Erasmus vs. Lamy

Erasmus’ method of developing a case is better than Lamy’s because he focuses on fully building up the art of persuasive communication, doesn’t manipulate the minds of the audience, and aims to make an argument based not only on logical coherence, but also enriching and amplifying subject matter. Erasmus rhetorical philosophy is teaching, moving, delighting; wisdom speaking copiously. He believes rhetoric should be taught to students in a way that makes them talk with structure and purpose. In doing so, it requires an eloquent style of speech aimed to capture the audience attention, through a performance that works up. I’m going to systematically state why I feel Erasmus’ method of developing a case is superior to Lamy’s, regarding their unique rhetorical discourse.

First, I’ll begin by discussing the method of developing a persuasive argument. In the 2004 Keynote Address, president Obama tries to persuade the Americans to have hope that the American dream will lead us to knock on the doors of opportunity. In order to achieve the American dream, you must be willing to work long and hard. Erasmus beliefs are similar to the American dream, in which you have to work up something so much that it seems as if you can’t say anything else on the matter. Erasmus aims to create a written or spoken artful masterpiece, in which you’ll need to have the knowledge of an “extensive array of words and figures from which can immediately select what is most suitable for conciseness” (Erasmus, 15). Having a variety of words can provide the performer with many options that can eloquently capture the audience. Erasmus believes “avoiding tautology, that is, repetition of the same word or expression” (Erasmus, 16), helps to prevent boredom in the audience. Erasmus believes the speaker must be full of expression and thought, that’s concise and directly relevant to the audience.
Lamy believes that words are necessary to express the other operations of the mind, in which “nature has disposed man to make use of the organs of voice to give sensible signs of what he wills and conceives” (Lamy, 180). Lamy bases the development of his case with the idea that the minds of the audience are affected by a sensory experience. Lamy believes that “sound can excite passions, and we may say, that every passion answers to some sound or another” (Lamy, 292). He wants to affect the organs of sense in the audience, by using words that leave their impression in the brain. “Discourse is the image of the mind” (Lamy, 305), and if you want to eloquently craft an image that sticks in the mind of the audience, one must have a good imagination. “Tis easy to speak of things that we see, their presence guides and regulates our discourse; but imagination supplies us with things” (Lamy, 305). The American dream is a novel thought, in which one need’s to imagine the reality of this dream. Knowledge can shape a good imagination, which can help paint, a picture of discourse of the American dream.

Next, I’ll discuss how to distinguish manipulation from something that is judgment. Erasmus aims to treat the subject as fully as possible, in which fullness doesn’t mean manipulation. Obama’s persuasion of the American Dream is too brief to be considered manipulation. Erasmus believes the “truth lies concealed in hidden places, and in judging things one ought not to follow popular report by which always the worse things are accustomed to be considered the best” (Erasmus, 101). Erasmus believes you are judge by what you say, and these judgments will affect the way a proposition can be persuaded. Erasmus wants to persuade the audience by using the most powerful proof for achieving copia, through the use of exempla. Exempla are employed “in comparing the greater to the lesser, the lesser to the greater, or equals to equals” (Erasmus, 67). Thus, one should obtain the greatest and most varied number of copious exempla that adduce the audience judgment that will make it easy to persuade.
On the other hand, Lamy believes in winning friends and influencing people are achieved by manipulation and the exactness of judgment. “A good judgment chooses and picks, it stops not at everything presented by the imagination, but discerns and discriminates betwixt what is fit to be said, and what is fit to be pass’d” (Lamy, 309). This relies not upon the first ideas, but manipulates the audience judgment about whether things are as great as they appear. Lamy prefers to use pathos to evoke emotions upon the audience. “The common way of affecting the heart of man, is to give him a lively sense of impression of the object of that passion wherewith we desire should be mov’d” (Lamy, 364). Whether it is exciting love or fear, Lamy suggests you must present that audience with an object of amicable qualities. You must excite the sensory of emotions to eloquently give an “ample and sensible delineation that may strike it home, and leave an impression” (Lamy, 364). I dislike Lamy’s style of pathos; because it convinces the audience of its good qualities, and make sense of them by manipulating their emotions, this, will in turn, bend the audience to the will of the speaker.

Finally, I’m going to discuss why Erasmus has a better form of argument. Erasmus aims to logically connect his argument by enriching and amplifying it. Erasmus uses analogies, parables, judgment and so on, as a way to produce belief by “embellishing and illustrating, for enriching and amplifying subject matter” (Erasmus, 67). You enrich a subject by “changing of words, by expressing the same thing many times in different words and figures” (Erasmus, 83). In order to stay logically coherent, one must embellish their thought. Obama embellishes the American dream with notion it will lead us to knock on the doors of opportunity. Amplification is achieved by “rendering something more effectively we put in place of an appropriate word a stronger one” (Erasmus, 35). Erasmus would amplify what Obama said by switching the word knock for batter, to amplify the action that is to be persuaded.
Lamy views arguing based off the perception of truth. "We may question it with out mouth, but our heart must be thoroughly convinced" (Lamy, 244). Lamy amplifies an argument through the use of repetitions and synonyms, which "do illustrate a truth" (Lamy, 244). Lamy aims towards an argument based on logic; "for which reason, comparisons, and similitudes, drawn ordinarily from sensible things, gives us more easie penetration into the most abstracted and abstruse truths" (Lamy 245). Lamy wants to bend the audience to the will of the speaker, by using repetition that amplifies the belief of truth with a capital T.

In comparison, Erasmus configures a better case of persuasion, because he teaches that one must gradually build up the climax, which captures the audience attention by anticipation. While Lamy tries to develop a case based on affecting the audience sensory experience. Erasmus views rhetoric as artful presentation of eloquent copia, that aims to move the minds of the audience, while Lamy is more worried about leaving an impression in the minds of the audience. Just like Obama, Erasmus tries to persuade the audience, and in order to do so; you must work them up to the idea. On the contrary, Lamy is more concerned with science of psychology and how it affects the audience. "We cannot comprehend any argument or science, unless our meditation supply us with things necessary" (Lamy, 182). One could argue that Lamy is more worried about creating a vivid image of discourse that he tries to forcefully leave an impression on the audience, and by doing so, fails to persuasively move the minds of the audience like Erasmus does.