QUINTILIAN, SENECA, *IMITATIO:* RE-READING *INSTITUTIO ORATORIA* 10.1.125–31*

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Rhetoric is about elitism. A man's ability to speak in a particular fashion signals that he belongs among the elite. And yet for as long as there has been rhetoric, there have also been teachers of rhetoric: those whose instruction promises the student admittance into this coterie through the mastery of a set of skills.[1] In the study of the teaching of rhetoric, however, we have been hesitant to attribute much in the way of rhetorical style to the "textbooks" of the rhetoricians. I would like to show that Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* not only teaches the skills that allow students to be classed among the elite, but that its very rhetoric also stratifies the author and various readers of the text.

Quintilian's treatment of Seneca at the end of his reading list for students of rhetoric in Book 10 will serve as a case study for the use of rhetoric in the *Institutio Oratoria*. The passage has generally been read as a negative assessment of Seneca. While much scholarship has attempted to define precisely Quintilian's opinion of Seneca, this paper will not be concerned with this question. Rather, I would like to suggest that the passage is not so much about Seneca as about Quintilian and, moreover, that it is not so much about Quintilian the man as about the *Institutio Oratoria* and its construction of Quintilian's rhetorical and pedagogical authority. I hope to show that Quintilian's assessment of Seneca imitates Seneca's own *Epistulae Morales* 114 and that this act of imitation serves to stratify the authors (Quintilian, Seneca) as well as the readers of the text.

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1 Habinek 2005.60–78 describes this socio-political aspect of the teaching of rhetoric.

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I will begin by establishing *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.125–31 as an imitation of *Epistulae Morales* 114, concentrating on the imitation of both content and form at two specific moments. Discussions of Quintilian's imitation of Seneca's use of *sententiae* and the ramifications of this imitation follow. I will first consider the trope of imitation itself, then, borrowing from the study of didactic poetry, I will consider the roles and hierarchic positioning of Quintilian, Seneca, and their readers.

It will be useful to summarize both passages here at the outset. Quintilian's assessment of Seneca comes at the end of his reading list for students of rhetoric (10.1). He first states that he separates Seneca from the rest of the list (which is organized by language and genre) in order to clear up some confusion regarding his opinion of Seneca: people believe that Quintilian despises Seneca, when, in fact, he is only trying to prevent students from being unduly influenced by him (125–26). Students, moreover, imitated only his vices (perverse style, lack of editing, the abundance of *sententiae*), and missed his virtues (the breadth of his corpus, the morality espoused in it) (127–29). But in the end, his precious prose style renders him unfit for impressionable students (130–31). Quintilian thus ends the reading list and moves to the next topic, imitation (10.2).

Seneca's Letter 114 is ostensibly a reply to his interlocutor Lucilius's question about the source of bad prose style. Seneca begins his response by quoting a maxim, "talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita" ("As men's speech, so their lives"): a bad speaking style comes from a bad lifestyle (1–2). He then spends the remainder of the letter describing three sources of bad prose style and their relationship to lifestyle. First, stylistic faults may be caused by faults in the individual: Maecenas serves as a negative *exemplum* (3–8). Second, stylistic faults may also be a product of the times: a taste for luxuries and novelty in life translates into greater tolerance for temerity in prose style (9–12). As a consequence, we may understand that there is no absolute definition of good style but that styles change with the times; there are, nevertheless, some faults that are preposterous (13–16). The third source of bad style is imitation: Arruntius wrote bad prose by immoderately imitating Sallust's quirks (17–19). But unlike Maecenas's faults, Arruntius's faults are not original and thus not a reflection of his true character (20). In a final assessment, Seneca finds that Maecenas's faults, that is, the intentional faults originating from an individual's character, are the most dangerous, because a corrupted mind will, in turn, corrupt the body in which it is housed and use it to exercise its vices (21–27).

Much of the existing work on Quintilian's assessment of Seneca seeks to understand Quintilian's remarks in the context of the history of prose style: as a proponent of a Ciceronian style, Quintilian disapproved of Seneca's more modern style.[2] Yet some have also noted that Quintilian's position on prose style, as exemplified in his assessment of Seneca, is, in fact, not dissimilar from Seneca's position in Letter 114.[3] Thomas Gelzer, in particular, views the passage as a parody in which Quintilian conceals his prejudice against Seneca behind the mask of irony (Gelzer 1970).

The use of rhetorical figures in works that are themselves about rhetoric has recently begun to be explored fruitfully. Erik Gunderson calls attention to Quintilian's use of rhetorical language throughout the *Institutio Oratoria*.[4] Matthew Leigh shows that Quintilian's prose style in the "autobiographical" preface to Book 6 of the *Institutio Oratoria* anticipates the subsequent discussion of an orator's use of emotion, particularly in the peroration.[5] I propose that Quintilian is utilizing the same technique here: the assessment of Seneca, placed at the end of 10.1, right before the discussion of *imitatio* at 10.2, itself imitates Seneca's Letter 114.[6]

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2 Rocheblave 1890, Peterson 1967.xxiv–xxviii, Leeman 1963.278–82, Culver 1967, Ballaira 1980, Heldmann 1980.12–16, Dominik 1997. Laureys 1991.100–03 provides a succinct survey of the scholarship on this passage. Alexander 1934–35 subjects Quintilian to his own medicine, offering a Quintilian-esque assessment of Quintilian's assessment: while he praises Quintilian generally, he soundly condemns his prejudice against Seneca and its influence on subsequent students of Latin.

3 Gagliardi 1982, Connolly 2007.87. However, cf. Leeman 1963.281: "It would be absurd to put Seneca on a level with the very Maecenas whom he has exposed in the 114th letter."

4 Gunderson 2009. Gunderson discusses the same issues of rhetoric and the persona of the author more thoroughly—albeit regarding Seneca the Elder—in Gunderson 2003.29–58.

5 Leigh 2004. The observation was, however, first made by Kennedy 1969.73. Kennedy also cites 9.2.6 as another passage wherein Quintilian employs the rhetorical technique under discussion. There Quintilian begins his explanation of rhetorical questions with the rhetorical question: "quid enim tam commune quam interrogare vel percontari?" ("For what is as familiar as questioning and investigating?").

6 However, Quintilian himself posits a reason for the unusual positioning of the passage: people believe that he despises Seneca. It has been suggested that he is referring to the lost *de Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae*, in which, we believe, he strongly criticized Seneca's prose style. The arguments both for and against this identification are summarized by Brink 1989.480–82. To return to the question of placement: Quintilian's reason reads more as an ostensible cause than an ultimate cause for the treatment of Seneca last. (For example, Quintilian may just as productively have treated Seneca first.) Thus it seems to me that the *de Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae* cannot be the whole story here.

INSTITUTIO ORATORIA 10.1.125–31 AS AN IMITATION OF *EPISTULAE MORALES* 114

The passage in the *Institutio Oratoria* imitates Seneca's Letter 114 in both content and form. We will examine these similarities as follows: 1) Quintilian's criticisms of Seneca's vices (130–31), and 2) the role of imitation in bad prose style (126–30). After looking at these passages, I will consider Quintilian's imitation of Seneca's most famous vice: his use of *sententiae*.

Quintilian's assessment and Seneca's Letter 114 are both concerned with the causes and consequences of bad prose styles. They share, however, more than mere subject matter: both texts approach the topic from similar angles. More specifically, both texts view bad prose style as the result of either an imbalance in the relationship between *ingenium* and *iudicium* or overzealous imitation.

Quintilian summarizes his criticism of Seneca at §130: "velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno iudicio" ("You would wish that he had spoken with his own talent but another's judgment").[7] For Quintilian, Seneca's virtues are his talent ("ingenium facile et copiosum"), effort, and knowledge (128). He also praises the breadth of Seneca's corpus as well as the moral instruction contained in it (129). But these virtues are undermined by Seneca's vices, which are a result of a lack of restraint in his expression (130). As Quintilian sees it, the *gravitas* of Seneca's thought is ruined by being expressed in pithy sayings: "si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset" ("If he had not broken up the weight of his thoughts into the pithiest sayings," 130). Thus Quintilian frames the issues surrounding Seneca in terms of *ingenium* (talent) and *iudicium* (judgment). Seneca's talent is not matched by his judgment; his lack of restraint regarding his prose undermines his talent.

This same dichotomy between talent and restraint is also present in Seneca's discussion of bad prose style. Seneca introduces the topic by linking talent to temperament: "non potest alius esse ingenio, alius animo color" ("It is not possible for talent to have one tone and for temperament to have another," 3).[8] One's talent is a reflection of one's character. Seneca then provides Maecenas as an *exemplum*: Maecenas was loose (*solutus*), perverse (*inprobe*, *contra consuetudinem*, *pravos*), and weird (*novos*, *sin-*

7 Text: OCT 1970, ed. Winterbottom; all translations are my own.
8 Text: OCT 1965, ed. Reynolds; all translations are my own.

gulares) in both his lifestyle and his prose style (6–7). Seneca cites the looseness and effeminacy of Maecenas's clothing and his entourage of eunuchs (more manly than Maecenas himself, Seneca quips) as evidence of Maecenas's wayward character. These vices were mirrored in his prose and ruined Maecenas's reputation so that Maecenas was regarded as soft (*mollis*) rather than gentle (*mitis*).

Seneca makes the same vain wish for Maecenas that Quintilian makes for him: that he would have shown some restraint before he undermined his talent (114.4): "magni vir ingenii fuerat si illud egisset via rectiore, si non vitasset intellegi, si non etiam in oratione diffluere" ("He would have been a man of great talent, if he had used it more strictly, if he had not avoided being understood, if he had not been loose in his prose style too"). The wording of Quintilian's wish for Seneca echoes Seneca's for Maecenas.[9] Quintilian writes: "nam si aliqua contempsisset, si prava non concupisset, si non omnia sua amasset, si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset, consensu potius eruditorum quam puerorum amore comprobaretur" ("For if he had cast a critical eye on anything in his writing, if he had not desired the perverse, if he had not been in love with all of his work, if he had not broken up the weight of his thoughts into the pithiest sayings, he would have found approval in the esteem of learned men rather than in the adoration of schoolboys," 130). The similarity between content and sentence structure is uncanny: a mixed contrafactual condition in the past tense, with an unexpected verb form in the apodosis (indicative *fuerat* in Seneca, imperfect subjunctive *comprobaretur* in Quintilian), and with three (four in Quintilian's sentence) protases expressed with *si* + pluperfect subjunctive (imperfect subjunctive in Seneca's third protasis), only the first of which is not negated by *non*.

In sum, according to Quintilian, both Maecenas and Seneca possessed great talent, but failed to harness it properly, and, as a result, their prose was corrupted. Quintilian certainly appreciates the irony of the situation: the man who criticizes Maecenas for his prose style is now himself criticized in the same terms.[10] Indeed, Quintilian refers to Seneca as a

9 Also noted by Gagliardi 1982.

10 Connolly 2007.87 notes the similarity in the depictions. Connolly is concerned not with the depiction of Seneca but with the use of gendered terminology in the evaluation of prose style. Graver 1998 considers Maecenas's role in Seneca's conception of a masculine prose style.

persecutor of vice (*vitiorum insectator*) and, in the very next sentence, criticizes the "sweet vices" (*dulcibus vitiis*) of his prose (129).

There is another similarity between the two texts: both works also discuss the role of imitation in the formation of a bad prose style, and they do so in similar ways. A key aspect of Quintilian's criticism of Seneca lies in the effects of Senecan prose upon the prose of Quintilian's students. Quintilian relates that the youth loved Seneca only for his vices, and when they imitated these vices, they claimed to write like Seneca (127). The students' imitation of Seneca, then, was merely an exaggeration of his vices. Seneca writes similarly of the historian Arruntius's imitation of Sallust: Arruntius greatly admired certain verbal quirks in Sallust and reproduced them in great quantity. As Seneca puts it, a rare turn of phrase in Sallust became nearly constant in Arruntius; the difference was that Sallust chanced upon a phrase, while Arruntius went looking for it (17–19). Seneca, like Quintilian, identifies this sort of intemperate imitation as one of the sources of bad style. For both Quintilian and Seneca, then, imitation is not in itself problematic, but rather the sort of imitation that arises from an immoderate esteem for the original author and results in a caricature of the author that exaggerates his particular verbal quirks.

Moreover, just as Quintilian had previously compared Seneca to Maecenas, he now compares Seneca to Sallust. Indeed, both Sallust and Seneca are described by Seneca and Quintilian, respectively, as using pithy sayings: *anputatae sententiae* of Sallust at Letter 114.17, *minutissimis sententiis* of Seneca at *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.130. This fault, in turn, incites the adoration of the younger generation: Arruntius's attitude towards Sallust is expressed by *Arruntius amare coepit* (114.17), the younger generation's devotion to Seneca is expressed by *amabant* (*I.O.* 126) and *puerorum amore* (*I.O.* 130). Finally, this love is expressed by imitation: *imitantur* for Sallust (114.17), *imitabantur* for Seneca (*I.O.* 126). Thus both Sallust and Seneca inspire the same process, described in the same words, in their admirers.

Quintilian shares with Seneca sentiments regarding not only bad prose style, but also about language. As we have seen above, Seneca is best known—indeed, caricatured—for his pointed prose style.[11] His sentences are often short and his prose is punctuated with *sententiae*: pithy sayings

11 Quintilian is not the only ancient author to parody Seneca's use of *sententiae*. Michel van den Hout notes that Fronto depicts Seneca's style as "mollibus et febriculosis prunuleis insitam" ("grafted with soft and feverish little plums"). The diminutive *prunulum*, van den Hout believes, mimics the diminutive phrases in Seneca's prose (van den Hout 1999.359).

that offer a truism or an encapsulation of the relevant remarks.[12] Seneca's translation of the Greek maxim in the first section of Letter 114 provides a good example: "talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita" ("As men's speech, so their lives"). Seneca offers this gnomic statement as an introduction to a longer discussion of the relationship between lifestyle and prose style. Thus the *sententia* here anticipates as well as encapsulates the discussion that follows. Furthermore, this *sententia* exhibits two characteristics that typify Seneca's *sententiae*: paronomasia (the repetition of the same, or similar, words) and antithesis (the use of words with seemingly opposite meanings). Here we may see paronomasia used in the pair *talis/qualis*, and antithesis in the pair *oratio/vita* (a variation of the traditional word/deed dichotomy). Quintilian imitates this use of *sententia* at the close of his assessment (10.1.130–31):

> Velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno iudicio: nam si aliqua contempsisset, si prava[13] non concupisset, si non omnia sua amasset, si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset, consensu potius eruditorum quam puerorum amore comprobaretur. Verum sic quoque iam robustis et severiore genere satis firmatis legendus, vel ideo quod exercere potest utrimque iudicium. Multa enim, ut dixi, probanda in eo, multa etiam admiranda sunt, eligere modo curae sit; quod utinam ipse fecisset: digna enim fuit illa natura quae meliora vellet; quod voluit effecit.
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> You would wish that he had spoken with his own talent but another's judgment; for if he had cast a critical eye on anything in his writing, if he had not desired the perverse, if he had not been in love with all of his work, if he had not broken up the weight of his thoughts into the pithiest sayings, he would have found approval in the esteem of learned men rather than in the adoration of schoolboys. But even so, he should be read by those who are already toughened and conditioned enough by the stricter sort of

12 Summers 1932.lxxxii–xc and Motto and Clark 1993 provide introductions to Senecan style.

13 Here I diverge from Winterbottom in opting for the more generally preferred *prava* over his *parum*. Ballaira 1980.173–75 discusses the text and proposed emendations of *parum* as well as of *si aliqua* (in the previous clause).

> style, perhaps because he will be able to drill them in their judgment of good and bad. For, as I said, there is much that is worthy of approval in him, much that is worthy of even admiration, provided one takes care to edit; if only he himself had done this: for his nature deserved to want better; what he wanted, he accomplished.

This passage begins with a *sententia*: "velles eum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno iudicio" (130). We have already considered this remark in the context of the dichotomy of *ingenium* and *iudicium*. We did not, however, appreciate that this sentiment is couched in the form of a *sententia* that contains some hallmarks of Senecan style: *ingenio* and *iudicio* stand in antithesis, as do *suo* and *alieno*, while *iudicio* aurally echoes *ingenio*. Now consider Seneca's *sententia* from *Epistulae Morales* 114.3 (which we also considered earlier): "non potest alius esse ingenio, alius animo color." *Ingenium* here is paired with *animus* rather than *iudicium*, and contrast is established by *alius . . . alius* instead of *suo . . . alieno*. Despite these minor changes, Quintilian's *sententia* is remarkably Senecan. Furthermore, following Quintilian's imitation of Seneca's *sententia* is the contrafactual condition that imitates Seneca's contrafactual condition about Maecenas. Thus the whole of Quintilian's §130 imitates Seneca's treatment of Maecenas in Letter 114.

To return to the consideration of *sententiae*, the conclusion of Quintilian's passage contains more imitations of Seneca's *sententiae*.[14] Gelzer identifies the final clauses, "quod utinam ipse fecisset: digna enim fuit illa natura quae meliora vellet; quod voluit effecit" as a series of *sententiolae* (1970.220). However, Gelzer neglects to explore the interplay between these various clauses: it is not simply that the clauses are short, rather the interplay between the clauses emphasizes characteristics of Seneca's *sententiae*, particularly paronomasia and antithesis. There are four clauses in all: 1) "quod utinam ipse fecisset," 2) "digna enim fuit illa natura," 3) *quae meliora vellet*, 4) *quod voluit effecit*. Each element of the final *sententia* either echoes or contrasts with a word in one of the previous three clauses. *Quod* echoes not only *quod* from the first clause but also *quae* from the third clause. *Voluit* recalls *vellet* from the clause previous to it. Meanwhile,

14 We might compare the frequency of *sententiae* in this passage to their absence from the discussion of Cicero of comparable length (*I.O.* 10.1.105–12).

the meaning of *volo* is anticipated by *utinam* but contrasted with the adjective *digna* (insofar as what one wants is often contrasted with what one deserves). Finally, *effecit* echoes *fecisset*. The effect of these four clauses, then, is that of a larger *sententia* composed of smaller *sententiae*. Quintilian has, in effect, imitated Seneca by creating a "meta-*sententia*" of sorts.[15]

IMITATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

We have now seen how Quintilian imitates Seneca in both content and form. However, Quintilian's employment of imitation is not unequivocal. Within this passage we may identify two areas of concern: the effect of imitation on ethics and on pedagogy. While imitation is an integral technique for the development of the orator, Quintilian, through his assessment of Seneca, also expresses anxieties about its possible effects on younger students.

The importance of imitation for this passage is evinced not only by Quintilian's use of imitation in its composition, but also by its placement. As Quintilian acknowledges at the beginning of the assessment, the passage is separated from the remainder of the discussion of Greek and Latin literature. The assessment of Seneca at the end of 10.1 thus comes directly before the discussion of imitation at 10.2.[16] The assessment of Seneca, it turns out, is not so much a critique of Seneca himself as a lesson on imitation, with Seneca serving as a preliminary *exemplum*.

Both Seneca and Quintilian discuss the influence of imitation in the cultivation of prose style. At §20 of Letter 114, Seneca returns to the topic with which he began his letter, "talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita," and considers the role that imitation plays in that relationship. Seneca believes that although faults of imitation are faults nonetheless, they do not reflect faults of lifestyle: "vitia, quae alicui inpressit imitatio, non

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15 Perhaps the final *sententia*, *quod voluit effecit*, is not only the culminating *sententia*, but may also allude to Seneca's philosophical output, which tackles the difficulty of bridging the distance between wanting (*voluit*) to behave ethically and actually accomplishing it (*effecit*). We might say that the problem in Seneca's Stoic ethics—as opposed to the problem in, say, Socratic ethics—is one of practice rather than one of knowledge: the *Epistulae Morales* repeatedly relate the mishaps of a Seneca who, despite knowing what virtue consists of, nonetheless finds himself amid vice.

16 Also noted by Gelzer 1970.221–22 and Laureys 1991. For both, the significance of the location of the assessment lies in the belief that Seneca is an inappropriate object of imitation. My own understanding of the placement is less specifically negative: the proximity of the passage to the discussion of imitation indicates the importance of imitation in the passage.

sunt indicia luxuriae nec animi corrupti" ("Vices to which imitation has habituated someone are not signs of luxury, nor of a corrupted mind," 20). The imitator (like Arruntius) is different from the originator of vice (like Maecenas) insofar as imitated vices are, so to speak, only skin deep. To this extent, imitated faults are irritating to the reader, but do not threaten the writer's virtue.

Quintilian, however, differs from Seneca. His primary objection to Seneca, it seems, is that he fears that his students' prose style will be corrupted by imitating Seneca: "sed placebat propter sola vitia, et ad ea se quisque dirigebat effingenda quae poterat" ("But he was pleasing on account of his faults alone, and each student applied himself to cultivating whatever he could of them," 127). Quintilian does not view imitated faults as harmless; rather, Seneca threatens to emasculate young orators.

Indeed, masculinity figures prominently in Quintilian's language of rhetorical training.[17] At 130–31, Quintilian contrasts young orators with those with proper oratorical training. Proper (*severior*) rhetorical education literally turns boys (*pueri*) into learned men (*eruditores*), toughened (*robusti*) and conditioned (*firmati*). For these men Seneca has the power (*potest*) to give them a workout (*exercere*). It is through exposure to harsher authors that men are made. Quintilian also implies the alternative, that through exposure to lesser styles, boys are made into effeminate less-than-men.[18] The degenerate style is labeled *fractum*, that is, effeminate (125).[19] Moreover, whereas toughened men train (*exercere*), the activity of the young is depicted as love (*amor*). Thus the pedagogical principle of imitation is central to Quintilian's ambivalence regarding Seneca. Seneca is unsuitable to growing boys because, through imitating Seneca, they acquire the traits of Seneca's style.[20] As a result, the young are instructed to steer clear of Seneca.

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17 The employment of gendered language in the discussion of prose style is certainly not unique to Quintilian and is a regular feature of Roman rhetoric. See Connolly 2007 for an overview.

18 See also *Inst. Orat.* 5.12.17–21, where Quintilian likens the rhetorical style of declamation to eunuchs.

19 Seneca himself uses the same term in describing prose style at 114.1 (the compound form *infracta*). See Gleason 1995.112 for a discussion of this term.

20 The more scandalous claim presented by Aulus Gellius 12.2.1 and Cassius Dio 61.10—that Seneca sexually seduced boys—may thus be seen as the logical, albeit intentionally alarmist, conclusion drawn from Quintilian's implications. The claim reads the analogy of sexuality for prose style in reverse: while Quintilian uses the vocabulary

In contrast, more mature readers are given the opposite instructions: they *should* read Seneca. Quintilian explicitly divides his readership into two groups: those who should read Seneca and those who should not.[21] While those who should not read Seneca go about their merry way, Quintilian's assessment has more to offer those who return to it having read Seneca.[22] These privileged readers are given a more nuanced opinion of Seneca and imitation. They may appreciate that Quintilian imitates Seneca in his assessment and, as such, that this assessment anticipates the subsequent discussion of imitation. Moreover, these readers may reinterpret Quintilian's original prescription to read Seneca: "quod exercere potest utrimque iudicium." Seneca was to train their judgment. But upon re-reading the passage, they may appreciate that Quintilian does so as well: in reading the assessment and recognizing the imitation of Seneca, these readers have exercised their stylistic judgment.

This passage, then, may be read differently by the different readerships of the *Institutio Oratoria*. While Quintilian's impetus for writing in this way may be, in part, playfulness, there are also larger pedagogical issues at stake. Although Quintilian makes clear at the beginning of the reading list (10.1.4) that its intended audience consists of more advanced students, he seems to want to ensure that students unprepared to read Seneca will not do so.[23] The student who *has* read Seneca, in contrast, is rewarded with a richer understanding of both the technique and the consequences of imitation.

CONCLUSION: AUTHORITY, AUTHORS, AND READERS

The *Institutio Oratoria* as a whole establishes Quintilian as a voice of authority in matters of rhetoric and pedagogy, and the use of imitation in

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of effeminacy to describe prose style, Gellius and Dio read literally Quintilian's claim that Seneca seduces boys.

21 The recognition of different groups of readers is not especially surprising, as Quintilian seems to address different portions of the *Institutio Oratoria* to different groups: e.g., parents, *grammatici*, students, practitioners of oratory.

22 Quintilian says as much in his discussion of oratory at 10.1.20–21: an orator (and we should remember here that Quintilian himself was a practicing orator) tricks his audience, so his speech must be re-read in order to unearth those techniques.

23 Elsewhere in the *Inst. Orat.* (especially Books 1 and 2 about early education), Quintilian displays a special interest in, and sensitivity about, the psychology of his students.

the assessment of Seneca provides an opportunity to dissect the ways in which Quintilian establishes this authority.[24]

I propose that the use of categories typically applied to didactic poetry will be beneficial in sorting out these hierarchical relationships. We will see how the functions of author and reader organize Quintilian, Seneca, and the readers. The explicit analysis of these functions in didactic poetry has increased our understanding of that genre, and I believe the same is possible in the study of these rhetorical textbooks.[25] While the textbooks belong to a somewhat different tradition than Lucretius's *de Rerum Natura*, Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, they are, nonetheless, didactic and, as such, participate in the same complex relationships between author/teacher and reader/addressee as they intersect at the topic of instruction.

The study of didactic poetry has taught us that the author is not identical to the persona of the *praeceptor*.[26] This principle is also true of Quintilian. There is Quintilian the author of the *Institutio Oratoria*, but also Quintilian the *praeceptor orationis*, whose biography is strategically presented to us, as in the preface to Book 6.[27] Certainly Quintilian the author and Quintilian the *praeceptor* are not mutually exclusive, and their biographies overlap, but we should be careful not to confuse Quintilian's presentation of himself with his "real" self. The purpose of the *praeceptor* persona, I contend, is to establish authority: indeed, the function of the *praeceptor* in any didactic work is to establish himself as an authority on the topic. As befits an instructor of rhetoric, Quintilian uses various tropes to demonstrate mastery, such as the disclosure of his personal grief and subsequent up-by-the-bootstraps revitalization in the preface to Book 6. His imitation of Seneca is another of these tropes. Quintilian demonstrates his comprehensive knowledge of rhetoric through his imitation of Senecan style.

Furthermore, through the very act of imitation, Quintilian demonstrates that his own prose style is impervious to the corrupting influence of Senecan style. That is, Quintilian shows that he may imitate a Senecan

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24 Bloomer 1997 similarly traces how Seneca the Elder uses the prefaces of the *Controversiae* to establish both his own authority and an authoritative history of declamation. Also, Gunderson 2003.29–58 reads the preface to *Controversiae* 1 as the thematization of memory and old age in the construction of Seneca's authority.

25 Clay 1983.212–25, Heath 1985.233–34, Sharrock 1994.5–17.

26 See Sharrock 1994.5–17 for a lucid discussion of both the author and reader.

27 Leigh 2004, Gunderson 2009.122.

style without having it affect him. The use of gendered terminology in the description of prose styles adds a sexual dimension to Quintilian's victory: Quintilian's masculine prose style has fended off the attacks of Seneca's effeminate style.[28] Or, as Quintilian himself might put it, he has managed to play the eunuch without being castrated: a marvel of anatomy.[29]

The use of the trope of imitation is also particularly appropriate for Quintilian's establishment of authority: imitation further confuses the identity of the author, distancing him from readers through the intervention of yet another author. We should note that an imitative author is himself difficult to master through imitation: whereas Quintilian may demonstrate his rhetorical superiority by imitating Seneca, it is much more difficult to imitate an imitator in turn. Thus as an author, Quintilian presents a persona who is placed hierarchically above Seneca, as well as above the pupils who cannot correctly imitate Seneca.

I turn now to the reader/addressee. Inasmuch as the majority of the *Institutio Oratoria* is not written in the second person, the overlapping of reader and addressee observable in a didactic work proper is largely absent. Nonetheless, readers of the *Institutio Oratoria* are stratified by their knowledge of the reading list: readers who recognize Quintilian's imitation ascend to an exclusive group who "get the joke." Thus Quintilian reduplicates in this passage the very stratification that an education in rhetoric promises.[30] And yet upon closer investigation, we see that Quintilian has set up a no-win situation: a reader approaches the *Institutio Oratoria* in order to acquire *paideia*, but he must already be versed in the literary canon to understand Quintilian. An earnest reader is bound to fail; only the disingenuous reader passes the test. Quintilian thus warrants re-reading, as he himself prescribes of other orators, whom he describes as similarly dissimulating and employing tricks (10.1.20–21).

We may thus appreciate that the *Institutio Oratoria* participates in a certain reflexivity as a textbook that itself reinforces and reduplicates

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28 In the gendered language of rhetorical style, an effeminate prose style is paradoxically depicted as aggressive: the rhetoric of declamation is often personified as actively attacking traditional rhetoric. This paradox may be explained as a reflection of anxieties rooted in idealized masculine rhetoric: in striving to embody the perfect masculine orator, any small fault is viewed as effeminate. Thus effeminate rhetoric is felt as a ubiquitous threat.

29 Following the logic of the passage cited above at n. 18.

30 Cf. Sharrock 1994, which asserts that Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 2 seduces the reader while promising instruction in seduction.

among its readership the socio-political structures through which these readers seek to advance by reading the *Institutio Oratoria*.[31]

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31 One could make the somewhat specious observation here that the hierarchy of Quintilian and his readers resembles the political structure of the empire: subjects toiling fruitlessly under a sole ruler. The impotence of oratory under the empire relative to its former glory in the republic is a well-worn topic in imperial oratory. On the subject of education, Corbeill 2007 discusses how rhetorical education in both the republic and the early empire serves to replicate social hierarchies.

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