# The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

John C. Brereton, Editor

*Pittsburgh Series in Composition,*
*Literacy, and Culture*

*David Bartholomae and*
*Jean Ferguson Carr,*
*Editors*

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*To the memory of*
*Mina P. Shaughnessy*

# *Contents*

# *Preface*

RECENT YEARS HAVE WITNESSED A RESURGENCE OF interest in the history of English studies, part of an attempt to understand how the present got to be the way it is. In composition studies this work has taken many forms: the two-volume history by James Berlin; monographs on a single aspect of rhetoric's history like those by Anne Ruggles Gere, Nan Johnson, and Sharon Crowley; historical articles by Robert Connors and Donald Stewart; and book-length analyses relying on history, like those by Susan Miller. These and other scholars and critics have different purposes and subject matter, but they all seem to gravitate toward the formative years of English as a discipline, during the last third of the nineteenth century. Their constant return to beginnings recalls the way French historians are continually reinterpreting the French Revolution. They do it not in order to achieve any kind of "fixed" understanding of the historical circumstances, but because the events of 1789 are the site of the French citizens' sense of what France is all about; as France changes, so does the French historian's search for a usable past. It may be that scholars of English studies in general and composition in particular, in their modest way, share this characteristic with the French; they will always be defining themselves by their relationship to their origins. (I am also aware that some regard the French fascination with their revolution as little short of an obsession.)

To aid this ongoing reexamination of origins, this book gathers together in one place some of the major documents in the establishment of composition studies. Many scholars have used some of these documents in research libraries and university archives; now a wider audience can have easy access to original sources. For literature, Gerald Graff and Michael Warner have led the way in producing *The Origins of Literary*

*Studies in America: A Documentary Anthology.* I hope this collection can serve the same purpose as theirs, to supply researchers, students, and all those interested in the history of English composition with some of the most significant documents in readily accessible form. A good many of these original documents are hard to find. Some exist only in a few large research libraries; many are old and crumbling books printed on acid paper. Even the best research libraries do not have them all.

Now is a particularly appropriate time for such a collection. The past fifteen or twenty years have witnessed what seems to be a distinct stage in the recovery of the history of the discipline. In 1991 Robert Connors and Nan Johnson each mapped out two distinct phases of historical research: an early period, dating roughly from 1935 to 1955, which included historical research mainly conducted by members of speech departments, and the current one, beginning in about 1970, which has been dominated by composition scholars (Connors, "Writing" 55; Johnson 7–14; North, using different criteria, also discerns two "generations" of historians, 66–68). The 1970–90 research into the origins of college composition is rooted in the dramatic changes that occurred within composition studies during the 1970s, when the field first began to cohere as a distinct academic discipline. New thinking about the composing process, about teaching writing to entirely different groups of students, and about the purview of composition research reinvigorated the field and gave it a renewed sense of professional standing. Composition specialists of the 1970s and 1980s, eager to distinguish what was best about their field, quite naturally emphasized the change from poor composition teaching to good. In some cases they frankly acknowledged a "propagandistic agenda" to become "reformers as well as scholars" (Connors, cited in North 87; Vitanza 79–83). In an attempt to separate the good from the bad, and to disown what they saw as generations of unproductive teaching and textbook writing, some condemned the great mass of composition work between 1875 and 1960 with the derogatory term "current-traditional rhetoric."

In both eras, 1935–55 and 1970–90, most historians have lamented the transition from traditional rhetoric to modern composition that took place in the late nineteenth century. To them it represented a significant decline, a loss of rhetoric's ancient place as a master discipline of the humanities. One reason for such a view is that most of these historians have been genuine rhetoricians, steeped in the classical tradition or at

least impressed enough by it to give it great respect. Naturally, their vantage point encouraged them to see the greatness of rhetoric, its decline in the nineteenth century, and its potential for revival. No one embodies the feeling of decline more than Albert Kitzhaber, whose brilliant 1953 dissertation on nineteenth-century college rhetoric was for so long a prime source for composition's early history. Because of Kitzhaber's great influence, most historians have regarded rhetoric as the ideal, composition as a fall from grace, and the last two decades as the beginnings of a great recovery.

While this perspective has helped colleges to regard composition as a distinct discipline, by letting some insights in it has had to exclude some others. A term like "current-traditional" by its very nature lumps together a vast array of practices in the interest of making a larger point. And it discourages us from looking at a whole range of educational practices that were occurring in those supposedly weak composition courses that proliferated for nearly a century. In other words, interpreting the history of composition as a loss and then a revival of rhetoric has given a partial view, a view that explicitly devalues almost a century of teaching and learning. And an unwieldy name like current-traditional, one that almost scorns precision, is about on a par with "Dark Ages" as a satisfactory investigative or taxonomic tool.

The 1970–90 stage of historical research devoted much more concentrated attention to theory than to practice. One reason for this disparity, no doubt, lies in the fact that theory is easier to get at. Many books and articles embody it, while few tell of practice, especially of what actually happened in the classroom. Another reason lies in a genuine interest in the philosophical underpinnings of nineteenth-century rhetoric, as evidenced by Nan Johnson's and Sharon Crowley's important books on the subject. Still another reason stems from a desire to return to a time when rhetoric was a fully theorized discipline rather than an eclectic assemblage of lore and experimentation. Finally, the interest in theory connects to the way American English departments grew fascinated with literary theory during the 1970s and 1980s. Whatever the source, a good many historians have tended to intellectualize; eager to establish the field as a worthwhile enterprise, we gravitated toward theories, philosophies, and ideologies. We looked for psychologies buried in theories of rhetoric; we pieced out intellectual stances from textbooks; we inferred philosophies from teaching materials. Over and over again we probed,

interrogated, and erected theories, trying to determine an underlying philosophy. This yielded excellent results; we now know a good deal more about composition instruction than, say, instruction in English literature. In fact, without quite setting out to do so, historians of composition have created the single most impressive body of knowledge about any discipline in higher education, a fact that seems to surprise historians of other fields (Turner 94–95). Still, in searching for the ideologies, historians sometimes ignored the actuality of the experience of students and teachers, curriculum planners and administrators. Indeed, we rarely looked at the writing itself. Many took textbooks as the embodiments of courses, rather than as necessary props, and looked on administrative plans as the curricular structures. In short, what often got left out was the detail, the everyday fabric of history as lived by the student, the teacher, and the general public. Some historians seemed unconcerned with this loss of detail, while others saw its absence as only temporary, until "after the major currents of the age—important figures and theories—have been mapped out" (Connors, cited in North 73). Now, after so much good work has been done and so much territory has been mapped, may be the time to begin another phase.

This book sets out to supply some—but by no means all—of the connections between theory and practice. The documents reprinted here reveal a number of hitherto hidden points: most of them were excellent examples of rhetoric themselves, attempts at persuasion rather than transparent statements of fact to be taken at face value. (It's a nice irony that historians have sometimes underestimated the rhetorical stance of early textbooks, journal articles, statements of purpose, and manifestos. [For examples of some who *are* aware of the rhetoric, see Berlin, "Revisionary History" 48–50; Schilb 30–31; and Vitanza 83–84.]) The documents also reveal a startling degree of self-consciousness, which has often gone unremarked; early composition theorists and practitioners were very aware of what they were doing, and often made quite conscious choices. Many early-twentieth-century practitioners knew their history. The professional literature abounds with references to progenitors like Alexander Bain, to the inauguration of the Harvard writing program, and to the fading influence of traditional rhetoric. And the documents display a great deal of diversity, which may belie the notion that things were so uniform—or so uniformly bad. Within late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century professional discourse one may observe different schools form, join forces, and

split apart. As those who have looked closely at the sources know well, it's possible to see a diversity of voices and a conflict of different theories and practices. Also, this volume prints some of the papers themselves, to get at least some idea of what the discussion was about. The lack of these papers in the histories is something of a scandal; even though any piece of student writing cannot fully be understood outside of its context, it seems crucial to know what students were writing, what examples of student prose nineteenth-century scholars and administrators were discussing, and how the writing itself was represented to contemporary eyes.

This book presents the printed record, the key documents known to practitioners at the time. It is not intended to be a "secret history" of composition instruction. University archives have large quantities of student essays, course syllabi, lecture notes, and teaching materials. Though to teachers nothing seems more ephemeral than student papers, students did save them and eventually donate them to university archives. (That a large number of students thought their themes were worth preserving should be a sobering thought to today's teachers penning comments in the margins.) Untold numbers of student papers sit in American college and university archives. These repositories vary widely, from the superb facilities at Harvard's Pusey Library, to a section of the library at Wellesley, to a dreary basement at the University of Minnesota, to a back room full of uncatalogued boxes at New York Theological Seminary. It is in these archives, with their unfailingly helpful staffs, that we will find a fuller selection of student voices, of class notes, of the real record of what the compositions looked like. I have been in archives and found and read many papers, but though this volume prints a range of compositions, I have deliberately taken them from printed rather than manuscript sources; I wanted to publish the public record, what composition specialists said to each other, to their students, and to concerned citizens. Most of the documents here were *not* obscure at the time; the majority were part of the common knowledge of composition teachers and administrators. They were once available for many to read; now they are again.

One limitation that stems from my choice of the public record is that some important kinds of writing get less emphasis. For instance, the most widely circulated professional documents of the time ignore important trends in writing instruction by women: the writing groups chronicled so well by Ann Ruggles Gere, for instance ("Kitchen"). And a great

deal of what we would now regard as postsecondary writing was done by immigrants in settlement houses, by men and women in Bible colleges and normal schools, and at historically black institutions. It is clear that many of these groups took goals and methods from white, mainstream universities, but we are learning that some students and some teachers asserted themselves in new and important ways. So my decision to include the major texts of the time, the pieces that aroused the most debate and response, should in no way suggest that I have presented the whole story. The documents I reprint were the ones most fully discussed by the profession at large; scholars are beginning to uncover new and different documents that paint a fuller, more varied picture (Hollis, "Liberating Voices"). There is lots of exciting work ahead in this field.

I am all too aware of the other limitations of this book. The selection is inevitably partial; I have had to be content with portions of key books, all the while knowing that nothing can replace the entire text (and the look and feel) of the original. I am comforted by knowing that many of the major texts of the period are still available at research libraries. The selection is partial in another way too: I concentrate on the first-year composition course, the centerpiece of writing instruction for well over a century. But one could easily print student writing done outside the standard composition class: lab reports, research papers, class notes, remedial writing exercises, advanced composition themes, technical reports, forensics, journalism, diary entries, college magazine pieces, letters home. That anthology would be as thick as anything collected from beginning composition and a good bit more varied. First-year composition came to dominate teaching and professional discourse about college writing instruction, but it in no way dominated writing.

## *Principles of Selection and Editing*

I CHOSE WHAT I considered representative texts from the era, but since I deliberately printed somewhat larger selections from the least accessible documents, length of excerpt does not always correlate to its absolute importance. I have tried to reproduce the original documents precisely, even when this led to certain inconsistencies. For instance, I have retained the original punctuation, spelling, and methods of citation, which changed considerably between 1875 and 1925 and are not always

in accordance with modern practices. In a very few cases I have silently corrected obvious typographical errors.

When possible, complete sections have been reprinted. Minor omissions as well as longer omissions are marked with ellipses. All notes appear in the original except for those marked [ED.], but in accordance with modern practice the notes are numbered consecutively and placed at the end of the excerpted section.

In determining the most useful sections of early readers, I decided not to reprint entire essays, since they are usually readily available. Prefatory materials and/or tables of contents have been reprinted, keeping the page numbers in order to indicate the original length of each essay or section.

Throughout the book I have taken care to distinguish between the authors' citations and my own cross references. Within the selections themselves, all page citations are as in the original. Whenever the citation refers to a selection that appears elsewhere in this book, I add the relevant page number in brackets. Outside of the selections (i.e., in introductory material), I have referenced selections that appear elsewhere in this book by citing chapter as well as page.

# *Acknowledgments*

THIS BOOK GREW OUT OF MY LONG-STANDING INTEREST in the history of writing instruction, an interest that led to my 1985 collection, *Traditions of Inquiry.* Over the past fifteen years I have spent more time than I can count in college archives, in periodical rooms, or in tracking down old textbooks. Often it has seemed a solitary occupation, but I've been happy with the knowledge that a good many others have seen fit to engage themselves in this vocation as well. Their work has given me encouragement as well as a good sense of what needed to be done.

The model for this collection of documents is Gerald Graff and Michael Warner's 1989 collection *The Origins of Literary Studies in America.* And over the years my conversations with Gerald Graff about the history of English studies have been enjoyable and helpful. He has been a strong supporter of this project from the very beginning.

Plenty of friends have helped and encouraged me, some I'm sure in ways they didn't even suspect. I simply list their names in thanks: Lynn Z. Bloom, Barbara Couture, Carol Hartzog, Winifred Horner, Nan Johnson, Erika Lindemann, Richard Lloyd-Jones, Donald McQuade, Sharon Quiroz, Hephzibah Roskelly, Mariolina Salvatori, Nancy Sommers, and Edward White. Scholars of composition studies have built a rich body of knowledge that I have drawn upon in ways that go beyond mere citations in the body of the text. In particular, this book is indebted to the work of the late James Berlin, Susan Miller, and the late Donald Stewart. And most of all, Robert J. Connors, both in person and in his many superb articles, has pointed to key issues in composition's historiography.

David Bartholomae first put the idea for this book in my head, and he and Jean Ferguson Carr have helped every step of the way, from cloudy

idea to rough proposal to early drafts to final copy. A writer could not ask for smarter, more supportive editors. At the University of Pittsburgh Press, Elizabeth Detwiler provided exemplary guidance through a difficult and lengthy editorial and production process.

This book has benefitted from close readings by friends who devoted time and energy to helping me get the history right. I particularly want to thank John Burt, Neal Bruss, Richard Marius, Linda Peterson, and David Russell for being willing to read the whole manuscript and give me their reactions. My best critic, as always, has been Virginia Lieson Brereton, a writing teacher, a writer, and a historian of education whose questions and close readings have improved this book immeasurably. I hope I have incorporated all my readers' best suggestions, but of course I take full responsibility for any failings the finished book may have.

At the University of Massachusetts at Boston I have been surrounded by some of the best (and nicest) writing scholars in the country, and lunches, coffee breaks, and hallway conversations with Pamela Annas, Elsa Auerbach, Ann E. Berthoff,[1] Neal Bruss, Judith Goleman, Susan Horton, Eleanor Kutz, Donaldo Macedo, Margaret Mansfield, Louise Smith, and Vivian Zamel have been a source of support and enlightenment. Parts of this book were presented, in different form, at the UMass/Boston graduate colloquium series, and the responses of colleagues and students have made it stronger.

At UMass my research assistants have made my task much easier. For one semester Anya Bonduransky and Sandra Howland helped gather information. For three semesters Coleen O'Hanley and Helen Price have provided superb assistance with everything from fact checking to copyediting to proofreading. Hundreds of places throughout the book are better because they cared.

A book like this also depends on great libraries and their staffs. I first started work at the University of Michigan's superb libraries. Most of the additional work took place at the Boston Public Library, the New York Public Library, the archives of the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin, Boston University's Mugar Library, the Library of Congress, the libraries at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and at Boston, and most of all, the Pusey and Widener Libraries of Harvard University.[2]

Finally, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the National Endowment for

the Humanities for an award that provided much-needed time and the University of Massachusetts at Boston for a sabbatical leave in 1991.

## NOTES

1. Ann E. Berthoff also gave me the copy of Woolley's *Handbook of Composition* her father used as a student at Cornell College in 1915.

2. Part of my enjoyment in working in the Widener Library is that so many of its books were once owned by the very people I am writing about. Thus the copy of Adams Sherman Hill's *Principles of Rhetoric* I used had been President Charles W. Eliot's own, with Hill's compliments written on the flyleaf.

# *The Origins of Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925*

# I

# Introduction

THE COMPOSITION COURSE AS WE KNOW IT TODAY, like the university that teaches it, is a product of late-nineteenth-century America. Both began life in the 1870s, in the age of invention that saw the birth of the hydraulic elevator, the electric light, the telephone, and the phonograph, and both were shaped by the reform impulses that pervaded late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America during the Progressive Era.

Right after the Civil War the American college (there were no universities) was an institution in danger of becoming irrelevant to a rapidly changing nation. The small number of students who attended college were drawn mostly from a fairly narrow range of society, and the collegiate curriculum did not do much to broaden their horizons. Almost all colleges put their students through a four-year program of required courses. There were no majors, hardly any electives, no sections, and precious little course work outside of classics, mathematics, and some science. It was hard to find a course in English literature, history, or a modern language. Classes were conducted by the recitation method, with students mastering a text for homework and "reciting" it, upon the teacher's demand, in class. There was no discussion, no question period, and lectures were reserved mostly for seniors. The professors were rarely professional educators or scholars. Faculty were often Protestant clergymen; the college was dominated by the president, who customarily taught the seniors a course in "moral philosophy," a mix of religion and ethics. The purpose of the college was to build character, not to supply useful knowledge. This school, dominant in 1860, would be swept away by 1900.

The rise of the university took place very rapidly; in a single genera-

tion, from 1870 to 1900, the American college moved from a unified small, elite school to a diverse, large, fragmented university organized by academic disciplines. In the field of writing instruction, it is tempting to make a neat distinction between the old college and the new university on the basis of orality versus literacy. The evidence shows that orality was highly regarded in the pre-1860 college, while literacy became increasingly important from 1860 on. Oral examinations in the college were replaced by written ones in the university; public oral discourse gave way to written compositions. A curriculum that honored speech by providing opportunities for declamations, disputations, and debates became heavily weighted toward writing, toward the page of text. But such a distinction overlooks how large a role literacy played in the old college; it seems more accurate to say that the nineteenth-century college had a more balanced mix of oral and written work, and that the new university dropped much of the oral emphasis and consequently valued the written word much more. Plenty of writing took place in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colleges. At Yale in 1766, "compositions" were handed in to the instructor before they were delivered orally (Wozniak 8). And the University of North Carolina's archives contain many early nineteenth-century compositions (Lindemann, "Student Writing"). Lab notes and lecture notes were rigorously kept. Attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation were handled every day through work in Latin and Greek. In fact, the old college was much more language-based than the new university; classics masters taught grammar thoroughly and exactly, paying meticulous attention to detail through class exercises, recitations, and written compositions in Greek and Latin and in written translations into English. Proponents claimed that the ancient languages provided mental discipline and trained the powers of the mind, pointing to the extremely close attention to the details of language, both oral and written, that characterized college Greek and Latin classes.

Though the old college stressed language study, English rarely had an official presence in the curriculum. A few institutions made provision for a professor of English or belles lettres, and most colleges fostered speech making, essay writing, and literary readings in a host of extracurricular student-run clubs, but most colleges in 1860 had no course in composition or in English literature. By 1900, on the other hand, every college had an array of composition and English literature courses. What happened? The creation of the modern university transformed writing

instruction. Composition rose as an academic subject with the new university, and it took on the special characteristics it did because of the way the new university was formed. Of all the complex factors that influenced the university's formation, four stand out: the influence of the German university model, the changing nature of knowledge, the dramatic expansion of higher education, and the efforts of a few visionaries to update the university's purview. All of these factors were to shatter traditional rhetoric and to aid in the emergence of modern composition.

## *The German Model*

BEGINNING IN THE EARLY nineteenth century, Americans in search of advanced degrees went to Germany and returned imbued with the university ideal. The German universities they studied at stressed research, the creation rather than the transmission of knowledge. In 1876 Johns Hopkins University was founded on the German model and overnight became the single most potent force for upgrading the educational standards of American scholarship.

The ten thousand or so Americans who studied in Germany between 1815 and 1915 (Diehl 1) quite naturally imported key parts of the German university when they could: lectures rather than recitations (lectures in American colleges had been mostly reserved for seniors); seminars for truly advanced work, including graduate instruction; and a model of conceptualizing academic subject matter that emphasized freedom of inquiry, fostered a high degree of specialization, and stressed the links between research and teaching. This German influence helped shape the American graduate schools, but it had a whole series of side effects on undergraduate rhetoric and composition programs. First of all, it encouraged specialization in place of breadth. The old liberal arts ideal stressed the essential unity of knowledge, a common set of courses, and a reliance on the tried-and-true classics of antiquity. The German model stressed innovation, electives, and specialization. Following this German ideal (if not the exact model, which was altered as it crossed the Atlantic), professors immersed themselves in their studies or laboratories to produce research, the disciplines organized themselves on scholarly rather than pedagogical lines, and universities slowly abandoned much low-level teaching to an underclass of instructors and graduate student

assistants. Finally, the German model did not include rhetoric; Americans interested in English studies came home with a German doctorate in philology, not rhetoric. And writing instruction was missing too; German (as well as most other European) universities simply did not teach composition. Students learned writing in lower schools; all who earned the coveted secondary school diploma passed a stringent series of written tests, and the tiny percentage who went on to university were usually quite competent writers. University professors did not study the process of composition, student writing style, topic selection, or audience. Germany, source of so much American scholarship, simply had no models for rhetoric and composition on the university level. Thus the adoption of the German model meant the breakup of old arrangements, and among those arrangements was the very prominent scheme of rhetorical education that would not survive the century.

## *Expansion of Knowledge*

THE SECOND ENGINE behind the growth of the new university was the dramatic expansion of knowledge, particularly in the sciences. American ingenuity and the native intelligence of people like Thomas A. Edison (who attended school for all of three months) produced a stream of wonderful inventions, while universities were producing theoretical advances at an astounding rate in biology, geology, physics, and chemistry. Specialized training in these fields required specialized knowledge, and the nineteenth century saw a protracted struggle between the proponents of a classical education (codified by the Yale report of 1828, in Hofstadter and Smith I: 275–91) and those who favored the new science-based learning. Already by 1803 the new military academy at West Point trained engineers, and the founding of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1824 and the inauguration of a new scientific curriculum at Union College in 1828 had pointed the way to the future (Rudolph, *Curriculum* 141). The forces of this expanded knowledge led to the founding in the 1840s of the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard; both offered three-year practical programs that had lower admissions standards and omitted the specialized Latin and Greek curriculum. At Lawrence the presiding genius was the great zoologist Louis Agassiz; but one of the junior faculty was

German-trained Charles William Eliot, later to be Harvard's president. On the staff at Sheffield was Daniel Coit Gilman, also German-trained, who would become the first president of Johns Hopkins. These two scientists, soon to head major universities, believed strongly in specialization, in allowing students to concentrate their studies in electives rather than forcing them to take required courses. Until the Civil War the American college had succeeded in channeling the demand for scientific training and specialization into second-class academic institutions, but the dominance of the classical curriculum would not last much longer. As Richard Ohmann claimed in "Writing and Reading, Work and Leisure," the emergence of the new university would make a traditional, unified subject like rhetoric obsolete and replace it with a new, utilitarian writing course, more attuned to the times (see also Douglas, "Rhetoric for the Meritocracy").

## *Increase in Students*

COLLEGES IN 1865 were small, hardly an important part of the American prospect. They did not play a large role in American intellectual life; that was the province of general circulation magazines, newspapers, lyceums, and theaters. Neither was culture dominated by colleges; many an eminent writer (Walt Whitman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, William Dean Howells) had never studied in one. The three traditional fields that colleges prepared for, the ministry, the bar, and medicine, all offered alternative means of certification, though naturally the college-educated still dominated. Americans were well aware that the president who saw the North through the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, an acknowledged master of eloquence, was not a college graduate.

College enrollments were relatively static in the years 1850–80, growing much less than the population. Then came the boom. Between 1890 and 1910 enrollments practically doubled, and by 1920 almost doubled again (see Veysey 4; Cremin 545; Connors, "Modern University" 80–81). This explosion of students called for a vast increase in faculty members (with a huge rise in graduate enrollments to train them). College became a much larger part of the American scene by the turn of the century; college was important and exciting, even if it still enrolled a small percentage of the population.

## *Individuals with a Vision*

THE FINAL INGREDIENT in the change stemmed from the determined efforts of many individuals to change American higher education. Laurence Veysey's *The Emergence of the American University* chronicles the efforts of the men who in the space of thirty years led their universities into a new era: Andrew White of Cornell, James Angell of Michigan, Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins, David Starr Jordan of Stanford, and many others. Already in 1862, at the height of the Civil War, farsighted congressmen had passed the Morrill Act, which provided for the establishment of land-grant universities, with special attention to agriculture and technology. (Mining, engineering, and even farming were themselves becoming complex enough that trained expertise was seen as necessary.) The 1865 founding of Cornell University, a school which promised that anyone could learn anything there, was a sign that a determined philanthropist with enough money could influence the course of education. And the individual who seems to symbolize the change the most is Charles W. Eliot, Harvard's president from 1869 to 1909, the man who transformed Harvard into a modern university. Eliot had graduated from Harvard, studied in Germany, taught chemistry at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School, then moved to the newly founded MIT. He had outlined a model of a modern university in two *Atlantic Monthly* articles (February and March 1869; excerpted in Hofstadter and Smith II: 624–41). His accession to the Harvard presidency was regarded at the time as a sign of dramatic change at America's most prestigious university.

By 1869, when Charles W. Eliot was inaugurated as Harvard's president, all the conditions were ripe for a transformation of the American college into a modern university. And with Eliot's accession came what we now know as English composition.

## *The Birth of the Modern Composition Program*

THE FIRST MODERN composition program was begun at Harvard, with President Charles W. Eliot as its sponsor and his classmate Adams Sherman Hill as its creator. Other colleges quickly followed Harvard's lead, but it is to Harvard that we must look for the rationale behind the rise of

composition. Eliot's Harvard did not introduce English composition or English literature to the American college; as documents in chapter 2 show, there was extensive instruction in rhetoric and writing at Harvard and elsewhere well before 1869. What Eliot did was to ally the modern university with a new emphasis on English and to raise writing and English literature to the level of more hallowed studies like mathematics and classics. English for Eliot was to be the modern, up-to-date equivalent of the ancient subjects, a preparation for citizenship and productive work in the modern American democracy (Douglas, "Rhetoric for the Meritocracy").

To carry out his new emphasis on English, Eliot in 1872 appointed Adams Sherman Hill, a lawyer turned newspaperman, as assistant to Harvard's Boylston Professor of Rhetoric, Francis James Child, a German-trained Ph.D. who preferred collecting ballads and researching literature to reading student themes. Hill quickly set up the first change, a placement examination in English composition, based on literary topics, with writing linked to literature. (A description of that first examination appears in chap. 2, p. 34.) In this manner English entered Harvard's extensive entrance examination schedule, and all preparatory schools had to change their curriculum to accommodate Harvard. (The documents in chap. 2 link the new placement examination with Harvard's attempt to upgrade secondary school education.)

The traditional, pre-Eliot Harvard writing program, like that at most colleges, required a mix of oral and written composition throughout all four years of college, with a single rhetoric course to provide a theoretical grounding in the principles of effective prose, usually by way of brief examples from the English classics. Students did not learn to write in a single course, but got instruction at all stages of their academic careers. As David Russell has shown, this system was at risk with the rise of the disciplines and especially with Eliot's great innovation, the elective system. When students had a set curriculum for four years, a college could build in additional help or add on workshops, confident that the assistance would reach all students at the same stage in their studies. But when electives took a larger and larger share of a student's time, a workshop here or a required course there would intersect each student's career differently. What worked well in the old curriculum—small amounts of writing instruction strategically placed throughout a common curriculum—did not fit in with the new. Soon writing, like every-

thing else, was confined to well-defined courses, and at Harvard after the turn of the century, required composition dwindled to the first-year course and some very limited upper-level requirements that were soon to disappear entirely (Russell 51–56). A small number of elective writing courses would remain at Harvard and elsewhere, but they would have nothing like the enrollment of first-year composition and very little impact on the intellectual life of the English department.

If the elective system cordoned off writing instruction into single courses and inexorably did away with upper-level writing requirements, an even larger change loomed ahead. At Harvard and elsewhere, knowledge was being partitioned into departments; English organized itself as a distinct discipline, slowly but surely imbued itself with the research ideal (not without battles, as Graff's *Professing Literature* makes clear), and began to grow. Yet the single largest part of English studies in the 1880s, composition, did not have a research agenda of its own; the principles of teaching writing were not in question, so what was there for a scholar to study? Adams Sherman Hill's *Principles of Rhetoric* (1878), like most other nineteenth-century rhetoric texts, argued that rhetoric was an art, not a science (Kitzhaber 76–81; Hill, chap. 5, p. 321). Over time, this was to be a devastating stance, for the art/science divide was what separated the old knowledge from the new; art was often related to skills that could be inculcated, while science was connected to knowledge, to research, in short, to the new disciplines that were embarked on expansion. To argue that rhetoric was not a science, not a way of knowing, was to consign it to training, to an introductory level of college, to pedagogy. If it was art, its instruction depended upon the skill of the teacher, not on a knowledge base built up by concentrated study, by research. There was nothing to discover, only some pedagogical arrangements to be worked out, some teaching methods to be made more efficient. And that is where the energy went, into teaching, correcting countless themes, and writing textbooks. Over the next twenty or so years, Harvard's English staff threw itself into the work of teaching writing, publishing widely in composition, and developing an ambitious and successful program. But the writing faculty did little rhetorical research, produced no advancement in knowledge, and earned themselves a reputation as teachers, not scholars, a serious handicap in the new university.

Over a relatively short time Harvard created a genuine composition

program, a system of instruction that stood out as an example to imitate or avoid. At that time Harvard was one of the largest and certainly the most respected of American colleges; in 1909 its enrollment of 5,558 was second only to Columbia's (Slosson 475). Its football team was dominant, its professors were eminent, its president was the most famous educational leader in the nation. It cast a shadow over the college scene as no American university ever has, before or since. And Harvard went about composition, like everything else, in a big way. At its height in 1880–1910, the Harvard system included three elements: a particular kind of writing; a wide array of course work; and an eminent, highly visible composition staff. Some colleges had one or two of these elements; no place had them all, or in anything approaching the depth of Harvard. The Harvard program marks the only time a major university made such a total commitment to student writing. For thirty years the United States' oldest and most prestigious college devoted the majority of its English teaching resources to composition from the first year to senior level, from entrance examinations to senior forensics, from advanced composition to writing across the curriculum. Some of the most famous scholars and critics in America devoted the best part of their intellectual energy to student writing. There has never been anything like it.

Harvard's standard, required composition course was English A, first given in sophomore year and then, after 1885, moved to the first year. In 1899–1900 its enrollment of 620 to 630 students and staff of eleven instructors made it one of the largest college courses of any type in the country (Copeland and Rideout 1). English A was a two-semester course in rhetoric and writing almost totally based on Adams Sherman Hill's *Principles of Rhetoric;* though plenty of literary topics were covered, there were no outside readings. In 1900–01 writing assignments included a mix of daily themes, which were brief two or three paragraph sketches, and more extended fortnightly themes; topics were up to the student and thus varied widely, but the dailies usually asked for personal experience while the longer ones covered a mix of general knowledge. Two characteristics marked English A and most other writing courses at Harvard: the insistence that students develop their own topics, and the absence of extended readings outside the textbook; hardly any teachers assigned essays or poems or plays for reactions. In fact, in contrast to other contemporary rhetoric programs (e.g., Genung's at Amherst, or Gayley's

at Berkeley) there was hardly any emphasis upon reading at all. (Chapter 6, p. 439, presents the examination required in Hill's English A for the 1887–88 academic year.)

The writing course that Harvard is most famous for is daily themes, English 12 (see chap. 2, pp. 32 and 107), which was an elective course originated in 1884 by the young Barrett Wendell; elements of it were later transferred to the first year (Copeland and Rideout). In 1905 Charles T. Copeland took over English 12 and kept it famous until the late 1920s.

Upper-level writing courses played a major role at Harvard. In 1896 sophomores were required to take one of three one-semester courses, depending on their grades in first-year English: English B for the weakest or English 22 and English 31 for the strongest writers. Another writing course, English 5, was aimed at graduate students. Other important writing courses included senior forensics, which taught argumentative writing through the subject matter of the students' own upper-level work in other courses. Forensics were in many ways holdovers from the old era of rhetorical education and were a constant source of English department tinkering. David Russell's *Writing in the Academic Disciplines, 1870–1990* gives an excellent overview of Harvard's advanced writing instruction at every stage in a student's career (see especially 51–61); at first it was much like the built-in writing instruction that characterized the old pre-1860 college. But in an environment increasingly hostile to writing instruction, Harvard's upper-level writing courses virtually disappeared after 1910.

Besides its distinctive writing course work, Harvard boasted the most famous array of rhetoricians in the nation. The Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, founded in the eighteenth century, had been filled by eminent professors from the very beginning, when John Quincy Adams, its first occupant, published his lectures. Edward Tyrrell Channing, occupant from 1819 to 1851 and the rhetoric teacher of Emerson, Thoreau, Motley, Prescott, and Parkman, also published his lectures (see Scott, chap. 3, p. 179). Francis Child, occupant from 1851 to 1876, published in literature and philology, not in rhetoric, and when almost lured away by a job offer from Johns Hopkins, was persuaded to become Harvard's first professor of English with the understanding that he would no longer have to read student themes (Kitzhaber 33). He was replaced in the Boylston chair by Hill from 1876 to 1904. The next two

occupants were also extremely visible figures in the field: Le Baron Russell Briggs from 1904 to 1925 and Charles T. Copeland from 1925 to 1937, both revered men on campus, dedicated to undergraduates, eminent teachers (they were not Ph.D.'s and did not conduct scholarly research), and strong believers in the composition program. In addition to this string of Boylston professors, Harvard had Barrett Wendell, whose *English Composition* (1891) was by far the most elegant and urbane treatment of rhetoric and composition to date. These were true academic stars, known across the country in the profession, a formidable array of talent unmatched elsewhere. And besides those stars were others who worked in the Harvard program like Byron Hurlbut, who later served as dean, George Pierce Baker, who wrote *Specimens of Argumentation* before moving in 1925 to begin the drama program at Yale, and George Rice Carpenter, who wrote on composition at Harvard and later was a professor of rhetoric at Columbia. And of course there were many instructors and lecturers who taught composition while working toward a doctoral or a law degree, men who left Harvard with strong impressions of the writing program (see Phelps and Aydelotte, chap. 4; Manly, chap. 5; Valentine, chap. 6). The presence of eminent figures like Briggs and Copeland meant that by 1900, when composition was losing its luster elsewhere and men like Wendell were confessing that theme writing didn't seem to train students well enough, the Harvard program remained vital, perhaps past its time. Composition had more prestige at Harvard than elsewhere, and its prominence lasted longer. But when Copeland retired in 1937, Harvard marked a definite break in the tradition by appointing the poet Robert Hillyer, not a rhetorician, to the Boylston professorship. For half a century Harvard's program depended on powerful teachers, not scholars; it never developed a graduate research program in rhetoric that might have given undergraduate instruction the needed stability or theoretical sophistication.

Most colleges followed Harvard in replacing the traditional required rhetorical work spread over four years with a single year-long required first-year course; this is the freshman composition course that by 1900 had taken hold almost everywhere. (Other colleges also attempted to offer upper-level writing courses, mostly as electives.) The rapid spread of the freshman composition course has been described by John Michael Wozniak, who traces the transformation of traditional rhetoric into modern composition by following textbook adoptions at Eastern colleges.

## *Harvard's Critics*

THE HARVARD CURRICULUM from 1875 to 1910 had its critics at the time and has had them ever since. Perhaps because it represented such a commitment to writing instead of to literature, the Harvard system gave rise to much dissent, both at home and at rival colleges. Essentially it was attacked for three reasons: for not making a difference in student writing, for being expensive in terms of a teacher's time and energy, and for distracting faculty efforts from more important things (i.e., literature). Chapter 4 contains some of the many attacks on the Harvard curriculum.

From the outset there was a traditional alternative to the Harvard program that persisted relatively unchanged for many years in smaller colleges. This was an old-fashioned rhetoric course that set an eighteenth- or early-nineteenth-century textbook by Blair, Campbell, or Whately to be mastered by students and tested in recitations and examinations. By the mid-1890s, fully twenty years after Harvard's program began, a few colleges in the East were using one of the traditional texts (Wozniak 145). Such an approach lasted because faculty members were wedded to it, or because a college prided itself on its traditionalism, or because the college was simply bypassed by intellectual currents. Significantly, the very traditional approaches survived at colleges, not universities, in the East and South.

Chapter 4 concentrates on a number of alternatives to the Harvard system, alternatives that would eventually overwhelm Harvard's method and in turn remain dominant for more than half a century. The first alternative to the Harvard method, as outlined by two strong articles in the popular press ("Two Ways of Teaching English," chap. 4, p. 238 and Lounsbury, chap. 4, p. 261), was to require no writing at all. Students would arrive in college with good writing abilities and would pick up additional writing practice as a function of their work in other courses. To operate this way a college would have to have extremely high entrance requirements and a reliable supply of good students from feeder schools. A few colleges could make this alternative work successfully for a long time (Princeton was one), and over the years some colleges, thinking their entering students good enough to survive without direct writing instruction, abolished required composition and assumed that students would improve their writing through course work in what were called

the "content areas." This somewhat haphazard approach to writing instruction was understandably implemented at relatively few colleges, and only sporadically. The no-writing alternative was not what eventually displaced the Harvard system. What eventually prevailed was an eclectic mix of three other approaches: personal writing, writing about literature, and writing about ideas.

The personal writing course is often thought of as "pure" composition; it consists of just students and teacher, with no rhetoric textbook, no anthology of readings, maybe just a handbook for reference. This course's roots lie in the quite personal topics students wrote about in Harvard's writing courses, descriptive sketches that captured a moment or a mood (for samples see chap. 6, p. 514). At Harvard such themes were not meant to explore the inner self or to be regarded as truly expressive pieces of writing; rather they were to represent an individual perspective on experience, and so topics were never assigned. They are remarkably close to some forms of creative writing and also have affinities with an artist's sketchbook. In the late nineteenth century everyday experience was proving rich material for a new generation of American painters and writers, so it is no surprise that some influence shows up in theme writing, particularly in a program run by a former journalist like Hill and in the classes of a sometime novelist like Wendell; and they even show up in Genung's aims for his students' themes at Amherst. (See chap. 3, p. 133; Miller, *Textual Carnivals* 58–59, critiques this new type of theme topic.)

At the University of Michigan in the 1890s Fred Newton Scott argued for using such personal themes to connect writing to real experience. To be sure, this same rationale was used for the Harvard program; in fact, throughout this period it is fairly easy to find statements about how writing is best when it springs from real experience. Such statements, unfortunately, are not evidence that much raw, unfiltered experience was permitted in the classroom or in papers. The true test of whether student experience was valued comes not from statements of high purpose but from actual practice in the classroom and the writing itself. Scott's argument for a genuinely personal approach to writing has had a good many adherents over the years, but during the period 1875–1925 it was never close to dominant. At Vassar, Scott's student Gertrude Buck wrote articles that provided some of the most sensible rationale for this kind of writing (see chap. 4, p. 241) and wrote a text embodying it.

The modern composition course devoted to writing about English literature predated the Harvard composition program; it was invented and popularized by one of the most prominent linguists of the late nineteenth century, Thomas Lounsbury at Yale, a man who had long experience reading student themes during his teaching career. Yale, which did not require composition, was in 1870 the site of Lounsbury's most innovative course, a literature elective requiring plenty of student writing. This in embryonic form was the kind of course that would be widely adopted throughout the country by 1900 and has persisted to this day, at Yale and elsewhere, a sort of introduction to literature which required writing about the literary points of the reading. This approach assumed that writing worked best when students had something substantial to write about, and that the most substantial thing an English department could provide was English literature. Cornell operated under this belief (see James Morgan Hart, "Cornell Course" 183), as did many liberal arts colleges. The literature course grew so common that there were any number of variations upon it, all of which contained some elements of the old rhetoric course's emphasis on belles lettres, style, and examples drawn from English literature. In the most common type of literature-based course students read a wide variety of English (and later, American) works: poems, some plays, plus a novel or two, and wrote critical essays about them. Indeed, it was often in such composition courses that students got their first English department exposure to current American authors, most of whom were excluded from literature course work.

By the time the literature-based composition course became popular a hierarchy began to develop: the better the student, the more literature in the composition course. We can see this operating at Yale at the beginning of our era, and at Wisconsin at the end. Throughout the era 1875–1925, literary works prevailed in elite colleges (with the exception of Harvard), while the least prestigious colleges concentrated more on grammar and mechanics drills. At Wisconsin in the 1920s, 65 percent of first-year students had some literature in their composition course, and the best students had all literature (Taylor, chap. 7, p. 555).

The third alternative, the idea course, became popular after the turn of the century and won many influential adherents; it consisted of close analysis of important essays, a sort of literary nonfiction course with the emphasis upon the structure of the ideas, definitely not the style, and

rarely the effect. The first such course was introduced at Indiana in the 1890s by Frank Aydelotte; by 1915 it had spread to Columbia, Wisconsin, and to many other schools that employed one of the popular anthologies stressing this approach, Foerster, Manchester, and Young's *Essays for College Men* or Steeves and Ristine's *Representative Essays* (Berlin, *Rhetoric* 51–53). One strain of the idea course would later imperceptibly slip into a course in "great ideas" or "great books" and become a key component of general education programs. After a time such programs stopped devoting much attention to direct writing instruction at all. But the other, more popular side of this course developed into the most common of all early-twentieth-century composition courses, the expository writing course stressing certain key works of serious nonfiction (there soon grew a sort of unacknowledged composition canon, with Arnold, Newman, Huxley, Ruskin, and Woodrow Wilson most common early on). Students would analyze the prose and sometimes react to its ideas, at other times imitate its structure or style, following the example of Robert Louis Stevenson's "sedulous ape" (Berkeley, chap. 5, p. 383). This canon was often embodied in a common textbook of the time, a rhetoric/reader like Fulton's *Expository Writing* (1912), which contained instructions on writing along with copious selections to read, imitate, and discuss. Other exposition courses assigned a separate reading text, which was often accompanied by a rhetoric textbook; sometimes a handbook was used as a reference, at other times the rhetoric contained a handbook section. (See chapter 5 for readers, handbooks, and rhetorics.)

## *From Rhetoric to Composition*

THIS BOOK CHRONICLES the move from composition at every stage of a student's college career to composition confined to the first year, and from a saturation in a rhetorical tradition of some two thousand years to its replacement with a new, streamlined curriculum which, as later chapters demonstrate, emphasized error correction and the five modes of discourse. These were simplifications perfectly suited for the mass-production education carried out in so many universities after 1900. How did the rich and complex world of rhetoric get replaced so quickly with composition?

The first way to answer that question is to look at the relegation of

writing instruction to the first year, something Adams Sherman Hill worked hard for at Harvard; it took him from 1872 until 1885, because the classicists didn't want to give up their control of first-year course work. Putting composition at the beginning of a student's career earned it the right to be a "foundation" for all that followed. But along with the foundation came its reputation as a transition from high school to college, connected with introductory work, with bringing students up to the required level. In fact, putting composition into the first year was a recognition of its newly developed remedial overtones: freshman year was to make up for what preparatory schools had failed to teach. That goes a long way to explain composition's lowly status. Furthermore, colleges have long had an unspoken rule, "You are what you teach." Working with first-year students is a job for a teacher, not a scholar. And of course since even its proponents argued it was an art, not a science, the notion grew that just about anyone could teach it, and before long just about anyone did. Even before teaching assistants were common, teaching composition was an entry level job, one to leave behind after acquiring seniority.

Even worse, the composition course came to stand for a kind of teacher slavery—relentless correction and strict supervision of writing. The literature is full of complaints about the paper load (see chap. 4, p. 288, and Connors, "Overwork/Underpay"). Why did colleges pile the writing on, even when alternatives were available? Why process every single essay? (Some teachers did devise peer grading; see chap. 6, p. 458.) Could some writing tasks carry their own justification, be worth doing, and teach writing in the act of writing itself, yet not need to be read by the teacher? Why weren't such assignments even imagined in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century instruction? To address that question requires some understanding of how the relationship between teacher and student made the first year of college very much resemble high school. For years the gap between college student and professor was maintained rigidly, with strict rules of behavior, tight regulations for dormitory life, and distinct expectations of courtesy. All students were expected to listen, to be kept under control, and to be passive learners. Nowhere did these expectations come out more forcefully than in composition, which imposed incredibly strict rules and enforced them thoroughly. The composition teacher was, willingly or not, the accomplice of

the authorities, or in fact the enforcer. The rules about plagiarism were a perfect example of this authoritarian system; chapter 6 contains the composition rules pamphlet from the University of Minnesota in 1913; its tone and contents display some of the strictness imposed at the time. At its worst there is a sense that in composition, students are on trial, that they are not really a part of things until they get through their ordeal. As Susan Miller's *Textual Carnivals* depicts the difference, composition was "low," while literature was "high."

And what was the actual classroom teaching like? A remarkably large amount of it seems to have been adversarial, with the teacher as a stern taskmaster skilled in rooting out falsehood and cant and the student in fear of the teacher's scorn. Accounts of the recitation system and paper evaluation sessions conducted by Hill and Channing (Briggs, cited in Kitzhaber 61; Scott, chap. 3, p. 179) at Harvard or Northup at Yale (Cross), and a host of others (see Simmons 106–29) suggest that students spent much of their time in fear of being called on in class and found wanting. On the other hand, personal accounts of the Berkeley program (Frank Norris in Graff and Warner 133–35) or of Fred Newton Scott's Michigan program (Theodore Roethke's experience as described in Seager 116–17) speak of teachers' blandness and students' lack of interest in theme writing.

## *Feminist Rhetoric*

THE COLLEGE WRITING and reading curriculum depicted in these documents was overwhelmingly male. (Only 15 percent of college students in 1900 were female, though the percentage was growing throughout this period.) The early twentieth century was the site of a specifically female rhetoric, of course; the two great successes of the women's movement, temperance and suffrage, were achieved through old-fashioned oratory, brilliant pamphleteering, and highly sophisticated manipulation of public opinion. In short, they were triumphs of rhetoric. A whole generation of women participated in massive efforts to transform public opinion, and in the process developed a wide range of rhetorical skills. During these struggles there were distinctly different audiences involved. Since in most cases the electorate was male, a male-targeted rhetoric prevailed.

At the same time, since much work needed to be done to convince other women to join these causes, signs of a specifically female-targeted public rhetoric were also emerging.

We still do not know enough about the connections between college course work and the public and private examples of female rhetoric. We do know that the women's colleges were the scene of a continuing debate over whether they should offer the same subjects as the men's colleges or whether they should offer subjects specifically tailored for women. M. Carey Thomas, for instance, argued that the subject matter of a woman's education should be the same as a man's; in keeping with this general idea, Harvard professors gave the same courses at Radcliffe as they did in their own departments. At some other colleges the stress for women was on a preparation in home economics and child-rearing. And we also know that the women's colleges did not always mirror the rapid rise of women's rhetorical skills. Controlled as they often were by male presidents (and overwhelmingly male trustees), many women's colleges had official policies against demonstrating, leafleting, or even speaking on behalf of suffrage. Even so, it is possible to detect the emergence of a distinctly feminist rhetoric among women professors at this time. Gertrude Buck's emphasis on personal writing (chap. 4, p. 241) helps to separate her from the mainstream of male rhetoric. Recent dissertations on Buck (Campbell; Weir) tend to emphasize her differences from her teacher Fred Newton Scott and stress her search for a distinct, specifically feminine community.

In the era 1875–1925 there were hundreds of women teaching composition and thousands of women students learning to write in college. But not surprisingly, the most widely circulated documents of the time, with very few exceptions, do not reveal very many distinct signs of a specifically feminist rhetoric, or even a feminist slant on writing. The male model dominated the national discourse about writing and the writer. This is true despite the fact that women professors produced some of the era's path-breaking textbooks—the first reader to use student papers, by Wisconsin's Frances Campbell Berkeley (see chap. 5, p. 378), and one of the first handbooks, by Oregon's Luella Clay Carson (see chap. 5, p. 353). These books reveal little of a distinctive female rhetoric, reminding us of the existence of a narrow range of attitudes among women writing college textbooks and of the continuing dominance of male discourse.

We need to ask many questions: To what extent did timorous publishing houses suppress signs of an identifiable feminist rhetoric in textbooks? Did feminists, eager to mount the platform and debate suffrage and temperance, avail themselves of the characteristically male oral rhetoric of the time straightforwardly, or did they give it their own personal dimension? Just what was the range of attitude and instruction among women rhetoricians? Answers to these and other questions will no doubt shed light not just on women's education but on the flexibility and adaptability of the whole educational enterprise to particular student populations.

Similarly, African-American writers were forging a distinctive voice (or series of voices) in nineteenth-century America, but any concerns black educators had about college writing instruction were not at all part of the general discourse. In writing, black college faculty and students were forced to assume the white world's styles and standards, as Fisk University graduate W.E.B. DuBois did when he elected Barrett Wendell's writing course at Harvard (DuBois 123). Arnold Rampersad (124) claims to discern some signs of the Harvard program on DuBois's prose style, but it is hard to find the opposite, a trace of a black writer or orator in composition's professional literature. Black or Latino or Native American concerns seem invisible in the professional literature of writing instruction between 1875 and 1925, while most black colleges seem to have taught writing in strict accord with the standards of white America.

## *Transition*

AS COMPOSITION ENTERED the twentieth century, common patterns of professional work emerged, patterns that would remain until the 1970s and even beyond. Composition moved away from the Harvard model (which lost much of its credibility with Harvard's own faculty; see Perry, chap. 4, p. 311) and became the recognizably modern system that still prevails: professors teaching advanced literature courses, and instructors, part timers, and graduate students teaching composition. By 1910, composition had become almost totally apprentice work, and responsibility for its oversight became the province not of a scholar or curriculum expert but an administrator. Despite some well-known exceptions like Michigan and Wisconsin until the late 1920s, and some liberal arts

colleges which preserved a respect for teaching, English departments decreed that literature teaching—the serious intellectual occupation of the discipline—would get the rewards. In fact, literature itself came to *be* the reward; a long apprenticeship in composition would be rewarded with literature teaching once promotion came.

This hierarchy was practically inevitable given the fact that university English departments organized themselves on the German academic model, rewarding research and privileging the doctorate, the learned article, and the monograph. Textbooks, curriculum materials, and teaching had their place in this system, but ranked significantly lower. And, with the single exception of Fred Newton Scott's Michigan program, there was no doctorate in composition, no research, no learned journal, no research seminars. Some professional discussion about composition took place, of course, but it was mainly about pedagogical goals and administrative matters (see chap. 3, p. 233). The major professional organization, the Modern Language Association (MLA), long confined talk of composition to its pedagogical section, and abolished even that from its convention in 1903. It is tempting to think that the disappearance of this section in 1903 marked the decline of composition's professional place, but I would argue that the real damage occurred in the relegation of composition to pedagogy in the first place. Once it was determined that composition work was to be considered pedagogical, not the product of research or a province of the aesthetic imagination, writing instruction's place at the bottom was sealed. (While composition was being marginalized, many other topics in English studies were departing: speech, journalism, theater arts, and linguistics. The splits were often done on research verses nonresearch lines: those who researched the history of the Globe Theatre found a welcome in the higher ranks of the English department; those who actually directed plays were encouraged to take their business elsewhere. Those who published on language development and variation were grudgingly accepted; those who taught students how to give speeches were relegated to the lower ranks.)

Still, despite the imposition of a rigid hierarchy, some faculty remained interested in composition and rhetoric. What options did they have? In a department organized as English was on a research model, composition specialists faced three choices: (1) join the small but influential band of academics who attacked the research model as inadequate, (2) initiate what their peers would recognize as high-quality research, or

(3) break away from the English department. At this time, roughly from 1905 to 1920, some influential academics were mounting attacks on the research model, what William James had called "the Ph.D. Octopus." In modern language studies the most prominent critic was Irving Babbitt, a classicist with a position in Harvard's French department, whose *Literature and the American College* (1908) is a strong attack on doctoral studies in English and a plea for a genuine, humanistic understanding of "ideas." Babbitt had followers among intellectual conservatives who knew the current composition scene firsthand and who published significant writing textbooks: Norman Foerster of Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Iowa (see chap. 5, p. 390); Frank Aydelotte of Indiana, MIT, and Swarthmore (see chap. 4, p. 300), and John Erskine of Columbia. These men were not sympathetic to traditional rhetoric, and they certainly were not inclined to equate composition with personal expression. Instead they wanted their students to write about ideas, and all three tried to transform composition into courses in liberal culture or great books, an influence that would live on in many composition readers for over half a century. All three would found programs to infuse the undergraduate years with required humanistic training and counter what they regarded as the diluting effect of electives and premature specialization. At first Foerster and Aydelotte took the composition course seriously, putting first-rate teaching into it and giving entering students some meaty books to read. Soon, however, their courses crowded writing instruction out in favor of concentrating on the reading. Over time, someone interested in new thinking about writing instruction and rhetoric would find little of interest in their course work. Still, they displayed confidence in their students, and from our vantage point they look much more intellectually respectable than their English department mandarin counterparts who were happy shunting first-year students off to untrained teaching assistants.

The second option available to a composition specialist, to carry on high quality writing research, was taken by Fred Newton Scott, chair of the rhetoric department at Michigan and a tireless worker for composition's status. He ran a successful and highly popular doctoral program in rhetoric, began a scholarly series to publish promising dissertations, headed the MLA and its pedagogical section, edited works on rhetoric, literature, and criticism, and published articles and textbooks on rhetoric and composition. Scott had a department of his own, excellent gradu-

ate students, first-rate research, and the respect of his professional peers. But his program was essentially a one-man show; the people he appointed to teach in his program were not influential in the field, and he himself was stretched very thin, running composition, journalism, the MLA (president, 1907), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE; founding president, 1911–13). And Scott also lacked successors; his program did not survive him. Upon Scott's retirement, Michigan's English department absorbed the rhetoric program, succeeded in reducing composition work to pedagogy, and relegated teaching to a minor role (Stewart, "Two Model Teachers" 128).

Little evidence shows that composition specialists besides Scott willingly followed the third alternative—independence from the English department. This was the route taken successfully by speech, which English had also reduced to the status of a support course. At the 1913 NCTE convention speech teachers voted to break free of English department domination and found their own association; their earliest manifestos speak eloquently of the need to conduct research, to be scientific, in a word, to compete in the university world on an equal footing with other academic disciplines (O'Neill 56–57).

Composition failed to take any of these routes; instead, it made its alliances across the gap between college and high school, casting itself as an ally of school teachers in the NCTE, an organization with distinctly pedagogic aims that fostered a Midwestern, egalitarian attitude toward education rather than the Eastern elitist approach. Such an attitude pervaded the newly formed *English Journal* (established 1912), where composition articles would appear for the next eighty years. (*English Journal* branched off into a college edition and later split into *College English,* which still publishes composition articles: *PMLA* hasn't published an article by a composition scholar in eighty years.)

It was no crime to select teaching over scholarship; in fact, it may have been the better choice. But given the way higher education worked, such a choice had severe consequences. It meant one was removed from the sources of professional glory: grants, released time, graduate students, the very things that conferred status and sustained research. It meant relegation to a service role, while the profession moved on to new frontiers of scholarship. It meant that administrative work became necessary for advancement. To be sure, there were notable exceptions. Hoyt Hudson published widely in rhetoric and moved from Cornell to Prince-

ton, while Charles Sears Baldwin had a distinguished career in rhetoric at Columbia. Many others made their mark in administration, including Porter Perrin at Washington and Frank Aydelotte at Swarthmore. But most promising rhetoricians' careers would resemble those of the many scholars who taught and published in rhetoric while young and migrated to literature when older. That was true of Barrett Wendell at Harvard, John Genung at Amherst, Gertrude Buck at Vassar, Norman Foerster and Karl Young at Wisconsin, Hyder Rollins at Texas, Stith Thompson at Indiana, and many more who published early work in composition and then moved on to more "important" work within English departments or in administration. And common too was the path taken by many women who did not establish names for themselves or become well known: Maria Louisa Sanford (1836–1920) of Swarthmore and Minnesota published articles on suffrage, religion, and public speaking but made her main contribution through years of teaching; Luella Clay Carson of the University of Oregon published composition texts but little else during a long career (chap. 5, p. 353); Frances Campbell Berkeley (later Young) left the profession when she married (chap. 5, p. 378). The early twentieth century offers very few examples of well-known professionals, male or female, who staked out composition as their field, published primarily in it, and persevered in it for their entire careers.

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By 1920 composition had assumed the shape it would retain for the next half century. Many changes would occur, changes which are well worth investigating (and which the emphasis on current-traditional almost precludes). But these changes would occur within a universe determined by composition's fixed place within the curriculum. The half century from 1875 to 1925 had witnessed an enormous revolution in the relation of composition to students and to other academic subjects, all within the context of a transformation of American higher education. It is not surprising that this period of ferment should have been followed by a period of stasis. Laurence Veysey argues that for all higher education the period 1910–45 "was largely a period of drift, characterized by a sense of letdown" and "the continuing divorce of the entire curriculum from the wellsprings of student energy" ("Stability and Experiment" 9–10). Composition, like much in the American curriculum, had become stable, at a point very far away from the rhetoric of the 1850s.

# 2

# The First Composition Program: Harvard, 1870–1900

HARVARD ESTABLISHED THE FIRST MODERN COMPOSITION program, and for two decades its faculty wrote extensively about the subject. This chapter contains articles and documents from the Harvard program, including large sections from the Harvard reports which are often cited in histories of composition. These reports were part of an attempt to get the secondary schools to improve their writing instruction; in effect, though, they diminished the role of first-year composition and expressed the hope of removing it entirely from the college curriculum and placing it in the schools. In order to understand the connection between the Harvard reports and the growth of composition, one needs to look at school-college relations in the 1870s.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century the great bulk of secondary education for the college bound took place at private academies and preparatory schools. Colleges that wished to improve the quality of their students had to raise admissions standards, yet colleges were totally dependent upon preparatory schools. Charles W. Eliot saw matters clearly in early 1869, just before he came to the Harvard presidency:

> The higher and lower institutions are, indeed, mutually dependent; if the admission examiners of the colleges and polytechnic schools seem, on the one hand, to sharply define the studies of the preparatory schools; on the other hand, it is quite as true that the colleges and advanced schools are practically controlled in their requisitions by the actual state of the preparatory schools. They can only ask for what is to be had. They must accept such preparations as the schools can give. ("The New Education" 204)

For over two centuries Harvard had demanded knowledge of Latin, Greek, and mathematics from its entering students, and a group of

academies and preparatory schools had been set up to provide them to young scholars. Now, with Eliot's new emphasis on English, the preparatory schools were faced with another task: teach English, and particularly writing, to their charges. And for the first time the schools were to be judged by a public standard, by writing *everyone* could understand. They had had a monopoly on Latin and Greek instruction; they set the standards and colleges had to accept their students, since there was no other source of supply. But with English the field was suddenly open; here was an achievement practically everyone was qualified to judge, and not surprisingly the public (and Harvard too) would judge by obvious marks of error in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

In the early 1870s, after Harvard set up a written examination in English composition, it began to prod its preparatory schools about improving their writing instruction, beginning a twenty-year-long acrimonious debate over composition in the schools. Faculty spoke to headmasters at professional meetings; professors wrote newspaper and magazine articles about the poor quality of writing; and finally Harvard published lengthy official reports pinpointing the problem and laying blame on the preparatory schools. (Midwestern colleges handled matters with less acrimony; colleges dominated their feeder schools by offering them official certification if they met certain standards. Students from certified schools were automatically eligible for admission to the local state university. See Gayley, chap. 3, p. 168, and Scott, "College-Entrance Requirements.") The shock expressed by Harvard faculty at the low quality of student writing on entrance examinations seems to have been mostly for effect. Everyone teaching English at Harvard had been an undergraduate there and was quite familiar with the quality of student English. And every year saw plenty of college writing assignments that demonstrated student abilities. The new examination in English did not reveal some long-hidden weakness so much as supply Harvard with new, objective evidence to use in the effort to improve the secondary schools, which was one of Eliot's lifelong ambitions.

Another part of Harvard's battles over writing instruction involved a long and ultimately successful fight with the classicists. Eliot's privileging of English and other modern languages was a direct attack on the hegemony of the classics at the college level, since English would thus be entitled to its own share of class time, time that had to be taken from classics. At the school level the battles involved a concerted attempt to

break the power of the classics as well. One element of this battle was Harvard's claim that the classics simply weren't doing their job in producing entering students who could handle English well enough. The traditional claim of the classicists was that their subjects provided the mental discipline students needed to succeed in all their subjects. The Harvard reports questioned whether skill in Latin and Greek would indeed transfer to those other subjects like English. In particular, Harvard had two specific complaints about the classics: students produced atrocious examples of "translation English" instead of idiomatic, straightforward English; and students could not master simple grammatical English despite years of a language-based curriculum. So it was no accident that the person appointed from the Harvard Board of Overseers to head the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric was the nation's most outspoken enemy of mental discipline through classical instruction, Charles Francis Adams (*Three Addresses* 33–34). The documents in this chapter, then, depict the rise of Adams Sherman Hill's powerful program, and Charles Francis Adams's equally powerful indictment of secondary education, an indictment that undermines the Harvard writing program's very reason for existing.

### Rollo Walter Brown
### *Dean Briggs* (1926)

*Brown (1880–1956) received his B.Litt. from Ohio Northern in 1903 and an M.A. from Harvard in 1905, where he was befriended by Le Baron Russell Briggs. He taught at Wabash College, 1905–20, and Carleton College, 1920–23. His publications included* How the French Boy Learns to Write *(1915) and a memoir,* Harvard Yard in the Golden Age *(1948).*

*In this affectionate portrait of one of Harvard's most revered figures from the turn of the century, Brown supplies a nice overview of Harvard's role in establishing composition. Brown also makes a claim for Briggs as the originator of freshman orientation. The fact that Briggs could add such orientation on to composition instruction illustrates the dual nature of the writing course: important enough to require of every student, but unstructured enough that a third of it can be taken over by a semiacademic orientation to college life.*

As far back as 1872, Professor Adams Sherman Hill had been brought to Harvard to supplement the scholarly work already being done

in the Department of English. President Eliot, then a young man of thirty-eight, foresaw a greatly increased attendance at the colleges and universities of the country. Not only that; he felt sure that this attendance would be made up in large part of men and women who would work in the sciences and other subjects not linguistic or literary. Anyhow, the older literary training was rigid and artificial, and altogether too exclusively designed for state occasions. He would have students forearmed with such a working acquaintance with their mother tongue as would serve them unaffectedly in their daily lives.

So Professor Hill was brought to the College Yard to see whether or not such an acquaintance was possible. He was a thin, cadaverous man who had received his bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1853—in President Eliot's class. He had subsequently studied law, and then had worked on the New York *Tribune* under Horace Greeley. When he came to the college he shared President Eliot's belief that students should write with direct clearness, and his experience in a newspaper office had led him to the somewhat unorthodox conviction that there were certain practicable means of approaching this end. At first he had no sense of discipline—as the word is used pedagogically—and the students, carrying on the easy traditions of a course that had been under the direction of young men who taught transiently, were not inclined to look upon his work with overmuch seriousness. In truth, they sometimes hummed pleasant academic melodies while he read a man's themes in the classroom. He encountered, in addition, no little unfriendliness in influential quarters. But despite his frail health and the uninviting atmosphere, he persisted. By the early 'eighties he had made such progress that both he and President Eliot believed the time had come when he should have associated with him more men than a mere young assistant or two. By 1883 he had gathered about him three young men who were to undertake the further development of his "idea." These were Barrett Wendell, W. B. Shubrick Clymer, and Le Baron Russell Briggs.

In 1883–84 the prescribed course in English, at that time required in the sophomore year, was officially in the hands of Professor Hill and Mr. Briggs; but on account of Professor Hill's poor health, he delegated most of his authority to his young associate. From Dean Briggs's boyhood to the day of his withdrawal from all university duties he always gave people the impression that he was timid; yet quite as consistently, whenever anyone came to him with a difficult task, he was always ready to undertake it. So when Professor Hill handed him classroom lectures

and said, "I am too sick to meet the class, and you must lecture to them," he accepted the difficult commission and read valiantly. Students who were in the course at that time were so impressed by the pink-faced boy's efforts to fill the mature man's shoes, and by his deep, almost desperate earnestness, that they listened to him with more respect than they had supposed they could command.

At the end of that year he was to have the opportunity to show just how a new idea begins its earthly journey. He and Professor Hill believed that the prescribed English should come at the beginning of a student's course rather than in the second year. They proposed a change. If the course came in the freshman year, it would help the student when he most needed help, and it would not break into his other studies after he had taken them up. To a young man's unclouded vision, that was clear beyond question. But he had to encounter minds made heavy by too much wisdom. The older members of the faculty were engaged in a mad scramble to enlist recruits among the freshmen for their elective courses. They did not want Professor Hill and this young upstart to put a prescribed course back into the open field and hamper the early beginnings of a right pursuit of truth. And the young man had the audacity to ask for something more! He wished to make the prescribed English into a course that would meet three times a week instead of two. Some of the distinguished members of the faculty became savage. But Professor Hill and young Briggs promised that should the course be pushed back to the freshman year and made a three-hour course, they would see to it that no work outside the classroom was required for the third hour. Upon that basis the change was made.

Now how could this transaction, by any stretch of the imagination, become a matter of national significance? The answer is to be found in certain theories of democracy cherished by the American people. They wanted as much education as possible for everybody. They wanted their children well taught in the colleges and universities. Harvard, with an honorable past, attracted many men who expected to do college teaching. These men, when they went to their posts all over the country, carried with them, as every college graduate must, some memory of the way things were done by their Alma Mater. And when these newer institutions sought a means of preventing students from disgracing themselves every time they put pen to paper, they almost invariably made use of Harvard's experience and established prescribed freshman courses in

writing. A glance at the college and university catalogues of America will reveal how few of the institutions did not follow the precedent which young Briggs, after much opposition, was allowed to establish.

This simple change in the schedule of the university, moreover, enabled him to start another variation in college practice. He had agreed not to require outside work of students for the third hour of his course. He must, then, devise means of occupying this hour profitably. In casting about, he discovered, among other things, how little the freshmen knew about the college and the world in which they lived. They needed not merely courses in Greek and chemistry and German; they needed general information. They knew little about the social machine, and they did not feel their place in it with sufficient distinctness to give import to their college work. He would make use of this "third hour" by trying to give his freshmen some glimpses of the world in which they supposedly lived. And he called on others to assist him.

This practice likewise spread throughout the country. At first, many teachers in the colleges where young instructors in English attempted to carry out the practice declared vehemently that it was "unscholarly" and that it did not "fit into" any well-organized curriculum. In fact, it did fit into any curriculum that was not too well organized! And to-day, helping the freshman to orient himself is so generally regarded as a necessary part of a college education, that it is accepted as though colleges had always fostered the idea. The sequence is clear enough: first, occasional hours were devoted to what a freshman should know; then regular hours; then a separate one-hour course—in many colleges—with compiled volumes of liberalizing essays; then full-fledged courses in "orientation" in which freshmen are brought face to face not only with the world, but with the universe! Whatever else may be said about college freshmen to-day, they must be more alert than they were obliged to be thirty or forty years ago.

But see how Briggs and Wendell, working together, were able to enter still further into the educational life of America. The pushing of the prescribed course back to the freshman year inevitably left one sophomore class, that of the year 1884–85, without the customary instruction in English. So Barrett Wendell, under the direction of Professor Hill, undertook to give for the sophomores the identical course, so far as possible, that Le Baron R. Briggs, under the same direction, was giving for the freshmen. It was in that year also that Wendell first offered

English 12, an advanced course in writing that soon took a place next to Professor Hill's English 5 as a magnet for those who wished to learn whether they had any capacity as writers. While he was laboring with his classes that year he "invented" the daily theme. Although he was in his last years looked upon as something of a tory, he was as a youth and as a young teacher rebellious enough; and he rebelled against the incessant practice of imitating the stiff eloquence and, in some instances at least, the stiffer poetry of New England. He had kept a diary himself, and had profited by the daily writing. Why should not students write a little each day? From Briggs's practice of discussing many matters with the freshmen, he completed the idea: he would have his students look squarely at some little part of the world, try to catch the color or flavor of what they saw, and then write as significantly as possible. Longer themes of one kind or another were not to be given up, but if men were ever to write with any flexibility, they must have a certain amount of daily practice with a variety of manageable subjects.

Wendell's idea, which was closely akin to the entire conception of the freshman course as Briggs was developing it, likewise went to every part of the country. The idea had the good fortune, as Briggs's ideas had, of coming to birth at the time when institutions everywhere were drawing upon Harvard heavily in their efforts to establish adequate courses. Some years later, after the freshman course had been perfected by the touch of many skilled hands, the demand for information about it became so great that two of the men then teaching in it published a book in which the methods of the course were set forth in detail.[1] Teachers in hundreds of colleges wanted to know more about this method of helping men to see clearly and to write directly. Newspaper editors rejoiced that college men were learning to write straight sentences; and magazines and weeklies discussed the educational value of the "daily theme eye."

A "literary movement" is always too complex to be explained simply. Men, moreover, who find themselves better off as a result of any such movement, are pleased to feel that their increased well-being has emanated from their own virgin genius. Least of all are they willing to admit that men in an institution of learning have had anything to do with it. But when some one sits down to explain why in the early years of the twentieth century the younger readers and writers of America began to concern themselves with something less hollow, less conventionally formed than much of the literature conveniently styled "New England," he cannot

leave Briggs and Wendell out of consideration. They trained men to look at the world with their own eyes, and to write directly and honestly about what they saw, without regard for the traditional ways of looking at things. The men thus trained went all over the country to teach in the colleges and universities, and they carried with them the gospel that the world right where one lives is interesting if one will only look and think. And the students whom these men in turn trained went away from college by the thousands—and later by the tens of thousands—to find joy in the same unaffected experience. Only the blind can say that this fact has had nothing to do with our attempt, more or less national, to develop a literary art directly from the soil.

NOTE

1. Copeland and Rideout, *Freshman English and Theme Correcting in Harvard College.* 1901. [See chap. 6, p. 514.—ED.]

## Three Harvard Catalogue Course Descriptions from *Twenty Years of School and College English* (1896)

*The following curriculum descriptions document the evolution of the Harvard English curriculum in 1874–75, 1879–80, and 1896–97. They show how the Harvard of 1896 depicted the changes that had taken place in its own composition program and demonstrate four key trends: the growth of composition course work, the movement away from traditional rhetoric and toward modern composition, the expansion of the undergraduate literature curriculum, and the growth of the graduate program in literature. A close look at the 1896–97 listing also reveals a luxuriant growth of courses in writing without much differentiation in subject matter, approach, or form. Harvard's extensive composition course work does not seem to make up a coherent, easily grasped sequence. (One could always say the same is true of Harvard's 1896–97 literature courses, yet they have a built-in order in that they cover authors or periods or genres.)*

### HISTORY OF THE REQUIREMENT IN ENGLISH FOR ADMISSION TO HARVARD COLLEGE.

The first mention of anything approaching an examination in English as a requirement for admission to Harvard College appears in the Catalogue for 1865–66:

"Candidates will also be examined in reading English aloud."

For four years this sentence was, as Mr. Hurlbut says, "tacked to the end of the list" of prescribed subjects with nothing to call attention to it. In the Catalogue for 1869–70 we find for the first time the heading "English." The requirement for 1870 runs as follows:

## "English."

"Students are also required to be examined, as early as possible after their admission, in reading English. Prizes will be awarded for excellence. For 1870 students may prepare themselves in Craik's English of Shakespeare (Julius Caesar) or in Milton's Comus. Attention to Derivations and Critical Analysis is recommended."

For the next three years this paragraph remains substantially unchanged except that Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" is substituted for Shakspere's "Julius Caesar." In the Catalogue for 1872–73 the candidate is for the first time informed that the quality of his written English will be taken into account:

☞ *Correct spelling, punctuation, and expression, as well as legible handwriting, are expected of all applicants for admission; and failure in any of these particulars will be taken into account at the examination."*

In the following year an examination in English composition was for the first time imposed on every candidate for admission to Harvard College. The requirement for that year as printed in the Catalogue for 1873–74 is as follows:

"*English Composition.* Each candidate will be required to write a short English Composition, correct in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression, the subject to be taken from such works of standard authors as shall be announced from time to time. The subject for 1874 will be taken from one of the following works: Shakespeare's Tempest, Julius Caesar, and Merchant of Venice; Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield; Scott's Ivanhoe, and Lay of the Last Minstrel."

The requirement for 1878 says that the "short English Composition" must be correct not only "in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and expression," but also in "division by paragraphs;" the requirement for 1879 precludes a common kind of misunderstanding by making clear that "Every candidate is expected to be familiar with *all* the books in this list."

In the Catalogue for 1880–81 the following paragraph appears for the first time:

"In 1882, every candidate will also be required to correct specimens of bad English given him at the time of examination. For this purpose the time of the examination will be lengthened by half an hour."

Although the time for the examination was lengthened to an hour and a half, the examination continued to count as a one-hour examination.

The Catalogue for 1886–87 says:

"*English* (after 1887) must be reserved for the candidate's final examination for admission. With this exception, candidates may offer themselves for the preliminary examination in any studies, elementary or advanced, *in which their teachers certify that they are prepared.*"

The Catalogue for 1891–92 has the following addition:

"The English written by a candidate in any of his examination-books may be regarded as part of his examination in English, in case the evidence afforded by the examination-book in English is insufficient."

In the Catalogue for 1893–94 teachers are explicitly told how to deal with the prescribed reading:

"The candidate is expected to read intelligently *all* the books prescribed. He should read them as he reads other books; he will be expected not to know them minutely, but to have freshly in mind their most important parts. Whatever the subject of the composition, the examiner will regard knowledge of the book as less important than ability to write English."

In conformity with the recommendations made at a meeting of teachers held at Philadelphia in 1894, a change was made in the requirement. The new requirement was optional in 1895, but is prescribed for 1896 and subsequent years. As stated in the Catalogue for 1895–96 it is as follows:

"*English.*—English may be offered either as a Preliminary or as a Final subject. In 1896 and thereafter the examination will occupy two hours.

"The examination will consist of two parts, which, however, cannot be taken separately:—

"I. The candidate will be required to write a paragraph or two on each of several topics chosen by him from a considerable number—perhaps ten or

fifteen—set before him on the examination paper. In 1896 the topics will be drawn from the following works:—

"Shakspere's Midsummer Night's Dream; Defoe's History of the Plague in London; Irving's Tale of a Traveller; Scott's Woodstock; Macaulay's Essay on Milton; Longfellow's Evangeline; George Eliot's Silas Marner.

"The candidate is expected to read intelligently *all* the books prescribed. He should read them as he reads other books; he is expected, not to know them minutely, but to have freshly in mind their most important parts. In every case the examiner will regard knowledge of the book as less important than ability to write English.

"As additional evidence of preparation, the candidate may present an exercise book, properly certified by his instructor, containing compositions or other written work.

"The works prescribed for this part of the examination in 1897, 1898, and 1899 are as follows:—

"In 1897: Shakspere's As You Like It; Defoe's History of the Plague in London; Irving's Tales of a Traveller; Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales; Longfellow's Evangeline; George Eliot's Silas Marner.

"In 1898: Milton's Paradise Lost, Books I and II; Pope's Iliad, Books I and XXII; the Sir Roger de Coverley Papers in the Spectator; Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield; Coleridge's Ancient Mariner; Southey's Life of Nelson; Carlyle's Essay on Burns; Lowell's Vision of Sir Launfal; Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables.

"In 1899: Dryden's Palamon and Arcite; Pope's Iliad, Books I, VI, XXII, and XXIV; The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers in the Spectator; Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield; Coleridge's Ancient Mariner; De Quincey's Flight of a Tartar Tribe; Cooper's Last of the Mohicans; Lowell's Vision of Sir Launfal; Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables.

"II. A certain number of books will be prescribed for careful study. This part of the examination will be upon subject-matter, literary form, and logical structure, and will also test the candidate's ability to express his knowledge with clearness and accuracy.

"The books prescribed for this part of the examination are:

"In 1896: Shakspere's Merchant of Venice; Milton's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, and Lycidas; Webster's First Bunker Hill Oration.

"In 1897: Shakspere's Merchant of Venice; Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America; Scott's Marmion; Macaulay's Life of Samuel Johnson.

"In 1898: Shakspere's Macbeth; Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America; De Quincey's Flight of a Tartar Tribe; Tennyson's Princess.

"In 1899: Shakspere's Macbeth; Milton's Paradise Lost, Books I and II; Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America; Carlyle's Essay on Burns.

"No candidate will be accepted in English whose work is seriously defective in point of spelling, punctuation, grammar, or division into paragraphs.

"In connection with the reading and study of the prescribed books, parallel or subsidiary reading should be encouraged, and a considerable amount of English poetry should be committed to memory. The essentials of English grammar should not be neglected in preparatory study.

"The English written by a candidate in any of his examination-books may be regarded as part of his examination in English, in case the evidence afforded by the examination-book in English is insufficient.

"The attention of candidates who have passed in English at the Preliminary Examination is called to the subject of Optional Examinations for the Anticipation of College Studies (on pp. 210, 211*)."

*See the University Catalogue for 1895–96.

## COURSES OF INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH OFFERED BY HARVARD COLLEGE.

### For 1874–75.

*PRESCRIBED STUDIES.*

**Prescribed Rhetoric.**—Asst. Professor A. S. Hill.

*Sophomore Year.*

Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric (Book 2, Chapters I–VI).—Whately's Rhetoric (Part 3).—Herbert Spencer's Philosophy of Style.—Written Exercises.

*Two hours a week. First half-year.*

*Junior Year.*

Whately's Rhetoric (to end of Part 2).—Lessing's Laocoon (Chapters 13–26).

*Two hours a week. Second half-year.*

**Prescribed Themes and Forensics.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sophomore Year.* | Six Themes: Asst. Professor A. S. HILL. |
| *Junior Year.* | Six Themes: Professor CHILD. |
| | Four Forensics: Asst. Professor PALMER. |
| *Senior Year.* | Four Forensics. |

*Candidates for Honors* may substitute for Forensics an equal number of Theses in their special departments, provided such substitution is permitted by the Instructors in those departments.

*Electives.*

**English 1.**—Professor CHILD.

*English.*—Hadley's History of the English Language.—The Elements of Anglo-Saxon.—Morris's Historical English Accidence.—Lectures.

*Two hours a week. 1 Junior, 13 Sophomores, 1 Freshman.*

**English 2.**—Professor CHILD.

*Anglo-Saxon and Early English.*—Beówulf.—Mätzner's Altenglishe Sprachproben.

*Three hours a week.* (Not given this year.)

**English 3.**—Professor CHILD.

*English Literature.*—Chaucer.—Shakspere.—Bacon.—Milton.—Dryden.

*Three hours a week. 7 Seniors, 8 Juniors, 2 Sophomores, 2 Freshmen.*

## For 1879–80.

*Prescribed Courses*

*Sophomore Year.*

Rhetoric.—Hill's Principles of Rhetoric.—Abbott's How to Write Clearly.—Addison, Goldsmith, Irving, Macaulay, Scott.—Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America.—Exercises in Writing and Criticism. *Twice a week.* Mr. WARE.

Six Themes. Mr. PERRY.

*Junior Year.*

Six Themes. Professor HILL and Messrs. WARE and PERRY.

Four Forensics. Asst. Professor PALMER.

*Senior Year.*

Four Forensics. Professor PEABODY.