

## **Aphthonius *Progymnasmata***

Aphthonius was a Greek rhetorician of the fourth century AD; his book on the progymnasmata (including an outline of each exercise and a worked example) became a standard textbook. This is my own, rather makeshift translation. The Greek is sometimes quite difficult, especially in some of the later examples, and I would not want to guarantee that I have got everything right. There is a translation of this and other Greek texts on the progymnasmata in G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek textbooks of prose composition and rhetoric* (Atlanta 2003).

Malcolm Heath

### **1. Fable**

The *fable* originated with poets, but is now also used by orators as a means of conveying advice. A fable is a false discourse which gives an image of the truth.

It is variously called Sybarite, Cilician or Cypriot, according to the nationality of its originators; but the name Aesopian is more prevalent, because Aesop was the greatest expert in composing fables.

A fable may be rational, ethical or mixed. The *rational* is that in which a human being is imagined doing something; the *ethical*, that which imitates the character of irrational creatures; the *mixed*, that which is composed of both irrational and rational.

The advice which the fable is intended to convey is called *prefabular* if placed first, and *postfabular* if placed at the end.

#### **Ethical fable: the crickets and the ants, exhorting young people to work hard**

It was the height of summer. The crickets were striking up their tuneful song, but it fell to the ants to toil and gather the harvest by which they were to be sustained through the winter. When winter came the ants were sustained by their labours, but the others' pleasure ended in need.

Thus youth, if it will not work, fares badly in old age.

### **2. Narration**

*Narration* is the exposition of an event which has occurred, or as if it had occurred.

Narration differs from a narrative in the same way that poetry differs from a poem (the *Iliad* is a poem; the preparation of Achilles' arms is poetry).

Narration may be dramatic, historical or political. The *dramatic* is fictitious; the *historical* contains a story from antiquity; the *political* is the kind which orators use in their disputes.

Narration has six concomitants: the *person* acting; the *action* performed; the *time*, the *place*, the *manner* and the *cause* of its performance.

Narration has four virtues: *clarity, concision, plausibility, and purity of diction.*

### **Dramatic narration: On the rose**

Whoever admires the rose for its beauty should consider what befell Aphrodite.

The goddess was in love with Adonis; Ares was in love with her: the goddess was to Adonis what Ares was to Aphrodite. God was in love with goddess; goddess was in pursuit of mortal. The longing was the same, though the kind differed. But out of jealousy Ares wanted to kill Adonis, thinking that Adonis' death would put an end to love. So Ares struck Adonis. The goddess, learning of what was done, hurried to his defence; and in her haste she ran into a rose-bush and caught herself on its thorns. The flat of her foot was pierced, and the blood which flowed from the wound changed the colour of the rose to its own appearance. And the rose that at first was white came to be what we see today.

### **3. Anecdote**

An *anecdote* is a concise reminiscence aptly referring to some person. It is called anecdote [*chreia*] because it is useful [*chreiôdes*].

An anecdote may be logical, practical or mixed. The *logical* is that which discloses its moral in words (e.g.: Plato used to say that the seedlings of virtue are grown by sweat and toil); the *practical* is that which indicates an action (e.g.: Pythagoras, asked how long human life is, let himself be seen for a moment and then hid, making the length of his appearance the measure of life). The *mixed* consists of both word and action (e.g.: Diogenes, seeing a youth misbehaving, struck the boy's slave attendant and said, 'Why do you teach such things?'). That is the division of anecdote.

You will develop it under the following heads: encomium, paraphrase, cause, converse, analogy, example, testimony of ancients, brief epilogue.

### **Logical anecdote: Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter, its fruit sweet<sup>1</sup>**

It is right to admire Isocrates for his art, for he gave it a most glorious name and proved its greatness by his practice of it; he made the art famous, he did not owe his fame to it. To go through the benefits he conferred on human life by giving laws to kings and advice to individuals would be too long; I will speak only of his wise saying on education.

'The lover of education,' he says, 'labours at first, but those labours end in profit.' That was his wise saying; and we shall show our admiration in what follows.

The lovers of education are enrolled with the leaders of education, whom it is fearful to approach though to desert them is foolish; fear always waits on boys, both when they are present and in anticipation. From teachers the attendants take over, fearful to behold, more fearful when inflicting punishment. Fear precedes the experience and punishment follows on fear. What the boys do wrong they

---

<sup>1</sup> For obvious reasons, this theme was popular among teachers of rhetoric. You might like to compare Aphthonius' treatment with the more elaborate one by his own teacher, Libanius.

punish; what the boys do well they take as a matter of course. Fathers are harsher than attendants, examining their ways, telling them to make progress, viewing the market place with suspicion; and if punishment is needed they take no account of human nature. But by these experiences the boy, when he reaches adulthood, is crowned with virtue. But if someone, because he fears these things, flees from his teachers, absconds from his parents, avoids his attendants, he is utterly deprived of eloquence; along with his fear he has set aside eloquence. All these things swayed Isocrates' judgement when he called the root of education bitter.

For just as those who work the land laboriously sow the seed in the earth and gather the crops with greater joy, in the same way those who strive for education by their toil acquire the subsequent renown.

Consider Demosthenes' career, which was more devoted to toil than that of any orator and more glorious than that of any. So great was his commitment that he even deprived his head of its adornment, thinking the best adornment is that from virtue. And he devoted to toil what others devote to enjoyment.

For this reason one must admire Hesiod, who said that the road to virtue is hard but the summit easy,<sup>2</sup> expressing the same wise judgement as Isocrates. For what Hesiod represented as a road Isocrates called the root; both disclosed the same opinion, though in different words.

Those who consider these points must admire Isocrates for his outstandingly wise saying on education.

#### **4. Maxim**

A *maxim* is a summary statement in declarative form, exhorting to or dissuading from something.

A maxim may be hortatory, dissuasive or declarative; it may be simple or compound; it may be plausible, true, or hyperbolic.

*Hortatory*: 'Be kind to a guest when he is with you; when he wishes to go, speed his way.'

*Dissuasive*: 'A man who takes counsel should not sleep all night.'

*Declarative*: 'One must have money; without it, nothing that is needed comes about.'

*Simple*: 'One omen is best: to fight for one's country.'

*Compound*: 'It is not good to have many rulers; let there be one ruler.'

*Plausible*: 'Each man is like those in whose company he delights.'

*True*: 'A painless life can be found by none.'

*Hyperbolic*: 'The earth rears nothing frailer than man.'

That is the division of maxim.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Works and Days* 286-92.

You will develop it under the same heads as anecdote: encomium, paraphrase, cause, converse, analogy, example, testimony of ancients, brief epilogue.

Anecdote differs from maxim in that an anecdote may be practical while a maxim is always logical; and an anecdote must have a person, while a maxim is produced without attribution to a person.

**Hortatory maxim: ‘He who flees poverty, Cynus, should cast himself into the sea, and from steep cliffs’**

Theognis did not abandon poetry to its detractors; instead of stories he fashioned advice. Seeing that poets made much of the telling of tales, he set tales aside and instead collected in metrical form sayings on how one should live, retaining the charm of the metre while adding the profit of the saying. There are many things for which one might praise Theognis, but most of all for his wise saying on poverty.

What does he say? He who lives in poverty should be content to perish, for it is better to depart this life than to have the sun as witness to one’s disgrace. Such was his wisdom; it is easy to see how fine it is.

Consider the man who lives in poverty. First of all as a child he is not schooled in virtue; and as he grows into adulthood he will do all the most terrible things. When ambassador he will betray his country for money; when he speaks in the assembly he will speak for payment; when chosen for jury-service he will take bribes for his votes.

But those who are free of poverty are not like that. As children they are schooled in the noblest pursuits, and as they advance into adulthood they do all things with distinction, furnishing choruses at festivals and paying their taxes in war.

Just as those who are held by some burdensome chain have in their bonds a hindrance to action, in the same way those who live in poverty have in their destitution an impediment to freedom of speech.

Consider Irus. Though he was an Ithacan he did not share plenty with his fellow-citizens; so great was his neediness that his name was changed by poverty—he was called Arnaeus at first but was renamed Irus, receiving this title from being a servant. But what need is there to speak of Irus? Odysseus, the ruler of Ithaca, when he set foot in his native land pretended poverty and took a share in the evils of poverty, being the target of missiles at home and subjected to abuse by the maid-servants. So harsh is even the appearance of poverty.

So I must admire Euripides, who said that it is an evil thing to be in want, and that noble birth cannot alter poverty.

So how can one admire Theognis as he deserves for such a wise saying on poverty?

## 5. Refutation

*Refutation* is the overturning of some given fact. One should use refutation not on things that are perfectly obvious, nor on those that are completely impossible, but on intermediate matters.

Those engaged in refutation must first discredit those who make the assertion, then add an exposition of the matter, and use the following heads: unclarity, implausibility, and in addition impossibility, inconsistency, impropriety; and adduce finally inexpediency.

This preliminary exercise includes within itself the whole force of the art.

### **Refutation: the story of Daphne is improbable**

It is pointless to contradict the poets, but they themselves provoke us to contradict them by first inventing such stories about the gods. Is it not absurd that they should have had no respect for the gods, while we have respect for the poets? For my part, I am pained when any of the gods is treated with contempt, but especially Apollo, whom they themselves have made the patron of their own art; for such are the tales they have told about Apollo's Daphne.

Daphne, they say, was the offspring of Earth and Ladon, and excelling others in beauty she made the Pythian her lover. Loving her, he pursued her; pursuing her, he did not catch her, but Earth received her daughter and gave forth a flower bearing the same name as the maiden. He crowned himself with her in her new form, and the plant is displayed as a crown at the Pythian tripod because of his desire for the mortal maiden, and the shoot is made a token of his art. Such are the tales they tell; it is easy to put them to the test as follows.

Daphne was the offspring of Earth and Ladon: what proof does she have of her birth? She was human; theirs is a different nature. How did Ladon have intercourse with Earth? Flooding her with his waters? Then all rivers can be called Earth's husbands, since all flood her. And if a human came forth from a river, then a river can come from humans; for descendants disclose their ancestry. What do they call a marriage of river and earth? A wedding is for sentient beings, of whom the earth is not one. So either Daphne must be classed among streams or Ladon must be reckoned a man.

But let it be so; let us grant to the poets that Daphne was the child of Earth and Ladon. When the girl was born, by whom was she raised? For even if I grant the birth, the rearing is impossible. Where did the girl live? 'By Zeus, with her father.' What human can live in a river? The father would not have noticed whether he was drowning her in his waters or rearing her in his streams. 'But the girl lived beneath the earth with her mother.' Then she was hidden from view; and if she was hidden there was no one to observe her. When a girl's beauty is concealed, love has no beginning.

If you will, let us grant this too to the poets. How did a god love and belie his nature by falling in love? Love is the most burdensome of all things, and it is impious to ascribe the worst evils to the gods. For if the gods are subject to all diseases, how will they differ from mortals? But if they bear love, which is worst

of all, why are they free from the rest when they bear the most grievous? But his nature does not know passion, nor was the Pythian seen as a lover.

When the Pythian was chasing the girl, how did he come second to a mortal? Men excel women; do women, then, outclass gods? Does what is lesser among mortals overcome gods?

Why did the mother receive her daughter when she fled? Is marriage a worthless thing? Then how did she herself become a mother? Or a good thing? Then why did she deprive her daughter of what is fine? Either she was not a mother or, if she was, she is to be reckoned a poor one.

Why did Earth act in conflict with her own deeds? She displeased the Pythian by saving her daughter; did she then try to please him by bringing her back? She should not have tried to please if she wanted to displease.

Why was the god crowned with laurel at the tripods? The shoot was a symbol of pleasure, but the power of prophecy is a sign of virtue; how then did the Pythian connect what by nature cannot be joined? What? Was the cause mortal, the passion immortal?

Let there be an end to the poets, lest I seem to be decrying them.

## **6. Confirmation**

*Confirmation* is the securing of some given fact. One should use confirmation not on things that are perfectly obvious, nor on those that are completely impossible, but on intermediate matters.

Those engaged in confirmation should reverse the procedure of refutation and first speak in praise of those who make the assertion, setting out the exposition piecemeal and using the opposite heads: clarity instead of unclarity, plausibility instead of implausibility, possibility instead of impossibility, consistency instead of inconsistency, propriety instead of impropriety, expediency instead of in expediency.

This exercise includes the whole force of the art.

### **Confirmation: the story of Daphne is probable**

Whoever contradicts the poets, in my view contradicts the Muses. For if all the utterances of the poets are related at the instigation of the Muses, how can one not contradict the Muses in seeking to abuse what poets say? For my part, I accept the opinions of all the poets, but especially of him who wisely said that Daphne was loved by the Pythian.

Daphne, he says, was the offspring of Earth and Ladon. What, in heaven's name, is incredible in this? Are not water and earth the origin of all things? Are not the elements the seed of life? Then if everything which exists comes of earth and water, Daphne confirms the common stock of all, being the offspring of Earth and Ladon.

And being born whence all things are born, she excelled all others in beauty—as one would expect; for what first issues from the earth comes forth in all the beauty

of its nature. For beauty is discerned through many physical changes, but what appears first is fairer than them all. It is not surprising, then, that Daphne excelled in beauty, since she was the first-born from the earth.

Because Daphne excelled in beauty the Pythian loved the girl; this too is what one would expect. For if anything fine lives on earth it has come forth from the gods; and if beauty is the most blessed of the good things on earth, because beauty is a gift of the gods, beauty had a god as lover. For what the gods give they all cherish.

Being in love, the god chose to heal his passion. For such are the virtues: they are acquired by effort, and without toil it is not possible to attain virtue. Hence he loved and toiled, toiled and did not overtake; for it is not possible to attain the end of virtue. Hence when they say that the Pythian was in love they are not denying the nature of the gods, but showing that the nature of virtue is responsible. The one who pursued shows the character of the object pursued.

When the girl fled, her mother received her. For this is the nature of all mortal creatures: whence they come forth, thither they hasten to return. Wherefore Daphne goes to Earth, having come forth from the earth.

When she received the maiden, Earth gave forth a plant, for these are both works of the earth; to the earth men fall, and from it trees grow.

When the plant appeared it became a cause of honour to Apollo. For the gods do not exclude even plants from their providence, but crown themselves with what grows. For the firstfruits of the earth are dedicated to the gods. And it became a sign of prophecy; this, too, I think is fitting. For they call the girl Sophrone, and oracular power proceeds from self-control [*sôphrosunê*]. Because the girl was unacquainted with pleasure, she is a dedication to the virtues. For no one afflicted with lack of self-control can foresee the future.

For these reasons I admire the poets, and for this reason I honour due measure.

## **7. Common topic:**

A *common topic* is a discourse that amplifies evil attributes. It is so called because it applies equally to all those who participate in the same action; e.g., the discourse against a traitor is applicable equally to all those who have a share in that activity.

It resembles a second speech and an epilogue. For this reason the common topic does not have a prologue, although we adumbrate prologues in order to train the young. After that you will place the first head, from the contrary; then you will adduce the exposition—not in order to explain, since the facts are known, but to provoke the audience; then you will adduce the comparison, attaching greater weight to the charge through juxtaposition; then the head called intention, discrediting the intent of the agent; then a digression, conjecturally abusing his previous life; then the rejection of pity; and to complete this preliminary exercise the heads of purpose: legality, justice, expediency, possibility, honour, consequence.

**Common topic: against a tyrant**

Since laws are established and courts are part of our constitution the man who tries to put an end to laws should be punished by the laws. For if acquittal in the present case was going to make him more friendly to the people in the future perhaps one would remit the penalty; but in fact if acquitted now he will be more oppressive in the future—and how can it be right to allow leniency towards this man to be the beginning of tyranny? All others who are chosen for jury-service come to no harm if they dismiss the charges; but dismissing a charge of tyranny will bring harm on the jurors, for jury-service itself no longer survives under a tyrant's rule.

It seems to me that you will form a more accurate view of this man's intent if you take into account the intentions of our ancestors. As if as a favour to us they discovered a form of government free of despotism—and justly so. For at different times different fortunes befall men and change they way they think. So they invented laws, correcting fortune's instability by the impartiality of laws; and so they produced a single standard of judgement for all. And this is what law is for cities, the correction of evils caused by fortune.

All of which this man disregarded when he devised a most diabolical plan, to change the constitution's basic law. This is how he spoke to himself: 'What is this, in heaven's name! Shall I, who clearly stand above the masses, consent to outright equality with all the rest? Shall I permit fortune to lavish wealth on me in vain? If I submit to the same conditions as the masses, and the poor assemble to take decisions, then the resolution of the masses is a law to me. So what will be my deliverance from this? I will seize the acropolis, I will set aside these miserable laws, and I will be a law to the masses, not the majority to me.' That is what he said to himself—but he did not bring it to fulfilment; the favour of the gods prevented that. Do not let something for which we owe the gods thanksgiving preserve this man today.

A murderer is terrible, but a tyrant is worse. The one commits butchery on some single individual, but the other overthrows in their entirety the fortunes of the city. To the degree that inflicting a little pain falls short of butchering all, to that degree a murderer is of less consequence than a tyrant.

All other men, no matter how heinous their crimes, can make a distinction between their intention and their action; the tyrant alone cannot claim that his reckless enterprise was involuntary. For if he had undertaken tyranny against his will perhaps one would remit the penalty; but since he did this deliberately, how can it be right to exempt what had, before the deed, come about in intention?

All other men who are brought for judgement before you are held to account for the present only, and they are often acquitted on account of their past life. This man alone is subject to judgement for his past as well as for his present life. He did not live his past life with moderation; the present is worse than what preceded it. He should be punished for both, for the pain he caused before and for the pain he has subsequently caused.

Who, then, will plead for his freedom? 'By god, his children.' But when they weep and wail picture the laws standing by them; it is far more just to cast your vote for them than for this man's children. For this man's children would have sustained his tyranny, but it is because of the laws that you serve on the jury. You are more bound in justice to cast your vote for the laws, through which you have received your places on the jury.

Moreover, if it is the law that those who free their country be honoured, it follows that those who enslave it are to be punished. And it is just that the penalty should be fixed on your part equal to what he himself has done. The fall of the tyrant will do good, since it will make the laws secure. It is easy to bring about this man's punishment; for though he needed bodyguards to establish his tyranny, you have no need of allies to overthrow the tyrant. The jurymen's vote will suffice to bring to nothing the power of tyranny in its entirety.

## **8. Encomium**

*Encomium* is a discourse that expounds good attributes. It is so called because they sang in *kômai* in old times, *kômai* being a name for narrow lanes.

It differs from hymn and from praise in that the subjects of the hymn are gods, of the encomium mortals; and praise is brief, while encomium is artistically elaborated.

One may use encomium for persons and things, times and places, irrational creatures and in addition plants (persons: e.g., Demosthenes or Thucydides; things: e.g., justice or self-control; times: e.g., spring or summer; places: e.g., harbours or gardens; irrational creatures: e.g., horse or ox; plants: e.g., olive or vine); one may use encomium also both corporately and individually (corporately: e.g., all Athenians; individually: e.g., one Athenian). This is the division of encomium.

You will develop it under the following heads. You will have a prologue referring to the subject in hand. Then you will place birth, which you will divide into nation, homeland, ancestors, and parents. Then education, which you will divide into pursuits, art, and customs. Then you will adduce the most important head of encomium, achievements, which you will divide into soul, body and fortune (soul: e.g., courage, practical wisdom; body: e.g., beauty, speed, strength; fortune: e.g., power, wealth, friends). After these the comparison, attaching greater weight to the subject of the encomium through juxtaposition. Then an epilogue, more akin to a prayer.

**Encomium: Thucydides<sup>3</sup>**

It is right to honour those who have made useful discoveries for the good things they have provided, and to refer what they have brought to light back justly to those who disclosed it. So I will praise Thucydides, choosing to honour him with his own eloquence. It is a noble thing to honour all discoverers, but Thucydides above the rest, just as he discovered the finest thing of all. For it is not possible to find anything in existence superior to eloquence, nor to find anyone more skilled in eloquence than Thucydides.

Thucydides came from a land which gave him both life and art; for he was born in the very same place as eloquence. Though Athens the mother of his life, he had kings as ancestors and his fortunes were enhanced by his ancestry. Possessing both powerful ancestry and citizenship of a democracy, he applied the advantage of each to the other's correction; he allowed equality of speech to correct the injustice of wealth while avoiding the poverty of a common citizen by virtue of his prosperous descent.

Coming of such stock, he was reared under a constitution and laws manifestly superior to others. Because he was able to live at once by arms and by eloquence, he aspired to combine in one person both culture and generalship; he neither divorced eloquence from arms nor set battles in the place of culture. He made a single practice out of things of which there is no single art, uniting in one what is separate by nature.

When he reached adulthood he sought an occasion to display the skills in which he had been well schooled before. Fortune soon provided the war, and he made the deeds of all the Greeks his own art; he became custodian of what the war brought to pass. He did not allow time to conceal what each side did. The capture of Plataea is known; the ravaging of Attica was published; the Athenians' voyage round the Peloponnese was made known. Naupactus witnessed sea-battles, and Thucydides by his writings prevented these things from going unnoticed. The taking of Lesbos is spoken of to this day. There was a battle against the Ambraciots, and time has not stolen away the event. The Spartans' lawless judgement is not unknown. Sphacteria and Pylos, the Athenians' greatest achievement, is not unnoticed. The Corcyreans' address to the Athenian assembly; the Corinthians' reply to them; the charges laid by the Aeginetans when they came to Sparta; Archidamus' moderation at the assembly; Sthenalaidas' incitement to war; Pericles, too, discounting a Spartan embassy and restraining the Athenians' anger during the plague—these things are preserved for all time in Thucydides' writings.

---

<sup>3</sup> This treatment of Thucydides (written in a style that seeks to imitate his) naturally stresses his work as a historian, but also alludes to his distinguished family connections (including a Thracian king), his military service (naturally, the fact that he was exiled for losing Amphipolis to the Spartans is passed over in silence), his citizenship in a democracy and his wealth (the biographical tradition includes stories of financial malpractice—perhaps arising from a confusion with the politician Thucydides son of Melesias—which are, again, passed over).

Will anyone compare Herodotus with him? But the one narrates for pleasure, the other's utterances are all for truth. To the degree that amusement is inferior to truthfulness, to that degree does Herodotus fall short of Thucydides' excellence.

There is much else that one could say about Thucydides, but the abundance of his praises precludes saying everything.

**Encomium: wisdom**

To achieve wisdom is fortunate, to praise it worthily impossible, because it so far excels prosperity as to be recognised as the common possession of the gods.

For each of the gods has a different province. Hera presides over marriage; Ares, with Athene, over war; Hephaestus forges metals with fire; Poseidon guides mariners; each of the gods has a different concern. But all have a share in wisdom, and Zeus uniquely above the rest. For he excels the other gods in strength to the same degree that he excels them in wisdom, and wisdom confirms Zeus' rule.

The gods possess it innately; their possession proceeded to the earth, and the children of gods brought it into human life. For this reason I may admire the poets, because they made Palamedes and Nestor, and anyone else among the first men who is celebrated in song for wisdom, sons of gods. They do not have the nature of gods—in that case they would have been recognised as gods themselves, and have disclosed by virtue of their common birth an excellence held in common. But it w

as because they acquired the excellence of the gods that they were considered the children of gods and are seen as a reminder of the gods, whose wisdom is possessed innately.

Wisdom holds sway in both peace and war. Some things are held in repute only in peace; some are admired only in war. Of all things wisdom alone understands how to rule both as one. She governs in war as if wholly ignorant of peace, and is mistress of peace as if utterly ignorant of battle; in whichever she rules she is thought to belong to that alone. She passes laws in times of peace and makes use of every kind of tranquillity; but in war it is she who instigates victory. And wisdom, the source of conquest under arms, allows none other to succeed in assemblies. She knows how to rule over both alike, both those at war and those who speak.

Wisdom alone interprets the will of the gods; she alone like a god knows the future. She provides land to farmers, to sailors she assigns the sea. Crops cannot be raised without wisdom, nor can one go on board ship without a wise helmsman. All the sea's lavish provision and all that the earth affords to mankind, all this is wisdom's discovery. She has not left in obscurity the secrets which the heavens keep to themselves; the circuit of the sun, the course run by each of the stars, wisdom alone has found out for mankind. Even things beneath the earth are not unknown to the wise man, and our fate after death only wisdom reveals.

She took Troy; the city which the length of time could not take, a wise plan won over. She overthrew the whole might of Persia, the accomplishment of a single

stratagem. The Cyclops lost his eye, because Odysseus schemed more wisely. Everything, if it prevails, is the product of wisdom.

Does anyone compare courage with wisdom? What might is able to achieve is the gift of wisdom, and if you subtract good judgement from courage, what is left is open to blame.

There is much else that could be said about wisdom, but there is no way for those who speak of her to say everything.

## **9. Invective**

*Invective* is a discourse that expounds bad attributes. It differs from common topic in that the topic invites punishment, while invective contains pure disparagement alone.

It is divided into the same heads as encomium. The subjects of invective are the same as encomium, i.e. persons and things, times and places, irrational creatures and in addition plants. Invective may be collective or individual.

After the prologue you will adduce birth, which you will divide just as in encomium, and you will set out education, achievements, comparison and epilogue as in encomium.

### **Invective: Philip<sup>4</sup>**

It is not fitting to leave virtue without praise or vice without blame, since there is profit to be gained both from the praise of good men and the censure of bad. It is right that all men of evil disposition should be spoken of ill, but Philip more than them all, to the extent that he exceeds them all in wickedness.

He came of a nation which is the worst of the barbarians, one that out of cowardice sought to migrate from place to place. The Argives first ejected them; then in their wanderings they took refuge in the country they now possess. They made their dwelling-place from two misfortunes, yielding to the stronger and pushing out the weaker, through cowardice and greed unable to settle on a fixed home. Born of such a nation, he came from a city more worthless still. The Macedonians are the worst of the barbarians; Pelle is the most worthless place in Macedonia; even when they are slaves, no good comes of men from there. Born in such a land, he had ancestors even more vulgar than the land. For his ancestor was Philip, who was debarred from ruling the land because of his birth; his father was Amyntas, who relied on others' help for his kingdom—for the Athenians restored him when he was driven out.

Seen to be of such descent, he stayed in Thebes as a hostage. And though he passed time in the centre of Greece, he did not change his way of life because of that association, but he brought the incontinence of a barbarian to the customs of Greeks. Greeks and barbarians differ in every respect, but he was on both sides, working equal wickedness among dissimilar peoples.

---

<sup>4</sup> This invective against Philip of Macedon draws heavily, as one might expect, on Demosthenes.

First of all he enslaved his own kin, showing his treachery to those from whom he came forth. Then he attacked and destroyed his neighbours; he seized Paeonia, took Illyria, invaded and conquered the land of the Triballians, seizing whatever tribes had the misfortune to be close. Although he captured the bodies of the barbarians he did not win over their minds with their bodies; those who were slaves by force of arms dreamed of revolt, and what was enslaved in fact was free in thought. When he had subdued to himself the neighbours of these barbarians, he proceeded on his course and came among the Greeks. First he overthrew the Greek cities towards Thrace, taking Amphipolis, subjugating Pydna and securing Potidea along with them; he did not treat Pherae separately from Pagasae, nor Magnesia separately from Pherae, but all the cities of Thessaly were conquered and bore slavery as if it were a token of their race.

It is appropriate to describe this man's death also. As he advanced he subjected most things to himself, breaking treaties to enslave those who had made peace with him. Enraged by his violations of treaties, the gods brought a fitting end upon him. They did not kill him in battle, nor did they make a hero witness to his death; they killed him in the midst of his pleasures, making a fine funeral for Philip's wickedness out of his pleasures, so that both living and dying he should have witnesses to his incontinence.

Will anyone set Echetus<sup>5</sup> alongside him? The one cut off a little of the extremities but left the rest of the body; the other destroyed bodies entire. And just as the destruction of all is harsher than that of part, to that degree is Philip more dreadful than Echetus.

Philip while he lived did not know where to stop; but anyone who speaks about him must come to an end.

## 10. Comparison

*Comparison* is a discourse that expresses contrast, attaching greater weight to the object compared through juxtaposition.

Those engaged in comparison should juxtapose noble objects with good, or worthless with worthless, or good with worthless, or small with greater. In general a comparison is a double encomium or a discourse consisting of encomium and invective. Every topic of comparison is forceful, but especially that which compares small objects with greater.

The same subjects are appropriate to comparison as to encomium and invective, i.e. persons and things, times and places, irrational creatures and in addition plants.

Those engaged in comparison should not compare whole with whole, since that is tedious and lacks competitive energy, but head with head; that does have competitive energy, [since division is a manner of encomium, not of comparison]. There is no comparison in it, since the whole preliminary exercise is a comparison.

---

<sup>5</sup> See *Odyssey* 18.85-7.

**Comparison: Achilles and Hector**

Seeking to compare virtue with virtue, I set Peleus' son alongside Hector. For the virtues deserve honour in themselves, but comparison makes them even more worthy of emulation.

They were not born of a single land, but each of one equally worthy of praise: the one of Phthia, from which Greece took its name, the other from Troy, whose founders were the first among gods. As being born of a similar land is not worse with regard to praise, so Hector is not excelled by Achilles.

Both born of a land worthy of praise, both were equal in kindred. Each descended from Zeus; for Achilles was the son of Peleus, Peleus of Aeacus, Aeacus of Zeus. Likewise Hector descended from Priam and Laomedon, Laomedon descended from Dardanus, and Dardanus was the son of Zeus. And with Zeus as their ancestor, they had forebears of equal standing. Achilles had Aeacus and Peleus, of whom the one freed the Greeks from drought, the other killed the Lapiths and was allotted marriage to a goddess as prize for virtue. Hector's ancestor Dardanus at first lived with the gods; and his father Priam ruled a city the walls of which had been built by gods. As intercourse with gods and living with one's greater are similar, so Hector is similar to Achilles.

Descended from such ancestors, both were raised to manliness. The one was brought up by Chiron; Priam was the other's tutor, by his character providing lessons in virtue. Their education in virtue, being equal for each, brings equal fame to each.

When they both reached adulthood, they displayed equal prowess in a single war. Hector led the Trojans, and while he lived he was the bulwark of Troy; he stood firm, with the gods as his allies; and his death brought ruin on Troy. Achilles was the leader of Greece under arms; he struck fear into the all the Trojans, and vanquished them; he had Athene as his ally; his death deprived the Achaeans of victory. The one in his defeat was slain by Athene's doing; the other fell, struck down by Apollo. Both descended from gods, both were killed by gods; they received birth and the end of life from the same source. As their life and death were similar, so Hector was similar to Achilles.

There are many other things that could be said on the virtue of each; but both won similar glory from their deeds.

**11. Characterisation**

*Characterisation* is the imitation of the character of a given person.

It has three species: the portrayal of image, person and character. In the portrayal of *character* the person is known, the character invented; hence it is called characterisation. E.g.: What Heracles would say when Eurystheus gives him orders. In this case Heracles is known, and we invent the speaker's character. In the portrayal of *image* the character is known, but dead and no longer able to speak, as with the fictions of Eupolis in the *Demes* and Aristides in *On the Four*; hence it is called portrayal of image. In portrayal of *person* everything is invented, both character and person, as Menander created Refutation—for refutation is a

thing, not a person; hence it is called personification, since the person is invented along with the character. This is the division.

Characterisations may be pathetic, ethical or mixed. The *pathetic* are those which indicate emotion at every point; e.g.: What Hecabe would say after the sack of Troy. The *ethical* are those which involve character only; e.g.: What someone from the mainland would say on first seeing the sea. The *mixed* are those which have both character and emotion; e.g.: What Achilles would say over Patroclus' body when resolving to fight; the deliberation is character, the friend's death emotion.

Characterisation is developed in a style that is clear, concise, colourful, unconstrained, not intricate or figurative. Instead of heads, you will divide into the three times—present, past and future.

### **Characterisation: What Niobe would say on the death of her children**

What a change of fortune is mine; I am childless, who before was held to be blest in my children. Abundance has turned into lack, and I am not the mother of a single child though before I was held mother of many. It would have been better never to have given birth than to have given birth for lamentation. Those who lose their children are more wretched than those who never had them; what has been experienced brings pain when lost.

Alas, I have suffered a fate like my father's. I am Tantalus' daughter. He lived with the gods but was banished from the gods' society; offspring of Tantalus, I give proof of my birth by my misfortunes. For I was Leto's companion, and that is the reason for my misery; I have gained from her company the loss of my children, and association with a goddess has ended for me in disaster. Before it was put to the test I was a mother more to be envied than Leto; but now that this is known, I am in want of offspring—which before the proof I had in abundance. And now both my sons and my daughters lie dead, and the prouder I was of them the more hopeless my grief.

Where shall I turn? To what shall I cling? What tomb will suffice in the face of the death of all my children? My honours fail in the face of my misfortunes. But why do I lament these things, when I can ask the gods for a change of nature? I see one release from wretchedness: to join the things that have no feeling. And yet I fear that even when I am seen in that form I shall still weep.

## **12. Description**

*Description* is an expository discourse which brings the object exhibited vividly into view.

One may describe persons and things, times and places, irrational creatures and in addition plants. Persons: e.g., Homer's 'He was round-shouldered, dark-skinned, with curly hair'; things: e.g., sea-battles and land-battles, like the historian; times: e.g., spring and summer, explaining what flowers grow during them; places: e.g., Thucydides spoke of the shape of the Thesprotian harbour Chimerium. In describing persons one should proceed from beginning to end, i.e. from head to feet; in describing things, from what precedes them, what is in them, and what

tends to result from them; in describing times and places, from what surrounds them and what is contained in them.

Descriptions may be simple or compound. *Simple*: e.g., those describing land-battles or sea-battles; *compound*: e.g., those combining things with times, such as Thucydides' description of the battle by night in Sicily; he described the course of the battle and the character of the night.

In description one should adopt a free, relaxed style and ornament it with different figures, and in general hit off the objects being described.

**Description: the temple in Alexandria, together with the acropolis**

Citadels are established for the common security of cities—for they are the highest points of cities. They are not walled round with buildings, so much as they wall round the cities. The centre of Athens held the Athenian acropolis; but the citadel which Alexander established for his own city is in fact what he named it, and it is more accurate to call this an acropolis than that on which the Athenians pride themselves. For it is somewhat as this discourse shall describe.

A hill juts out of the ground, rising to a great height, and called an acropolis on both accounts, both because it is raised up on high and because it is placed in the high-point of the city. There are two roads to it, of dissimilar nature. One is a road, the other a way of access. The roads have different names according to their nature. Here it is possible to approach on foot and the road is shared also with those who approach on a wagon; there flights of steps have been cut and there is no passage for wagons. For flight after flight leads higher and higher, not stopping until the hundredth step; for the limit of their number is one which produces a perfect measure.

After the steps is a gateway, shut in with grilled gates of moderate size. And four massive columns rise up, bringing four roads to one entrance. On the columns rises a building with many columns of moderate size in front, not of one colour, but they are fixed to the edifice as an ornament. The building's roof is domed, and round the dome is set a great image of the universe.

As one enters the acropolis itself a single space is marked out by four sides; the plan of the arrangement is that of a hollow rectangle. There is a court in the centre, surrounded by a colonnade. Other colonnades succeed the court, colonnades divided by equal columns, and their length could not be exceeded. Each colonnade ends in another at right angles, and a double column divides each colonnade, ending the one and starting the other. Chambers are built within the colonnades. Some are repositories for the books, open to those who are diligent in philosophy and stirring up the whole city to mastery of wisdom. Others are established in honour of the ancient gods. The colonnades are roofed, and the roof is made of gold, and the capitals of the columns are made of bronze overlaid with gold. The decoration of the court is not single. For different parts are differently decorated, and one has the exploits of Perseus. In the middle there rises a column of great height, making the place conspicuous (someone on his way does not know where he is going, unless he uses the pillar as a sign of the direction) and makes the acropolis stand out by land and sea. The beginnings of the universe

stand round the capital of the column. Before one comes to the middle of the court there is set an edifice with many entrances, which are named after the ancient gods; and two stone obelisks rise up, and a fountain better than that of the Peisistratids. And the marvel had an incredible number of builders. As one was not sufficient for the making, builders of the whole acropolis were appointed to the number of twelve.

As one comes down from the acropolis, here is a flat place resembling a race-course, which is what the place is called; and here there is another of similar shape, but not equal in size.

The beauty is unspeakable. If anything has been omitted, it has been bracketed by amazement; what it was not possible to describe has been omitted.

### 13. Thesis

A *thesis* is a logical investigation into some matter under consideration.

Theses may be political or theoretical. The *political* are those concerned with the fabric of society, e.g. Should one marry? Should one go to sea? Should one build fortifications? All these things constitute the fabric of society. The *theoretical* are those which are given only intellectual consideration; e.g., Is the sky spheroid? Are there many universes? These things are not matters of human experience, but are considered only in the intellect.

The difference between thesis and hypothesis is that hypothesis has circumstance, while thesis is incircumstantial; circumstance means person, action, cause etc. E.g., ‘Should one fortify?’ is a thesis, i.e. an impersonal investigation; ‘During the Persian invasion the Spartans deliberate whether to fortify Sparta’ is a hypothesis. It has person (i.e. the Spartans discussing), action (the fortification of Sparta) and cause (the Persian invasion).

Thesis is the first of the preliminary exercises to admit counterposition and solution point by point.

Thesis is divided first into the so-called introduction, which you use instead of a prologue; then into the heads of purpose: legality, justice, expediency, possibility.

#### **Thesis: should one marry?**

Whoever wishes to praise the universe briefly should praise marriage. It came from heaven—or rather it filled heaven with the gods and established their father, from whom the very title of father is derived. And having produced the gods he allowed nature to preserve them. Then he came to earth and gave the power of reproduction to all other things; he changed what does not know permanence and contrived permanence for them through their descendants. And first of all he stirs up men to bravery; for since marriage is able to produce wives and children, in whose defence wars are fought, he confers vigour by his gifts. Secondly, he makes men just as well as brave; for since he is the provider of children, out of concern for whom men act justly, marriage renders men just as well as brave. Wise, too, since he inspires men to take thought for their nearest and dearest. And—a paradox—marriage is able to confer self-control, and in his lavish provision of

pleasure is intermixed self-control; for since it imposes law on pleasure, self-control provides pleasures lawfully, and what is condemned in itself is admired when combined with marriage. So if marriage produces gods, and after them each successive generation, and renders men at once brave and just, and makes men wise and moderate, is not marriage to be held in the utmost possible honour?

‘Yes,’ someone says, ‘but marriage is the cause of misfortunes.’

I think you are bringing a charge against fortune, not marriage. What men suffer in adversity is the product of fortune, not marriage; what marriage lavishes upon mankind is not gained by chance. So marriage should be admired for the blessings it contains, not criticised for the evils which fortune dispenses. And yet even if we ascribe to marriage the worst features of human life, is that any more reason to abstain from marriage? The disagreeable aspects of any activity do not make one abandon it. Consider one by one the trades in which the thing you are criticising is present. Thunderbolts cause trouble for farmers and hail-storms ruin them; but farmers do not abandon their land because a thunderbolt destroys it; they go on with their farming, even if something comes from heaven that causes damage. Men suffer ill-fortune at sea and storms wreck their ships; but they do not give up seafaring because they have suffered in their turn, but ascribe their difficulties to fortune and await the income that comes from the sea. Battles and wars bring physical destruction on those who fight them; but death in battle does not make them avoid battles, but because they are admired for fighting they are content to die and efface the misfortune by its attendant good. For one should not shun what is good because of what is bad; one should endure the worst because of what is fine. So it is absurd if farmers, sailors and soldiers too bear the hardships of their calling for the sake of the praiseworthy things associated with them, while we dishonour marriage because it brings a certain distress.

‘Yes,’ he says, ‘but it brings widowhood on women, orphanhood on children.’

These evils result from death, which is an affliction of our nature. You seem to be criticising marriage because it does not turn men into gods, and to condemn marriage because it does not reckon mortals with gods. Tell me, why do you blame marriage for what death brings about? Why do you attribute to weddings what is in nature’s power? Concede the death of one born to die. But if men die because they are born, and in dying leave their mate a widow and make an orphan of their offspring, why do you say that marriage has done what is the result of nature alone? I, on the contrary, believe that marriage corrects orphanhood and widowhood. Someone’s father has died, and the child is an orphan; but marriage brings a second father for the orphans, and the affliction, which is not the outcome of marriage, is effaced by marriage; marriage is the abolition of orphanhood, not its occasion. Then again, nature produces widowhood from death, but marriage changes it by a wedding. The woman whom death made a widow, marriage grants to live with a husband, as if standing guard over its own favour; for what it conferred in the beginning it restores when taken away. So marriage is able to remove widowhood, not to inflict it. Furthermore, a father is deprived of children by death, but through marriage he has a share in others, and he becomes a father a second time although he was not allowed to be so the first. What then? You are

turning the blessings of marriage into criticism, and I think you are trying to praise marriage, not to disgrace it; since you force us to enumerate the favours which marriage gives you have become a supporter, not a critic, of marriage. Moreover, your attack on marriage compels us to admire it and you make a catalogue of benefactions out of the charges you bring against marriage.

‘Yes,’ he says, ‘but marriage is tiresome.’

What is it but marriage that can put an end to toil? All toil is taken away by marriage, and for everyone coming together with one’s wife for intercourse is restful. What it is for a man to come together with his wife in bed! With what delight a child is looked forward to; and, when expected, appears; and, when he appears, says ‘father’; and starts to learn his trade, and works alongside his father, and speaks in the assembly, and cares for his father in old age, and in general does all that he ought!

It is not possible to go through all the things which marriage can bring. Marriage is a great thing, bringing forth gods and making mortals, for whom it contrives permanence, seem to be gods. It teaches those who experience it justice, it incites one to consider self-control, it is the provider of pleasures that are abused in their absence.

Therefore it is universally acknowledged that marriage is to be held in the greatest esteem.

#### **14. Proposal of Law**

Some concede that the *proposal of a law* is also an exercise. It is nearly a complete hypothesis, but does not have all the characteristics of a hypothesis. A person is introduced in it, but not known in every respect; hence it is more than a thesis and less than a hypothesis. Because it admits person schematically, it goes beyond the thesis; because it does not keep the circumstances clear it falls short of a hypothesis.

Proposal of law is a double exercise, advocacy of and opposition to legislation. A law is ‘an invention and gift of the gods, a common convention of the city, a correction of errors towards both’.

This is the division of proposal of law. You will develop it under the same heads as the practical issue: legality, justice, expediency, possibility. You will use prologues, and after the prologues what is called the converse; then you will use the heads already mentioned. Hence it differs in this respect too from thesis.

#### **Opposition to a law: that an adulterer should be killed if apprehended in the act**

I do not completely approve of the law, nor do I wholly condemn the motion. I approve of the legislation for putting adulterers to death; but because it does not await the jurymen’s vote, I disapprove of the proposal. If the proposer does away with the courts because he accuses jurymen of corruption he clearly has a poor opinion of jurymen; but if he thinks they judge justly—as indeed you do—then is it right to praise jurymen while taking the law out of their hands? All others who

take up arms against the existing laws are either opposed to certain cities or in agreement with others; this man alone has come forward in opposition to all laws. I believe you that you will have a better scrutiny of the law if you pass judgement as you do on other aspects of your civil life. Generals, priestly offices, decrees—I might almost say that everything that is done best in peace or in war is subjected to judicial scrutiny. He is the general, whom the man who passes judgement has scrutinised; he is priest, whom the juryman has confirmed in office; that decree is valid which has been examined by others; and victories in war do not win honours unless they are first subjected to judgement. Then is it not absurd that everything should be subject to scrutiny, and only the present law should circumvent the jury's vote?

'Yes,' he says, 'but adultery is a serious crime.'

What? Is not murder more serious? Do we consider treason less important than other crimes? Or sacrilege more trivial than treason? Even so, a man caught in any of these crimes awaits the jury; the traitor does not suffer punishment unless the juryman casts his vote; the murderer does not die unless the prosecutor proves his case; nor do those who have stolen the property of higher powers suffer until those who pass judgement have had an opportunity to learn of these things. Is it not strange that greater crimes are brought to judgement before juries and are not held to be crimes unless the juryman casts his vote, and only the adulterer is to be killed without trial—who should have been brought to trial more than the others, since he is inferior to them?

'What difference is there between killing an adulterer and handing him over to a jury, if he will undergo death equally at the hands of both?'

The same distance as between tyranny and law; the same difference as between democracy and despotism. A tyrant may kill whoever he likes; law kills the man who has been justly convicted. The people put forward for investigation whatever it considers in the assembly; despotism punishes without investigation, but the people and the law do both together, being the opposite in every way of the man who has chosen to be an autocrat and a tyrant. Of course there is a difference between killing an adulterer and handing him over to a jury! Moreover, the person who kills an adulterer on his own behalf makes himself the master of the perpetrator, but the man who hands him over to a jury makes the court master of the perpetrator; surely it is better for the juryman to be master than the prosecutor. Furthermore, the man who kills an adulterer on his own behalf is suspected of killing him for some other reason, but the person who brings him forward for judgement is thought to be motivated by justice alone.

'Yes, he says, 'but he will suffer a harsher penalty if he dies at once; the time until judgement is his gain.'

Quite the reverse, if he is brought to trial. He will suffer a more painful existence up to that point. The expectation of suffering is worse than suffering itself, and the delay of the punishment will seem to add to the penalty. The man who expects to die will die often, and will find the anticipation worse than the experience. If he dies on the instant, the adulterer feels nothing; the speed of the punishment precludes feeling. Death is painless if it comes unexpectedly; but if it is often

anticipated, though it comes but once the penalty is measured by the anticipation. Consider, setting the points side by side. The man who kills an adulterer on his own behalf has no witness to the punishment; the man who hands him over to a jury makes many spectators of justice. It is a more painful kind of punishment that is inflicted with many onlookers. And there are other advantages which accrue to adulterers who die in secret. They will leave many who suspect that they were killed out of enmity, but if the deed is proven in open court his death will be justice beyond dispute. So it is to the adulterer's advantage to die unseen, rather than be handed over to a jury.

An adulterer is a terrible thing, and surpasses every extreme of criminality. So he should be convicted first, then die; he should be judged, rather than paying the penalty before judgement. If he dies as an adulterer he will make the parentage of children clearer; no one will question whose father a child is if adulterers do not exist in future. The crime is against common nature; so let a common vote remove it. I fear that if an adulterer perishes without the reason being known he will leave many of the same kind behind him; because they do not know the reason for his death the others will emulate him, and the punishment will be not the end but the beginning of the crime.