Learning and Transforming Conventional Wisdom: Reading and Rhetoric in the Elizabethan Grammar School

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Some questions demand frequent reconsideration. Ever since T. W. Baldwin completed his fundamental research on the relationship between Elizabethan textbooks and grammar school syllabi and Shakespeare's plays, scholars have been trying to establish what rhetorical training contributed to Elizabethan culture and writing.[1] In this paper I shall think further about a questio which has occupied me since post-graduate studies in the light of my growing understanding of renaissance rhetoric.[2] I aim to look at some materials which scholars know rather well in a slightl different light. We all know that rhetoric texts and rhetorical theory played a large part in renaissance education generally and Tudor education in particular. Thanks to Baldwin and his ma successors we know what the syllabuses and the educationalists say should be taught and what t documents tell us may actually have happened.[3] My aim in this paper will be to re-examine what know from the point of view of my developing understanding of rhetorical theory.[4] I shall argue t the rhetorical skills taught in the grammar school provided pupils with ways of both elaborating a transforming conventional wisdom. I shall begin with some general observations about rhetoric a about the Elizabethan classroom. For most of the paper I shall be considering the way in which th texts and practices of the Elizabethan grammar school inculcated rhetorical skills and I shall end w analysis of some examples and some comments on the relationship between reading, writing an new thinking in Elizabethan culture.

So first the general observations. I have come to think that rhetorical theory combines or big idea with a very large number of detailed doctrines. The big idea is that whenever you write y must keep your audience in the front of your mind. In particular you must take account of the wa which your audience thinks about the topic on which you are about to speak and you must think about the way of presenting yourself, the arguments, and the appeals which you must make, in order to bring them round to your way of thinking. The many detailed doctrines concern such different topics as discovery and formulation of arguments, narration, self-presentation,

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[1] T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols (Urbana, 1944), Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York, 1947), W. S. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in Englan 1500-1700* (Princeton, 1956), B. Vickers, *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (London, 1968) and *In Defer of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1988), Neil Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence in English Renaissance Literature* (Lond 1992), Mary T. Crane, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self and Society in Sixteenth-century England* (Princeto 1993), Q. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), Lynne Magnusson *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1999), Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Langua* (Oxford, 2001), Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), H. F. Plett, *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture* (Berlin, 2004), Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom* (Philadelphia, 2012), Q. Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford, 2014) and L. Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxfo 2015).

[2] This paper is a worked up version of a lecture given at the Folger Institute Conference Theatres of Learning October 2015. I am grateful to the organisers Lynn Enterline, Mordechai Feingold, Nicholas Tyacke and Ow Williams for their invitation and to those who asked questions including Lynne Magnusson and Sir Keith Thomas. It is related to papers I gave on transformations of renaissance rhetoric, in Berlin in March 2015, an linguistic creativity in renaissance rhetoric, in Fribourg in September 2015, which will be published in the relevant conference volumes.

[3] Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge, 1966), A. Grafton and L. Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (London, 1986), L. D. Green, "*Grammatice movet*: Renaissance Grammar Boc and *Elocutio*", in P. L. Oesterreich and T. O. Sloane eds, *Rhetorica Movet: Studies in Honour of H. F. Plett* (Leiden, 1999), 73-115, Fred Schurink, "An Elizabethan Grammar School Exercise Book", *Bodleian Library Record*, 18 (2003): 174—96.

[4] P. Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric in Montaigne and Shakespeare* (London, 2010), A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620 (Oxford, 2011) "Ramus and Ramism: Rhetoric and Dialectic", in S. J. Reid and E. A. Wilson eds, *Ramus, Pedagogy and the Liberal Arts* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 7-23.

manipulation of the emotions, construction of correct and elegant sentences, levels of style, amplification, metaphor and other figures, planning, use of the voice and gesture, and so on. The detailed instructions are very valuable, and a study of any one of them may throw light on a reac or a culture,[5] but one does not have to follow them all; in fact there are so many of them that or always obliged to choose. But the big idea of thinking about the audience and its likely reactions central to any rhetorical approach.

As we all know the first focus of the grammar school syllabus was on acquiring fluency in Latin reading, writing and speaking. Every text that the more advanced pupils read was read part for the sake of acquiring vocabulary and sentence forms. In the second place the course provide extensive sampling of the best classical Latin writing in the major genres: Virgil for pastoral and e Cicero for letters and philosophy, Sallust or Caesar for history, Ovid and Horace for lyric, Terence comedy. Thirdly, this reading was almost always presented as preparations for the pupils' own writing, first of all Latin letters in imitation of Cicero, and later themes and exercises taken from t *progymnasmata*. We must always think of the pupils as engaged in writing Latin compositions ar using the rhetorical resources provide by the letter writing manuals, Erasmus's *De copia* and the *progymnasmata* to assist them in thinking about their reading and preparing their own compositions. The resources which students collected from their reading consisted largely of axi and narratives which promoted conventional principles of ethical behaviour. Equally we should never forget that moral improvement and a developed Christian faith was a central aim of the grammar school. Pupils were expected to hear and attend to Bible readings and sermons on Sun and they could expect to be questioned about them at school on Monday morning.[6]

Recent work by Jennifer Richards on the sound of the Tudor classroom puts a focus on th role of performance and improvisation, alongside prepared written work. Oral questioning and response was a key element in grammar school training. When the boys were drilled on their syn they were expected to be able to alter the tense, number and gender of a phrase instantaneousl response to the teacher's direction. Their overnight preparation of sentences was primed for ora delivery. In his teacher's manual *Ludus literarius*, Brinsley envisages pupils responding to suitably framed ethical questions with the moral sentences they have learned from the *Sententiae puerile* He also advises teachers to prepare pupils for off the cuff construal of unprepared Latin sentence by training them to consider the context of the sentences by means of the *circumstantiae*:

2...when they must construe wholly of themselves, call upon them oft to labour and to keep in fr memory the argument, matter and drift of the place which they are to construe...
3. To consider well of all the circumstances of each place, which are comprehended most of them this plain verse:
Quis, quid, cui, causa, locus, quo tempore, prima sequela
That is, who speaks in that place, what he speakes, to whom he speakes, upon what occasion he speakes, or to what end, where he spake, at what time it was, what went before in the sentences next, what followeth next after...[8]

These *circumstantiae*, which we also find in medieval education,[9] are taught by Brinsley as a way understanding the context of an unseen sentence the pupil is attempting to translate. But they ar also questions which help analyse the nature of the situation in which one finds oneself, in narrat or in action. They help you inhabit the inside of a situation.

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[5] For example, T. Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* (Oxford, 1979), Christopher Johnson, *Hyperboles: The Rhet of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought* (Cambridge MA, 2010).
[6] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 11-47.
[7] J. Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, ed. E. T. Campagnac (Liverpool, 1917), pp. 142-5
[8] Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, pp. 123-4. *Quid* is omitted in this text but it is required because it is translated immediately.
[9] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 64-73.

Here I want to emphasize the different roles of questioning in the classroom. Pupils were questioned by the teacher to check up on their learning; they were encouraged to question each other in playfully phrased Latin dialogues and they were urged to question themselves in order to understand the context which would assist them in construing and understanding Latin sentence which they had not prepared. Questioning was a central feature of the performance of competence but it was also a way of building up understanding of how the words in a particular text were used. Question and answer before an audience was a key forum for the schoolboys to display knowledge understanding and linguistic virtuosity.

With these preliminary observations in mind I now turn to four skills of writing which were encouraged by the textbooks and exercises of the Elizabethan classroom. Pupils were trained in several different ways of reusing their reading in order to write compositions of their own. Reusing their reading is my first skill. The earliest letters which pupils wrote were modelled on Cicero's letters. At a more advanced level they were instructed to write letters suited to the narrative situation of a character from one of the books they read. They were taught to record striking stories phrases, axioms and examples from their Latin texts in their commonplace books so that the material would be available for them to choose from when they needed to compose a paragraph one of the moral subjects which were used as headings in the book.[10]

Erasmus's *De copia*, the most successful new rhetoric textbook of the sixteenth century, showed schoolboys how to develop and amplify pre-existing material, both individual sentences, which will concern us a little later, and summarised events. The second book of *De copia*, concerned with *copia* of things begins with 11 methods of varying a text based on thinking further on what is implied in the words rather than varying the words themselves. These methods are linked to the topics of invention. For example method 1 involves exploring the more detailed implications lying behind a summary phrase like "he completed a comprehensive course of education"; method 2 examines the actions leading up to an outcome; method 3 directs attention to the causes of an event; method 4 to the circumstances which accompany an event and the effects it has. In each case the writer can find more material which will lead to a fuller and richer statement in place of a brief summary.[11] The writer is asked to reconsider an event described in a source text in order to work what is implied and can be made explicit or elaborated further. Searching for elements in the situation which the writer of the source text did not explore offers the rewriter the opportunity of reconsidering a situation and inflecting it differently. Training in using the *circumstantiae* to analyse a context would also have helped here. Where the classical rhetorical tradition had focussed on narrative and argument as the key elements of the oration, Erasmus, after discussing ways of reinflecting both these aspects, describes further elements for texts. He gives advice on writing descriptions and using comparisons, and cites model examples from classical literature, which his pupils can then read and imitate. *De copia* also draws attention to the ways in which proverbs, maxims and examples can be used to enrich and inflect a text.[12] All these processes of collecting material from one's reading and reusing it are backed up by the *progymnasmata* exercises which out recipes for composing new texts based on narratives, axioms and comparisons most of which understood to be drawn from previous writing.[13] A significant part of their training in writing provides pupils with different ways of using material taken from their relatively wide reading in classical literature. These techniques are also applicable to students' post school reading in Latin, English, French and other languages.

Style is a second crucial element of grammar school rhetorical training. Instructions to teachers from Erasmus and the Lily/Colet grammar make it clear that in reading classical texts wit

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[10] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 24, 32-38, 44-45.

[11] Erasmus, *De copia*, *Opera omnia*, I-6, ed. Betty Knott (Amsterdam, 1988), pp. 197-230, trans. Betty Knott *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 24 (Toronto, 1978), pp. 572-606.

[12] Erasmus, *De copia*, pp. 202-15, 232-52, trans. Knott, pp. 577-89, 606-30.

[13] George A. Kennedy (trans.), *Progymnasmata: Greek textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2003), pp. 97-108, Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 27-9, 34-37.

their pupils, teachers were expected to point out occurrences of the tropes and figures of rhetor and to comment on the way in which they were used.[14] This implies that pupils must also have b instructed in a basic list of tropes and figures. This expectation is supported by the evidence of teachers' manuscripts like Conybeare's notebook and the printed compendia of tropes and figur The preface to Mosellanus's *Tabulae de schematibus et tropis* suggest that it was important for pupils to have the names and definitions of the figures with examples continually before their ey Today we often feel that there is something empty and formalistic about these seemingly innumerable labels for figures of rhetoric but in fact knowing the names enables readers to notic the different ways in which individual writers use particular techniques. Knowing the names and having examples to hand makes it possible to ask questions about particular figures, to discuss th and to use them differently. Awareness of the figures, which is certainly reinforced by reading, makes it possible to write more impressively.

Closely connected to the use of the figures is another element of style, the technique of amplification. We know that teachers and commentators frequently noted that a particular pass in Virgil or Cicero showed signs of being written in a particularly intense way in order to seem mo impressive. We know also that rhetoric manuals frequently gave advice on ways to make subject matter seem grander, more impressive and more moving. Being aware that some passages are written in an amplified way gives readers the opportunity of considering rewriting them so as to emphasize different aspects. It also leads to the possibility of reflecting on the benefits of brevity Sometimes a brief and allusive way of mentioning a particular event or point builds up a kind of complicity between speaker and audience as the speaker lets the audience know that he or she trusts them to know and understand the point without lengthy explanation. Rewriting a text to n it more elaborate or briefer is already discussed by Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria* 8.4) and is presented as a technique of the medieval manuals of poetics, such as Geoffrey de Vinsauf's *Poet nova*, lines 205-735.

The first book of *De copia*, on abundance of words provides a series of twenty methods f substituting the words used in a simple base text with other expressions.[17] These twenty method are largely based on the tropes of rhetoric. After explaining these methods Erasmus gives a demonstration first showing how the basic phrase "your letters pleased me greatly" can be rephrased using a combination of these techniques in up to 200 different ways and then perform the same virtuoso exercise on the much more difficult sentence "as long as I live I shall remembe you". Here are a few examples from each demonstration:

First four consecutive versions of "your letter pleased me greatly":

Your epistle exudes nothing but joy

The man who brought your letter brought a feast day

A triumph came from the man who delivered your letter.

Nectar I would not prefer to a message from you.[18]

Now four versions of "as long as I live I shall remember you":

Your image is too firmly impressed on my heart for me to outlive it, should it be torn from thence

The picture of you is so deeply embedded in my thoughts that no passage of time will ever efface

It will never be that I live and am heedless of you.

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[14] Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, ed. J. C. Margolin, *Opera omnia* I-2 (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 496-8, Lily, *Brevissima institutio* (London, 1573) STC 15616, sig. H5r-v, T. Wolsey in J. Colet, *Rudimenta grammatices* (London, 1529) STC 5542.3, sig A4r-v, Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 14-16.

[15] F. C. Conybeare ed., *Letters and Exercises of the Elizabethan Schoolmaster John Conybeare* (London, 19 p. 97 (list of figures noted but not transcribed).

[16] P. Mosellanus, *Tabulae de schematibus et tropis* (London, 1573), sigs. A1v-2r.

[17] Erasmus, *De copia*, pp. 35-76, trans. Knott, pp. 307-48.

[18] Tuae literae me magnopere delectarunt: Nil nisi gaudium tua spirat epistola. Festum diem attulit is qui tua attulit literas. Triumphum adduxit qui tuum adduxit epistolam. Nullum ego nectar tuis scriptis anteposuerim Erasmus, *De copia*, pp. 76, 82, trans, Knott, p. 353.

As long as I dwell among men, not even all the waters of Lethe will be able to dissolve my recollection of you.[19]

In both cases these are only four of more than two hundred alternative phrasings.

I want to use these examples to make three points about the enterprise. First of all we notice how far-fetched and humorous most of these examples are. In writing them Erasmus is deliberately doing something extreme and playful. He is showing off what language can do. The s learned by the student writer will enable him to devise phrases like this. Later the student will ha to decide whether these phrases will have the effect he wants to achieve. They are like masks wh he can try on in order to determine which is appropriate. But both writing sentences like this and effect of such sentences on an audience depend on an idea of play with language, and this idea o play is in fact something very important in the renaissance class room. When the boys are set tas of giving new Latin phrasings for particular ideas or expressions which they will have to recite be the class they will of course aim at correctness so as to avoid the teacher's rebuke but they will a want to show off to each other, to be as outrageous as they can within the limits set by the exerc The apparently rigid exercise of rephrasing a particular sentence, with the help of these twenty methods and of combinations between them, becomes an arena in which every kind of linguistic play is commendable. This element of play is evident even in Erasmus's dialogues intended to he schoolboys speak Latin in which the everyday exchange of greeting becomes more and more outrageous and absurd. One thing that *De copia* is about is the endless possibilities of creative pl in language and the extraordinary effects which language can achieve.

A second consequence of *De copia* is that the pupils become aware that any phrase in language could be phrased differently, that the choice to use any one expression is also the choic not to use many other alternative expressions and that this choice always requires reflection abo the effect which one wishes to achieve on a particular audience. The second part of the first bool *De copia* is in fact devoted to the constant presence of alternatives within language, when, like a thesaurus of phrases, it gives many different expressions of common social and semantic notions such as greeting, expressing limits, approbation, interest or importance.

The third consequence of copia of words is that in addition to choosing between differen expressions of an idea one could also cultivate a very rich, thick, extravagant style by placing side side several different phrases expressing the same idea. In that sense, as Terence Cave showed, *L copia* made possible the extravagant style of writers like Rabelais and Nashe.

We should also ask ourselves about the effects of Latin training on English style. Teaching pupils about effective ways of using the stylistic resources of Latin must have made them reflect what was possible in English. While Latin was evidently of crucial importance for higher educatio and for international communication, for most of the boys who studied at the grammar school English was the normal language for their adult writing. Evidently some writers simply transferre Latin structures to English, but other pupils must have asked themselves questions about the effe of Latin forms and Latinate vocabulary in English and they may have become sensitive to the imp of alternating or choosing between the two registers in which they were fluent. And there must have been more use of English within the grammar school than the statutes care to admit. For example at least some of the Monday morning work on the sermons heard on Sundays must hav been conducted in English. We must at least allow for some compositional consequences of the bilingual world in which the graduates of the Tudor grammar school operated.

A third group of skills encouraged in the grammar school involves disposition, structure a argument. Given the grammar school focus on studying examples of different genres of Latin writ it is reasonable to assume that much of what pupils learned about the content and organisation c

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[19] Semper dum vivam, tui meminero: Fixius impressum est cordi meo simulachrum tui quam ut superstiti po unquam detrahi. Sic effigies tui cogitationi meae penitus impressa est, ut eam nulla sit aetas abrogatura....Fi nunquam poterit ut vel vivam parum tui memor. Donec apud superos commorabor, ne tota quidem Lethes ac tui memoriam poterit abolere. Erasmus, *De copia*, p. 88, trans. Knott, p. 362.

their writings was based on their understanding of the different genres. This would probably hav been reinforced by their early study of letter-writing manuals, which present between twenty an eighty different types of letters, each of them classified according to the purpose of the letter, fo example, letters of recommendation, of consolation, of encouragement, of persuasion, of petitio and of advice.[20] The grammar schools also exhibit a very striking lack of emphasis on the four-pa oration. Classical manuals of rhetoric assume that the only important structure is the four-part oration and reduce the role of disposition, the second of the orator's five skills, to deciding on whether to omit one of the parts or whether to make minor alterations in the established order. Tudor grammar schools, on the other hand, did not give a large place to Cicero's orations or to manuals of oratory. Grammar school pupils would have learned about how to structure their ow compositions primarily from the recipes provided in the letter-writing manuals and the *progymnasmata*. The range of structures presented in these texts would have been reinforced b their observation of the texts they read. Furthermore there was at least some expectation that pupils would analyse the arguments underlying texts on the model of the dialectical analysis proposed by Rudolph Agricola. The pupils at Winchester in the 1570s were expected to take note the Bible readings and sermons and "repeat then when they come home, and the next day be opposed of them in school by the Master or the Usher."[21] Brinsley recommends that while the younger pupils should simply record moral maxims from the sermon, more advanced pupils wou be expected to analyse the division and exposition of the scriptural text, showing how the teachi proofs and examples fitted together.[22] We find evidence of this practice also in manuscript analy of the psalms and in the reports on sermons in Manningham's *Diary*.[23]

Thus although a comprehensive training in logic is reserved for the university and does n take place in the grammar school we nevertheless find that some teaching of the basic structure logic occurs in reading the texts. We frequently find logical analysis in the commentaries on Latin poetry prepared for the grammar schools, such as Bond's commentary on Horace.[24] The recipes f pupils' compositions provided in the *progymnasmata* also indicate that some at least of the topic invention were familiar in the grammar school even though full teaching of the topics was undertaken only at the university. Thus we find mention of some of the topics of invention in the instructions for writing chreias and commonplaces in Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*:

Chreia: You should elaborate it with the following headings: praise, paraphrase, cause, contrary, comparison, example, testimony of ancients, brief epilogue.
Commonplace: Prologue, Contrary, Exposition, Comparison, Intention, digression, rejection of pit legality, justice, advantage, possibility, honour, result.[25]

The recipes mention such topics as cause, example, comparison, testimony, result (effect) and contrary, as well as the topics of deliberative oratory, such as legality, justice, advantage, possibil and honour. In these cases organisation of a text means above all ordering the arguments you ar going to make.

The examples discussed under the first few methods of producing copia of things, in bool two of *De copia* indicate that Erasmus had in mind the situation of rewriting a narrative to make i fuller or to allow it to make a particular point more thoroughly. Later the methods focus on ways developing and amplifying arguments. This division of the book raises the crucial question of the relationship between argument and narrative in persuasion which was implicit in rhetorical theor

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[20] Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, pp. 228-56.
[21] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, I, p. 346.
[22] Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius*, p. 255.
[23] British Library MS Harley 3230, R. P. Sorlien ed., *The Diary of John Manningham* (Hanover NH, 1976), pp. 35-37, 61-68, 71, 101, 134, P. Mack, "Renaissance Habits of Reading", in S. Chaudhuri ed., *Renaissance Essays for K. S. Datta* (Calcutta, 1995), pp. 1-25, Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 104-9.
[24] Horace, *Poemata*, with the commentary of John Bond (London, 1608) STC 13791.
[25] Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, pp. 97, 105-6.

from the beginning but which was addressed most directly by Quintilian, when he considered wa of making narratives credible,[26] and by Rudolph Agricola when he discusses the relations betwee exposition (often using narrative as the primary example) and argumentation, the ways in which exposition can be adapted to prepare for our arguments, and the occasions on which exposition be more effective in persuading an audience.[27] Agricola's work was too advanced to have been studied in a grammar school but it was the inspiration for many of the ideas of *De copia* and Erasmus's other rhetorical works.[28] Agricola focused on the need to make narratives credible and suited for argument and suggested that in some circumstances providing an audience with ideas through exposition and allowing them to make the connections between them would lead them persuade themselves of the truth of one's case.[29] The question of the relationship between narra and argument was also strongly posed by the *progymnasmata* exercise of the fable which was of studied in the grammar school.[30]

Self-presentation and the relationship to the audience constitute a fourth rhetorical skill promoted in the grammar school. The most important text here was the letter-writing manual. Several of the syllabi mention a letter-writing treatise, most often naming Erasmus's *De conscribendis epistolis*, first published in 1522 and printed 83 times in the sixteenth century.[31] Erasmus emphasizes the freedom and variety of the epistolary genre. Very different lengths and styles are permitted; the only rule is that the choices made should suit the addressee, the writer the subject undertaken. Erasmus's discussion of the style appropriate to the letter conveys also a broader idea of the way in which letter-writers should adapt their approach to the subject-matte and to the person addressed. More than any of the classical rhetorical manuals, *De conscribendis epistolis* focuses the attention of the writer on the audience and on what he or she wants to achi in relation to them.

I shall give this one preliminary piece of general advice to young students, that when they are goi to write a letter they should not at once have recourse to rules nor take refuge in books from wh they may borrow elegant little words and sententious expressions. Rather, they should first consi very carefully the subject on which they have decided to write, then be well acquainted with the nature, character and moods of the person to whom the letter is being written and their own standing with him in favour, influence or services rendered. From the careful examination of all these things they should derive, so to speak, the living model of the letter. After that has been determined I shall allow them to search out passages in the authors from which they can borrow plentiful supply of the best words and sentiments.[32]

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[26] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, IV.2.52-60.

[27] Agricola, *De inventione dialectica* (Cologne 1539, repr. Nieuwkoop 1967), pp. 1-2, 258-306, Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, pp. 190-202.

[28] Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, pp. 303-14.

[29] Agricola, *De inventione dialectica*, pp. 261-64.

[30] Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, pp. 74-5, 96, 177-82.

[31] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, I, pp. 298, 305, 310, 348. On *De conscribendis epistolis*, see J. Choma *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Erasme*, 2 vols (Paris, 1981) pp. 1003-38, J. R. Henderson, "Erasmus on the A of Letter-Writing", in J. J. Murphy ed., *Renaissance Eloquence* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 331-55, L.Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1999), esp. pp. 61-74, Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetori* pp. 90-96.

[32] Sed illud unum prius in genere studiosis adolescentibus praecipiemus, ut epistolam scripturi, non statim praecepta respiciant; aut ad libros, unde voculas, sententiolasve aliquot mutuentur, confugiant, sed prius res, quibus scriber constituerint, solertissima cogitatione dispiciant; tum eius ad quem scribitur, naturam, mores, affectusque omnes perspectos habeant: quantum etiam ipsi apud eum vel gratia, vel autoritate, vel meritis denique valeant. Eque his omnibus diligenter pensiculatis, epistolae tanquam vivum exemplar ducant. Quo constituto, tum demum nihil equidem morabor, quo minus locos aliquot ex autoribus petant, unde tum verbo optimorum, tum sententiarum copiosam supellectilem possint mutuari. Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, 316, trans. Fantazzi, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 25 (Toronto, 1985), p. 74.

Erasmus provides pupils with a good deal of general rhetorical training suitably adapted to the fo of the letter and the occasion of each type of communication. The letter of persuasion provides with the occasion to teach in summary fashion several key elements from the theory of inventio the topics of deliberative oratory, the forms of argumentation suitable for a letter, the topics of circumstances (person, action, motive, place, time, manner means), the topics for describing a person, and the general topics of invention (following Cicero's list in *Topica*).[33]

Erasmus notes that the letter of encouragement originates in the emotions, which are incentives and guides to virtue. Although the handling of the emotions must be learned from the rhetoricians, he provides suggestions for ways in which letters of exhortation can employ praise, hope, fear, love, hatred, pity and rivalry. The focus is on the way in which these emotions might l used to encourage someone. Since letters of encouragement require a majestic, imperious and f style he takes the opportunity to summarise the doctrine of amplification, which is so important the handling of emotions.

Erasmus begins his account of the letter of consolation by emphasizing the frequency, va and difficulty of the obligation to console.

Timely and friendly consolation is no ordinary act of kindness; for in times of distress, when it is r possible to remedy the anguish of those whom we love through deeds, it at least enables us to e their sufferings by words. Yet we must perform this duty skilfully, lest like unskilled doctors we aggravate rather than alleviate a wound that is still raw and fresh.[34]

The strategy and arguments to be employed will depend on the situation of the person being addressed. Three different approaches can be taken. To philosophers and men of strong characte one can argue directly that there is no reason to feel grief since the wise man cannot be damage anything but his own mistakes. To very noble people who would be distressed by overt consolati one must employ a discreet approach, praising their fortitude and strength of character in the fa of overwhelming difficulties. To those who are overwhelmed with grief we must begin by expres sympathy with the depths of their grief and establish a sense of sympathetic suffering before mo over to the cure, which begins with arguments to soothe the pain and assert that it will not endu long. It may be possible to elaborate on the common condition of sorrow shared by all humans. These suggestions for ethical arguments related to the different types of people one may be calle on to console are illustrated with lengthy examples of letters of consolation and reusable phrase Erasmus both suggests the thinking which may be needed for this type of letter and provides a collection of expressions in which to convey these ideas.

Consistent with the focus on the audience of the letter, Erasmus gives a good deal of adv on ways to obtain the goodwill of the person being addressed. In his general chapter on the open of a letter he suggests ways of obtaining good will by emphasizing the warm connections betwee the families of the writer and the recipient, the shared experiences of their previous acquaintanc and to amplify both the recipient's previous kindness and the writer's gratitude.[36] In letters of request we shall employ the same topics to begin with but add the argument that what we ask is just, honourable and essential for us and easy and commendable for the recipient, adding professions of our gratitude and promises of favours in return.[37]

In *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, I pointed out the problems inherent in moving directly from the instructions given in schoolroom manuals to self-consciously sophisticated literary texts and l

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[33] Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 365-432, trans Fantazzi, pp. 108-148.

[34] Neque vero mediocre beneficium est, tempestiva et amica consolatio, qua quoties in rebus afflictis, eorum quibus bene volumus aegritudini re mederi non licet, verbis saltem lenimus dolorem. Verum scite id ipsum faciamus oportet, ne velut imperiti medici vulnus crudum adhuc et recens exulceremus potius quam mitigem Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, p. 432, trans Fantazzi, p. 148.

[35] Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 432-55, trans Fantazzi, pp. 149-64.

[36] Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 319-22, trans Fantazzi, pp. 76-8.

[37] Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 465-6, trans Fantazzi, pp. 172-3.

I saw that teares did in her eyes appeare;
I saw that sighes her sweetest lips did part,
And her sad words my sadded sence did heare.
For me, I wept to see pearles scattered so,
I sighd her sighes, and wailed for her wo,
Yet swam in joy, such love in her was seene.
Thus while th'effect most bitter was to me,
And nothing then the cause more sweet could be,
I had been vext, if vext I had not beene.[41]

Probably the duty which causes Sidney to part from Stella in the first quatrain is a public or famil duty, though it could just possibly be the duty of love to her, as explained argumentatively in sor 61. The narrative of the second quatrain describes her tears and sighs on his sorrowful departure identifying them as a shared pain ("she with me did smart"), rather than the anger at Astrophil which could be expressed in the same words. The first tercet explores his side of their shared sorrow. He weeps, wails and sighs in response to her sorrow, yet, according to line 11, at the san time the display of her affection for him makes him happy. Through amplification, specifying the topics of cause and effect, lines 12 and 13 explain line 11 in more detail. As her admirer it was bi for him to see her tears, but the inferred cause of the tears, that she was sad at his departure because of her affection for him, was unsurpassably sweet. Line 14 restates the idea, through its contrary, with pointed brevity and paradox. The first reading here runs "if he had not been made sorry by her sorrow, he would have been angered that she was not sorry at his departure". In addition there is the possible implication: "I would have been angry with myself if I had not been saddened at her sorrow (i.e. if my only reaction had been joy)". The new thinking here makes exp the selfishness inherent in this love, and the realisation that duteous self-denial can also be a sou of muted satisfaction. Through comparison of the two sonnets the reader might infer that for Sid while the obligation to give up love for the sake of the beloved is frustrating, there could also be consolation in knowing that that the necessary departure is also regretted by the beloved. The narrative partly consoles for the argument.

Neither of these sonnets addresses Stella. Rather they seem to be phrased partly as soliloquies and partly as declarations to the presumed manuscript audience of courtiers and poet lovers. Both poems play with words. Sonnet 61 with anaphora (lines 1 and 2), chiasmus (line 8), paronomasia (line 10) and paradox (line 14); sonnet 87 with anaphora (lines 1-3, 6-7), polyptoton (lines 9 and 11) and paradox with chiasmus (line 14). Sidney demonstrates his skilful and resourc play with language but the paired paradoxes of the two poems, instead of leading to stasis or frustration, instantiate new thought.

Hamlet's second soliloquy offers a very good example of the ways in which a character ca apply grammar school techniques of amplification, narrative and argument as things to think witl Watching the tears in the player's eyes as, as Aeneas, he relates Priam's death and Hecuba's reaction, Hamlet compares the actor's presumed adequate emotion to his own inaction. He amplifies with a detailed description bringing before the audience's eyes (*enargeia*) the face and voice of the actor.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

[41] Sonnet 87, Sidney, *Poems*, pp. 222-3.

attempted to mitigate those difficulties by analysing a number of everyday writings, such as lette and notebooks and texts which had a clear persuasive aim, such as political speeches and sermo Here my point is that the inheritance of renaissance school rhetoric could also stimulate new thinking and for this exceptional examples are more appropriate than everyday ones. In *Astroph and Stella*, Sir Philip Sidney consciously and brilliantly drew on both the Petrarchan tradition of l lyric and his training in rhetoric and logic at Shrewsbury grammar school and Oxford.[39]

OFT with true sighes, oft with uncalled teares,
Now with slow words, now with dumbe eloquence
I *Stella's* eyes assayll, invade her eares;
But this at last is her sweet breath'd defence:
That who indeed infelt affection beares,
So captives to his Saint both soule and sence,
That wholly hers, all selfnesse he forbeares,
Thence his desires he learnes, his live's course thence.
Now since her chast mind hates this love in me,
With chastned mind, I straight must shew that she
Shall quickly me from what she hates remove.
O Doctor *Cupid*, thou for me reply,
Driv'n else to graunt by Angel's sophistrie,
That I love not, without I leave to love.[40]

The first quatrain of sonnet 61 is introductory, setting the occasion for Stella's response (which Sidney labels as a defence), after observing the poet's heartfelt devotion, very much modelled or Petrarchan expectations. Her defensive argument in the second quatrain, this time turning the Petrarchan convention to her advantage, is that the true lover must so strongly identify with his mistress's wishes that he must shape his course of life entirely to her wishes. In the first tercet of sestet, Sidney himself elaborates the implication of that comment, that since her intention to be chaste leads her to hate his silent displays of his love for her he must (chastened by her words) instantly forbear. In this way he will show that she has the power to change his behaviour directl and that he is (in the terms of the second quatrain) entirely subservient to her wishes. The final tercet reflects on the consequences of this argument and the implication drawn. Sidney imagines himself in the context of a disputation. He has run out of arguments. Unless Cupid, in the role of t Doctor presiding over the disputation, can reply for him he will have to commit the error of self-contradiction (which causes the arguer to lose the disputation): the only way for him to persist in loving Stella, with all the conditions that entails, will be for him to stop loving her. Stella's logic ("sophistrie" can be a term of admiration as well as of abuse) and his own understanding of its consequences forces him, most unwillingly, to acknowledge the contradictory nature of his love. Logic applied to the inherited Petrarchan conventions exposes the contradiction which underlies them. The new thinking here is the realisation that in some circumstances self-abnegating love requires its own destruction. Sonnet 87 begins with a narrative approach leading to a parallel paradox.

When I was forst from Stella ever deere,
Stella food of my thoughts, hart of my hart,
Stella whose eyes make all my tempests cleere,
By iron lawes of duty to depart:
Alas, I found, that she with me did smart,

[38] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 2-8, 103-134, 176-292.
[39] K. Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney* (London, 1991), pp. 25-43, 50-1.
[40] Astrophil and Stella, sonnet 61, Sir Philip Sidney, *The Poems*, ed. W. A. Ringler jr (Oxford, 1962), p. 195.

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to her,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.[42]

Hamlet's detailed description of the player's acting prepares the strong repetition of Hecuba whi points the paradox. The player can express an immense depth of emotion "for nothing". Then Hamlet makes the comparison with his own situation, providing a deep yet generalized impressi of the impact which the actor's response to Hamlet's situation would have on an audience. The combination of comparison and description forces him to face up to the inadequacy of his response. But once he has confronted, initially refuted and then acknowledged the charge that h inaction stems from cowardice, he first attempts to speak words which follow the player's inspiration and then turns on himself to reject the very language and that kind of speaking in fav of action. Where the language of his description of the actor's past and potential effect had beer powerful, the curse words demonstrate their own futility.

Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion! Fie upon't! Foh!
II.2.576-83.

As he speaks about the scene we have just witnessed we seem to see Hamlet's mind in motion. H reacts to what he has seen and then reflects on and rejects his earlier response. Taken together t speech provides us with three different views of the actor's art. Hamlet's first response is that th actor is adequate to express emotions in a way that he is not. In the second place he sees the act as a kind of whore, who relies on words to provide a pretence of emotion rather than its reality (taking us back to his second speech in the play). Finally, though, he presents the play as a site of experimentation, where one can establish unknown truths by observing the reaction which the p elicits from the spectator. Hamlet's new thought here (drawing on what he has said about the player's impact on a future audience in lines 56-60) is that the model which he can reflect on in order to determine his own course of action should be the effect of the scene on the spectator rather than the moral quality of the actor. Half an hour or so later the audience overhears Claudi as the recent spectator of a play thinking about his own moral position. This reaction correspond Hamlet's expectation, in that it is a confession of guilt, but goes beyond what the audience expec through using the situation of Claudius to reflect on the nature of guilt and forgiveness. Again we a mind in motion, seeking ways around an apparent logical blockage.

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't--
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:

[42] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. H. Jenkins (London, 1982) II.2.544-60.Further citations in text.

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up.
My fault is past-- But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder--
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
III.3.36-55

Claudius acknowledges his guilt and appears desperate for some sort of forgiveness. He believes divine mercy is large enough and prayer powerful enough for forgiveness to be possible, but he a realizes that there is no form of prayer which can get around the fact that he still wants to retain crown and his marriage and that this precludes the true repentance which is the condition for receiving grace. He amplifies the power of grace by presenting pictures of the depth of bloodguil and the radiance of heaven's cleansing. But then he imagines what he would say and realizes tha will not suffice. Towards the end of the speech he confronts the paradox: he knows that he need be forgiven, yet he cannot fulfil the requirement of repentance in order to be in a position to ask forgiveness. He confronts his own damnation and resolves that all he can do is ask for angelic hel resolve his inextricably conflicted position.

What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that struggling to be free
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe.
All may be well.
III.3.64-72

The repetition and opposition (can / can not) in lines 63-4 dramatizes the inescapability o his situation. Later in the play, when the audience recollects this speech and compares it with Hamlet's reaction to the deaths of Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Gildenstern, Hamlet appea in a different light. Where Claudius was apparently tortured by his guilt and his inability to give up prize, Hamlet is either nonchalant or apparently unaware of the damage he has done to lover, friends and servant. The comparison makes Claudius almost into a tragic figure and enables us to limitations in Hamlet which had previously been occluded by the play's tendency to present even and their interpretation through Hamlet's view and by the conventions surrounding the tragic her The new understanding for the audience is created partly by copious amplification, partly by logic exploration and partly by comparison, all of them techniques fundamental to grammar school rhetorical education.

While it is entirely legitimate to use principles of rhetorical education to think about the v literary texts were composed and interpreted, we must also remember that the primary goal of rhetoric was to assist people in speaking and writing in order to persuade other people to act in

accordance with their wishes. Rhetoric is concerned with the consideration of all persuasive use language, not only with literature as we have come to define it. In particular rhetoric is concerne with the relationship between the world we live in, including the physical and social constraints us, and the words we decide to use. This prompts students of rhetoric to look beyond literature their materials of study but it also proposes one way of approaching the difficult question of the relationship between language and life. Without restricting their sense of the possible creative u of language and received ideas to literature, students of literature may nevertheless find that rhetorical theory offers them ways of thinking about the kind of work which a particular text wa intended to, and was received as doing, in the world.

In this light we might regard Sidney as both demonstrating his skill in constructing arguments and wordplays to illuminate the situation of the unaccepted lover and through this technical display inviting his readers to think more deeply about the implications of saying that o loves someone else more than oneself, and even of the possible benefits of that attitude. Shakespeare wants his audience to experience the dilemmas and suffering of the characters in t story. In order to do this he will both draw on general notions known to the audience (such as th issues of guilt and honour) and invite them to think about the issues involved through the words uses and through comparisons which the audience can make between speeches and characters. Enabling the audience to think with stories, characters, phrases and ideas is part of the work of t play.

Grammar school education was concerned with reading as much as with writing. Above pupils were taught to read as fellow practitioners, noticing the presence of particular techniques observing the ways in which different writers employed them for their own purposes. They were shown how to quarry material from their reading and how to reuse that material. Knowing the conventional moral axioms in texts like "Cato's *Distichs*" and the *Sententiae pueriles*, knowing ho apply them, and knowing the classical narratives that illustrated such principles was a condition c being heard by the Elizabethan elite.[43] The classical Latin texts read in the grammar school were sources of material and examples of how descriptions, axioms, narratives and arguments could b combined into effective texts. Pupils learned both the general principle of thinking about audienc self-presentation and appropriate arguments, and many individual doctrines from which they cou choose which ones to use at any particular moment. These rhetorical teachings helped them botl their own writings and in their analyses of texts they read.[44] Most often, no doubt, in their ordina writing, they used these resources to express and support conventional wisdom, but I have tried suggest that there were elements in rhetorical education which promoted the individuality of expression which we so often find in writings of this period.

Pupils' study of *De copia* and their competitive and repetitive exercises showed pupils tha language expressions could always be varied, and that language could be a site of play and experimentation. They learned of the range of possible ways of expressing an idea, of describing situation or responding to it, and they learned of the need to make judgements about which of t possible expressions could most effectively persuade a particular audience. They learned to treat descriptions narratives, axioms, comparisons and character descriptions as things to think with.[45] They registered the ways in which axioms counter previous axioms, in which stories question axic or can be interpreted differently from the way a classical author presented them. They learned about the different ways in which examples could be used in argument, for example to counter a previously stated or widely held axiom, or to develop an idea in a new way.[46] The rhetorical

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[43] T. E. Hartley ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, 3 vols (Leicester 1981-95), I, pp. 48, 82-3 183, 186-7, 189, 330 425, III, pp. 109-10, Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 1-3, 215-52.

[44] See the examples in Mack, "Renaissance Habits of Reading" and *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp. 38-9, 104-14.

[45] Erasmus, *De copia*, pp. 202-15, 244-54, trans. Knott, pp. 577-89, 621-31, Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric*, pp 99-105, 120-77, "Madness, Proverbial Wisdom and Philosophy in *King Lear*", in P. Gray and J. D. Cox eds, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Ethics* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 284-303.

[46] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. H. Jenkins (London, 1982), V.1.74-209, Mack, *Reading and Rhetoric*, pp. 3-7, 1 20, 82-88, 126-38.

techniques they learned helped them to adapt stories to a particular audience and to interpret stories and situations in new ways. The ways in which writers reinflected inherited stories, questioned and combined axioms, and developed characters and expressions, produced new thinking. The habit of using axioms, stories and characters as elements to think with enabled Elizabethan readers to respond to and in turn to encourage new forms of writing which question conventional wisdom.