

Zenón Luis-Martínez, ed. 2016.
*Abraham Fraunce. The Shepherds' Logic and
Other Dialectical Writings.*
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As the rear cover blurb proclaims, this volume is the first published critical edition of the three works by Abraham Fraunce (1559?–1593?) on the art of logic contained in the manuscript preserved in the British Library as Add MS 34361. It is to Luis-Martínez's great credit that he has made these little read texts available in book form to a prospective audience which would hitherto either have had to make the trip to Euston Road or apply to Saint Louis University for a copy of Sister Mary M. McCormick's (1968) unpublished critical edition of the same three texts. Luis-Martínez (3) pays due tribute to McCormick's work, but his own edition will henceforth become the standard *Shepherds' Logic* for generations to come. In this sense it is no great exaggeration to say that Luis-Martínez is a twenty-first century counterpart to the great nineteenth and early twentieth-century philologist-editors of early modern English rhetorical texts. As Luis-Martínez will probably be the first to admit, the texts presented here are not of the stature or importance of, say, Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553, 1560) or George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), which found their editorial champions in G. H. B. Mair (1909) and Gladys Willcock and Alice Walker (1936), respectively, although Fraunce himself, Ramists in general and, perhaps, Luis-Martínez might object to my bracketing of Fraunce's logical writings with others on rhetoric; but like Francis Bacon's fly on the axle-tree of history, Fraunce and countless other second or third-division authors were capable of kicking up an awful lot of dust, and it is often the common dust of the literary journeymen rather than the glittering pinnacles of high art rising above it which is of greater historical interest.

The major difference between McCormick's and Luis-Martínez's editions is the latter's decision to provide a modern-spelling version, which, we are told (49), is the result of collating the original

manuscript with McCormick's old-spelling edition and parallel passages in Fraunce's *The Lawyers' Logic* (1588). Perhaps unnecessarily—we have been brought up quite happily on modern-spelt Shakespeare, Sidney and Donne, while some academic journals insist on modern spelling for quotations from original sources—Luis-Martínez justifies his decision by adducing the similar *modus operandi* of recent editions of Puttenham's *The Art of English Poetry* (2007) and William Scott's *The Model of Poesy* (2013), the idea being that modern spelling will neither offend the specialist nor put off the "beginning graduate student." That said, modern-spelling editions can run into difficulties when differentiating between issues of orthography and morphology. Words as ordinary as "moe" (more) and "fet" (fetched) are here transcribed as found, and the reader is referred to the Glossary, usefully appended to the texts; but would any harm be done if they were given their modern forms in the transcription?

Luis-Martínez's thorough and up-to-date Introduction means that few will need to consult what he calls deferentially McCormick's "illuminating account" (3) of the Ramist context. Based on thorough knowledge of recent Ramus-related scholarship, all duly listed in the comprehensive Bibliography, it provides a useful account of English Ramism; says all that can be said about Fraunce's life, works and literary legacy; considers carefully the vexed issue of dating (opting for 1583 or very early 1584 for *The Shepherds' Logic*); analyses the evolution of Fraunce's logical thought from *The Shepherds' Logic* to *The Lawyers' Logic*; discusses the relationship between dialectic (the second art of Ramist logic, the first being invention) and rhetoric with reference to *The Shepherds' Logic* and Fraunce's *Arcadian Rhetoric* (1588), and between logic, poetry and poetics with reference to Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherds' Calendar* and *The Shepherds' Logic*; briefly introduces the two other logical texts that complete British Library Add MS 34361, namely, "Of the Nature and Use of Logic" and "A Brief and General Comparison Between Ramus his Logic and that of Aristotle"; and finally explains the procedures followed in editing the texts.

Several points of interest emerge from all this which illuminate various aspects of English literary and intellectual culture in the 1580s. The failure of Fraunce's logical writings to secure the patronage of Sir Philip Sidney (like him, a former pupil of

Shrewsbury School), who in 1585 made another Cambridge Ramist, William Temple, his personal secretary, is a reminder of the precarious hand-to-mouth existence of university graduates with no, or only very tenuous, personal connections. That two graduates should vie for patronage on the strength of Ramist logical works (Temple's edition and commentary on Ramus's *Dialectica* was published in 1584) is an indication of how hot an issue among the intelligentsia of the day was the Ramus versus Aristotle debate, which from our vantage might seem like a storm in a cold cup of tea. In this respect, Fraunce's anti-scholastic, anti-monkish and therefore anti-Catholic invective, which Luis-Martínez suggests (146n7) was inherited from Thomas Norton's 1561 translation of Calvin's *Institution of Christian Religion*, was perhaps too trenchant for Sidney's patrician demeanor and courtly *savoir faire*. On the other hand, in the broader context of philosophical history, the empiricism of Fraunce's apparently original account of logic's origins anticipates what would later distinguish British thought from the continental tradition. In a trio of writings that draw heavily on Ramus's own works, on Friedrich Beurhaus's two volumes of commentary of them, and, particularly, on Johannes Piscator's *In P. Rami Dialecticam Animadversiones* (1580), which steered something of a middle course between Ramus and Aristotle, to come upon what seems to be Fraunce's own voice in the following passage from "Of the Nature and Use of Logic" (recommended as entertaining first port of call for readers before embarking on *The Shepherds' Logic*) is a welcome breath of fresh air:

That therefore is true Logic, which is agreeable to reason imprinted in man, and apparent in the writings, arguments and disputations of the most excellent in every kind, as Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Homer, Virgil and such like, whose particular examples collected by observation have brought this art to perfection, and so in others. For what first taught astronomer's the number and course of the planets? Sense. What first told the natural philosopher that a lion feareth a cock, an elephant hateth a rhinoceros? Experience. What made the physician believe that rhubarb was good to purge, that eupatorium cured the infected liver? Daily observation in daily particulars. (146)

Indeed, if Luis-Martínez's Introduction were to be criticized, it would be for the absence of any appraisal of Fraunce's own contributions to English Ramism: his debts are clear, as are the development of his Ramist ideas, but his own legacy as a thinker is

never given succinct treatment; rather it is left to the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. A case in point is Fraunce's tendency to simplify his sources: for if one of the main goals of Ramism was to order, systematize and simplify the diverse Aristotelian writings on logic and dialectic, Fraunce simplifies (and occasionally reorders) the simplifiers. Whether this is due to lack of energy or serves some philosophical agenda is a moot point which might have deserved some consideration.

If Ramism was markedly Protestant, it was also democratic where other rhetorics and poetics were aristocratic. One of its chief claims was that logic was the art of arts, the mental superstructure which enabled and gave backbone to other arts such as rhetoric and grammar, but also, as the passage quoted above attests, astronomy, natural philosophy, medicine, as well as humbler fields of activity like shoe-mending and carting (157). Whereas the Ciceronian myth of language as recycled by Thomas Wilson viewed eloquence as a gift of God bequeathed to a privileged few and, in Puttenham, none more privileged than Queen Elizabeth I, to the Ramist logic was natural in origin and, since all men can reason, universal. Of course, some men are better at it than others, and a few even excel; and it is the writings of the excellent which repay study and serve as models to help the rest of us improve. What is truly novel about Fraunce's *Shepherds' Logic* is that by implication, to the conventional list of Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Homer and Virgil it adds Edmund Spenser as a further "excellent," albeit vernacular, author. And it is in this regard that Luis-Martínez articulates his central thesis: "Fraunce's logic for shepherds is chiefly a book for poets and about poetry, a first-hand document showing how scholarly training in the arts of discourse could enlighten the composition and interpretation of poetic texts" (3). On the assumption that by "arts of discourse" (which on Ramist terms should strictly speaking be subordinate) is intended the art of logic, Luis-Martínez's contention is that Fraunce's work could offer guidance in what Ramists would call the "genesis" (composition) and "analysis" (interpretation) of poetic texts. By analyzing the "invention" and the "judgement" (or dialectic) of Spenser's *The Shepherds' Calendar*, potential poets would learn on the one hand how even the modest shepherd was possessed of natural reason and, on the other, how an excellent poet could, through language, render that pastoral logic to the pitch of perfection. Luis-Martínez further suggests that pastoral's

conventional identification with the middle or plain style made it a particularly appropriate model of “plainness and accuracy of expression” (38), a point which might need to be qualified in the light of William Webbe’s view in *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586) that pastoral’s “cloak of simplicity” was a ruse for fabricating rather more complex allegorical significances.¹

Nonetheless, Luis-Martínez’s thesis is plausible, yet there is one dimension to pastoral which is overlooked but may account for Fraunce’s sustained engagement with the mode, as noted elsewhere (41). For as Louis A. Montrose has argued, literary pastoralism, which began to flourish in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, was a means of “covert political communication” and “a mode of ornamental self-display”; its pastorals were “coded performances in which a community of speakers and auditors, writers and readers, participate in a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, in a process of social signification,” one strand of which was the “metaphorical identification between otiose shepherds and leisured gentlemen” (1983, 427, 448, 431). Viewed in this light, Fraunce’s logic may have been intended for courtiers *sub specie* shepherds, in which case the generally levelling aetiology of Ramist logic would come into conflict with the narrowly elitist ambition of Elizabethan pastoral. Another more straightforward and supplementary thesis might build on the parallels between the (almost exactly contemporaneous) vogues for Euphuism and pastoral and contend that Fraunce’s recruitment of Spenser’s work was merely an attempt to cash in on a bankable title: as with “Euphues,” “anatomy” or “wit,” any work with the word “shepherd” or, after Sidney, “Arcadia” on the title page (where authors’ names were generally absent) was certain to attract an audience.² Thus, the whole conception of *The Shepherds’ Logic* might have been a plain, cynical and practical exercise in self-promotion: sexy logic, sexy title... laughing all the way to patronage (with a bit of luck, but not in Fraunce’s case).

As for *The Shepherds’ Logic* itself, one suspects it is of less interest for what it says than for what it signifies as historical dust. If the

¹ Webbe’s *Discourse*, in a new critical edition by Sonia Hernández-Santano, has been published in the same series as the book under review (Webbe 2016). See also pages 239–41 in the current issue of *Sederi* for a review of that edition.

² On the publishing craze for *Euphues*, see Kesson (2014).

Ramist-Aristotelian controversy reads today like an early modern precursor to any of the countless theoretical spats which beleaguer and often disfigure the academic project, at times Fraunce's own work is reminiscent of those jargon-heavy articles whose theoretical convolutions too often tend to obfuscate the blindingly obvious. It is also testimony to the pitfalls attending over-zealous taxonomy: some categories, for example, the argument "Of the thing caused" (76–79), are so capacious as to lose all analytical utility; while others, such as the arguments "Of the Subject," "Of the Adjunct" or "Of comparison" (80–85, 92–93), or "Of the Like" (96–98), verge on the purportedly different and secondary arts of grammar and elocution, respectively. More crucially, logic's purported status as the "art of arts" relies on the question-begging premise that there can be thought without language ("reasoning may be without talking," 57), notwithstanding France's discussion of judgement (115), which practically conflates grammar with logic. Some of Fraunce's examples of false syllogisms in his chapter "Of the Elenchs" will raise a smile, my favorite being "God is everywhere;|Everywhere is an adverb;|Therefore [...]" (141–43). I leave the conclusion to the reader.

Luis-Martínez's edition comes complete with footnotes citing Fraunce's sources and three appendices, the first including pertinent extracts from *The Lawyers' Logic*, the second a catalogue of all the quotations from Spenser, and the third a comparative table of the contents of Fraunce's logical writings and Ramus/Piscator's *Dialecticae libri duo*. The Index is full and helpful. All in all, for the foreseeable future Luis-Martínez's meticulous, ground-breaking edition will be the obligatory point of departure for all students and scholars with an interest in Fraunce's logical writings, as well as a providing a useful introduction to English Ramism in general. The book is a credit to English Renaissance studies in Spain, and Luis-Martínez is to be congratulated.

A few errata in no way diminish the magnitude of Luis-Martínez's achievement: "MacIlmaine" in the Bibliography appears as "McIlmaine" in the Index, and is spelt inconsistently in the Introduction; the tabulation of the argument of the adjunct (84) should read "Adjunct" rather than "Subject"; in the Glossary, "Modals" is out of alphabetical order.

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