



Letters to Power: Public Advocacy Without Public Intellectuals (Rhetoric and Democratic Deliberation)

Samuel McCormick

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Although the scarcity of public intellectuals among today's academic professionals is certainly a cause for concern, it also serves as a challenge to explore alternative, more subtle forms of political intelligence. *Letters to Power* accepts this challenge, guiding readers through ancient, medieval, and modern traditions of learned advocacy in search of persuasive techniques, resistant practices, and ethical sensibilities for use in contemporary democratic public culture. At the center of this book are the political epistles of four renowned scholars: the Roman Stoic Seneca the Younger, the late-medieval feminist Christine de Pizan, the key Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant, and the Christian anti-philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Anticipating much of today's online advocacy, their letter-writing helps would-be intellectuals understand the economy of personal and public address at work in contemporary relations of power, suggesting that the art of lettered protest, like letter-writing itself, involves appealing to diverse, and often strictly virtual, audiences. In this sense, *Letters to Power* is not only a nuanced historical study but also a book in search of a usable past.

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