Conclusion

A dreary overstuffed catalogue of bygone orators or a magnificent intellectual achievement? A swan song for public speech or an apology for the art of eloquence? A timid retreat into academic leisure or a brazen challenge to civil war and Caesar? Despite the divergent viewpoints of these questions, it is hard to come away from Cicero's *Brutus* without seeing merit in each of them. There is some of almost everything in Cicero's stunning dialogue, and for that reason its seeming hodgepodge of intellectual curiosity, political statement, and documentary diligence has spurred modern observers to widely differing interpretations.

Cicero's *Brutus* is a rhetorical masterpiece steeped in the intellectual vibrancy of the late republic and its Greco-Roman traditions. "Rhetorical" remains the operative word, since its literary history is not history in the modern sense, but rather a careful mélange of plain fact, suggestive coincidence, and egregious mischaracterization. Many of its aims, and the techniques by which it persuades us, are hidden or only dimly hinted at. Indirection is its lifeblood. The scholarly veneer of scrupulously chronicling notable speakers masks just how ingeniously deceptive Cicero can be. He partially and tendentiously illuminates the history of Roman oratory, something paradoxically akin to hanging a veil of light over the past.

This book has examined the *Brutus* from political, aesthetic, and intellectual perspectives, with each contributing to a larger picture of the dialogue's message and aims. Certainly there were forerunners for parts of Cicero's undertaking, but it deserves greater recognition than A. E. Douglas' tentative appreciation: "without any certainly known precedent" and "perhaps completely novel."[1] Douglas' emphasis on historical actors made him focus on the integration of historical biographies and the dialogue form, which had some precedent in Peripatetic (Aristotle)

[1] Douglas (1966a) xxii–xxiii. Cf. Rawson (1972) 34; Gowing (2000) 39: "an unusual work written to fulfill an unusual purpose." Again, for a discussion of several intellectual forerunners, see Chapter 2.

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and Academic (Heraclides of Pontus) writers and in Hellenistic scholarship.[2]

There were also Roman precedents in the field of biography and memoir: we learn of the writings of Scaurus and Catulus (both overshadowed by Xenophon's *Cyropaideia*). Rutilius' memoirs are not cited but some content may be smuggled in as the "conversation" Cicero claims to have had with him. Sulla's massive twenty-two-book autobiography, like any reference to the dictator's oratory, is passed over in one of the dialogue's blaring silences.[3] Cicero had happily written about his own life, in both Greek and Latin, seeking to slot himself into this tradition of political memoirists.[4] Among Greco-Roman scholars Varro seems to have most closely paralleled Cicero's endeavors, although we again have no evidence or reason to think that, despite their shared interest in the literary past, the two intellectual rivals developed the same theoretical framework.[5]

The greatest contribution of the *Brutus* must be stated outright: Cicero invented literary history, or at least literary history as we have come to understand its main features in the tradition of European letters. His major accomplishment was to compose (in the original sense of *componere*, "put together") a framework for documenting the history of an artistic practice, and he did so by selecting from the diverse and sometimes contradictory literary and scholarly talk of the late republic. There is no need to claim that, in a stroke of genius and in isolation, he created literary historiography without precedents. No creative mind advances in this way. His accomplishment is in having interwoven diverse strands of thought on how to conceptualize and represent cultural production across time.[6]

Crafting such a "modern" literary history meant not only incorporating several competing discourses but also countenancing their inevitable conflicts and limitations. Cicero chose teleology as his model for literary development, documenting the various contributions and stages of improvement within an artistic tradition. His choices were not the only

[2] Nünlist (2015) 713–14 gives a succinct overview and bibliography.
[3] Scholz, Walter, and Winkle (2013) on republican memoirs.
[4] Isocrates' *Antidosis* presented a partial bio-rhetorical template for the Ciceropaideia.
[5] I am aware, in light of how much of Varro is lost, that we cannot know with certainty how different their conceptions of literary history were.
[6] Vasari's magnum opus, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1550, rev. 1568), shows that Cicero's framework was relevant not just to literature. See Gombrich (1960) and (1966). Several expected features of modern literary history listed in Most (2008) 198–200 are present in the *Brutus*, as well as at least some attempt to craft what he calls "a genuinely *literary* literary history," that is, "a distortion of the past of literature into an open future" (206). Cf. Hunter (2009), Farrell (2010), Grethlein (2017).

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possibilities and ushered in several abiding problems, such as the conflict between antiquarianism and presentism in canon formation. Directly related to this problem is the conflict between absolute and relative standards: should one apply the standards of today or the past in judging a work of literature? As so often, Cicero looked to historical context for a workaround: the effectiveness of stylistic change in its contemporary setting secures it a place in literary history.

Investigating the literary past also means peering into the murky regions of meaningful change and causes: which innovations merit documentation and how do we know what caused them? Cicero partly advocates for contextualism, acknowledging the role history plays in shaping literature, but unlike many modern critical cults, he does not idolize historical context alone as the guiding genius of literary evolution. The syncrisis of Cato with Lysias, and indeed the entire question of how to appropriate past models, Greek or Roman, exemplifies the crucial gulf between the history of an art and the circumstances that effect artistic change. Authors do not respond solely to immediate contexts, but also fashion their craft on past models or alien traditions that are historically or contextually out of sync with the immediate lived experience of an author. This is one of the reasons why literary history cannot be accounted for by the same causal narratives that explain the histories of events (which are also imperfectly accounted for, but for different reasons). For all that we may acknowledge historicism's power, when speaking of literary causes we cannot reduce them to historical determinism any more than pure formalism.[7]

Cicero's historically informed view of literary models is the conceptual underpinning of his stylistic agenda in the *Brutus*. Diversity and forcefulness are derived from the history of oratorical styles documented throughout the dialogue. He thereby avoids relying on purely aesthetic justifications for style, citing the exemplary contributions of the past to promote his contemporary stylistic program. Greek and Roman luminaries have all contributed to the panoply of stylistic possibilities. We typically speak of this model as evolutionary or teleological, which is true, but it is also accretive, as each speaker or generation supplements past innovations and refinements. The exposition of Rome's oratorical past thereby becomes the greatest argument in support of Ciceronian style. While *de Oratore* presents his values dogmatically through the authority of Crassus, Antonius, and their fellow

[7] Perkins (1992) 128: "Historical contextualism tends to suppress critical intelligence." See also the seminal discussion by Wellek and Warren (1956) 263–82, with Wellek (1963) 37–53. Hinds (2010) teases out the rival claims of historicism and formalism for textual interpretation in classics.

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travelers,[8] the *Brutus* presents a compelling diachronic basis for those values: oratorical diversity, culminating in *vis* and *copia*, must be the inevitable result of oratory's long trajectory at Rome.

This historical view of style also required a significant shift in the doctrine on diversity, which coincided with renewed appreciation of Demosthenes.[9] Demosthenes was exemplary because he remained publicly relevant and his style possessed the greatest range of effects: "you'd easily say that Demosthenes doesn't lack anything at all" (*cui nihil admodum desit Demosthenem facile dixeris*, 35).[10] He is not the sole model, however, because we may emulate his effectiveness but cannot imitate his style. Hence the transition in Cicero's thinking, as Elaine Fantham has remarked, from *imitatio* directed at a single forerunner to *imitatio* that champions a wealth of styles – this second model would win out among later authors who found it so alluring in Cicero's *Brutus*.[11]

Quintilian, for example, adamantly champions Cicero as *the* canonical figure, but equally champions diversity, and however simplistic, even pedantic, Book 10's pairing of authors with stylistic traits might seem, his *Institutio* underlines the need for the budding orator to master the greatest number of styles, which are to be found in the breadth offered by Rome's literary past. Seneca the Elder's declamatory encyclopedia displays a wealth of examples, and is billed as such for the edification of his sons. Pliny's *Epistles* elevate *varietas* to the chief compositional virtue of the epistolary corpus.[12]

But it was Pliny's contemporary and literary confidant, Tacitus, who endowed the Ciceronian lesson with a historical sensibility and ensured the powerful afterlife of Cicero's doctrine of diversity. Marcus Aper

[8] E.g. "Another [requirement for pleading], in which that divinely forceful excellence of the orator is perceived, is to state what needs to be said with embellishment, fullness, and variety" (*alterum est, in quo oratoris vis illa divina virtusque cernitur, ea, quae dicenda sunt, ornate, copiose varieque dicere*, *de Orat.* 2.221).

[9] This appreciation also dovetails nicely with the political appeal to Demosthenes in the *Philippics*. Set against the development in Greece and the ultimate futility of Demetrius' pleasing style, Cicero's criticism of the Atticists underscores their civic irrelevance. See Wooten (1983), Bishop (2019) 173–218. It was in some sense a revival of his post-consular exuberance and the "Demosthenic" corpus of consular speeches; cf. *Att.* 2.1.3 (SB 21), which emphasizes deliberative oratory and the combination of word and deed (perhaps as a better alternative to the uninspiring Greek commentary on his consulship, discussed at 2.1.2). Cape (2002) discusses the consular speeches.

[10] The passage is followed by a careful listing of his fullness, emphasized through pleonasm of *nihil* (×10) in Section 35. Cf. the definition of the *genus grande* in the *Orator*, connected to Demosthenes: "full, rich, serious, adorned, in which there is surely the greatest power" (*amplus copiosus, gravis ornatus, in quo profecto vis maxima est*, *Orat.* 97). Wooten (1997) is a salutary reminder of Cicero's skewed take on Demosthenes in the *Orator*.

[11] Fantham (1978a) and (1978b).

[12] Fitzgerald (2016), esp. 84–100 on Pliny.

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reformulates the wealth of styles into a principle of change: "eloquence doesn't have one look alone, but even among those whom you dub ancients many sorts are found; what's different isn't automatically worse" (*non esse unum eloquentiae vultum, sed in illis quoque quos vocatis antiquos pluris species deprehendi, nec statim deterius esse quod diversum est*, *Dial.* 18.3). Cassius Severus, the watershed dividing ancient from modern oratory, let history and context prompt his innovations (Aper, again): "you know, he saw, as I was just saying, that the form and appearance of oratory must adapt in sync with the circumstances of a period and changes in taste" (*vidit namque, ut paulo ante dicebam, cum condicione temporum et diversitate aurium formam quoque ac speciem orationis esse mutandam*, *Dial.* 19.2). The observation explains why Cicero cannot be the sole model of style, as Tacitus adapts Ciceronian lessons in the spirit in which Cicero first appropriated Greeks and Romans.

The choice to make Demosthenes an ideal, the doctrine of diversity, and the desire to preserve past contributions also bear directly on conceptions and constructions of literary canons. The *Brutus* contains a powerful utilitarian justification for the diversity of the canon, which merits repeating amidst the sallies and retreats of the still-ongoing culture wars. Great models are meaningless without others to contextualize them, to instruct us, and to offer new perspectives. In the case of English literature, for example, it is not despite but because of Shakespeare's greatness that we should also read, say, Toni Morrison.[13] The canon anxiety of the 1990s was largely based on a misunderstanding of the reality that closed canons, in the secular tradition at least, have been the exception rather than the norm.[14] Indeed, the most productive interventions – those that would themselves become part of the canon – have always been, in one form or another, challenges to it.

Cicero's provocative staging of a canon debate shows that no one version can be correct. We possess, after all, every reason to challenge his excommunication of Appius Claudius Caecus from oratory's hallowed

[13] If we have absorbed the lessons of the *Brutus*, then one Ciceronian dictate is clear: any reasonable person will insist that reading Toni Morrison is valuable and required. No appeal to the School of Resentment (to use Harold Bloom's phrase) can deny the aesthetic value of her novels for expressing the experience of America.

[14] Well put by the philosopher John Searle in "The Storm Over the University," a review article in the *New York Review of Books* (6 Dec. 1990): "In my experience there never was, in fact, a fixed 'canon'; there was rather a certain set of tentative judgments about what had importance and quality. Such judgments are always subject to revision, and in fact they were constantly being revised." See further T. Gelzer (1975), Gorak (1997), Vardi (2003), Citroni (2006), Döpp (2008), and essays in Flashar (1979).

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lists, the very man who deserves to inaugurate oratorical history at Rome. The delicious irony of Atticus' needling presentism – Cicero brilliantly makes this antiquarian play the ultra-modernist – only underscores the contingency of Cicero's oratorical catalogue. Instead it emerges from the *Brutus* that tussling with the canon, and coming to understand the political and intellectual stakes of canonization, are part and parcel of what literary histories not only can but in fact *must* do. Such debates never end, nor should they, and Cicero's inventive solution – to have Brutus say that he wishes to read authors who might otherwise elude a presentist canon – places pedagogical principles above the dictates of modern fashion.[15]

This debate is related to the uncertain status of oratory as a literary genre. Oratory and its texts are portrayed as subject to several cultural codes that also govern poetry. This hardly means that the two genres are the same, but it is a powerful reminder that literary history must accommodate its canons not only to new authors but to new and different types of cultural production. Generic expansion occurs not by assigning texts categorically to the abstract notion of literature (as it is, that modern term was foreign to Romans); instead, it requires identifying cross-generic similarities in the creation, circulation, evaluation, and employment of texts as literary artifacts. It is these social functions that eventually determine the canonical place of emerging types of literature.[16]

Another key emphasis of Cicero's literary history is the relationship of literature to the communal world, both the community of today and of the past. He offers an open-ended teleology by refusing to make himself the sole endpoint of all oratorical development. For all the self-serving gestures, he crafts a normative framework that can encompass Rome's oratorical future no less than its past. This teleology without a telos ultimately becomes a bridge from the aesthetic world of criticism to the political world of contemporary Rome: we write not only for ourselves now, but for a community in the future.

Cicero always sought to align individual and communal interests: "so we must all have the same aim in mind, that utility be the same for each individual and for all together" (*unum debet esse omnibus propositum, ut eadem sit utilitas uniuscuiusque et universorum*, *Off.* 3.26). Sean Gurd has argued that the community of revision in the *Brutus* is essentially political,

[15] As Richard Rorty (1998) 135 puts it: "canons are temporary, and touchstones replaceable." Morrison (1989) cogently defends canonical texts while showing how canons must necessarily evolve under the pressure of new contexts.
[16] See Farrell (2003), with bibliography, on classical genres.

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that Caesarian perfection in his *commentarii* and his rule-bound analogical system preclude communal intervention in linguistic production and literary tradition.[17] Cicero insists on the principle of change, on the need for the revision of communal standards, and on the orator's accommodation to the audience. Stylistic developments are inevitable in any art and are inherently political in oratory: they form the basis for communal contributions to the state through public speech, unlike Caesar's perfect, yet isolated, *commentarii*.

Cicero embeds in his normative historiographical framework a means by which the Roman community will, indeed must, remain attached to the past, not by accepting it wholesale, which is the dirty business of classicism, but by valuing the past and the need for change at the same time. This is the privilege and burden of each generation of critics, scholars, and readers. Only a future community that can both revere and criticize past luminaries can sustain the communal connections that Cicero envisions as part of the *res publica*. Put pointedly: to espouse a closed canon is to be severed from the community, to be bereft of any communal value toward others or oneself.

The close interconnection of oratory with the community and civil order brings us back to Cicero's own view of oratory's purpose and its future under Caesarian rule. The *Brutus* shows that oratory thrives even in conditions of external war and civil unrest. Jarrett Welsh has argued that the choice to follow Varro and to place the beginnings of Latin poetry, and therefore literature, in 240 BCE also followed Varro's desire to place the beginning of Latin poetry in a time of peace rather than war. Leaving aside his compelling arguments and the valuable recovery of the Accian and Porcian mindsets, it is worth considering Cicero's stated claims about oratory's rise.[18]

Cicero had earlier remarked that oratory flourishes in the absence of internal and external conflict:

> You see, the passion for speaking doesn't usually arise among those who are establishing a government or warring or who are impeded and chained up by the domination of kings. Eloquence is the companion of peace, the associate of leisure, and the nursling as it were of a well-ordered state.

[17] Gurd (2012) 57–58.

[18] Welsh (2011) shows that Cicero has tendentiously suppressed Accius' dating of Livius' *Hymn to Juno Regina* in 207, in which Accius probably followed the Porcian chronology. Varro's *de Poetis* made 240 the beginning of poetry. Cicero's adoption of Varro's chronology need not entail adoption of his ideology *en bloc*. Cicero could just as easily have used Varro's redating of the beginning of Latin poetry as a convenient screen for different views on the history of oratory and its relationship to literature.

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> nec enim in constituentibus rem publicam nec in bella gerentibus nec in impeditis ac regum dominatione devinctis nasci cupiditas dicendi solet. pacis est comes otique socia et iam bene constitutae civitatis quasi alumna quaedam eloquentia. (45)

He may have had in mind Aristotle, who placed the development of Greek artistic practices in the period of leisure after the Persian Wars:[19]

> Through wealth they found greater leisure and greater passion for virtue, emboldened by their deeds before and after the Persian Wars, searching after and acquiring all manner of knowledge indiscriminately.
>
> σχολαστικώτεροι γὰρ γιγνόμενοι διὰ τὰς εὐπορίας καὶ μεγαλοψυχότεροι πρὸς τὴν ἀρετήν, ἔτι τε πρότερον καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ φρονηματισθέντες ἐκ τῶν ἔργων, πάσης ἥπτοντο μαθήσεως, οὐδὲν διακρίνοντες ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιζητοῦντες. (Arist. *Pol.* 1341a 28–32)

Yet in considering the possible beginnings of oratory and the general turmoil of the late republic, it is difficult to accept Cicero's connection of oratory to peace. Cethegus, best known as an ally of Scipio Africanus, inaugurates oratory while his career falls in the flush of the Second Punic War, and in fact Cicero's Ennius portrays his eloquence as integral to that war. The alternative beginning Cicero considered, Caecus' speech against Pyrrhus, shares this martial shortcoming. Cicero's larger claims about oratory and peace are undermined by the very examples he cites (or overlooks) for the beginnings of Roman oratory. The placement of Livius at the beginning of literature may well have been a concession to the idea that peace rather than war should accompany the beginning of literature. But Cicero's own options for oratory, be it his explicit choice, Cethegus, or the overlooked option, Caecus, place oratory's beginnings amidst war.

Furthermore, the last century of the republic was similarly marked by frequent, often violent, political strife, much of which fostered (and was fostered by) the use of oratory. If anything, the rise of oratory and its documentation in Cicero's own writings repeatedly align state disorder with the practice of oratory. Oratory may ensure peace by quelling or even instituting its own ordering violence, but aligning its development with peace is far less plausible. Perhaps no greater example exists than Cicero's monumental *de Oratore*, which stands as a testament to the oratorical

[19] Horace probably alludes to this passage to explain the rise of the arts: *Epist.* 2.1.93–102. See Brink (1963) 115, 196–98, (1982) 133–34, Citroni (2013) 202. Brink believes that 45 draws on Aristotle's Συναγωγὴ Τεχνῶν, but Cicero's citation seems (to me) to begin at 46. On the topos cf. also *de Orat.* 1.14, 1.30, 2.33.

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greats whose fates were intertwined with the political upheaval of the 90s and 80s and the causes and fallout of the Social and Civil Wars. Cicero in fact built his reputation on public speech in times of public upheaval; witness the Catilinarian conspiracy – sedition quelled by oratory, and capital violence. Cicero even likened his deeds to Rome's salvation from the Germans by Marius and from Hannibal by Scipio.[20] Soon after the *Brutus* he wrote in the Demosthenic tradition passionate and monumental speeches against Antony, urging that Antony be declared a public enemy.

Tacitus draws the right conclusions:

> I'm not speaking of some inactive and calm thing and one that enjoys approval and restraint, but that great and notorious eloquence is the nursling of license, which fools call freedom. It's the companion of seditious actions, the goad of an unbridled people, lacking compliance, lacking sternness, contumacious, reckless, arrogant, and does not occur in well-ordered states.
>
> non de otiosa et quieta re loquimur et quae probitate et modestia gaudeat, sed est magna illa et notabilis eloquentia alumna licentiae, quam stulti libertatem vocant, comes seditionum, effrenati populi incitamentum, sine obsequio, sine severitate, contumax temeraria arrogans, quae in bene constitutis civitatibus non oritur. (Tac. *Dial.* 40.2)

The passage reverses the alignment of oratory with peaceful circumstances, offering not only several allusions to Cicero but a correction of his apparent claim.[21] At a distance of a century and a half, Tacitus understood the insurmountable discrepancy between Cicero's argument and the tumultuous reality of civic life in the late republic. Yet there may be underlying optimism in Cicero too: if war and upheaval in fact do not inhibit oratory, then the work's allusions to the civil war might also hold out the promise of a future for oratory and reinforce the importance of continuing to cultivate it in the present. Under Caesar oratory was on hiatus, not dead.[22]

Traditional readings of the *Brutus* have done much to obscure the uniqueness of Cicero's inquiry, in large part because they have not accounted for the complexity of the *Brutus* as a work of literature itself. They take the teleology to be the central point of the work and relegate the digressions to a position of adornment and distraction or, occasionally and

[20] Cic. *Cat.* 4.21.

[21] Tacitus also draws in part on Cic. *de Orat.* 2.35 (Antonius: *et languentis populi incitatio et effrenati moderatio*) and *Rep.* 1.68 (Scipio: *ex hac nimia licentia, quam illi solam libertatem putant*).

[22] Cf. Gowing (2000), C. Steel (2002), Charrier (2003).

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less grudgingly, of doctrinal assertion. Yet the digressions contain the methodological reflections on literary history, while the teleology of orators in successive stages is a pretext that creates a place for the digressions. Of course neither the digressions nor the teleology could exist without one another in the *Brutus*. The digressions alone could only amount to what we call literary theory, while the teleological catalogue alone would be nothing but failed literary history.[23]

The much larger issue is how we choose to read a text such as the *Brutus* and whether we are willing to acknowledge it for what it is. My reading is intended to be more broadly applicable to other literary texts in the critical tradition. A work such as the *Brutus* must be read first on its own terms, which means carefully considering the literary elements before us: meaningful repetitions and omissions, parallels and images, the rhetorical manipulation of the material under discussion, and a host of other characteristics. In most cases, only after first getting a view of the work's larger construction is it then possible to determine how its constituent elements fit into that construction and how they are meaningful.

Chapter 8's discussion of Julius Caesar's *commentarii* offers an important caveat for appreciating Roman criticism and suggests that different interpretive assumptions can lead to very different readings of a literary-critical text such as the *Brutus*. The work's so-called digressions, including the most digressive parts of those digressions, are integral to its aesthetic and political claims. Scholars have not shied away from locating secondary allusions to Caesar's life in the judgment, and this book's claim that Cicero likens Caesar's *commentarii* to a nude statue of Venus (Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos) is not intended to deny other possibilities. Cicero's description may well have been crafted with the understanding that different audiences might have different interpretations. Some may also prefer the traditional reading: Cicero depicts with reasonable accuracy the main stylistic features of Caesar's histories. However, a modern scholar who takes this immediate judgment as accurate contemporary evidence for Caesar's style may also face a disconcerting question: in a different context and for different purposes, how differently might Cicero have described Caesar's style?

The passage is a powerful reminder of the danger faced in extracting isolated statements from texts of ancient literary criticism. The oft-assumed status of such works as technical or theoretical treatises has made

[23] As de Man (1970) 401 provocatively put it: "a positivistic history of literature, treating it as if it were a collection of empirical data, can only be a history of what literature is not."

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them liable to the curse of excerption, the tendency to read an isolated statement as the immediately transparent view of the author. Such statements then become mobile and redeployable, borrowed, traded, or pilfered like artifacts for museums of thought.

His judgment of Caesar serves as a reminder that Cicero's arguments are often as rhetorical as they are logical and that, however pathbreaking his conceptualization of literary history, not all claims merit the same recognition. Cicero's specious diatribe against the Atticists has largely gone unchallenged by modern scholars, while, for example, the arguments of Marcus Aper in Tacitus' *Dialogus* on the definition of *antiquus* have been dismissed as reductive sophistry that disqualifies his defense of imperial oratory (Tac. *Dial.* 17). Unlike Cicero, Aper has both literary precedent (Horace and Cicero) and a sounder analytical framework (the relationship between qualitative categories and chronology) to back his claims. The different receptions demonstrate well how scholarly preconceptions produce wildly varying treatments of similar material. Prejudices about political aims (anti- and pro-autocracy) have largely determined scholarly acceptance: the choice to believe Cicero and disbelieve Aper rests more on assumptions about their politics than on the strength of their arguments.

The dialogue's apparent flaws, including Cicero's remarkable penchant to select, suppress, or manipulate evidence, have limited our recognition of his literary-critical innovations. So have misunderstandings of the work's multifaceted purpose, as well as prejudices against ancient, and especially Roman, literary criticism. The orthodoxy has long held that ancient criticism is intrinsically flawed, a nascent stage of the art, whose complexity could only be revealed by modern theorists and critics millennia later. Such shortcomings are doubly felt for Roman critics because of supposed inferiority to their Greek confrères; as Michael Winterbottom notes, "Cicero, Horace and Quintilian, authoritative and influential though they were, not only rank inferior to the best Greek critics: they are not competing in the same field."[24] The rules of the game – to respond in kind to this scholar's metaphor – have yet to be adequately laid out, which accounts for our neglect of such texts and misunderstanding of the enduring value of Roman criticism.

The brilliance of Cicero's intellect would radiate for centuries across the field of oratory – or better put, rhetorical education and so all education – and across the field of philosophy too, oratory and philosophy being the

[24] Winterbottom (1982) 33.

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main divisions in his twin afterlives.[25] The fate of his criticism, unless it fell under one of these two areas, was less fortunate. Roman criticism, much like Roman philosophy, has suffered greatly from not looking more like its Greek counterparts, whose aggressive forms of inquiry and abstract categorization, readily suspected by Cicero for being tedious hair-splitting without public relevance, have a shape more familiar and therefore more palatable to modern scholars. His great English biographer, Elizabeth Rawson, notes that he had "a sensitive and receptive, but not a deeply original, mind."[26] Even so great an advocate of Roman intellectual history would not balk at calling him unsympathetically derivative, an opinion, or prejudice, unquestioningly repackaged and retailed by some of even the most devoted students of Greco-Roman criticism.

Yet the contributions to literary historiography and to Greco-Roman criticism, if the readings of this book are valid, undoubtedly belong to a capacious and innovative mind. Cicero did not think it sufficient to offer a catalogue of oratory and to connect oratory to the governing of the *res publica*, although that alone would have been a great achievement. Instead he also crafted a critical framework and a critical idiom with which to write a compelling and pleasing account of an artistic past. He drew not only from the vibrant intellectual discourses of the late republic, but also from the urgent realization that the republic he had known might cease to exist.

In the *Brutus* Cicero has contributed more than any other thinker in the Western tradition to the foundation on which accounts of the literary past continue to be built. It is a kind of revolution in literary criticism and history, not the astronomical revolution of Copernicus noted in this book's Introduction, but the kind of fundamental reconceptualization that Kant's first *Kritik* would signal for modern philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century. In crafting a new and enduring framework for literary historiography, Cicero was outdone not by any of the Greeks before him and from whom he first learned both literature and how to judge it, not by any of his contemporaries, who avidly pursued new possibilities for literary expression and documenting the past, and, despite unquestionable advances and occasional relapses in the intervening millennia, not by any thinker since.

[25] For documentation of Cicero's imperial afterlife, see Gowing (2013), MacCormack (2013), Bishop (2015), Keeline (2018), and La Bua (2019).

[26] Rawson (1983) 3. The preface to the second edition, written as she was completing the exemplary *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (1985), does acknowledge that Cicero possessed "greater intellectual maturity than most of his contemporaries" (Rawson 1983 vi).

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