liebersohn, Yosef Z. *The Dispute Concerning Rhetoric in Hellenistic Thought.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010. Google Books.

Logie, John. "'I Have No Predecessor to Guide My Steps': Quintilian and Roman Authorship." *Rhetoric Review* 22 (2003): 353-373.

Meador, Prentice A. "Quintilian's 'Vir Bonus.'" *Western Speech.* Summer 1970: 162-169.

Morgan, Teresa. *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.[25]

"A good man skilled in politics: Quintilian's political theory." In Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (eds.), *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of classical learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998: 245-262.[26]

Nocchi, Francesca Romana. *Quintiliano: Modelli pedagogici e pratiche didattiche.* Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 2020.

Novara, Antoinette. "La dignité de l'enseignement ou l'enseignement et le dialogue (d'après Cicéron, *Orat.*144*)*. Essai sur les raisons du choix de la forme dialoguée dans les grands traités rhétoriques cicéroniens." *Annales Latini Montium Aruernorum*, 10 (1983): 35-52.

Peirano Garrison, Irene. *Persuasion, Rhetoric and Roman Poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

"Quintilian." In *Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and General Literature*, Vol. 20. United States: R.S. Peale, 1891: 187-188.

Radermacher, Ludwig. "Studien zur Geschichte der antiken Rhetorik. III. Eine Schrift über den Redner als Quelle Ciceros und Quintilians." *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 54 (1899): 285 292.

Remer, Gary. *Ethics and the Orator: The Ciceronian Tradition of Political Morality.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Taoka, Yasuko. "Quintilian, Seneca, *Imitatio*: Re-reading *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.125-131." *Arethusa* 44 (2011): 123-137.

---

[25] This work appears as "Morgan 1998a" in the text of the dissertation.

[26] This work appears as "Morgan 1998b" in the text of the dissertation.

Villa, Edmondo. "Attualità e Tradizione nell'Ideale Politico e Sociale di 'Vir Bonus' in Catone." *Rivista dei studi classici* (1952-1953): 96-115.

Voelke, André-Jean. *L'idée de volonté dans le stoïcisme.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973.

Walzer, Arthur. "Quintilian's 'Vir Bonus' and the Stoic Wise Man." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 33, (2003): 25-41.

Winterbottom, Michael. *Papers on Quintilian and Ancient Declamation.* Antonia Stramaglia, Francesca Romana Nocchi, and Giuseppe Russo (eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

"Quintilian and the *Vir Bonus.*" *Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964): 90-97.

"Quintilian the Moralist." In Tomás Albaladejo, Emilio del Río, José Antonio Caballero (eds.), *Quintiliano: Historia y Actualidad de la Retórica*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1998: 317-334.

Zetzel, James E. G. "Plato with Pillows: Cicero on the Uses of Greek Culture." In David Braund and Christopher Gill (eds.), *Myth, History, and Culture in Republican Rome.* Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003: 119-138.

Zinsmaier, Thomas. "Quintilian als Deklamator: Die Topik des *parens superstes* im Proömium zu Buch VI der *Institutio oratoria.*" In Bianca-Jeannette Schröder and Jens-Peter Schröder, *Untersuchungen zu Schulübungen und Prunkreden von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit.* Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 2003: 153-167.