

Autour de Ramus

**A Critical Review
(English Version)**

by

**Timothy Buell, Ph.D
The University of Calgary**

AUTOUR DE RAMUS IS THE FIRST PUBLICATION to be issued by an international network of researchers interested in Renaissance humanism generally, and Petrus Ramus in particular (le Réseau International d'Études Ramistes). The result of this collaboration is an eclectic and comprehensive collection of essays in both French and English, which encompass all aspects of Ramus and his intellectual world. Topics include annotated reproductions of original texts, as well as critical commentaries, and deal not only with Ramus himself, but also with his collaborators, students and contemporaries.

Alex Gordon's comparison of the motivations behind Quintilian's and Ramus's differing approaches to rhetoric reminded me of Thomas Gradgrind, the schoolmaster of Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, who proclaimed:

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else ever will be of any service to them.”

Ramus would have told us that such matters as speculation over the propriety of a given rhetorical approach (the Method of Prudence), debate over how rhetoric could be used in the service of morality, investigating the psychological characteristics of speaker and audience, or speculating on the role of rhetoric as a force of persuasion in society--this might be all very well for Quintilian to engage in, but just you try explaining those concepts to a room full of fourteen-year old adolescents! Better, that we teach them to express themselves clearly and forcefully. Like Gradgrind, what Ramus basically wanted was Facts, and, more specifically in terms of teaching rhetoric, the facts of figurative language. Nothing else would ever be of service to his rhetorical curriculum. Gordon provides an excellent and convincing argument as to why Ramus took the approach he did to rhetoric, namely that Ramus had to sacrifice attention to humanistic breadth in order that he could more efficiently drum figures of speech into the muddled minds of young boys.

There are some intriguing parallels here to the current debate at universities over whether we value accomplishments in teaching as highly as we do research. It is even possible that we can see the beginnings of this dichotomization in the controversies that surrounded Ramus in his time. Today, the debate is over whether we value what is sometimes called “teaching scholarship” as much as we value “pure research.” According to Ong, one of the things about Ramus that his colleagues found less than endearing was his aggressive campaigning for the cause of serious and competent teaching.¹ Sound familiar? It would seem that most of what Ramus published in his time would today be considered a kind of educational theory, and his publications for the most part would be viewed as textbooks or pedagogical works of “teaching scholarship.” Quintilian, on the other hand, to the extent that he offered the perspective of how rhetoric functions in an overall societal context, would probably be considered to be working in the area of cultural studies or communications theory.

¹ Walter Ong. *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1958. pg. 27

Although Gordon does not say it directly, his article does imply an important question: Are we considering Ramus in the proper disciplinary frame? His article clearly demonstrates that Ramus's commentary was essentially pedagogical. Yet today, Ramus is considered a *rhetorical* theorist rather than a *pedagogical* theorist. This, in part, is to blame for the attacks on Ramus for causing so much harm to the discipline of Rhetoric. (Considering Ramus in a modern-day context, I can easily imagine him, needing to make a little extra money to supplement his teaching income, as the author of the very successful book, "Dialect for Dummies.")

James Murphy's article attempts to settle the actual authorship of two works attributed to Omer Talon, the *Institutiones Oratoriae* (1545) and the *Rhetorica* (1548). His examination suggests that the *Rhetorica* was in fact the work of Ramus. This conclusion is partly based on what Richard Dawkins has called an "Argument from Personal Incredulity."² As Murphy puts it: "How could the author of a pedantic, rambling—Ong uses the term 'discursive'—generalized treatise on eloquence...within four years so change his mental and rhetorical habits that he could produce a tightly-organized *Rhetorica* that became a runaway best-seller?" Especially when one considers that the only connection of the former work (the 1545 *Institutiones*) to Ramus is a Ramus-centered Preface that Murphy suggests was tacked on years after the work was written.

Murphy provides an important reminder (largely derived from Nancel) of the way in which Ramus was able to manage such a prodigious scholarly output. He had gathered around himself tutors for mathematics and Greek, transcribers for his lectures, editors for his commentaries, and a coterie of disciples who would teach, publish and disseminate the Ramist doctrine (nowadays we'd call them graduate students). Murphy also reminds us of how Ramus used Talon and another assistant, Bartholomew Alexander, to publish Ramist orations during the time he was prohibited by royal edict from teaching or writing about philosophy. Reading this, I was reminded of Woody Allen's film *The Front*, about a Hollywood screenwriter who found fame during the McCarthy era by taking screenplays by blacklisted writers and passing them off as his own to the major studios.

He ends by concluding that for Ramus, at least in 1548, "the doctrine was more important than the title page." Not long after Talon had died, a new Latin text version of his *Rhetorica* was published, this time with Ramus's name emblazoned on the title page. And so Murphy might have added that by 1562 that Ramus had obviously come to realize that title pages were an essential part of marketing the doctrine.

² See Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*. London, Longman, 1986. Pg. 38.

Dawkins coined this term in his criticism of arguments against Darwinism, so many of which begin with phrases such as: "It is difficult to understand;" "It does not seem feasible to explain;" "It is difficult to see;" or, "how could..."

One of this collection's most valuable characteristics is the many perspectives it offers on Ramus. Those of us only peripherally familiar with Ramus may have thought chiefly in terms of his influence (for better or for worse!) on rhetorical pedagogy and commentary in the curriculum of the Renaissance university, and the resulting aftermath of Ramistic reform on the place of rhetoric in the curriculum.

What perhaps is not as widely recognized, especially outside the circle Renaissance humanist studies, is that Ramus applied his methodology--his system of classification through dichotomization, his techniques of logical analysis--to virtually every subject in the curriculum of his time. Ramus was convinced that his logical method could be applied equally to all subjects, and so we have works by him (besides the majority in grammar, rhetoric and dialectic), on poetry, law, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, mathematics, theology, and even medicine. As we know, the success of these multidisciplinary ventures met with varying success.

His forays into mathematics are particularly interesting in this regard. By all accounts, Ramus didn't exactly have a head for numbers (and especially large numbers, Ong tells us, being prone to making mistakes with his abacus during lectures!³). Still, that didn't prevent him from lecturing and publishing in mathematics. Yet Ramus was apparently an very effective teacher, and seems to have been able to discern ability in his students (even if lacking it himself), such as with the mathematician Jean Pena.

Fernand Hallyn's contribution to this collection is a fascinating commentary on Pena's Preface to Euclid's *Optics*, one of the few works completed by this protégé of Ramus not long after Pena's premature death at a young age. Particularly interesting is Hallyn's account of how Pena used metaphor in order to clarify his discussion of the Optics--explaining the abstract in terms of familiar, real-world objects and phenomena. Hallyn credits this to Pena's adoption of Ramist methodology. Perhaps more important, Pena's work exemplifies the Humanist practice of reconciling a classical work with the rapidly emerging discoveries in physics and astronomy ushered in by the Renaissance.

Kees Meerhoff and Jean-Claude Moisan contribute an engaging article entitled *Précepte and Usage: Un Commentaire Ramiste de la 4^e Philippique*. The Philippics were Cicero's series of speeches attacking Marc Antony. They so defined the genre that any oration of bitter invective against someone came to be known as a philippic. Cicero was one the troika of classical rhetoricians--the other two members being Aristotle and Quintilian--against which Ramus fashioned his own series of pedagogical philippics, and upon which his scholarly reputation--and notoriety--was largely based. As Ramus proclaims in his *Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian*: "I have a single argument, a single subject matter, that the arts of dialectic and rhetoric have been confused by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian."⁴ Ramus announced he would shed

³ Ong, op. cit, pg. 33

⁴ Petrus Ramus, from *Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian: Translation and Text of Peter Ramus's Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum*, trans. Carole Newlands, ed. James J. Murphy. Northern Illinois University Press, 1986.

light on the “Aristotelian obscurity” of the classical rhetoricians and replace it with his own Method of didactic analysis.

This article allows the authors to fulfill two purposes:

- 1) to present an edited and annotated edition of an minor didactic work of rhetorical analysis by an anonymous scholar that reflects Ramist methodology; and,
- 2) to place it in the overall context of the spreading influence of Ramistic method.

This particular commentary appeared in 1572, the year Ramus died. By then, his reputation had spread throughout Europe, and his didactic methodology and attempts to reform the university curriculum had won him a widespread following—as well as numerous detractors. Meerhoff and Moisan suggest that this commentary is typical of numerous pedagogical works that were written by scholars and teachers at the time, published in an attempt to cash in on the current vogue that Ramist methodology was then enjoying. They further claim that the kind of work represented by this commentary marks a watershed in the history of Ramism, (“un moment majeur dans la démarche ramiste”). They demonstrate that the Ramistic method of logical analysis forms the basis of the entire commentary. In other words, the Ramist method of logical analysis has infiltrated humanist pedagogy to the point where it seems to appear as the default form of discourse analysis in the popular scholarly commentaries of the time.

The authors point out in detail how all the hallmarks of Ramistic analysis—particularly the analysis/genesis method of analyzing a text and the dichotomy-based form of logical analysis—suggest that our anonymous author was a true disciple of Ramus. They state that Ramistic method, far from being the crude oversimplification through forced dichotomies that Ramus’s detractors had claimed, was, in fact, a much more sophisticated form of analysis. Meerhoff and Moisan point out that the author of this commentary on the one hand draws attention to many surface-level irregularities in the chain of argument, but at the same time has no problem praising the overall elegance and rigour of the argument on a more background or deep-structure level in terms of the gradual unfolding of the argument itself. This is not a contradiction or methodological inconsistency, they claim, but, on the contrary: It demonstrates how Ramistic analysis can function on different levels, a kind of “transformational logic” which allows for the presence of varying levels of discourse. They go as far as to suggest that this apparent acknowledgment by Ramist method of surface, middle and background levels of analysis anticipate the analytical procedures used in transformational-generative grammar. Imagine, Noam Chomsky a Ramist!

Moisan has edited the original Latin text of the commentary in meticulous detail, and provided numerous annotations and clarifications. In doing so, he has made available and accessible an extremely interesting text by this anonymous disciple of Ramus. This is supplemented by three appendices which serve to contextualize the edited commentary, including original letters in which Ramus justifies his pedagogical approach to the logical analysis of texts, and a brief history of the of the origin and possible publication history (“complexe et bigarré) of the *Philippique* text itself.

Geneviève Clerico’s article—*Ramus et le Matériau de la Langue*—deals more specifically with Ramus’s foray into the realm of linguistic analysis. This article provides a very clear summary of how Ramus identified and categorized the specific sounds of both Latin and French. The specific

works referred to are the *Scholae Grammaticae*, 1559, Ramus's Lectures on Latin Grammar, and his two French Grammars (*Gramere*, 1562, and *Grammaire*, 1572). Unlike other theoretical works by Ramus, these grammars are expository or demonstrative in nature, as he applies his penchant for dichotomization and categorization to the vowels and consonants of Latin and French.

Clerico provides a nice summary of the systematic way in which Ramus proceeds from a discussion of individual sounds, successively upward through parts of speech, participles, verb forms, conjugations and other parts of speech. Ramus was attempting this linguistic analysis long before the concepts of phoneme and morpheme were available. As Clerico points out, this created difficulties for classification since linguistic description could not clearly differentiate between the visual representation of a letter and its actual sound. Despite this Ramus was able to come up with a fairly efficient system of classification which is well summarized by Clerico, and supplemented by examples from the manuscripts in the appendices.

Clerico situates Ramus at that particular point in the development of the Humanist curriculum, where the vernacular begins to infiltrate the curriculum. Ramus wanted to endow the French language with the same rigorous analytical techniques found in classical Grammars. Clerico points out how Ramus attempted to transfer these to his French grammars, with mixed results. She closes by speculating on an apparent contradiction raised by this study: although Ramus provides us with exhaustive classifications of most aspects of grammar, he is silent on all aspects of prosody, for both Latin and French. Why?

The explanation lies partly in the rigidity of Ramus's method. As Clerico points out, in the Ramist tradition, poetry is treated as part of rhetoric, since it has a tonal dimension. Prosody, of course, deals with purely aural aspects and thus is relegated to a minor—for Ramus—branch of rhetoric. I wish she had expanded on this part of the discussion: Her explanation as to why Ramus's methodology would exclude prosody is indisputable, but what are the underlying reasons behind Ramus's attitude toward the aural aspects of prosody, poetry, and its resulting relegation to rhetoric? Is it symptomatic, as Ong has suggested, of the shift in orientation from an oral to a print-based culture? Or was it purely and practically due to the exigencies of teaching teen-age boys (the average age of university students at the time)? And finally, how well-versed was Ramus in Renaissance literature and poetry? Probably not extensively—certainly these subjects did not figure prominently in the French university curriculum at the time.

At any rate, we do know that “Ramus,” as his biographer Nancel informs us, “wrote no poetry (in Latin), because he was not sure of syllabic count.” His commentaries on poetry could hardly be called successful. His lectures on the *Bucolics* and *Georgics* of Virgil drew so much laughter that he seemed not to have the heart to continue with the *Aeneid*, as he had originally intended.”⁵ (I wonder what Ramus would have thought of Robin Williams's pedagogic methodology in *Dead Poet's Society*?)

⁵ Ong, op cit. Pg 33.

Whatever the reasons for Ramus's attitude towards poetry, his treatment of it has certainly not endeared him to many of us. His rigid view of poetry as belonging, not in the higher curriculum but rather only as a mnemonic tool in the elementary curriculum, had enormous influence as Ramism spread during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

And so it fell to another Ramus disciple, and student of his collaborator Omer Talon—Antoine Fouquelin-- to make significant contributions in applying Ramist methodology to poetry. His Latin coursebook on Persius' *Saturae* is the subject of a very detailed discussion by Michel Magnien. Magnien begins by making the case that this is an important work which hasn't received much in the way of the critical attention it deserves. We've previously noted Ramus's rather cursory treatment of poetry, to the extent that he fails to provide much in the way of dialectical summaries on Latin poetry. And so here Fouquelin takes up the torch by introducing dialectical summaries on Persius which are very faithful to the Ramist method, and the preface to the work contains a dedication to Ramus.

According to Magnien, Fouquelin's work is emblematic of a turning point in the rise of Ramism. The work appears just around the time—in 1555—that Ramus and his followers were effecting a profound change in the curricular orientation of the College de Presles. Ramus had arrived there some ten years earlier, and soon after had performed a sort of coup d'état in arranging the ouster of the current principal and having himself installed. Soon after, Ramus's political skills—enhanced by the numerous dedications in his publications to the King and to the new Cardinal of Guise (who also happened to be an old school chum of Ramus)—resulted in the King finally lifting the ban on Ramus's teaching and writing on philosophy. Soon after, along with the emergence of Fouquelin's work, we see an explosion of numerous works by Ramus and his followers.

However, as Magnien points out, most of the previous Ramist commentary had been in the realm of rhetoric and philosophy. With Fouquelin and others a kind of Latin poetry revival emerged. According to Magnien, this represented a new phase of Ramism. Ramus had long called for the conjoining of Philosophy and Eloquence:⁶ With Fouquelin do we now see the Ramist technique extended into a “Combining of Poetry and Philosophy?” And while the Ramist method might have worked well enough in analyzing Ciceronian prose, how will it fare with the more nebulous language of poetry—especially the relatively obscure poetic language of Persius?

⁶ See for example, Petrus Ramus. *Address on Combining Philosophy and Eloquence* (1546)

Another area that Ramus avoided—the subject of commonplace-books—is the topic of Ann Moss’s article, entitled *Commonplace-Books and Ramist Branches*. Ramus had very little to say on the subject of commonplace books. This not only sets him apart from many of his contemporaries, but also seems contradictory in light of Ramus’s own propensity for citing verbatim from numerous texts, ancient authorities and natural science references—which is one of the main purposes of the commonplace-book. In suggesting why Ramus ignores commonplace-books, Moss provides two tentative conclusions (actually, they are not really presented as such, rather, Moss lays the evidence before us and then gently points us in the proper direction). The first reason is that commonplace-books had no place in the Ramistic method, because the very procedure one uses in creating a commonplace-book (collecting specific statements relating to general topics) is antithetical to the top-down, general-to-particular dialectical order of investigative procedure. If he were to require the use of a common-place book Ramus would be admitting that his method was not the all-encompassing generative method it claimed to be.

Secondly, the varied subject matter of the commonplace-books meant that they could not be firmly placed within the boundaries of any one of *inventio*, *elocutio*, or *pronuntiatio*. So not only did the commonplace-book span these boundaries, it also could be seen as part of both *dialectic* and *rhetoric*, according to the way Ramus had divided them. Such fuzzy interdisciplinarity had no place in the rigid curriculum of Ramus. And so, it was left to other, lesser Ramist disciples, such as Johann Thomas Freigius, to reconcile Ramism with the commonplace-book. Moss relates how Freigius devised a sort of Ramist commonplace-book for the study of Cicero, where the titles of the sections are pre-supplied by Freigius for the student, according to ten general subjects (rather like a subject-divided notebook).

Finally, Moss describes how Gabriel Harvey treated commonplace-books. Although an admirer of Freigius’s work, Harvey liked his Ramus straight up and undiluted. And so, like Ramus, he relegated the commonplace-book to the lowly status of a technological aid barely worth mentioning, even exhorting his pupils to “Avoyde all writing, but necessary: which consumith unreasonable much time.” Moss concludes that this attitude is emblematic of the decline of verbal erudition at the university, which was to become associated with the weakened state of rhetoric in the curriculum, bereft as it was by the Ramus-induced exclusion of invention and arrangement.

Ramus’s faithful disciple Freigius reappears again in the article by Keels Meerhoff, which begins with a section provocatively entitled “Ramus and Jesus.” We’ve already had comparisons to Noam Chomsky, but isn’t this going a little too far? But as it turns out—fortunately—Meerhoff is being gently ironic, as his subtitle serves to introduce a quotation from Johann Thomas Freigius’s panegyric *Life of Peter Ramus*. His work opens with a quotation from St. Mark:

“And they came to Bethsaide. And some people brought to him a blind man, and they begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” And he looked up and said: “I see men; but they look like trees, walking.” Then he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly.” (Mark 8: 22-26).

Why? Because for Freigius, Ramus was to philosophy what Jesus was to the blind man. Freigius's *Life of Ramus* written in the immediate aftermath of Ramus's assassination during the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, after which he emerged as a Protestant martyr in the eyes of his legion of followers. This accounts for the hagiographical nature of the several Ramus biographies, like the one by Freigius, that emerged about this time.

Ramus himself was never particularly quick to credit the work of others when announcing his pedagogical breakthroughs. Not exactly known for his scholarly humility, two phrases that don't appear very often in Ramus's writings are:

- 1) "I stood on the shoulders of giants," or,
- 2) "I learn as much from my colleagues and students as they from me."

A good example of this can be found in the history of dialectic Ramus provides in his 1555 *Dialectique*. Following his account of the classical Greek and Roman authors, Ramus closes with an acknowledgment of Galen and Aristotle. He then begins to expound on his own Method, without a single mention of anything during the medieval period, or any of the works of his contemporaries or the generation of humanist scholars who had immediately preceded him. Or, since we've already invoked the New Testament, as Freigius might have said, "In the beginning was the Word, and then came Ramus," (or as the pagan Greeks might have said, "Ramus sprang, Athena-like, fully armed with his Method, from the head of Aristotle).

This is the myth that Meerhoff so convincingly dispels. He situates Ramism in the overall context of the development of method in education during the first half of the 16th century, tracing its initial origins to Agricola. He then takes us on a well-guided tour of the development of humanist pedagogy in Northern Europe, paying particular attention to Agricola, Melanchthon, and Latomus. The innovations of the so-called Ramistic revolution, such as the analytical method of reduction of discourse to a principal syllogism, the notion of a *natural* dialectic, and indeed the overall concept of producing a primarily *pedagogical* work for mass consumption, can all be found in the works of Ramus's predecessors, in varying degrees of development.

Meerhoff provides clear evidence that Ramus could hardly have been unaware of Latomus and his work. Latomus had formerly occupied the prestigious regius professorship to which Ramus was appointed in 1551. One could certainly expect that Ramus was aware of the writings and pedagogy of his immediate predecessors. Meerhoff's detailed discussion of Latomus, which includes an appendix containing a well-edited original discourse analysis by Latomus, clearly demonstrates that as early as 1532 Latomus was making a distinction between dialectic and rhetoric. This distinction, as we all know, is what historically was to gain Ramus such notoriety, among those who claim that Ramus dealt a curricular death-blow to Rhetoric. But now we know it wasn't entirely his fault!

Meerhoff alludes to the increasingly important role of the printing press in the dissemination of Ramism. For the first time in history, we are beginning to see the creation of an intellectual culture where the primary means of dissemination is not the oral lecture but the printed book. The works of Agricola and other early Northern European humanists had become readily available to

Ramus's teachers, his colleagues and, of course, to Ramus himself. This is especially likely since Ramus, in the humanist tradition, was very widely read, and had a well-deserved reputation for the encyclopedic breadth of his learning. In fact, it is primarily through printed books that Freigius himself, who lived and worked at Bâle, gained most of his knowledge of Ramus (Freigius had actually met Ramus only a few times). Meerhoff suggests that this may help explain Freigius's rather uncritical view of Ramus. He points out how in 1553, a publisher in Bâle put out a comprehensive and definitive collection of the very latest commentaries on Cicero's speeches. The material was apparently arranged in order of insight and relevance, culminating in the hottest, most up-to-the-minute scholarship at the end of the volume. Perhaps not wanting to waste his time with passé material, Freigius might have flipped through to the end, where he would have encountered Ramus's Commentaries, in all their furious splendour, which had been added just prior to publication. They were obviously a revelation to Freigius, "a phenomenally dull pedant," according to the usually diplomatic Ong.⁷

Meerhoff closes his article by suggesting that the spirit—or spittle—of Ramus, far from improving the clarity of Freigius's scholastic vision, had in fact increased the layers of scales on the eyes of his hapless disciple, and so, with a nice chiasmatic flourish, suggests a more appropriate New Testament allusion might be Acts 9:18).

Like Meerhoff and Moisan, Perrine Galand-Hallyn situates her article in the context of the rise of early French humanism. The particular work she examines is taken from an edition of Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, by the relatively minor Parisian humanist scholar Nicolas Béraud. Béraud, we are told, was a fervent militant ("militant actif") in the nascent humanist scholarly movement in Paris during the early 1500s. He was a contemporary and friend of Erasmus (for whom Suetonius was also a favourite author and source of numerous citations).

Politen was a primary model for Béraud's own work, although, as the author points out, he seems rather reluctant to acknowledge it, burying an acknowledgment that his commentary is based on Politen's own work several pages into the edition, after Béraud's own leçon and other extensive prefatory material has appeared. The literary equivalent of muttering "oh, and by the way..." under one's breath.

Galand-Hallyn draws many interesting parallels between Béraud's methodology and that of Politen, clearly showing that however understated his acknowledgment of Politen might have been, Béraud did serve as an important conduit for the introduction of the work of this great Florentine humanist into the scholarly milieu of Paris during the early 1500s. She offers no specific commentary on relationships between this early Parisian humanist and Ramus himself (and forgets to mention the coincidence that Béraud's edition was published in 1515, the year of Ramus's birth!). But it is clear from Galand-Hallyn's excellent commentary that Béraud exerted a fair bit of influence in the early stages of French humanist thought a legacy that Ramus would inherit and help transform. Her analysis also emphasizes the importance of *ethos* in humanist rhetoric, which we see not just in France but throughout Europe.

⁷. Ong, *ibid*, pg. 37

Jean-Claude Moisan, in his article on the *Rhetorics of Francisco Sánchez*, reinforces this point. Specifically, Moisan studies Sanchez's *elecutio* in his *De arte Dicendi*, which was published in Salamanca in 1558. The Spaniard Francisco Sánchez de la Brozas, was one of the earliest disciples of Ramus beyond the French borders. In fact, one could say that it was largely due to Sanchez that Spain was one of the first countries outside France where Ramism appeared. This article provides a concise summary of the Ramist model, particularly as it relates to *elecutio*. Moisan looks in some detail at Sanchez's treatment of tropes and figures of speech, and meticulously establishes how faithful he was to the early rhetorics of Talon and Ramus. Moisan documents how Sanchez even uses the same definitions and examples of various tropes and figures. But Sanchez seems caught in a time-warp. Moisan points out that while later editions of Ramus's Rhetorics provide more evolved (at least for Ramus!) treatments of such tropes as catachresis, allegory and hyperbole, they do not seem to find their way into Sanchez's later work. What caused this apparent "stagnation" ("cette stagnation") of Sánchez? Moisan doesn't dwell on this in much detail, only to remind us that Ramus's conversion to Protestantism, which contributed to the subsequent trouble Sánchez got into with the inquisition probably played a large part.

That is one thing perhaps lacking in this book: some more extended commentary on the social and cultural and technological contexts of Ramism. Ong—to whom this present collection is dedicated—was one of the first to realize this significance, especially in his discussions of how the Ramist elimination of the oral, sonic elements from the rhetoric were symptomatic of an emerging print culture.⁸ But his seminal work needs updating and expansion.

Ramus lived at a fascinating juncture in history—his scholarly career witnessed a massive revision of the university curriculum, the rise of humanist thought, and the growing influence of the printed word on Western European society. Within this context, Lawrence Green places Ramism not as revolutionary, but as part of an intellectual continuum that began in the early Renaissance and has continued to the present day. It's just that during his time, Ramus was able to articulate in a more compelling and attractive manner than his predecessors. Green's article—one of the most comprehensive in this collection-- traces the history of attempts to represent Aristotle's rhetoric in a methodical manner, by which he means graphical or spatial in orientation.

Of particular interest is Green's commentary on the work of John Rainolds, who was active at Oxford in the late 1500's. He seems to have had a fairly balanced view of Ramus, accepting some of his views on Aristotle while acknowledging that his pedantic posturing was largely unnecessary and made Ramus his own worst enemy. Green then points out how Green's hierarchical, diagrammatic representation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* owes a great debt to the Ramist hierarchical approach to knowledge and discourse. Rainold's graphical representation of parts of the *Rhetoric* has been adapted countless times and come down to us in the present day. So used are we to a graphical, hierarchical explanation of Aristotle that we tend to forget that such a manner of representation was quite foreign to the Aristotelian conception, creating categories and relations which do not exist within the Rhetoric itself.

⁸ See especially Chapter XIII in Ong, op. cit.

Green's article also contains a fascinating account of how Ramism managed to find its way to England. He points out how at the time Rainolds was working at Oxford, Ramism had not yet made great inroads in England, and in any event, Rainold's work on Aristotle survives only in lecture notes, not publications. In the meantime, Green reminds us of how, notwithstanding his limited training in the area, Ramus subjected medicine to some of his most vigorous methodological approaches, applied particularly to the writings of Galen. Now, when Aristotle's *Rhetoric* finally is published in England in 1619, it has been prepared by a physician, Theodore Goulston, who, steeped in Ramist methodology as applied to medicine, assumes that Aristotle's complex treatise is equally subject to the Ramist method of spatial declination. As Green points out, "a major part of the organization here is organization required by Goulston's method, and not by Aristotle's text."

Finally, Green considers Thomas Hobbes, and provides a nice overview his *A Briefe of the Art of Rhetorique*, which was prepared around 1637. While skeptical of Ong's claim that Hobbes was a Ramist, Green presents some tentative evidence—such as his pedagogical simplification through dichotomization-- that Hobbes' method had at least been influenced by Ramism. Even if Hobbes was not a closet Ramist, he could not fail to be influenced by the pervasiveness of Ramist perspectives in English thinking.

This article, despite its thoroughly comprehensive examination of original sources, dwells hardly at all on how these spatially-oriented models represent an overall shift in pedagogy from aural to spatial models wrought by the introduction of the printing press and its attendant visual culture. Ong, of course, made the definitive start in this area as it relates to Ramus and the humanist milieu of his day; and Eric Havelock has done similar work as it relates to the classical Greek world. But there are too many commentaries by post-McLuhan acolytes on aural vs print culture, spatial vs acoustic orientation, and so on, which are formulated in almost total ignorance of the primary sources of those periods. One hopes that they will read Green's article, now that he has made some of these sources so readily accessible.

I'll close by discussing Peter Mack's essay, which opens this collection. His focus is the comparison of an early version of a dialectic manual by Ramus (*Partitiones dialecticae*) with the more well-know printed edition (*Dialecticae institutiones*), which was published in 1543. Mack provides a detailed comparison between the early manuscript version and the later printed version, providing a glimpse into the intellectual development of this specific work as well as the genesis of Ramus's views on dialectic and rhetoric in general. For instance, Mack points out how Ramus's initial version of this *Dialectic* contains virtually no treatment of invention, which of course doesn't square with his later exclusion of dialectic from rhetoric. Mack offers two possible explanations:

- 1) That Ramus at this stage in his thinking had not decided to banish invention entirely from the realm of rhetoric, or,
- 2) That the manuscript was a preliminary work which Ramus had intended to flesh out later (a supposition supported by the fact that in the printed version Ramus has removed a sentence stating that if the current works "wins approval" he will return to the task more thoroughly later.)

At any rate, Mack's commentary demonstrates that the sharp division Ramus drew between rhetoric and dialectic in terms of the role of invention and logic was a gradual development in Ramus's thought. Mack points to other omissions and inclusions, which very often have to do with explicit references or allusions to other scholars of the time, specifically Agricola and Valla. It seems that Ramus made considerable effort to remove sections in the printed version which could be construed were reflective of their thought. Mack also points out how several of the references to Agricola which do appear in the printed version are later dropped in the later versions of the textbook. He also notes that the printed version features the addition of numerous literary examples. This is relatively easy to explain: Ramus must demonstrate his *ethos*, after all.

Mack has provided us with primary source evidence that Ramus seems ignorant of Agricola in his earliest works, incorporates him in his subsequent works, but then gradually removes such references in his later works. Although, as we have seen from other essays in this collection, a large part of what we would call "Ramism" has been seen to be heavily derived from the innovations of Agricola and other humanists of his generation. Ramus's ability at self-promotion is not explicitly dealt with in Mack's essay—unlike his subject Mack maintains the appropriate objective scholarly stance—but inherent in this account of the vagaries of Ramus's references is the implication that Ramus's removal of references to his contemporaries most certainly had something to do with his desire to bolster his reputation as a pedagogical innovator.

Mack begins his essay by saying: "Whoever wants to make a significant contribution to the study of Ramus will need a large budget for travel and microfilms." Overall, this volume not only offers us a host of fascinating historical and theoretical perspectives on Ramus, but it also provides a substantial amount of original texts, commentaries and theoretical writings by Ramus and his contemporaries—some well known, some relatively obscure. Much of this material has never been available outside original rare document collections in European libraries. As such, this wonderful book makes a substantial contribution to the accessibility of primary Ramist sources, and its publication will be welcome news to scholars of Renaissance humanism as well as departmental budget officers.