Before the Revolution: Formal Rhetoric in Philadelphia During the Federal Era

THE anthropologist H.G. Barnett has asserted in his exhaustive study of cultural change, *Innovation*, that "periods of social and political upheaval" offer "auspicious circumstances for the emergence of new ideas, many of them predatory." If Barnett's hypothesis is correct, then Philadelphia in the last two decades of the eighteenth-century should have fostered ingenious new ideas and witnessed great cultural change. At least as far as formal rhetoric is concerned—the rhetoric taught in schools or available for self study in rhetorical treatises and related works—such change did not occur. There were some few small changes, but, for the most part, the modes and methods that emerged at mid-century prevailed until the third decade of the next century.

Consider, for example, the commonplace tradition. Commonplace books, whose primary emphasis was on the arrangement of extracted sentiments under moral categories in order to insist that the end of all knowledge was inculcation of virtue, were transformed in the late eighteenth-century into literary readers concerned with the presentation of literature as literature. Yet, these readers were still heavily moralistic and served, like a commonplace book, to influence felicity in both spoken and written English and to inculcate virtue.

In the years before the Revolution, Philadelphian John Smith used his commonplace books in the traditional manner; that is, as a storehouse to consult for matter when writing. Author of the Atticus essays which ran in *The Pennsylvania Chronicle* from January, 1767, until August 1770, he used his commonplace entries either as material for these essays or as the occasion for them. For example, a passage from *The Gentleman's Magazine* included in Smith's commonplace book, Select Maxims, under the heading "education" concluded his essay "On
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

Education” and a passage from Swift in Smith’s commonplace book under the heading “conversation” served as the occasion (that is, the epigraph to) his essay “On Conversation.” All quotations in the Atticus papers cannot be found in Select Maxims or Smith’s other commonplace books, but all sources for quotations can. For example, his essay “On Slavery” quoted Montesquieu and his Select Maxims also cited Montesquieu on slavery, but different passages.

Whereas Smith thought of all writing as serving some moral end, others thought of literature as something with its own needs and goals, something with its own identity. While Milcah Martha Moore and Lindley Murray thought of literature as drama, poetry, fiction, these divisions according to genre were unthinkable to John Smith. Although he had read widely in contemporary literature of all genres, when he categorized his reading he did so in terms of its ability to adhere to the traditional headings of virtue and vice. Smith’s commonplace books contain only a single entry for a literary genre. It occurs under the heading “Poetry.” It is a negative statement that Smith included: “Poetry is a sweet and pleasant Honey: I advise thee to Taste it with the Tip of thy finger, and not to Live upon it; if thou dost, it will disorder thy head, and give thee dangerous Vertigo’s.” Outside of this single instance, Smith used no categories such as drama or satire. Of course, Smith included excerpts from drama and satire, but only as matter for headings such as “Wisdom” and “Charity.” As the traditional commonplace book became the modern reader, headings such as “Wisdom” and “Charity” disappeared and definitions of genre dictated the organization of excerpts. The material in a reader illustrated these literary forms, aided the improvement of style within them and in writing and speaking in general, and tended to be heavily moralistic.

The emphasis of the passages in Milcah Martha Moore’s Miscellaneous, Moral, and Instructive was virtue, but Moore omitted the rigid headings of the commonplace book. Although extracts were not included under “useful” moral headings, Moore’s reader, endorsed by Franklin and used in the Philadelphia region from the last decade of the eighteenth-century to the third decade of the nineteenth-century, derived from her commonplace book. At the start of the volume she wrote, “Most of the extracts which compose it, were collected some years ago, from a variety of authors, by a person who had no other intention; at the time, but that of preserving them for her own perusal and amusement.”

Likewise, Lindley Murray’s readers abandoned the commonplace form, but retained some of the functions of the commonplace book. Born
in Pennsylvania in 1745, Murray briefly attended school in Philadelphia. After making a fortune as a merchant in New York, he moved to England and although he never returned to America, he nonetheless, maintained close ties with Philadelphia Quakers. Murray’s readers were very popular throughout the English-speaking world during the first half of the nineteenth-century.⁶

Whereas Moore’s *Miscellanies* intended to be “Moral” (that is, to teach correct behavior in all aspects of life) and secondarily “Instructive” (that is, to teach proper speaking and writing skills), Murray’s work, in title at least, placed language instruction before moralistic inculcation. The complete title of his reader published in 1799 is *The English Reader: Or, Pieces in Prose and Poetry, Selected from the Best Writers. Designed to Assist Young Persons to Read with Propriety and Effect; to Improve their Language and Sentiments; and to Inculcate Some of the Most Important Principles of Piety and Virtue*. By 1812, this volume achieved its tenth Philadelphia edition: Murray’s *Sequel to the English Reader* also placed learning above virtue in its subtitle: *Designed to Improve the Highest Class of Learners in Reading; To Establish a Taste for Just and Accurate Composition; and to Promote the Interests of Piety and Virtue*. Organized according to literary divisions rather than according to headings of virtue and vice, both of these volumes include narrative pieces, argumentative pieces, didactic pieces, descriptive pieces, pathetic pieces, public speeches, dialogues, and mixed pieces. Murray included selections from Cicero and Sallust as well as from Goldsmith and Blair, but in citing poets he went no further back in time than Milton and included poets as contemporary as James Beattie.⁷

Although the contents of these readers included more modern works than previous readers or published treasuries, the passages still contained practical moral teaching. Although much longer passages replaced the moral maxim, the purpose remained improvement in both composition and composure. And finally, although the phrasing of the titles reversed that of old, knowledge and virtue remained inviolably linked. In short, the American Revolution did not engender a revolution in this important method of formal rhetorical invention.

The dominant conception of formal rhetoric did not go completely unchallenged during the Revolutionary period. Challenged it was, but in the end the old pattern survived by incorporating challenge within its established doctrine. The traditional use of a commonplace book as an aid to the finding of proper arguments or as a storehouse for supporting material declined, but survived in modified form in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century reader. The practice of imitating masters
in order to attain an accurate and eloquent prose style survived the challenge of the doctrine of originality by incorporating that doctrine within lessons on the imitation of masters. Similarly, the battle between ancients and moderns and Latin and English concluded in a compromise that maintained the pre-war status quo. Although John Andrews replaced William Smith, the rhetoric taught at the University of Pennsylvania at the century’s end shared much with that taught at its predecessor institution, the College of Philadelphia. The revolutionary leaders, such as Benjamin Rush, who wrote of national educational reform still thought of education in hierarchical terms. Formal rhetoric remained at the century’s close antithetical to the larger cultural challenge to traditional authority. Formal rhetoric remained at the century’s close a discipline for the select few, gentlemen who would lead and rule, as Louis B. Wright wrote, not for personal glory nor as dictators, but “as the wiser and better-trained element in a harmonious society.”

The American Revolution did not overthrow the belief in the fecundity of the use of proper models for imitation as a method to achieve an eloquent style. The doctrine of originality is in some sense a phenomenon analogous to a war for independence, but the doctrine of originality’s challenge to imitation sputtered because it became a part, rather than a replacement, of the practice of imitation. As virtue and knowledge remained intertwined, imitation and natural genius likewise became intertwined.

As the commonplace tradition emphasized moral aims, so, too, the methods of imitation emphasized the inculcation of virtue. Indeed, the belief in the proper models for proper teaching provided an opening for skeptics, such as some of the Quakers of the Quaker City, to view formal rhetoric as something more than a deceitful art. Classical rhetoricians stressed the importance of imitating upright models in order to attain a useful style and, similarly, Friends stressed the importance of imitating proper models in order to live a proper life. According to classical rhetoric, just as the orator must be virtuous in order to be eloquent, the student must imitate virtuous models in order to learn eloquent composition.

As the century progressed, modern authors as well as classical authors served as models for imitation and Addison replaced, for some, Cicero as the most revered model. The popular essay rivaled the sermon and the oration in its communicative power and as a teaching tool it competed only with the oration. At the Friends Latin School, students copied Latin authors, yet also learned a plain English style that avoided the
merely ornamental and "sought to be intelligible and useful, without attempting to set off their Sentiments by any Thing but their intrinsic Worth." Schoolmaster Robert Proud required his students to study *Spectators* as well as Ruddiman's *Latin Rudiments*. The students even published a newspaper that imitated the *Spectator*. Similarly, at the College of Philadelphia Smith instructed students to peruse the "Spectator, Rambler, &c. for improvement of style" during their private hours.

Of course, the most famous example of this imitation of the Addisonian essay occurs in Franklin's *Autobiography*. As a youth, Franklin said, he had "met with an odd volume of *Spectator*" which he enjoyed so much that he decided to imitate the essays therein. He recounted his method of imitation as follows:

I took some of the Papers, and making short Hints of the Sentiment in each Sentence, laid them by a few Days, and then, without looking at the Book, try'd to complete the Papers again, by expressing each hinted Sentiment at length.

He then compared his version to the original and corrected his mistakes.

Franklin was not the first, nor the last, to suggest such a method. Gilbert Burnet, for example, wrote that any preacher who wanted to improve his preaching "ought to take some of the best Models, and try what he can do upon a Text handled by them, without Reading them, and then compare his Work with theirs." Later in the century, Hugh Blair outlined a similar method for improving style. He directed students to take, for instance, some page of one of Mr. Addison's *Spectators*, and read it carefully over two or three times, till we have got a firm hold of the thoughts contained in it; then to lay aside the book; to attempt to write out the passage from memory, in the best way we can; and having done so, next to open the book, and compare what we have written with the Style of the author.

In nearly the same words as Blair, John Andrews instructed his students at the University of Pennsylvania to do likewise.

One might think that this reverence for the Addisonian essay, a reverence that steadily increased as the century progressed, represented a challenge to classical authority, a way out from under the weight of the ancient past. This was not the case for three reasons: the Addisonian
Before the Revolution

Essay remained moral in tone, critics evaluated the Addisonian essay in classical terms, and certain qualities necessary for the complete orator required toil beneath the burden of the past.

A republican such as James Burgh concluded that the growth of knowledge among all ranks of people in his day resulted from the publishing [of] those admirable essays, the Spectator, Tatler, and Guardian, in which learned subjects were, by elegant and ingenious authors, cleared of the scholastic rubbish of Latin and Logic, represented in a familiar style, and treated in a manner which people of common sense might comprehend.  

However, many more critics praised the Addisonian essay not for its antischolasticism, but for its neoclassicism. For example Samuel Miller, who studied rhetoric with John Andrews at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote in A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century that Addison, who attained "a style of composition so much superior to that of any who had gone before him," displayed judgement in the choice of terms, exhibited "perspicuity, ease, and harmony," and disclosed "taste in the choice and management of figures." In other words, he wrote well because he wrote in the English language as the classical authors did in theirs.

It was believed by many that neither Addison, Swift, nor Pope had surpassed their classical predecessors. That was impossible. For as David Huem wrote in "Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences," "A noble emulation is the source of every excellence," and yet, "admiration and modesty," necessary qualities for the virtuous man and hence for the complete orator, "naturally extinguish this emulation." Paradoxically, "no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty as a truly great genius."

There were those who envisioned a way out of this paradox. They recommended that one forego imitation and rely instead upon one's natural genius, one's originality. For example, Priestley suggested that just as a landscape painter paints directly from nature and never second-hand from the work of another painter, so the author should write from direct experience and not copy from the works of other men.

To this day, Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition (1759) remains a key work on artistic originality. In it he asked the rhetorical question "why are Originals so few" and he answered "because illustrious examples engross, prejudice, and intimidate." Imitations of past authors, he said, "only give us a sort of duplicates of
what we had, possibly much better, before; increasing the mere drug of
books, while all that makes them valuable, knowledge and genius, are at
a stand." 23 While Young endorsed some traditional beliefs, such as
literature must serve a practical purpose and authors must be virtuous
men, he changed the concept of imitation. Imitation, he affirmed, is
destructive both to literature in general and to the individual artist.
"Modern writers," he exclaimed, "may soar in the regions of liberty, or
move in the soft fetters of easy imitation." 24 Originality, he said, springs
from natural genius and always surpasses mere copying. Yet, Young
added that the writing of others should not be neglected. He said authors
should nourish the thought of others, but never command it. By
suggesting imitation of the spirit of another and not the exact letter of
another’s compositions, Young placed the practice of imitation in a
psychological framework and thus a world apart from Franklin’s
mechanical method of imitating (copying) the Spectator. Young ascribed
to learning a secondary position below that of genius for he declared,
"Learning inveighs against unstudied graces" and "unprescribed beau-
ties, and unexampled excellence, which are the characteristics of genius,
lie without the pale of learning’s authorities. . . . Genius can set us right
in Composition, without the rules of the learned; as conscience sets us
right in life." Young went so far as to define genius as "that God
within." 25 We are born originals, he concluded, but die copies because of
an excessive reverence for the past. Let us then, he entreated, begin to
know and to revere ourselves.

Implicit in Young’s Conjectures were ideas that threatened tradi-
tional authority. For example, if “Genius can set us right in Composi-
tion, without the rules of the learned,” then formal education must be
unnecessary. The solution to this challenge also implicitly presented
itself in the Conjectures: although, according to Young, certain qualities
“lie without the pale of learning’s authorities,” by imitating the spirit of
the man and not the letter of the composition, students learned
something that supplemented their natural genius.

The practice of imitation survived the challenge from the doctrine of
originality by compromising with it. Although Hugh Blair and John
Andrews suggested a method of imitation similar to that recalled by
Franklin in the Autobiography, these university rhetoricians added that
students must not succumb to “a servile imitation of any author
whatsoever.” “No man,” John Andrews wrote (closely following Hugh
Blair), “will ever become a good writer or speaker, who has not some
degree of confidence to follow his own genius” and he concluded that “it
is much better to have something that is our own, though of moderate
beauty, than to affect to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will at last betray the utter poverty of our genius.”

The best authors, then, have natural genius as well as wisdom and virtue.

Just as the commonplace tradition and the practice of imitation survived challenges, so did the teaching of the classical languages. In Philadelphia, the battle between ancients and moderns, Latin and English concluded in a compromise that maintained the pre-war status quo. Meyer Reinhold has discussed the connection between the dethronement of Latin and Greek and the egalitarian ideals of revolution. Reinhold concluded, however, that serious challenge to classical languages did not occur until 1820 and that the classical languages remained important in college curriculum throughout the nineteenth-century.

Benjamin Rush was one eighteenth-century Philadelphian who opposed classical learning and in his essay “Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages,” he summarized six common eighteenth-century arguments against the teaching of the classical languages. Rush wrote that Latin and Greek grammar were not necessary for an understanding English grammar, that knowledge of Latin and Greek was not needed to understand English words derived from classical languages, that Latin and Greek was not needed to understand the frequent allusions to myths made by English poets (for the less we know of the heathen lore, Rush reasoned, the better). Furthermore, Rush noted that Latin was no longer the universal language of science and that the mistaken belief that Latin was still the language for all discovery, in fact, curtailed the advance of science. The errors of the past were repeated, Rush warned, when the languages of the past were used. “The rejection of the Latin and Greek languages from our schools,” Rush proclaimed, “would produce a revolution in science.” Finally, Rush asserted that Latin and Greek were not even necessary for professions such as law, medicine, and divinity because all important and useful classical texts had been adequately translated and the praiseworthy works of recent times had been written in English.

Rush’s critique offered nothing new. For example, his first criticism follows in the line of late seventeenth-century educational reformers such as John Newton and John Locke. They, along with many other authors that followed them, believed that Latin and Greek grammar were not necessary for a thorough understanding of English grammar. John Newton introduced his *The English Academy: Or, A Brief Introduction to the Seven Liberal Arts* by noting that to send children to a Latin School was not the best way to educate them. It was far more
important, Newton said, for students to learn English grammar than to attempt to apply a foreign grammar to their native tongue. And John Locke complained that Latin school students were taught classical rhetoric, “but yet never taught how to express themselves handsomely with their Tongues or Pens in the Language they are always to use.” He continued, in a passage quoted by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Sheridan, and many other eighteenth-century authors, “since ’tis English that an English Gentleman will have constant use of, that is the Language he should chiefly cultivate, and wherein most Care should be taken to polish and perfect his Style.”

Locke concluded the section on the teaching of Latin and Greek in Some Thoughts Concerning Education by adding that Latin and Greek should not be omitted from a gentleman’s education, but that whatever languages a student studies, he must daily concentrate on his own language. Following Locke’s principles, Richard Peters announced in his Sermon on Education, preached at the opening of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, that the purpose of this institution, unlike other colonial colleges, was not simply to teach the learned languages. Here, Peters said, “the Place of English Master was thought to be of as much, if not more Consequence” than that of a Greek or Latin master. Peters said that in the Latin School the Masters will “have it particularly in charge to correct, refine and beautify out Mother Tongue” for many “who understand the learned Languages,” write poorly “when they come to write in English.”

Franklin, the school’s founder, believed that William Smith, the first Provost, betrayed the original design of the College and Academy of Philadelphia. Franklin thought that the classics and learned languages received too much attention and that English suffered from neglect. Franklin referred to Smith as a Latinist, but Smith’s own theory and practice reveals a somewhat more moderate position. In the Account of the College, Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia, Smith noted, like Locke, that study of the mother tongue was “too much neglected.” He thought that the study of English was even more important in Pennsylvania since citizens from many nations comprised the population. In a note, Smith also reflected that Sheridan complained that no one taught proper pronunciation of the English language. If Sheridan knew of our school, Smith said, Sheridan would see that his complaint was not entirely justified. “This attention to public speaking,” Smith wrote in the text proper, “which is begun here with the very rudiments of the mother tongue, is continued down to the end; and especially in the philosophy schools, where the youth frequently deliver
exercises of their own composition, at commencements, examination, and other public occasions."

What was not enough for Franklin apparently was too much for others. In The Pennsylvania Gazette, William Smith defended the school's public exercises performed in English. He noted that the teaching of English was part of the original plan for the College and that English exercises

will contribute more to the forming a true Englishman, and promoting Principles both of public and private Virtue, than Half the Greek and Roman Stage put together; chaste and instructive as it generally is; to which it might not be extravagant to add Half our own also.35

At the College of Philadelphia, then “half our own” and half the ancients was the rule of the day.

The Philadelphia Quaker schoolmaster, Anthony Benezet believed that Latin and Greek only confused a student’s understanding of English grammar. He said his essay on grammar would

make the grounds of that necessary foundation of knowledge in our mother tongue, more clear and easy than such compilations generally are, most of which by introducing parts of Latin grammar, that are of no use in our language, run into many useless words, and are difficult to be understood, both by pupils and masters of dull capacities.36

The essay of which Benezet spoke in this letter to David Barclay was for the second edition of his The Pennsylvania Spelling-Book. Benezet’s primer was not a college text, but, as he said, for pupils “of dull capacities.” In this primer, unlike George Fox’s, the word rhetoric was not even mentioned. The point here is that rather than becoming more egalitarian, education in Philadelphia remained pretty much the same after the War for Independence as it had been before. Benezet’s primer addressed both sexes and the lesser ranks. He avoided all reference to Greek, Latin, Logic, and Rhetoric. Smith, on the other hand, taught a small group of select males and he taught them Greek, Latin, Logic, and Rhetoric as well as English grammar.

Benjamin Rush, who sought to reform education in the United States, was not entirely egalitarian either. Rather like Benezet, he said education for the masses must avoid Latin and Greek, but, somewhat like Smith, he suggested that the best students be selected for a national university. These best and brightest, in turn, would be the leaders (and
the only leaders?) of the nation. In an essay entitled "A Plan for Establishing Public Schools in Pennsylvania, and for Conducting Education Agreeably to a Republican Form of Government," Rush claimed:

Our schools of learning, by providing one general, and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government.37

Notice, he wrote "the mass of people," he did not write "all the people." Implicitly, some invariably would rise above the mass and those who rose, who attended the National University, who were, to use Wright's phrase once more, "the wiser and better-trained element in a harmonious society," would lead the nation. Furthermore, Rush said quite explicitly that "that first eight years of a boy's time" focused on the basics of English, but afterwards, from the age of fourteen to eighteen, the more advanced studies of rhetoric formed their lessons in language and literature.38 Yet in Thoughts upon Female Education, Rush said that "a young lady in this country" need only learn to read, speak, and spell English correctly. Ladies need not worry about the finer points of eloquence. Men must, because they go out into the world, but women raise children and how beneficial for babes is it, Rush added, to have their mothers properly pronounce the English language.39 Boys, the very best boys that is, must learn rhetoric for, as Rush said, "It is the first accomplishment in a republic, and often sets the whole machine of government in motion."40 Education, then, was still hierarchical. Only a few males could rise to the top, but these males that rose would no longer necessarily be from the upper class. Rush's system of education created the opportunity for a rags to rhetoric story.

And yet, at one Philadelphia school women were taught the finer points of eloquence. In 1787 the Young Ladies' Academy was founded to provide instruction in "Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Composition, Rhetoric, and Geography." Linda Kerber has argued that ladies academies existed only to provide the kind of "female instruction" that Rush advocated. "If the Republic indeed rested on responsible motherhood," Kerber has written, "prospective mothers needed to be well informed and decently educated."41 Hence; in a poem, "written by a Gentleman who attended the Commencement," included in The Rise and Progress of the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia it is said that the purpose of this institution is "To form the maiden for th' accomplish'd wife."42 Yet, this Academy had the most far-reaching
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

curriculum of any such school. Rhetoric was taught, although the classics were not. The students were, however, very cautious about demonstrating their rhetorical skills. Several commencement orations began with an apology for female oratory. Molly Wallace declared that "we look not for a female Pitt, Cicero, or Demosthenes." Priscilla Mason, after her "vindication of female eloquence," stated that in some aspects of oratory "the female orator stands on equal,—nay, on superior ground." She exhorted, "The Church, the Bar, and the Senate are shut against us. Who shut them? Man." Finally, she offered a suggestion. She did not suggest that women run for Congress, but, rather, that Congress should establish "a senate of women" committed to "the important business of regulating dress and fashions." It seems true that, as Kerber has written, "the pride women expressed in their new learning was balanced by the promise that traditional values would be upheld and maintained."

In 1797 the American Philosophical Society solicited essays on a national system of education. Samuel Knox and Samuel Harrison Smith shared first prize honors. Like the reforms Rush suggested, theirs were mild rather than revolutionary. Knox stated that girls should attend primary schools, but not academies or colleges. (Again, the idea that a woman learns what she needs to teach her children, especially her sons.) Smith, on the other hand, made no mention at all of female children. Knox kept rhetoric and the classics. Smith did not endorse the classics, but neither did he explicitly oppose them. Both Knox and Smith associated virtue with knowledge and Knox proposed that only the best students continue their education at the college level. At the college level, students learned rhetoric so that they could read the classics. After college, a graduate became "a scholar, a man of business, or a gentleman."

Reforms in terms of the teaching of rhetoric after the War for Independence were not revolutionary. Plenty of new ideas circulated, few took hold. The latter part of the eighteenth-century witnessed the rise of what has been called the new rhetoric. According to Douglas Ehninger, it represented the second great development in communication theory. The works of Priestley, who spent the last years of his life in Pennsylvania, Lord Kames, George Campbell, and Hugh Blair reached Philadelphia, but only Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres had a broad impact on the dominant conception of formal rhetoric in Philadelphia. Only one year after their first printing at Edinburg, the Philadelphia printer Robert Aitken published the first American edition of Blair's Lectures (1784). Matthew Carey published
the *Lectures* in 1793 and Manning and Moore reprinted them in 1804. Lord Kames's (Henry Home) *Elements of Criticism,* first published in 1762 and first published in America by Samuel Etheridge at Boston in 1796 from the seventh London edition, was not published in Philadelphia until 1816. In that year Matthew Carey issued the second American edition from the eighth London edition. George Campbell’s *The Philosophy of Rhetoric,* first published in 1776, issued from Baltimore and Boston presses before it appeared from the Philadelphia press of Mitchell, Ames, and White in 1818. Priestley’s *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777) had no Philadelphia printing. Furthermore, Kames, Campbell, and Priestley were for the most part absent from booksellers’ catalogues while nearly every catalogue listed the ubiquitous Blair.

Blair’s work was the most conservative of the new rhetorics. His work represented more a continuation and consolidation of past ideas than it did a drastic shift to totally different ideas. Blair emphasized communication of ideas, but still discussed persuasion to a specific cause. He provided a general theory for all literature and writing, but still outlined the traditional three types of discourse. He recommended simple structures for discourses, but also included the many parts of a Ciceronian or Quintilian oration. He preferred proofs drawn directly from the matter at hand, but, nonetheless, mentioned the commonplaces. Furthermore, as Walter J. Ong has argued, “Not English, but the classical languages, remain Blair’s central preoccupation.”

John Andrews, the first practitioner of the new rhetoric in Philadelphia, followed (if he did not also plagiarize) Hugh Blair. Andrews, born in 1746, entered the College of Philadelphia in 1762, graduated in 1765, and received an M.A. in 1767. In 1785, a D.D. degree was conferred upon him by Washington College. Besides his duties as Rector of St. James’, Bristol, he was Principal of the Academy from 1785–91, Vice Provost of the College from 1789–1810, and Professor of Rhetorick and Belles Lettres from 1789–1813. His *Elements of Rhetorick and Belles Lettres: Compiled for the Use of Schools* issued from the press of Moses Thomas and B. & W. Carr in 1813, the year of his death.

It is important to state here the Andrews’s rhetoric teacher, Provost Smith, lost control of the College during the Revolution. Smith traveled to Maryland where he instituted the College of Philadelphia curriculum at Washington College. Washington College became a sort of College of Philadelphia in exile and one of the young men that followed Smith into exile was John Andrews. Eventually, officials restored the College of
Philadelphia charter and Smith returned from Maryland to lead the College. During this period a rival Philadelphia institution, a State University, arose. In 1791, the College and the University united under John Ewing, a younger man than Smith. Three years later, William Smith retired from all duties at the University of Pennsylvania.

The rhetoric that Andrews taught, although derived from Blair, was not substantially different from that taught by William Smith. In other words, the rhetoric course taught after the Revolution had more similarities than differences with its pre-War predecessor. Andrews began teaching his course in 1789 and in his course he outlined the six part oration just as Smith did. His compendium, though as "well adapted to English Schools, including Female Academies, as to Latin Schools, and those of a higher order," fostered a hierarchical system of education. As Smith reserved rhetoric only for advanced male students, Andrews reserved the latter part of his compendium for similar students. Andrews provided translations of illustrations drawn from the classics so that the very young or the female could profit from them. Yet at the close of his work where he enumerated additional figures, examples were not translated because, as he wrote, "these are of little consequence except to those who are conversant with the Latin Classicks." For example, anaph'ora he defined as "Bringing over again, a word to begin the next clause" and he illustrated this by the following quotation from Virgil's Georgics, "Te dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum, te veniente die, to, decendte, canebat." This appendix, that returns to the ornamental rhetorics of Farnaby and Stirling, addressed only students in "Latin Schools, and those of a higher order."

As mentioned previously, beside fitting in with his predecessor, Andrews also closely followed Hugh Blair. In the "Preface" to his compendium, Andrews acknowledged that "the authors . . . which have been chiefly followed, are Blair and Beattie: something also has been taken from Irvine [Irving]; and something, but very little, from Lord Kames." The work might best be described as an abridgement of Blair. Andrews stated that very little of his Elements came from Kames, and Beattie and Irving were Edinburgh students heavily indebted to Blair. Indeed, Irving's Elements of Composition, published the year he received an M.A. degree from Edinburgh, 1801, quotes frequently and at length from Blair.55

Three decades after Blair first delivered his lectures at Edinburgh, Andrews promulgated Blair's lectures to the students at the University of Pennsylvania. As Blair's Lectures began with a consideration of
language and style, so did Andrews. As Blair asserted that perspicuity was more important than ornament and therefore explained and illustrated only a few choice tropes and figures, so did Andrews. Blair listed seven rules for attaining a good style and so did Andrews. Later in his Lectures, Blair explained the forms of writing and in his Elements, Andrews explained the same forms in the same order as had Blair.

In sum, the teaching of rhetoric at the College of Philadelphia/University of Pennsylvania did not radically change in the years following the American Revolution. Cicero's *de Oratore* remained a required text until late in the 1820s. Not until Alexander Jamieson's *A Grammar of Rhetoric, and Polite Literature*, with its use of Campbell and Kames as well as Blair, supplanted Andrews's *Elements* did the teaching of rhetoric at the University of Pennsylvania begin to change and it was not until the mid-nineteenth-century that a University of Pennsylvania professor—Henry Coppee, Professor of English Literature—published a rhetoric that bore the influence of Richard Whately, the next great English rhetorician after George Campbell. This finding regarding the teaching of rhetoric at the College of Philadelphia/University of Pennsylvania corresponds to what has been written regarding the institution as a whole. Saul Sack stated that rather than become increasingly liberal and egalitarian in the years following Independence, the University became more conservative and hierarchical. William Smith's old curriculum was so effective as well as embedded that it lasted longer than he did. Before the War, afternoons on the Philadelphia campus were devoted to the ancient languages and to rhetorical studies based upon those languages. According to Samuel Knox's award-winning essay "on the Best System of Liberal Education" for the new nation, college students should devote their afternoons to the ancient languages and to rhetorical studies based upon those languages. The dominant conception of formal rhetoric in Philadelphia after the Revolution was very similar to what it had been before the Revolution.

Philadelphians at first expressed a distrust of formal rhetoric. Gradually, formal rhetoric emerged in the culture by way of libraries and booksellers. At mid-century, formal rhetoric was firmly established at the Latin School and at the College of Philadelphia. Although the War for Independence disrupted and challenged the teaching of formal rhetoric, it survived in post-War Philadelphia virtually unscathed. It remained primarily something for a few select male students. It remained a necessary tool for authority and a desired ornament for gentility. "Indeed," as William Hedges has written, "it was in part by
the control of language, written and spoken, that lawyers, planters, and merchants sought to maintain the leadership which, in their view, rightly belonged in a republic to people like themselves.\footnote{6}

NOTES


2. [John Smith], Atticus, No. 18, \textit{The Pennsylvania Chronicle}, Vol. 1, Numb. 41, October 26, 1767, and No. 8, Vol. 1, Numb. 21, June 8, 1767. The titles I use here are titles Smith gave his essays in a manuscript list of all the Atticus papers (Smith Manuscripts, VIII, 63, Historical Society of Pennsylvania). Smith's commonplace books are at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For a detailed study of one author's use of his commonplace entries in his other writings see Ruth Mohl, \textit{John Milton and His Commonplace Book} (New York, 1969).


5. [Milcah Martha Moore], \textit{Miscellanies, Moral and Instructive. The Second Edition} (Burlington, 1792), 3. The volume was first printed in Philadelphia (Joseph James, 1787). It was reprinted in 1793 (Philadelphia) and in 1796 (Burlington) as well as in 1792 as noted above.


8. Louis B. Wright, \textit{The First Gentleman of Virginia: Intellectual Qualities of the Early Colonial Ruling Class} (Charlottesville, Va., 1964), 9. See also William L. Hedges, "The Old World Yet: Writers and Writing in Post-Revolutionary America," \textit{Early American Literature XVI} (1981), 3-18, Linda K. Kerber, \textit{Federalist in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America} (Ithaca, New York, 1970), especially Chapter 4, "Salvaging the Classical Tradition," 95-134. In her "Preface" she writes that "the revolutionary generation had left an ambiguous legacy ... it had endorsed popular participation in government because it expected that the citizenry would continue to accept the leadership of an educated and generally conservative elite" (ix) and later in Chapter 4 she states that some in the post-revolutionary generation believed that relaxation of rhetorical rules equaled relaxation of all rules (130).


10. Meeting of the Overseers of Friends public Schools, 2nd month 11th, 1796, "Advice to the Teachers in different Schools under the Care of the Overseers" (Penn Charter Papers, Manuscript, Quaker Collection of the Haverford College Library). \textit{Tatlers} as well as Seneca's \textit{Morals} were delivered to the Latin School in November, 1752 (A List of Books delivered to Robt. William, Penn Charter Papers, Quaker Collection of the Haverford College Library).

11. Robert Proud, "To the Overseers of Friends Public School in Philadelphia." First Month, 25th day, 1786 (Manuscript, Quaker Collection of the Haverford College Library).


22. [Edward Young], Conjectures on Original Composition: In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison (London, 1759), 16-17.

23. Ibid., 9-10.

24. Ibid., 19.


28. Benjamin Rush, “Observations upon the Study of the Latin and Greek Languages, as a Branch of Liberal Instruction, with Hints of a plan of Liberal Instruction, Without Them, Accommodated to the Present State of Society, Manners, and Government in the United States,” Essays, Literary, Moral & Philosophical (Philadelphia, 1798), 26-43. In an earlier essay, however, Rush wrote, “I do not wish the Learned or Dead Languages, as they are commonly called, to be reduced below their present just rank in the universities of Europe, especially as I consider an acquaintance with them as the best foundation for a correct and extensive knowledge of the language of our country” (A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and The Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania [Philadelphia, 1786], 28. This essay also appears in Essays, Literary, Moral & Philosophical).


30. Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education (London, 1699), Section 189. For Franklin's and Sheridan's use of the Locke passage see Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania (available in most anthologies of Franklin's writings as well as in The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 1749) and A Discourse Delivered in The Theatre at Oxford (London, 1759), 39.


32. See Franklin's Idea of the English School, Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania and Observations Relative to the Intentions of the Original Founder of the Academy in Philadelphia, 1789, and Melvin Buxbaum, “Benjamin Franklin and

33. The 1759 version of Smith’s *Account* refers to Sheridan’s “Introduction” to his lectures on elocution. The “Introduction” was published in 1759 and the complete *Course of Lectures* was first published in 1762. William Smith, therefore, was very up-to-date and perhaps many of his ideas antedated those of Sheridan.


35. [William Smith], “Conclusion of the Account of Alfred, as represented in an Oratorical Exercise, by a Sett of Young Gentlemen, belonging to the College of this City,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Numb. 1468, February 10, 1757. See also Terry W. Smith, “Exercises” Presented During the Commencements of the College of Philadelphia and other Colonial Colleges” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1962). John Macpherson, Jr., a College of New Jersey (Princeton) man, observed that the Latin compositions read at public occasions in Philadelphia were mediocre. According to Macpherson, on commencement day, 1767, the students “produced a Latin dispute... This was ill done... The Latin was ill pronounced, & there was no action, for they spoke from desks” (John Macpherson, Jr., to William Paterson, November 17, 1677, ed. William Macpherson Horner, “Extracts from Letters of John Macpherson, Jr. to William Paterson, 1765–1773,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* XXXIII [1899], 53).


42. ———, *The Rise and Progress of the Young Ladies’ Academy of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1794), 79.

43. Ibid., 74.

44. Ibid., 91–94.


46. Both of these essays are readily available in the collection *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge, Mass., 1965).


50. In the “Preface” to *Elements of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Andrews noted that he compiled the work twenty-years before, but evidence survives that indicates that he taught this rhetoric four years before 1793. Samuel Miller’s “Extracts from Blair’s Lectures on Rhetoric,” dated 1789, demonstrate that during his first year as Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Andrews taught the same course that he would teach until his retirement in
1813 (Notes from a Course on Logick and Moral Philosophy [Manuscript, Rare Book Collection, Rare Book Room, University of Pennsylvania]. The Library does not note on the catalogue card for Miller's manuscript that the notebook also contains notes on Hugh Blair's *Lectures*. Miller made these notes the year he graduated and they closely follow the notes of later Andrews students).


52. Ibid., vii and 312.

53. Ibid., 315.

54. Ibid., viii.

55. A Philadelphia edition of Irving's *Elements of English Composition* was published by Thomas L. Plowman in 1803 and Matthew Carey published Beattie's *Elements of Moral Science* in 1792 (volume one) and 1795 (volume two).

56. Blair began his lectures in 1759. In other words, the rhetoric Andrews taught at the University of Pennsylvania in 1789 was first taught at Edinburgh University thirty years before. Blair published his lectures upon his retirement in 1783. Besides compiling a rhetoric based on Blair, Andrews revised and corrected Sheridan's *Dictionary of the English Language* for publication by William Young at Philadelphia in 1789.


