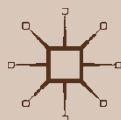Michael Wainwright

# THE RATIONAL SHAKESPEARE

## Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere, and the Question of Authorship

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# PREFACE

This book summarizes a project that emerged from an interest in the French philosopher Peter Ramus. Born in 1515, raised with a limited education, but determined on an academic life, Pierre de la Ramée settled in Paris in 1527. Poor but diligent, Ramée enrolled at the College of Navarre, where he assumed the name Petrus (Anglicized as Peter) Ramus. His search for a natural method of rational inquiry posited a readiness to court controversy in the pursuit of methodological truth. The manner of Ramus's return to first principles—he titled his master's thesis *Quaecumque ab Aristotele dicta sunt, commentitia sunt* (*All of Aristotle's Doctrines Are False*)—confirmed his refusal to compromise. Ramus's humanism was nothing less than radical.

"If the term 'humanism' in current discourse tends to connote an abstract resistance to the materiality of language," explains David Norbrook, "then Renaissance humanism was a very different phenomenon" (249). Renaissance (or second or late) humanism was a reaction against its scholastic counterpart. As the dominant epistemological movement of the period, Renaissance scholasticism ostensibly forwarded the cause of rationalism in deferring to classical authority, but implicitly diverged from that objective in retaining much of the religious dogma of its medieval foundation. This divergence had already precipitated one irreparable schism. "An open conflict between rationalism and irrationalism broke out for the first time in the Middle Ages," as Karl Popper chronicles, "as the opposition between scholasticism and mysticism" (434). Renaissance humanism, which emerged from this divided background, also forwarded the cause of

rationalism supposedly championed by late scholasticism, but did so unashamedly.

Ramus's principled attitude, his humanist vision, or Ramism, was at once a philosophy, a method of reasoning, and an approach to teaching. In returning to first principles, Ramus dismissed the preeminence of Aristotle, and this rejection had religious as well as philosophical implications. Of the three elements of Aristotelian dialectic—doctrine, nature, and exercise—Ramus dispensed with the first. Instead of doctrine, as advocated by the university, he prized the practical use (or exercise) of trained reason. Ramus's approach, as a condemnation of Aristotle, also censured the Catholic Church. The Parisian authorities formally addressed these contentions in 1544. The resulting edict at once suppressed Ramus's publications and restricted his duties as a university lecturer. Support and admiration for Ramus were never entirely lacking, however, and the authoritarian decree served to bolster his reputation. By 1547, the authorities felt duty bound to lift the edict, with Ramus emerging from these machinations as the most controversial philosopher and pedagogue of the age. He overshadowed the intellectual landscape of Europe.

Opposition from members of the University of Paris, as a center of late scholasticism, was to be expected. Yet, many academics from the University of Strasbourg and Heidelberg University, which were the bastions of late humanism, also balked at Ramus's uncompromising attitude. Nonetheless, some academics in Germany openly conferred with Ramus, as did their congeners in Switzerland. Ramus's reception in Italy also exhibited extremes. While Giordano Bruno labeled him an "archpedant," Leonardo Fioravanti and Simone Simoni defended Ramus, finding themselves ostracized as a result. During his time in Poland, Ramus received the offer of a well-endowed chair, a mark of academic respect that recurred in Hungary and Transylvania.

Ramus never visited Britain, but his impact there was profound, spawning successive generations of followers. The foremost of these Ramists came from Cambridge University. Thomas Smith (1513–77), an Essex farmer's son, headed the first generation. Ramus, as a commoner himself, dismissed the educational barrier of class; Ramism was a practical philosophy, and Smith accepted this basic practicality. At the university, Smith assembled a band of like-minded academics, which included John Cheke, Roger Ascham, and William Cecil (1520–98). These gifted and ambitious men followed Ramus's lead. They challenged the staid ideas of their elders in an attempt to extend the boundaries of knowledge. Ramism suited their

Protestant outlook, but following the execution of Cambridge University Chancellor Thomas Cromwell (d. 1540), Smith's coterie disbanded. Stephen Gardiner, the new chancellor, was hostile to the republican sentiments of second humanism.

Smith accepted a role in supervising religious reformation under King Edward VI. An important aspect of that reform was the Ramist promotion of a meritocratic state, a quasi-republic that would close (or even abolish) the tiers of social class. Having withdrawn from public life during the reign of Mary Tudor, Smith reentered government service under Queen Elizabeth, who sent him as ambassador to France. His first tour of duty lasted from September 1562 to May 1566. During this time, Smith counted Ramus among his *convictores* and their friendship influenced Smith's commonwealth vision, as published posthumously in *De republica Anglorum* (1581). Elizabeth valued Smith for his nerve on matters of foreign policy, but she found him personally irksome and his ideas on sovereignty too radical. William Cecil, Smith's junior and erstwhile pupil, became her trusted advisor. Ramism helped Cecil to order and manage the political and religious landscapes of Elizabeth's reign. He adopted but softened Smith's commonwealth vision, promoting a meritocracy that did not close (let alone abolish) the social hierarchy.

The long and unbroken friendship between Smith and Cecil owed much not only to their common grounding in Ramism but also to their shared charge, Edward de Vere (1550–1604). The Sixteenth Earl of Oxford, John de Vere, removed his son Edward from the family home to Thomas Smith's household during Edward's early childhood. The unexpected death of John de Vere on 3 August 1562 left Edward under the authority of the Master of the Court of Wards and Liveries. The queen had appointed Cecil to this position the previous year. Under Cecil's auspices, tutors followed the latest trends in humanism, and preeminent among these trends was Ramism. Of outstanding intellect, and making undoubted use of Cecil's magnificent libraries, Edward de Vere soon outstripped his teachers. He came to understand the weaknesses as well as the strengths of Ramism in practice as well as in theory.

This rounded appreciation separates Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, from William Shakspere (1564–1616) of Stratford. Shakspere boasted neither the educational nor the courtly provenance for such an understanding. In 1572, Shakspere's father appeared in court on charges of illegal wool purchases; within four years, he was broke; there would been neither money nor time for his children's schooling. William Shakspere

received a poor education. Nor did he have unlimited access to great libraries. These details, which confirm the gulf between the Ramist credentials of Oxford and Stratford, are crucial to the authorship debate that surrounds the name of William Shakespeare. For, "however deeply the poetic impulse stirs the mind to which it is granted," as Giovanni Boccaccio asserts, "it very rarely accomplishes anything commendable if the instruments by which its concepts are to be wrought out are wanting" (40).

The present volume hereby supports the Oxfordian side of the authorship debate: Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, rather than William Shakspere of Stratford, was the man behind the Shakespeare nom de plume. Indeed, the rationality that marshaled Oxford's critical response to Ramism superintended not only his instrumental aim but also his ultimate goal. During his middle years, those that covered his majority (1571) to his second marriage (1591), Oxford was rarely self-denying. The conventional interpretation of this attitude damns him for squandering the inheritance of the oldest patrilineal dynasty in England. Such readings misconstrue Oxford's instrumentality. Although born of noble ancestry, Oxford did not make that heritage his raison d'être. Oxford's creative need was his ultimate priority. That need found satisfaction with a state annuity of £1,000, which Queen Elizabeth granted him in perpetuity in 1586.

When recast in ultimate and instrumental terms, therefore, Oxford's largesse looks rather different: that supposed waste becomes a necessary investment. Oxford invested his inheritance in books, theatrical troupes, literary patronage, foreign travel, and other grist to his aesthetic mill. Put succinctly, his spending aimed toward his ultimate goal, and that goal was writing. Oxford's state annuity sealed his compact with the Policy of Plays. That policy, as a promotion of the Protestant state under Queen Elizabeth, was (in part) a delayed reaction to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. That massacre, which immediately accounted for 10,000 Huguenots in Paris, and which finally accounted for over 100,000 Huguenots in France, had provoked anger, sorrow, and fear across England. One of the most prominent victims of the massacre had been Peter Ramus. Three of Elizabeth's most outraged courtiers had been Thomas Smith, William Cecil (now Lord Burghley), and Edward de Vere.

As a pupil of two renowned Ramists, a member of Elizabeth's court, and an annuitant associated with the Policy of Plays, Oxford would turn his critical appreciation of Ramism to excellent effect. Ramus accepted the inherence of natural reason: the dialectically capable mind understood its intersubjective environment as one composed of other dialectically capable

minds. Yet, Ramus eventually transformed the dialogue of negotiation into a one-way process of persuasion. When confronted with trenchant or well-founded opposition, he attempted to force an opponent into submission. If this approach failed, then an intersubjective impasse ensued. Coercion and deadlock were not the natural outlets for dialectic. When fully realized, Ramus's pedagogy encouraged this unfortunate transformation, creating singular minds incapable of discussion. The resultant barrenness matched that of second scholasticism. Ramus hereby failed Ramism. Oxford, who learned to treat intersubjectivity as a series of dramaturgical events, witnessed and experienced this practice firsthand, as a ward, as a courtier, and as Burghley's son-in-law. He also witnessed and experienced Burghley's efforts toward implementing Smith's commonwealth vision. Those efforts resonated to Ramus's demands for the recognition of personal merit.

The mature Oxford appreciated Ramus's committed but ultimately self-defeating Ramism, his dilemmas of intersubjectivity, his attempt to force opponents into submission, and his vision of a commonwealth built on assurance. Oxford intuitively valued these issues as matters of coordination. In these strategic situations, people must make choices in the knowledge that other people face the same options, that a coordination condition equivalent to silence pertains between the participants, and that the outcome for each person will result from everybody's decisions. Such a situation is particularly problematic when a logical approach to its solution establishes a circle of conjecture that demands an arbitrary choice from the solutions on offer.

While the works attributed to William Shakespeare reveal Oxford's intuitive appreciation of coordination problems, the theory of games of strategy (or game theory) formally models such situations. John von Neumann founded this mathematical discipline in 1928, but prescient authors have always appreciated coordinative dilemmas, however implicitly, and Shakespeare's insights remain among the most important. The present volume supports this claim by examining unrestrained Ramism in *Love's Labour's Lost*, pedantic reasoning in *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, and the most common coordination problems, the subset known as social dilemmas, with reference to *King John*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *King Henry V*. These primary texts ensure that this study covers the standard taxonomy of Shakespeare's dramas—comedy, tragedy, history, and problem play—in drawing on the basics of game theory, a theory mooted but ultimately denied by Ramus. Rather than review the multiple strands

of research that comprise the Oxfordian argument to date, the ongoing argument draws on the relevant material from this excellent back catalogue, with the social dilemmas of Oxford's life and times aligning him with the works of both Ramus and Shakespeare.

In total, then, the following book comprises two main sections. Section 1, "Ramus, Smith, Cecil, and Oxford," comprises five chapters. They present Peter Ramus's life and works in both historical and philosophical contexts, slowly introducing a detailed analysis of Ramism, on the one hand, and the exposure of Smith, Cecil, and Oxford to Ramism, on the other. Section 2, "The Rational Shakespeare," comprises an introduction, eight subsequent chapters, and a conclusion: the introduction summarizes the concepts and terms of game theory necessary to the dramaturgical analyses that follow; the book then closes with a concise summary of its findings.

Egham, UK                                                    Michael Wainwright
2018

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# Ramus, Smith, Cecil, and Oxford

# Peter Ramus and the Basis of Logic

> *If I had to pass judgment upon my own works, I should desire*
> *that the monument raised to my memory should commemorate*
> *the reform of logic.*
> —Peter Ramus, Preface, *Dialecticae libri duo* (qtd. in Frank
> Pierrepont Graves 104)

Three contemporary biographers chronicled the life and works of Peter
Ramus: Nicolas de Nancel (or Nicolaus Nancelius) (1539–1610),
Théophile de Banos (or Banosius) (c. 1540–95), and Johann Thomas
Freige (or Joannus Freigius) (1543–83). Nancel, as Walter J. Ong explains
in *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (1971), was "first Ramus' pupil and
then for some twenty years his secretary, amanuensis, literary collaborator,
and general understudy" (145); as a result, he earned the soubriquet
"Little Ramus" (144); Nancel published *Petri Rami veromandui, eloquen-
tiae et philosophiae apud Parisios profesaoris regii vita* in 1599. Banos "was
matriculated at the University at Basel," and as "an exiled French
Protestant" (146) accompanied the similarly banished Ramus on his
European travels of 1568–70; Banos published *Rami vita* (in *Commentaria
de religione Christiana*) in 1576. Freige, who visited Ramus in Basel dur-
ing Ramus's exile, became thereafter "an ardent promoter of Ramus'
ideas" (150); Freige published *Petri Rami vita* in 1575. Of this trio of
biographies, or *Three Lives*, Nancel's study emerges as the most important.
Despite the implications of his soubriquet, Nancel was a scrupulous

historian, while Banos and Freige, with their tendency toward hagiography, erred in their commitment to impartiality.

All significant biographies of more recent date—Charles Waddington's *Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée)* (1855), Frank Pierrepont Graves's *Peter Ramus and the Educational Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (1912), Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958), and Marie-Dominique Couzinet's *Pierre Ramus et la critique du pédantisme* (2015)—draw extensively on *Three Lives*. Recognizing Nancel's disinterest helps Graves, Ong, and Couzinet to secure Ramus's place within late humanism, so recommending them to the present study as the major sources of a carefully nuanced biography. This contextualization throws Ramus and his works into a sociohistorical relief that at once rationalizes and unifies that newly faceted material.

Born in Picardy in 1515, raised with a limited education, but determined on an academic life, Pierre de la Ramée settled in the University Quarter (or Quartier Latin) of Paris in 1527. Here, recounts Graves, Ramée "obtained employment as a servant to a rich student at the College of Navarre, and thus secured the […] opportunities he craved" (20). The twelve-year-old Ramée "undertook to attend his master by day and pursue his own studies at night." Ingenuity complemented determination. "By attaching a stone to a lighted cord, he provided an automatic alarm for awakening after a few hours of sleep" (20). Poor but diligent, Ramée eventually enrolled full time at the university: attending the College of Navarre, for which he assumed the Latinized name Petrus (Anglicized as Peter) Ramus, before transferring to the College Royal.

The university colleges, as Aleksander Gieysztor chronicles, "began as *hospitia*, boarding-houses for groups of students or fellows called *socii*. A few, including the first college, the Collège des Dix-huit, founded for eighteen needy students in 1180, and the College of St Thomas du Louvre founded in 1186, received endowments; there were even monastic colleges for students of theology. About 1257 Robert of Sorbon founded the college known as La Sorbonne, so that there should be a sufficient number of non-monastic students of theology" (116). The colleges attended by Ramus were relatively progressive. Joan I of Navarre, wife of King Philip IV of France, founded the College of Navarre in 1304. N. M. Troche describes how this college provided "the broadest education of all the institutions of the University of Paris. From the start, it was provided with chairs in theology, philosophy, and the humanities" (193). King Francis I of France (r. 1515–47), urged by Guillaume Budé (or Budaeus) (1468–1540) to

soften the dogmatic attitude of the university, founded the College Royal in 1530. The king's agnomen of the Father and Restorer of Letters rang true.

Budé's complaint maintained the pressure on late scholasticism initially applied by humanists such as Lorenzo Valla (c. 1407–57) and Rudolph (or Rodolphus) Agricola (c. 1444–85). They had blamed the intellectual estrangement between logic and human reasoning for the scholastic caution toward rationalism. By the middle of the fifteenth century, logic "had become a discipline studied for its own sake," as Robert Goulding relates in "Method and Mathematics" (2006), "using its own incomprehensible jargon, and was of no practical interest" (64). As a broad response, aver Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt, "Valla wanted his propositions pruned of solecism and needless abstraction" (224). Although Valla revealed the full extent of his project in *Repastinatio dialecticae et philosophiae* (1439), "it was largely through the agency of Agricola," as N. Scott Amos documents, "that Valla's thinking about rhetoric and dialectic came to exercise a wider influence in the sixteenth century" (179).

Finished in 1480, but not published until 1515, Agricola's books on invention, *De inventione dialectica libri tres*, championed a comprehensive method. This approach focused on the selection and classification of material, while minimizing the application of syllogistic logic.[1] Agricola's three works testify to what Brendan Bradshaw classes as "northern humanism's epic phase" (95). This period lasted from the 1480s until the late 1530s. During this phase, the Protestant humanism of Jean Sturm (or Johannes Sturmius) (1507–89) became another medium for Valla's influence. "The Brethren of the Common Life at Liège," as James Veazie Skalnik documents, had inculcated Sturm with a preference for "practical instruction at the expense of scholastic exercise" (31, n. 72). Sturm advocated this prioritization, which set the humanist-scholastic debate within the context of religious reformation, when he arrived in Paris (in 1529) to teach at the College Royal.

Notwithstanding these intellectual pressures, especially Sturm's influence, second scholasticism remained preeminent at the University of Paris. In consequence, as Goulding stresses, classes in logic did little more than "teach the kind of practical reasoning useful for composing a speech or letter" (64). Ramus's "own education at the College of Navarre," adds Graves, "was of the traditional sort, with its word for word interpretation of Priscian, Donatus, and Alexander of Villedieu in grammar, and its abstractions, trivialities, and hair-splitting disputations, depending absolutely upon the

authority of the medieval Aristotle" (16). This education incited rather than quelled Ramus's noncompliance—a personal quality that received further stimulation under Sturm at the College Royal.

Ramus accepted Aristotle's double definition of the word "art." *Techne* meant both the technique that fashions artistic creations and the reasoning that understands the precepts of that technique. Ramus also approved of the observations and classifications in Aristotle's *Historia animalium*. Even so, Ramus's rational response to the academic approach of the university, as his master's thesis of 1536 testified, was to invalidate the uncritical appeal to authority that characterized the late-scholastic attitude toward Aristotle. The title of Ramus's submission, reports Matthew Guillen, "was '*Quaecumque ab Aristotele dicta sunt, commentitia sunt*' ('All of Aristotle's doctrines are false'), or *Quaecumque ab Aristotele dicta essent, commentitia esse* ('Whatever is affirmed from Aristotle is contrived')" (44).

Ramus's thesis branded its author a "controversialist" (James J. Murphy 17). The university examiners were reluctant to pass this candidate. Ramus identified himself with Socrates. "He saw Socrates confronting what he took to be a situation similar to his own," writes Craig Walton in "Ramus and Socrates" (1970), "viz. a predominance of special pleading, argument from authority and insensitivity to the problems of self-examination" (120–21). Nevertheless, his examiners could not invalidate Ramus's logic and were obliged, however reluctantly, to award his degree with honors. The jubilant postgraduate celebrated his success with Aristotle's words: "[T]he truth is more precious and dear to me than my father himself, and I shall hold myself guilty to let my regard for a single person stand in the way of all" (qtd. in Graves 27).

In 1537, Sturm left the university to teach in Strasbourg, where he established the Protestant Gymnasium. Ramus remained in Paris, teaching the liberal arts, first at the College of Mans, then at the College of Ave Maria. While at the former institute, Ramus befriended the young Charles of Lorraine (1524–74). While at the latter institute, Ramus befriended Omer Talon (or Audomarus Talaeus) (c. 1510–62). This professor of rhetoric would hereafter remain a trusted colleague and an enthusiastic supporter of Ramus's reforms.

The fundamentals that Ramus developed into an alternative to late scholasticism concern what analytical philosophers now call *protologic*. Protologic "is not a logical *system* as such," explains Robert Hanna, "but rather a single set of *schematic logical structures*, in the form of a coherent repertoire of metalogical principles and logical concepts" (43; emphasis

original). Hanna argues that the human mind is endowed "with an innate constructive modular capacity for cognizing logic," which makes its possessor "a competent cognizer of natural language, a real-world logical reasoner, a competent follower of logical rules, a knower of necessary logical truths by means of logical intuition, and a logical moralist" (xviii). This competent cognizer is both *procedurally* and *substantively* rational according to Derek Parfit's definition of these terms. Individuals who imagine the overall effects of their possible actions, assess the probabilities of alternative outcomes, and follow other concomitant rules are "*procedurally* rational" (1:62; emphasis original), whereas *what* they choose rather than *how* they choose concerns their substantive rationality.

"Something protological," avers Hanna, "is built innately into human rationality itself" (xviii). Ramus's principled attitude, or *Ramism*, accommodated this precondition.[2] "Philosophy was not the arcane pseudo-science of the theologians, but something else altogether," as George Huppert explains of Ramus's intellectual ethos, "a method of reasoning—the only method—which was so natural, so simple, that it had always been practiced, even in pre-historic times" (23).

In 1543, Ramus promoted his academic principles in what Graves calls "two epoch-making books on logic" (30): *Dialecticae partitiones* and *Aristotelicae animadversiones. Dialecticae partitiones* outlines a set of basic precepts, with one of Ramus's occasional acquiescence to Cicero's findings in *Paradoxa Stoicorum* amounting to a particularly good summary of Ramus's fundamental separation of (intellectual) humans from other (nonintellectual) animals. Cicero laments how his compatriots "hold fast to the conviction, which they champion with zealous devotion, that the chief good is pleasure." This behavior is bovine rather than hominine. "On you," counsels Cicero, "has been bestowed by God, or else by Nature, the universal mother as she may be called, *the gift of intellect*, the most excellent and the divinest thing that exists: will you make yourself so abject and so low an outcast as to deem that there is no difference between you and some four-footed animal?" (265; emphasis added).

The second edition of *Dialecticae partitiones*, which exhibits greater care in formal honing than the first, appeared in the same year as its forebear, but under the title *Dialecticae institutiones*. Of the three elements of Aristotelian dialectic—*doctrine*, *nature*, and *exercise*—Ramus dispenses with the first: doctrine, as sycophantically espoused at the University of Paris, bore little resemblance to natural dialectic. Ramus prized the practical use (or exercise) of reason as an inborn faculty. Moreover, Ramus wished

to present the proper, unified shape of dialectic, which he determined to set out in unbroken form. From this desire, observes Ong, "grows the most striking expression of his extensional or quantifying mental habits" (*Decay* 280), which Ramus calls "Solon's Law," and which he will later apply to other arts, including grammar and rhetoric. "While he makes no explicit mention of humanist doctrines in the *Dialecticae*, such as the intrinsic perfectibility of human nature, many of the examples that he employs," as John Charles Adams states in "Ramus, Illustrations, and the Puritan Movement" (1987), "follow this theme, and none of the others contradict it" (199).[3]

In the second of his distinct volumes from 1543, the far more contentious *Aristotelicae animadversiones*, Ramus posited four major challenges to second scholasticism. First, he questioned the Aristotelian belief that logic formed a subset of rhetoric, with the two disciplines inseparably entwined. Nor was rationality, as Aristotle held, subservient to rhetorical expression; indeed, Ramus committed himself to making dialectic the pre-eminent discipline.

Second, and to ensure this elevation, Ramus subjected Aristotelian logic to a severe examination. This analysis showed how Aristotle's elaborations had muddled Aristotle's account of logic; simplicity, according to Ramus, enhanced usefulness; the two separate logics favored by Aristotle—one for dialectical invention, the other for indisputable (or apodictic) judgment—required, therefore, a singular reinterpretation. Furthermore, as Murphy contends, Aristotelians had "distorted his books over many centuries" (15), with Ramus's examination in *Aristotelicae animadversiones* citing the "desperatione" (107) of Aristotle's acolytes, whose blind adherence undercut their intellectual confidence in a self-mystifying manner. The intervention of Boethius (or Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius) (c. 480–c. 525) was typically problematic: in attempting to clarify Aristotelian dialectic, while retaining two distinct logics, Boethius compounded Aristotle's confusions. Put succinctly, as summarized by Richard M. Waugaman in "Maniculed Psalms in the de Vere Bible" (2010), "Aristotle's authority [had] distorted centuries of scholarship by ignoring new evidence because of the misguided use of deductive reasoning based on his sometimes false premises" (116).

Ramus failed to see any merit in Aristotelian dialectic. He even accused Aristotle of childish ineptitude. Being less severe with Ramus than Ramus was with Aristotle, however, Graves adjoins a caveat: "[W]e must recall the dogmatism of the times, the stupidity and fanaticism of the defenders of Aristotle,

and the intolerable yoke with which they were endeavoring to burden all intelligence and love of truth, science, and progress" (144). To Ramus, Aristotle's notion of two separate logics forestalled the production of fruitful knowledge. "Taking account of what he considered to be man's inability to secure an apodictic middle term," as Walton notes in "Ramus and Bacon on Method" (1971), "Ramus intended to develop one dialectical logic to include both invention [*inventio*] and judgment [*disposito*]" (296).

Importantly, while the results of this intention lack enough detail to enable a point-for-point comparison with Aristotle's separate logics, Ramus continued to navigate dialectic with the basics of two-valued Aristotelian logic. Ramus's dialectic abides by categorical (or attributive) and hypothetical (or conditional) propositions, and understands any proposition as either true or false. A categorical proposition affirms or denies according to its predicate. A hypothetical proposition contains two subcategories: the conjunctive, with the form "if *A*, then *B*," and the disjunctive, with the form "either *A* or not *A*." In other words, two-valued Aristotelian logic, which is formal in the modern sense of the term, underpins Ramus's understanding of rationality. This understanding distances Ramus from both Agricola and Sturm. While Agricola championed a comprehensiveness of method, he acknowledged the uncertainty that pervades the subjects studied by that method. Similarly, Sturm "divided logic into apodictic, which arrived at necessary conclusions from necessary proofs, and dialectic, which argued *probabiliter*." In contrast, Ramus remained "hostile to the idea of logic as probabilism" (John Monfasani 200).

The third challenge to late-scholastic thinking forwarded by Ramus in *Aristotelicae animadversiones* criticized the outdated traditions of teaching. In taking Sturm's influence in a new direction, Ramus's dialectic reorganized pedagogy to ensure the teaching of that dialectic. Ramus hereby "assaulted both scholastic and humanist Aristotelianism," as Couzinet elucidates, "exposing himself to the reactions of all Aristotelians" (324). His uncompromising policy incited opposition to Ramism not only at the University of Paris, where an outcry was to be expected, but also at the University of Strasbourg and Heidelberg University, the main strongholds of late humanism. In Paris, Ramus's *Dialecticae* and *Aristotelicae animadversiones* provoked the university hardcore, who were "masters of arts" (Ong, *Decay* 23) with a strong theological bent. Joachim de Périon and António de Gouveia, two of these academics, and both devout Catholics, immediately published their respective defenses of Aristotle: *Pro Aristotele in Petrum Ramum orationes* (1543) and *Pro Aristotele responsio adversus*

*Petri Rami calumnias* (1543); each denied the existence of a single or pure dialectical logic; and each charged Ramus with attempting to sabotage the curriculum. The unease shared by humanists at Strasbourg and Heidelberg supported these sentiments. The resultant reactionism would help to fuel the *critique of pedantry*—what Couzinet defines as "the philosophical analysis of the pedantic degeneration of humanist education" (29)—that would soon characterize a major oppositional stream to Ramist thought.

Ramus's fourth significant challenge to second scholasticism dismissed Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The theological implications of this rejection were significant: the bible rather than exegesis offered intimate access to God. To discourse well required the biblical word. "Thou shalt get a singular dexterity and volubility of holy language, being able to utter thy minde in pure Scripture," as John Trapp (1601–69) would contend: "*Loquamur verba Scripturae*, saith that incomparable Peter Ramus, *utamur sermone Spiritus Sancti*" (264–65). More immediately, and despite the (admittedly reluctant) findings of his examination board eight years earlier, Ramus's most ardent adversaries at the University of Paris refused to relinquish their (uncritical) reliance on Aristotle. Instead, they simply condemned Ramus's publications. Eventually, Guillaume de Montuelle, principal of the College of Beauvais, presented *Dialecticae* and *Aristotelicae animadversiones* before the faculty of theology for censure. "The medieval Aristotle," as Graves explains, "was still protected by the church, and the two were so thoroughly identified as to be almost indistinguishable" (72). An attack on Aristotelian authority was an attack on the authority of God.

The affair came before parliament; that body failed to arbitrate, so Ramus's detractors brought their complaint before the king. Under advice from Pierre Duchâtel, the Bishop of Mâcon, King Francis entrusted the matter to a five-man commission. Each party chose two of these commissioners; the king chose the fifth. "Ramus succeeded in getting two talented personal friends to act for him," as Graves documents, "but, although their arguments completely vanquished the other three judges, who were zealous Aristotelians, they were overborne and withdrew from the farcical trial in disgust" (34). Hereafter, as Walton records in "Ramus and Socrates," Ramus's opponents "persuaded Francis I to direct a verdict of guilty" (121), with the commission deeming Ramus's "deviation from the university curriculum," as Couzinet chronicles, a danger to "public order" (306). Under the sentence imposed on 26 March 1544, both the contentious *Aristotelicae animadversiones* and the less controversial *Dialecticae* were "suppressed by all available methods" (Waddington 47). The king's agnomen now rang rather hollow.

The additional stipulation that Ramus must teach neither logic nor philosophy confined his lectures at the College of Ave Maria to the classics and mathematics. As Goulding emphasizes, Ramus held mathematics, "in particular esteem." He spent his "mornings being coached […] by a team of experts" ("Method" 63); he spent his afternoons lecturing on mathematics; and he was soon bringing his revisionism to bear, as his first publication in the field, a Latin version of *Euclid's Elements* (1545), attested. This volume charges Euclid with disciplinary misrepresentation. Just as Aristotle had confused the art of logic, so Euclid had distorted the art of mathematics. In the same year as this publication, the principal of the College of Presles, Nicolas Lesage, invited Ramus to take charge of the school. Lesage wished to retire; he deemed Ramus the best possible successor; Ramus accepted. This effective promotion brought the rigidity of Ramus's professional ethos to the fore: discipline at the college, as Ong remarks, "was strict at Ramus' own insistence" (*Rhetoric* 149).

With King Francis I's death in the spring of 1547, Henry II (1519–59) succeeded to the throne, and the courtly influence of the new monarch's former preceptor John (b. 1498), Cardinal of Lorraine (r. 1518–50), notably increased. The cardinal and his brother Claude (b. 1496), Duke of Guise (r. 1528–50), "represented the extreme Catholic party," as Graves details, "and Ramus, while endeavoring to dethrone Aristotle, had remained a member of the church in good standing" (71). Support and admiration for Ramus were never entirely lacking; the authoritarian decree served to bolster his reputation, so the cardinal almost immediately "procure[d] from the king an abrogation of the edict" (41) against Ramus. Free to develop his thoughts openly, Ramus proceeded to reassess rhetoric, the art he considered intimate with, but separate and subservient to, dialectic. The first result of this deliberation, which Ramus dedicated to the Cardinal of Lorraine, was *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* (1549).

This volume opens with Ramus's post-edict summation of his previous findings on Aristotelian dialectic, which "both lacked many virtues and abounded in faults" (79). Aristotle, maintains Ramus,

> left out many definitions and partitions of arguments; instead of one art of invention embracing the ten general topics—causes, effects, subjects, adjuncts, opposites, comparisons, names, divisions, definitions, witnesses— he created unfathomable darkness in his two books of *Posterior Analytics* and eight books of *Topics* with their confused account of predicables, predicaments, enunciations, abundance of propositions, and the invention of

the middle term; in his treatment of simple syllogisms he did not collect the rarer ones; he gave no instruction on connections; he was completely silent about method; in a loud sophistic debate over quite useless rules he handed down to us nothing about the use of the art as a universal, but only as a particular. (79–80)

In response, asserts Ramus, "we have added to the art the virtues it lacked; we have uncovered these various faults and, I hope, have abolished them; we have revealed its true use and have shown it to be common to all things" (80). In fine, according to Ramus's syllogism, "[i]n every art one should teach as many parts as exist in its proper, natural subject matter, and no more./To the subject matter of the art of dialectic, that is to the natural use of reason, belongs the skill of inventing, arranging, and memorizing./Therefore it should deal with the same number of parts" (105).

The main targets of Ramus's latest publication, however, were Cicero and Quintilian. For Ramus, as Talon reports, rhetoric was "the art of effective speaking" (1–2); "two parts, style and delivery," as Ramus emphasized, were "the only true parts of the art of rhetoric" (90); and Ramus's overarching objection to orthodox opinion on that twofold art again concerned the uncritical appeal to authority. Whereas dialectical deference bowed before Aristotle and mathematical deference bowed before Euclid, rhetorical deference bowed before Cicero and Quintilian. This respect was misplaced. Cicero "transferred to rhetoric almost all Aristotle's obscurity concerning invention and arrangement, and indeed also style, confusedly making one art from the two" (80).

Despite drawing on Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* for his *Dialecticae*, Ramus's application of Solon's Law exposed "Cicero's and Quintilian's failure to keep dialectic and rhetoric distinct from one another" (Ong, *Decay* 280). As Erasmus (or Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus) (1466–1536), Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), and Ramus himself acknowledged, the supposedly Attic style of Cicero, therefore, manifested two extremes: the selfless, restrained, and virtuous practice of *De officiis*; and the selfish, unrestrained, and vituperative practice of *Pro Milone* and *In Catilinam*. The resultant mixture of these extremes was a cloying, verbose, and undisciplined style that earned the epithet "Asiatic."

"Greeks had, naturally enough, characterized Persians and others to the East of Athens as 'Asiatic,'" expounds Rosalie Littell Colie, "meaning sensuous, sybaritic, self-indulgent, rich, materialist, decorated, soft. According to the paradigm, Asiatics lived a life of ease, delicacy, even of sloth, surrounded

by ornate works of art and elaborate amusements for body and spirit." Slowly, as Colie maintains, "the moral disapproval leveled at their eastern neighbors came to be applied to a style of oratory conceived as 'like' Persian life, a style formally complex, ornate, decorated and elaborate" (171). For John Wilders, "the most distinctive feature of this style [was] its hyperbole" (51). The result, explains Kyle DiRoberto, was "a verbal 'copia' of voluptuous description and linguistic play. This effeminate style was also associated with youthful prodigality, youth being conceived as a period in one's life of gender ambiguity" (759). Hence, in his *Ciceronianus* (1528), as Patricia A. Parker notes, Erasmus "speaks of seeking in vain in Ciceronian eloquence for something 'masculine' and of his own desire for a 'more masculine style.'" Similarly, the mature Lipsius "claims no longer to like the Ciceronian or Asiatic Style: 'I have become a man and my tastes have changed. Asiatic feasts have ceased to please me: I prefer the Attic'" (14).

For Ramus, as for Erasmus and Lipsius, the rhetorical corruption and enervation induced by Cicero required correction. In *Brutinae quaestiones* (1547), as DiRoberto details, Ramus "blames Cicero for making rhetoric the whore of wisdom rather than its 'handmaid'; he adds that the softness of Cicero's style is 'scarcely adequate for a noble man,' and that he 'spurn[s] and condemn[s] it as worthy of an unassuming woman'" (759). Just as the acolytes of Aristotle had further muddled logic and the followers of Euclid had further misrepresented mathematics, so the stylistic descendants of Cicero had further damaged rhetoric. The interdisciplinary extent of this corruption was such that each art now lacked organizational structure; and "Ramus, with strong support in the royal entourage," as J. H. M. Salmon avers, "made new converts in the parlement and the university" (36). Nonetheless, "even the humanists, although they were free from the scholastic verbosity and the digressions that appear in most of the textbooks of the times," as Graves adds, "taught rhetoric according to Cicero and Quintilian" (134). Thus, while most sixteenth-century humanists "borrowed extensively from rhetorical works of Cicero and Quintilian to develop a highly rhetoricized logic" (Goulding, "Method" 64), Quintilian suffered as Cicero did under Ramus's inspection.

In *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum*, Ramus classes Quintilian's definition of an orator—"'I teach,' [Quintilian] says, 'that the orator cannot be perfect unless he is a good man. Consequently I demand from him not only outstanding skill in speaking but all the virtuous qualities of character'"—as "useless and stupid." Ramus employs dialectic to prove this damning conclusion: "[L]et us lay down this first proposition

of a syllogism:/The definition of an artist which covers more than is included within the limits of the art is faulty./Then let us add to the first proposition we have put down:/But the definition of the artist of oratory handed down to us by Quintilian covers more than is included within the limits of the art" (84). Ramus "conclude[s] therefore:/Quintilian's definition of the orator is as a result defective" (85). This assessment exemplifies the fact that Quintilian "lacked one instrument but an absolutely essential one for the teaching of his art—the syllogism, I repeat, the syllogism" (146). What is worse, Quintilian's "lack of judgment" conflated this deficiency, causing "his vanity to overflow" (104).

Ramus's reformulation of the intimate association between dialectic and rhetoric further distanced him from late humanism as well as from late scholasticism. "To a great extent, in the ancient cultures," expounds Ong, "rhetoric was related to dialectic as sound was to sight. This is not to say that rhetoric was not concerned with the clear and distinct, nor that dialectic, as the art of discourse, was not concerned with sound at all." The two arts were not identical, but neither were they mutually exclusive. The academics of Ramus's time generally held the same opinion. In contrast, Ramus at once separated rhetoric from dialectic and understood the two arts to be "correlative" (*Rhetoric* 147). The difference was obvious: "[R]hetoric was concerned with what was resonant and closer to the auditory pole; dialectic with what was relatively silent, abstract, and diagrammatic" (*Decay* 280). Ramism conceived of dialectic and rhetoric analogically—both in their entireties and in their parts—with "extended, and hence quantified surfaces"; and because "two extended objects cannot occupy the same space, at least in the ordinary experience of men," dialectic and rhetoric remain quantitatively distinct (*Decay* 280). Rhetoric and dialectic were both further apart and more aligned than convention admitted.

Overall, then, as Kees Meerhoff asserts, Ramus's "concern was to modernise logic, the *ars artium*, and its companions grammar and rhetoric" (141). The order in which one learned these arts, as *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* makes plain, was crucial to this enterprise. "The first is grammar, since it can be understood and practiced without the others; the second is rhetoric, which can be understood and practiced without all the others except for grammar" (90), which teaches the pupil "how he should divide a speech with punctuation and how he should mark off the clauses" (150). Learning the arts in the wrong order would perpetuate the confusions of the past.