

Quintilian's Psychological Insights in his *Institutio Oratoria*¹

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What convinces and wins over the listeners? Under this leitmotiv, the article deals with (1) the authenticity of the speaker as well as the techniques (2) of visualizing, (3) of influencing affects, and (4) of leaving room for the creativity of the listener. Quintilian's insights into these four aspects can be illustrated with Pauline material and may lay the ground for further studies of Paul's letters. Finally, we examine (5) the orator's creativity and (6) the importance of memory.

Once in a while, Quintilian glances into the depths of the human psyche. He is no psychologist and does not develop psychological theories. He writes as a teacher who instructs students of rhetoric, as a forum-experienced speaker, whose toga often is wet with the sweat of the practitioner. Of course, he has no clue about modern psychological theories. In his instructions, he scatters nuggets of experiential wisdom that often are similar to our everyday experience and that make us feel that the psyche of Western people has not altered much even after two thousand years of cultural change.² Often when reading his work, we get the impression of standing beside Quintilian on the forum. We understand—because we are similar.

However, it is not my goal to define the relation between his ancient psychological wisdom and modern psychology though it would be a rewarding task to illuminate Quintilian's insights within the framework of today's psychological theories. The open waters of assessing the relation between *ancient* rhetoric and *modern* psychology are tempting, as is the ocean of *modern* rhetoric that integrates *modern* psychology. We observe the sails of others cruising out there in the sunlight.³ But in this article we refrain from joining them and stay moored in the harbor. We will

1. All references without specification of author or work are taken from Quintilian's *Institutio*.

2. Some basic universalities probably exist, at least within the sphere of Western culture, that have lasted more than two thousand years. This article does not venture into the debate about general human universalities.

3. Cf., e.g., the collection of essays *Rhetorik und Psychologie*, ed. Joachim Dyck, Walter Jens, and Gert Ueding, *Rhetorik: Ein internationales Jahrbuch* 6 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987). Most psychologi-

not even compare Quintilian's boat to other veteran ships at the pier, such as the psychological aspects of Aristotelian rhetoric that could be confronted with what Quintilian knew about the human psyche.⁴ At first, we need to explore Quintilian's mahogany boat itself, to peek into its portholes, to open its chests and try to get to know the owner better.

Without emptying Quintilian's treasure chests of psychological pieces of wisdom, I select six subjects for display—but before I turn to these topics that structure the paper, I will briefly inventory some of the other interesting psychological contents of the chests. Quintilian observes, for instance, that shyness, although a “likeable mistake,” timidity, and a nonpugnacious nature stand in the orator's way. To overcome a shy nature, the speaker ought to have self-confidence, constancy, and courage, which, however, according to Quintilian, have nothing to do with arrogance, temerity, impudence, and presumption. Nor should these features be confused with being hardened, because the speaker who is aware of his⁵ great responsibility and of the speech's risk needs to show signs of nervousness and anxiety; he ought to have some stage fright, change the color of the face, and stand up restlessly from his seat before entering the stage. This has nothing to do with fear (12.5.2–4). It is characteristic of a moralist like Quintilian to put into opposition, for example, self-confidence and arrogance, courage and temerity, because the moral education and refinement of a person determine the directions in which a positive self-image or courage evolves.

The speaker also needs to overcome the human pursuit of safeness, the tendency to stick with the things he is good at, instead of taking off to new shores and learning what he has not yet mastered (12.10.14, 20–21).

Quintilian offers further pieces of wisdom. When preparing a case, a good attorney puts himself in the position of both the accuser and the judge in order to understand the facts of the case completely and to design a promising strategy of defense (role reversal: 12.8.10, 15; 7.1.4; 6.1.11, 20). Similar empathy is practiced when he tries to endear the judge by adapting his style and manner of speaking to the judge's taste. Sometimes he can push this method to the extreme of self-denial—but then he should not publish such a speech (12.10.55–56; cf. also 11.1.43–45, 50, 52, 61–72, 75–76, 78; 3.7.25; 4.1.17–18, 20, 45–46; 4.3.11; 5.12.11; 5.7.26).

A young orator should not start his practice in court too late, “because the fear increases from day to day” the longer he waits. In his perception, the task lying ahead of him becomes bigger and scarier every day, and when he still mulls over the time when to begin public court appearances “it is already too late to begin at all.” “The fruit of our studies should be brought before the public eye while it is still fresh . . . ,

cally oriented seminars for managers combine the topics of “communication” and “moderating” with an intensive training in rhetoric.

4. For Aristotelian psychology, see, e.g., the dissertation by Euthymios Papadimitriou, *Ethische und psychologische Grundlagen der aristotelischen Rhetorik*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 20/43 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1977), e.g., 79, 146–47, 164, 195–229. Aristotle shows a keen sense of psychological issues, especially when unfolding his ideas about the affects or looking at the *gnome* and the *koinoi topoi* as means to convince the audience. If an orator, e.g., uses convictions and opinions of the hearers (*doxai*) as premises of his rhetorical syllogisms, each listener is delighted, feels assured and flattered, and therefore even more willingly accepts what the speaker says (*Rhetor.* 1371a 25, 1371b 27, 1395b 2).

5. Quintilian always has a male speaker in mind—although we tacitly imply both genders.

while it may be assured of a kindly disposition in the audience, while boldness is not unbecoming and youth compensates for all defects, and boyish extravagance is regarded as a sign of natural vigor" (12.6.3). The young orator should begin in court with an easy and favorable case. He then will know what it means to fight and should get some rest and refreshment before pleading new cases. In this way, he will get over the beginner's timidity. However, the easiness of the first case should not seduce him to underestimate the task of pleading in court in the future (12.6.6–7).

Covetousness, greediness, and envy occupy the mind so excessively that they disturb the hours of slumber and dreams; bad thoughts "tear the mind apart" (12.1.6–7). Ambition, *amor laudis*, on the other hand, is welcome as an incentive to enjoy reading and writing (12.1.8; 1.2.22). Similarly, an off-the-cuff speech gains momentum through both the speaker's desire to be applauded and his fear to lose face. Furthermore, the situational pressure of the impromptu speech surprisingly causes the thoughts to flow more freely than in the situation of writing in isolation, where thoughts often only trickle (10.7.16–17).

For practice purposes, the orator, on a daily basis, should declaim not only alone, but also in front of an audience whose judgment he values, "because seldom does one have the necessary respect of oneself" (10.7.24–25).

Quintilian's advice for educating children seems almost modern. Children need to learn playfully (*lusus*), having fun and receiving lots of rewards and praise (*laudetur, gaudeat*). Rivalry between children can be used as an incentive (1.1.20; 1.2.22, 26; 1.3.6, 10; 3.1.3; 2.4.12; the text of 1.2.29–31 also pleads against one-on-one instruction). The teacher should praise neither stingily nor overabundantly in order to avoid both aversion toward hard work in the drought of too rare praise, and complacency and fading diligence because of too much (2.2.6, 10). A fond, loving relationship (*ament, carissimi*) should evolve between the teacher and the pupils. When the instructor is loved, cheerfulness abounds, and learning is facilitated. A beloved teacher can guide the students more easily, and they accept his corrections more readily; he becomes a model (2.9.1–2; 2.2.8), which is important because one grows to be a good orator mainly through imitating role models (10.5.19). The teacher should not correct too harshly lest the pupil loses courage (2.4.10, 12); reproving rebuke often angers the student and falls short of its goal (2.6.3; 2.2.7: "some teachers fuss as if they hated the pupil"). Usually, coercion impedes mental initiative (1.3.9). From time to time, the teacher should let the children act on their own authority (2.6.6). He should descend to the level of students who have weak comprehension instead of asking too much (1.2.27). Relaxation breaks are important (1.3.8). But, for Quintilian, all this does not mean that the quality of accomplishment is diminished. On the contrary, according to him, such an environment, cultivated with psychological insight, facilitates great accomplishment, and, for example, may inspire students to learn many pages by heart (2.7.2–4).

Quintilian was driven by an almost unlimited pedagogical optimism⁶ behind

6. E.g., in 12.2.1; 12.11.11–13. The passage 12.11.23 appears quite modern (even elderly people can study and grasp what they really desire to learn); correspondingly 1.1.16–17, 19 (mental training and education conveying both *mores* and *litteras* need to begin already in the first years of childhood and not as late as at the age of seven). In 12.1.42, Quintilian pleads for a liberal, pedagogically oriented criminal justice system

which the stoic doctrine of individual progress toward wise perfection can be discerned. He nurtures a perplexingly optimistic, if not naive, image of humankind; for example, in 12.1.4: "vileness and virtue cannot jointly inhabit in the selfsame heart, and it is as impossible for one and the same mind to harbor good and evil thoughts as it is for one man to be at once both good and evil." This optimistic image of the human being and its flipside, the almost unlimited pedagogical optimism, would have caused Paul to shake his head. For the apostle, the natural human being is a sin-dominated old Adam, lost forever, who needs to be changed radically by God into a new human being (e.g., Romans 6). For the Christian apostle, pedagogics was meaningless without this divine "new creation."

Quintilian is able to discern subtlety between conscious processes in the orator's mind and unconscious ones in the listener. "Who has ever possessed such a gift of charm [as Cicero]? He seems to obtain as a boon what in reality he extorts by force, and when he wrests the judge from the path of his own judgment, the latter seems not to be swept away, but merely to follow" voluntarily (10.1.110). As will be shown below, the best figures of speech for Quintilian are those that influence the listener subconsciously.

The first four of the six themes that the article will embark upon (authenticity, visualizing, emotionalizing, creativity of the listener, creativity of the orator, and memory) are guided by the central question: What convinces the listeners? What wins over their hearts? A part of the last theme also involves this leitmotiv.

1. Authenticity of the Orator as the Primary Means of Convincing

1.1. *The Vir Bonus*

As Quintilian defines it, rhetoric is the art of orating well as a good person. And he means: whoever wants to master the art of rhetoric needs to be a good human being at the same time.⁷ For Quintilian, the ideal of a speaker is the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, the man of honor able to orate (12.1.1). He therefore dedicates more than one chapter to giving a solid foothold for the moral conduct of the student of rhetoric

(if culprits, "as commonly conceded," can meliorate their ethos, then it is in the public's interest not to punish these delinquents; cf. also 7.4.18). Quintilian admits that the genetic disposition of a person plays an important role, but the enhancements by learning and practice are as crucial (e.g., 12.1.32; 12.2.2–4; 10.7.8–9, 24–25, 29; 11.2.1, 50; 11.3.11, 19; 10.2.20; in 10.2.21 Quintilian, however, admits that further labors are useless where the teacher runs "against nature"). For Quintilian's pedagogics, see furthermore, e.g., 1.1.1–2, 16–17; 1.2.18; 2.4.3–9, 13. A study of his pedagogics should differentiate between the different age groups of students even more decidedly than possible here.

7. 2.15.34 (*cum bene dicere non possit nisi bonus*); 1 prooem. 9; 2.3.12 (*tam eloquentia quam moribus praestantissimus . . . dicere et facere*, with a reference to Homer, *Il.* 9.442–443: master of words and of deeds); 2.15.2–3, 20, 27–33 (with a reference to Plato, *Gorg.* 460c, 508c; *Phaedr.* 267a); 2.17.43; 2.21.12; 3.8.1; 12.11.9; 12.11.31 (*bonam voluntatem*, "the will to do well," are the last two words of the *Institutio*). Quintilian knows how much harm the sharp weapons of eloquence can do in the hands of bad people (12.1.1; 2.15.30; 2.16.4, 10).

(12.1–2).⁸ Why? In regard to the rhetorical goal of convincing the audience the reason is easy: “It often happens that even when [morally bad persons] tell the truth they fail to win belief” (12.1.13). As soon as a *vir bonus*, on the other hand, with the weight of his respectability and achievement, appears in front of a crowd that has been throwing rocks and firebrands, it becomes silent, heads lifted to listen intently.⁹

1.2. Modesty

The authenticity that wins over the audience is, however, energized by more than just *generally* being “good.” To be “good” in the specificity of the rhetorical situation means, for example, to display modesty. Modesty lends the speaker a maximum of respect and trust (12.9.12; cf. 12.5.2a). Therefore, Quintilian frequently admonishes orators to use artifices and rhetorical flourishes only in moderation,¹⁰ an exhortation that 12.10.47 puts into an image: The orator does not need to shave himself bald, but he should not show up with “curly locks” either. It is important not to put one’s own art on show, but to let it be effective in unnoticed ways.¹¹ In this manner, the speaker earns trust and disperses many judges’ mistrust of attorneys’ tricks (12.9.5–6).¹²

8. Quintilian’s educational program to combine the teaching of rhetoric and the formation of an ethically “good” person, who is fit for life and not only for declamatory games in the school room, was approved by the highest authorities when Domitian appointed him educator of imperial princes (cf. 4 prooem. 2).

9. 12.1.27 (reflecting Virgil, *Aen.* 1.151–53). Cf. also 5.12.9 (one pleads before the court and argues most effectively when one is an ethically proper person; reference to Aristotle, *Rhetor.* 1.2.4); 6.2.18–19 (kindness and virtue win the listener’s confidence); 7.2.33; 10.1.111; 11.3.154–55; 4.2.125; 5.13.52; 3.8.12–13, 48; 8.5.8. However, the concept of the speaker having to be virtuous also shows some cracks: in certain cases, Quintilian allows the orator “to conceal the truth from the judge” (12.1.36; 12.7.7; cf. 4.2.91–93; 4.5.5–6; 5.14.29). He tries to seal the fissures: “there are many things which are made honorable . . . not by the nature of the deeds, but by the causes from which they spring” (12.1.36). Apparently, for Quintilian, this also applied to the deceit that the orator sometimes uses. “Even the sternest Stoics admit that the good man will sometimes tell a lie” (12.1.38; referring to *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, ed. H. von Arnim; 4 vols. [Leipzig, 1903–1924], 3.555). If a judge, e.g., “wants to convict certain laudable deeds,” the honorable orator’s task is to convince the judge with lies that “the deeds did not happen at all.” In this way, a respectable citizen can be saved (12.1.41; similarly 2.17.27, 29; 3.7.25; 3.8.63; 4.1.33). Here a tension builds with Quintilian’s concept of honesty that will be discussed below (in 1.3.). Quintilian is ready to endure this tension.

10. E.g., 12.10.79, 46; 9.3.27, 101; 5.12.8.

11. Cf. also 8.3.2: “More demanding artifices are generally concealed, since unconcealed they would cease to be artifices.” Similarly, 9.2.69; 9.3.102; 10.1.20–21; 4.1.60. It is true, the human desire to be applauded (12.9.1) is not served immediately when artifices are employed unnoticed, but “the reward comes after they have been carried to a successful termination” of the speech (12.9.4).

12. Psychologically, humility has an appealing effect, for “people have a natural prejudice in favor of the weak who are struggling” (4.1.8–9, 11; cf. further 11.1.15–17). Quintilian’s comment about the lack of humility and the intellectual vainglory of some orators is timeless (2.3.8–9; cf. 2.12.3–11): “The less talented a man is, the more he will strive to exalt and dilate himself. . . . As for those whose style is inflated or degenerate, and whose language reveals a passion for high-sounding words, or labors under any other form of affectation, in my opinion they suffer from weakness . . . like bodies swollen with disease. . . . The worse a speaker is, the harder he will be to understand.” 1.8.18–19: Furthermore, “it is a sign of . . . hollow pomposity to ferret out everything that has ever been said on the subject even by the most worthless writers. . . . Who pores over every page even though it be wholly unworthy of reading, can as well devote

1.3. Identification with Content and with Emotions

To be “good” in the specificity of the rhetorical situation finally means that the orator is totally convinced by the content of which he tries to persuade the audience. “However we strive to conceal it, insincerity will always betray itself, and there was never in any man so great eloquence as he would not begin to stumble and hesitate as soon as his words ran counter to his inmost thoughts.” Honesty wins over the heart (12.1.29–31).

Also the speaker needs genuinely to feel in himself the sentiments he wants to evoke in the audience; his inmost self needs to be steeped in these emotions in the moment of his speaking. Will the judge “shed tears if the pleader’s eyes are dry?” “Fire alone can kindle.”¹³ In order to ignite the audience, the orator, when speaking, has to imagine the contents of his speech in a most animated way and to incorporate these vivid imaginations (φαντασίαι) into his feelings (*in affectus recipienda*); “our inmost (*pectus*) makes us eloquent” (10.7.14–15; as well as 6.2.29–32; 11.3.62). From there alone emerges electrifying verve. Therefore, also when the orator presents previously prepared thoughts, he needs to make sure that the authentic feelings that he had when writing can show the same heat when he delivers the speech and that those feelings have not cooled down between writing and presentation (10.7.14).

2. Authenticity of the Speech: Visualization as a Means to Convince

Discussing authenticity that wins over the audience, Quintilian concentrates not only on the orator’s personality, but, of course, also on the speech itself. Every written or spoken text becomes particularly authentic when it uses the method of visualizing. The objects of the speech need to be presented before the listener’s eyes in most graphic and concrete ways so that they become incarnate in the words.¹⁴ The speaker needs to enable the audience to “form mental pictures (*imagines*) of the objects”;¹⁵ therefore, he should intently observe nature (*naturam intueamur, hanc sequamur* 8.3.71), so that everything he says seems drawn from life and authentic. In this way,

his attention to the investigation of old wives’ tales. The commentaries of the *grammatikoi* are full of such dead weight!” Nevertheless, one should avoid false modesty, which is a concealed form of ostentatiousness (*illa in iactatione perversa*); we see it when rich persons call themselves poor or an eloquent orator claims to be totally inexperienced (11.1.21).

13. 6.2.26–29. Similarly, 11.1.56 or 6.2.34–36: “When we desire to awaken pity [for clients], we must actually believe that the ills of which we complain have befallen our own selves, and must persuade our minds that this is really the case. . . . For a brief time, we must feel their suffering as though it were our own.” Quintilian confesses: “I have often been so much moved while speaking that I have not merely been brought to tears, but have turned pale and shown all the symptoms of genuine grief.” Similarly Cicero, *De Orat.* 2.45.189–90; Horace, *Ars poetica* 102. The speaker, however, should avoid irascibility, for, even when it is genuine, it blocks rational thinking, carries him away to scolding, and sets the judge against the speaker (6.4.10).

14. In the φαντασίαι mentioned above; 10.7.15. Cf. 6.2.32.

15. 8.3.64; cf. also 8.3.88 (*visionibus*); 12.10.43.

the audience is won over, for "the mind is always readiest to accept what it recognizes to be true to nature" (8.3.71).

As he often does, Quintilian leaves it to his master Cicero to supply examples: "I seemed to see . . . some reeling under the influence of the wine, others yawning with yesterday's potations. The floor was foul with wine smears, covered with wreaths half withered and littered with fish bones."¹⁶ "There on the shore stood the praetor, the representative of the Roman people, in his slippers, robed in a purple cloak, a tunic streaming to his heels, and leaning on the arm of this worthless woman."¹⁷

Enargeia (vivid illustration) is possible when things are described in a way that they "seem to be clearly seen with the eyes (*cerni*). For oratory fails to reach its full effect . . . if its appeal is merely to the *hearing*." The audience needs to get the impression that the objects of the speech are "displayed in their living truth to the *eyes* of the mind (*oculis mentis*)."¹⁸

We have become accustomed to seeing the Roman imperial culture as an oral culture in which the written did not rank first.¹⁹ Quintilian to some extent confirms this impression.

He advises, for example, never to peek at a prepared sheet of paper during an impromptu speech, because verve and momentum would get lost. During the delivery of the speech, "what is written ties down the mind" (12.9.17–18). One should not summarize a hammered-out written speech in keywords on a slip of paper and then, during the oral presentation, keep this cheat sheet within reach. Such a crutch slows down the mental momentum rather than giving it wings. In addition, the trust in written aids seduces one to become lazy in memorizing.²⁰ "Once we have committed a thing to writing, we cease to guard it in our memory and lose it because of the feeling of [written] security."²¹

However, this impression should not lead us to confuse orality with a culture that is geared to the sense of hearing. Drawing from his long experience in the lecture room and on the forum, Quintilian repeatedly demonstrates that the ancient psyche was primarily *visually* oriented. Below we will discover this especially in his teachings about human memory. The difference from today is simply that what was "seen" was not printed on paper or on digital screens, but most often imprinted into the brain's memory instead. Our mnemonic brain areas have lost a lot "because of the feeling of [written] security" (see 11.2.9 above).

Luke's court official of the Candace, seated in his chariot and reading Isaiah aloud to himself (Acts 8:30), does not confirm an auricular culture, but only dem-

16. 8.3.66: Cicero, *Frgm. Orat.* 6.1 Schol.

17. 8.3.64: Cicero, *Verr.* 5.33.86.

18. 8.3.61–62, emphasis added. In 9.1.27, cf. "setting forth our facts in such a striking manner that they seem to be placed before the eyes as vividly as if they were taking place in our actual presence" (*quasi gerantur sub adspectum paene subiectio*). Similarly, 9.1.45; 9.2.40; 4.2.123. In a broader sense, also the mimesis technique belongs here: the speaker enthralls and conquers the hearts by vividly impersonating characters and imitating ways of life or manners of speaking (*morum ac vitae imitatio*; 9.1.30, 45).

19. Cf., e.g., Paul J. Achtemeier, "Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990): 3–27.

20. 10.7.32. According to 11.2.45, the same is true for the trust in stage prompters.

21. 11.2.9, a reference to Plato, *Phaedr.* 275a.

onstrates the commonly used trick, documented also by Quintilian,²² of enhancing concentration by reading aloud. For the eunuch, this concentration technique was all the more advisable as he is described as having a hard time understanding what he read (Acts 8:31).

3. Emotionalizing as the Most Effective²³ Means to Conquer the Listener

In order to stir up emotions and fervor, the speaker generally turns to the style of the *genus grande* (ἄδρὸν), the “grand and forcible” (12.10.58–62): a river that sweeps along rocks “does not tolerate a bridge,”²⁴ finds the limits of its shores on its own, and, thundering along, carries the judge away with it. The latter will feel sympathy or wrath; he will pale or weep; he will follow the speaker “wherever he sweeps him from one emotion to another and no longer asks merely for instruction” (12.10.62; cf. 6.2.3).

However, also the refined and crafty²⁵ figures of speech influence the feelings of the listening judge if they remain unnoticed (9.1.19–21): “There is no more effective method of guiding the emotions (*adfectus nihil magis ducit*). For if the expression of brow, eyes and hands has a powerful effect in stirring the passions (*ad motum animorum valent*),²⁶ how much more effective must be the ‘facial expression’ (*vultus*) [the style] of our speech itself.” No matter whether the speech with its figures tries to “win approval,” “to win favor . . . , to relieve monotony by variation of our language, or to indicate our meaning [about possibly embarrassing subjects] in the safest or most seemly way,” the feeling of the listener, secretly guided by means of the figures, goes along.

As music with its different meters can put us in various moods, enliven or placate, so especially the artistic structure of the sentences also secretly leads the emotions. Artistic structure bestows special momentum to the thoughts—just as the throwing-sling does to the spear (9.4.9–10). Violent themes, for example, should be expressed in rough rhythms to make the listeners shiver (9.4.126); the accelerating pulse of the two-syllable iambs would be effective, for example (9.4.136). In order to radiate solidity, the speaker who wants to present evidence needs to put his proofs on metrical feet that walk along energetically and rapidly and mix short syllables with—less frequent—long ones (9.4.135, 138).

22. 11.2.33 (*exitandus est voce*); see below for more details.

23. According to 6.2.2, 5–6; 5.8.3; 4.1.14; 3.5.2, nothing can lend more clout to a speech than influencing the feelings of the audience. “There is some advantage to be gained by pleasing our audience and a great deal by stirring their emotions” (5.8.3). “As soon as [the judges] begin to be angry, to feel favorably disposed, to hate or pity, they begin to take a personal interest in the case” (6.2.6).

24. Virgil, *Aen.* 8.728.

25. See note 11 above, and cf. 10.1.20–21: Often we see speeches “whose merits are deliberately disguised. The orator frequently . . . sets a trap.”

26. How much facial expressions, body posture and the tone of the voice, its rising, lowering and modulating, influence the emotions of an audience, is also reflected in 9.3.2; 4.2.77; 11.3.64, 67, 116, 170 (162, 166, 169); 1.10.25, 27, 31f.; (1.11.12).

Fervor is expressed in word figures such as asyndeton and brachylogy. They allow articulating thoughts more energetically and insistently (9.3.50–54).

Feelings are particularly well kindled by means of *prosopopoeia* or impersonations, that is, fictive direct speeches that the orator, when pleading before the court, puts into clients' mouths: "The judge seems no longer to be listening to a voice [such as the lawyer's] bewailing another's ills, but to hear the voice and feelings of the unhappy victims themselves."²⁷ Also without *prosopopoeia*, the orator stirs affects as long as he allows himself to be moved and harbors genuine feelings himself.²⁸ If he cannot, the speaker's influence on the audience's emotions can at least be enforced by figures that rely on dissimulation (*simulatione*). The orator then *pretends* to be angry, delighted, timid, astonished, or grim (9.2.26). But these feelings should be simulated as "authentically" as possible (5.12.9).²⁹

Anger, for example, can be well expressed by means of *aposiopesis*, a sudden breaking off in the middle of a sentence (9.2.54), shame, on the other hand, by means of an ellipsis, by decently omitting an embarrassing word (9.3.59–60). Equally long and similar-sounding sentences should be avoided whenever anger, horror, disgust, or pity should be felt by the audience (9.3.102).

When compassion and pity are evoked,³⁰ Quintilian advises, along with his master Cicero, not to let this effect last too long. As soon as the climax of this emotion is reached, the speaker needs to turn to something else. Nobody is willing to bemoan somebody else's misery for a long time. "If we spend too much time over such portrayal our hearer grows weary of his tears." The effect produced falls flat. Nothing dries so quickly as tears.³¹

An effective means of persuading, finally, is to infuse fear of evil, which is more potent than evoking hope of good (3.8.39–40; cf. 4.1.21; Aristoteles, *Eth. Nic.* 10.9.4).

Positive feelings can be roused by means of entertainment, of creating pleasure (12.10.43–48):³² Often *delectatio* wins over the audience (48: *delectatione persuadent*), provided that the entertaining rhetorical embellishments are not used too frequently lest they mutually destroy their own effects (12.10.46).³³ Quintilian ranks *utilitas* before entertainment, but, like Cicero, he acknowledges the useful role of entertain-

27. 6.1.25–27; 4.1.28. In 9.2.58–59, see also the emotion-evoking techniques of *ethopoeia/mimesis*.

28. See section 1.3 above.

29. Cf. also 11.3.61–62, 156. In note 9, we already saw that Quintilian can portray a *vir bonus* as not completely honest; but he does not problematize this tension. At the end, in another context, we will encounter the same disaccord again.

30. This can also be achieved nonverbally: wounds are bared, abused bodies uncloaked, the defendant is presented in pitiable attire, or his parents and children are summoned, all visibly suffering from the trial (6.1.30; 4.1.28).

31. 6.1.27–29; Cicero, *De Inv.* 1.56.109; *Ad Her.* 2.31.50. The pity-evoking effect also falls flat when the speaker in the same moment tries to display self-confidence and artistic eloquence (11.1.50, 52, 54).

32. Making the audience laugh (6.3.1–112) is only one way of creating pleasure; in fact, most rhetorical ornaments please the audience. Laughing though not only evokes positive feelings, it also distracts the judge from the facts if so desired. Or it can help him to overcome fatigue and mental repletion, thus reviving his interest (6.3.1).

33. Cf. in note 10 above the advice to use artifices only moderately. In addition, 8.6.42 criticizes the mistake of wordiness, which reminds of "an army that has as many camp-followers as soldiers; it has doubled its numbers without doubling its strength."

ing: The orator helps his client when the audience applauds the enjoyable speech (12.10.45). If the rhetorical ornaments make the audience "listen gladly, their attention and their readiness to believe what they hear are both increased; most often they are won over by the very fact of being entertained, and sometimes even transported by admiration."³⁴

4. Creativity of the Audience—as a Means to Involve the Listeners and in this Way to Win Them Over

Quintilian does not know the literary critical term of *Leerstelle* ("empty space"), but he knows what it stands for³⁵—in all its ambivalence. The *Leerstelle* can particularly help to win over an audience. Quite a number of first-century listeners were fond of opaque formulations: "The fact that they can provide an answer to the riddle fills them with an ecstasy of self-congratulation, as if they had not merely heard the phrase, but invented it" (8.2.21). The hearer is won over by being drawn into identification with the inventing orator.

In 8.5.12, Quintilian pulls an example of veiled speech from the repertoire of declamation themes. It illustrates how much, in rhetorical schooling, these themes could be psychologically loaded:

A woman repeatedly bought her brother's way out of gladiator fights. At another occasion, however, she chopped off one of his thumbs during his sleep. The brother sued her, and she defended herself by using an opaque formulation: "You deserve to have an intact hand."

The rhetoric professor's question for the students is: What is the *noema*, the unspoken underlying thought with which the listeners have to fill the *Leerstelle*? Answer: You deserve to have an intact hand in order to fight for your life in the gladiators' arena (*ut depugnares*), i.e., I repeatedly saved your life. So what, why do you sue me?

34. 8.3.5; cf. 5.14.35; 4.2.46; 1.8.11. According to Quintilian's experience, the most advantageous place to stir emotions is the last part of the speech. Now the judge definitely has to be won over. The *prooemium* is the second best spot, but there the speaker has to move more cautiously, just enough to find access to the hearts of the listeners (*in animum*) and to make them "benevolent, curious and receptive" (4.1.5; 6.1.9–14, 51–52; 7.1.10; cf. 6.4.22; 11.3.170; 4 prooem. 6; 4.1.14, 28; 4.2.112, 115, 120). However, the speaker's task is not only to stir desired emotions, but also to extinguish undesired ones, for example, to dissolve anger, hatred, or pity by means of a joke (6.1.46; 6.3.9–10; cf. 4.1.29) or to allay fears (2.16.8; 4.1.20, 51). Quintilian's teachings about the affects represent the then-mainstream rhetorical education, which treated the affects merely as a means to influence the hearers. Aristotle's concept of the affects (*Rhetor.* 2.1–11), in contrast, was more impressive, as it was part of an overall anthropological conception. For Aristotle, the affects were connected to the nonrational capability of "striving" and "wanting" as well as to the intellectual capacities, thus building a unifying bridge between both sides of the personality. Furthermore, Aristotle developed a socio- and age-specific concept of the affects; he observed that they function differently in varied social and age groups. Cf. further Papadimitriu, *Ethische und psychologische Grundlagen* (note 4 above), 195–229.

35. Cf. only 2.13.13–14!

As much as the speaker, the hearer needs to become active, too, so that meaning can be created—when the speaker uses bagatelles such as *noema*, synecdoche, metonymy, or antonomasia,³⁶ or an allegory,³⁷ or keeps quiet about something,³⁸ or uses “dissimulation,” which means that “we say one thing and mean another,”³⁹ or insinuation, when he “suggests more than is actually said,”⁴⁰ or parables, such as Jesus did. The listener always has to cooperate and thus become a coauthor, a *coactor minor*. According to Quintilian, it is exactly this gratifying role that wins him over.

Quintilian reports (9.2.65, 68, 77, 79; 9.1.14) that the rhetorical strategy of the *schema* (in its narrow sense) was particularly popular in the first century C.E., even among ordinary people in the streets (*vulgo*). When a *schema* was used, the audience had to puzzle a little in order to discover the double meaning of a passage. But when the listeners detected the hidden, second meaning, they could pat themselves on the shoulders and be proud of their own cleverness. Because of their own contribution to the creation of meaning, they were easily persuaded by the text, more easily than if the text had conveyed its message in an unconcealed way.⁴¹ The successfulness of the psychological component—the audience gets a chance to flatter itself—explains why orators grew fond of the *schema* strategy.

In modern literary criticism (in a short exception to saying I would not look at modern theories), Wolfgang Iser emphasizes in a surprising parallel⁴² that the activity that a *Leerstelle* requires of the listeners effectively underpins the credibility of the text because recipients generally are inclined to perceive as true and real what they themselves produce. “The empty spaces (*Leerstellen*) let the audience creatively participate in making sense of events.”⁴³ They “make the text adaptable and enable the readers to make the extrinsic experiences of the texts their own when reading.”⁴⁴ The quoted Quintilian passages in 8.2.21 and 9.1–2 show how close the Roman professor of rhetoric came to modern readers’ response criticism, which cannot get by without psychological insights either.

However, danger also lurks in each *Leerstelle*: “The attention of the judge is not always so keen that he will dispel obscurities without assistance and bring the light of his intelligence to bear on the dark places of our speech. On the contrary, often he will have many other thoughts to distract him unless what we say is so clear that our

36. Cf. 8.5.12; 8.6.21, 23, 29.

37. Cf., e.g., 9.2.92.

38. *Reticentia* 9.1.31.

39. According to Quintilian, dissimulation is the most effective means of stealing into the minds of the audience: *illa, quae maxime quasi inrepat in hominum mentes, alia dicentis ac significantis dissimulatio* (9.1.29). A special case of dissimulation is irony; the orator means the exact opposite of what he says (cf., e.g., 9.1.43; 9.2.44–46).

40. *Plus ad intellegendum quam dixeris significatio* (9.1.28; similarly 9.1.45; 9.2.3 ἔμφασις).

41. See, e.g., 9.2.71: The listening judge “believes in that which he thinks he has found out for himself.” 9.2.78: “The hearer takes pleasure in detecting the speaker’s concealed meaning, applauds his own smartness and regards the other person’s eloquence as a compliment to himself,” while the other is speaking.

42. “Die Appellstruktur der Texte,” in *Rezeptionsästhetik: Theorie und Praxis*, ed. Rainer Warning (Munich: Fink, 1993), 228–52, here 236.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 249.

words will thrust themselves into his mind. . . . Therefore, our aim must be . . . that he by no means can misunderstand" (8.2.23–24).

5. Examples from Paul's Letters

Within the deliberately narrow framework of this article, I leave it to the creativity of the readers to bring to mind the abundance of Pauline examples that would fit into the four categories treated so far. A few remarks must suffice.

Point 4. In a 1990 study, I explained an example of the fourth category, the *schema* (σχῆμα) in 1 Corinthians 1–4. Figured speech was the normal mode of discourse in Greek and Roman antiquity, not the exception.⁴⁵

Point 3. The so-called letter of tears, 2 Corinthians 10–13, presents the classical Pauline example of emotionalizing.⁴⁶ Also in the Letter to Philemon, Paul adroitly uses affects to calm Philemon's anger toward Onesimus. As I have explained in my psychologically oriented commentary on Philemon, Paul capitalizes on the amicable feelings between him and Philemon and steps in as interceder between the slave and his master, thus deflecting the latter's aggressive emotions toward Onesimus. Quintilian calls this a *flectere* (a deflecting) of the recipient's agitation (6.1.9)—at first onto the surrogate object Paul, but ultimately onto Philemon himself, because Philemon could never vent anger onto his friend, brother, and spiritual father, Paul himself. Thus, internalization of aggressive feelings is the solution.⁴⁷

Point 2. In regard to visualization, three exemplary quotations might suffice. In 2 Cor 12:7, Paul puts his physical handicap before the readers' eyes: "A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to beat me, to keep me from exalting myself." "At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands" (2 Cor 11:32–33). "To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are in rags and buffeted and homeless, we labor, working with our own hands. . . . We have become like the rubbish of the world, the scum of all things" (1 Cor 4:11–13).

Point 1. It hardly needs to be demonstrated that Paul was totally convinced by the content of what he wrote in his letters and that he did not feign the feelings that he verbalized (point 1.3.). Humility (point 1.2.) can be exemplified by 1 Cor 15:9: "I am the least of the apostles, and not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

45. "Theological Wisdom and the 'Word About the Cross': The Rhetorical Scheme in I Corinthians 1–4," *Interpretation* 44 (1990): 117–31. See also F. Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome," *American Journal of Philosophy* 105 (1984): 174–208; B. Fiore, "'Covert Allusion' in 1 Corinthians 1–4," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 85–102; D. R. Hall, "A Disguise for the Wise: μετασχηματισμός in 1 Corinthians 4:6," *NTS* 40 (1994) 143–49; J. P. Sampley, "The Weak and the Strong: Paul's Careful and Crafty Strategy in Romans 14:1–15:13," in *The Social World of the First Christians*, FS W. A. Meeks, ed. L. M. White and O. L. Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1995), 40–52.

46. See my study of this text, entitled "Can Words Be Violent or Do They Only Sound That Way?," at the end of this volume.

47. See in detail P. Lampe, "Der Brief an Philemon," in N. Walter, E. Reinmuth, P. Lampe, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, Thessalonicher und an Philemon*, NTD 8/2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 203–32.

The apostle Paul's authenticity was based not only on the call and grace that he had received from the Lord himself at Damascus, where he had been granted seeing the last apparition of the risen Lord, as the congregations believed. It was also based on his success as a missionary; the Corinthian congregation itself, founded by him, served as a living letter of recommendation for Paul (2 Cor 3:3). Last but not least, his entire life, which, as a *cruciform existence*, conformed to the content of his preaching, that is, the crucified Christ ("I bear on my body the brand marks of Jesus" [Gal 6:17; cf. 1 Cor 2:1–5, as well as the catalogs of his sufferings, such as 1 Cor 4:9–13]), gave the apostle a peculiar authenticity that intrigues people even today, although we have nothing else left before our eyes but his letters. However, this very cross-formed existence ("my power is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor 12:9) could also offend opponents, such as those behind the collection of fragments called 2 Corinthians who took his cruciform existence and weakness as a reason to doubt his authenticity as an apostle. This document shows how important it was for Paul to restore this authenticity with the Corinthians—fortunately a successful restoration; otherwise he would have lost the Corinthian congregation.

It does not make sense to increase and elaborate on the examples here. As Quintilian notes, if you add more camp followers to an army, you increase its numbers without augmenting its strength (8.6.42). What is important here is the foreseeable result that Pauline material easily fits into the framework of the four categories treated.

6. Creativity of the Orator—Psychological Factors Advancing or Impeding the Creative Process

"It is an ordinance of nature that nothing great can be achieved quickly and that all the fairest tasks are attended with difficulty."⁴⁸ For the student of rhetoric, this translates into assiduous training, especially written style exercises. When Quintilian describes the creative process of writing, he pays attention to psychological aspects.

(a) "We love all the offspring of our thought at the moment of their birth; were that not so, we would never commit them to writing. [For that very reason], we must, however, give them a critical revision, and go carefully over any passage where we have reason to regard our fluency with suspicion" (10.3.7). The best is "to put aside for a certain time what we have written, so that when we return to it after an interval it will have the air of novelty and of being another's handiwork, for thus we may prevent ourselves from regarding our writings with all the affection that we lavish on a newborn child."⁴⁹ The question, however, is: how much revision, how much rasping is appropriate for an orator's preparing a speech for a trial? He does not have time to age and grow gray hair in this situation. He is no Virgil, who allegedly wrote only a few verses a day. "Procras-

48. 10.3.4, alluding to Hesiod, *Erga* 289.

49. 10.4.2. Cf. also the dedication at the beginning of the first volume (2): "Following the precept of Horace who in his *Art of Poetry* (388) deprecates hasty publication and urges the would-be author, 'To withhold his work till nine long years have passed away, I proposed to give [my books] time, in order that the ardor of creation might cool and that I might revive them with all the consideration of a dispassionate reader.'"

tionation and anxious endeavor" are only allowed at the beginning of a rhetorical career. According to Quintilian, the torture of self-chastening ("They want to change everything!" "They consider it diligence to make writing really hard for themselves") shows lack of confidence and ingratitude in regard to one's own talent; finally, it condemns to silence.⁵⁰ "To make any real progress, we need assiduous striving, not self-accusation" (*ad profectum . . . opus est studio, non indignatione*, 10.3.15). The goal is to become fast through continuous exercising, with the principle being: "Write quickly and you will never write well, write well and you will soon write quickly"; "speed will come with practice" (10.3.9–10). But, then, how much quickness in writing is good? As he often does, Quintilian advocates moderation: "We must . . . curb the horses that would run away with us. This will not delay our progress so much as lend us fresh vigor" (10.3.10). Translated into specifics, this bridling means "to exercise care from the very beginning and to form the work from the outset in such a manner that it merely requires to be chiseled into shape, not fashioned anew" (10.3.18).⁵¹

(b) The orator should learn to write with more speediness not only by assiduous training, but also by *concentrating*. That is, he should not "stretch out and stare at the ceiling," mutter some thoughts under his breath and just wait to see what happens (10.3.15). To discipline oneself in the art of concentrating implies that "we must not fling aside our notebooks at once, if disturbed by some noise, and lament that we have lost a day" (10.3.28). In late-first-century Rome, Quintilian tried to stamp Roman discipline onto intellectual activity, thus opposing artists' hypersensitivity that came along with Greek education. "We must make a firm stand against such inconveniences and train ourselves so to concentrate our thoughts that we rise above all impediments to study. If only you direct all your attention to the work that you have in hand, no sight or sound will ever penetrate to your mind" (10.3.28). Quintilian bases this optimism on everyday experience: When we go for a walk, it can happen that our thoughts are struck by a fascinating idea. Then suddenly, without an effort of will, we may not see the people around us in the street anymore—or even get lost in the streets of the city (10.3.29). Because the human psychic capability to filter out perceptions and thereby to concentrate can be triggered without effort of will, Quintilian concludes that it also can be activated deliberately (*non consequemur idem, si et voluerimus?* 10.3.29). In the middle of busy street and forum crowds, even during a dinner party, the orator needs to learn to dedicate such moments of isola-

50. 10.3.9–12. Similarly 12.10.77: The timidity that tantalizes the speaker to change his words over and over again will never lift him up to speaking powerfully. Further 10.4.3–4: "There are some who return to everything they write with the presumption that it is full of faults and, assuming that a first draft must necessarily be incorrect, think every change an improvement and make some alterations as often as they have the manuscript in their hands. They are, in fact, like doctors who use the knife even where the flesh is perfectly healthy. The result . . . is that the finished work is full of scars, bloodless. . . . No! Let there be something in all our writing which, if it does not actually please us, at least passes muster, so that the file may only polish our work, not wear it away. There must also be a limit to the time that we spend on its revision." Quintilian consoles the carvers: "Even great authors have their blemishes" (10.2.15).

51. Building anew is painful. The damages done by "the superficiality resulting from the speed with which the matter was thrown together" can be repaired only in time-consuming and laborious work; the raw material (*silva*) that some writers, "in the heat and impulse of the moment," threw on paper has to be remodelled, its words and rhythms corrected (10.3.17).

tion to concentrated reflection—such as Demosthenes practicing on the beach the art of focusing, pondering his speeches in the noisy boom of the ocean's surf. Thus trained, his concentration also held up when speaking in the drone and buzz of the city's assembly (10.3.30).

(c) When formulating and experimenting with word order and rhythm, it is advisable "repeatedly to go over what we have just written." Only then "the warmth of thought which has cooled down while we were writing it down is revived anew and gathers fresh impetus from going over the ground [i.e., the previously written text] again" (10.3.6).

Even the choice of writing material helps to maintain the warmth and the impetus of thought. Wax tablets, not parchment, should be chosen. With parchment, one often has to dip the pen into ink, thus halting the hand, and the flow of the thoughts loses momentum (10.3.31).

(d) Quintilian opposes the dictating of thoughts, which is also practiced by the apostle Paul (Rom 16:22). Quintilian has several reasons.

- When the stenographer wants to hurry on, "we feel ashamed to hesitate or pause, or make some alteration, as though we were afraid to display such weakness before a witness. As a result, our language tends not merely to be haphazard and formless, but in our desire to produce a continuous flow, we let slip positive improprieties of diction" (10.3.19–20).
- On the other hand, when the stenographer is too slow, "our speed is checked." By the delay, which is annoying and sometimes makes us angry, "the thread of our ideas is interrupted" (10.3.20). We saw (above, c) how important it is to keep the momentum alive, "the heat and impetus of the moment" (10.3.17).
- The impetus of the moment often is supported by bodily movement. The mind is animated when the author, trying to invent thoughts, lets his hands, arms, and facial expressions move more freely, for example, lifts his hand, frowns, hits his chest or hip with his palm, knocks his knuckles on the desk, or chews his nails. "All this is ridiculous unless we are not alone" (10.3.21).

(e) Thus, seclusion, deep silence, best at night with books by the oil lamp, is the ideal environment for creativity, when nobody is looking over the shoulder, no critics are present yet, and nothing distracts (10.3.22, 25, 27).

However, Quintilian sneers at solitary working outdoors, somewhere in pleasant nature. He visits lovely forests and picturesque rivers and enjoys the song of the birds in order to relax, not to concentrate and strain his brain. "Whatever causes us delight must necessarily distract us from the concentration due to our work" (10.3.22–24). He admits that many contemporaries disagree on this point. For them, "the freedom of the sky and the charm of the surroundings" inspire mind and soul.

(f) "Sometimes the best thoughts break upon us at a time when we cannot insert them in what we currently are writing." Therefore, the author, when writing a speech, always should leave some free space on the tablet or papyrus for making notes about such ideas. If we do not jot down these ideas instantly, we forget them. Or we try to

imprint them in our memory, but then we are distracted from the train of thoughts that we just were in the process of inventing. Jotted down on free space, they are conserved, and later will be placed somewhere else in the speech (10.3.33).

(g) With Roman discipline, Quintilian finally fights the author's natural laziness. "We must not give way to pretexts for sloth. For if we suppose that we can approach our studies only when we are fresh, cheerful and free from all other care, then we shall always find some excuse for idleness" (10.3.29).⁵² Quintilian knows the open flanks of the human psyche and its mechanisms of rationalization.

7. The Memory as *Thesaurus Eloquentiae*⁵³

7.1. Training Methods before the Delivery of the Speech

We train the memory by (a) "at first learning only a little at a time, in amounts not sufficient to create disgust." Then slowly we increase the amount, "every day a few lines," so that the increase of pain is not sensed (11.2.41; 10.6.3). In other words, we need to trick ourselves when fighting our natural dislike of necessary labors.⁵⁴

(b) Quintilian's advice to memorize poetry first, then artistically, rhythmically constructed prose, and only then plain prose, is a trick, too, because it preprograms initial feelings of success (11.2.39, 41). Poetic verses are easier to learn by heart than prose, and within prose, the rhythmically constructed texts are less strenuous (11.2.39). Quintilian observes this phenomenon; he does not try to explain it.

(c) As the pinnacle, one has to learn by rote the most difficult texts to memorize: the less rhythmically structured ones, not akin to ordinary speech, texts from legal authors, for instance. "For passages intended as an exercise should be more difficult (*difficiliora*) in character" than the more rhythmically, artistically constructed court speeches for which the orator exercises. Only more difficult exercises "make it easy to achieve the end for which the exercise is designed." In the same manner, ath-

52. Another mistake abetting laziness is not to leave enough empty space for later corrections when writing. Improvements are left undone because of lack of room on the manuscript (10.3.32).

53. For this expression, see 11.2.1. Quintilian's elaborations about memory again have a limited scope. They aim solely at giving the student enough technical skills to memorize things easily. Other possible subjects of teachings about memory (collective and cultural memory, reminiscence, etc.) are left untouched. It might seem that the memory theme is irrelevant for Paul, because his letters were always delivered by someone else. However, to be able to dictate long letters such as Romans or 1 Corinthians (see Rom 16:22) presupposes that Paul premeditated these texts and their compositions before dictating. Paul's dictations came close to the delivery of speeches! They required memory skills. In addition to premeditated, long letter texts, Paul had many more or less fixed text modules on various themes stored in his memory on which when dictating he could draw in different contexts at discretion and which he then adapted to the specific purposes of a letter. E.g., the midrash 1 Cor 10:1–12; 1 Corinthians 13; Phil 2:6–11; traditional formulas such as 1 Cor 15:3–7; 11:23–25; Rom 1:3–4 or set pieces such as the body image (1 Corinthians 12; Rom 12:4–5) or the Abraham motif (Galatians 3; Romans 4). For the use of topics and maxims by Paul, see, e.g., R. A. Ramsaran, "Paul and Maxims," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. J. P. Sampley (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003), 429–56, and the bibliography there.

54. Cf. further 11.2.41: From the outset, speakers need to eradicate aversion "to read and re-read what they have written or read, a process which we may compare to chewing the cud."

letes train by carrying weights of lead in their hands, although in the actual contests their hands are empty (11.2.41–42; cf. Heb 12:1). In pedagogics, too, the conclusion *a maiore* has a certain validity.⁵⁵

(d) Today we still are familiar with the trick of memorizing a text immediately before we fall asleep at night. Quintilian observes: “It is a curious fact, of which the reason is not obvious, that the interval of a single night will greatly increase the strength of the memory. . . . Things that could not be recalled on the spot are easily recollected the next day. Time itself, which is generally accounted one of the causes of forgetfulness, actually serves to strengthen the memory” (11.2.43). Quintilian tries to explain the phenomenon: During sleep, the memory rests from the labor and its fatigue, which was responsible for the failure on the previous day. During the night, the power of recollection (*recordatio*), “the most important element of memory,” “ripens” and “matures” (11.2.43).

(e) A well-known method of increasing memory power when learning lists by heart is to associate the various topics of the speech with localities (11.2.17–22). The orator chooses a spacious and multifaceted real locality, for instance, a house with many rooms or a town. When taking a walk through the house or town, he commits significant items in the rooms or places (*topoi*) in town to memory. He then repeats this list from memory over and over until he does not stumble anymore (“statue in the hall, pool in the atrium,” etc.). This framework needs to be firmly anchored in the memory, because, as a clever mnemonic framework, it will have to carry the burden of other things later.

The orator then condenses individual topics or sections of his speech material into specific terms (e.g., “seafaring”),⁵⁶ and, if possible, visualizes these as symbols (e.g., “anchor”). In his mind, he then attaches these symbols or terms to the external *topoi* of the locality, for example, “statue with anchor,” or simply “statue → seafaring.” In this way, he imprints the speech materials into his memory while he, in his mind, envisions himself walking through the external locality. Instead of the real locality, he can, of course, also make up a locality, to whose details he affixes the topics of the speech when practicing it.

This method shows again how much Quintilian worked with visualizations. Apparently, most ancient orators relied on a visual, not an acoustic memory. 11.2.34 states: “If we attempt to learn by heart from another person reading aloud, . . . the process of learning will be slower, because the perception of the eye adheres more [in the memory] than that of the ear” (*acrior est oculorum quam aurium sensus*).

However, this method, useful for learning listed topics, also has limits (11.2.24–26) when one has “to memorize a continuous speech. For thoughts do not call up the same images as [listed] topics; such symbols require being specially invented for them.”⁵⁷ Plausible images cannot always be found. To know the catalog of individual topics of a speech (seafaring, pirates, etc.) is not the same as memorizing the speech

55. Similarly 2.7.3. Or 10.5.15–16: Whoever wants to plead in court also should practice composing poetry and history accounts lest his arm become stiff and his mind dull in the everyday verbal fights in the forum.

56. “In cases of forgetfulness, one single word will serve to restore the memory” (11.2.19).

57. Quintilian’s critique of the symbol method is confirmed by modern research: F. L. Müller,

itself. Therefore, Quintilian gives alternative suggestions for the word-by-word memorizing of a longer speech:

(f) The text needs to be broken down into sections, not too short though, lest it become fragmented. It needs to be imprinted section by section into the memory (11.2.27).

(g) Symbolic markers should be used for portions that the orator has difficulty keeping in mind. In the best case, they can be associated with the content of thoughts (e.g., an anchor for a passage dealing with maritime trade). They stimulate the memory. However, Quintilian even uses markers that have no relation to the content, for example, a ring that he changes from the usual finger to another or around which he ties a string; it “reminds us of the reason for doing so” (11.2.28–30).

(h) When an unknown person's name needs to be remembered, it helps to associate a well-known person of the same name. Names with a meaning, for example, *Ursus* and *Crispus*, are easily kept in mind when simply a bear (*ursus*) or a curly head (*crispus*) is imagined (11.2.30–31).

(i) When practicing by heart, it is useful always to use the same wax tablets on which the text originally was written. The student sees—again the visual memory is addressed—“not only the pages in front of the mind's eye, but almost as well the individual lines themselves, and at times he will speak as though he were reading aloud.” Secondary changes in the manuscript, which disturb the optical evenness of the writing, might be esthetically ugly, but prove to be beautiful in a mnemotechnic sense, because they are useful markers for the eye (11.2.32).

(j) Silently learning by heart should be avoided because it tempts the thoughts to stray. Our voice keeps us alert and concentrated “so that the memory may profit from the double effort of speaking and listening. But our voice should be subdued, rising scarcely above a murmur” (11.2.33). This reconfirms the visual fixation. The speaking does not serve to imprint the text into the memory through the ear; it simply keeps the mind focused (*exitandus est voce*).⁵⁸

(k) Lest time is wasted, primarily the portions that do not yet stick well in the memory should be rehearsed. But even “the mere fact that these passages once slipped our memory usually makes us ultimately remember them with special accuracy” (11.2.35).

(l) A teacher such as Quintilian has a holistic, even psychosomatic approach: In order to succeed when memorizing, we should not only have “a head free from other thoughts,” but also “a healthy physical condition and a well-regulated digestion!”⁵⁹

7.2. Memory Activities during the Delivery of the Speech

There also is a middle road between a speech that was written down word for word and then memorized and “the gamble of the impromptu speech” (10.6.1). Quintilian

Kritische Gedanken zur antiken Mnemotechnik und zum Auctor ad Herennium (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), 9f., 73–77.

58. People who do not need help to concentrate read silently. For references documenting silent reading, see Carsten Burfeind, “Wen hörte Philippus?” *ZNW* 93 (2002): 138–45.

59. 11.2.35. Similarly 10.3.26–27: Good health, enough sleep, and simple food further the mental activity of writing.

calls it the *cogitatio*: the premeditation of the speech material (10.6); it even allows preparing long lawsuit orations in a few hours (10.6.1). In your mind, not on paper, you plan the structure of the speech, you connect some crucial words that will be used, and “bring the general texture of your speech to such a stage of completion that nothing further is required beyond the finishing touches” by your writing hand (10.6.2). However, you actually do not write anything down, because the memory suffices.

When you orally present the unwritten, premeditated speech, it is important not to look back nervously at the premeditated thoughts, and not to rely exclusively on the memory. If you look back in this way, you obstruct a free forward view. For if the flow of words ever runs dry, you should not dig around in your memory, but look straight ahead and invent something new (10.6.6–7).⁶⁰

All oral presentations—whether of prewritten and memorized texts, or of premeditated speeches, or of off-the-cuff inventions—require a good short-term memory, which Quintilian describes aptly. As the eyes hurry far ahead of the feet when we go for a walk, in the same way, the mind, while we speak, already sets up the words that will be said a little later (10.7.8). “For our mental activities must range far ahead and pursue the ideas that are still in front. In the same proportion as the speaker pays out what he has in hand, he must make advances to himself from his reserve funds,” if he does not want to stumble (10.7.10). “While we are saying one thing, we must be considering something else that we are going to say: consequently, since the mind is always looking ahead, it is continually in search of something that is more remote. But whatever it discovers, it deposits by some mysterious process in the safe keeping of memory, which acts as a transmitting agent and which hands on to delivery what it has received from the imagination” of the mind (11.2.3). According to Quintilian, the same unconscious capability of looking ahead is used when we write and read. The mind grasps the words or even entire sentences in advance before they are pronounced or written down (10.7.11). Already children should practice this skill (1.1.34).

7.3. Short-Term versus Long-Term Memory

Comparing short- versus long-term memory, we all have experienced “that we cannot recall what happened yesterday and yet retain a vivid impression of the acts of our childhood” (11.2.6; cf. 1.1.5; 1.2.20) and “that in the case of a slower type of mind, the memory of recent events is far from being exact” (11.2.42). Furthermore, “the very rapid memory [i.e., the short-term memory] as a rule quickly fades and takes its

60. Cf. also 11.2.48: If the memory that nature has given to a speaker is too porous or if time is lacking, it is useless to memorize word by word, because if only one word slips the mind, the speaker stumbles in an embarrassing way. According to Quintilian, these orators play it safer when they master the subject matter well in their heads and then do not look backwards at bits and pieces they memorized, but deliver a free speech. Furthermore, they may take comfort in the fact that words that they especially handpicked during their preparations usually are anchored firmly in the memory (11.2.49). For Quintilian, emotion explains this phenomenon: Everybody is reluctant (*invitus; nec facile*) to let go of something that he or she scabbled hard for earlier.

leave as though, its immediate task accomplished, it had no further duties to perform" (11.2.44). On the other hand, the long-term memory is to be applauded: "Things that have been implanted in the memory for some time have a greater tendency to stay there" (11.2.44; cf. 1.1.5). We are also familiar with the vexing experience "that some things we search for refuse to present themselves, but then eventually occur to us by chance" (11.2.7). In spite of these common weaknesses, the pedagogically oriented Quintilian keeps his optimism: if a more or less gifted orator assiduously exercises, preferably every day,⁶¹ he can confidently "rely on what he has premeditated and on what he has written out and learned by heart" (10.6.4; cf. 11.2.1, 40). "Even in the longest pleadings, the patience of the audience flags long before the memory of the speaker does" (11.2.8; cf. also 11.2.39).

7.4. *Memory as a Means to Build the Audience's Confidence*

What wins the audience over? This was the leading question. Quintilian replies in 11.2.46–47: "The memory will give us credit for quick-wittedness by creating the illusive impression (*videamur*) that our words have not been prepared in the seclusion of a study, but are due to the inspiration of the moment, an impression that is of the utmost assistance both to the orator and to his cause. For the judge admires those words more and fears them less that he does not suspect of having been specially prepared beforehand to outwit him" (*nam et magis miratur et minus timet iudex, quae non putat adversus se praeparata*). Therefore, it is a principle of pleading in court "to deliver certain passages, which [in our preparation] have been constructed with the utmost care, in such manner as to make it appear that they are but casually strung together, and to suggest that we are thinking out and hesitating over words that we have, as a matter of fact, carefully prepared in advance."⁶²

The orator, for Quintilian, is a *vir bonus* and gentleman, even if he sometimes sails into the heart of the audience with the jib of *pia fraus* (*upright deceit*).⁶³

61. "There is nothing that is more increased by practice or impaired by neglect than memory." Memorizing and premeditating should be practiced every day, regardless of how old one is (11.2.40–41).

62. Similarly 9.2.19: "Hesitation may lend an impression of truth to our statements, when, for example, we pretend (*simulamur*) to be at a loss where to begin or end, or to decide what especially requires to be said or not to be said at all." Cf. further 9.4.143–44, 147; 4.1.54.

63. Cf. also notes 9 and 29 above.