

And (the real point) this *is* authority, not power: unlike the beast or slave, the child will, it is assumed, come to appreciate the value and rightness of the system under which he lives.

The aim was to make of certain privileged children expert users of language, as speakers and writers, composers and interpreters. Children stand halfway between animals and adults, and must be treated in a way which combines the methods of instruction appropriate to both these groups – physical force, gentle encouragement, threats and rewards – but never rational persuasion, the supreme goal of élite education, and the reserve of adults alone. The subtle hierarchy of linguistic authority thus emerges as a superb preparation for the complex hierarchies of social authority under which the child would eventually exercise the *artes liberales* he had so painfully acquired. Famously, Tiberius was advised that he could grant citizenship to people, but not to words (Suet. *gr.* xxii). The grammarian, in contrast, had the power to construct the norms which legitimated, or outlawed, words and uses of them, as well as to grant children a passport to élite status.

CHAPTER II

*A good man skilled in politics:
Quintilian's political theory*

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There are, broadly speaking, two ways of reading Quintilian. One can see him as a type of likeable pedagogue: conscientious and agreeable; perhaps, among the major writers of the first century, not quite first class. This approach is favoured by historians of education and educationalists, some of whom have praised him as 'doubtless the ideal schoolmaster . . .',¹ dwelling on his 'native good sense',² his 'prevailing sanity',³ even his 'simple sincere soul'.⁴ Alternatively, one can mine him for the information he contains rather than the opinions he expresses. This method has a rather different history, being preferred by a long line of distinguished historians of rhetoric and literary theory.

If the first is largely a diversion, in the double sense that it at once entertains and distracts us from more serious considerations, the second approach is the measure of Quintilian's status as a source for ancient education and particularly for rhetoric. The *Institutio Oratoria* or 'Education of the Orator' is the longest and most detailed educational work to survive from the classical world. In twelve books it takes a learner through every stage of the training of an orator, incorporating on the way a long and detailed rhetorical handbook which matches in importance anything to survive elsewhere in Greek or Latin. If anything, though, Quintilian's descriptions of the pre-rhetorical stages of education are even more to be treasured than the later material. They provide the fullest systematic description we have of the content and organisation of *enkyklios paideia*, the 'common' or 'general' (though not encyclopaedic) education which is found throughout the Hellenistic and Roman worlds and which is attested by a number of Greek and Latin authors and

¹ E. C. Reinke, 'Quintilian Lighted the Way', *Classical Bulletin*, 51 (1975), 65–71.

² H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Latin Literature* (London, 1949), 400.

³ J. W. Duff, *A Literary History of Rome in the Silver Age* (New York, 1930), 407.

⁴ C. E. Bennett, 'An Ancient Schoolmaster's Message to Present-Day Teachers', *Classical Journal*, 4 (1909), 149–64.

hundreds of papyri and other documents. The components of this general education included learning to read, write and calculate, reading literature, and learning grammar, arithmetic and geometry, rhetoric, astronomy, music and philosophy.⁵ The first seven subjects, which were taught wherever literacy existed, seem to have gone together and to have been taught in a regular order and with a regular repertoire of texts and exercises. The last four were alternatives of which any or all might be studied according to the taste and opportunities of the pupil or his elders or teachers. That we can be fairly sure both that the order and content of these subjects was highly standardised and that standardisation persisted right across literate society is in large measure due to the fact that we have the prescriptions of Quintilian to compare with the more fragmentary accounts of other authors and the evidence of the papyri.

If there is a snag in all this, it is that the 'mining' approach to the *Institutio* has been so successful that it has distracted attention from the overall structure of the work. In particular it has tended to obscure the obvious but important fact that the *Institutio* presents itself as a work of educational theory, not merely as a handbook of rhetoric or a sourcebook of literary criticism. The distinction is substantial. If the *Institutio* were a rhetorical handbook we should not expect it to discuss what rhetoric is for, whether it is a good thing or what its putative product is equipped to do with his life.⁶ But if it is a work of educational theory, then it stands in a different tradition in ancient literature and such questions are highly relevant.⁷

In the ancient world educational theory regularly occurred in the context of political theory.⁸ Education, whether of an orator, a philosopher,

⁵ H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 6th edn. (Paris, 1965), 266ff., 356ff.; T. J. Morgan, *Frames of Mind: Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge University PhD thesis, 1995), ch. 1.

⁶ The masculine pronoun is used throughout: Quintilian makes no indication that he expects women to be taught like this.

⁷ This distinction is inevitably not hard and fast, but there is a distinction between technical works such as *Peri Hypsous* (*On the Sublime*), the *Progymnasmata* and the *Techne Grammatike* and writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Tacitus who discuss wider issues as well.

⁸ So, for instance, in Plato, *Republic and Laws*, Aristotle, *Politics*, Isocrates, *Panegyric*, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Ps.-Aristotle, *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, Zeno, *Republic* (and discussion in M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge, 1992)), Diogenes, *On Piety* (and discussion in E. Goodenough, 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship,' *Yale Classical Studies*, 1 (1928) 55-102), Nicolaus, *Life of Augustus*, Philo, *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies, et passim*, Plutarch, *On How the Young Man Should Listen to Poetry, On Listening to Lectures*, Cicero, *Republic, Orator, On Oratory*. See also G. J. D. Aalders, *Political Thought in Hellenistic Times*, (Amsterdam, 1975); N. Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley, 1988).

a general, or a smith, was examined in its social and political context on the understanding that the function of education was to produce people suited to bring about or maintain whatever political organisation the author proposed for a particular state. From the beginning of the *Institutio* Quintilian places himself unambiguously in this tradition. He says that for a long time he refused to write about the art of speaking, knowing that the most distinguished authors in both Latin and Greek had dealt with it. There are good reasons not to suppose that he meant the writers of rhetorical handbooks by the phrase 'the most brilliant authors in both languages.'⁹ The natural assumption should be that he means Cicero in Latin and Plato, Aristotle and Isocrates in Greek. His references throughout the work bear this out: he cites Cicero constantly and Plato more often than any other prose writer apart from Cicero; his citations of Aristotle and Isocrates are only just behind those of Plato, numerically.¹⁰ He therefore aligns himself from the start with a group of authors all of whom discuss rhetoric alongside or as part of philosophy, and for whom the relationship between rhetoric and politics was a central concern.

Since Quintilian identifies the *Institutio* as a work about education, rather than a rhetorical handbook or anything else, we should therefore ask what political theory underlies it, or at least we should consider whether such a question can reasonably be asked of it. My aim in what follows is a limited one: to try to show that the question of the political context and purpose of education is one which we can properly put to Quintilian, and that he has an answer which is both cogent and original.

From what we know of Quintilian's career it should not surprise us that he wrote as he did. He had flourished in Rome (and earlier in Spain) as an orator and teacher under every emperor from Nero to Domitian.¹¹ Vespasian gave him a state salary in 71 CE for teaching rhetoric.¹² Domitian awarded him consular insignia in 94/5, a rare honour for a man who was neither a soldier nor a senator. At the time of writing the *Institutio* he was tutor to Domitian's great-nephews and heirs.¹³ He was prominent, successful and close to the imperial court.

⁹ *auctores utriusque linguae clarissimos*, 1 pr. 1.

¹⁰ M. Odgers, 'Quintilian's use of earlier literature', *Classical Philology*, 28 (1933), 182-8.

¹¹ *Juvenal Sat.* 7. 188-9; *Martial Ep.* 2.90; G. A. Kennedy, *Quintilian* (New York, 1969), 15-30; W. C. McDermott, 'Quintilian and Domitian', *Athenaeum*, 57 (1979), 9-26.

¹² M. Woodside, 'Vespasian's Patronage of Education', *TAPA*, 73 (1942), 123-9.

¹³ S. Giet, 'Quintilien et les jeunes Flaviens', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 32 (1958), 321-34; 33 (1959), 1-17; S. J. Simon, 'Domitian, Patron of Letters', *CB*, 51 (1975), 58-9.

We should expect him to be politically informed and we should not be surprised to find politics in his work.

And once we begin to look for it, it is not hard to see. In the four books which frame the work (two at each end), and scattered throughout the others, Quintilian has a good deal to say about the nature and expectations of the ideal orator whom he aims to create and the sort of world in which he expects him to live. The orator's expectations are clear: he is educated to rule. If we look closely at the passages in which his political activities are described, however, we find that the orator's world is a rather curious one. It is not quite the Rome of Quintilian's own day. Neither is it the political landscape of earlier theorists like Cicero, though it owes something to them. It is Quintilian's own vision of how Roman society might be if his educational programme were carried out.

A GOOD MAN SKILLED IN SPEAKING

The nature of the orator's power and the qualities which equip him to exercise it are summed up in the definition of the orator borrowed by Quintilian from the elder Cato, alluded to throughout the *Institutio* and quoted repeatedly in its culminating book: 'a good man, skilled in speaking'.¹⁴ Quintilian's project is to show that the orator can be neither good nor skilled without education and it is worth examining in some detail how he establishes the connection.

The good man, in Quintilian's analysis, is the product of education acting on nature.¹⁵ In books one and two he claims that all human beings have an inherent tendency to virtue. Virtue, in his view, is natural and nature virtuous,¹⁶ a double principle which is put forward as a statement of faith. But virtue is not the product of nature unaided; it requires education to bring it to fruition.¹⁷ 'Virtue, though it uses some natural impulses, must be perfected by learning . . . Will he who does not know what abstinence is, be abstinent? Will he be brave, who has not overcome the fear of pain, death and superstition by reason? . . . What a small thing they think [virtue] is, if they think it comes so easily! But

¹⁴ *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 12.1.1, 31, 44; 12.2.1; 12.11.19; cf. 1 pr. 9; 12.1.27; Seneca the Elder, *Contr.* 1 pr. 9.

¹⁵ A commonplace in educational theory: cf. Isoc. *Soph.* 10, 17; Plato *Phaedr.* 276d-7a; Protagoras *DK* 80B3; Ps.-Plutarch *De lib. educ.* 4a-c.

¹⁶ 1.12.19: *dedi . . . hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis iuarent*; 12.1.1-2; 12.2.1.

¹⁷ 1.1.1-2; 2.19.1-3; 10.3.2.

I pass over this, because I believe that no-one who has even tasted education, as they say, could doubt it . . .'¹⁸

All the disciplines of *enkyklios paideia* are described as contributing not only to the pupil's intellectual development but also, both individually and cumulatively, to the development of virtue. Quintilian recommends the teacher of letters to set his pupil to copy gnomic sayings from literature on the grounds that, 'the memory of them will follow him into old age and, because it has been impressed on his mind when raw, will inform his morals'.¹⁹ Reading the Greek and Latin authors is a highly complex process with many functions, but Quintilian repeatedly emphasises it as a source of ethical precepts, role models and attitudes to life.²⁰ Grammar is important because the speaker's authority, including his moral authority, is linked with his linguistic accuracy.²¹ Geometry and astronomy are not only practically useful; they also lead one to understand the world: 'When the calculations [of geometry] show us the regular and ordained courses of the stars, we learn that nothing [in the universe] is random or accidental . . .'²² Ethics and dialectic aid the development of character and present the pupil with rational justifications for his moral beliefs.²³ Physics illustrates the correspondence between providence and the orator: 'If the world is governed by providence, the state should certainly be run by good men'.²⁴

The constituents of education act on the pupil's inherent tendency to virtue to produce a good man. What is more, Quintilian asserts that good and bad cannot coexist in the same person, which means that the well-educated man will be not just good but wholly good.²⁵ This condition of total virtue will prove essential to the political status of the orator.

The second half of Cato's definition, skill in speaking, has an even more complex exegesis. Like virtue it is the result of nature and education acting together and is both a natural virtue and an acquirable art. The first quality on which it depends is reason. Quintilian claims that reason is native to most men, though not quite all: 'Precepts and methods are useless unless nature helps. These writings will be no more use to him who is lacking in ability than writings on agriculture are

¹⁸ 12.2.1-4. ¹⁹ 1.1.36; cf. 1.8.6-7.

²⁰ 1.8.67; 10.1.86ff. A longstanding concern of Greek literary education: cf. Plato *Rp.* 376dff. (against); Plutarch *Quomodo adulescens, passim* (in favour).

²¹ 1.4.1-1.7.35; 1.5.1; 1.6.1ff. For full discussion see Morgan *Frames of Mind* ch. 2.

²² 1.10.34, 46; probably from Plato; on the reception of this idea from Plato to the second century CE see L. Taub, *Ptolemy's Universe* (Chicago, 1993), 135-53.

²³ 12.2.10-20. On music see 1.10.9-15. ²⁴ 12.2.20-1. ²⁵ 12.1.4.

to barren soil'.²⁶ Reason is one of the things which in general distinguish men from animals (and also from women, barbarians and slaves). '[Reason] is natural to men, as birds are born to fly, horses to run and wild beasts to be savage; our native agility of mind and wisdom are such that our minds are believed to derive from heaven'.²⁷ If reason is natural, however, it must be a virtue, because nature in general is 'a mother, not a stepmother',²⁸ and would not give men gifts which lead to evil.²⁹ If reason is a virtue, then according to Quintilian's theory of virtue it needs education to perfect it.

The second precondition of skill in speaking is the ability to speak at all. This ability too, Quintilian claims, is natural to men and distinguishes them from animals. By that token speech is also a virtue and, as a virtue, dependent on education to bring it to fruition.³⁰ Quintilian goes on to claim that rhetoric is a form of speech and that the ability to speak *well* (that is, rhetorically) is natural to some people.³¹ If that is the case then rhetoric too must be a virtue and also dependent on education for its fulfilment.

The importance of this move is that skill in speaking, which forms half of Cato's definition of the orator, is now seen to be part of the other half, the good man. They go together: the skilled speaker is bound to be a good man and *vice versa*.³² And both are seen to depend on education for their fulfilment. Quintilian's status as an educationalist will now depend on his ability to devise a more complete and effective education in speaking and virtue than anyone else, and in the prologue to book one he sets out to do just that. He criticises other rhetoricians for ignoring the early stages of education, comparing them to architects who are so concerned with the showy exterior of a building that they neglect the foundations.³³ He, in contrast, holds that, 'nothing without which it would be impossible to be called an orator, is irrelevant to the art of oratory, nor can one reach the summit of anything without passing through its earlier stages . . .'³⁴ The 'earlier stages' take up most of the rest of the twelve books and include the whole of rhetorical theory.

²⁶ 1 pr. 26. Quintilian is equivocating here, conflating the fundamental human quality of reason with the ability to reason in a specifically rhetorical way. He is also referring to the 'nature/nurture' debate endemic in philosophy, rhetoric and education theory since the fifth century BCE. His image leaves open the interesting question whether clods of earth are expected to read agricultural treatises or, more to the point, whether pupils are ever expected to read the *Institutio*. The work begins as if addressed to a teacher but by the end it seems to address the pupil directly.

²⁷ 1.1.1; 2.16.12-5. ²⁸ 12.1.2. ²⁹ 12.1.2. ³⁰ 2.20.6-7, 9. ³¹ 2.19.1-3, 20.9-10.
³² Implied at 2.20.1ff; 12.1.3ff. ³³ 1 pr. 4. ³⁴ 1 pr. 5.

Quintilian's contribution to the history of rhetoric has received its share of attention elsewhere.³⁵ The only point I want to make here is that the connection he makes between skilled speech and virtue is central to his political theory, and if we examine the activities of the finished orator it becomes clear why.

ROME RECONSTITUTED

The great majority of descriptions of the orator in the *Institutio* show him engaging in politics, in a state ruled above all by the word and institutions in which words are the medium of government. He is by definition a political animal³⁶ who takes on all manner of political offices³⁷ and every duty of a good citizen:³⁸ 'the man who is a true citizen and fitted to administer both public and private business, the man who can rule cities with his counsels, give them a foundation with his laws and regulate them with his judgements, is indeed none other than the orator'.³⁹ The orator is expected to 'defend his friends, rule the senate and the people by his advice and lead an army wherever he wants it to go . . .'.⁴⁰ He directs 'the debates of the senate and leads the foolish people to better things. . .'.⁴¹ He must be prepared to speak in 'public meetings and all councils'.⁴²

When he is not directing the senate or the people the orator is often to be found in the lawcourts. 'The laws themselves would be useless if they were not reinforced by the voice of a suitable authority . . . the orator will not allow the complaints of allies nor the death of a friend or neighbour nor conspiracies against the state to go unpunished - not because he enjoys punishing the guilty but because he desires to correct vice and improve morals . . .'.⁴³ Forensic oratory is one of the

³⁵ Especially G. Boissier, 'The Schools of Declamation at Rome', in *Tacitus and Other Roman Studies* (London, 1906), 163-94; D. L. Clark, 'Imitation: Theory and Practice in Roman Rhetoric', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 37 (1951), 11-22; *Rhetoric in Graeco-Roman Education*, (New York, 1957); M. L. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome* (London, 1953), 199ff.; J. Cousin, *Etudes sur Quintilien*, (Paris, 1936); *Recherches sur Quintilien*, (Paris, 1975); G. A. Kennedy, 'An Estimate of Quintilian', *American Journal of Philology*, 83 (1962), 130-46; *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* (Princeton, 1972), 487ff.; E. P. Parks, *Roman Rhetorical Schools as a Preparation for the Courts under the Early Empire*, *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, 63.2 (Baltimore, 1945), *passim*; O Seel, *Quintilian - oder die Kunst des Redens und Schweigens* (Stuttgart, 1977); M. Winterbottom, 'Quintilian and the *vir bonus*', *JRS*, 54 (1964), 90-7; *Problems in Quintilian BICS* suppl. 25 (1970); 'Quintilian and Rhetoric', in T. A. Dorey ed. *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II* (London, 1975), 79-97.

³⁶ *Vir civilis* 12.2.21. ³⁷ *Civilibus officiis* 12.2.6. ³⁸ *Omni . . . officio boni civis* 12.11.1.

³⁹ 1 pr. 10. ⁴⁰ 2.16.19; 2.16.19; 12.9.13. ⁴¹ 12.1.26-8; 2.20.8.

⁴² 2.27.8, again reflecting a long tradition of debate about the function of rhetoric in public life.
⁴³ 12.7.1-7, 11.1; 2.4.33-4, 16.19, 17.23ff., 20.8ff.

many means by which the orator makes and maintains friends and clients, as well as doing justice and keeping order in the state.⁴⁴

At first sight there is nothing very remarkable about all this: it is all the sort of behaviour which typifies Roman public life. But on closer inspection it proves to be an odd mixture of activities, some of which we associate with the Republic and others with the Principate. Quintilian's language of oratorical power and influence is strikingly regal, bringing to mind the politics of his own day. The orator is described repeatedly as ruling (*regere*) both the senate and the people and several passages make clear how sharp the imbalance of power between orator and audience is conceived to be. Quintilian quotes with approval, for instance, a description in Virgil's *Aeneid* (1.151ff.) of a statesman quelling a riot which ends: 'He *controls* their minds with his words and soothes their breasts'.⁴⁵ On the other hand, explicit references to the emperor and imperial forms of government are very rare. The emperor is addressed honorifically in prefaces but never referred to in any functional capacity.⁴⁶ There are no references to the private councils or the groups of 'friends of the emperor' whose informal influence was so important in the making of imperial policy, nor to the imperial freedmen who held so many administrative positions, to the fury of aristocratic families, nor to the imperial system of appointments.⁴⁷ Quintilian writes as though government were carried out mainly by means of the spoken word, which we associate rather with the republican than the imperial administration.

If he does not give us a straightforward account of politics under the Principate, however, neither does Quintilian present the reader with a systematic picture of the Republic. Public meetings, which were abolished after the death of the emperor Augustus in 14 CE, are alluded to as though they were still a functional element of government. On the other hand, the major magistracies, the motor of the republican administration, are never mentioned and Quintilian is vague about the

⁴⁴ 2.16.19; R. Saller, 'Patronage and friendship in early imperial Rome', in A. Wallace-Hadrill ed. *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London, 1989), 49–62.

⁴⁵ 12.1.27; 10.1.16ff. (my italics). In passages like these Quintilian's language recalls that of earlier writers describing the emperor's absolute power – notably Seneca in *De Clementia* but also Virgil and Horace. M. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976), 141ff.; G. Brugnoli, 'Quintiliano, Seneca e il *De causis corruptae eloquentiae*', *Orpheus*, 6 (1959), 29–41.

⁴⁶ Except as a poet (10.1.91).

⁴⁷ F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London, 1977), chs. 3, 6; J. A. Crook, *Consilium Principis* (Cambridge, 1955), chs. 2–3, 48ff.; K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge, 1983), ch. 3.

everyday details of his orator's political life. And he makes very few references to anything outside the internal government of the city state – which, given Rome's long history of power abroad, is equally surprising whether he has a republican or an imperial *scena* in mind.

The picture is surely intended to represent Rome, or a city modelled on Rome. We could explain its inconsistencies by assuming that Quintilian was stupid or escapist – that he did not notice the problems or deliberately blurred his account to avoid saying anything provocative. It would be hasty, however, to dismiss him so lightly. He had prospered under a string of emperors; he was a survivor and a success; it is implausible that he was either politically naive or unintelligent. Since he was involved with the imperial household anything he published was likely to be politically visible and might have been regarded as significant, so it is unlikely that he wrote in a spirit of irresponsibility or naïveté. Before we jump to any such pessimistic conclusion there are other possibilities to explore.

Quintilian was writing at a time of much discussion about the purpose and future of oratory under the Principate. Some writers claimed a role for public, political speech even under a monarchy; others argued that where power was invested in one man, debate was meaningless and oratory was nothing if not the vehicle of debate.⁴⁸ The obvious question, therefore, is whether Quintilian can be interpreted as an apologist for either of these positions, or, more to the point, the political interests they represented, namely the emperor and his senatorial adversaries. The idea that he is acting as an apologist for the emperor is superficially attractive, given his professional position and his use of the vocabulary of political control, but the picture does not fit well enough to be convincing. For one thing, Quintilian describes the orator doing a great many things which Domitian in practice did rarely or not at all, like attending the lawcourts and the senate, addressing public meetings and leading the army.⁴⁹ To have been seen to describe the ideal emperor doing things which the emperor in practice did not do would surely have been to invite trouble. Worse, Quintilian makes very little

⁴⁸ Cf. Tacitus *Dialogus*; [Longinus] *On Sublimity* 44.1ff.; Seneca the Elder *Contr.* 1 pr. 6ff.; Seneca the Younger *Panegyricus*, *De Ira*; F. Ahl, 'The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome', *AJP*, 105 (1984), 174–208; S. Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Double-Speak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1994), chs. 4–5.

⁴⁹ B. Jones, 'Domitian's Attitude to the Senate', *AJP*, 94 (1973), 79–91; *The Emperor Domitian* (London, 1992), chs. 8–9; P. M. Rogers, 'Domitian and the Finances of State', *Historia*, 33 (1984), 60–78; cf. R. Syme, 'Domitian: the last years', *Chiron* 13 (1983), 121–46.

of the one area in which Domitian did intervene often and successfully: the administration of provinces.⁵⁰ To have refused to give the emperor credit for what he did do would have been dangerously to compound the folly of praising him for things he did not do. Worst of all, if the perfect orator were synonymous with the emperor, Quintilian would be placing himself in the position of kingmaker, since he insists throughout the work that the orator can only be created by means of his educational curriculum. That would have been dangerous enough had he been teaching only Domitian's great-nephews, but he had also taught many of the wider Roman elite (including we know not how many potential claimants to the purple) and in the *Institutio* itself he recommends his curriculum to his own children and the son of the dedicatee. He could not have done so if the perfect orator of his prescriptions had been intended to be identified solely with the emperor.

If he is not himself the emperor, neither does Quintilian's orator apparently live under an emperor. In this connection one aspect of Quintilian's rhetorical analysis has received less attention than it deserves: the fact that he has very little to say about epideictic oratory in general and panegyric in particular. Panegyric forms no part of his orator's public or political duties, in stark contrast with the political realities of his own day in which, in the form of the public address to the emperor, it was perhaps the only remaining form of oratory with direct access to the hub of power.⁵¹ The *Institutio* treats epideictic at any length only in one chapter of book three, and Quintilian's language in that passage invites a brief comment. He observes that Aristotle and Theophrastus divorce epideictic from the business side of rhetoric, but that Romans do use epideictic for political purposes – in funeral orations, in the courts and in elections.⁵² In addition, of course, they use it for show, including for panegyrics of gods and great men of the past – and, startlingly, animals and inanimate objects.⁵³ Only at the very end of the passage does he make the briefest acknowledgement that we sometimes praise individuals during their lifetimes, and he immediately

⁵⁰ B. M. Levick, 'Domitian and the Provinces', *Latomus*, 41 (1982), 50–73; H. W. Pleket, 'Domitian, the Senate and the Provinces', *Mnemosyne*, 4a ser. 14 (1961), 296–313.

⁵¹ Though not the only form of literature with access to the emperor; cf. Kennedy, *Art of Rhetoric*, 428ff.; S. MacCormack, 'Latin prose panegyrics', in T. Dorey, ed. *Empire and Aftermath*, 143–205; F. Millar *Emperor*, 341ff., 366ff., 368ff., 497ff.; C. E. Nixon and B. S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors* (Berkeley, 1994), 1–35; J. Sullivan, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero*, (London, 1985).

⁵² 3.7.1; 3.7.2–3; Arist. *Rhet.* 1358b2ff. cf. W. Grimaldi, *Aristotle, Rhetoric I: A Commentary* (New York, 1980), ad loc.

⁵³ 3.7.3–18.

adds that we rarely have the opportunity to celebrate divine honours, votes of thanks or the setting up of statues. There is no mention of the emperor among either political or non-political occasions of epideictic – at best he is barely alluded to by implication in the comments on praise of the living. It is all so brazenly inappropriate to contemporary politics that it is hard not to suspect that Quintilian is inviting us to share a joke. If so, the joke makes a serious point. It corroborates what we have seen elsewhere, that Quintilian is interested only in functional forms of speech, and that he defines such speech as that performed by the orator in his capacity as ruler in the traditional fora of public life: the law and the commonly acknowledged political institutions. The sort of speech associated with emperors, which takes place outside the framework of political institutions (whether in public or in private), he declines to acknowledge, and by implication he ignores, if he does not explicitly repudiate, the role of the orator in the Principate of his own day.

The idea that the *Institutio* is a pro-senatorial, anti-imperial work also has its attractions, the more so since the descriptions of the orator engaged in politics owe a great deal to Cicero.⁵⁴ An example from *De oratore* makes the point:

There is to my mind no more excellent thing than the power, by means of oratory, to get a hold on assemblies of men, win over their minds, direct their will wherever the speaker wishes, or divert them from whatever he wishes. In every free nation . . . this one art has always flourished above the rest . . . for what is so marvellous as that, out of the innumerable company of mankind, a single being should arise who either alone or with a few others can make effective a faculty bestowed by nature on every man? . . . What achievement is so mighty and glorious as that the impulses of the crowd, the conscience of the judges, the austerity of the senate should suffer transformation through the eloquence of one man . . . ? What function is so kingly (*regium*), so worthy of the free, so generous . . . ?⁵⁵

Cicero goes on to discuss how the ability to speak distinguishes men from animals: 'This is our greatest advantage over beasts: we can talk among ourselves and express what we feel in speech'.⁵⁶ The parallels with Quintilian are clear enough. The difference, when it comes to

⁵⁴ Especially *De Or.*; also *Orator*, *De Rep.*, *De Leg.*; Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Theory*, pp. 120ff; 176ff. On the comparison between Cicero and Quintilian see A.-M. Guillemin, 'Cicéron et Quintilien', *Revue des Etudes Latines*, 37 (1959), 184–94.

⁵⁵ 1.30–32 trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham. *Regere* occurs not infrequently of the orator's effect in the works of rhetorical theory, especially *De Or.* 1.

⁵⁶ 1.32.

assessing the political implications of their language, is that Cicero's republican sympathies are not in doubt. Though many opinions are expressed in the course of the *De republica*, and though his oratorical and philosophical works span the whole of his working life, Cicero never wavered in his allegiance to a form of republican mixed constitution in which political eminence was always contested and at best temporary. Moreover in his rhetorical works, at least, Cicero does not demand moral perfection of his orator – he must be good enough to rule effectively, but he need not be perfect.⁵⁷ Quintilian does demand perfection of his orator, which makes him a political idealist, and that, coupled with the fact that we have no external information about his political sympathies, makes it much harder to gauge what he means when he uses the language of rule and control.

There are a few signs that he is unlikely to have been a republican. There is no indication that his credit with the emperor suffered with the publication of the *Institutio*: he may even have received the consular insignia as a result.⁵⁸ It is noticeable that he does not discuss the possibility of competition between his orator and others, nor does he refer to orators in the plural. He does talk as though anyone might have access to his educational programme but there is no real indication that he imagined training a whole generation of equally matched, competing speakers and politicians. It looks rather as though however many orators may be trained, only one is expected to arrive at the degree of authoritative perfection which is its aim. All these somewhat slender indications may incline us to doubt that the *Institutio* is intended to be read as pro-republican political theory, though they fall short of a conclusive case.

QUINTILIAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO ROMAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

However, there may be good reasons for thinking that Quintilian does not intend us to prove the case either way – that in fact the search for clear-cut, traditional political affiliations in the *Institutio* cannot do other than draw a blank. Our confusion about Quintilian's political programme drives us back to seek enlightenment in the educational material. If anything, this strategy succeeds rather too well and many readers have overlooked the work's political frame altogether. But if

⁵⁷ *De Officiis* 3.13–17; *De Leg.* 1.30; G. M. Grube, 'Educational and Literary Theory in Cicero', *Phoenix*, 16 (1962), 234–57.

⁵⁸ Kennedy, *Quintilian*, p. 28.

we keep it in mind, and return to the programmatic statements at the opening of the work, we can begin to see Quintilian's individual contribution to Roman political theory more clearly.

He defines his project as the creation of, 'that perfect orator, who can be nothing other than a good man . . .'⁵⁹ In the past, he says, the study of virtue has been seen as the business of philosophy. He has several objections to this. First, virtue is essential to the man in public life – 'the proper citizen.' Second, he claims that oratory and philosophy are really, as Cicero shows, part of the same subject, and that in the past the same men were orators and philosophers. More recently the two professions have split apart with bad results all round: the philosophers have withdrawn from public life and the orators have lost their ethical guidelines. His aim is to reunite the two disciplines to produce a statesman who is both eloquent and virtuous.

The stage is therefore set for a drama familiar from earlier political theory: the production of a model statesman by means of a model education. And that is what Quintilian provides – but in such peculiar proportions that it is as if the genre has been turned inside out. Its educational element, instead of being one scene in the action, seems to have taken over the plot, while the political *dénouement* is all but eclipsed.

The effect of this inversion of what we might expect to be the normal relationship between education and politics, is that what is achieved through education appears to justify what happens in politics, rather than vice versa. Instead of devising a political structure and then working out an education to produce suitable people to maintain it, Quintilian implies that the state can be run well through any and all institutions but only by a man or men properly educated in wisdom and the means by which to impose wisdom on others. Brushing constitutional theory aside, he envisages a state of affairs which can be brought about by nothing more radical than his version of conventional contemporary educational practices. The effectiveness of Quintilian's programme as a theory of government is based on the idea that the pupil acquires, at each successive stage of education, a higher degree both of technical competence and authority, and of the virtue which justifies that authority. The man most skilled in speaking, in other words, will always be both the effective ruler and the man most fitted to rule, while those who are slightly less competent will be fitted to a slightly lesser degree of power, and so on down the scale. The offices which such men occupy in the state, in this

⁵⁹ 1 pr. 9.

construction, is a matter of secondary importance. The crucial thing is their status as good men skilled in speaking. If we were to put this re-evaluation of the relative importance of political structures and education in more conventional 'republican *versus* imperial' terms, we might say that Quintilian is delivering a rebuke to emperor and senate alike for behaving as though it were the forms of government, rather than the qualities of individuals, that enable the state to run well.

SPEECH AND WRITING

One of the ways in which Quintilian effectively blurs the difference between forms of government is by treating speech and writing as barely divergent aspects of the same discipline. We see it in the earlier stages of education where the pupil is prepared to study rhetoric by means of a literate education in which the single most important element is *reading*. Quintilian's orator-to-be learns almost everything by reading, from morals, role models and style to the construction of a speech, forms of argument and how to flatter a judge.⁶⁰ Quintilian emphasises repeatedly that the very language used by the orator is different from the ordinary language of the uneducated and that it is acquired above all by reading the great authors.⁶¹

There is, in other words, a particular language associated with power and authority and it is based on writing. This is true both on linguistic and cognitive levels. On the cognitive level, the construction and analysis of every aspect of a speech, from its language to the proportions of its parts, is performed in a manner characteristic of literate discourse.⁶² On the linguistic level, the language which the pupil learns to recognise, appreciate and ultimately to use under the supervision of the *grammaticus* and *rhetor* is based on that of poets, orators of the past and historians.⁶³ As Quintilian puts it, right language is based on reason, authority,

⁶⁰ 1.4.6ff., 6.1; 3.2.1 and see J. Adamietz, *M. F. Quintiliani Institutiones Oratoriae Liber III* (Munich, 1966) *ad loc.*, 10 pr. 1, 1.8-13, 3.13-15, 7.1ff. (cf. R. J. Lewis, 'A crux in Quintilian', *Classical Review*, 11 (1961), 204-5).

⁶¹ 1.5.1ff.; 1.6.1; 10.1.27ff.

⁶² On the intellectual consequences of literacy see, among a vast number of studies, M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1993); J. Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge, 1986); E. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton, 1982); A. R. Luria, *Cognitive Development* (Cambridge, Mass, 1976); W. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word* (London, 1982); K. Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1994).

⁶³ Though not all authors are regarded as equally appropriate models for every type of discourse.

antiquity, and usage.⁶⁴ 'Reason' means formal grammar, which is based on written forms of language. 'Authority' is that of the most respected writers. 'Antiquity' is explained only as the qualities of 'majesty' and 'sanctity';⁶⁵ but in practice, reference to ancient forms of language is likely to have been made largely to texts. Only in appeals to usage might education have paid significant attention to non-literary elements of the language, but even here the role of orality is strictly limited. Having introduced the idea of usage Quintilian goes back to discussing grammar for forty-two paragraphs, only to finish with a definition of usage as the agreed practice of *educated* men – that is, highly literate men who have learned their grammar and rhetoric.⁶⁶

In all this Quintilian is following the normal principles of grammatical and rhetorical theory, of both of which, in Latin and Greek, the written word is at once the medium and the material. But Quintilian goes further by attributing the use of literate language to the politically powerful, and by claiming that the orator's power and authority, and even his virtue, are actually generated by his education in, among other things, grammar and rhetoric. Two claims follow from this. The larger and more important, which we cannot pursue here, is that in some sense the product of an education in a certain type of language is political power and virtue, then the use of that language comes close in itself to guaranteeing the virtue and authority of the man who uses it. The second, which is relevant here, is that that educated language which is the accompaniment of power and virtue is substantially the same language, whether it is written or spoken. The spoken form is a version of the written form and they are learnt in the same process. So the good orator and the good administrator through the written word are indistinguishable and the language of each is equally authoritative. Readers need not worry about which areas of government are conducted orally or through the written word (one of the defining differences between the republican and imperial administrations); the important distinction is between those communications which are authoritative and educated – and those which are not.

This is not to claim that Quintilian recognises no difference between a speech read and a speech heard. It is rather that the differences are not linguistic: they depend on the extra-linguistic effects of the orator's presence on the crowd. This is how he describes them:

⁶⁴ 1.6.1. ⁶⁵ *maiestas quaedam et, ut sic dixerim, religio commendat.* ⁶⁶ 1.6.45.

The advantages conferred by reading and listening are not identical. The speaker stimulates us by the animation of his delivery, and kindles the imagination, not by presenting us with an elaborate picture but by bringing us into touch with the things themselves. Then all is life and movement, and we receive the new-born offspring of his imagination with enthusiastic approval. We are moved not merely by the actual issue of the trial, but by all that the orator himself has at stake. Moreover his voice, the grace of his gestures, the adaptation of his delivery . . . have their educative effect. In reading, on the other hand, the critical faculty is a surer guide, inasmuch as the listener's judgement is often swept away . . . Reading, however . . . does not hurry us past with the speed of oral delivery: we can reread a passage again and again if we are in doubt about it or wish to fix it in the memory.⁶⁷

Though presented as a distinction between reading and hearing, this is really a distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic means of communication. There is no suggestion that the orator's language or argument would be any different in written form: indeed, the comparison depends on their being the same. What vary are the other things: the orator's passion, his grace and his voice.⁶⁸ In some passages Quintilian goes further and denies that the illiterate can make effective use even of non-linguistic means of persuasion. Gestures and tone, for instance, must be appropriate to the words they accompany, so even they depend on the formal rhetorical education.

We have already observed the power which Quintilian gives the orator over his audience. Nowhere is it more evident than in passages where the audience consists of the uneducated and illiterates. Throughout the *Institutio* illiterates are described as dumb: they cannot speak, or if they do, their speech is described as ephemeral, accidental, ignorant, subjective, even a different language, meaningless to the educated.⁶⁹ Exaggerated as these descriptions sound, they prove to be yet another way of claiming that education and power, skill in speaking and skill in politics, go together. Quintilian identifies the uneducated variously as barbarians, peasants, slaves, children, and women.⁷⁰ These categories are oddly anomalous: they do not quite coincide with what we know about education and literacy in the ancient world, where we know of quite a number of literate women, literate slaves, and, of course, literate

⁶⁷ 10.1.16-7 trans. H. E. Butler. On earlier rhetorical influences on Quintilian in this and other areas see Kennedy, 'An estimate of Quintilian'; P. Mackendrick, *The Philosophical Books of Cicero* (London, 1989).

⁶⁸ 10.1.48; though even these factors can be learnt to some extent from literature. Literacy also seems to improve one's control of them.

⁶⁹ 2.16.19; 2.17.16; 2.20.6; 2.21.15; 10.1.16ff; 10.7.12-16; 12.1.27; 12.10.40.

⁷⁰ 2.17.6; 2.20.6-7; 2.21.16; 10.3.16; 12.10.40, 53.

children, not least Quintilian's own pupils.⁷¹ Nor do they sound like a typical political audience. But they do coincide with those who lacked political freedom in Quintilian's Rome. Drawing them together in a picture of an imaginary audience therefore makes a vivid statement about the nature and degree of the orator's political authority. By the power of his words he rules the city as justifiably and absolutely as the Roman male rules barbarians, women or slaves.

As a successful rhetor and teacher, an associate of the imperial household, the holder of consular ornaments, and the friend of senators, Quintilian must have known how fruitless and how dangerous the feud between the emperor and the aristocracy could be. In the *Institutio* he offers Romans his prescription, the prescription of a lifelong educationalist, for settling it without revolution or bloodshed. If they concentrate on the education of good men skilled in speaking and worry less about political institutions, Rome might be a more peaceful and a juster state.

At the same time, Quintilian is anxious to reassure the reader that his ideas do not represent a radical departure from all that is best in Roman tradition. And he is lucky enough to have a definition of the orator coined by the elder Cato, that paradigmatic Roman of the old school. It is notable how well Quintilian's many references to Cato fit the picture of Quintilian's ideal orator. Like Cato the wise, he says, the good man must choose carefully what cases to defend, prosecuting only when it is his duty to the state or to an individual.⁷² Like Quintilian's orator Cato is described as at once a great philosopher, orator, historian, and general, an expert in law and agriculture, the model Roman who took up Greek culture in old age (Quintilian's orator has progressed further down this line and is brought up to speak Greek before he speaks Latin).⁷³ Quintilian even observes that Cato was the first Roman to write on rhetoric – perhaps a discreet advertisement for the pristine virtue of rhetoricians, who sometimes had a rather bad reputation in Quintilian's day.⁷⁴ The testimony of the elder Cato is that the best modern ideas have the blessing of history.

⁷¹ A. D. Booth, 'The Schooling of Slaves in First Century Rome', *TAPA*, 109 (1979), 11-19; A. K. Bowman, 'Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode', in M. Beard, A. K. Bowman, M. Corbier, T. J. Cornell, J. L. Franklin Jr., A. Hanson, K. Hopkins, N. Horsfall *Literacy in the Roman World*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, suppl 3 (Ann Arbor, 1991), 119-31; C. A. Forbes, 'The Education and Training of Slaves in Antiquity', *TAPA*, 86 (1955), 321-60; A. E. Hanson, 'Ancient Illiteracy', in Beard et al, *Literacy*, 159-97; W. V. Harris *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1989), 196ff, 248ff.

⁷² 12.7.4. ⁷³ 12.3.9; 12.11.23; on learning Greek before Latin see 1.1.12. ⁷⁴ 3.1.19.

There is no evidence that Quintilian's ideas had any effect on the emperor Domitian, nor on his enemies in the senate, nor on those among his household who finally murdered him. But in the second century there was to be a period in which emperors saw themselves as philosopher kings and their subjects as the citizens of a single, idealised world state whose city walls were contiguous with the ends of the earth itself.⁷⁵ Is it too much to speculate whether Quintilian's idea of the orator king influenced the beliefs of Antoninus or Marcus Aurelius?⁷⁶ There is no direct evidence for it but Quintilian would have recognised and approved of a world in which education was seen as a source of virtue and right speech, and those qualities valued in tandem as the proper criteria of a well-run state.

⁷⁵ Aelius Aristides *To Rome*, cf. Marcus Aurelius *Meditations*; L. S. Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought* (Indiana, 1970), 173ff.

⁷⁶ There is plenty of evidence that Quintilian was remembered and that later rhetoricians throughout antiquity, and at least one Christian apologist (Jerome *Ep.* 107), made use of the *Institutio*. Cf. Kennedy, *Quintilian*, 139–41; R. Rutherford, *Marcus Aurelius: A Study* (Oxford, 1989), 41–2, 97–8; also M. L. Clarke, 'Quintilian, a Biographical Sketch', *Greece and Rome* ser. 214 (1967), 24–37; 'Quintilian on Education', in T. Dorey ed. *Empire and Aftermath*, 98–118; G. Downey, 'Education and Public Problems as Seen by Themistius', *TAPA*, 86 (1955), 291–307.

CHAPTER 12

*The voice of Isocrates and
the dissemination of cultural power*

Niall Livingstone

Twentieth-century reading of Isocrates has tended to concentrate on his achievements or shortcomings as a 'thinker' rather than on his pedagogy,¹ but he has a long-established image as one of antiquity's supreme pedagogues. In Cicero's dialogue *De Oratore*, Antonius speaks of Isocrates' school 'from which, as from the Trojan horse, all who emerged were leaders'.² In the Italian Renaissance, Isocrates' works were popular objects of translation, especially the speech *To Nicocles* which instructs Isocrates' pupil, the young King Nicocles, on the ideals of kingship. The passage from *De Oratore* was echoed in a funeral oration for Guarino Guarini, revered as the 'father of humanists': Guarino was to be seen as a new Isocrates.³ The self-proclaimed arch-pedagogue Erasmus presented a translation of *To Nicocles*, along with his own *Panegyricus* and *Institutio christiani principis*, to his royal patron Emperor Charles V.⁴ And if Isocrates is invoked as a model by the humanists, humanism in turn provides a paradigm for incorporating Isocrates into a continuous narrative of Western culture: H.-I. Marrou's history of ancient education discusses Isocrates' 'ethical rhetoric' in a section entitled 'Le humanisme d' Isocrate', and a famous essay by the historian

¹ E.g. E. Mikkola, *Isokrates: seine Anschauungen im Lichte seiner Schriften* (Helsinki 1954); C. Eucken, *Isokrates: seine Positionen in der Auseinandersetzung mit den zeitgenössischen Philosophen* (Berlin and New York, 1983). The subject of Isocratean pedagogy has been re-opened by Yun Lee Too's book *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates: Text, Power, Pedagogy* (Cambridge, 1995); see also H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1948), pp. 121–136.

² *De Oratore* II.94: *cuius e ludo tamquam ex equo Troiano meri principes exierunt*.

³ L. Carbone 'Oratio Habita in Funere Praestantissimi Oratoris et Poetae Guarini Veronensis' in E. Garin (ed.), *Prosatori latini del quattrocento* (Milan and Naples, 1952), pp. 382–427, esp. p. 392. Cf. L. Jardine and A. Grafton, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1986), p. 1: Guarino as 'the modern equal of Theophrastus and Isocrates'.

⁴ In Erasmus's dealings with Charles V and his father Philip – discussed by Rundle in this volume, p. 157 – there seems to be a deliberate imitation of Isocrates' dealings with Nicocles and Evagoras. I am grateful to David Rundle for discussions of Isocrates' Renaissance readers and translators.