

Ideas (trans. D. B. King and H. D. Rix, 1963), though not a complete edition, reproduces the flavor of Erasmus's Latin more accurately. A good new translation of *The Praise of Folly* is Clarence Miller's (1979). See also *Stultitiae Laus: A Facsimile of the Froben 1515 Edition with Marginal Drawings by Holbein* (ed. H. A. Schmid, 1931).

Biographies include Roland Bainton's *Erasmus of Christendom* (1969) and J. Kelley Soward's *Desiderius Erasmus* (1975), which gives more attention to Erasmus's writings.

An excellent discussion of Erasmus's concept of *copia* and its sources can be found in Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* (1979).

Discussions of the skepticism of Erasmus can veer toward either its political or its mystical implications. On the practical side is Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle's *Rhetoric and Reform: Erasmus' Civil Dispute with Luther* (1983). She argues that Erasmus's skepticism led him to espouse a sort of deliberative rhetoric, in opposition to the judicial rhetoric to which Luther was led by his Stoicism. Victoria Kahn's *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Scepticism in the Renaissance* (1985) studies Erasmus, Montaigne, and Hobbes as they grapple with the problem of defining right political action from a skeptical, morally relativistic mind-set.

On the other hand, Erasmus's praise of folly connects him with a long European tradition of the fool as a licensed questioner of social convention and, at times, a forerunner on the way to spiritual transcendence of social norms. See Walter Kaiser's *Praises of Folly* (1963), which focuses on Rabelais, Erasmus, and Shakespeare, and W. Willeford's *The Fool and His Scepter* (1969), which mentions Erasmus throughout while tracing the fool figure, especially his or her mystical implications, from medieval to modern times.

From *Copia*: Foundations of the Abundant Style

BOOK I. ABUNDANCE OF EXPRESSION

1. *Copia*: Dangers Inherent in Its Pursuit

The speech of man is a magnificent and impressive thing when it surges along like a golden river, with thoughts and words pouring out in rich abundance. Yet the pursuit of speech like this involves considerable risk. As the proverb says, "Not every man has the means to visit the city of Corinth."¹ We find that a good many

mortal men who make great efforts to achieve this godlike power of speech fall instead into mere glibness, which is both silly and offensive. They pile up a meaningless heap of words and expressions without any discrimination, and thus obscure the subject they are talking about, as well as belaboring the ears of their unfortunate audience. In fact, quite a few persons of no real education or understanding have, heaven help us, undertaken to give instruction in this very subject, and these, while professing a mastery of *copia*, have merely revealed their own total lack of it.

Such considerations have induced me to put forward some ideas on *copia*, the abundant style, myself, treating its two aspects of content and

expression, and giving some examples and patterns. Some of my material I have extracted from works dealing specifically with rhetorical theory. I have also drawn on my own now considerable experience of the art of speaking and writing, and on what I have observed in the course of wide reading over a considerable range of authors. It is not my intention to write a book dealing exhaustively with the whole subject, but rather a short treatise in which I hope merely to open up the way for teachers and students and provide the raw material for future work. One of my reasons is that I have undertaken this task solely out of a desire to be helpful, so I shall be quite content for another to reap the glory, so long as I am ultimately responsible for some benefit reaching the students. Also I am committed to more serious studies which prevent me from expending a great deal of labor on topics which, in spite of their considerable contribution to serious subjects, themselves seem unimportant.

2. *Copia*: Its Invention and Practice

Now in case anyone should feel inclined to despise it as some newfangled discovery recently brought into the world within the four walls of my own study, I would have him know that this whole idea of being able to express one's meaning in a variety of ways is in a number of places touched on by that learned and thorough writer Quintilian;² further, that a number of famous sophists blazed a trail,³ showing how to compress and abridge what was being said, and this they could not have done without at the same time demonstrating how to expand it. If their books were extant, or if Quintilian had been prepared to set out his recommendations in full, there would not have been such need of these modest injunctions of mine.

²In *Institutio oratoria*, where the importance of *varietas* in every aspect of speaking is mentioned in passing in many places; see fn 15. [Tr.]

³Itinerant teachers who traveled from city to city in Greece in the fifth century B.C., giving instruction (for a fee) which purported to enable students to get on in life; the systems of many of them included instruction in the art of speaking. A list is given in Quintilian 3.1.8ff. [Tr.]

The whole business is further recommended by the fact that men who were the intellectual leaders of their day were by no means averse from constant practice in it. We have a number of marvelous passages where Virgil tried his skill: descriptions of a mirror, a frozen river, a rainbow, a sunrise, the four seasons, the constellations. There is further evidence in Apuleius' treatment of Aesop's fable about the fox and the crow: first he skims over it briefly with a wonderful economy of words, and then he sets it out expansively and in great detail, thus exercising and displaying his talents. But after all, who could possibly regret an enthusiasm for this subject after observing that Cicero, the great father of all eloquence, was so dedicated to this kind of exercise that he used to vie with his friend, the actor Roscius, to see whether Roscius could express the same material more often using different gestures, or Cicero himself applying the resources of eloquence and using different language?

3. *Copia*: Delight Taken by Ancient Authors in Demonstrating It

Moreover these same writers have quite often taken delight in demonstrating their powers of expression, not only in practice pieces, but in serious works as well, first compressing the subject to such an extent that you can subtract nothing, and then enriching and expanding it so that nothing can be added. According to Quintilian,⁴ Homer is equally admirable for fullness and for compression. Although it is not our intention to treat examples in detail at this point, we will nonetheless give one or two examples, using Virgil only. What could be more concisely expressed than his line: "the plains where Troy once stood"? As Macrobius says, in a very few words he has here consumed and swallowed up the city without even allowing the ruins to remain. Now listen to the fullness of expression in this passage:

Come is the final day, fate's inevitable doom
Upon Dardanus' city; we Trojans are no more;

⁴See 10.1.46. [Tr.]

Translated by Betty I. Knott.

¹Horace *Epistles* 1.17.36, a favorite line of Erasmus', quoted again in chaps. 50, 154; see *Adagia* I.iv.i. The proverb refers to the exorbitant price charged by the famous Corinthian courtesan Lais, who would receive no one, however distinguished, if he could not pay. [Tr.]

In the notes a simple reference indicates that Erasmus is quoting an example in the exact words of the original or with slight divergence; "cf" indicates a wider divergence from the original; "see" means that Erasmus is either using the subject-

matter of the passage identified, or has invented a grammatical example with the quoted example in mind. [Tr.]

Gone is Ilium, gone the mighty fame of Teucer's sons.

Jove is become our foe and has bestowed
All that was ours on Argos.
Greeks now triumph in all the blazing city.
O my country, O Ilium the dwelling place of gods!
O ramparts of Dardanus' race with all your fame
in war!

Who can unfold in words that murderous night?
Can any weep the tears those toils deserve?

What fountain, what torrent, what sea so swelled
with waters as he with words? But some may
think that this example should rather be listed
under wealth of material. Again he revels in
verbal luxuriance in the following lines: "Lives
he still and breathes the air of heaven? / Rests
he not yet among the cruel shades?"

Ovid makes even more of a feature of this
sort of thing; consequently he has been taxed
with not knowing when to stop when elaborating
an idea; but this criticism came from Seneca,⁵
and his style is totally condemned by Quintilian,⁶
Suetonius,⁷ and Aulus Gellius.

4. Copia: Carried Too Far by Some Writers

It does not worry me that certain writers have
been blamed for excessive or misjudged fullness
of diction. Quintilian⁸ censures Stesichorus for
overabundant and extravagant expression, while
at the same time admitting that it is a fault that
cannot be absolutely avoided. Aeschylus is as-

⁵*Controversiae* 9.5.17. *nescit quod bene cessit relinquere* "he cannot leave well alone." This is the Elder Seneca, who wrote on rhetoric, orators, and various literary figures. His more famous son, the Younger Seneca, wrote mainly on philosophy. Erasmus believed the *Controversiae* to be the work of the Younger Seneca. They had been attributed to the father by Raffaele Maffei of Volterra in *Commentarii rerum urbanarum*, *Anthropologia*, book XIX, published in Rome in 1506. In conjunction with other scholars Erasmus produced editions of the Younger Seneca's works in 1515 and 1529. In the preface to the 1529 edition (Allen Ep 2091) he gives an extended treatment of Seneca's character and style, but does not there question his authorship of the rhetorical works, though he has doubts about the tragedies. [Tr.]

⁶10.1.125ff. [Tr.]

⁷See *Caligula* 53; Suetonius is a favorite author whom Erasmus quotes frequently in *De copia*; he published an edition of the *Lives of the Caesars* in 1518. [Tr.]

⁸See 10.1.62. [Tr.]

sailed in Old Comedy for saying the same thing twice: *ἦκω καὶ κατέρχομαι* [back I've come and here I am]. There are times when Seneca can hardly put up with Virgil chanting the same sentiment two or three times. So as not to waste time going through a long catalogue, there have even been people who decried⁹ Marcus Tullius himself as favoring the florid Asian style and indulging in excessive verbosity. But, as I said, this does not concern me, since I am not prescribing how one ought to write or speak, but merely indicating what is useful for practice, and everybody knows that in practicing everything must be exaggerated. Besides, I am giving instructions for the young in whom Quintilian¹⁰ was quite content to see an over-exuberant style, because the excessive growth can easily be cut back by criticism and the passing years will wear down other excrescences, while it is quite impossible to do anything to improve a thin and poverty-stricken style.

5. Compressed and Abundant Styles Available to the Same Speaker

There may well be people who admire Homer's Menelaus *ὁὐ πολὺμυθος* [a man of few words], and detest Odysseus "rushing like a river swollen with winter snows," and there may be those who are mightily pleased by that famous Laconic brevity; yet even these have no right to cry out against this work of mine, as they too will discover it to be not without profit, for the reason that the compressed style and the abundant style depend on the same basic principles. Socrates in Plato's dialogue acutely deduces that the same man is capable of either lying convincingly or of telling the truth;¹¹ in the same way the craftsman in words who will be best at narrowing down his speech and compressing it will be the one who is skilled in expanding and enriching it with ornament of every kind. To take compression of language first, who will speak more succinctly than the man who can readily and without hesitation pick out from a huge army of words, from

⁹See Quintilian 12.10.12. [Tr.]

¹⁰See 2.4.3-4. [Tr.]

¹¹[Plato's dialogue] *Hippias minor* 367E-8A. [Tr.]

the whole range of figures of speech, the feature that contributes most effectively to brevity? And as for compression of content, who will show the greatest mastery in setting out his subject in the fewest possible words if not the man who has carefully worked out what are the salient points of his case, the pillars so to speak on which it rests, distinguishing them from the subsidiary points and things brought in merely for embellishment? No one in fact will see more swiftly and surely what can be omitted without disadvantage than the man who can see where and how to make additions.

6. The Wrong Way to Practice Either Style

If it is a matter of chance which style we happen to use, we may suffer the same fate as some fanatics for the Laconic style, who say only a few words, yet those few words are mostly, if not entirely, superfluous. On the other hand, we find that unskilled practitioners of the full style chatter on without restraint, and yet say far too little, omitting a good many of the things that need to be said. The purpose of these instructions is to enable you so to include the essential in the fewest possible words that nothing is lacking, or so to enlarge and enrich your expression of it that even so nothing is redundant; and to give you the choice, once you understand the principles, of emulating the Laconic style if you so fancy, or of imitating the exuberance of Asianism, or of expressing yourself in the intermediate style of Rhodes.¹²

7. Copia Is Twofold

The abundant style quite obviously has two aspects. Quintilian,¹³ for example, among other virtues which he attributes to Pindar, especially admires his magnificently rich style, manifested

¹²The three styles of oratory discussed in Cicero's time were Attic (plain and simple), Asiatic (ornate and exuberant), and Rhodian (intermediate); see Cicero *Brutus* 51; and Quintilian 12.10.18 where the Rhodian style is described as *velut medium . . . atque ex utroque mixtum*. Cicero received his main oratorical training from Molon of Rhodes. [Tr.]

¹³See 10.1.61. [Tr.]

both in subject matter and expression. Richness of expression involves synonyms, heterosis or enallage, metaphor, variation in word form, equivalence, and other similar methods of diversifying diction. Richness of subject matter involves the assembling, explaining, and amplifying of arguments by the use of examples, comparisons, similarities, dissimilarities, opposites, and other like procedures which I shall treat in detail in the appropriate place.¹⁴ It might be thought that these two aspects are so interconnected in reality that one cannot easily separate one from the other, and that they interact so closely that any distinction between them belongs to theory rather than practice. Even so, I intend to separate them as a teaching procedure, doing it in such a way that I lay myself open to the charge neither of drawing hair-splitting distinctions, nor of being careless about details.

8. Advantages of Studying this Subject

To encourage students to embark on this study with more enthusiasm I shall briefly set out the advantages it confers. First of all, exercise in expressing oneself in different ways will be of considerable importance in general for the acquisition of style. In particular however it will help in avoiding *ταυτολογία*, that is, the repetition of a word or phrase, an ugly and offensive fault.¹⁵ It often happens that we have to say the same thing several times. If in these circumstances we find ourselves destitute of verbal riches and hesitate, or keep singing out the same old phrase like a cuckoo, and are unable to clothe our thought in other colors or other forms, we shall look ridiculous when we show ourselves to be so tongue-tied, and we shall also bore our wretched audience to death. Worse than *ταυτολογία* is *δμοιολογία* [identical repetition], which, as Quintilian says, has no variety to relieve the tedium and is all of one monotonous color. Who has got ears patient enough to put up even for a short time with a speech totally monotonous? Variety is so powerful in every sphere

¹⁴Erasmus deals with the first group in book I chapters 11-32, the second group in book II. [Tr.]

¹⁵For this section see Quintilian 8.3.50-2. [Tr.]

that there is absolutely nothing, however brilliant, which is not dimmed if not commended by variety. Nature above all delights in variety; in all this huge concourse of things, she has left nothing anywhere unpainted by her wonderful technique of variety. Just as the eyes fasten themselves on some new spectacle, so the mind is always looking round for some fresh object of interest. If it is offered a monotonous succession of similarities, it very soon wearies and turns its attention elsewhere, and so everything gained by the speech is lost all at once. This disaster can easily be avoided by someone who has it at his fingertips to turn one idea into more shapes than Proteus himself is supposed to have turned into.¹⁶ Also this form of exercise will make no insignificant contribution to the ability to speak or write extempore, and will prevent us from standing there stammering and dumbfounded, or from disgracing ourselves by drying up in the middle. Nor will it be difficult to divert a speech, even when we have embarked upon it rather hastily, into the course we desire when we have so many expressions lined up ready for action. We shall also find it of great assistance in commenting on authors, translating books from foreign languages, and writing verse. Otherwise, if we are not instructed in these techniques, we shall often be found unintelligible, harsh, or even totally unable to express ourselves.

9. Exercises to Develop the Powers of Expression

It remains for me now to give some brief advice on the exercises by which this faculty may be developed. Once we have carefully committed the theory to memory, we should frequently take a group of sentences and deliberately set out to express each of them in as many versions as possible, as Quintilian advises,¹⁷ using the analogy of a piece of wax which can be molded into one shape after another. This exercise will be more profitable if a group of students competes together orally or in writing on a common theme; they will all be helped individually by the sug-

gestions made by other members of the group, and each of them will have his imagination stimulated by being given a starting point. Second, we shall treat a connected line of thought in a number of ways. Here it will be best to copy the expertise of the famous Milo of Croton and develop our powers gradually,¹⁸ first of all rendering it twice, then three times, and eventually treating it over and over again, so as to attain such facility in the end that we can vary it in two or three hundred ways with no trouble at all. In addition we shall add greatly to our linguistic resources if we translate authors from the Greek; as that language is particularly rich in subject matter and vocabulary. It will also prove quite useful on occasion to compete with these Greek authors by paraphrasing what they have written. It will be of enormous value to take apart the fabric of poetry and reweave it in prose, and vice versa, to bind the freer language of prose under the rules of meter, and also to pour the same subject matter from one form of poetic container into another. It will also be very helpful to emulate a passage from some author where the spring of eloquence seems to bubble up particularly richly, and endeavor in our own strength to equal or even surpass it. We shall find it particularly useful to "thumb the great authors by night and day," especially those who were outstanding in the rich style, such as Cicero, Aulus Gellius, and Apuleius. We must keep our eyes open to observe every figure of speech that they use, store it in our memory once observed, imitate it once remembered, and by constant employment develop an expertise by which we may call upon it instantly.

10. Copia: Preliminary Instructions

Having said all this by way of introduction, I must now tackle the task of actually setting down my instructions, though what I have said already is instruction of a sort. I think it will be not inadvisable to launch my remarks with a warning to the candidate for *copia* that his first care must be to see that his speech is appropriate, is Latin,

is elegant, is stylistically uncorrupt. He should not imagine that the rich style can admit anything which is abhorrent from the unsullied purity of the language of Rome.

Elegance depends partly on the use of words established in suitable authors, partly on their right application, partly on their right combination in phrases. An example of the first is the form *piissimus* [as the superlative of *pius*], which according to Cicero was never heard by Latin ears — though even this form is found in quite respectable authors; so it would be better to use as an example some other barbarous or faulty form, such as *avisare* "advise" instead of *prae-monere*. A barbarism is also committed by faulty writing or pronunciation, such as pronouncing *dócere* with the accent on the first syllable [instead of the second], or *Christus* as *Cristus* [without the aspirate], or *perca* as *parca*, or lengthening the first syllable of *lego*.¹⁹

An example of the second is saying *dedit mihi licentiam abeundi* "he issued me license to go away," instead of *fecit mihi potestatem abeundi* "he gave me leave to go away." In the first sentence every word is Latin; the fault lies in misapplication: *potestas* is a general word for every kind of possibility, *licentia* tends towards a pejorative meaning. So here there is a mistake in the application of a word, as there is in saying *compilare* "gather up" for *colligere* "collect." *Compilare* is a good Latin word, but it has acquired a different sense, "remove by stealth." Horace uses it when talking about "slaves on the run filching their masters' stuff," and in the lines:

¹⁹These faults of Latin pronunciation characteristic of the "ignorant crowd" are discussed in *De recta pronuntiatione* (1528) LB I 940E–TB, 951C, 935E–F. In this work Erasmus criticizes especially the pronunciations employed by the Dutch, Flemish, and French. *Dócere* and *lêgo* are typical confusions over vowel quantity and the position of the Latin accent; *Cristus* exemplifies ignorance as to the correct employment of Greek aspirated stops; particularly noticeable among Germanic speakers; the change from *er* to *ar* was due to a tendency to use an *e* of too open a quality both in general and particularly before *r*. This change was facilitated by the fact that a similar development was taking place in Erasmus' time in English, Dutch, and French; no doubt speakers carried over this pronunciation from their native language into Latin. [Tr.]

"Lest you think that I've been thieving / From runny-eyed Chrysippus' shelves."

The third type of mistake is very like the second, and consists in wrongly combining words perfectly good in themselves, such as using *iniuriam dedit* as the equivalent of *damnum dedit* "he inflicted injury." *Dare damnum* is a correct expression, but *dare iniuriam* is not; the phrase is *facere iniuriam*. *Dare malum* "cause misfortune" is a good Latin expression, but not *dare iacturam* or *dare dolorem* "cause loss or grief." It is *facere iacturam* that is correct, and it means "to sustain a loss," [not "to cause a loss"]; but it is not right to use *facere infamiam* for "suffer a loss of reputation." It is good Latin to say *facere iniuriam* for "inflict an injury," but Cicero says²⁰ that Latin speakers did not use the phrase *facere contumeliam* for "inflict an insult," although this form of expression is found in Plautus, Terence, and other respectable authors, and it is possible that it had gone out of use in Cicero's time. *Accepit iniuriam* is right for "he received an injury," but I would not like to risk *accepit contumeliam* for "he received an insult." You can say *facere aes alienum* for "contract debts," and also *facere vorsuram* for "raise a second loan," but you cannot use *facere* like this in the phrases *facere invidiam* or *facere similitatem* to mean "generate ill will or animosity against oneself." *Aedes vitium fecerunt* "the building has sustained damage" is all right, meaning that it has disintegrated of its own accord, but I would avoid *rimas facere*, meaning it has developed cracks, because the Latin idiom is *rimas agere*. Likewise *facere stipendium* is right, meaning "to serve as a soldier for pay," but not *facere salarium* [which is another word for a soldier's pay]. *Fecit sui copiam* is right, meaning "he granted access to himself," but again I would hesitate about *dedit sui copiam*, although Virgil with his fine linguistic judgment could write *et coram data copia fandi* "Granted was leave to speak before her." *Fecit spem* and *dedit spem* are both good Latin for "he gave hope."

Sometimes expression is spoiled by an inappropriate word. For example, *quid sibi vult hic*

¹⁶A favorite figure of Erasmus. [Tr.]

¹⁷For this whole section see Quintilian 10.5. [Tr.]

¹⁸The famous athlete who lifted a calf every day until it had grown into a bull; see Quintilian 1.9.5. [Tr.]

²⁰Philippics 3.22; Quintilian 9.3.13. [Tr.]

development of wealth of expression, for we have put one basic sentence, and that not particularly fertile or productive of variation, into about two hundred different forms, I should think, and even so we have not pursued with finicking exactitude every minute possibility.

The next thing to do, it seems, is to set out examples illustrating various points of Latin usage. We do not intend to pursue every possible one, though this would be extremely useful, as it would involve endless work; but we shall provide a few by way of illustrative example, and either our readers can invent similar phrases for themselves, or someone else who has more leisure than we have can look for phrases illustrating the various points in all the different authors, and so provide more copious and detailed information for our candidate for *copia*.

34. How to Combine Predications of Equal Weight

est vir tum eruditus, tum probus: he is a man both learned and good.

est iuvenis et formosus et bene ingeniatus: he is a young man both handsome and of a fine disposition.

atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater: "Both gods and stars she heartless calls / Who once his mother was" (*atque* repeated like this is a poetic usage, here illustrated from Virgil).

vir doctus pariter ac probus: he is learned even as good.

est vir doctus simul et integer: learned and at the same time upright

est vir tam doctus quam bonus: he is as learned as good.

vir est doctus iuxta ac bonus: learned and together with it good

vir est non minus probus quam litteratus: no less good than cultured

vir est non inferior litteris quam moribus: not inferior in learning to what he is in character

est ex aequo probus atque doctus: in equal measure good as learned

vir est aequo-litteratus ac incorruptus: equally cultured as honest

vir doctus aequae ac probus: learned equally as good

vir perinde doctus ac probus: in like manner learned and good

exquisite doctus est, itidem et facundus: a fine scholar, and likewise eloquent

vir est non minore morum probitate quam doctrina praeditus: endowed with integrity of character to match his knowledge

vir est quemadmodum doctus, ita et integer: as learned, in like manner upright . . .

BOOK II. ABUNDANCE OF SUBJECT MATTER

Enrichment of Material: Method 1

We have now presented as briefly as possible such thoughts as occurred to us on the subject of abundance of expression, so our next task is to review with equal conciseness abundance of subject matter. To start off this part of the work with material as similar as possible to that used in the corresponding section in Book I, the first method of enriching what one has to say on any subject is to take something that can be expressed in brief and general terms, and expand it and separate it into its constituent parts. This is just like displaying some object for sale first of all through a grill⁶⁷ or inside a wrapping, and then unwrapping it and opening it out and displaying it fully to the gaze.

Here is an example of the method. Let us take the sentence: *He wasted all his substance in riotous living*. This is expressed in summary fashion, and is, so to speak, wrapped up. We can open it out by enumerating all the different types of possessions and setting out the various ways of wasting them: All he had inherited from mother or father or acquired by the death of other relatives, all that was added by his wife's dowry (and that was nothing in the ordinary run of things), all the increase that accrued from various legacies (and that increase was very considerable), all he received by the prince's generosity, all that he raked in during his military service,

all his money, plate, clothes, estates and land, together with farm buildings and stock, in short everything, chattels and real estate, even his very household, he threw away on degrading affairs with low women, revelry every day, extravagant parties, nights spent wining and dining, luxurious foods, perfumes, dicing and gambling, and all in a few days so squandered, gobbled up, and sucked it out that he did not leave himself two half-pennies to rub together.

In this way the two phrases "all his substance" and "wasted in riotous living" are explicated via their constituent parts.

Here is another example: *He completed a thoroughly comprehensive education*. This general statement can be expanded by listing all the separate disciplines and every aspect of learning: There is absolutely no area of learning in which he is not meticulously versed; there is no branch of learning which he has not grasped down to the last detail, and so grasped that he would appear to have labored at it to the exclusion of the rest; he has such a wonderful knowledge of all the tales of all the poets; he is so richly supplied with the finest turns of expression employed by the orators; he has so sifted the laborious rules of the grammarians; he is skilled in the subtleties of dialectic; he has probed the secrets of physical science; he has scaled the heights of ultramundane knowledge; he has penetrated the inmost recesses of the theologians; he has a thorough understanding of the demonstrations of mathematics; such is his knowledge of the movements of the stars, the principles of number, the dimensions of the various lands, the position and name of cities, mountains, rivers, springs, the harmony and intervals of musical sounds; such is his memory of ancient and modern history; every good writer, whether of ancient or of modern times, he has them all; add to all this an equal skill in Greek and Latin language and literature; in short, whatever learning has been discovered and handed on by distinguished authors, this one man has completely assimilated and understood and holds fast in his memory.

Again, to expand the phrase *Endowed with every blessing of nature and fortune*, one can mention every separate good point of the body and then every separate gift of intelligence and

spirit, and finally birth, wealth, nationality, success, and whatever comes to us from fortune. A third example is provided by *Hippias the omniscient*.⁶⁸ To elaborate this, one may introduce all the things listed by Apuleius in his description of this person in the *Florida*, a passage that is incidentally not devoid of diversity and richness of expression.

There is a very good example of this procedure in Lucian's *Harmonides*, where he could have said baldly *τὴν ἀλληλικὴν ὄλην ἐκμεμάθηκα* [I have thoroughly learned the art of flute-playing], but he preferred to make a display of *copia* by setting out the parts inherent in the total idea. The passage does not go very easily into Latin, but I will make some attempt to translate it for the sake of those who do not know Greek: "You have by now taught me to tune the flute accurately and breathe into the mouthpiece gently and tunefully, to put the fingers down flexibly and in time with the constant rise and fall of the melody, to move with the beat and play in unison with the chorus, and to observe the characteristics of the different modes, the sublime frenzy of the Phrygian, the Dionysiac storming of the Lydian, the solemnity and dignity of the Dorian, the elegance of the Ionian. [All this I have learned from you.]"

If we had decided to do with all the separate disciplines in our example above what Lucian has done here with the single discipline of music, you can see what riches of material would have been thus provided.

Here I would make what I think is a helpful suggestion: have the general statement set out right at the beginning, and then take it up again in a different form of words, returning to the basic idea as if you have wearied of enumerating details, even if in fact nothing has been omitted.

Furthermore, we should take care not to throw the proper order of the various parts into confu-

⁶⁸Of Elis, a sophist (297:14n and 583:5) contemporary with Socrates; equipped with a wide if superficial knowledge of many branches of learning and of art, combined with practical skills; he professed to be able to speak on any topic, and declared that everything he wore was made with his own hands. He was a celebrated figure, though criticized for arrogance and boastfulness. [Tr.]

⁶⁷Cicero, *De oratore* I.162. [Tr.]

sion by mixing everything up in an indiscriminate chaos of utterances, and piling up a boring mass of words totally devoid of attraction; but instead we should rather prevent tedium in reader or hearer by skillful arrangement, appropriate allocation, and elegant disposition.

Division of a Whole into Parts

We may include here the kind of example where some whole made up of subordinate parts rather than of a group of disparate items is separated out into its parts. Take the sentence: *He is a total monster*. This will be filled out by first dividing the man into body and mind, and then touching on the separate parts of the body followed by the separate parts of the mind: He is a monster both in mind and in body; whatever part of mind or body you consider, you will find a monster — quivering head, rabid eyes, a dragon's gape, the visage of a Fury, distended belly, hands like talons ready to tear, feet distorted, in short, view his entire physical shape and what else does it all present but a monster? Observe that tongue, observe that wild beast's roar, and you will name it a monstrosity; probe his mind, you will find a horror; weigh his character, scrutinize his life, you will find all monstrous; and, not to pursue every point in detail, through and through he is nothing but a monster.

It is clear what fullness the speech would acquire if anyone chose to dwell on the depiction of any of these separate items.

Here is another example: *He was quite drenched*; he was drenched with rain from the top of his head to the soles of his shoes; head, shoulders, chest, belly, legs, his entire body in fact, dripped with rainwater.

A small point, but one quite worth mentioning as possibly applicable to this type, is the introduction of the genus if we are speaking of a species. This is usually done just for the sake of amplification: Learning of every kind both adorns and assists the race of men, but philosophy does so pre-eminently; Lust is disgusting at any age, but is most disgusting of all in old age; Prudence is of great importance in all human affairs, but especially in war. Here the simple statement would have been: Prudence is of great importance in war. Cicero has an example of this type

in his speech *De domo sua*, delivered before the college of priests: "Our ancestors, your reverences, invented and established many practices in their extraordinary wisdom, but nothing was more striking than their decision that you, the priests, should direct both the worship of the immortal gods and the highest affairs of state."

But there is little point in quoting this one specimen when examples of the type lie ready for the finding on every side.

Variation: Method 2

The second method of variation is very like the first. It arises when we are not satisfied with stating the final outcome and leaving preceding events to be deduced, but rehearse in detail everything which led up to the final result. Here is an example of what I mean: *Cicero crushed Catiline's designs*. This may be elaborated as follows: The wicked designs of Catiline, put into effect through young men of desperate character plotting the ruin and destruction of the whole Roman state, the consul Marcus Tullius Cicero immediately sniffed out with his customary sagacity, hunted down with remarkable vigilance, caught by exercising great prudence, revealed with wonderful devotion to the country, convicted with incredible eloquence, broke by the weight of his authority, extinguished by the use of force, and with the aid of fortune removed for ever.

Here is another: *He acknowledged a son born to him from the girl*. You may expand this as follows: He fell passionately in love with the girl, who was extremely pretty. Unable to control his affection, he assailed her simple mind with promises, bribed her with gifts, cajoled her with flattery, induced her by kindnesses to return his affection, and overcame her by his insistence. Finally he became intimate with her and deflowered her. After some time the girl's belly began to swell as, of course, a child had been conceived. At the end of nine months she went into labor and produced a boy.

Here is yet another example: *He took the city*, which may be amplified as follows: First of all the heralds were sent to demand reparations and also to offer terms of peace. When the inhabitants

refused to accept these, he gathered forces from all quarters, brought in a great supply of engines of war, and moved his army and the machines up to the city ramparts. The inhabitants replied by fiercely repelling the enemy from the walls, but the general eventually got the upper hand in the fighting, and, scaling the walls, invaded the city and seized control of it.

Method 9

The ninth method consists of amplification or building up, of which Quintilian⁶⁹ lists a considerable number of types. We shall briefly deal with those that are relevant to our present purposes.

The first type uses augmentation, in which one advances by regular steps not only to the maximum, but even in a way beyond the maximum. An example of this may be found in Cicero's fifth speech against Verres:⁷⁰ "It is an offense to tie up a Roman citizen, a crime to flog him, equal to the murder of a kinsman to put him to death. What shall I call crucifying him? It is not possible to find a word to fit such a heinous act."

There is also a variety of this figure in which we heap up "circumstances" while observing some kind of order, and let one run on from another so arranged that the next thing is always greater than the one that went before, as in Cicero's passage in the *Second Philippic*⁷¹ about Antony's vomiting: "What a disgusting thing, not only to see but even to hear! If this had happened at dinner when you were quaffing those monstrous tankards of yours, who would not think it disgraceful? But it was in a formal assembly of the people of Rome, engaged in conducting the business of the state, holding the office of Master of the Horse, for whom it would be a disgrace even to belch, that this fellow spewed up morsels of food stinking of wine all over himself and all over the speakers' platform." Here each individual word has more effect than the one before. In

the first place the action was disgusting in itself even if it had not been in an assembly, or if in an assembly not one of the people, or not of the Roman people, or if he had not been conducting formal business, or not formal public business, or if he were not Master of the Horse.

If anyone took these items separately and dwelt on the individual stages, he would indeed extend his material, but an amplification of this type would be less effective than the one we have.

The opposite method to this is comparison. In augmentation, the movement is constantly towards something more impressive; a comparison gets its effect by starting from something less striking. The comparison may be based on a supposition or may employ a real event. We had a supposition, for which the Greek term is *ὑποθέσις*, in the first part of the example we quoted from Cicero, for he puts forward the supposition that it happened at a dinner party to a person holding no public office. There is another one in the well-known passage from one of the *Catilinarian*⁷² speeches. "Upon my word, if my slaves feared me the way all your [fellow citizens] fear you, I should feel that I had better get out of my house."

When a real situation is used, we put forward a genuine circumstance that has some similarity with the thing we are boosting, and proceed to show how this is very close to it, or equal to it, or even greater. This is what Cicero does in the *Pro Cluentio*.⁷³ He describes how a certain woman of Miletus received money from the reverserionary heirs in return for having an abortion. He goes on: "While Oppianicus shares the crime committed, he deserves much greater punishment. She ill-treated her own body, and brought suffering on herself, but he achieved the same result through another person's suffering."

In this type we not only compare one whole situation with another, but we can compare one detail with another, as is done in this passage from the *Pro Milone*:⁷⁴ "Scipio, that distinguished figure, when holding no public office,

⁶⁹8.4, from which chapter Erasmus takes his examples. [Tr.]

⁷⁰Verrines 5.170; quoted in Quintilian 8.4.4. [Tr.]

⁷¹Philippics 2.63; Quintilian 8.4.8. [Tr.]

⁷²1.17; Quintilian 8.4.10. [Tr.]

⁷³*Pro Cluentio* 32; Quintilian 8.4.11. [Tr.]

⁷⁴Actually *Catilinarians* 1.3; Quintilian 8.4.13. [Tr.]

killed Tiberius Gracchus when he was causing a moderately serious political upheaval in Rome; shall we, when clothed with the dignity of consul, stand by while Catiline seeks to lay the whole world waste with fire and slaughter?" Here Catiline is compared with Gracchus, the situation in Rome with the world, a moderate upheaval with slaughter and burning and desolation, a man holding no office with those who are entrusted with the highest. Again if anyone wished to expand these sections, he would have topics full of possibility at every point.

The second method of amplification uses the rhetorical figure known as inference; in this we actually build up one thing, and this suggests the build-up of another, as in this passage: "You, with a gullet of that capacity, with a chest of that girth, with a physique which would do credit to a gladiator, swilled so much wine at Hippias' wedding that the next day you couldn't help being sick in full view of the Roman people." Here one can infer how much wine Antony drank because, in spite of his gladiator's physique, he was not able to carry so much and digest it.

Associated with this is the procedure by which we take the most dreadful deeds and rouse the strongest resentment against them, and then deliberately tone them down so that what follows may seem even more serious, as in this passage from Cicero:⁷⁵ "In a prisoner like this these crimes are trivial. The commander-in-chief of the fleet of a noble city had to pay money to save himself from the fear of being flogged. But that's a human enough crime." We must needs expect something absolutely appalling, if deeds which are shocking seem human and normal beside it.

Another method of build-up is the piling up of words and phrases meaning the same thing. This is very like *συναθροισμός* [accumulation of synonyms] which I discussed earlier. Cicero uses this in his speech *Pro Ligario*:⁷⁶ "What was that sword of yours doing, Tubero, that you drew on the field of Pharsalus? Whose ribs was that weapon-point seeking? what was the purpose of your weapons? what was your own mind? what

sort of eyes, what sort of hands did you have, what passion drove you on? what did you seek? what desire?" Here the speech grows like a heap by addition. Sometimes the emotional tone of the additions rises ever higher with each one, as in this:⁷⁷ "Present was the keeper of the prison gate, the praetor's thug, the destruction and terror of allied and Roman citizens alike, the lictor Sextus."

We can also build up by using a form of "self-correction,"⁷⁸ as Cicero does in this passage from the *Verrines*:⁷⁹ "We have brought to your court not a mere thief but a brigand, not an adulterer but a stormer of chastity, not a temple-robber but a sworn enemy of religion and all that is sacred, not a cut-throat but a savage murderer of citizens and allies alike."

There are just as many ways of toning down what we have to say as there are of building it up.

Our utterances may be expanded by everyday and unremarkable methods such as adding adverbs, nouns, and other parts of speech, either to express approval or censure: Cicero delights me to an inordinate extent: it is beyond words how well disposed your father-in-law is toward you; I cannot find words to express what pleasure I take in Cicero — but I have dealt with these methods of extension in Book 1.⁸⁰

A well-known and common method of expansion is to attach a species to its genus: All the disciplines of a liberal education bestow on a man either grace or advantage; eloquence does so beyond all others — though I have dealt with this method before too.⁸¹

Method 10

The tenth method of expansion depends on inventing as many propositions as possible.⁸² I am speaking of rhetorical propositions or themes, which are demonstrated to be true by the expo-

sition of arguments. As for inventing propositions, Quintilian⁸³ says that this skill cannot be learned as a technique, but comes from imagination and practice. Hence we find that a group of people may have received the same instruction, and may use similar types of argument, and yet one will discover more material than another.

Propositions or themes are derived partly from generalities, partly from the circumstances of the case. We can demonstrate the method with an example chosen by Quintilian:⁸⁴ "When Alexander overthrew Thebes, he discovered documents recording that the Thebans had lent the Thessalians a hundred talents. These documents he handed over to the Thessalians as a reward for supporting him with troops in the campaign. The Thebans later had their fortunes restored by Cassander, and demanded repayment of the debt from the Thessalians. The case was taken before the Amphictyonic Council. It was not disputed that the Thebans had lent a hundred talents, and that this sum had not been repaid — the point at issue was the claim that Alexander had given the Thessalians the documents. Nor was it disputed that Alexander had not actually presented them with the money they owed the Thebans."

In arguing this out we need to invent themes and sections of the following sort to provide the framework for our case: (1) Alexander's gift was of no effect; (2) he had no power to give; (3) he did not actually give.

In the first section the first proposition on behalf of the Thebans will be that one has the right to demand back through the law what has been taken away by force. On behalf of the Thessalians it will be propounded that the documents were not simply removed by force but by war, and the rights of war are the most powerful ones known in human affairs; by them are determined kingdoms and peoples and the territories of nations and cities. In answer to this the Thebans declare that not everything falls into the victor's power by the rights of war; the rights of war have no validity in matters which belong to the sphere of civil justice; that things seized by force of

arms can only be retained by exercising that same force of arms; where arms hold sway, there is no place for a judge, but where there is a judge, arms have no authority. Here we argue from the circumstances special to the case, which enables us to show why this particular case differs from others. To support this last proposition, we can put forward as a parallel a statement of general validity: Captives become free again if they regain their native land, because ownership of things acquired in war can only be asserted by exercising the same physical force by which they were first acquired. The third proposition on behalf of the Thebans will also depend on the special circumstances of this case: In any case in which the Amphictyonic Council⁸⁵ is the judge, the main consideration must be equity. (The same lawsuit requires different handling according to where it is heard, for example, before the Centumviral Court⁸⁶ or before an arbitrator.) The effect of these arguments is again to show that this case is on a different footing from those where the rights of war should determine the issue.

In the second section we can state on behalf of the Thebans that the victor had no power to make a gift of a right, because only what can be seized belongs to the victor: a right is an incorporeal thing, and cannot be physically held. To support this proposition we can bring in an argument from the dissimilar: An heir and a conqueror are not in the same case; the right passes to the heir, the material object to the conqueror. The circumstances of the case provide the next proposition, which reinforces the previous one: Even if we concede that in other cases a right passes to the conqueror, certainly the right attached to a state loan could not in any way pass to the conqueror, because if a loan is made by the whole people, the sum is owed to the whole people, and as long as one individual survives,

⁷⁵Verrines 5.117; Quintilian 8.4.19. [Tr.]

⁷⁶*Pro Ligario* 9; Quintilian 8.4.27; see above 320:28ff. [Tr.]

⁷⁷Cicero *Verrines* 5.118; Quintilian 8.4.27. [Tr.]

⁷⁸See book 1 chap 65. [Tr.]

⁷⁹*Verrines* 1.9; Quintilian 8.4.2. [Tr.]

⁸⁰Chap. 46. [Tr.]

⁸¹At 574:41ff. [Tr.]

⁸²See Quintilian 4.4. [Tr.]

⁸³5.10.119–21. [Tr.]

⁸⁴5.10.111–18; Erasmus changes Quintilian's statement of the case slightly. [Tr.]

⁸⁵Because it was associated with the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, which in theory meant that the council had dignity and authority and that its decisions carried religious sanction. [Tr.]

⁸⁶A court in ancient Rome dealing with property suits; Pliny began his legal career there, and speaks of it in his *Letters*. [Tr.]

he is the creditor to whom the sum is due; but not all the Thebans fell into Alexander's power. This argument needs no further support.

In the third section we can have a general proposition (that is, one not specifically tied to any case): When he gave the documents, Alexander did not really give anything, for rights do not reside in documents. This proposition can be supported by arguments of all kinds; such as arguments from a similar case: The man who possesses documents proving inheritance does not necessarily have the right of inheritance; or: If a creditor happens to lose his documentary proof, the debtor is not forthwith released from his debt. The second proposition in this section depends on conjecture: Alexander did not present the Thessalians with the documents to reward them, but to deceive them. This will have to be demonstrated by various suggestions and hypotheses. The third one is not simply a contribution to this stage of the argument, but is more or less the introduction of a new issue. It depends on material proper to the case, and takes this form: Even if we grant the Thessalians all this — that the law of war has authority in civil disputes in general, and before these judges in particular, and in the case of a state loan, and all the other points — all the same, whatever the Thebans lost when conquered by Alexander, they should have recovered when restored by Cassander, especially when this was Cassander's express wish.

[Example Taken From Speech Discussing
Course of Action]

To give a second example: anyone urging Cicero not to accept Mark Antony's proposal⁸⁷ that he should keep his life in return for burning the *Philippics* could use the following propositions: No man of eminence ought to buy his life at the cost of his immortal fame. This general proposition could be reinforced by one dependent on the specific circumstances of this case: Especially Cicero, who by his labors won for himself a name and a glory that will live for ever and

⁸⁷A stock theme debated in the ancient schools of rhetoric; see Seneca *Suasoriae* 6. [Tr.]

eloquently demonstrated in so many wonderful books that death is of no account, particularly as, being already an old man, he probably has not many years still to live. A second major proposition can be derived from the circumstances of the case: Nothing could be more distressing than to have a fine man like Cicero indebted for his life to a villain like Antony. The third proposition will be conjectural: Antony is acting treacherously; when the *Philippics*, which he knows enshrine his own eternal infamy and Cicero's deathless glory, have been burned, he will then take Cicero's life and so blot out the man entirely.

[Second Example of the Same Kind]

Again, if you are dissuading someone from matrimony,⁸⁸ propositions like this may be used: (1) if you consider your duty to God, matrimony is an impediment to those who strive towards Christ; (2) if you consider your comfort in this life, even a happy marriage brings innumerable cares in its train (and here a wide field opens up of comparison of the advantages of celibacy with the disadvantages of matrimony); (3) if you consider freedom, which many people rate higher than life itself, this above all else the bond of matrimony takes away. Then you may turn to specific propositions, and these can be very numerous: You should not marry this particular woman; you should not marry at this time; you should not marry, because you are poor, old, a student, in poor health.

The number of available propositions increases when we start from a hypothetical situation, as Cicero does in his defense of Milo:⁸⁹ "Suppose that Clodius had been killed in the ambush by Milo, Milo should nevertheless be considered worthy of the highest honors for removing such a pernicious member of society, and

⁸⁸Erasmus discusses marriage in many writings (see Thompson *Colloquies* 99–100), including an early *Encomium matrimonii* (c 1498; printed 1518; from 1521 on it formed part of *De conscribendis epistolis*) and a treatise, *Institutio christiani matrimonii*, published in 1526. See *De conscribendis epistolis* chaps 47–8, where arguments for and against matrimony are set out at length. [Tr.]

⁸⁹A summary of what Cicero says in *Pro Milone* 77ff. [Tr.]

for risking his own life for the well-being of the state." But then he returns to reality: "But he did not kill him."

The number increases also if, to prepare the way for our case, we set up in advance and outside our main line of argument a proposition that is somewhat startling, so that the one we are really trying to carry seems easy to accept by comparison. Suppose that someone in a consultation were trying to persuade the pope not to make war on the Venetians.⁹⁰ Remembering the saying, "Demand the outrageous in order to achieve the reasonable," he would first seek to undermine the proposal as follows: There are authorities of no little weight who consider that empire and earthly sway are inconsistent with the dignity of the supreme pontiff, and with the peace of the church, and with the Christian charity which he should foster, disregarding all else. This proposition may be demonstrated with a wealth of argument almost without trying, there is so much to choose from.

The speaker may then move on to his second proposition as follows: Such arguments and others like them might well be put forward by another; but even if we grant that temporal power

⁹⁰For this example Erasmus is drawing on his experiences in Italy, 1506–9, where he saw for himself the belligerence and secular ambition of Pope Julius II, whose goal was to reassert the temporal power of the papacy and recover lands nominally under the church's jurisdiction by playing off the various temporal powers against each other and even resorting to war. In 1506 Erasmus was in Bologna, from which he fled to Florence in October, fearing a siege by approaching French forces; the siege came to nothing, and with the departure of the tyrant Bentivoglio the city agreed to acknowledge papal suzerainty; Erasmus was back in Bologna in November at the time of Julius' triumphal entry into the city.

The arguments against war in these pages of *De copia* reappear in the important essays "Dulce bellum inexpertis" (*Adagia* IV i 1), "Sileni Alcibiadis" (*Adagia* III iii 1), "Scarabaeus aquilam quaerit" (*Adagia* III vii 1), and *Querela pacis* (all of 1515; printed separately 1517); and see *Institutio principis christiani* (1516). Erasmus' hatred of war is expressed in many of his writings, including *The Praise of Folly* and the *Colloquies* (for example *Charon*). His detestation of Julius II is found most memorably in his brilliant satire, *Julius exclusus*. He did not publish this, but few scholars question his authorship. The text is available in *Opuscula* 65–124; a translation in *The Julius exclusus of Erasmus* trans and ed Paul Pascal and J. K. Sowards (Bloomington, Indiana 1968). . . . [Tr.]

does not involve inconsistency, yet to seek to win or regain earthly dominion by force of arms, tumult, slaughter, and bloodshed is totally opposed by the mercy that should be seen in the representative of the Christ who said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart."

Then he will move on to his third proposition: Even if it were entirely right, all the same it would be unsafe, because the outcome of war is never to be relied upon; consequently, in trying to restore the status of the church through the temporal and the changeable, he is in danger of utterly overthrowing it. This too can be supported by a considerable number of examples, including those drawn from similar situations.

Then he will proceed to his third [sic] proposition: Even if it were fitting, even if it were permissible, even if you were successful, yet such a foul swill of evils follows in the train of even the justest of wars, that even a temporal prince, if he were a Christian, should not consider paying such a price to regain by the sword a few lands or cities, let alone that prince who bears the title of Most Holy. One could add a proposition dependent on the particular person involved: Though it might be fitting for another pontiff⁹¹ it is not fitting for Julius, if we mean that Julius whose mild nature and unequalled holiness of life seem totally incompatible with war.

After our speaker has demonstrated all these propositions by argument, he will then turn to the point at issue: Even if none of the arguments we have advanced deters you from this course, it does seem somewhat unwise at the present time to undertake a war with the Venetians. (This proposition also depends on the details of the actual situation.) This theme will then be subdivided: first, such a conflict cannot be entered upon without grave danger to the whole church; second, the Roman see, which has always honored and rewarded deeds done for the benefit of

⁹¹Julius Caesar, who as Pontifex Maximus was the supreme religious head of the ancient Roman republic. Erasmus on several occasions compares Pope Julius with Julius Caesar (for example below 625:1), a comparison not meant to be flattering; see Ep 205:42–3 (from Bologna, concerning the pope's triumphal entry). [Tr.]

the church, will seem to have forgotten the services performed time and again by that nation with grave peril to their own lives for the Christian religion; third, there is not even a satisfactory reason to justify taking up arms against those who have done nothing to deserve it.

These might well be considered reasons rather than propositions, but there is nothing to prevent the same statement being a proposition and a reason.

To take yet another example: if someone were trying to persuade some king⁹² not to undertake a war against the most Christian king of France, he could construct his line of argument with propositions of this sort: first, to engage in war is not natural to man who was born to feel good will, but to brute beasts whom nature has supplied with weapons of a sort (a general proposition). The next proposition will reinforce this one: it is not natural to all beasts, but only to wild ones; and the next again supports this one: and not even wild beasts fight among themselves in the way that mortal men do: tiger does not war with tiger, nor lion with lion; but man does not show to any other animal the savagery that he shows to his fellow men; wild beasts only fight to defend their young, or when driven mad by hunger; man is incited by bloody wars by vain ambition and foolish and pretentious titles. The next proposition will be more specific, and will function as a new stage: Granted that men do make war, it is the mark of uncivilized ones to do so, men not all that different from wild beasts, not of those that live under the rule of law. A fifth point could be that, even if civilized men make war, it is not the mark of Christian men to do so, seeing that the Christian faith is peace pure and simple. As a sixth we could say: Even if it were proper to undertake the war, it would not be to your advantage because, when all is weighed up, the evils that are endured for the

⁹²Among his other moves against the French subsequent to 1510, Julius II induced the young Henry VIII of England to send expeditions against France in 1512–13 (see below 601:20–9). This was a disappointment to Erasmus, who had formed high hopes of Henry as an enlightened Christian prince. In *Julius exclusus* the pope boasts of fostering war against the Venetians and of inciting Henry to attack France. [Tr.]

sake of war are far greater in number than the advantages that even the victor secures. (This will have to be argued out.) Seven: Even if it were advantageous, it would not be safe, as the outcome of war is always uncertain, nor do those always win whose cause is the better, or whose equipment is superior, and quite often the troops turn their arms against their own leader.

All these propositions are for the most part general ones; one may next proceed to the particular ones derived from the issues more specifically related to the case in question: Leaving aside everything else, no war should be undertaken by you, especially with such an adversary. This one admits of many subdivisions: because you are a boy with no experience of war, or have only recently come to the throne (and so on — I am only showing how one sets about it); again, you should not fight this king who is so powerful, or who did your father such great service, or who is bound to you by so many ties, or who has shown such regard for you; or, not on this pretext, not at this time, not with these forces.

[Another Example]

Similarly, someone who was intending to convince a person that he should not study Greek literature⁹³ could start off by stating that literature of any sort is no great help towards Christian happiness, and can even be an obstacle. Having demonstrated the validity of this by argument, he can then come to the point at issue: Granted that there is reason why we should study other literatures, we should certainly refrain from studying Greek literature, because it is so difficult that the life of man, fleeting, brief, and feeble as it is, is not equal to the task of learning it; and even if one had years enough, it does not

⁹³This illustrates the ability of the trained man to argue on either side of a case, according to the precepts of the ancient schools of rhetoric. Erasmus was convinced of the humane value of Greek studies, and himself persevered in the acquisition of Greek in the late 1490s and early 1500s in spite of having no suitable teacher and no money to buy books (see Ep 138); but in the company of More and other English scholars his Greek studies flourished. In 1516 and 1518 he published a translation of books I and II of Theodorus Gaza's Greek grammar to encourage the study of Greek. [Tr.]

bring sufficient reward to make it worth acquiring at the cost of even moderate toil; finally, those who have devoted themselves to the literature of Greece have themselves been overtaken, through some fate or other, by the misfortune suffered by that ruined and oppressed land. Or we could say that, even if other people should study it, this particular person should not. We have now moved on to specific propositions, and there will be plenty of these one can use.

With these propositions it is important, I think, to arrange them as far as possible so that one moves comfortably from one to another as down a flight of steps. Lucian does this splendidly in *Tyrannicida* (a work which we have translated into Latin).⁹⁴ If I had only attempted such a deed of derring-do at such risk to my own life, I should deserve a reward for that; but (he goes on) I did not only attempt it — I actually beat off the bodyguard and killed the son. Shall I not receive a reward? But (moving on to the next point) I also removed the father, by providing the occasion of his death.⁹⁵

He does it again in *Abdicatus*,⁹⁶ which we

⁹⁴Lucian was a favorite author with Erasmus, as with Thomas More, Rabelais, and many other Renaissance writers. Lucian's literary influence endures in Erasmus' and More's most popular writings, *The Praise of Folly* and *Utopia*. In 1505–6, when Erasmus was in England, he and More made Latin versions of thirty-two works by Lucian: twenty-eight (some very brief) were by Erasmus, four by More. These, and a declamation by each replying to Lucian's *Tyrannicida*, which each had translated, were published in Paris by Bade late in 1506. A later edition (Paris: Bade 1514) contained seven additional translations of Lucian by Erasmus. His authorship of another work (*Longaevi*) formerly attributed to Lucian is disputed. The text of Erasmus' translations, ed Christopher Robinson, is available in ASD I-1 361–627; of More's in the Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St Thomas More III 1 (1974): *Translations of Lucian* ed Craig R. Thompson. [Tr.]

⁹⁵*Tyrannicida* is a display speech on a fictitious subject: the speaker intended to kill the tyrant, but finding only his son killed him instead; the tyrant, discovering his son's body, committed suicide; the speaker now claims reward as a tyrannicide. On this declamation and the replies to it by Erasmus and More see *Translations of Lucian* ed Thompson xxx–xxxix, 79–127, 147–56. [Tr.]

⁹⁶Another display speech: a disinherited son studies medicine and so is able to cure his father's madness; he is received back into the family, but on refusing to heal his stepmother is disinherited again; he claims this is unjust. [Tr.]

have also translated into Latin: It is not allowed to disinherit someone whom you have already disinherited once and received back into the family. Even if it were allowed, there is this good reason for not being allowed to do so now. Finally, even if there were very good cause for doing so now, his earlier services are so great that out of regard for them a father should overlook his faults.

If we are not happy with a whole troop of propositions, we can embrace the essentials of the case in three or four, and then, as we handle each of these, move off into other propositions if we feel like it. These main propositions are quite often advanced in the division, by which I mean the section of the speech immediately before we step off into the argument, where we set out in general terms what we are going to say, and in what order. Quite often as we handle the case, we find we can move from one proposition to another by natural steps, but if they do not cohere naturally, we shall ourselves invent suitable transitions which will connect them neatly together.

Anyone aiming at the abundant style must observe three things: he must discover those propositions which embrace in entirety everything pertaining to the case; he must properly subdivide them; and finally arrange them in the order most appropriate to the case. By this means the speech is not confused by the wealth of material, as the listener always has something definite either to concentrate on now, or to remember, or to look forward to. Besides, the speaker will not flounder in his argument while the next point is ready to hand to help him back onto his course.

As I said,⁹⁷ Quintilian does not consider that the invention of propositions can be taught, though it is both an essential preliminary and something difficult. There are, however, things that help: primarily those which are especially effective in any sphere, that is, natural ability and imagination; next, a knowledge of the law, particularly valuable in law-court speeches, and of moral philosophy, history, and a wide range

⁹⁷See 595:16. [Tr.]

of authors, in speeches intended to urge a course of action or do someone honor; finally, experience, practice, and imitation. Similar situations will readily provide propositions based on similarities, and also on dissimilarities, though general propositions will be suggested by the overall nature of the case, specific ones by a careful scrutiny of the special circumstances involved on each occasion. Finally a lively imagination will be stimulated by the precepts of the rhetoricians concerning the main types of issue, which Quintilian⁹⁸ calls *status*, the Greeks *στάσεις* [categories]. The "persuasive" type of speech has its natural topics which may act as a source of propositions — the right, the praiseworthy, the expedient, the safe, the easy, the unavoidable, the pleasant. The laudatory or vituperative type likewise has its own topics, I mean the main types of "good thing" with all their subsidiary concepts.

Method 11

The eleventh method⁹⁹ of enriching our style depends on the accumulation of proofs and arguments. The Greek word for these is *πίστεις* [reasons for belief]. Different reasons can be brought forward to confirm one and the same proposition, and the reasons themselves can be supported by further arguments.

Proofs fall into two classes: *ἐντεχνοί* [of the art], invented or artificial proofs, and *ἄτεχνοί* [not of the art], given proofs.¹⁰⁰ This second type is drawn mainly from previous legal judgments, hearsay, evidence extracted under torture, written evidence, oaths, and witnesses. The former type is derived first from "indications," which are very like the *ἄτεχνοί*. (Of these "indications," some are "compelling," for which the Greek term is *τεκμήρια* [evidence], some are "non-compelling," *σημεῖα* [signs].) Second, they are derived from "arguments" — Quintilian

at any rate makes a distinction between these and "indications." Arguments can be likely, possible, and not impossible. Most of these are derived from the circumstances of the case, which cover persons or things. "Persons" takes in family, nation, country, sex, age, education, physical condition, material circumstances, state, disposition, occupation, ambition, previous actions, previous statements, motives, purpose, name; "things" includes cause, place, time, opportunity, previous contemporary and subsequent events, means, instrument, method.

Commonplaces

There are also certain topics appropriate to all types of speech or even to all sections of a speech, whereas the ones I have just been discussing, though they can on occasion be handled in other contexts, are more suited to controversial issues dealt with in a court of law, and within this class, to cases which turn on a question of fact.

Generally speaking, arguments are derived from definition or defining formulae, from description, from exposition of the meaning of a word, which is a form of definition, or from things which definition by its very nature includes: genus,¹⁰¹ species, properties, differentiating characteristics, subdivision, classification (this last takes various forms, for example, a consideration of aspects such as commencement, completion, development); or from deductions based on similar or dissimilar situations; from contraries, contradictions, consequences, related propositions, causes, results, comparisons (of which there are three forms: comparison with something greater, smaller, or equivalent), and from self-evident statements,¹⁰² and from all the others that have been suggested, since writers agree neither on the order of presentation, nor on the number, nor on the names to be used. The subject has been dealt with at length by

Aristotle¹⁰³ and Boethius,¹⁰⁴ in fair detail but not very clearly by Cicero,¹⁰⁵ briefly by Quintilian.¹⁰⁶ Anyone training with a view to acquiring eloquence will have to look at all the possible topics in turn, go knocking from door to door¹⁰⁷ so to speak, to see if anything can be induced to emerge; but with practice the right ones will come to suggest themselves naturally, without this process being necessary.

Again, arguments can be derived from a "supposition," which is itself appropriate to many contexts, and finally from the circumstances peculiar to the case in question.

[Illustrative Examples]

A most effective means of making what we are saying convincing and of generating *copia* at the same time is to be found in illustrative examples, for which the Greek word is *παράδειγματα*.¹⁰⁸ The content of the examples can be something like, unlike, or in contrast to what we are illustrating, or something greater, smaller, or equivalent. Contrast and dissimilarity reside in features such as type, means, time, place, and most of the other "circumstances" I enumerated above. We include under "examples" stories, fables, proverbs, opinions, parallels or comparisons, similitudes, analogies, and anything else of the same sort. Most of these are introduced not only to make our case look convincing, but also to dress it up and brighten, expand, and enrich it. Anyone therefore who chooses to furnish himself with a mass of material from the possibilities here listed can make what he has to say as copious as he likes, without thereby producing a meaningless accumulation of words; furthermore the variety of the material will prevent boredom. This is not the place¹⁰⁹ to discuss how to discover such material or how to apply

it, but anyone who wants this information may find it in Aristotle,¹¹⁰ Hermogenes,¹¹¹ and Quintilian, who have written in great detail on these very topics. I shall deal with anything relevant to *copia*, but only briefly, so as not to appear to have written a whole book rather than a set of notes.

In the development of *copia*, then, illustrations play a leading role, whether the speech is the sort that debates what action should be taken, or urges to a particular course of action, or is intended to console someone in grief, or is laudatory or vituperative; in short, whether one is trying to convince one's audience, move them, or give them pleasure.

It is not enough to provide oneself with an enormous and very varied supply of illustrations, and to have them ready for use at a moment's notice; one must also be able to handle them with variety. Variety can be provided by the very nature of the illustrative examples themselves. They can be things done or said in the past, or be derived from the customs of various nations. There will be differences according to whether they are drawn from historians, or from poets (and poets include writers of comedy, tragedy, epigrams, epic, and pastoral poetry), or from philosophers (and again there are various schools of philosophers), or from the theologians, or the books of the Bible. Some variety will be provided by the differences between nations: the institutions and illustrative examples of the Romans are different from those of the Greeks, and among the Greeks those of the Spartans are not those of the Cretans and Athenians; nor again do we find the same habits among the Africans, Jews, Spaniards, French, English, or Germans. Or it may be a question of period: early times, then the subsequent periods of antiquity, recent history, and things in our own lives; or some inherent quality in the incident recorded: military or civil actions, examples of clemency or bravery or wisdom (and so on ad infinitum, for there is

⁹⁸3.6.3. [Tr.]

⁹⁹This section summarizes material in Quintilian 5.9 and 10. The material is so compressed as to be difficult to follow; Quintilian's more extended version with examples is much clearer. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁰Quintilian 5.1. [Tr.]

¹⁰¹See Quintilian 6.3.66, a section on sources of jests. [Tr.]

¹⁰²For example, those who perform a just act, act justly; Quintilian 5.10.58. [Tr.]

¹⁰³*Topica*. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁴He translated Aristotle's *Topica* and wrote a commentary in six books on Cicero's *Topica*. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁵In *Topica*, professedly based on Aristotle's work. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁶5.10, a long chapter dealing with all kinds of argument. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁷Quintilian 5.10.122. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁸Quintilian 5.11.1. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁹He deals with it later, at 635ff: Assembling illustrative material. [Tr.]

¹¹⁰*Rhetoric* 2.20ff. [Tr.]

¹¹¹Rhetorician of the second century AD, who wrote a series of textbooks on rhetorical technique much read in succeeding centuries, including four books, *περί εὐρεσέων*, on invention. [Tr.]

no end to this list); or the status of the person concerned: one finds different behavior in a prince, judge, parent, slave, rich man, poor man, woman, girl, or boy.

One should therefore apply as many different illustrations as possible at each point, derived not only from the whole range of Greek and Latin literature, but also from the history of other nations. We can also derive material from popular sayings. People are most impressed however by examples that are ancient, splendid, national, and domestic. In fact each nation, each class of person prefers what is his own, or else something that makes him feel superior, such as anecdotes about women, children, slaves, and barbarians.

Treatment of Examples

But examples not only acquire variety in our handling of them; they are also enlarged and expanded. I shall indicate some of the ways of doing this: first by "commendation," when we introduce a section in which we praise the incident, or the author, or the nation from which the illustration is drawn. If one quoted something done or said by a Spartan, for example, one could preface the anecdote by remarking that this people was always superior to the rest in wisdom and in military and civil organization, and abounded in splendid moral object-lessons. Or an example from Plutarch could be introduced by saying that this writer was of all authors particularly worthy of respect in that he combined a thorough knowledge of philosophy with the eloquent style of a historian, so that one would rightly expect to find in him not only a trustworthy account of events, but also the authority and judgment of a revered and learned philosopher. If one wished to use as an illustration the story of how Marcus Atilius Regulus¹¹² returned to the enemy, one could begin with something like this: Among all the honorable examples of Roman

¹¹²Consul during the First Punic War between Rome and Carthage; he was captured in Africa by the Carthaginians and sent to Rome to arrange an exchange of prisoners, under strict oath to return if he were unsuccessful. He dissuaded the Roman Senate from accepting the terms offered and returned to the enemy, who tortured him to death; see Cicero *De officiis* 3.99. [Tr.]

courage, there was never any act finer or more celebrated than that of Marcus Atilius.

One may invent little passages of commendation like this, making them long or short according to the requirements of the context; but one should take care to invent one that is appropriate; for example, if one is quoting something to illustrate faithfulness, one will commend one's source for seriousness and good faith, or if one wishes the audience to see something as an example of proper feeling, one will make proper feeling the subject of one's remarks. And so with other qualities.

Second Method of Expanding [Examples]

Next illustrative anecdotes can be presented in a richer form if we expand them and broaden the treatment by incorporating amplifications and extensions. Anyone who is concerned to be brief will find it enough merely to refer to the incident as being well known, as Cicero¹¹³ does in the *Pro Milone* when he says: "If it were a crime to put villains to death, we would have to view as criminals famous men like Servilius Ahala, Publius Scipio Nasica, Lucius Opimius, and the whole senate headed by myself as consul."¹¹⁴ But the speaker whose purpose is the rich treatment will narrate the incident in a more substantial manner, as we find Cicero doing in another passage from the same speech.¹¹⁵ An officer in the army of Gaius Marius, who was a relative of the commander, made a sexual assault on one of the soldiers, and was killed by the man he was trying to force. Cicero then added one of those remarks which effectively round off a story (*epiphonema*): "The fine young man preferred to act and incur peril rather than submit and incur dis-

¹¹³*Pro Milone* 8; Servilius Ahala as Master of Horse in 439 BC killed Spurius Maelius on suspicion of aspiring to tyranny; Scipio Nasica, an exconsul, led the mob of senators that killed the reformer Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC (see 593:27ff); Lucius Opimius as consul hounded down Gaius Gracchus in 121 BC. [Tr.]

¹¹⁴A reference to Cicero's execution of the Catilinarian conspirators when he was consul in 63 BC. [Tr.]

¹¹⁵*Pro Milone* 9, quoted in Quintilian 8.5.11; a speech in defense of the young man is found in Quintilian *Declamationes maiores* 3, *Miles Marianus*; see 500:26n. [Tr.]

grace." The great Marius acquitted him of guilt and let him go free.

In passages introduced for display purposes one may spend even longer on elaborating such illustrative anecdotes, especially if the subject is such that sheer pleasure will induce the audience to pay attention. For example, if someone were trying to urge the idea that foreign travel and the enlargement of personal experience do much to make a man wiser, he could dwell for a time on the praise of Solon, and then launch into an extended account of the city that Solon left, his reasons for going, the seas he crossed, the foreign peoples he visited, the dangers he encountered among them, the persons he met, the wonders he saw, how long he was away, and how much more famous and more wise he was when he returned to his native land.

Of the same sort are Jerome's anecdotes about the wanderings of Pythagoras and Apollonius in the preface to his complete edition of the Holy Scriptures. But the most convenient example of the whole procedure is to be found right at the beginning of the second book of Cicero's *De inventione*, where he tells the story about Zeuxis, who, when he was going to paint a picture of Helen, asked for a number of girls of outstanding beauty so that he could take the best feature from each and so produce a flawless portrait of beauty.

Fictional Examples

The same applies to fictional examples, for these too can be treated extensively or concisely as the subject-matter and context demand. When we use an anecdote which cannot possibly be believed, it will be best, unless we are being humorous, to preface it by saying that those wise old men of long ago did not invent stories like this for no good reason, nor was it for nothing that they have been current by general consent for so many centuries. Then we can interpret the meaning. For example, if a speaker is saying that one should not pursue that for which one is not naturally suited, he can point out that those wise old writers were well aware of this truth, and demonstrated it by inventing the very apt tale of the Giants whose rash attempts came to no good end. Or if he is depicting a miser, he can first

say that the miser is deprived of what he actually possesses as well as of what he does not possess, and then go on to the story of Tantalus. Or if he is arguing that the function of the wise man is to control his emotions by reason and judgment, he can bring in Homer's story in book 1 of the *Iliad* where Achilles is already laying his hand on the hilt of his sword and Pallas Athene calls him back from behind. Again, if one is putting forward the idea that a genuine reputation for courage can only be won by the man who has been tossed by misfortune and tested by all sorts of danger, after the sort of introduction I have indicated, he can bring in Ulysses as Homer depicts him.

Although the principle of the allegory or hidden meaning is not equally obvious in every case, experts in antiquity are agreed that under all the inventions of the ancient poets there does lie a hidden meaning,¹¹⁶ whether historical, as in the story of Hercules fighting the twin-horned Achelous; or theological, as in that of Proteus turning into all kinds of shapes or of Pallas springing from the head of Jove; or physical, as in the story of Phaëthon; or moral, as in the case of the men whom Circe turned into brute beasts with her cup and wand. Quite often there is a mixture of more than one type of allegory. In some instances it is not particularly difficult to grasp the sense of the allegory: it is quite obvious (I prefer to take examples of moral allegories) that the tale of Icarus falling into the sea warns that no one should rise higher than his lot in life allows, and the story of Phaëthon that no one should undertake to perform a task that is beyond his powers. Salmoneus¹¹⁷ cast headlong into hell teaches us not to emulate what lies far beyond our fortunes, and Marsyas¹¹⁸ flayed alive teaches us not to try conclusions with those more powerful than ourselves. The story of Danaë tricked with gold can only mean (and this is how Horace interprets it too) that there is nothing so walled in that money

¹¹⁶In *Enchiridion* (LB v 7f) Erasmus says that all of Homer's and Virgil's poetry may be read allegorically. [Tr.]

¹¹⁷Who made himself equal with Zeus (Virgil *Aeneid* 6.585-6). [Tr.]

¹¹⁸Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6.382ff; Marsyas presumed to challenge Apollo to a musical contest which the god won. [Tr.]