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The Old is New Again: Cicero, Barack Obama, and the Campaign Rhetoric of the ‘New Man’

Abstract: The following comparison of Cicero’s *Verrines* with Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign rhetoric reveals the parallelism between these candidates’ stylistic responses to the challenges of *novitas*, as they turn obstacle into advantage and transform change into tradition. Through similar stylistic means, these candidates demonstrate their unique ability to preserve their respective political communities thanks to their positions as both outsiders and insiders who possess “double vision.” Cicero’s distinctive rhetoric of *novitas*, which is an enduring contribution to republican politics, is a model for the campaigns of outsider candidates like Obama who seek to sustain, not break with, the classical republican tradition.

Keywords: Cicero, campaign rhetoric, classical republicanism, Roman oratory, *novus homo*, Obama

A modern American president may look and sound different from a first century BCE Roman politician. Looks, however, can be deceiving, as ancient Greco-Roman models of leadership and their resultant political styles persist today and even shape current political debate. One such model is Cicero who created a distinctly classical republican style marked for its balance, ability to collapse tradition with change, and seaming together of seemingly

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contradictory viewpoints.¹ By meeting, subverting, and reconfiguring the expectations of his *novus homo* ('new man') role during his candidacy,² Cicero transformed his version of the new man into a stock figure of republican campaign oratory. Through a comparison of Senator Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign rhetoric with that of aedile-elect Cicero's in the *Verrines*, this paper aims to demonstrate that this version of the 'new man' and his distinctive rhetoric of *novitas* forged by Cicero are enduring features of republican campaign rhetoric.

Why is it that the same charges that were leveled against the *novus homo* Cicero in ancient Rome—pusillanimity, vanity, and empty rhetoric—reappeared in attacks on another political outsider, Barack Obama, in 2008?³ And why are Obama's and Cicero's stylistic responses so similar? Eloquent outsiders who treat words as actions are often charged with

¹For more on the republican style and on oratory as the source of the republic's perpetual re-creation, see R. Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 95–140. For more on the Ciceronian version of this style as the foundation of the republican oratorical tradition that unites speechmaking with statesmanship, see L. Samponaro, *Playing Rome: Cicero and the Republican Style* (forthcoming).

²The definition of a *novus homo* is a matter of some debate. Some apply the term only to those who were the first of their families to reach the consulship even if their ancestors had already attained senatorial status. cf. M. Dondin-Payre, "Homo novus: Un slogan de Caton à César?" *Historia* 30 (1981): 22–81. Since the meaning of *novitas* is not consistent in the ancient sources themselves, I employ here Wiseman's and Vanderbroeck's broader definitions of *novi homines* as "people, whose political career was marked by the fact that they had to make up for a social deficiency (e.g. Com. Pet.2–4; Cic. Mur.17)." P. J. J. Vanderbroeck, "Homo novus again," *Chiron* 16 (1986): 239–42 (p. 242). Cf. T. P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate 139 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). For the flexible nature of the term *novitas* and its relationship to *nobilitas*, see L. A. Burckhardt, "The Political Elite of the Roman Republic: Comments on Recent Discussion of the Concepts of Nobilitas and Homo Novus," *Historia* 39 (1990): 77–99; H. van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models: The Political Strategy of a Newcomer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 35–41, 58. As van der Blom points out, Cicero never called himself a *nobilis* and consistently fashioned himself as a genuine *homo novus*.

³Cicero was known as a weathervane who wrote grandiloquent speeches and self-indulgent poetry and who talked about his consulship *non sine causa sed sine fine* (Seneca, *De Brevitate Vitae* 5.1) cf. Pseudo-Sallust, *Invectiva in Ciceronem* 7. From ridicule of his Democratic nomination stage and its styrofoam Greek columns as a "temple of Obama" to attacks on his vacillating foreign policy as president, Obama has faced similar criticism: "I could stand up here and say: let's just get everybody together, let's get unified. The sky will open, the light will come down, celestial choirs will be singing, and everyone will know that we should do the right thing, and the world would be perfect. . . You are not going to wave a magic wand. . ." Hillary Clinton (2/24/08). cf. L. Grossman, "Obama's Greek Columns Uh Oh," *Huffington Post* 9/27/08 blog.

sophistry in the republican arena.⁴ The accused may respond by fighting fire with fire, ignoring the charges, misdirection, or the like. But a traditional republican, who seeks consensus over chaos, and harmony over division, will take the Ciceronian route, which is to craft a carefully balanced stance and style that collapse tradition with change, assertion with deference, and idealism with pragmatism. In addition to their oratory, Obama's memoirs and Cicero's philosophical, political, and rhetorical treatises reveal a penchant for the middle, a knack for combining opposing stances, and a desire to reconcile opposites,⁵ all of which befit the republican style in which consensus is valued.⁶ Since substance and style are all of a piece for republicans, politics are enacted by means of Obama's and Cicero's oratorical styles, both of which paradoxically

⁴While Obama and Cicero take the "strong view" of rhetoric, which views words as deeds that construct, rather than just describe, reality, their opponents retaliate by espousing the "weak view" of rhetoric, which divides form from content, substance from style. Clinton, who repeatedly attacked Obama for relying on words and speeches rather than on works and actions, posited that the 2008 campaign was about "talk versus action, rhetoric versus reality" and that the "best words in the world aren't enough unless you match them with action." Wisconsin Primary Speech (2/19/08). The sophistic divide of the mind from the tongue is a persistent theme of this campaign rhetoric: "I don't want to just show up and give one of those whoop-dee-do speeches and get everybody whipped up. I want everyone thinking." H. Clinton (Wynnewood, PA Speech 4/19/08) "I will work hard to make sure Americans aren't deceived by an eloquent but empty call for change" J. McCain, Wisconsin Primary Speech (2/19/08). For more on the strong v. weak view of rhetoric, see R. A. Lanham, *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1993), 154–94; M. Leff, "Cicero's *Pro Murena* and the Strong Case for Rhetoric," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 1.1 (1998): 61–88.

⁵Cicero's pragmatic politics, which shape his new man style, nicely parallel his eclectic, Academic Skepticism. For more on his view that circumstances determine moral judgments, see R. Woolf, *Cicero: The Philosophy of a Roman Sceptic* (New York: Routledge Press, 2015), *passim*. For Niebuhrian "realism" and Deweyan "chastened idealism" as Obama's philosophical inspirations, see J. T. Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hopes, and the American Political Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 151–265. Obama, like Cicero, espouses an admixture of idealism and pragmatism: "I am robbed even of the uncertainty of certainty—for sometimes absolute truths may well be absolute" Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Crown/Three Rivers Press, 2006), 97. Both speakers tread a fine line in combining seeming opposites. For example, while Obama praises American values as being "rooted in a basic optimism about life and a faith in free will," he simultaneously espouses the belief that we are not ourselves masters of our own fates. Cf. S. Cave, "There's No Such Thing as Free Will," *The Atlantic* (June 2016): 69–74.

⁶For more on republics as "states of speech" that are constructed and maintained by persuasion, the goal of which is to create a working consensus among competing interests, see J. Connolly, *The State of Speech: Rhetoric and Political Thought in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 23–76. cf. Cicero, *De Oratore* 1.30–4, 2.33, 3.63, 122; *Brutus* 6, 45, 53; *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.5; *De Officiis* 1.156–8.

exhibit continuity in change throughout their political careers. It is the purpose of this paper to show that the traditionalism of republicans of the Ciceronian brand manifests itself early in their careers in a style that reflects the dual nature of their outsider/insider positions. From Edmund Burke to John Adams to Barack Obama, these political newcomers who are inherent traditionalists, adopt, whether deliberately or not,⁷ the style and ethos of the Ciceronian *novus homo*, as they carve out their niches in their respective political domains. Replete with figures of doubling such as antithesis, anaphora and metonymy, the campaign style of a Ciceronian republican is litotic, chiasitic, and balanced even at times to the point of excess.⁸ It is this doubling of self and style that is responsible for both the strength of these campaigners and the criticisms they attract.⁹

THE *VERRINES* AND CONVENTIONS OF *NOVITAS*

Haec eadem est nostrae rationis regio et via, horum nos hominum sectam atque instituta persequimur. Videmus quanta sit in invidia quantoque in

⁷Adams, a “new” man in that he was not of noble birth, deliberately adopted Cicero as a stylistic and political model from the start. Cf. J. M. Farrell, ““Syren Tully” and the Young John Adams,” *Classical Journal* 87.4 (1992): 373–90. For a discussion of how Cicero and Adams compensate for their respective social disadvantages by their “worth,” see Adams’ own correspondence with Jonathan Sewall in February 1760. Burke, who explicitly modeled his prosecution speech in Warren Hastings’ impeachment trial on the “Verronean orations,” and whose very career followed the patterns of Cicero’s, regularly played a doubled role as he exploited the equivocal nature of his status as both an Irishman and Englishman. Cf. M. M. Miles, *Art as Plunder: The Origins of Debate about Cultural Property* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 302–7; C. C. O’Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 83.

⁸For more on Cicero’s own characterization of his earlier style as being marked by a *iuvenilis redundantia*, see J. C. Davies, “Molon’s Influence on Cicero,” *Classical Quarterly* 18.2 (1968): 303–14. cf. *Brut.* 316. Cicero’s excessive balancing and redundancy in the *Verrines* are actually means of conveying politeness in the face of intimidation; as in archery, to achieve one’s target, one must often overshoot. The new man eschews the jarring inconcinnity and reliance on hyperbaton that define his late style in favor of balancing techniques that aim at harmonizing even the most discordant political beliefs.

⁹As Terrill argues, the “multiperspectivalism” and rejection of ordinary “monologic discourse” that result from adopting a doubled persona invite suspicion that one is a “potentially subversive” “duplicious double-talker.” R. E. Terrill, “Unity and Duality in Barack Obama’s “A More Perfect Union,”” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95.4 (2009): 363–86. Cf. R. E. Terrill, *Double-Consciousness and the Rhetoric of Barack Obama: The Price and Promise of Citizenship* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 20–4. For an ancient critique of Cicero’s tendency to adopt “doubled” roles, see Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 36.43.4–6.

odio apud quosdam nobiles homines novorum hominum virtus et industria; si tantulum oculos deiecerimus, praesto esse insidias; si ullum locum aperuerimus suspicioni aut crimini, accipiendum statim vulnus esse; semper nobis vigilandum, semper laborandum videmus. Inimicitiae sunt, subeantur; labor, suscipiatur; (*In Verrem* 2.5.181–2)

There is this same direction and route for our course of life, and these are the men whose school and customs we follow. We see how much jealousy and how much hatred the virtue and industry of new men incur among certain noble men. If we turn our gaze away for even just a moment, a trap awaits; if we leave room for any suspicion or charge, we must immediately suffer the injury; we must always be vigilant, we must always toil—we see this. There are hostilities—let us endure; there is work—let us take it on.¹⁰

In 70 BCE the new man Cicero had already obtained the quaestorship *in primis*, and now, eschewing the *popularis* associations of the tribunate, stood as a candidate for aedileship.¹¹ Since a *novus homo's* best chance at electoral success was to impress a lasting image of himself in the public eye, and a political trial was the time-honored means to this end,¹² Cicero chose to prosecute the corrupt provincial governor Verres *de repetundis* in an *illustris accusatio*. In response to the fact that Verres' supporters had colluded to postpone the trial until 69 so that they would be in positions to obtain Verres' acquittal,¹³ Cicero delivered

¹⁰The *Verrines* are cited from G. Peterson, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes: Divinatio in Q. Caeciliam, In C. Verrem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917, 2nd ed.). All translations in this article are my own.

¹¹As a more conservative new man, Cicero chooses to climb the *cursus honorum* through the aedileship despite it being the more difficult rung. As Wiseman, *New Men*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 161–2, pointed out, “Only two *novi*—Cicero and Ummidius Quadratus—are known to have reached the consulship after being aediles, as against sixteen ex-tribunes.” Cf. E. S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 180–9. For ancient testimony that Cicero ran for the aedileship instead of the tribunate in order to please the optimates, see Dio 36.43.5.

¹²There are numerous examples of young men often in their late teens prosecuting well-known figures as a means of career advancement. cf. J.-M. David, *Le patronat judiciaire au dernier siècle de la République romaine* (Rome: École française, 1992), 525–47. Cicero's own patron and role model L. Licinius Crassus prosecuted the tribune C. Papirius Carbo in a career-launching move. cf. *Verr.* 2.3.1–9; *De Orat.* 3.7; *Brut.* 159, 242; *Off.* 2.47.

¹³Verres' noble friends, the Metelli and his defense *patronus* Hortensius, would all be newly elected officials in 69: Marcus Metellus would replace Manius Glabrio as the praetor presiding over the extortion court (*quaestio repetundarum*), and Hortensius and Quintus Metellus would be consuls. For Cicero's story that C. Curio congratulated Verres on the election of Hortensius, see *Verr.* 1.1.18–21. For more on the prosecution's delay tactics, see *Verr.* 1.1.16–17, 29–34, 2.1.29–31.

the unorthodox and successful first *actio*, which relied primarily on the testimony of eyewitnesses; as a resourceful *novus homo*, Cicero consistently turns seeming obstacles into opportunities. At the late age of thirty-six and already an experienced defender,¹⁴ Cicero the candidate donned the mask of the new man in the *Verrines* in order to catapult himself and his career into the midst of current political affairs.¹⁵ In an unusual, possibly groundbreaking, move Cicero published, along with *Divinatio in Caecilium* and the first *actio*, what purportedly would have been his complete prosecution speech against Verres.¹⁶ As a new man, Cicero did not have the easy routes of power open to him and could not rely on inherited *gratia*, *amicitiae*, or *clientelae* to the extent that the *nobiles* could. Having been sorely disappointed that his hard work as quaestor in Sicily in 75 had been overlooked in Rome,¹⁷ he could now in this trial publicize his achievements as quaestor and emphasize the *gratia* he received from his provincial clients since conveniently the province that Verres had fleeced and he was to defend was Sicily itself. The text, which maintains the fiction of a trial with Verres present,¹⁸ is

¹⁴For the appropriate age (usually as an *adulescentulus*) for undertaking prosecutions, see A. Vasaly, "Cicero's Early Speeches," in J. M. May, ed., *Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill Press, 2002), 72–3, 98; A. Vasaly, "Cicero, Domestic Politics, and the First Action of the *Verrines*," *Classical Antiquity* 28.1 (2009): 101–37 (p. 118). For Cicero's special pleading on this matter, see *Div. Caec.* 1, 41; *Verr.* 2.2.10, 2.3.3. He similarly exploited his role as an outsider "novice" in earlier speeches even though he was already in his mid to late twenties. cf. *Pro Quinctio* 2–4, 34, 77; *Pro Roscio Amerino* 1–9, 31–4, 60.

¹⁵Since candidates during Cicero's time did not have formal conventions or spaces within which to campaign other than *contiones* that evoked populism, trial speeches like the *Verrines* provide the closest parallel to today's formal campaign speeches. For more on campaign customs in Rome, see W. J. Tatum, "Campaign Rhetoric," in C. Steel and H. van der Blom, edd., *Community and Communication: Oratory and Politics in Republican Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 133–50. For the conservative Cicero's avoidance of the populist *contiones*, see T. N. Mitchell, *Cicero: The Ascending Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 150.

¹⁶Although publication of speeches was precedented, the "literary" nature of the second *Verrine* makes its publication unusual or even unique. Cf. Vasaly, "Early Speeches" cited in n.14 above, pp. 90–2. While the first *actio* was aimed to win over the jury and impressionable summer crowds (*Verr.* 1.1.54), the second was intended for Cicero's literate constituency. For more on Cicero's political aims in publishing his works, see J. Powell and J. Paterson, edd., *Cicero the Advocate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52–7. *contra* W. Stroh, *Taxis und Taktik. Die advokatische Dispositionskunst in Ciceros Gerichtsreden* (Stuttgart: Teubner Press, 1975), 52.

¹⁷Cf. Cicero, *Pro Plancio*, 64–6; Plutarch, *Vita Ciceronis*, 6.

¹⁸The irony that Cicero is playing a new man who isn't really new further heightens the dramatic irony that Verres had already skipped town for Marseilles long before the second *actio*. Cf. *Verr.* 2.1.1–3. Most scholars concur that the lengthy second *actio* is undeliverable in its present form. Cf. B. Innocenti, "Towards a Theory of Vivid

a political tract meant to ensure that Cicero's dethroning of Hortensius as Rome's premier orator would be well-known¹⁹ and to enhance Cicero's political standing in the senate as he sets himself squarely in the center of the debate about the constitution of the criminal courts; indeed, he even argues this case will determine the outcome of the "popular" agitation for court reform.²⁰ If he could convince a senatorial jury to convict one of their own, he would save the senate's good name and be a champion of the courts and the nation.²¹ He would not only have ingratiated himself with the equites but also the *nobiles*, Sicilian clients, and the people all in one public display,²² a *maximum certamen*,

Description as Practiced in Cicero's *Verrine Orations*," *Rhetorica* 12 (1994): 355–81 (p. 364, n.18). *contra* A. Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 209 n. 24. For ancient testimony on the cumbersome bulk of the *Verrines*, consider Aper: "Who would wait out the five volumes against Verres?" Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 20.

¹⁹For more on Cicero's need to outdo Hortensius, see A. R. Dyck, "Rivals into Partners: Hortensius and Cicero," *Historia* 2 (2008): 142–73 (pp.149–53).

²⁰70 was a year marked by public agitation for the overturning of existing Sullan legislation including the senatorial monopoly of the criminal courts (*quaestiones*), and in August of that year the conservative praetor L. Aurelius Cotta promulgated a bill to divide the courts evenly between senators, knights, and *tribuni aerarii*. cf. *Verr.* 1.1.45, 2.2.174. For other references to Cotta's bill, see T. R. S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* vol. II (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1984 rpt. of 1952 ed.), 127.

²¹For Cicero's argument that if Verres were convicted, the senate would retain control of the courts, see *Verr.* 1.1.1–2, 1.1.20, 1.1.47–9, 2.1.5–6, 2.1.20–3, 2.2.174–5, 2.3.168, 2.3.223–4, 2.5.174–9. Cicero's claim that L. Aurelius Cotta's bill was promulgated because of the popular fear that the senatorial jury would acquit Verres is easily refuted by chronology: Cotta's compromise was already in the works as the trial commenced, and the senate lost their judicial monopoly even before the second *actio* was published. Cf. Gruen, *Last Generation*, cited in n. 11 above, p. 35. cf. M. Gelzer, *Cicero, Ein Biographischer Versuch* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), 41–2. Cotta's bill was among a series of compromises, including Pompey's tribunician bill, that were actually backed by the senate. In order to emphasize his own role in saving the senate from herself, Cicero obfuscates this fact to make the measure seem more *popularis* in nature. Cf. *Verr.* 1.1.44–5. For the view that Cotta's bill was not, in fact, the product of factional wrangling between Pompeian *populares* on the one side and Metellan optimates on the other, see P. A. Brunt, "Patronage and Politics in the *Verrines*," *Chiron* 10 (1980): 273–90 (p. 283); Gruen, *Last Generation*, cited in n. 11 above, pp. 34–5; Mitchell, *Cicero*, cited in n. 15 above, pp. 115–34. For Cicero's assessment that Pompey's tribunician bill was actually a necessary evil, see *De Legibus* 3.26.

²²For a discussion of the *equites* as Cicero's targeted audience in the *Verrines* and his subsequent need of their electoral support in 63, see S. Butler, *The Hand of Cicero* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), 76–81. For more on Cicero's reliance on the wealthy *publicani* especially for political support, see *Commentariolum Petitionis* 3; *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* 1.1.6, 32, 35; *Epistulae ad Familiares* 13.9.2; *Epistulae ad Atticum* 1.17.8–9, 1.18.7, 2.1.8, 2.16.4. For the importance of cultivating *municipales* for a successful candidacy, see *Comm. Pet.* 24, 31.

as he himself later called it;²³ the aedile-elect's first show would be a big hit. By exaggerating the political importance of a trial that was to be held mid-summer when Rome was thronged with crowds who had come for the census, elections, and Pompey's games,²⁴ Cicero the candidate was mobilizing votes through his words and increasing his political stock by playing the outsider new man who would correct insider politics.²⁵

Whether he was the first to transform the term *novus homo* into a political slogan or simply redeployed the tradition of *novitas* that he inherited in an innovative way,²⁶ Cicero faced an audience in the *Verrines* that had certain expectations and preconceptions of what a new man would be like. Due to the fragmentary, limited nature of early Roman oratory, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which Cicero relied on, broke with, or reinvented this tradition.²⁷ Nevertheless one thing is clear. Cicero is not Marius,²⁸ just as Barack Obama is not Sarah Palin. They are not iconoclasts seeking to overthrow the status quo but rather

²³*Brut.* 319. cf. *Verr.* 1.1.54.

²⁴For the wider public interest in the case, see *Div. Caec.* 42; *Verr.* 1.1.4, 54, 2.5.175.

²⁵There is a tension in Cicero's fiction of the political importance of this case: If Cicero's prosecution of Verres is to determine the outcome of the senate's claim to the courts, then Cicero as prosecutor, is challenging the senate's privileged position. Walking a fine line between attack and defense, Cicero, on the one hand, threatens to create a *iudicium populi* should Verres be acquitted, and on the other hand, presents this threat as encouragement for the senate to clean house in order to save herself. For the provocation that he would be happy to bring Verres' case before the people as a *munus aedilitatis*, see esp. *Verr.* 2.1.13–14, 2.3.217, 2.5.151, 173, 179, 183.

²⁶For the argument that Cicero may have been the first to consolidate the associations of the new man into an ideology and to make *novus homo* a political slogan, see Dondin-Payre, "*Homo Novus*," cited in n. 2 above, pp. 31–33, 51–2. Later depictions of new men like that of Sallust's Marius are drawn in relation to Cicero's persona. Cf. D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 28–40; van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 52–3.

²⁷While the lack of evidence makes it difficult to prove with absolute certainty when Cicero was the start, or merely the part, of certain trends in new man politics, in his strategic approach to *novitas* it is "likely that he reused and redeveloped some elements already existent in Roman oratorical and political culture as his rhetoric had a broad appeal." van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, p. 333.

²⁸Sallust's Marius, for instance, a simplified and intensified version of Cicero's own Cato the Elder, is a crude counterpart to the more finely spun Ciceronian *novus homo* and is a later example of the reductive new man stereotype that likely would have been readily identifiable to Roman audiences like that of Cicero's *Verrines*. For echoes of Cato in Sallust's portrait of Marius, see G. M. Paul, *A Historical Commentary on Sallust's Bellum Jugurthinum* (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1984), 204–14. For more on the extremism of Sallust's Marius as a deliberate counterpoint to Ciceronian *novitas*, see E. Dench, *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the age of Alexander to the age of Hadrian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 146–9; van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 51–3.

traditionalists who rely on change in accordance with tradition to sustain, not undermine, the existing political order. Throughout the *Verrines*, Cicero meticulously associates *novitas* with himself but novelty with his opponents.²⁹ Audience assumptions notwithstanding, Cicero casts his new men predecessors into his own distinctive mold. In the *Verrines*, Marius and Cato the Elder are singled out for their *diligentia*, *industria*, *ingenium*, *labor*, *officium*, *temperantia*, *vigilantia*, and *virtus*, especially the *prisca virtus* of the *maiores*.³⁰ These traits well suit the aedile-elect *novus homo* who seeks to pluck the fruit of his diligence (*fructus diligentiae*) in the lengthy second *actio*, a showcase of his natural talent and unstinting industry,³¹ indeed, of all the instances of *industrius* in Cicero's speeches, one-third are in the *Verrines*. In order to win over constituents, the candidate manipulates the diction of the new man³² to prove that he is actually following in the footsteps of his predecessors along his journey.³³ There is a tension within the text between Cicero accepting and revising the tradition, or "ideology,"³⁴ of *novitas* he inherits, and the text itself mirrors his careful tightrope walk between fulfilling the duties of the new man persona he inherits

²⁹Cicero treats Verres, who had recently come to power during the Sullan domination of the 80s as son of a senator without consular antecedents, as a counterfeit *novus homo* who is his own model, a *novum monstrum* who shocks the world with his unheard of crimes. Cf. *Verr.* 2.1.6, 8, 44, 49, 60, 129, 2.2.9, 26, 129–30, 146, 151, 158–60, 2.3.8, 10, 16, 22, 32, 64, 138, 206, 2.4.38, 99, 2.4.7, 38, 2.5.13, 28, 60, 68, 75, 156, 189. To counter Hortensius' charge that his abbreviated first *actio* is itself a procedural innovation, Cicero argues Hortensius is novel both for his courtroom tactics and corruption of justice. Like the sham nobles he represents, Hortensius abandons *mos maiorum* in favor of a new kind of wisdom (*nova quadam sapientia*). Cf. *Verr.* 2.1.24, 2.2.26, 2.3.210, 2.5.155.

³⁰See esp. *Verr.* 2.5.25, 181. For more on Cicero's cautious handling of his more radical Arpinate predecessor, whom he exploits as a negative or positive exemplum depending on political exigencies, see Mitchell, *Cicero*, cited in n. 15 above, pp. 46–50; van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 181–3, 326–35.

³¹*Verr.* 1.1.32–3, 2.1.2, 20.

³²For an overview of the catchwords of *novitas*, see van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 51–2.

³³For Cicero's depiction of his *curriculum vitae* as a precarious ascent, in which even the tiniest (*tantulum*) misstep could topple him, see esp. *Div. Caec.* 44, 72; *Verr.* 2.2.179, 2.3.2.

³⁴For more on the "ideology" of *novitas*, see Wiseman, *New Men*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 107–113; J. Dugan, *Making a New Man: Ciceronian Self-Fashioning in the Rhetorical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–15; van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 35–59. For a succinct discussion of the limits of applying the term "ideology" to the new man given the flux of Roman political self-definition, see Dench whose view of *novitas* as a "stance that insists on its true traditionalism while facilitating the accommodation of the new" my philological approach here complements. Dench, *Romulus' Asylum*, cited in n. 28 above, pp. 185–6.

and those he chooses for his own doubled persona.³⁵ Whenever Cicero shows up in the *Verrines*, the grammar often alternates between first person active verbs and perfect passive participles,³⁶ and between weighty, periphrastic gerunds and active, enthusiastic jussive responses (as in the passage cited above), as Cicero transforms attack into defense, necessity into choice. Duties become honors, as Cicero appropriates, but does not alienate, from the nobles the marks of distinction reserved for them.³⁷ Achieving conflicting ends through the same means is a hallmark of Ciceronian style, and the *Verrines* is no exception. In these speeches, Cicero is the prosecutor who turns out to be a defender, a challenger who turns out to be a supporter of the elite, the orator who uses *popularis* rhetoric to achieve optimum ends,³⁸ in short the outsider who ends up an insider.³⁹ Many typical new man characteristics are turned on their head: Cicero cannot remember the name of Polyclitus and yet can address a Syracusan senate in Greek,⁴⁰ he relies on hard *labor* to hunt down Verres but then claims

³⁵Of all the instances of *officium* in Cicero's speeches, one quarter are in the *Verrines*. By underlining his *officia*, Cicero shows that he too, like the nobles, is at the center of a web of interdependent relationships. As *patronus*, Cicero must fulfill his duty to the Sicilians (*Div. Caec.* 4–5, 14; *Verr.* 2.4.80, 2.5.139, 183), as aedile-elect he must fulfill his duties to the state and Roman people, and as a model Roman he must always perform the sacred obligations of friendship, family, and *religio*. Cf. *Verr.* 1.1.27, 2.4.81–2, 2.5.35, 130, 188.

³⁶For example, not wanting to appear overly zealous in his attack on Verres and the nobility, Cicero describes himself both as actively undertaking the case and passively receiving it from the Sicilians and Roman people. The interplay of *suscipio* in the first person singular and *recipio* in the perfect passive participle emphasizes this reluctant hero theme. See esp. *Verr.* 2.2.1. cf. *Div. Caec.* 26; *Verr.* 2.2.179, 2.5.139, 183. For the past participle as “expressing mental or emotional motivation, compulsion, or hindrance,” see E. Laughton, *The Participle in Cicero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 5.

³⁷For praise of the new man's skill at avoiding offense to the nobility while simultaneously neutralizing the threat of their *auctoritas*, see Asconius, preface to commentary on *Pro Cornelio* §61.

³⁸For Cicero's similar deployment of the term *popularis*, see R. Seager, “Cicero and the Word *Popularis*,” *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1972): 328–38. For Cicero's ability to represent himself “in a combination of different ways” and his tendency to “play the ‘new man’ card for himself,” see Dench, *Romulus' Asylum*, cited in n. 28 above, pp. 179, 185–6.

³⁹Cicero is a new man but as member of the senate he is also an insider. As Flower points out, *nobilitas* and *novitas* are not precise antonyms and are only defined in relation to one another. H. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 62.

⁴⁰For the new man's professed shunning of luxury and the Greek lifestyle, see Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 85.32–3; *ORF* 94, 96, 98, 133, 174, 185 in H. Malcovati, ed., *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta Liberae Rei Publicae* (Turin: Paravia, 1930

Verres was an easy catch,⁴¹ and after first rejecting the claims of aristocratic *virtus* in favor of those of *industria* and *ingenium*, he accepts and even praises aristocratic *virtus*, the embodiment of which he himself becomes. For only this newcomer possesses a unique double vision⁴² necessary to see that an attack, albeit a careful one, on the senate is actually the only way to save her.⁴³ Whether searching through records for evidence, eyewitnessing the devastation of Sicily, or detecting the Sicilian baskets of gold that threaten his election, Cicero perceives, indeed foresees, potential threats.⁴⁴ As a *novus homo*, he is used to deception and therefore more keen in detecting and predicting it. He is thus most fit to be the senate's crier and personal herald and repeatedly warns her that this case is her one chance to save herself: "I warn and admonish you what I know to be true (*moneo praedicoque id quod intellego*) that this is a heaven sent opportunity" . . . "if I am in the position to be the one warning. . ." (*si qui monendi locus ex hoc loco est*)⁴⁵ is the bold yet cautious refrain of this new man who makes himself the senate's only hope for redemption.

As a member of the senate who was also an African-American presidential candidate, Obama too is an insider/outsider candidate

(rpt. 1955), 2nd ed.). Cf. E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 52–83.

⁴¹The style modulates to reflect the balance between Cicero's ease and difficulty in tracking Verres, who somehow always gets caught red-handed (*manifestus*). New men need worthy, but not insurmountable, opponents. See esp. *Verr.* 1.1.48, 2.2.181, 187, 190–1, 2.3.133–4, 137, 178, 2.4.104, 111. Obama also speaks of his fellow candidates as "fierce competitors, worthy of respect." South Carolina Primary Speech (1/26/08)

⁴²As DuBois was to tell another insider/outsider, the African-American, he is unique and "gifted with second-sight. . . It is a peculiar sensation, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. . . One ever feels his two-ness. . ." DuBois urges his reader to "merge his double-self into a better and truer self." W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1903), ch. 1: "Of Our Spiritual Strivings." Of course, the best foresight is hindsight, and in this Cicero has the advantage: The *Verrines* were finished after the senate lost its monopoly of the *questiones*.

⁴³For a similar view that the *Verrines* are Cicero's attempt to bolster, not diminish, the power of senate by means of kicking out a few 'bad apples,' see Vasaly, "Domestic Politics" cited in n. 14 above, pp. 101–37. For the counter view, which conflates rhetorical and historical reality, that Cicero was posing a genuine *popularis* challenge to the optimates, see esp. E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae, 264–70 B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 278ff; J. van Ooteghem, "Verres et les Metelli," *Mélanges Piganiol* (1966): 827–35; A. M. Ward, "Cicero and Pompey in 75 B. C. and 70 B. C." *Latomus* 29 (1970): 58–71.

⁴⁴The verbs most commonly used to describe Cicero's actions in the *Verrines* are of sight and visualization (*video/provideo/inspicio/perspicio*). For Cicero's *prudentia*, which enables him to translate sight into foresight, see esp. *Verr.* 1.1.22–4.

⁴⁵Cf. *Verr.* 1.1.36, 43, 2.5.174. Cicero similarly tempers his threats of seeking a *iudicium populi* with blandishments of the elite. Cf. n. 25 above.

who is expected to reform the ways of Washington. Armed with hope and change as his rhetorical weapons, Obama asserts, "my ways are not those of Washington."⁴⁶ Obama adopts a style replete with the new man's diction of industry, labor, and vigilance as well as the usual figures of speech and thought. For example, he relies heavily on litotes to say what he will do by saying what he won't do.⁴⁷ To emphasize his *temperantia* and *frugalitas*, this new man, who recalls he had *neither* money *nor* family connections in his early days in Chicago,⁴⁸ repeatedly states that there will be *no* business as usual in Washington and that he will *not* take a dime from lobbyists.⁴⁹ Not unexpectedly, antithesis shapes Obama's style, as he contrasts hope with fear, division with unity, the old with the new, and the past with the future in his quest to enact change that will "require great struggle and sacrifice."⁵⁰ Like the interplay of gerundives and jussives in Cicero, collocations expressing struggle, hardship, and obligation to one's fellow citizens are followed

⁴⁶For more on Obama's attacks on the corrupt "business-as-usual in Washington," and his formation of a "new American majority," see especially New Hampshire Primary speech (1/08/08); South Carolina Primary Speech (1/26/08); Super Tuesday speech (2/05/08).

⁴⁷Litotes, a technique for avoiding envy incurred by self-praise (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 4.50) is used by new men aiming to showcase their *prisca virtus* with impunity.

⁴⁸"I knew *no one* in Chicago, was *without* money or family connections. . ." Announcement of Presidential Candidacy (2/10/07). Indeed, Obama affirms his very candidacy by denying its likelihood: "I was *never* the likeliest candidate for this office. We *didn't* start with much money or many endorsements. Our campaign was *not* hatched in the halls of Washington-it began in the backyards of DesMoines. . ." Election Night Speech (11/4/08).

⁴⁹"It's change versus more of the same. It's the future versus the past. . .It's a choice between a candidate who's taken more money from Washington lobbyists than either Republican in this race, and a campaign that *hasn't* taken a dime of their money because we've been funded by you." Super Tuesday Speech (2/5/08). Cicero's similarly litotic claims that his travel to Sicily "posed no expense or burden, public or private, to anyone" (*Verr.* 2.1.6) echo the substance and style of Cato the Elder's claims to simplicity. cf. *ORF* 21-55, 132-3. For more on Cato's 'carmen style,' see E. Sciarino, *Cato the Censor and the Beginnings of Latin Prose: From Poetic Translation to Elite Transcription* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 124-35.

⁵⁰Obama, like his new man predecessors, uses antithesis to contrast insider corruption with his outsider virtuousness. He is part of the "party of tomorrow" versus his opponents' "politics of yesterday." The *kairos*, or right moment, theme is pervasive ("this time can be different") since Obama, like Cicero in the *Verrines*, depicts his campaign as a watershed moment in American history when citizens are to embrace "what Dr. King called the 'fierce urgency of now'" in order to "choose our better history." Opponents are left muddling in the murky past and, like Verres, render themselves useless for the future. See especially Remarks at Iowa Jefferson-Jackson dinner (11/10/07).

by swift affirmations of Obama's dutiful discharging of his political responsibilities. From the very outset of his campaign, Obama, like Cicero in the passage cited above, insists, ". . . it won't be easy. That's why we'll have to set priorities. We'll have to make hard choices. . . we will have to accept responsibility for. . . sharing some measure of sacrifice. So let us begin. Let us begin this hard work together. Let us transform this nation. . . Let's do this." Like Cicero, Obama must make his own way and forge a new path, though Obama claims his journey is a less orchestrated affair: "I never expected to be here. I always knew this journey was improbable. I've never been on a journey that wasn't." Of course, doubt implies faith for Obama so despite assertions that his "extraordinary journey" is "unexpected," his rhetoric intimates a divine design!⁵¹ Like all new men, Obama must exhibit extraordinary *industria* and *diligentia* in his effort to surmount obstacles and *invidia*. But he, like Cicero, is not alone on this journey, this "long march of those who came before *us*."⁵² As embodiments of their respective states, these new men derive their power from the people. Man is born for his country not for himself (*Fin.* 2.45), and the slogan for Obama's campaign is not "Yes, I can" but rather "Yes, we can."⁵³

A NEW MAN IN OLD CLOTHES

Obama, however, like Cicero, is not the typical new man, and analysis of his speeches reveals that he too turns expectations upside down and becomes the new man who isn't new, the democrat who is actually a traditionalist, the agent of change who is actually restoring rather than creating anew. A Ciceronian newcomer exploits the conventions of *novitas* but only within reason and in order to reconfigure audience

⁵¹"Faith doesn't mean that you don't have doubts. You need to come to church in this world precisely because you are first of this world, not apart from it." Call to Renewal Keynote Address (6/28/06). For more on Obama himself (and his 'unexpected' journey) as the embodiment of the paradox that doubt implies faith, see J. M. Murphy, "Barack Obama, the Exodus Tradition, and the Joshua Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97.4 (2011): 387-410 (pp. 404-5). Cf. D. A. Frank, "The Prophetic Voice and the Face of the Other in Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union' Address March 18, 2008," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 12.2 (2009): 167-94; J. Darsey, "Barack Obama and America's Journey," *Southern Communication Journal* 74.1 (2009): 88-103.

⁵²"A More Perfect Union" (3/18/08)

⁵³Compared to the more autocratic "Yes, you will" chant during the July 2016 RNC for presidential candidate Trump, Obama's republican, corporate "we" evokes more potentiality both for unity *and* for conflict.

expectations. Like Cicero in the *Verrines* who played up his new man role while being an already older, experienced defender, Obama makes certain his audience sees him in 2008 as the new man who is not entirely new. Both speakers create a pedigree for their *novitas* and rely on outsiders and insiders alike to be their *exempla*.⁵⁴ Although stylizing their attacks on inside corruption as blazing their own trails, these speakers' respective paths turn out to be somewhat well trodden. For Obama, Kennedy, Roosevelt, and especially "the tall, gangly self-made Springfield lawyer" Abraham Lincoln, who "moved a nation" "through his will and his words"⁵⁵ are models of *maiores* who, in lieu of traditional resources of power, also transformed words into action, speech into political power. Cato the Elder, the embodiment of his own tag "a good man skilled in speaking," and other new men pave the way for Cicero, and in any case, as he carefully, yet boldly, claims in the *Verrines*, he is more heir to bluebloods like the Scipios than their actual descendants are given his penchant for *virtus*. For example, while praising P. Scipio Africanus, whose statue Verres has stolen from Segesta, Cicero carefully chides Africanus' descendant, P. Scipio Nasica for shirking his duty (*Verr.* 2.4.79–81):

Te nunc, P. Scipio, te, inquam, lectissimum ornatissimumque adulescentem, appello, abs te officium tuum debitum generi et nomini requiro et flagito. Cur pro isto, qui laudem honoremque familiae vestrae depeculatus est, pugnas, cur eum defensum esse vis, cur ego tuas partis suscipio, cur tuum munus sustineo, cur M. Tullius P. Africani monumenta requirit, P. Scipio eum qui illa sustulit defendit? . . . Potes domesticae laudis amplitudinem, Scipio, tueri, potes; omnia sunt in te quae aut fortuna hominibus aut natura largitur; non praecерpo fructum officii tui, non alienam mihi laudem appeto, non est pudoris mei P. Scipione, florentissimo adulescente, vivo et incolumi me propugnatorum monumentorum P. Scipionis defensoremque profiteri. Quam ob rem si suscipis domesticae laudis patrocinium, me non solum silere de

⁵⁴Obama generates for himself "a genealogy of forebears—not biological forebears but intellectual forebears. For Cicero it was Licinius Crassus, Scipio Aemilianus and Cato the Elder. For Obama it is Lincoln, Roosevelt, and King." C. Steel quoted in C. Higgins, "The new Cicero," *The Guardian* 11/25/08. For more on the diverse exempla upon which Cicero patterned his early ethos, see van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 151–83. In order to demonstrate the parity of new men with their social superiors, Cicero even goes so far as to attribute new man characteristics to bluebloods like Scipio Aemilianus. Cf. Vasaly, "Domestic Politics," cited in n. 14 above, pp. 131–2.

⁵⁵Cf. Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07). From the announcement of his candidacy on the steps of the Springfield Old State Capitol to his swearing in on Lincoln's Bible, Obama models his persona upon that of the new man Lincoln who likewise overcame "doubts, defeats, and setbacks" in order to unite a divided nation.

vestris monumentis oportebit, sed etiam laetari P. Africani eius modi fortunam esse mortui ut eius honos ab iis qui ex eadem familia sint defendatur, neque ullum adventicium auxilium requiratur. Sin istius amicitia te impedit, si hoc quod ego abs te postulo minus ad officium tuum pertinere arbitrabere, succedam ego vicarius tuo muneri, suscipiam partis quas alienas esse arbitrabar. Deinde ista praeclara nobilitas desinat queri populum Romanum hominibus novis industriis libenter honores mandare semperque mandasse. Non est querendum in hac civitate, quae propter virtutem omnibus nationibus imperat, virtutem plurimum posse. Sit apud alios imago P. Africani, ornamentum alii mortui virtute ac nomine; talis ille vir fuit, ita de populo Romano meritus est ut non uni familiae sed universae civitati commendatus esse debeat. Est aliqua mea pars virilis, quod eius civitatis sum quam ille amplam inlustrem claramque reddidit, praecipue quod in his rebus pro mea parte versor quaram ille princeps fuit, aequitate, industria, temperantia, defensione miserorum, odio improborum; quae cognatio studiorum et artium prope modum non minus est coniuncta quam ista qua vos delectamini generis et nominis.

I now appeal to you, Publius Scipio, you, I say, a most eminent and distinguished young man, I expect and demand from you the duty that you owe to your family and name. Why do you fight on behalf of that very man who has defrauded the glory and good name of your family, why do you want him to have been defended, why do I play your role, why do I shoulder your duty, why does a Marcus Tullius demand back the statues of Publius Africanus, while a Publius Scipio defends the man who has removed them?...You are able, Scipio, to safeguard the prestige of your family honor—you are able; you possess everything that nature and fortune can bestow upon man; I do not pluck prematurely the bounty of your duty, I do not grasp for myself the praise that belongs to another; it is not characteristic of my modesty to profess myself the champion and defender of the monuments of Publius Scipio, while Publius Scipio, a young man in his prime, is alive and well. Therefore, if you are going to undertake the defense of your family honor, it will be fitting not only that I am silent about the memorials of your family, but also that I rejoice that the fortune of Publius Africanus is of such a kind that in death his good name is to be defended by those of the same family and that no aid from an outsider is needed. But if your friendship with Verres hinders you, if you think that this which I demand of you has nothing to do with your duty, I shall come onstage as your substitute to perform your duty, I shall play what I considered to be the role of another. After that let that outstanding nobility of yours stop complaining that the Roman people entrusts and has entrusted offices to industrious

new men too freely. Nobody should complain that virtue holds sway in a state that commands all other nations on account of virtue. Let the mask of Publius Africanus be shared by others, let others be decorated by the virtue and name of this dead man; he was such a man and deserved so well of the Roman people that his memory ought to have been entrusted not just to one family but to the entire state. It is in some way my proper part, since I am a member of this state which that one rendered great, illustrious, and glorious, and especially since I am engaged to the best of my ability in those matters in which he took the lead—in justice, industry, temperance, defense of the weak, and enmity against the wicked—and this kinship of pursuits and practices is almost no less close than that of name and blood in which you all take such delight.

Ciceronian new men like to play reluctant heroes so that they can appropriate the power of their insider counterparts while simultaneously expressing deference to them. Here Cicero boldly takes on the role of P. Scipio Nasica while frankly admitting the part is not really his to play (*ego vicarius. . . partis quas alienas*). The repetition of the forms of the second person pronoun stress that it is Nasica's *officium*, not Cicero's, to preserve Africanus' memory. Using anaphora (the indignant *cur* and exhortative *potes*) and the characteristic antithetic new man style (e.g. the juxtaposition *M. Tullius P. Africani*), Cicero admonishes Nasica for failing in his duty and feigns reluctance to pick up Nasica's slack. Litotes and *praeteritio*, the careful new man's favored figures of dissimulation (*non praecerpo, non appeto, non est pudori mei*), underscore Cicero's disclaimer that he has no desire to walk in the shoes of his social superior. The tone meticulously alternates between sarcasm (*ista praeclara nobilitas*) and deference towards Scipio's inherited *nobilitas* (Scipio is honorably addressed as *lectissimus, ornatissimus, and florentissimus*). Just as in his cajoling of Hortensius⁵⁶ and in his tiptoeing around the Metelli,⁵⁷ Cicero is always careful to pay homage to *nobilitas* while simultaneously undercutting it. In the same manner as he cautiously chastens the senate for not defending its reputation, Cicero likewise with care admonishes Nasica for not

⁵⁶In his quest to dethrone Hortensius as Rome's premier orator without incurring jealousy as a new man, Cicero alternates between stating he fears and does not fear Hortensius. In these passages, Cicero's mimicking of his opponent's theatrical style works as both mockery and flattery. See esp. *Div. Caec.* 44; *Verr.* 1.1.37, 2.1.31, 56, 2.2.118, 161, 176, 2.2.192, 2.3.217, 222–3, 2.5.2–3, 32, 174–6.

⁵⁷As in his dealings with Hortensius, Cicero alternates between stating he fears and does not fear the elite. See esp. *Verr.* 1.1.37, 2.1.10, 2.1.17, 2.4.82. For similarly careful criticism of the Metelli for their support of Verres, see *Verr.* 2.2.162–4, 2.3.43, 122–3, 128, 153–9, 209–11, 2.4.141, 147.

defending his family name. In truth Cicero is happy to do the job for both parties.⁵⁸ He phrases his claim that he would never be so presumptuous as to undertake Africanus' defense while such a fine fellow like Nasica was alive in such a way that he is defending Africanus while saying he won't defend him. The artful collocation *me propugnatores monumentorum P. Scipionis defensoremque* places Africanus right where Cicero wants him to be, that is between Cicero his champion (*propugnatorem*) and Cicero his defender (*defensoremque*).

Probably the best illustration of Cicero's conciliatory yet assertive new man stance is his redefinition of *virtus*.⁵⁹ Cicero makes *virtus* the defining characteristic of *novitas* and argues that, for the new man at least, *virtus* derives not from blood but from personal worth (*ingenium*) and industry (*industria*).⁶⁰ Throughout the *Verrines*, Cicero attributes this quality to himself, predecessors like Cato, and even the Sicilians,⁶¹ who ironically embody the *prisca virtus* that the corrupt elite lack.⁶² Outsiders—new men and the usually *leves* Greeks—⁶³ are the ones who exhibit *virtus*, which, as Cicero argues in the above passage, is the defining characteristic of what it means to be a Roman; the virtuous new man is thus a most authentic, and

⁵⁸Cicero has his cake and eats it too in these passages wherein grammar undercuts claims of timidity to reveal boldness. Compare *Verr.* 2.1.10 where Cicero's professed fear of seeming boastful is shown up by a clause at the end that makes him alone responsible for saving the state and therefore alone worthy of making the boast! Cf. Cicero, *Verrines II.1*, trans. and comm. T. N. Mitchell (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1986), 164.

⁵⁹New men like Marius, who dedicated a temple to Honos and Virtus in 101 BCE, created their own brand of *nobilitas* through their *virtus* (Sallust, *Bell. Iug.* 4.7, 85.17). cf. Cicero, *Verr.* 2.5.180ff; *Pro Murena.* 16–17; *Pro Sestio* 136; *Epistulae ad Hirtium* Fr. 3; *Fam.* 3.7.4–5. For more on *virtus* as a defining characteristic of new men, see esp. M. McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 320ff.

⁶⁰For Cicero's opposition to the view that *virtus* can *only* be inherited, see *Ep. ad Hirt.* fr. 3: “. . . nobility is nothing other than virtue that is well-known” (*nobilitas nihil aliud sit quam cognita virtus*). For more on Cicero's use of “great Romans as general exempla for all Romans,” see van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 152–8.

⁶¹The further from Rome the less a Greek community was to be trusted. For Cicero's exemption here of the Sicilians, who ironically possess the farming virtues that once made Rome great, see esp. *Verr.* 2.1.127, 2.2.7, 23, 83, 102, 149, 156, 2.3.26, 57, 60, 132–4, 204, 2.4.38, 50, 93, 96, 2.5.20, 128. Cf. Vasaly, *Representations*, cited in n. 18 above, pp. 191–243.

⁶²For the *novus homo's* *virtus*, see esp. *Verr.* 2.3.7, 9, 2.5.25, 180, 188. For Cicero's citation and appropriation of military *virtus* of Roman generals like Marcellus and Scipio, see *Div. Caec.* 69; *Verr.* 2.1.55–7, 135, 2.2.4, 2.4.73, 78, 80–1, 121–3, 2.5.25, 84.

⁶³For the stereotypical *levitas* of the Greeks that Cicero himself exploits in his defense cases, see esp. *Pro Flacco* 12, 19, 24, 36–8, 57, 61, 63–6, 71; *Pro Scauro* 38–45.

most visible,⁶⁴ representative of Romanness. It is no coincidence that the *nobilis* Africanus is above said to have exhibited the same *virtutes* as the new man: *aequitas, industria, temperantia, defensio miserorum*, and *odium improborum*. For Cicero, as for the nobles, *virtus* is displayed in a civic context in actions that benefit the common good.⁶⁵ He thus does not dispute the content of aristocratic *virtus* nor does he deny that it can be inherited.⁶⁶ This is an important distinction. Unlike Sallust's Marius who unqualifiedly rejects the idea of inherited *virtus*,⁶⁷ Cicero includes the tradition of *nobilitas* based upon inherited *virtus* in his redefinition of this concept. The *virtus* a Tullius earns is no less and no more legitimate or dignified than the *virtus* a Scipio inherits. For despite all his protests about senatorial corruption and his insistent threats of a *iudicium populi*, the young *novus homo* is inherently conservative, a Burkean who trusts in the status quo and who effects change only if it is gradual and in accordance with the *mos maiorum*.⁶⁸ He follows in the footsteps of his role model, Lucius Crassus, who also prosecuted an *illustris accusatio* and who was an "optimate. . .who sometimes talked like a *popularis*; and who also often acted as a moderate."⁶⁹ As he puts

⁶⁴One of the traditional strategies of new men who excluded in retaliation for being excluded, was to reveal the irony that "contrary to the claims of the nobility and the etymology of their name as 'known,' they (the nobles) are instead inauthentic figures, unknown entities who hide behind the reputation of ancestors whose accomplishments they do not share. The 'new man,' in contrast, attains his successes on his own merits, and thus is truly 'known.'" Dugan, *Making a New Man*, cited in n. 34 above, p. 10.

⁶⁵Cf. Cicero, *De Republica* 1.12, 33, 52, 6.29.

⁶⁶For instances of the original concept of inherited *virtus* in the *Verrines*, see esp. *Div. Caec.* 69; *Verr.* 2.3.161. "Cicero is prepared to admit nobility of birth as one of the claims to the consulship besides those of the *novi homines* based on a personal *virtus*. That is, he wishes not so much to replace the idea of *nobilitas* by a new one as to widen it to include both the *nobilis* with his inherited position and the *novus homo* with his individual merit. As a *novus* he desires parity with and recognition by the *optimates*, not to supersede them." Earl, *Political Thought*, cited in n. 26 above, p. 39.

⁶⁷See esp. Sallust, *Bell. Iug.* 85.13–17. For Cicero's wariness of using Marius as an exemplum, see van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models*, cited in n. 2 above, pp. 203–8. Cf. n. 30 above.

⁶⁸Compare Cicero's respect for the *mos maiorum* and the ancestral constitution with Burke's reverence for British common law: "All the reformations we have hitherto made have proceeded upon the principle of reverence to antiquity; and I hope, nay, I am persuaded that all those which possibly may be made hereafter will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example" in Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), 28. cf. *Rep.* 1.34ff, 2.2.

⁶⁹E. Rawson, "Lucius Crassus and Cicero: The Formation of a Statesman," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 17 (1971): 75–88 (p. 85). For Cicero's

it, his prosecution *rei publicae causa* is a revival of a traditional practice (*Verr.* 2.1.15); not surprisingly words denoting restoration, renewal, and repair surround his ethos.⁷⁰

Obama walks a similar fine line in his self-presentation as the bold, transformational candidate⁷¹ who turns out even in his presidential candidacy announcement simply to be “reclaiming the meaning of citizenship, restoring our sense of common purpose,” and “reaffirming a truth that was spoken so many generations ago,” namely that America is an indivisible union the continuity of which paradoxically depends on change. The vocabulary of renewal pervades the rhetoric of Obama, who, like Cicero, seeks to restore, not overturn, the status quo. From his debut on the national stage at the 2004 Democratic convention to his inaugural, which to some was disappointingly traditional,⁷² Obama interweaves his own biography with that of America and suggests, just as Cicero does in the *Verrines*, that his outsider status, which reflects America’s tradition of change, renders him alone the right man at the right place and time to unite and save the nation: “I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas. . . It’s a story that hasn’t made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts, – that

admiration for Crassus’ exploitation of the *popularis* style, see *Brut.* 165. Cf. *de Orat.* 1.154, 3.214. In the highly entertaining *peroratio* of *Verrines* 2, Cicero’s witty undercutting of Hortensius as being neither a Crassus nor an Antonius achieves the added effect of implying he himself is. Cf. *Verr.* 2.2.191–2.

⁷⁰Whether seeking restoration of Sicilian rites and sacred objects in the manner of Scipio and Marcellus before him or preserving Rome’s *commoda* (especially the Sicilian grain supply), which the corrupt elite diminish, Cicero aims to restore Rome to her former glory (*conseruo/recupero/reddo/restituo/tueor*). See esp. *Div. Caec.* 9, 72; *Verr.* 1.1.1–2, 2.1.4–5, 2.3.6, 9, 2.4.73, 81–2, 120–1.

⁷¹Obama affirms he is running “not just to hold an office, but to gather with you to transform a nation.” Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07). Cf. R. W. Leeman, *The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books 2012), 52–3. For this *unus ille vir* theme in the *Verrines*, see Cicero’s aspiration to be not just any candidate for the aedileship but the *only* right one (*Verr.* 2.5.35–7).

⁷²While Obama’s first inaugural seemed less poetic, rather “somber” and more “laden with history” than his other campaign speeches, Obama was reiterating the themes with which he began his campaign, namely that Americans have, and should continue to be, “faithful to the ideals of our forebears, and true to our founding documents. So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans. . . The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation. . .” cf. A. Lichtman in “How did this Speech Compare to Past Obama Speeches? Experts on Presidential Rhetoric React to Tuesday’s Historic Address,” *National Journal* (1/21/09).

out of many, we are truly one."⁷³ In careful litotic phrasing, Obama humbly, and repeatedly, admits that he was "never the likeliest," "not the most conventional," candidate, but humility unveils itself as pride when Obama highlights that his "story is part of the larger American story," itself also an "unlikely story!"⁷⁴ His own doubled status, which gives him a second sight,⁷⁵ makes him uniquely part of America's historical continuum where he re-enacts the role that he has inherited from his metaphorical, if not literal, ancestors who as transformational leaders had likewise activated the American ideals of freedom and unity. Indeed, change itself is traditional in America and, as the impetus not only for her civil rights movements but indeed for her very founding, it, according to Obama, is the defining characteristic of her, and his own, ethos: "It was here in Springfield, where North, South, East, and West come together that *I was reminded* of the essential decency of the American people—where *I came to believe* that through this decency, we can build a more hopeful America. And that is why, in the shadow of the Old State Capitol, where Lincoln once called on a divided house to stand together, where common hopes and common dreams still live, *I stand* before you today to announce my candidacy for the president of the United States. *I recognize* there is a certain presumptuousness – a certain audacity – to this announcement. *I know I haven't spent* a lot of time learning the ways of Washington. But I've been there long enough to know that the ways of Washington must change. The genius of our founders is that they designed a system of government that can be changed. And we should take heart, because we've changed this country before. In the face of tyranny, a band of patriots brought an empire to its knees. . . Each and every time, a new generation has risen up and done what's needed to be done. Today *we are*

⁷³"A More Perfect Union" (3/18/08) Turning what might have been a liability into an asset, Obama treats his own biracial status as a physical embodiment of the American ethos, *e pluribus unum*. His synecdochic identification with voters even inspired them to wear t-shirts emblazoned "I am Barack Obama." Like Cicero, Obama deploys his new man ability of "keenly negotiating oppositional tensions" to turn potential loss into gain as in the case of the Reverend Wright crisis. Cf. G. Wills, "Two Speeches on Race," *The New York Review of Books* (5/1/08); J. L. Isaksen, "Obama's Rhetorical Shift: Insights for Communication Studies," *Communication Studies* 62.4 (2011): 456–71 (p. 468).

⁷⁴Remarks on New Hampshire Primary Night (01/08/08)

⁷⁵As in Cicero (cf. n. 44 above), metaphors derived from sight or foresight that emphasize Obama's *prudentia* abound. For more on *prudentia* as a practical, republican virtue and its connection to *providentia*, see Cicero, *Rep.* 2.45, 67, 6.1b, 1c; *Leg.* 1.45, 60; *Off.* 1.15–6, 81, 122, 153–60, 2.33–5, 3.117.

called once more – and *it is time* for our generation to answer that call.⁷⁶ With its characteristic litotic stance, evenly balanced isocola, antithesis, movement from obligatory passive to energetic active verbs, and resonant call for traditional change at the right moment, Obama's style, like Cicero's before him, alternates between presumption and tact in his pursuit of realizing that ever moving target, "a more perfect union."⁷⁷

Perfecting the union, just like re-creating a republic that never really existed, is tricky business, and in stance and style, Obama, like Cicero, maneuvers between audacity and humility, attack and deference, idealism and pragmatism.⁷⁸ Like Cicero, who in his attempt to gain entry into the political elite, appeases, but does not acquiesce to, his social superiors, Obama deploys a rhetoric of opposition that is harsh yet restrained. In order to be simultaneously aggressive and deferential, he subverts and appropriates the authority of his more powerful opponents by using devices like the '*accusator as amicus*,' tactic, playing friend to one's opponents only to undermine their cause. This technique, which Cicero had used to make running circles around his opponents seem like careful tiptoeing,⁷⁹ blackens, but does not destroy, well-heeled insiders: "Now, this isn't about me and it's not about Senator Clinton. As I've said before, she was a friend before this campaign and she'll be a friend after it's over." By strategically sandwiching these asides between condemnations of the war that Clinton, but not he, authorized, and attacks on the "same drama,

⁷⁶The theme that change is an American tradition rings Obama's campaign and is echoed in his election night victory speech (11/4/08): "For that is the true genius of America—that American can change. Our union can be perfected, and what we have already achieved gives us hope for what we can and must achieve tomorrow."

⁷⁷Compare Cicero's similar tact in *Pro Lege Manilia*, in which the conservative new man justifies his endorsement of Pompey's radically novel command with the argument that change was always part of the expedient Roman tradition of warfare and therefore paradoxically necessary to maintain the status quo: ". . .our ancestors always bowed to convention in peace but to expediency in war." §60. cf. *Leg. Man.* 27–9, 43, 60–3. For more on Cicero's ability in this speech to shade a *popularis* style and agenda with optimate overtones, see C. Steel, *Cicero, Rhetoric, and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 180; Vasaly, "Domestic Politics," cited in n. 14 above, pp. 132–3.

⁷⁸For Cicero's attempt to reconstruct his own idealized version of Rome, see esp. J. E. G. Zetzel, "Looking Backward: Past and Present in the Late Roman Republic," *Pegasus* 37 (1994): 20–32. For the republican tendency to mix idealism with realism, see Hariman, *Political Style*, cited in n. 1 above, pp. 95–140.

⁷⁹This forensic technique, on which Cicero relies whenever his ethos is eclipsed by others, is prominent in his early orations and then in the Caesarians. For instances in the *Verrines*, see notes 56 and 57 above. cf. C. P. Craig, "The *Accusator as Amicus*: An Original Roman Tactic of Ethical Argumentation," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 111 (1981): 31–7.

division, and distraction" that "passes as politics in Washington," Obama effectively isolates Clinton as a symbol of the insider politics of the past; his disdain postures as deference.⁸⁰

In order not to alienate insiders and their constituencies, these virtuosos speakers must not, however, appear overly arrogant about their rhetorical (i.e. political) prowess. Cicero repeatedly alternates between saying his rhetoric has ensnared his opponents and then confessing in a rhetorical flourish that either he is not up to the task or there is no need for him to speak at all since his opponents are so easy to trap.⁸¹ Hyperbole and understatement are closely intermingled in these new men's rhetoric, as they magnify their skills by minimizing them. Cicero, for example, depicts himself on the one hand as the senate's single hope for salvation, the healer of a half-dead Rome, and, on the other, as merely an assistant to the senate who is to save herself and thereby Rome. Like Demosthenes' dramatic response to the news of Elatea's plight, Cicero appears in the exordia of the *Verrines* in a flurry of activity determined to heal the state,⁸² but he tempers his bold entries by acknowledging amidst the action that the state will be saved only in small part (*aliqua ex parte mea diligentia*) because of him.⁸³ Eschewing the epiphanic overtones found in the Demosthenic passage,⁸⁴ Cicero the pragmatic candidate knows that, although he can play Rome's savior along the dust roads of Sicily,⁸⁵ he must more carefully navigate the trickier waters of *novitas* when in Rome. While not taking all the credit for the state's salvation, Cicero often, however,

⁸⁰Remarks on Super Tuesday (2/5/08). In lieu of playing her own outsider card as a woman in politics, Clinton instead emphasized her insider experience. For the double bind in which Clinton found herself, see G. Steinem, "Women are Never Front Runners," *New York Times* op-ed. (1/08/08).

⁸¹See especially his Medean spoof of being overwhelmed by Hortensius in *Verr.* 2.5.2–3. In order to showcase his rhetorical prowess through denying it, Cicero employs daring figures of dissimulation such as *concessio*, *dubitatio*, and *aporia*. Cf. *Verr.* 2.1.103, 2.3.137, 2.4.1, 8, 10, 87, 89, 2.5.4, 22, 45, 154, 159.

⁸²In all of these passages (Demosthenes, *De Corona* 169–73; Cicero, *Div. Caec.* 9; *Verr.* 1.1.1–2, 2.1.4–5), diffuse language creates suspense, the state is laboring on its deathbed (*laboro/aeger*), and once the speaker arrives (*actor accessi*), the grammar turns simple to reflect his decisive, effective action that is a lifesaving remedy (*remedium/salus/servo/sublevo/succurro/suscipio*).

⁸³See esp. *Verr.* 2.1.5. Cicero presents himself as a facilitator (*me duce atque auctore*) who cautiously hopes that the example of his *diligentia* will motivate the senators to save the Sicilians and themselves (*Verr.* 2.3.228).

⁸⁴For Demosthenes as epiphanic hero, see W. J. Slater, "The Epiphany of Demosthenes" *Phoenix* 42 (1988): 126–30.

⁸⁵Cicero depicts himself as being greeted and supplicated as a savior in Sicily where one Heracleian woman even prostrated herself before him "as though he could raise her son from the dead." *Verr.* 2.5.12. cf. 2.4.146.

takes most of the credit, and he regularly appears in the grammar, as the Scipio passage above reveals, even as he feigns absence.

For when the world is right in Cicero, it is Cicero-centric, and the same is true for Obama, who repeatedly saves the day for those around him and brings health to a state in perpetual decay.⁸⁶ Like Cicero before him, who is at the center of a network of knights, *clientelae*, and other dependents, Obama exhibits the *virtus*, *fides*, and *religio* required of a leader upon whose shoulders the state depends. And like Cicero, Obama sometimes exaggerates personal authority through understatement and at other times boldly claims that his candidacy is “healing the nation” and “ushering in a new birth of freedom on this earth.”⁸⁷ In the same manner as his careful ancient counterpart, Obama tempers the boldness of such statements with the repeated claim that he only hopes to “play a small part in building a better America.”⁸⁸ Despite the professed modesty of these new men who claim only to be a small part of the renewal process, their words reveal them to be the center of, indeed the *sine qua non*, of the restoration. Obama’s personal vignettes, which emphasize the efficacy of his leadership, are remarkably similar to Cicero’s in their careful combination of tempered self-praise with bold rhetoric:

I was a young organizer then, intent on *fighting* joblessness and poverty on the South Side, and I still remember one of the very first meetings *I put together*. We had worked on it for days, but no one showed up. Our volunteers felt so defeated, they wanted to quit. And to be honest, *so did I*. But at *that moment*, I looked outside and *saw* some young boys tossing stones at a boarded-up apartment building across the street. They were like boys in so many cities across the country—boys without prospects, without guidance, without hope. And *I turned* to the volunteers, and *I asked* them, “Before you quit, *I want* you to answer one question. What will happen to those boys?” And the volunteers looked out that window, and they decided that night to

⁸⁶During their campaigns and the rest of their careers, these republican stylists use organic metaphors that treat the state as a living creature in constant need of being revitalized by their words. The state, like the body, is in constant need of repair. For the immortal nature of this mortal creature, see Cicero, *Rep.* 3.34b, 3.41.

⁸⁷Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07). Healing the nation and repairing the world are constant campaign refrains. See especially Remarks at Iowa Jefferson-Jackson dinner (11/20/07) and Super Tuesday (2/5/08).

⁸⁸Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07). Obama asserts in this speech and throughout the campaign that his constituents must themselves be the change that they seek: “This campaign can’t only be about me. It must be about *us*—it must be about what we can do together. This campaign must be the occasion, the vehicle, of *your* hopes and *your* dreams. . . .”

keep going – to keep organizing, keep *fighting* for better schools, and better jobs, and better health care. *And so did I*. And *slowly*, but surely, in the weeks and months to come, the community began to *change*. . .

In this Super Tuesday account of his life in Chicago, Obama employs the same first person action verbs, metaphors of sight and battle, right moment theme, and magnification of personal authority through restraint that Cicero uses in a similar scene from the *Verrines* (*Verr.* 2.4.137–49). Finding the Syracusan senate in an uproar and its senators literally groaning because they had been forced to eulogize Verres against their will, Cicero swiftly takes stock of the situation, quickly calms the senators, expediently takes action to get the false eulogy rescinded, and thereby saves the Syracusans from further degradation. Having been called to the Syracusan senate that had reportedly supported Verres, Cicero, like his careful counterpart Obama, mixes trepidation (“And to be honest, so did I”) with intrepid action (*Verr.* 2.4.138–40):

Primo nobis fuit dubium quid ageremus; deinde cito in venit mentem non esse vitandum illum nobis conventum et locum; itaque in curiam venimus. . .tantus est gemitus. . .Ubi eorum dolorem ex illius iniuriis non modo non minorem sed prope maiorum quam Siculorum ceterorum esse cognovi, tum meum animum in illos, tum mei consili negotique totius suscepti causam rationemque proposui, tum eos hortatus sum ut causae communi salutique ne deessent ut illam laudationem, quam se vi ac metu coactos paucis illis diebus deesse dicebant, tollerent. Itaque, iudices, Syracusani haec faciunt, istius clientes atque amici. Primum mihi litteras publicas. . .proferunt . . .ostendunt omnia quae dixi ablata esse perscripta. . .

At first we did not know what to do: then we swiftly realized that we should not avoid that meeting in that location; and so we arrived at the senate house. . .there was so much groaning. . .As soon as I realized that their suffering caused by his (Verres’) outrages was not only not less, but possibly even worse, than that of the rest of the Sicilians, then I told them of my intent towards them, then I laid out the foundation and method of my plan and of the entire task that I had undertaken, then I admonished them not to fail their common cause and welfare and to annul that ‘eulogy’, which they were saying they had been forced to decree under duress a few days before. The Syracusans, supposed friends and clients of Verres, did these things accordingly. First they brought me the public records. . .they showed me thorough documentation of all that I have said was stolen. . .

The diffuse narrative that described the chaos Cicero found in the senate is replaced by parataxis, anaphora (*tum*), and asyndeton that reflect Cicero’s prompt, exacting response (*cognovi, proposui,*

hortatus sum). Following Cicero's lead, the once helpless Syracusans, the "supposed friends and clients of Verres," learn to help themselves. Patterning their action on Cicero's, their previous passivity is replaced by busy third person plural actives (*faciunt, proferunt, ostendunt*). Obama similarly encourages his fellow organizers not to give up in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. Like Cicero, he enters the thorny scene above in dismay, untangles the knotty grammar, and saves the day with simple, short paratactic lines. Just as the Syracusans promptly rescind their forced eulogy and thereby reverse their humiliation, Obama's former fellow organizers, like his present day constituents, at once renew their work and avert shame. The new men are now themselves exempla.

Whether it is Obama tactfully urging on his fellow organizers and voters to do the right thing or Cicero rescuing his Sicilian clients and the Roman senate by being everywhere in the grammar even as he says he is not, these new men rely on language to transform pride into patriotism, self into state. For both are after all republican new men, for whom eloquence is the basis of civil society.⁸⁹ If silence destroys a republic,⁹⁰ speech renews her by returning her to her original state as a creature of habit that is timeless and yet subject to, indeed reliant upon, changing experiences.⁹¹ Only words can

⁸⁹For the indelible link between good speaking and sound republican citizenship, see Cicero, *De Inventione* 1.1–5; *De Orat.* 1.32–4, 2.33, 3.63, 122; *Brut.* 6, 23; *Tusc. Disp.* 5.5; *De Natura Deorum* 2.148; *Off.* 1.156–8, 2.51. cf. Isocrates, *Antidosis* 60, 67, 253–7. For the conflation of eloquence and the republic itself, see esp. *De Orat.* 1.30, 2.33; *Brut.* 6, 21–2, 45, 53; *Off.* 2.66–7. Like Cicero, Obama views eloquence as the *sine qua non* of republican politics and laments that its loss undermines the health of the state: "America, we weaken those ties when we allow our political dialogue to become so corrosive that people of good character aren't even willing to enter into public service." Presidential Farewell Address (1/10/17) For more on Obama's appeal to the "transformative possibility of words" as a means of correcting insider republican politics, see S. Thomas, "The Political Rhetoric of American Aspiration," in J. T. Gleeson and R. C. A. Higgins, edd. *Rediscovering Rhetoric: Law, Language, and the Practice of Persuasion* (Annandale: The Federation Press, 2008), 253–69.

⁹⁰Since republics are founded and sustained by words, they are easily undone by silence, which stifles deliberation, a precondition of republican freedom. cf. Cicero, *Inv.* 1.1–5; *De Partitione Oratoria* 79; *Off.* 1.156. cf. Hariman, *Political Style*, cited in n.1 above, pp. 110–12.

⁹¹As Burke, who shared the view that the state should be eternal and custom immemorial yet refreshed by experience, said of English society under common law, "the whole, at one time, is never old or middle-aged or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete." Burke, *Reflections*, cited in n. 68 above, p. 30.

grant her perpetuity: "Don't tell me words don't matter. I have a dream – just words. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal – just words. We have nothing to fear but fear itself– just words, just speeches. It's true that speeches don't solve all problems, but what is also true is that if we cannot inspire our country to believe *again*, then it doesn't matter how many policies and plans we have and that is why I'm running for president of the United States of America, and that's why we just won eight elections straight because the American people want to believe in change *again*. Don't tell me words don't matter!"⁹² The republican state, like the rhetoric by which it is constituted, is itself a fragile yet flexible working consensus,⁹³ an impossible ideal that is grounded in everyday pragmatism.⁹⁴ Thus, for Ciceronian newcomers aiming to achieve consensus and continuity through disruption and change, the most effective campaign style is balanced to the extreme, the most persuasive ethos is doubled, and the most desirable electorate is an active, awakened one.⁹⁵

⁹²Remarks at Democratic Party of Wisconsin's Founders Day Gala (2/16/08) Eight years later, Hillary Clinton adopted Obama's "strong view" of rhetoric: "Words matter, my friends, and if you are running to be president, or you are president of the United States, words can have tremendous consequences." Remarks in Des Moines, Iowa (8/10/16)

⁹³Since certainty is impossible (cf. n. 5 above), Obama exhorts Americans to build a "working consensus." Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07) For the fragility of this consensus, see Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama*, cited in n. 5 above, p. 242. For consensus as the foundation for republics, see Hariman, *Political Style*, cited in n.1 above, pp. 114–5. Cf. n. 6 above.

⁹⁴Just as the honorable and expedient cohere according to Ciceronians, so too do moral rigidity and flexibility: ". . .it's possible to compromise so long as you know those principles that can never be compromised." Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07). Cf. *Off.* 3.74ff. For Obama's tendency to take both sides of the same issue, which has resulted in his being labeled both an "idealistic pragmatist" and a "pragmatic idealist," see Terrill, *Double Consciousness*, cited in n. 9 above, pp. 20–3.

⁹⁵Obama exhorts Americans to "shake off our slumber" and remember ". . .our cherished rights of liberty and equality depend on the active participation of an awakened electorate." Presidential Announcement Speech (2/10/07) For Cicero's depiction of the current nobility as asleep at the helm, see *Verr.* 2.5.180.