

# Peter Ramus: Significance in Rhetoric and Attacks on Cicero

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## Abstract

Peter Ramus is an influential figure in the field of rhetoric, education, theology, philosophy, and numerous other areas of study. Much of his influence and noteworthiness came not only from his personal propositions, but from his criticism of Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero.

This paper examines the propositions of Ramus, his writings, his popularity, his attacks on classical writers, and his influence on education, rhetoric, and dialectic. Also examined, is Ramus' criticism of Cicero and his reasoning behind the attack.

## Introduction

Peter Ramus was born in the year 1515 as Pierre de la Rame´e in France. Little is known about Ramus' childhood and early life. What is known is that Ramus was one of the most dominating and influential figures in the history of rhetorical theory.

The reasoning behind Ramus' influence partially lies in the attacks and criticism that he leveled against some of the most prominent characters in the classics, including Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero. These attacks, specifically those against Cicero, are the basis for this paper. This paper will attempt to answer the question: Who was Peter Ramus and what was the basis for his rhetorical attacks on Cicero?

Before examining the attacks specifically, an understanding of Ramus' theories is necessary. What follows are overviews of Ramus' writings, his condemnation of Aristotle, his prohibition from teaching philosophy, his influence on the field of education, his stances on rhetoric and dialectic, and his popularity within Europe in the sixteenth century. Following an examination of Ramus, an overview of Cicero's influence on rhetoric, a comprehensive look at Ramus' specific attacks on Cicero will be covered.

## Ramus' Writings

Most of Ramus' significant works were produced in a relatively short period of time (1543-1549) although many of them underwent several revisions. Sharratt (1976) does indicate that "in 1536 he defended an M.A. thesis on the subject 'Everything Aristotle said was false'" (p. 5). However, research done later by Ong and other authorities on Ramus has indicated that this title, in actuality, meant something different, although the basis of the thesis was a criticism of Aristotle.

Additionally, if Ramus did in fact write and defend the thesis under the alleged title, "because of the routine character of M.A. theses in general and of spectacular

sophisms in particular, Ramus himself and his contemporaries, almost to a man, attached no significance whatsoever to the event - despite his subsequent anti-Aristotelian career" (Sharratt, 1976, p. 7).

According to Murphy (1992), Ramus' writings fell into two categories: those confirming his own views and others in which he refuted or criticized the works and ideas of classical writers. His most prominent works include: *Dialecticae institutiones* (1543), *Institutiones oratoriae* (1545), *Institutiones dialecticae* (1543), *Aristotelicae animadversiones* (1543), *Brutinae quaestiones* (1547), and *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* (1549), the final three attacking Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian respectively. Ramus' writings were so prevalent in the sixteenth century that according to Ong (1958), there "are over 750 separately published editions (including some adaptations of single or collected works by Ramus or his collaborator Omer Talon...Counting separately each of the works in these 750-odd volumes...one gets a total of around 1,100 printings of individual works" (p. 5).

The Omer Talon referred to by Ong was a collaborator and supporter of Ramus and his attacks on classical writers. Talon was so supportive of Ramus that, following the 1544 royal prohibition placed upon Ramus' writings, Talon's name was placed on many publications that are suspected to be works of Ramus. In fact, Ramus' 1543 work *Dialecticicae institutiones*, "was published under the name of his colleague Omer Talon" (Murphy, 1992, p. xi).

Following 1549, Ramus' works were limited in scope focusing more on the subjects of education, military science, and mathematics, although he did publish the work *Ciceronianus* in 1555, urging the imitation of Cicero in career and style (Murphy, 1992).

### **Attacks on Classical Writers**

Ramus was an individualist bent on change. This desire for change began while Ramus was still in school. In fact, Ramus felt that as a whole, his education had been a waste of his time. Huppert (1990), stated that "Ramus felt as though the studies he had undertaken through his education had been wasteful and unsatisfactory. He stated 'I reached the conclusion that all academic exercises had brought me nothing at all, only a waste of time'" (p. 211). His anger with the educational system in which he was a student was based on the study of classical writers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Huppert (1990) went on to say that Ramus felt that the time spent studying these philosophers and the languages Greek and Latin could be much more beneficial being "invested instead, directly in the pursuit of knowledge" (p. 219). Huppert (1990) goes on to say that Ramus felt there were certain natural principles of thought that individuals possessed that enabled them to create what Ramus called intellectual "masterpieces" (p. 219).

Ramus was not one to subject himself to previous authorities willingly. Graves (1972) said that Ramus followed only those that naturally had the same values and beliefs that he held to be true. "He estimates the value even of those from whom he selects according to his fixed principles of subject matter" (p. 207).

Following Ramus' self-described wasteful education, he set out upon a mission to attack those he felt had let him down academically. Ramus, from the time of his M.A. thesis attacking Aristotle, began a methodical crusade against the influential works of Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero (Murphy, 1992). Even Ramus himself stated in his

*Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* (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" (p. 563).

Ramus' primary focus of attack, and the attack on which most material has been written, is the one on Aristotle. Ramus saw Aristotle as being responsible for the combination of rhetoric and dialectic, which Ramus vehemently opposed (Ramus, 1992). Ramus felt that rhetoric and dialectic should be separated, a separation that will be discussed later in this paper.

Specifically, Ramus' goal in criticizing Aristotle was "threefold: to show how the Aristotelian-Scholastic logic as neither useful in practical spheres nor true and certain in its logic along lines he interpreted as Socratic; and to develop the art of judgment within that dialectic to replace both apodictic intuition and Aristotle's dialectic of practical wisdom with one comprehensive view of man's ability to think" (Walton, 1970, p. 153). In Ramus' (1992) words, he felt that Aristotle had "thrown the whole of dialectic into confusion; he has thrown rhetoric into confusion; he has also corrupted with his own calumnies the precepts which Plato fashioned through many holy admonitions" (p. 61).

Although Ramus held some level of respect for Cicero and Quintilian, his compliments for Aristotle were much less frequent. Ramus' complaints about Aristotle were reduced to a level of name-calling and extensive verbal attacks. In his attack on Cicero, Ramus blames Aristotle for Cicero's misguidings. He tells Cicero to "wake yourself up and observe the uselessness and the absurdity of Aristotle" (Murphy, 1992, p. xxviii). He continues to urge Cicero to "[C]ast away that deceitful, lying, vainglorious Aristotle. Do not call this man's foolish errors your own judgment" (Murphy, 1992, p. 50).

As a result of Ramus' perception of poor leadership on the part of Aristotle with regard to logic, rhetoric, and dialectic, he suggested a movement toward more of an individual manner of searching. He "concluded that we must turn from Aristotelian priorities and develop a logic more sensitive to our circumstances as variables among the things we explore and judge" (Walton, 1971, p. 292).

As vehement and extensive as Ramus' attack on Aristotle was with regard to rhetoric and dialectic, there is a school of thought that believes Ramus' criticism was religiously based. Irwin (1941) points to the high esteem with which Ramus was held in England during a growth period for Puritanism. He goes on to say that Ramus' "attacks on Aristotelianism were regarded for what they were, attacks on the Roman Church. Twenty years after his death he was revered as a Protestant martyr by many Cambridge scholars" (p. 16).

While Ramus criticized highly held individuals such as Socrates, Aristotle, Quintilian and Cicero, he himself did hold some regard for the philosophers and rhetoricians. Walton (1970), points out that "there is evidence that Ramus followed a number of leads he believed to be Socrates' views, and he worked from them by questioning and proposing" (p. 155). Even with the vicious names that Ramus equated with Aristotle, he did, in his *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*, admit that Aristotle "had an amazing fecundity of talent" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 564). Likewise, Graves (1972), pointed out that of Ramus' great teachers "the greatest master of Ramus was Aristotle himself, whom in the medieval form he so bitterly opposed....[h]is logic and spirit were based upon those of the great Stagyrte, when properly

comprehended. Undoubtedly, too, Ramus owed much, as he frankly confesses to Socrates, Plato, Galen, and the Stoics, and even to Cicero and Quintilian" (pp. 17-18).

### **Ramus' Prohibition**

Ramus' attacks on the classical writers, philosophers, and rhetoricians did not go unnoticed. Because his criticism was not only an attack on Aristotle, but an attack on the established rules of European education, "Ramus was condemned first by the faculty of theology...then by the Parlement....[t]he matter was finally referred to Francois Ier" (king) "himself and a public debate...was organized, in the presence of senior representatives of all the faculties" (Sharratt, 1976, p. 6). As a result of the meetings, Ramus was prohibited from teaching philosophy and dialectic throughout France. Additionally, Ramus' books were banned and continued printing of his works were prohibited. The government would not allow the supremacy of Aristotle to be challenged by Ramus or anyone else.

His prohibition was not however simply upheld in France. Huppert (1990) states that regardless of his continued attempts to gain teaching positions, Ramus' applications were consistently rejected throughout Europe including Switzerland and Germany.

Ramus however, would not be shaken. He took his punishment and prohibition just as it was handed down, a prohibition from teaching philosophy and dialectic. Ramus "was content to say that philosophy was synonymous with logic, and that was all he was not allowed to teach" (Sharratt, 1976, p. 6). Ramus was a man that was determined to separate and categorize fields of study. He saw each area of knowledge as being distinct and apart from all others. "Yet the method for explaining each art is identical and they have a common purpose in the presentation of knowledge. His colleague Talon would teach philosophy, that is logic, in the morning, and he would teach rhetoric in the afternoon" (Sharratt, 1976, p. 7), for rhetoric was distinct and separate from the art of dialectic.

Ramus' prohibition was short-lived, because in 1545, the Dauphin Henry, a friend and supporter of Ramus, was named King Henry II (Murphy, 1992) and subsequently reinstated Ramus. He was not vindicated in totality however as he was still required "to explain the regular authors in the way prescribed by the statutes. He was permitted upon holidays, feast days, Sundays, and such hours were left open by the rules, to teach whatever authors he chose and as freely as he liked. This likened to giving him nearly two-thirds of the year to interpret as he wished" (Graves, 1972, p. 46).

Six years later, in 1551, Ramus was named Professor of Philosophy and Eloquence at the College Royale, a title that none had held before him and none held following his departure (Sharratt, 1976).

Following his *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*, written in 1549, Ramus concentrated on opposing his contemporary educators as opposed to the classics. He wrote on the subjects of mathematics and religion among others. In 1561, Ramus became a Protestant and on "August 26, 1572, he was attacked by three men in his college chambers, shot, stabbed, and thrown out a fifth story window. His headless body was thrown into the Seine" (Murphy, 1992, p. xiv).

Although Ramus was the first to be censored for teaching philosophies in opposition to Aristotle, he was not the last. Likewise, his punishment was not the most extreme imposed on reformers. Huppert (1990), stated that in "1624, long after Ramus had been murdered...the doctors of the theology faculty went beyond censorship: they

requested and obtained a court order providing the death penalty for anyone foolhardy enough to criticize Aristotle" (p.211).

### **Role in Education**

As stated earlier in this paper, Ramus had a view that all areas of study and fields of inquiry should be separated from each other. He was famous for "separating a whole into two or three major divisions, and of proceeding systematically to break those divisions up into parts, and those parts into subparts, until only indivisible units remained" (Howell, 1971, p. 454). However, Ramus' influence in education extended far beyond a separation of fields of study. Yates (1966) stated that "[O]f all the reformers of educational methods in the sixteenth century the most prominent, or the most self-advertised, was Pierre de la Ramee, more generally known as Peter Ramus" (p. 231).

Why was Ramus so noteworthy with regard to education? Grafton and Jardine (1986) indicate that the reasoning is twofold. First, Ramus was the first educational reformer to truly challenge Aristotle as an authority. Secondly, Ramus "advocated the union for teaching purposes of philosophy and eloquence" (p. 162). They go on to suggest the significance of Ramus' "institutional" nature of educational reform. He "deliberately discarded the difficulty and rigour of high scholastic schooling and thereby attracted those who regarded education as a means to social position rather than as a preparation for a life of scholarship....In doing so he explicitly...achieved the final secularisation of humanist teaching - that transition from 'humanism' to 'the humanities'" (p. 168).

Ramus' role in education was so significant that he literally developed his own timetable for college courses and course structure. According to Sharratt, (1976), Ramus felt that students between the ages of seven and fifteen should be taught for ten hours each day. The courses taught were classical literature, memorizing, and debate. During the first three years of study, students would focus on grammar and syntax. The fourth year would focus on rhetoric, the fifth on logic, "ethics in the sixth...and mathematics, that is arithmetic and geometry, music and optics. The final year is devoted to physics...included meteorology and some astronomy" (p. 7).

Another departure Ramus made from the more traditional philosophy of education was his philosophy regarding the moral nature of education. Whereas educators prior to Ramus wanted to ensure that students were trained to become "good people" as well as scholars. According to Ramus "the purpose of education was to purvey information and skills, not to be morally improving: Ramist teaching might make you a good grammarian or a good mathematician; there was no guarantee that it would make you a good person" (Grafton & Jardine, 1986, p. 170). Ironically, Ramus' literature was "used and preferred for use in the schools for younger students" (Freedman, 1993, p. 140), a time at which modern education emphasizes character building and good citizenship.

Ramus' influence particularly extended to the Puritan education of the sixteenth century. According to Adams (1990), Ramus "played a role in inculcating students with political and social values consistent with the interests of Puritan educators" (p. 562). However, Puritan educators did not agree with all of Ramus' methods and techniques. Between 1570 and 1620, Puritan education replaced many of the "pagan" illustrations in Ramus' *Dialectic* with illustrations from the Bible (Adams, 1990).

Ramus felt that his educational methods were superior to other existing methods in the sixteenth century. In fact, Ramus felt that his educational methods could not only impart knowledge to students but in fact "culminate in the individual's realization of God's logic...to know and act in imitation of the way he knows and acts. Ramus gradually developed this view to the point of considering philosophy as the way to develop 'man's divinity'" (Walton, 1970, p. 159).

### **Ramus on Rhetoric**

Ramus is most recognized not for his contributions to education, but rather for the impact he had on the study of rhetoric. It has been stated that Ramus was very interested in separating arts and fields of study. Whereas previous rhetoricians had combined rhetoric and dialectic, Ramus refused to acknowledge the relationship of the two. Ramus defined rhetoric as "the theory of writing well and speaking well, or pleading or speaking eloquently....Rhetoric teaches how to speak elegantly from tropes and figures" (Murphy, 1992, p. 63). Bizzell and Herzberg, (1990), continued to say that Ramus thought of rhetoric as "style and delivery alone" (p. 560) whereas logic is thought of by Ramus as the process of arguing appropriately (Howell, 1971).

Irwin (1941) went on to state that to Ramus "invention, disposition, and memory belonged to logic; and that elocution or style and delivery or pronunciation were the properties of rhetoric. Logic invented arguments and arranged them in methodical order for the convenience of the memory; rhetoric then decided on the best means of persuading the audience within the logic she unfolded. Rhetoric's medium or persuasion was style, pronunciation, and gesture, but the content of the argument she offered was logic" (p. 16).

This separation was once again, in Ramus' tradition, contrary to the beliefs of the classical writers. Ramus separated all possible relationships with rhetoric from the art specifically. "It seemed fallacious to him to combine rhetoric with grammar, as suggested by Quintilian, and he held it confusing to insist, with Cicero, that dialectic, philosophy, ethics, and various other subjects are essential to the orator as such. These matters, while improving to him as a man, have nothing to do with his rhetorical training. For rhetoric it is necessary only to know the rules of the art of speech so as to use them effectively, in the same way that grammar consists in the use of correct language" (Graves, 1972, p. 135).

Ramus did however admit an approval of Cicero's division of speech into the aspects of style and delivery. He said to Cicero in his *The Questions of Brutus*, "You argue very well and are keenly involved....Style is a general name meaning tropes and figures and the entire ornament of diction; it even covers delivery, as you say, and in fact covers and signifies much more than diction itself" (Murphy, 1992, p. 63). Walton (1970) indicates that Ramus did not reduce rhetoric as some would claim. He states that those that make this claim "fail to account for all three phases of Ramus' dialectic and for the systematic relationships between them" (p. 155). Walton points out that Ramus saw rhetoric not just as a method of persuading individuals, but as something deeper that assists individuals in "evaluating inter-relationships between discoveries" (p. 155).

### **Ramus' Popularity**

As a result of his variations from the classics and reformist ideas, Ramus was seen as an extremist. By taking on this role, he gained a great number of supporters as well as a wide range of opposition. Murphy (1992) illustrates the extent of those with an opinion

on Ramus when he indicates that "in the *Ramus and Talon Inventory* of Walter Ong, it takes twenty-four pages...simply to list the authors for or against Ramus" (p. ix).

Howell (1971) illustrates this diversity of opinions by discussing the opinions expressed by Thomas Reid regarding Ramus and his stances. Reid suggested at one point that Ramus was literally "a force of genius sufficient to shake the Aristotelian fabric" (p. 382). Later, Reid downplays the significance of Ramus' attacks on Aristotle as being "more specious than useful" (p. 382). Reid saw Ramus' goals as being deceitful and showy in nature as opposed to having real application.

Freedman (1993) identifies two essential reasons that Ramus was popular, specifically in the period between 1570 and 1630. First, Ramus' message on logic and rhetoric were simple and easy to understand. Secondly, his books and methods were directed toward younger students and these were the demographic group that most supported Ramus.

Following 1630, however, Ramus' works lost popularity in Europe. Freedman (1993) also offers two reasons for the decline in Ramus' notoriety. The initial reasoning was the fact that schools were moving toward teaching all aspects of philosophy. The "instruction in grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, and geometry was emphasized" (p. 141). Secondly, Freedman points to the issue that the works of Ramus simply did not have the longevity of the works of authors like Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. The excitement over Ramus' philosophy and works simply declined over time.

#### **Cicero's Influence in Rhetoric**

One reason Cicero was chosen as a basis for attack by Ramus was the influence that Cicero carried with him in the history of rhetorical theory. Rolfe (1963) indicated that Cicero was very influential in the schools of rhetoric. He, in fact, represented "sometimes a perfect character" (p. 110). He was a perfect model for rhetoricians and was frequently equated with the term eloquence. "Cicero is no longer the name of a man, but has become a synonym for eloquence" (Rolfe, 1963, p. 112). Higgenbotham (1967) went on to say that Cicero's extent of influence extended throughout the renaissance. He states that Cicero "was a dominant influence on the chief figure in this movement" (p. 25).

Cicero's influence was at a height when Ramus began his studies in the 1520's. Lectures on Cicero were a routine part of university life; younger schoolboys as well were exposed to Cicero through their study of his rhetorical precepts, and through systematic commentaries on his orations and letters" (Murphy, 1992, p. xv).

There is a problem with Cicero's rhetoric which served as part of a basis for Ramus' attack. As Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) discuss, "Cicero does not show the speakers developing and modifying their positions in the course of the debate. Hence it is difficult to point to any passage as a concise statement of Cicero's rhetorical theory" (p. 197).

Also interesting with regard to Cicero is the level of interest, regardless of the extent of respect he carried in rhetoric, that he had in rhetoric. It was not, according to Bizzell and Herzberg (1990), his first priority. "Cicero's courtroom gave him more satisfaction than his early writing on rhetoric did" (p. 195).

#### **Ramus' Attacks on Cicero**

Ramus' attacks on Cicero came in the form of a response to one of Cicero's works, possibly his most noteworthy and thorough work, that of *Orator*. "*Orator*, written in late

46 B.C....takes the form of a letter to Cicero's friend Marcus Junius Brutus in response to Brutus' request that Cicero describe the Ideal Orator" (Murphy, 1992, p. xi). By responding to Cicero's comments in the same format as they were recorded, Ramus is able to express his opinions as the character of Brutus rather than as himself. He takes on the character of Brutus as if he were responding to Cicero's original statements. Murphy (1992) also points to the fact that as *Orator* focuses on style and Ramus is interested in delivery and style, it was the ideal choice for his attacks. Also, during the sixteenth century, there was great debate over what was referred to as "Ciceronianism". The choice by Ramus to use Cicero's *Orator* as a basis for attack enabled him to "enter into the widespread controversy" (Murphy, 1992, p. xxv).

Murphy (1992) identified all of the fronts which Ramus criticizes with regard to Cicero and his precepts in *Orator*. They are:

Cicero has no theory, Cicero's errors in *Orator* are the same as the errors in his other books, Cicero has no real description of the true orator, Cicero admits he is a victim of the Asiatics yet continues to follow them, Cicero makes Style alone proper to the orator, Cicero does not understand Invention through the Topics or through the Questions of Stasis, Cicero does not understand that Syllogism is a part of Arrangement, Cicero's concept of the Five Parts of Rhetoric is false, Cicero does not understand that Decorum belongs to Dialectic rather than Rhetoric, Cicero does not understand the Figures and Tropes, Cicero does not understand that rhythm is 'a measured arrangement of speech', Cicero would be a better man if he followed nature rather than false authorities (p. xxxi).

Each of these issues will not be addressed. Only some of the larger, more pertinent factors will be discussed in this paper. In totality, Ramus not only addressed minute details of Cicero's works, but also discussed cultural issues extending to the "proper role of a writer in society" (Murphy, 1992, p. xviii).

The issues of Ramus' attack that will be discussed below are: Cicero's lack of theory, his discussions of rhetoric in general, his definition of an orator, his discussion of syllogisms and arguments, and the figures to blame for misleading Cicero - his teachers.

As most researchers agree, it is necessary to utilize a theoretical basis for propositions and discussions. Ramus felt that Cicero, though he held positive propositions, lacked the necessary theoretical basis for them. On the purposes of speaking: to teach, to delight, and to move, Ramus asks "what theory do you expound for so many arts?...how do you make these skills and methods clear?...shouldn't the qualities of body and mind and their parts be clarified in detail to satisfy the proposition and make human nature clear and accurate" (Murphy, 1992, p. 12)?

One of the issues Ramus is most noted for is his discussion of and definition of rhetoric. According to Howell (1961), Ramus had a specific "conception of the way in which the five parts of Ciceronian rhetoric should be detached from their traditional surroundings and redistributed between rhetoric and dialectic" (p. 248). While Cicero separated the parts of a speech into the parts of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, Ramus felt that only rhetoric was necessary. "Is not the whole of rhetoric though confused by the five parts, common to all questions (Murphy, 1992, p. 60). He went on to say that "because you scorn memory as common, you must by the same reasoning scorn invention, arrangement, style, and delivery, since they are all alike common to all things" (p. 61).



Ramus spends the majority of his criticism of Cicero on the topic of their differing definitions of an orator and the questions that an orator should answer. While both agree on the use of a grand style of delivery. Ramus wrote to Cicero "I do not oppose you here....because the audience is generally dull and slow-witted, like a bad horse which does nothing unless spurred, I confess that grandeur and majesty of speech are necessary" (Murphy, 1992, p. 10).

Cicero wrote that the orator is limited in scope only to style and delivery. He also describes orators as good men. Ramus felt that Cicero's definition was lacking. He believed that Cicero was "describing not a common orator, but a most rounded and highly learned man, conversant in all the arts....You wish to fashion a political being, complete in every way; in naming this man an orator, you are seriously wrong" (Murphy, 1992, p. 24).

In Ramus' point of view, Cicero digressed seriously in his definition of an orator. Ramus states in his attack that Cicero's definition of an orator digresses in that it does not equate with the definitions of past orators of Greece and Rome and that Cicero's definition ignores the significance of the epideictic style (Murphy, 1992).

Ramus also claims that Cicero's questions for an orator to answer are flawed. Cicero believed that an orator, in presentations should answer the questions "Whether it was done?", "What was done?", and "What was its nature?". In Ramus' point of view, these questions are not necessary. According to Ramus, "I ask, 'where is it?', 'when will it come?', 'where is it going?', 'how many parts does it have?', 'of what is it made?', 'why is it?', my inquiry makes no use of any of your three" (Murphy, 1992, p. 45).

A fourth major criticism that Ramus has of Cicero is his discussion of arguments. In his *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*, Ramus states that "Cicero has no statement of fact which does not lay down arguments and reasons for the subjects and which does not apply syllogisms and argumentations" (Ramus, 1549, p. 576). While Ramus felt that Cicero ignored syllogisms in the arrangement of arguments, Ramus claimed that "arrangement is twofold: one concerns individual arguments, and another concerns complex arguments. The former uses syllogisms for judging every subject, the latter uses method for clearer understanding....From the theory of syllogisms dialectic teaches us the rule for applying the most sound and consistent judgment so that we may determine which things are true and which things are false, that is which are truly good, evil, useful, useless, noble, disgraceful, just unjust, desirable, undesirable, sound and unsound, or, on the other hand, which are falsely said to have such qualities" (Murphy, 1992, p. 52).

As opposed to his attacks on Quintilian and Aristotle, Ramus, in his criticism of Cicero, does not blame Cicero himself for his false beliefs and incorrect propositions. Ramus does not blame Cicero personally, but rather blames his teachers and their poor direction of Cicero for his lack of a "correct" understanding of his topics. He advises Cicero to return to nature for guidance rather than looking to his teachers of the past. Ramus felt that Cicero's incorrect perceptions did not "derive from your critical thinking, rather I truly believe that they derive from Aristotle and from the schools of the other rhetoricians whom you consider here your mentors....O Marcus Cicero, you would have been a thoroughly excellent and admirable man if you had followed nature as your leader rather than the opinion of many men" (Murphy, 1992, p. 136). Ramus blames "Aristotle

for confusing the principles of invention, then adds that 'Cicero and Quintilian on the authority of Aristotle lapse into the same confusion'" (Murphy, 1992, p. xviii).

### **Ramus' Admiration of Cicero**

As vehemently as Ramus attacked Cicero and his propositions and though he wrote extensively on Cicero (Murphy, 1992), he did not oppose Cicero on all fronts. In fact, Ramus held great admiration for Cicero in some areas. For example, Ramus believed that Cicero was a superb logician and he admired Cicero's speeches and his technique of combining logic with oratory (Murphy, 1992). While Ramus was a proponent of imitating other speakers, his emphasis on imitation was extended with regard to Cicero. Ramus advocated students imitation of Cicero's "resources of wisdom and character" (Adams, 1990, p. 558). Ramus felt that orators should strive to be like Cicero, not only with regard to style, but also follow and imitate "his prudence, his knowledge of things, and his virtues" (Murphy, 1992, p. xxiv). In fact, Ramus said that the imitation of just one of Cicero's speeches would "bear valuable fruit" (Murphy, 1992, p. xxiv).

Ramus not only encouraged others to imitate and follow Cicero's style, virtues, and knowledge, but Ramus himself drew particular themes from Cicero and endorsed them. Two themes in particular that Ramus extracted from Cicero and advocated were those of a "natural moral order" and a "will of the people" (Adams, 1990, p. 566).

The theme of a natural moral order implies that there is a bond between people and food. Ramus purports that things are not simply created, but rather they are a part of nature.

The second theme of the will of the people emphasizes that people "have a right to position...consistent with Puritan interests" (Adams, 1990, p. 566). As was stated earlier in this paper, Ramus was a major force in Puritan education. His support of this theme was part of that force that he had in the Puritan movement.

### **Conclusion**

A question that must be asked after Ramus' vehement attacks against Cicero is how could Ramus both admire and attack Cicero? The answer comes from Murphy (1992) in that Ramus "blamed all of Cicero's faults on his teachers and assigning all his virtues to Cicero himself" (p. xxix). Ramus said that "[T]hose very few things of which some of us do not approve, are entirely from your teachers" (Murphy, 1992, p. xxix).

Although Ramus attacks the beliefs and propositions of Cicero in much the same ways that he attacked Aristotle and Quintilian there are differences in Ramus' methods against Cicero and his criticisms of others. Whereas, in his attacks against Aristotle and Quintilian, Ramus made his criticisms directly, in those against Cicero, Ramus took on the character of another. It appears that Ramus did not wish to criticize Cicero directly even though Cicero died almost 1600 years earlier.

Also, Ramus did not place the blame for Cicero's beliefs squarely on his shoulders as he did when criticizing Aristotle and Quintilian. Instead, Ramus took the opportunity to again attack Aristotle through Cicero. He found fault with Cicero, but seemingly made a point to stress the fact that Cicero was not to be held accountable for his shortcomings as Ramus saw them. Cicero was merely an unsuspecting follower of Aristotle. Ramus felt Cicero was simply naive in believing Aristotle. Cicero's faults were not seen as being of his own making. Rather, they resulted from his belief in Aristotle, an individual that Ramus saw as having excessive faults.

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