

A Brief History of Rhetoric and Composition

Classical Rhetoric: Stages of Composing, Functions of Discourse

The formal study of rhetoric in the West began in Greece in the fifth century BCE with the Sophists [76], followed by Isocrates [65], Plato [71], and Aristotle [45]. The main line of Greek rhetoric was extended by Roman rhetoricians, notably Cicero [55, 56] and Quintilian [69, 72]. Classical rhetoric, although concerned with oratory, still influences writing instruction. For example, by Roman times a five-stage model of the process of composing a speech had evolved. Three of these stages—*invention*, or discovering ideas; *arrangement*, or organizing ideas; and *style*, or putting ideas into words—have been modified into elements in modern models of writing processes. *Memory* and *delivery*, the last two classical stages, dwindled in postclassical times into mechanical techniques before being revived for serious study in modern departments of speech.

Scholars traditionally regarded classical rhetoric as a system with the built-in assumption that one first finds knowledge and then puts it into words. In our own day, in the context of a renewed interest in the Sophists, this view has been challenged by a number of historians of rhetoric, who argue that knowledge is actually created by words (see Jarratt [107] and Swearingen [137]). But the strongest influence on rhetoric has undoubtedly been the Aristotelian model. Aristotle described a number of *topoi*, or topics, for discovering ideas and arguments. These topics—ways of analyzing, evaluating, and extending virtually any subject—constitute a heuristic, or method of systematic inquiry.

Scholars have also emphasized classical rhetoric's sorting of discourse forms according to social function. Many classical rhetorics divide oratory into three categories. Deliberative speeches, primarily devoted to political purposes, aim to persuade hearers to choose or avoid some future course of action. Forensic speeches, used primarily in legal situations, aim to accuse or defend someone involved in a disputed past action. Epideictic speeches, produced in classical times on ceremonial occasions, aim to help hearers see some present event or person as worthy of praise or blame. Epideictic orations may make more use than others of literary ornaments and vocal pyrotechnics.

Although these classical categories for oral discourse have been reshaped by later rhetoricians, the premise that discourse can be classified according

to social function has been persistently influential. In eighteenth-century American colleges, for example, discourse was classified according to its use by clergymen, lawyers, or politicians. Contemporary composition scholars have redirected the interest in social function to analyses of the ways in which audience or social context affects the interpretation of written text.

Medieval and Renaissance Rhetoric

We often think of the Middle Ages as a time when many classical sources were not accessible: Quintilian and much of Cicero, for example, were lost until the Renaissance. But it is more accurate to see medieval rhetoricians selecting and reshaping the classical heritage in light of Augustine's reinterpretation of rhetoric to suit Christian purposes [47]. One important emphasis in medieval rhetoric following Augustine was the redirection of deliberative discourse from political to religious ends. The goal became saving souls, not leading the state. Another important emphasis was the desire to codify authoritative classical precepts on good composition. Classical rhetoric texts had often been prescriptive, providing rules for achieving effective speeches. In the Middle Ages, this prescriptive impulse so intensified that many medieval rhetoric texts consist entirely of lists of rules and examples illustrating them.

Medieval university students studied grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic—the “trivium.” As exemplified in the popular classical textbooks of Donatus, grammar means not simply the study of correct constructions but also the analysis of style. The study of grammar thereby shaded over into the medieval study of rhetoric, which emphasized style. Grammar and rhetoric merely prepared the beginning student for the serious business of the university, the study of dialectic, which offered practice in oral argumentation on historical, religious, or legal issues. Bishop Isidore of Seville wrote an important summary of the arts of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic.

Dialectic was regarded as a preparation for logic, the oral arguments of which became opportunities for stylistic display, but the subject was still not considered closely allied with rhetoric. The study of rhetoric was manifested, however, in techniques for adult practitioners, for example, in *ars dictaminis*, the art of composing official letters through which church and state business was conducted, and *ars praedicandi*, the art of preaching. Medieval theorists of poetry also drew on rhetorical studies of style.

In the early Renaissance, major texts by Cicero and Quintilian were recovered. In the sixteenth century, a proliferation of rhetorics following classical models but written in the vernacular appeared, such as those in English by Leonard Cox, Richard Sherry, Thomas Wilson, and George Puttenham. Most of these rhetoricians emphasized the study of style, sometimes linking their practice explicitly with poetic. The generally acknowledged master of stylistic rhetoric in the Renaissance was Erasmus, whose *Copia* (1512) [60] was originally conceived as a textbook.

Another source of change for Renaissance rhetoric was the influential work of Peter Ramus (Pierre de la Ramée), whose ideas were recorded in *Institutiones Oratoriae* (1545) by his colleague Talaeus (Omer Talon). Ramus

wished to reform the medieval trivium by reemphasizing the classical division of the stages of composing. Ramist rhetoric intensifies the separation between these stages and the importance of their sequence, at the same time divorcing invention and arrangement from rhetoric and assigning them to logic. Ramists hoped to define a logical, scientific discourse, untainted by nonlogical appeals, that would win assent from the rational audience by virtue of rationality alone. Ramus' fellow Puritans widely adopted this plain style for all serious matters.

Rhetoric under the Ramist scheme is left to deal only with style, memory, and delivery. Memory had figured importantly in some early Renaissance hermetic precursors of modern science, and delivery would give rise in the eighteenth century to elaborate elocutionary techniques for public speakers and actors. Still, memory and delivery tended to continue their decline in importance as the Renaissance dissemination of printing made written texts ever more important to academic, religious, and political life. Rhetoricians, then, came increasingly to focus on the study of language as the dress of ideas that were generated elsewhere. The goal of rhetorical study was to clothe one's ideas in the most elegant dress possible, and rhetoric thus came to be seen as the finishing refinement of an upper-class education.

Rhetoric in the Eighteenth Century: The Scottish Influence

Seeing rhetoric as the study of the dress of thought rather than the study of thought itself threatened to trivialize it. Rhetoricians from the University of Edinburgh sought to stop this trend by arguing that the study of correct and persuasive style produced not only competent public speakers but virtuous people. This was a strong defense, for the study of rhetoric in American colleges focused on oratory that would be useful to clergy, lawyers, and politicians. In addition, the Edinburgh rhetoricians connected the study of persuasion with the more prestigious scientific discipline of psychology. And these rhetoricians adapted ornamentation from Cicero to correct the emphasis on plain style that the Puritans had kept alive from Ramism.

Perhaps the most influential book to come from Edinburgh to America was Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* [51], published in 1783 and adopted as the standard text at Yale in 1785 and Harvard in 1788. Blair's text was widely used in American colleges and secondary schools until the end of the nineteenth century. Americans found Blair's emphasis on the moral qualities of belletristic taste particularly important, since his approach justified the social leadership of the well-trained orator.

Less popular in the schools but perhaps more important for modern rhetoric was another Scottish rhetorician, George Campbell, whose *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) [53] professes to validate its principles by relating them to the working of the human mind. More innovative than his contemporaries, Campbell extended the purpose of rhetoric beyond persuasion, defining eloquence as the "art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end."

A later rhetorician in the Scottish tradition was Alexander Bain, who showed the importance of psychology for achieving goals of persuasion in *English Composition and Rhetoric: A Manual* (1866) [49]. Bain argued that

persuasive discourse is organized by associating ideas in a way that produces the desired emotion in the audience. From Bain's work comes the now familiar taxonomy of essay structures, or modes of discourse: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation.

In America, the Scottish revision of classical rhetoric had special significance. A nascent democracy, so the argument went, needed people of refinement who could direct the vulgar taste into virtuous channels; the psychology of persuasion could help these leaders consolidate their control. Hence, the study of rhetoric both conferred and garnered prestige. Long before American colleges had English departments, they had distinguished professors of rhetoric.

Rhetoric in Nineteenth-Century America: The Harvard Influence

In 1806 Harvard College established the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory and became, thereafter, the dominant influence on the development of rhetoric at other American colleges. Edward T. Channing, who held the chair for thirty-two years (1819–1851), continued the Scottish emphasis on belletristic taste and the psychology of persuasion but shifted the emphasis in practice from speaking to writing and increased attention to literary exempla. From the literary models, Channing derived rules for correct grammar, style, and organization, which were taught more and more prescriptively as the century went on.

Francis J. Child, who held the Boylston Professorship after Channing (1851–1876), had studied philology at a German university before taking the chair and came to Harvard determined to turn the study of English from rhetoric to literature. Child bitterly resented the time he had to spend correcting student compositions. He delegated as much of this work as he could to faculty underlings and concentrated on enlarging Harvard's offerings in literature. In 1876, to keep Child from moving to Johns Hopkins (the first American university to be organized in departments on the German model), Harvard created the first Professorship of English for him, and Child spent the next twenty years developing the English literature curriculum. His successor in the Boylston Professorship, A. S. Hill, continued the rule-bound focus on written composition begun by Channing, but it was now clear that composition was a second-class subject and that rhetoric was hardly mentioned in the English department.

These changes are neatly encapsulated in Harvard's 1874 entrance requirement in 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 Harvard model of freshman composition began to spread, particularly with the publication in 1890 of Harvard Professor Barrett Wendell's *English Composition: Eight Lectures*. Blair and Bain had used literary exempla to illustrate rhetorical principles. In the Harvard course, this belletristic tradition culminated in rules derived from the exempla and rigidly applied to student essays. Furthermore, the works of literature to be studied were strictly specified in lists of standard authors, such as the one given in the entrance requirements. These lists soon came to dictate secondary-school curricula, since one needed to know the listed works to perform well on admissions tests at prestigious colleges. And the prestige of those colleges that regulated their admissions according to the lists made it hard for other colleges to avoid similar requirements.

Progressive Education in Twentieth-Century America

In the early twentieth century, more and more secondary-school and college teachers came to oppose the domination of college admissions by the standard lists of works generated at Harvard and other elite eastern schools. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) was formed in 1911 largely to consolidate resistance to the lists and to the conception of English studies they represented. To further this cause, the NCTE began to publish *English Journal* in 1912 [10]. The first president of the NCTE was Fred Newton Scott of the University of Michigan. A past president of the Modern Language Association (MLA), Scott possessed impeccable credentials in literary scholarship; nevertheless, he deplored the demotion of rhetoric and promoted an understanding of writing that reemphasized self-expression and the adaptation of prose to its social purposes.

At the same time, departments of speech were growing more numerous in American colleges, taking over the study of historical rhetoric and many of its traditional concerns, such as response to audience. Speech teachers broke away from the NCTE in 1914 to form their own professional organization, the National Association for Academic Teachers of Public Speaking—now the Speech Communication Association.

English teachers' dissatisfaction with the reading lists soon became caught up in the larger progressive reform movement, which directly challenged the idea that the goal of higher education in America should be to empower an elite. The progressives believed that the purpose of education is to integrate a diverse population into a community of productive citizens. Progressive education sought to equip students with intellectual and social skills they would need as adults and to give attention to the needs of each individual student. John Dewey was an important leader of this movement. He became chair in 1894 of the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago, and his *School and Society* was published in 1899.

Progressive education sought to free writing instruction from the service of canonical literary study. Correctness remained a goal of writing instruction, justified not by some authoritative set of rules but by its usefulness in the

world beyond school. While respectful of the diverse cultural backgrounds of a school population that included record numbers of immigrants, progressive education stressed the communicative function of writing to help draw diverse groups together and integrate them into the mainstream of American society. A class writing project, for example, might collect data about some local social problem and prepare a report to be sent to the appropriate public official.

The progressives were not very often successful, at least on the college level, in separating composition and literature. In progressive hands, however, writing about literature became a way to understand one's own responses to the text. Such an approach can be found in Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and in early issues of *College English* (CE), which the NCTE began to publish in 1939 [4]. As progressive education moved into the 1930s and 1940s, its social agenda became more modest, but the main goal was still life adjustment—helping adolescents pass through their difficult developmental period and emerge as productive citizens.

Progressive education was also innovative in its interest in the social sciences as a source of information for English studies. Of course, progressives were not the first to look in this direction; rhetoric in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had incorporated some study of psychology. But with the demotion of rhetoric in the late nineteenth century, contacts between English and the social sciences were downplayed. Progressive education, in contrast, aimed to study students' abilities, needs, and achievements scientifically and to redesign curricula accordingly. These efforts had very little effect on college writing instruction, however.

Freshman English courses were rarely devoted only to writing instruction. Their main goal was to introduce students to literary study and in the process to correct the writing in students' literary essays according to long-established standards of grammatical, stylistic, and formal correctness. Where writing courses did exist, they usually patterned their syllabi after Bain's modes of discourse and justified their existence with arguments similar to Blair's for the good writer as a virtuous person. Widespread changes did not begin to occur until after World War II.

Beginnings of Modern Composition Studies: New Criticism

In the 1930s, New Criticism began to supplant biographical and philological criticism as the dominant mode of academic literary study. New Criticism put its emphasis on the close analysis of literary texts and appeared to have no common ground with the current forms of rhetorical study or composition pedagogy. By the 1940s, at any rate, the separation in English departments between literary study and the teaching of writing was so complete that academics committed to literary study could easily ignore the writing program.

New Criticism ultimately had a profound effect on writing instruction, however, because it approached literary texts as complex structures of meaning. In its view, changing a word in a poem changed the poem's meaning—it

did not simply select an alternative dress for an idea that remained unchanged. New Criticism therefore made it possible to see the relation between thought and language as fundamental rather than superficial. The freshman English course patterned on a nineteenth-century model (the current-traditional model, as it is often called) treated the relation between thought and language too mechanically. What could be taken for granted in the writing class quickly became problematic.

Recognizing the need for serious reconsideration of the freshman writing course, the NCTE mandated the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in 1949. The journal *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) appeared in 1950 [3]. In the 1950s, the CCCC did much to lay the foundations for the modern discipline of composition studies. On the practical side, the CCCC worked to improve conditions for the graduate assistants who taught almost all college writing courses and to exchange ideas among college writing program administrators. The conference also championed the cause of semanticists and linguists looking for a home in college English departments and urged that the PhD in English literature include coursework in linguistics as preparation for teaching writing.

Reinforcing these efforts pertaining to college composition was the post-Sputnik concern in the early 1960s to encourage excellence in all areas of American education. To make the college writing course more rigorous, ways were sought to expand its focus beyond socialization or linguistics to the full traditional range of rhetorical concerns. Distinguished literary critics such as Wayne Booth began to write on rhetoric. In 1963, the NCTE published a survey of research to date in composition, compiled by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer. Little valuable work was found, but the study itself encouraged high standards for new research in the field. To give such research an outlet, the NCTE began publishing the journal *Research in the Teaching of English* in 1967 [23].

The 1960s: Classical Rhetoric, Writing Processes, and Authentic Voice

With the encouragement of the CCCC in the early 1960s, composition specialists looked to the classical texts that had rarely been studied in English departments (although speech departments had preserved an interest in them) and to transformations of the classical heritage by later rhetoricians. Several important collections of premodern documents on rhetoric and discussions of classical rhetoric's value to the modern student were published. This renewed attention to classical sources helped to foster an increased interest in stages of the writing process and in style as an expression of personal ethos.

The classical model is a five-stage process, consisting of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. After the Ramists excluded invention and arrangement, and memory and delivery dwindled into elocution, American writing courses, in their focus on one stage—style—had lost a sense of writing as a process. Now writing as a process was reemphasized in the study

of what Gordon Rohman called the prewriting stages, those that precede production of a finished piece of work. Invention and arrangement began to be reclaimed for composition studies as preliminary stages in the writing process. Style, too, was seen as a process of developing ideas by recasting sentences, not merely pouring ideas into preset sentence forms.

Interest in the writing process and in writing as self-expression prompted the MLA and the NCTE to sponsor the 1966 conference at Dartmouth College on the teaching of English (see John Dixon [568]). Attended by American and British educators from the elementary, secondary, and college levels, the conference helped spread the conviction that writing instruction should emphasize self-expressive uses of language and assist students in shaping their ideas through writing. Unlike the Harvard-model course, which imposed standards on passive students, the new Dartmouth-model writing course encouraged more interaction among teacher and students, more dramatic and collaborative activities. One influential process-oriented pedagogy appeared in James Moffett's *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968) [576].

The Dartmouth conference called for writing instruction that takes more notice of students' needs for self-expression as opposed to their adjustment to social demands. Now composition studies searched for a pedagogy to help students find personal writing styles that were honest and unconstrained by conventions. Such a style came to be termed the writer's authentic voice—an important concept in the work of Ken Macrorie [609] and Peter Elbow [152, 601]. The need for such pedagogy seemed especially poignant in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when many writing teachers sought some critical response to the opaque, impersonal prose that dominates politics. Authentic-voice pedagogy contributed techniques, such as Elbow's free-writing, that became part of every writing teacher's repertoire.

The 1970s: Cognitive Processes, Basic Writing, and Writing across the Curriculum

In the 1970s, interest in the writing process prompted inquiry into what cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics might discover about it. Composition scholars began to refer not to the "writing" process but to the "composing" process, as in the pioneering work of Janet Emig [199, 261]. The significance of this shift in terminology was its emphasis on the cognitive activities involved in writing. "Composing," in other words, is what goes on in the writer's head and is then recorded in writing. This interest in composing processes first focused on what had been the initial stages in the classical process: invention and arrangement. Theorists developed structured invention techniques that would guide the student through an optimal composing process. The particle-wave-field heuristic devised by Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike [386] was one influential modern invention technique.

Progressive educators before World War II had urged researchers to use social-scientific methods for investigating students' real needs. These urgings were rarely heeded in college English departments. Now empirical studies

based on observations of working writers began, such as those of Nancy Sommers [400] and Sondra Perl [274]. The whole composing process came under study. Research indicated that there might be more than one successful composing process. Furthermore, the process no longer seemed to be neatly linear, as described in the classical model, but appeared recursive and hierarchical, as developed in the model of Linda Flower and cognitive psychologist John R. Hayes [265].

In comprehensive theoretical works, the philosophical and psychological bases for the study of composing were explored. Some authors argued that the forms of discourse are structurally similar to the forms of cognitive processes and perhaps even to the brain itself. To teach the forms of discourse, then, is not merely to teach conventional modes of arrangement but to provide students with models of actual cognitive processes. If the forms of discourse parallel cognitive processes, they should be equally accessible to every student, regardless of cultural background.

In the 1970s, the increasing number of college freshmen whose home language was not Standard English severely tested the applicability of cognitive theories of writing. The work of William Labov [648] and other sociolinguists on dialectal variation helped writing teachers see that this new classroom population, in need of so much help with the requirements of academic writing, was not cognitively deficient but, rather, linguistically and culturally diverse. One immediate result of this new understanding was a 1974 resolution by the CCCC on students' right to their own languages. This resolution argued that students would learn Standard English more easily if they were allowed to write some school assignments in their home languages, whether or not these were Standard. The document also called for teacher education to include work in dialectal variation.

Later in the decade, studies of basic writing explored the pedagogical problems posed by dialectal variation in the classroom. Mina P. Shaughnessy's important work, *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing* (1977) [660], argues for respect for students' home languages but also advises teachers on how to help these students become more comfortable with academic writing. Many student errors with Standard forms are actually regular, if not rule-governed, attempts to achieve academic correctness. A student whose home language is Black English, for example, might write her school papers in neither Black English nor Standard English but in an idiosyncratic blend of the two. Furthermore, socialization to school is a problem for many basic writers. If students' home cultures place little value on the intellectual abstractions of academic work, for example, a typical research paper assignment might seem pointless. The study of error, therefore, as Shaughnessy argues, must consider students' cultural background and how this may affect their relation to the social contexts of school as well as what appears on the page when they write.

With so many students seeming to need extra help in mastering college-level writing, many composition scholars came to feel that professors in all disciplines must be enlisted in the effort of teaching writing or, rather, helped to see that they were already contributing to students' introduction to academic

discourse. They could learn to make this contribution in better ways, which would improve both students' writing and their learning of disciplinary content. To address these needs, cross-disciplinary writing programs, or programs in "writing across the curriculum," to use James Britton's phrase, began to develop. The first American writing-across-the-curriculum program was started at Carleton College in Minnesota in 1974, and Elaine Maimon directed an influential program at Beaver College in Pennsylvania [549, 550].

These programs typically attempt to educate students and faculty from all disciplines about the conventions of academic discourse and about the range of activities that constitute mature composing processes. Maimon argues that the literary training most composition scholars have received makes them uniquely suited to analyze the conventions of discourse for writers who are not aware of the conventions' function in the generation of knowledge [549]. Toby Fulwiler stresses the importance of journal keeping in the composing processes of all academic disciplines. Fulwiler finds that writing-across-the-curriculum programs encourage students and teachers alike to become more confident writers and eager collaborators in a literate community of scholars [543]. James L. Kinneavy suggests that a further outcome may be wider participation in a literate community beyond the academy, in which important public issues can be discussed [547].

The 1980s: Social and Historical Approaches to Rhetoric

In the 1980s, composition scholars focused on the social nature of writing, building upon previous work in both basic writing and writing across the curriculum. Research into the cognitive processes of writers continued, but it was informed by new interest in how these processes are conditioned by social circumstances. For example, Mike Rose shows that writer's block may be as much a result of bad writing instruction as of individual cognitive disabilities [276]. Moreover, ethnographic studies, such as that by Shirley Brice Heath [352], which focus on writers at various school levels and beyond school, became increasingly important.

James Kinneavy's early work on the modes of discourse (1971) [221] returned to Aristotle for a revitalized sense of the decisive role of social function in determining the form of discourse. Kinneavy classifies rhetorical situations according to their emphasis on the writer (expressive), audience (persuasive), subject matter (referential), or verbal medium (aesthetic). Kinneavy's theory allows for the literary analysis of a wide variety of texts, thus laying the groundwork for studies in writing across the curriculum. His work became more influential in the 1980s as these studies proliferated.

The search for a social theory of writing became broadly interdisciplinary. Composition scholars studied not only writing but all aspects of language use, which they regarded as actually creating knowledge, not merely disseminating it. These interests have been shared with scholars in history, literary criticism, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and speech communica-

tion. Scholars in all these fields sought an account of discourse—language in use—that acknowledges the power of rhetoric to help create a community’s worldview, knowledge, and interpretive practices.

If rhetoric is epistemic, then there can be no language that does not require interpretation. As Richard Rorty shows, modern philosophers have failed to define a value-neutral language in which purely objective and rational arguments can be conducted (see Olsen and Gale [234]). Chaim Perelman describes the ways a community united by discourse establishes its interpretive practices [236, 237]. His “universal audience” is the audience that is presumed to adhere perfectly to a given community’s interpretive practices and hence to serve as that community’s standard of the purely objective and rational audience. Different communities can be expected to hold different conceptions of their universal audience.

Literary-critical theories of the role of the reader in making meaning also discuss the establishment of interpretive practices. Stanley Fish describes readers as participants in interpretive communities, which are defined by their agreement on the conventions of discourse. Fish’s work suggests a method for analyzing the conventions a writer must learn to enter the academic discourse community. No taxonomy of such conventions has appeared, although studies of a number of fields have exposed much about disciplinary conventions. More recently, studies of writing in various disciplines have revealed and analyzed the social creation of disciplinary knowledge through discourse.

Historical studies of rhetoric have been another resource for a social theory of discourse. Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa S. Ede drew on Aristotle for a theory of argument that legitimates ethical and pathetic as well as logical appeals. This theory supports the idea that cultural assumptions have more to do with persuasion than the “universal” rationality of a proposition [222]. S. Michael Halloran shows that when the classical emphasis on socially rooted appeals disappeared from nineteenth-century colleges, public debate on important national issues diminished [85, 97]. James A. Berlin describes the reduction of rhetoric to stylistic prescriptions [143]. He suggests that the roots of a more socially responsive rhetoric may be found in Emersonian romanticism.

The field of composition studies grew in professional respectability during the 1980s. By the end of the decade, graduate degrees in composition and rhetoric—not simply one introductory survey or teaching practicum—had come to be offered by departments of English in many prestigious universities. Under the auspices of the NCTE, the CCCC began publishing comprehensive bibliographies in the field [43]. The U.S. Department of Education funded an empirical research institute, the Center for the Study of Writing, at the University of California at Berkeley and Carnegie Mellon University. Series of bibliographic anthologies, collections, reprints, and monographs began to appear regularly from a number of research and university presses.

Part of the field’s coming-of-age process was increased interest in the history of rhetoric and composition, now an extensive area of scholarly work and a regular curricular offering. Composition work was not to be seen as a temporary response to unusual gaps in college-bound students’ preparation.

Rather, writing teachers and researchers came to view themselves as the most recent generation of serious thinkers about language in use, heirs of the rhetorical tradition. Many of our classroom practices were recast in light of historical traditions. For example, personal writing was connected with the genre of the personal essay stretching back at least to the Renaissance, as traced variously by William A. Covino [90] and Kurt Spellmeyer [616].

Although historical studies of rhetoric and poetic suggested theoretical bases for the location of composition studies in English departments, the relationship between composition studies and literary studies was (and is still to some extent) uneasy. Some composition scholars called for the formation of departments of composition and rhetoric, separate from departments of English. Some worked to redress the professional inequities that prompted the impulse to separate through, for example, the Wyoming Resolution and ensuing professional policy work by both the CCCC and the MLA [499]. Greatly increased self-consciousness about the institutional structures in which we work gave rise not only to more scholarship on writing-program administration but also to more ideologically sensitive criticism of our institutional functions, for example, in James Berlin's work on the history of twentieth-century writing [143, 173].

Analyses of the political problems within the profession extended to efforts to connect our profession with political problems in society at large, to a degree not seen, perhaps, since the late 1960s. An important intersection of personal work life and national political life emerged in the analyses of inequity and redress offered by feminist critics within composition studies. In 1988, Elizabeth A. Flynn [714] could lament that issues of feminism were rarely raised at our annual conventions, but this situation changed dramatically the very next year.

The late 1980s also saw a rise in awareness of the degree to which race and social class affect the situation of basic writers. Linda Brodkey analyzes teacher-student class differences in "The Literacy Letters" [637], and Mike Rose provides an autobiographical account of how such barriers may be negotiated in *Lives on the Boundary* [655]. "Politics" became a key concept for understanding the educational difficulties of all writers: witness Richard Bullock and John Trimbur's collection, *The Politics of Writing Instruction, Postsecondary* [742]. Composition scholars gave increased attention to pedagogical innovations with an explicitly liberatory political agenda, drawing once again on the work of Brazilian literacy educator Paulo Freire [344] (see Cooper and Holzman [566]) and learning from education theorists like Henry A. Giroux [210]. The desire to trace the influences of class, race, and gender to their roots also seemed to generate a great deal of attention among college-level writing teachers to work in the acquisition of literacy and its cognitive and cultural implications, as the works in the "Literacy" section of the Bibliography attest.

By the end of the 1980s, seeing writing in social and cultural contexts was the prevailing tendency in the field. Concern for writing in communal contexts appeared in the work of many theorists. Linda Flower, in a variation on the theme, argued for a sociocognitive theory of writing, according to

which writer, text, and context are mutually constitutive [264]. Studying writing in context means more than assessing the immediate audience. Rather, as Marilyn M. Cooper argues, we must consider a complex “ecology of writing” that comprises not only immediate personal relationships and social purposes but also larger generic and cultural constraints on composing [260]. To study this rich network, we need to look not only at the individual writer but at the collaborative situation of his or her classroom, personal and institutional histories, and writers’ and teachers’ political hopes.

Rhetoric and Composition Studies in the 1990s: The Challenge of Diversity

The powerful themes of the 1980s—social construction, politics, literacy, and gender issues—extended in the 1990s to work that related composition to postmodernism and cultural studies. Social construction was widely accepted as a theoretical basis for understanding language use, as can be seen in the research directions of technical and business communication, English as a second language, and writing centers. The history of composition, too, received generous and fruitful attention in the 1990s, a time of stock-taking in the discipline, some of which was motivated by the challenge of diversity in all areas of the field.

A number of scholars explored the connections among social construction, postmodernism, politics, and cultural studies and their implications for composition. The contributors to Patricia Harkin and John Schilb’s *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age* explored the sources of postmodern ideas in the works of influential theorists [214], and Lester Faigley analyzed the relationship of computer technologies and postmodern consciousness [202]. James Berlin drew upon cultural studies to argue for a reform of English studies [739], while others used these theories to complicate our notions of student subjectivity and to promote interdisciplinary research.

The impulse to write the field’s history appeared in such collections as *Taking Stock: The Writing Process Movement in the 90s* [279] as well as in a series of landmark essays on the writing process [274], invention [387], voice [601], writing centers [450], and writing across the curriculum [539], published by Hermagoras Press. In addition, a number of scholars shone a light on the teaching of rhetoric in nineteenth-century American colleges, finding there the stories of how the field of composition was positioned—and in some ways compromised—for the next century and beyond. Revisionist histories of writing and rhetoric such as those written by Robert J. Connors [87], Thomas P. Miller [121], and Robin Varnum [168] situated the role of composition in the development of English studies, while books in the history of rhetoric focused very specifically on the rhetorical practices of women speakers and writers. Cheryl Glenn studied the rhetorical contributions of women from antiquity through the Renaissance [96], while Shirley Wilson Logan [117] and Carol Mattingly [120] documented the work of nineteenth-century women rhetors. Influenced by feminist theory, these histories attempted to recover

lost or neglected voices in the rhetorical tradition, fill in disturbing gaps in our understanding of the history of rhetoric, and remind us of the wealth of archival research.

In response to the growing cultural diversity of student populations, composition welcomed its first longitudinal studies of college writers. Marilyn S. Sternglass' *Time to Know Them: A Longitudinal Study of Writing and Learning at the College Level* followed nine City College students through their academic careers [664], and Ruth Spack reported on a three-year study of a second-language student [789]. At the same time, composition also saw its first critique of process pedagogy; Lisa Delpit criticized the writing process movement for its tendency to restrict minority students' access to linguistic codes [711]. In 1991, Mary Louise Pratt called upon educators to think of the curriculum and the classroom as "contact zones" in which cultural groups of unequal power can interact under conditions that enable sharing and understanding [239]. Composition teachers and scholars were quick to respond to Pratt's challenge (see, e.g., Bizzell [181]) in ways that confirmed the richness of the contact zone metaphor and its potential for pedagogy; for example, while A. Suresh Canagarajah found the concept of "safe houses" important for his students [707], Joseph Harris found it problematic if those "houses" serve only as retreats where differences need not be negotiated [644].

The attraction of spatial metaphors to describe diverse classrooms continued with Gloria Anzaldúa's "borderlands" (*la frontera*), places of cultural, spiritual, geographical, and linguistic difference, where the reward for discomfort and conflict was a satisfying sense of shifting and multiple identities. Along with Pratt's contact zones, Anzaldúa's borderlands gave teachers and writers more ways to think about the space of the classroom and the curriculum, but more important, her "mestiza rhetoric" invited writers to blend genres, to occupy multiple identities, and to refuse to enclose discourses within well-defined parameters.

Such border crossing occurs in extracurricular studies of literacy. Beverly J. Moss' collection *Literacy across Communities* [360], and Brian V. Street's collection *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy* [370] extended the work of Labov and Heath in sociolinguistic and anthropological studies of literacy outside the academy; these scholars helped composition teachers to understand the cultural histories and languages from which students increasingly came. With a growing recognition that literacy does not mean school literacy, Deborah Brandt [329, 330, 331] and Anne Ruggles Gere [346], among others, focused on extracurricular reading, writing, and communicative practices. Also interested in community literacy were those teachers beginning to pursue service learning, an effort to expand the awareness of cultural difference beyond classrooms and campuses and to introduce students to the rhetoric of citizenship.

With more understanding of the complexities of students' literacies and identities, composition continued to respond to issues of diversity in our classrooms, institutions, and communities. *Writing in Multicultural Settings*, edited by Carol Severino, Juan C. Guerra, and Johnnella E. Butler [734], attempted to describe, without prescribing answers, the conflicts, tensions, and

struggles of both students and teachers in classrooms defined by difference. Mary Soliday described a program at City College designed to mainstream at-risk students—a program supported across the institution but also determined by the complex institutional politics of remediation [661]. And Vivian Zamel reminded us that ESL students' language use was too often equated with their intellectual ability [793]. Writing centers, similarly, began responding to the challenge of diversity. Anne DiPardo, for example, connected the difficulties of center clients from diverse cultures to campus tensions aroused by diversity and showed how tutors can help [640].

The late 1990s saw an emerging critical discourse on race in composition studies, a discourse that did not embrace multiculturalism, necessarily, but that tried to confront institutionalized racism through analyzing images, discourses, and practices. Keith Gilyard's edited collection, *Race, Rhetoric, and Composition* [718], as well as articles by Catherine Prendergast [731] and David L. Wallace and Annissa Bell [737], interrogated constructions of race in composition and in the academy. Feminist teaching and gender issues in the classroom continued to be important scholarly concerns in rhetoric and composition [720]. A variety of other women's concerns were reflected in studies of autobiographical writing [606], of academic women's sense of authority [722], and of the history of gender-coded texts [185]. At the same time, the typical categories of difference—race, class, and gender—began to be complicated by other, overlapping identities or subject positions. Harriet Malinowitz, for example, cast light on the writing problems of gay and lesbian students [728].

An important “contact zone” for composition scholars was electronic writing technologies. Still intrigued by the new frontiers of networking and hypertext and other online writing technologies, compositionists continued to explore these regions for their pedagogical implications. Their initial enthusiasm tempered by critical accounts of technology's exclusions, scholars approached computers armed with an awareness of, for example, how interfaces showed effects of domination and colonialism [291]. Theoretical interpretations of technology included Jay David Bolter's explanation of how electronic text radically changes the relationship between writer and reader and revives features of oral literature [280]. Studies of online writing were more likely to focus on the rhetoric and politics of exchanges [814] and to question the implications of adding technology to classrooms or writing centers [502].

As composition studies moved into a new century, there were many signs of its scholarly maturity. In 1999 the profession celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and there were other signs, too, that composition had come of age. Expanding forums for publishing—print as well as electronic—enabled more voices and views to be heard while also encouraging the rise of specialized, focused studies.

Despite composition's maturity as a discipline and its rapid adoptions of new technologies, the inequities and injustices for low-status composition instructors, well-documented in books by Eileen Schell and Theresa Enos, remained, in part, Sharon Crowley argued, because composition remained a requirement [193]. Composition's characteristic commitment to exploring the relationship between theory and practice [203], however, would seem to

indicate its continued productivity. While it remained to be seen if composition could construct new theories in a new century, the field continued to be defined by a blend of richly interdisciplinary interest in pedagogy, research, and theory.

Into the Twenty-First Century: Post-Process Perspectives and Concerns

Early in a new century, responses to diversity expanded to include more attention to disability studies [706, 721, 732], sexuality [701], and whiteness [241], all welcome complications to the category of gender, race, and class. As these categories have continued to blend and blur, greater consensus has emerged that attention to student identities must be accompanied by a full accounting of diverse histories, theories, and curricula. Thus, contemporary scholars and researchers are constantly engaged in efforts to rewrite composition history, formulate new theoretical perspectives, and analyze and adapt new media and technologies.

Historical scholarship abounds and has recently displayed a marked shift away from demonizing nineteenth-century current-traditional rhetoric; instead, historians are drawing a much fuller picture of the cultural issues and conditions that informed curricular histories, writing instruction, and conceptions of literacy. Until recently, composition's canonical histories and primary texts have made it difficult to see other patterns, namely the long-standing presence of African Americans in arenas of higher education and their successes as insiders (Royster and Williams [130]) or the role of cultural imperatives in shaping composition theory and practice (Paine [128]). But significant archival work has radically altered our understanding of current-traditional rhetorics and rhetorical education: activist rhetorical education, for example, was concerned more with language and ideology than correctness [110], and formal grammar instruction co-existed peaceably with progressive educational goals [155]. Women rhetorical educators prepared their students for civic engagement [95], while a classical curriculum in historically black colleges provided students with what Susan Jarratt calls "a sense of rhetorical enfranchisement" [106]. "Counter" histories reconsider periods as recent as the 1980s when new epistemological maps lumped vitalism with romanticism [217].

Accompanying these efforts to rewrite history are new theoretical perspectives that emphasize writing's materiality and a burgeoning interest in the ways in which writing and literacies are embodied [205, 249, 738] or how rhetorical training is a "bodily art" [100]. John Trimbur traces writing's materiality through circulation—a system of production and delivery [251], and Bruce McComiskey bases his social-process rhetorical inquiry on the cycle of production, distribution, and consumption [271]. The influence of materiality can also be seen in the proliferation of in-depth qualitative studies of everyday literacies—home, school, public, and multiple [325, 370, 371]—and in calls for materialist rhetorics to inform service learning [681]. The notion of literacy sponsors [331] has firmly taken hold and expanded into literacy

sponsorships and multiple partnerships [544]. Challenges to the autonomous model of literacy continue to mount; for instance, Shannon Carter argues that taking vernacular literacies seriously depends on a notion of rhetorical dexterity [332].

The importance of self-reflection, learned in part from qualitative research, has also influenced scholarship in the areas of community service learning, civic engagement, and public writing, where recognition of community expertise, reciprocity, and sustainability are central concerns [684, 685, 695]. Indeed, many areas of rhetoric and composition studies now look beyond classrooms or academic discourses for the development of theories and practices. In the areas of multimodal composing or digital writing, for example, scholars are turning to new environments, spaces, media, and genres to reconsider plagiarism in a digital age [288, 813] or to adapt to visual literacies [306] or new media writing [313].

With widening contexts for understanding genres [672, 828], writing programs are also recognizing the importance of writing in the freshman year [454] and the difficulty of “transfer” [565, 572]. The aims and content of first-year courses are shifting in light of the recognition that there is no universal academic discourse [451]. At the same time, writing programs are acknowledging that we need to know more about such matters as the code-meshing of World Englishes [743] as well as the impact of “English Only” policies [767]. One of the central challenges facing program design is to imagine writing instruction and curriculum from an internationalist perspective, a challenge shared by business communication [843, 857] and technical communication [798].

Writing programs are also increasingly looking beyond the curriculum [589], beyond the academy, and toward community literacies [687]. Interest in community engagement, along with studying the rhetorics, tools, technologies, genres, and infrastructure for such engagement [689], is likely to hold composition’s attention for many years to come. The size and scope of this seventh edition of *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing* testify to the status of rhetoric and composition in the twenty-first century and indicate a continued development of subfields and secondary specializations.

